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# **The development of 'drama' in YouTube discourse**

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29 September 2012

## **Declaration**

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged. This thesis has not been submitted to the Open University or to any other institute for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

### **NOTE:**

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## Abstract

This thesis presents a systematic discourse analysis of sustained antagonistic debate—called 'drama'—on the video-sharing website, YouTube. Following a two-year observation of a YouTube community of practice discussing Christianity and atheism, 20 video 'pages' (including talk from videos and text comments) from a drama event were identified and transcribed, producing a 86,859 word corpus comprising 136 minutes of video talk and 1,738 comments. Using metaphor-led discourse analysis (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b) of the total corpus, metaphor vehicles were identified, coded, and grouped by semantic and narrative relationships to identify systematic use and trace the development of discourse activity. Close discourse analysis of a subset of the corpus was then employed to investigate membership categorisation (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002), impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011), and positioning (Harré & van Langenhove, 1998), providing a systematic description of different factors contributing to the emergence of 'drama'.

Analysis shows that 'drama' developed when negative views of one user's impolite words exposed the different expectations of other users about acceptable YouTube interaction. Hyperbolic, metaphorical language derived from the Bible and narratives about tragic historical events often exaggerated, escalated, and extended negative evaluations of others. Categories like 'Christian' were used dynamically to connect impolite words and actions of individuals to social groups, thereby also extending negative evaluations.

With implications for understanding 'flaming' and transgression of social norms in web 2.0 environments, this thesis concludes that inflammatory language led to 'drama' because: (1) users had diverse expectations about social interaction and organisation, (2) users drew upon the Bible's moral authority to support opposing actions, and (3) the online platform's technical features afforded immediate reactions to non-present others. The 'drama' then developed when users' responses to one another created both additional topics for antagonistic debate and more disagreement about which words and actions were acceptable.

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My wife Yoko has sacrificed selflessly for my work, and I love her dearly.

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## **Publications arising from this work**

Pihlaja, Stephen. (forthcoming, 2012) Truck stops and fashion shows: A case study of the discursive construction of Evangelical Christian group identity on YouTube. In Herbert, D and M.Gillespie. (eds.) 'Social media, religion and spirituality'. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Pihlaja, Stephen. (2011) 'Are you religious or are you saved?': Investigating membership categorisation in religious discussions on YouTube. *Fieldwork in Religion* 6(1): 27–46.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Rationale for Study

In the last 30 years, the Internet has become an established medium for social interaction. With increased accessibility to technology, users from around the world are now able to communicate instantly in a way that has never been possible in human history. In a utopian vision of the Internet, the instant access to the lives and faces of users from different backgrounds, faith traditions, and geo-political perspectives would allow for the free exchange of ideas and philosophy, with users considering one another's opinions, building on those ideas, and moving towards greater understanding. This has not, unfortunately, always been the case, and users have employed online communication technologies in numerous ways for different purposes, sometimes resulting in positive social interaction, and sometimes resulting in negative interaction.

The popular video-hosting website, YouTube, provides both a service for users to upload and publish digital video online, and a 'web 2.0' environment where users not only consume content, but interact socially with others. YouTube's interactive features provide many opportunities for user text production and interaction, including usernames linked to YouTube channels; video-hosting; text attached to videos including titles, video descriptions, and 'tags' (keywords); and comments on videos. Users can upload videos of themselves speaking to the camera (called 'vlogs') about any topic or issue that interests them. Others can then make text comments on the video or record their own videos in response, creating a video or comment 'thread' in which videos and responses follow a common topic of interaction over an extended period.

Much like the *heteroglossia* of a novel (Bakhtin, 1981), YouTube pages are multi-voiced, with different elements (such as comments, description boxes, keyword 'tags', and the video) contained on the page, all with different features of text production. Beyond basic community standards forbidding violent and pornographic videos, YouTube does not restrict what types of video can be posted on the site, and different users produce different content, from corporate channels hosting music videos, television shows, and commercials, to individual users producing comedy skits, family videos, vlogs, etc. As the videos in my

dataset are 'vlogs', a brief history of the genre is needed before considering how it might best be analysed.

The neologism 'vlog' is a portmanteau comprised of the words 'video' and 'blog'. Vlogging as a practice emerged beginning in 2006 with YouTube's rising popularity and the combined technical advancements of abundant, free online video storage space and inexpensive web cameras (Burgess & Green, 2009). The generic conventions of the vlog, however, have grown out of an older CMC genre, the 'blog', which began to gain popularity in the early 2000s as a new kind of personal webpage in which users could post reverse chronological updates about topics of their choosing (Blood, 2004). Although the exact parameters of what a blog is or is not have been hotly contested, Herring and colleagues (2004, p. 11) see a distinction between 'journal-style' blogs, which are similar to online journals, and 'filter-style' blogs which provide information about different topics for a particular community, with intermediate characteristics, such as allowing a user to express themselves with varying degrees of exposure in an online space they can control.

The influence of the journal-style, confessional blog can be seen in the vlog's generic conventions. Users make videos alone, directly addressing a camera as though talking to another person, paradoxically engaging no one and everyone at the same time. Although, as with blogs, the bounds of what is and is not a vlog are not always clear, Burgess and Green have suggested the very simple description of a vlog video as 'a talking head, a camera, and some editing' (2008, p. 6), to which I add, drawing on Herring's description of blogs as online journals, 'with a sense of free expression of one's own opinions and experiences in an online, public space.' What is or is not a 'vlog' is not simply defined and the term has continued to develop with a diversity of uses on YouTube, but the vlogs in my dataset are all non-professionally produced videos with, in most cases, users speaking directly to the camera with little or no post-production editing.

In contrast to other video genres on YouTube, and particularly the proliferation of professional user content in the last several years, typical user vlogs tend to be less produced, with the user speaking directly to the camera and using only minimal editing. In this practice, a kind of confessional authenticity is performed

in which the vlogger (video-blogger) appears to be speaking one-to-one with the viewer, often with the vlogger's face dominating the camera frame. This necessarily limits the inclusion of other elements and vlogs often maintain one single shot for the duration of the video, with a few video edits where a user may cut something out of the video that has been recorded, often evident in a 'jump', or an obvious change in the flow of talk. All the videos included for discourse analysis in the dataset collected for this study follow this convention of a vlogger speaking directly to the camera with only minimal editing. Generic conventions can be seen in structural elements of the vlog in the practice of greeting viewers as 'YouTube' as in, 'Hello YouTube'. A generic description of YouTube interaction is not, however, a straightforward endeavour, particularly in discourse activity on YouTube video pages. The YouTube video page represents a rich site for interaction in which a multitude of different voices can interact and influence one another after a video has been posted. In Figure 1-1, I present an example of a YouTube video page and the different types of text and talk on the page.

**Figure 1-1. YouTube Video Page**

**IMAGE REDACTED<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> To comply with the copyright restrictions of the Open Research Online (ORO) system, images of YouTube pages throughout the thesis have been redacted.

In Figure 1-1, the five main areas provided for text production are highlighted with red boxes and numbers. At the top of the video page, the video title is the largest text (1) and is produced by the video maker. The video appears below the title (2) and plays automatically when the video page loads. The video details appear below the video (3) including the video description and video 'tags' (keywords). Videos that other users have posted in response to the video appear below the description (4) and the viewer can click on these videos and be taken to the separate video page. Finally, viewer comments in response to the video are posted below the video responses (5). Images and text to the right of the video are automatically generated by YouTube and include both links to advertisements and videos with related content based on the keywords in the video description box.

As on many Internet sites, interaction on YouTube often features confrontational, antagonistic exchanges among users, and YouTube comments threads in particular are known for their offensive content. The term 'drama' (or 'flame wars' as it has been known in other Internet genres) appears often as an emic label for a phenomenon 'that emerge[s] when a flurry of video posts clusters around an internal "controversy" and/or antagonistic debate between one or more YouTubers' (Burgess & Green, 2008, p. 13). In these cases, serious disagreements can become entangled with interpersonal relationships and users position themselves in relation to others and social controversies.

'Drama' plays a key role in YouTube interaction by giving users subject matter for videos, affording them with creative ways to insult one another, and providing a chance for users to support or oppose others. Drama videos are often made quickly in response to other users with little production or planning and are also often removed within days or even hours of being posted. Although the actual video pages (i.e. videos and comments) may not remain, the talk that ensues in their absence, particularly the reconstruction of what another user may or may not have said remains in response videos, both in references to the video by the user who removed it, and in reporting of 'what someone said' on separate video pages. This leads to a complex, dynamic network of new, old, and missing video pages, with drama developing from previous disagreements,



the reconstruction of previous videos and comments, and user reassessment and repositioning as the context changes.

## **1.2 Focus and Aims of the Research**

The focus of this research is on the ways in which YouTube drama develops. Although a growing body of research into YouTube social interaction continues to develop descriptions of user experience on YouTube, empirical studies of the YouTube video page as well as close discourse analysis of user interaction on the site remains rare. Rather than attempt to describe and analyse overall user experience, this research focuses on the interaction of a small group of users discussing issues of Christian theology and atheism on the site, analysing how drama develops over time and how users position themselves and others in relation to changing contexts. Since YouTube drama occurs publicly, the research will focus on actual YouTube video pages rather than user reports of their actions and responses. The aim of this thesis is, therefore, to investigate how and why YouTube drama develops through a systematic description and analysis of user discourse activity. Through close analysis of video pages, this study contributes to a greater academic understanding of Internet antagonism and YouTube interaction by revealing the factors which contribute to the development of drama over time.

## **1.3 Thesis Outline**

This thesis is comprised of nine chapters.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 describes the historical context of this research and identifies a gap in previous studies of YouTube antagonism. It then provides both the theoretical and analytic frameworks employed in this study. Chapter 3 presents the research questions arising from the review of literature. Chapter 4 presents the methodological frameworks employed for data collection and analysis, providing descriptions of the processes of observation, video selection and transcription, and presents a brief narrative description of the two-year observation of YouTube users, providing a backdrop for the data and the drama analysed. I also provide an in-depth description of processes for discourse analysis of metaphor, categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning.

Chapters 5–8 comprise the main findings of this study. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction including the research questions specific to the given chapter and an overview of the main findings. I then present a description and analysis of data, followed by a discussion of the analysis. Chapter 5 reports the findings of metaphor-led discourse analysis to analyse metaphor use in the dataset. Chapter 6 reports the findings of membership categorisation analysis while Chapters 7 and 8 present findings from analysis of impoliteness and positioning, respectively.

Chapter 9 draws together the main findings in the three analysis chapters and their contribution to knowledge, identifies the limitations of the study, and makes suggestions based on the analysis.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I introduced the aim of this research to investigate how and why YouTube drama develops, through a systematic description and analysis of user discourse activity. 'Drama' is the emic label for a phenomenon 'that emerge[s] when a flurry of video posts clusters around an internal "controversy" and/or antagonistic debate between one or more YouTubers' (Burgess & Green, 2008, p. 13). Although some research into 'flaming' (or sending rude or insulting messages) on YouTube has been undertaken (Section 2.2.2), theoretical and analytical frameworks for investigating this phenomenon are still largely underdeveloped. This thesis, therefore, builds on my previous research into YouTube 'antagonism' (Pihlaja, 2009, 2010) in which I looked at interaction between an atheist and an Evangelical Christian around a single disagreement and attempted to analyse how the interaction resulted in antagonism. Findings from this analysis showed that both metaphorical language and categories influenced the development of antagonistic interaction among users. Given the findings in my previous study and the aim of this research to describe and analyse YouTube drama, I extend and expand the methods of my previous work to offer a robust description and analysis of YouTube 'drama'. In this chapter, I focus on developing theoretical and analytic tools to accomplish this aim.

First, I describe the historical context of this research and identify a gap in previous work, I start by presenting a review of computer-mediated communication (CMC) research and the methods researchers have employed for investigating online communication, with a particular focus on research into online antagonism and the YouTube context (Sections 2.2.1–2.2.3).

Second, I offer a theoretical framework for understanding the social context in which YouTube drama emerges and propose community of practice (CofP) theory and positioning theory as two ways of describing and analysing the social interaction of users (Sections 2.2.4 & 2.2.5).

Third, I offer a theoretical framework for understanding the 'internal controversy' and 'antagonistic debate' of YouTube drama. I then investigate ways that

'impoliteness' has been understood in offline interaction and present an operationalised definition of impoliteness for this research (Section 2.3).

Fourth, I describe and analyse the dynamics of interaction among users in their language use, and I present a reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis (Section 2.4) and the discourse dynamics approach to metaphor. Finally, I discuss the centrality of the Bible and Biblical interpretation in Evangelical Christianity (Section 2.6).

I begin by presenting a brief review of the historical interest in CMC research, the assumptions guiding this research, and how previous studies might instruct analysis of YouTube 'drama'.

## **2.2 CMC Background**

### **2.2.1 Historical Background**

Before beginning a review of research into YouTube, it is necessary to situate this work in historical trends in computer-mediated communication (CMC) research on the Internet. Research into CMC has developed with Internet use over the last forty years, and although CMC had been initially conceived as a monolithic category (Crumlish, 1995), it has grown increasingly diverse as new technological advancements have become available. With each new technology, researchers have adapted offline research methods to investigate new communication applications and the adaptation of communication modes within the applications. Historically, Herring states that two underlying assumptions have framed CMC research: 'first, that "new" CMC technologies are really new; and second, that CMC technologies shape communication, and through it social behaviour' (2004b, p. 26). Although the breadth of research was significant, Herring sees a meaningful growth in CMC research occurring in the mid-1990's, corresponding with popular uptake of the Internet (Herring, 2004a).

In considering the history of CMC research when developing methods for investigation of YouTube discourse activity, it first is important to note that research has been traditionally dominated by studies of language use in text-based media, such as Usenet groups (cf., Denzin, 1999), internet relay chat (IRC) (cf., Werry, 1996), and e-mail (cf., Baron, 1998). These studies serve as examples of work which attempted to understand the development of language

on the Internet, particularly in terms of written and spoken language (Baron, 2000). Early methods of CMC analysis were often built by adapting methods for analysing text and interaction from offline environments, including conversation analysis (CA) (Negretti, 1999; Psathas, 1995), corpus analysis (Yates, 2001), and virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000), trends which continue in recent work employing corpus analysis (Kapidzic & Herring, 2011), adapted CA (J. Harris, Danby, Butler, & Emmison, 2012), and ethnography (Nimrod, 2011), among many others.

Analysis of CMC has not been limited, however, to how language is used in online environments, and researchers have also considered the construction of the Internet as a social space. Along with online impoliteness (reviewed below), researchers have investigated the performance of gender (Bruckman, 1996; Herring, 1995), identity (Burkhalter, 1999), anonymity (Singer, 1996; Teich, Frankel, Kling, & Lee, 1999), and social norms (McLaughlin, Osborne, & Smith, 1995), issues that remain important in contemporary studies of online activity. This early work played an important role in describing language and society online and framing how researchers initially conceptualised CMC, namely as offline interaction replicated and reproduced in some way in online environments. In this sense, the Internet has been conceived of as a mediator of interaction, providing different opportunities for primarily text-based communication that users adopt and adapt to meet the needs of their interaction. As use of the Internet began to shift and diversify in the late 90's, however, criticism of this understanding of CMC began to grow (Soukup, 2000). Soukup, in particular, argued that the methods being developed for analysis of text-based CMC left important gaps in understanding what he termed the 'multi-media' Internet. Soukup saw the 'linear, two-dimensional world of print giving way to the full motion, three-dimensional world of cyberspace' (p. 210) and a need to move away from understanding CMC as 'a "computerized" version of face-to-face interaction' (p. 423). In some ways, Soukup's predictions about the growth of the 'multi-media' Internet have failed to materialise as text remains the dominant mode of communication online even in relatively new technologies (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, and text messaging in Skype). Still, with the advancements of high-speed Internet and inexpensive storage, communication using

asynchronous video in particular has developed significantly in the last five years. Potentially more prescient, however, was Soukup's criticism of treating CMC as linear, 'computerized face-to-face interaction' since social networking tools enable users to produce, consume, and adapt user-generated content in a way unique to online interaction.

Analysis of YouTube interaction has also been diverse, with researchers having investigated the educational potential of YouTube (Snelson, 2008), the prevalence of YouTube in the life of youth (Madden, 2007), the social-networking role of YouTube (Lange, 2007b), copyright issues on YouTube (Hilderbrand, 2007; O'Brien & Fitzgerald, 2006), and the effect of YouTube on the US political process (Burgess & Green, 2009). Maia, Almeida, and Almeida (2008) used quantitative analysis of YouTube networks to identify user behaviour. Similarly, Benevenuto and colleagues (2008) used statistical analysis to describe how patterns of user behaviour, such as commenting on another's video, lead to the emergence of social networks on YouTube. O'Donnell and colleagues (2008) used questionnaire data to investigate how YouTube 'community' is constructed, finding that reactions to videos differ based on the user group viewing the video.

To adapt to the diverse forms of CMC that have arisen, the rhetorical notion of genre has been employed for analysing the development of and purposes for different conventions in diverse CMC environments (Emigh & Herring, 2005; Erickson, 1997; Giltrow & Stein, 2009; Herring et al., 2004 & Wright, 2004; Miller & Shepherd, 2004). Although the term 'genre' has been applied differently in a variety of contexts (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978; Swales, 1990), Miller's definition of the term as 'typified rhetorical action based in recurrent situations' (Miller, 1984) has been employed in CMC research to conceive of and describe the diversity of online interaction, with variation within a genre (Bhatia, 1998), and genres developing over time (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). By mapping regularities in genres, CMC researchers provide a description and analysis of online interaction not only in terms of what is being accomplished in a given genre, but also how it compares to and differs from other online genres.

The adaptation of genre and discourse analysis, although a necessary and important first step, has led to inadequacies. For example, adapting a CA

approach to online, text-based communication may make a false comparison between different kinds of interaction, which are similar in some ways, but still contain important differences (written vs. spoken text, varying levels of synchronicity) (Herring, 1999). Genre analysis is also complicated by video pages on YouTube where video types can vary greatly on the site, from users talking directly to a camera with no editing to highly produced sketch comedies. The different kinds of video differences highlight the need for adaptation of discourse analytic techniques to take into account the particular opportunities for communication not only within particular CMC environments, but among the different genres of communication within the environment. To overcome these issues, Herring (2004a) suggests taking a broad approach to online interaction that makes no predictions about computer-mediated discourse. Rather than a strict application of any one method, she argues for an adaptation of offline paradigms to build a 'toolkit' for analysis of computer-mediated discourse. The particular parameters of the CMC interaction being analysed and the research aims then influence how the researcher approaches analysis of the data. In environments like YouTube, for example, the researcher may employ both corpus analysis of YouTube comments and conversation analysis of video talk to account for the different modes of communication occurring on a single video page.

Having presented a brief history of CMC research and analytic tools employed to understand and describe online interaction, I next discuss the history of research into antagonism in online interaction.

### **2.2.2 Antagonism in Online Interaction**

The often overwhelming presence of antagonism on the Internet has long been of interest to researchers from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, anthropology, religious studies, and linguistics, including, for example, early work on lack of co-operation in Usenet groups (Kollock & Smith, 1996), antagonism in controlled experimental environments (Dubrovsky, Kiesler, & Sethna, 1991), and politeness strategies in e-mail discussion groups (Harrison, 2000). In early analysis of online interaction, researchers focused on the effects of anonymity in CMC. Hardaker (citing Kiesler, Siegel, & McGuire, 1984; Siegel, Dubrovsky, Kiesler, & McGuire, 1986) states that 'CMC can offer a very high

degree of anonymity, and a great deal more control over a self-presentation than is available FtF [face-to-face], but this anonymity can also foster a sense of impunity, loss of self-awareness, and a likelihood of acting upon normally inhibited impulses, an effect known as deindividuation' (2010, p. 224). Although social media sites like Facebook and YouTube offer less anonymity than earlier, primarily text-based technologies, an effect of deindividuation created by communicating through Internet technology seems to persist.

Although a 'flame' is a particular, historically situated Internet genre, a term used originally in the 1990's to describe an antagonistic message posted to e-mail lists (Wang & Hong, 1995), the term has been applied to many different forms of online antagonism. Impoliteness online has been described as 'flaming', or the sending of aggressive individual messages 'related to a specific topic and directed at an individual user...' (Crystal, 2001, p. 55). 'Flaming', however, is not a technical, operationalised term, making it difficult to define and quantify for use in academic research. O'Sullivan and Flanagin (2003, p. 71) provide several early descriptions of flaming as 'scathingly critical personal messages' (Cosentino, 1994) or 'rude or insulting messages' (Schrage, 1997). Research has viewed flaming as primarily negative, building on a notion that lack of social cues in online communication leads to behaviour that others viewed negatively (Kiesler et al., 1984). The term 'trolling' has also been employed to describe similar kinds of activity online, such as leaving unwelcome, antagonistic comments on video pages (Baker, 2001; Brandel, 2007; A. M. Cox, 2006), but both 'flame' and 'troll' developed from user interaction in specific generic contexts and using the terms to describe all impoliteness online can suggest a false equivalency among different behaviours.

To account for diversity in flaming, CMC researchers O'Sullivan and Flanagin (2003) have proposed a framework that understands flaming in terms of norm violation and looks at the sender's perspective, the recipient's perspective, and a third-party perspective. 'Flames' or offensive messages can be judged on their intentionality and on how users transgress the social norms of a given online community. In this model, 'flames' are 'intentional (whether successful or unsuccessful) negative violations of (negotiated, evolving, and situated) interactional norms' (O'Sullivan & Flanagin, 2003, p. 85). In this sense, 'flaming'



is similar to Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of a 'face-threatening act' in offline communication (Section 2.3.1) where impolite words or actions are seen as strategic and purposeful.

The notion of 'intent' in this taxonomy, however, could cause problems with identifying what is or is not a flame. The discursive social psychologist Edwards (2008) gives a useful definition of the 'everyday sense' of intent as 'doing something agentively, deliberately, or to some kind of end or purpose, rather than, say, by accident or happenstance' (p. 177). However, as Edwards shows in his analysis of police interviews, even when intentionality is the explicit topic of enquiry, what an individual reports about their intention is problematic, to say nothing of how others perceive the intent. This presents serious difficulties for the researcher attempting to describe and analyse 'flaming', particularly when access to user reports of their own intentions are absent. I return to the discussion of 'intent' in terms of linguistic impoliteness in offline communication in Section 2.3.1.

The growing diversity of genres in CMC interaction has led to different descriptions of 'flaming' in a variety of online contexts. Researchers, however, have also attempted to reconceptualise 'flaming' and have adapted the notion of 'impoliteness' in CMC. A special issue of the *Journal of Politeness Research* highlights the approaches to analysing impoliteness online in a broad range of online genres, including e-mail threads (Haugh, 2010), bulletin board systems (Nishimura, 2010), online fora (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010), a transvestites' website (Planchenault, 2010), online reader responses (Upadhyay, 2010), and virtual team interactions (Darics, 2010). Across these studies, analysis focused on the norms of interaction in specific online communities, and showing how user relationships in specific online communities influenced how politeness and impoliteness norms emerged. Angouri and Tseliga's work in particular illustrates well how, within different online communities sharing the same generic features (i.e. written texts in online fora), social norms also differ depending on the group of users being investigated.

In comparison to online environments like those investigated by Angouri and Tseliga, YouTube offers several additional challenges for describing impoliteness. First, different kinds of interaction are present on video pages,

and second, YouTube is an open online environment where no gate-keeping mechanism is present to control who may or may not watch a video and comment on it. YouTube provides an open environment, and there can be wide differences in the 'norms' of interaction. To research the role of impoliteness in the 'antagonistic debate' of YouTube drama, work must be done to situate the interactional context. Additionally, analytic methods must also take account of the diversity of text types and groups of users because interaction on video pages occurs both in written text and spoken language with users adding content over time.

YouTube has been of particular interest for research into 'flaming' given its reputation for negative interaction (Burgess & Green, 2008; Lange, 2007a). Recent studies, including analyses of user experience (Lange, 2007b), user perceptions of 'flaming' in comments (Moor, Heuvelman, & Verleur, 2010), responses to the anti-Islam film 'Fitna' (van Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2011; Vis, van Zoonen, & Mihelj, 2011), and impoliteness strategies in responses to the 'Obama Reggaeton' video (Lorenzo-Dus, Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, & Bou-Franch, 2011), have investigated 'antagonism' in user responses to particular videos and topics. A brief review of the methods and data in this research is now presented:

- Anthropologist Lange's (2007a) ethnographic work on YouTube interaction and user experience employed a 9-month observation and interviews with 41 users in the US and Europe to investigate user experience of the 'YouTube community', particularly what it meant to 'hate' and be a 'hater' online. Lange found that users did not always experience antagonism online in a negative way nor have the same perceptions of negative interactions. Although the article does include analysis of one video in which a popular YouTube user is commenting on 'hate' on the site, the analysis focuses primarily on user interviews.
- Moor, Heuvelman, and Verleur (2010) identified 'flaming' in YouTube videos and sent questionnaire requests to both 'senders' and 'receivers' of flames. With 95 senders responding and 41 receivers responding, the research showed that flaming was common on YouTube, that views on flaming varied, but that most users accepted it as a negative component

of freedom of speech and that most flaming was done to express disagreement or an opinion rather than simply to disrupt the video. This research did not, however, specifically analyse video comments or video talk.

- The work of Van Zoonen and colleagues (van Zoonen, Vis, & Mihelj, 2010; 2011; Vis et al., 2011) has focused particularly on responses to anti-Islam film 'Fitna' which was released in February 2010. The researchers used network analysis to show connections among 776 videos posted around the time of the controversy and investigated the content of responses to the video, the numbers and types of interactions among users about the topic, and categorise responses as either 'agonism' or 'antagonism'. Findings showed that users did not, in general, interact with one another and although responses could be either agonistic or antagonistic, they did not usually result in dialogue. Although this study did not include analysis of the videos, another article (Vis et al., 2011) from the same project, looking at the gender portrayals in response videos did include thematic analysis of video images, particularly if and/or how women were portrayed in the videos, but systematic discourse analysis of video talk and commenters was not undertaken.
- Lorenzo-Dus and colleagues (2011) investigated impoliteness in YouTube comments in 61 polylogal sequences from a corpus of 13,000 comments made in response to a video titled 'Obama Reggaeton'. 54 participant questionnaires were used to judge their response to the comments and to measure how impoliteness was interpreted by observers. The study found a user preference for 'on-record' impoliteness (Section 2.3.1) and attacking the 'positive face' needs of others in comments. This research also only investigated user comments and perception of impoliteness by observers, not discourse analysis of video pages.
- My own MRes research (Pihlaja, 2010, 2011) began with observation of a group of YouTube users and investigated interactions between an atheist and Christian in a single video thread (9 videos). I investigated

how these users employed metaphor to describe and validate their activity on YouTube, and found that although metaphor use did not differ by ideological position, different interpretations of metaphor were observed among users. This research included systematic analysis (particularly of use of metaphor) of video talk and comments on a limited dataset.

From these studies of YouTube 'antagonism' and 'flaming', several important gaps remain in descriptions of antagonism on YouTube and of YouTube drama in particular. First, although Burgess and Green's (2009) description of 'drama' provides a basic outline for the phenomenon, no research has been done looking at a particular occurrence of YouTube drama and no empirical description of YouTube drama based on systematic analysis of YouTube video pages has yet been produced. Second, research into YouTube 'flaming' and 'antagonism' has focused on text comments and user reports, but analysis of the interaction between discourse in the video and text comments in a particular YouTube community context has not been done. Video pages, particularly those made by vloggers, are situated in a particular social context, and understanding the history of interaction between users is important for a full analysis. Third, close discourse analysis of video talk remains rare. Historically, analysis of YouTube interaction has focused on comments given the ease of collecting the data, but inasmuch as video talk represents the main content of the video page, analysis of video talk is essential for describing and analysing responses in comments and subsequent videos.

The studies of YouTube interaction I have so far mentioned reflect the trends of prior CMC research, employing interviews, questionnaires, discourse analysis, and ethnography to answer research questions. Attempts to adapt research methods for YouTube have been incomplete in taking into account all elements of the video page as well as the dynamic nature of interactions on the site. With very little discourse analysis of full video pages, research into YouTube discourse activity has continued to rely on analysis of comments and user reports of experience. This study, therefore, addresses a gap that remains in close discourse analysis of talk from YouTube video pages in the interaction of specific users over time.

To overcome some of these inadequacies, in the next section, I offer discourse-centred online ethnography as a potential tool for investigation of both the social context of YouTube and the interaction between users on the video page.

### **2.2.3 Discourse-centred Online Ethnography**

Given the rich set of opportunities for discourse activity and social interaction available on the YouTube page, adapting a set of analytic tools to account for all video page elements is a necessity for analysing interaction on the site. Rather than being a static, textual artefact that can be extracted and analysed, YouTube video pages change over time. Users can post and take down videos whenever they choose, often resulting in different videos being available for analysis at different times. Analysis of YouTube drama must then take into account not only the videos that are available for analysis, but other videos that may have appeared and been subsequently removed.

In an attempt to provide a framework for doing discourse analysis in dynamic online environments, Androutsopoulos (2008) has developed 'discourse-centred online ethnography' (DCOE) to describe and analyse online texts, treating online discourse as an emergent phenomenon, rather than an artefact to be extracted and analysed. DCOE is influenced heavily by linguistic ethnography, which seeks to contextualise language by integrating an applied linguistic approach with ethnographic theories and methods. Rampton describes linguistic ethnography as '...generally hold[ing] that language and social life are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity' (2004, p. 2). This includes '...attempts to combine close detail of local action and interaction as embedded in a wider social world' (Creese, 2008, p. 233). Linguistic ethnography then investigates connections between individual communication instances and context, drawing in all relevant contextual elements to bear on analysis. Inherently interdisciplinary, linguistic ethnography draws on linguistics, social theory, and ethnographic methodologies (Tusting & Maybin, 2007). From an ethnographic perspective, all tools available to situate the text should be employed in analysis of discourse (Wetherell, 2007) as language data is only

one component embedded in a complex system with other components influencing any given talk or text (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

Ethnographic approaches always carry with them complex issues of reflexivity for the analyst, as observation produces more subjective data than, for example, logs of chats from Internet message boards. Moreover, particularly with observation, the analyst must first choose a site for analysis, which is problematic in its own right (Schofield, 2002), and in doing so focus exclusively on a very narrow group of participants, potentially limiting the generalisability of any findings. Although the setting of specific research is important, given the reflexive nature of observation, research processes cannot follow clear linear paths or positivist, quantitative paradigms which place value on formulating and testing hypotheses. Rather, settings for research evolve with research questions, methods, and participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), and the researcher must be willing to adapt to dynamism in the research setting.

In proposing DCOE, Androutsopoulos argues that the researcher must also engage online texts and environments as dynamic flows, suggesting systematic observation and direct contact with participants coupled with analysis of user discourse to provide a comprehensive description of online data. With these tools, discourse activity can be compared and contrasted over time, and analysis can move between local and global phenomena (Androutsopoulos, 2010). Taking into account the history of CMC research and research methods presented above, DCOE therefore offers several potential benefits for describing and analysing YouTube drama. First, it provides the researcher, through observation, with the ability to situate analysed videos in a local-historical (or history of interaction within a community) context. The researcher is then aware of the history of interaction between users, giving a perspective on why certain issues may arise within a community. Second, it foregrounds the importance of situated discourse analysis which treats discourse activity as embedded in a particular interactional context that is also changing over time.

Having established a broad framework for doing discourse analysis of YouTube videos based on filling a gap in previous research, I now focus on the particular context of YouTube and present key theoretical and analytic frameworks

needed to investigate the discourse activity comprising YouTube drama among a particular group of users on the site.

#### **2.2.4 YouTube as a Community of Practice**

Along with investigations of discourse online, CMC researchers and Internet users have understood and described social interaction online by comparison and contrast to offline social spaces, particularly through descriptions of what have been called online 'communities' (cf., Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, 2005). In her seminal work on the subject of 'online community', Herring (2004a) operationalises 'community' for computer mediated discourse analysis. First identifying the origin of the 'virtual community' concept (Rheingold, 1993; 2000) and acknowledging early concerns that the term 'community' may have grown too broad to be useful (Fernback & Thompson, 1995; S. Jones, 1995), Herring analyses discussion forums from two professional development websites to investigate what constitutes an 'online community'. Based on her analysis, Herring (2004a) suggests that online community can be identified through similarities in structure (such as jargon, in-group/out-group language), meaning (exchange of knowledge, negotiation of meaning), interaction (reciprocity, extended [in-depth] threads, core participants), social behaviour (solidarity, conflict management, norms of appropriateness), and participation (frequent, regular, self-sustaining activity over time). Although online communities may differ in the configuration of these features, they are all necessary for the development of an online community.

This notion and treatment of community is, however, partially problematic in describing the interaction of YouTube users. Although participation and interaction can be observed as well as some elements of shared structure in language use (in terms of the generic norms of vlogging in particular), users do not necessarily share social behaviours or in-group/out-group language (to use Herring's terms). In the YouTube community, users from diverse backgrounds interact with one another, and there are no functions that allow for users to create formal 'groups' which are moderated. Moreover, because users have different socio-political perspectives and socio-cultural backgrounds without a mutually agreed upon goal for interaction, they do not necessarily have the same expectations.

Recent studies of discourse in online interaction have continued to employ the term 'community' in describing the interaction between users in different online contexts, but have also developed the notion of 'community' to better describe the observed interaction (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Graham, 2007; Luchjenbroers & Aldridge-Waddon, 2011; Stommel, 2008). For example, Stommel (2008) used conversation analysis to investigate a German forum on eating disorders and analysed the interaction on the forum in terms of Herring's description of community to show how solidarity, a shared purpose, norms and values, conflict, roles, and hierarchies are attended to in the interaction. Stommel also employed the concept of 'community of practice' (see below) to further describe user 'participation'. Focusing on how politeness norms are developed in online fora, Angouri and Tseliga (2010) also made use of a community of practice framework to describe the social context of user interaction in their research. In both studies, the community of practice framework offered a useful description of what users did in their interactions rather than providing a description of the features of the communities.

Community of practice (CofP) theory developed out of Lave and Wenger's theorisation of social learning (1991). Looking historically at the apprenticeship process, Lave and Wenger identified how specific shared knowledge emerged in interaction between community members around a shared practice. Although further work by Wenger and colleagues (2002) described the development of CofP in clear, definable stages, CofP theory treats community formation as social organisation which is explicitly emergent (Wenger, 1998). Cox warns that '[although] a surface reading would see a community of practice as a unified, neatly bounded group...what is intended is a far more subtle concept' (2005), one in which communities are primarily bound by mutual engagement, a joint negotiated enterprise, and a shared repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated over time (Wenger, 1998). Holmes and Meyerhoff (1995) describe these three features in the following way:

- *Mutual engagement*: Regular interaction between community members.
- *Joint negotiated enterprise*: Not simply a shared goal, but an enterprise which includes a constant negotiation and building of individual contributions.



- *A shared repertoire of negotiable resources*: The resources that users employ to make meaning in the community including:
  - Sustained mutual relationships - harmonious or conflictual.
  - Shared ways of engaging in doing things together,
  - Mutually defining identities,
  - Specific tools, representations, and other artefacts, and
  - Local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter (among others) (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999, p. 176)

Given the general nature of these parameters (particularly the 'joint enterprise' as Holmes and Meyerhoff [1999] point out), the CofP framework has been applied in studies of diverse communities from teachers (Vaughan, 2007) to business units (Wenger & Snyder, 2000) to reading groups (Peplow, 2011). In CofP theory, a community is defined not by static membership categories, but through

'[w]ays of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations-in short, practices-[that] emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. As a social construct, a CofP is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages' (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 464).

Membership in a CofP, therefore, is defined by what members practice, not whether or not they explicitly identify as community members.

To contrast to other conceptions of 'community' with CofP theory, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) provide the following useful table (Table 2-1) to show how CofP theory differs from speech community and social identity theories.

**Table 2-1. Different Conceptions of Community (from Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999, p. 179)**

Speech Community	Social Identity	Community of Practice
Shared norms and evaluations of norms are required.	Shared identifications are required.	Shared social or instrumental goal
Shared membership may be defined externally	Membership is constructed internally and externally	Membership is internally constructed
Nothing to say about relationship between an individual's group and personal identities	Relation between group and personal identities is unclear: continuum? orthogonal?	Actively constructed dependence of personal and group identities
Non-teleological	Non-teleological: any outcomes are incidental	Shared social or instrumental goal
Nothing to say about maintenance or (de)construction of boundaries between categories	Group identity is defined through comparison and competition with outgroups	Boundaries are maintained but not necessarily defined in contrasts with outgroups
Acquisition of norms	Learning incidental	Social process of learning

Speech community theory (Labov, 1972a, 1989) focuses primarily on individuals as speakers who, as a group, share a set of norms in evaluative behaviour and 'uniformity of abstract patterns of variation' (Labov, 1972b, p. 121). Holmes and Meyerhoff point out that speech community membership is based on social or behavioural properties that one possesses rather than one's practices. In contrast to CofP membership, membership in a speech community is defined by member identity rather than what a member practices. Holmes & Meyerhoff also describe *social network theory*, which has also been used to describe virtual communities (Daugherty, Lee, Gangadharbatla, Kim, & Outhavong, 2005). In social network theory, networks are described in terms of the quantity of interactions among users, forming weak or strong bounds depending on how much they interact.

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981, 1983; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) offers a cognitive conceptualisation of group as a product of people's self-perception (Hogg, 2004) rather than practice. Hogg describes social identity theory as 'intended to be a social psychological theory of intergroup relations, group processes, and the social self' (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, p. 259). The notions of ingroups and outgroups describe how group membership is negotiated not primarily as a product of discourse activity, but as an abstract

cognitive representation that is constructed through practice (Abrams, 1996; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999). Notions of grouping that developed in tandem with the theory were also cognitive (Brewer, 1979) and supported by empirical evidence that introducing notions of 'groups' in experimental settings affected the behaviour of research participants (Billig & Tajfel, 1973) particularly as they related to intergroup preference (Sherif, 1988). In social identity theory, how people perceive themselves is central to how they talk and think about group membership.

Given the diversity of users on YouTube, the lack of shared identification, and the lack of a gatekeeping mechanism by which members can enter and leave the community, CofP theory offers a useful, dynamic perspective of how community membership on YouTube might best be understood as activity rather than identity. In this thesis, I will, therefore, describe YouTube as a site where users form different communities of practice. Each CofP features:

- shared mutual engagement: communication in videos, comments, private messages, and potentially outside of the site.
- a joint negotiated enterprise: making videos.
- shared repertoire of negotiable resources including:
  - technological materials needed to make the videos, such as a web-camera, Internet connection, and computer
  - sustained mutual relationships
  - shared ways of making videos
  - mutually defining identities
  - shared stories and inside jokes
  - knowledge of past interaction in the CofP
  - knowledge or expertise in topics most often addressed in the CofP

On YouTube, the shared repertoire of negotiable resources could differ among CofP depending on who engages whom and what topics the CofP tends to discuss. The shared repertoire of negotiable resources is also dependent on the relationships within an individual CofP, the history of interaction, and the

influence of different members at different times. For example, in the CofP analysed in this study, the Bible is an important shared resource for some participants. Since CofP membership depends on engagement, users can enter and leave the CofP at different times, users can have stronger or weaker attachments to the CofP based on the level of their engagement, and some users can be more prominent in the CofP at different times depending on their own engagement with others and the strength of the shared resources with other users. The boundaries of the CofP are, thus, fluid and changing as the members, the mutual engagement and resources change.

Although CofP theory serves as a useful starting point for delineating which 'community' this research is investigating, an additional framework is still needed to describe the dynamics of the social interaction on the site. To accomplish this, I now discuss positioning theory.

### **2.2.5 Positioning within a Community of Practice**

Proposed by social psychologists Harré, Davies, and van Langenhove, positioning theory describes 'the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts...' (Harré & van Langenhove, 1998, p. 16). The concept of a 'position' offers an 'immanentist replacement for a clutch of transcendentalist concepts like 'role', highlighting the 'temporal, transient identities' speakers take in conversation (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 45). Rather than viewing social behaviour as a response to social 'stimulus', positioning is 'concerned with revealing the explicit and implicit patterns of reasoning that are realized in the ways that people act towards others' (Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009, pp. 5–6). Positions are emergent, dynamic, and subject to the context of interaction.

Harré and van Langenhove (1998) describe the structure of interaction as 'tri-polar' with mutually determinate positions, social speech acts, and storylines. How a speaker positions themselves or others in a storyline can either arise naturally in conversation, or from one speaker taking a dominant position in the conversation and forcing others into positions they would not have taken for themselves. Placing oneself and others in a moral space using storylines is 'first-order' positioning and can either be explicit, as in the use of categories, or tacit, in which the storyline implies a position that is not explicitly stated (Sabat,

2003). Harré and van Langenhove (1998, p. 20) offer the example of a person, Jones, telling another person, Smith, 'Please, iron my shirts.' In the utterance, Jones is positioned as someone with the authority to ask Smith to iron the shirts, and Smith is positioned as one who serves Jones. 'Second order' positioning occurs when a position is contested within a conversation and negotiation of positions results. What storyline emerges will depend on how Jones responds to Smith. When the negotiation of a position occurs outside of the conversation where the initial position was established, 'third order' positioning is said to occur.

Positioning is said to be malignant when it has a negative effect not only on the person positioned, but on the ways in which a person is subsequently treated by others (Sabat, 2003). Key to malignant positioning is the deletion of certain rights of the positioned individual (Harré & Van Langenhove, 2008). In Sabat's work investigating talk about patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease, for example, malignant positioning resulted in patients' rights, such as the right to be heard, being deleted as doctors and caretakers spoke about them (Sabat, 2001). In Sabat's analysis, examples of malignant positioning were both explicit and implicit. Explicit malignant positioning occurred when a clear statement about the patient was made, as in, 'They don't know anything anymore' (Sabat, 2003, p. 87). Implicit positioning occurred when caretakers and doctors spoke about being 'amazed' at the way patients spoke about their own forgetfulness. As the action was presented as not meeting the expectations of doctors, an implied positioning of patients as being unwilling or unable to speak about their own illness was accomplished.

Identification of implicit positioning as well as whether positioning is 'intentional' or 'tacit' (a distinction made by Harré and van Langenhove) can be difficult to deduce (see discussions of intent in Sections 2.2.2 & 2.3.1). Although 'intent' may be ultimately impossible to recover, evidence of perception of intent is potentially observable in the discourse activity. As Sabat's analysis shows, identifying the positioning of others can involve recognising potential expectations of speakers, revealed not only in what people say, but in what they don't say, as well as in the discourse activity that immediately precedes and follows a potential positioning. Moreover, storylines can reveal implicit malignant

positioning. Again, in Sabat's (2003) data, patients' repetitive actions were described as 'non-physically aggressive' after a series of treatments. The evaluation of actions within a storyline of treatment, therefore, revealed a malignant positioning of patients as generally acting in an aggressive manner.

Analysis of 'positioning' shares similarities with other notions of 'positions' in analysis of social interaction. 'Stancetaking' has, for example, been used to describe the temporal positions speakers take with respect to the form of content of their words (Jaffe, 2009). Although a diversity of definitions and uses of 'stance' occur in the literature—Jaffe (2009) notes 26 different stance terms over nearly 40 years—Du Bois' 'stance act' provides a useful contemporary attempt at a unified theory of stance. Du Bois' 'stance act' involves speakers evaluating objects, positioning subjects (themselves and others), and aligning with other subjects (Du Bois, 2007). This representation of 'alignment' or 'social position' focuses on 'social actors' aligning themselves with respect to social objects and other social actors. From this perspective, analysis focuses on how an individual takes a particular stance at a moment in conversation in the form of an *act*. These acts can be isolated in conversation and analysed for their linguistic features, including 'positioning markers' like 'I think' or 'I feel'.

Goffman's early notion of 'footing' has also been used to describe how speaker's perform 'roles' in social interaction and describes the 'alignment we take up to ourselves and others present as expressed in the way we manage the production and reception of an utterance' (Goffman, 1981, p. 128). Similarly to stance, 'footing' focuses on individual interaction between speakers and how shifts in orientation can be identified. 'Footing' is not, however, exclusively concerned with individual psychological states nor linguistic markers in conversation, but with how the mode and frame of a conversation shifts and how users align themselves within conversation. Analysis of footing, like analysis of stance, takes place at conversation-level, with shifts in footing observable in linguistic cues and markers, allowing the analyst to describe how roles and orientations shift within interaction.

Footing, Harré and colleagues remark, 'sits well with positioning' (Harré et al., 2009, p. 12) as both orient towards the dynamic alignments speakers make in conversation. Positioning, however, in contrast to analysis of 'stance' and

'footing', provides for a 'natural expansion of scale', as the analytic focus is on discursive interaction rather than linguistic features. While 'stance' and 'footing' provide the tools for investigating orientation in conversation, positioning places this orientation in a broader social context. As social interaction can occur from micro-scale to the macro-scale (Harré et al., 2009), the analyst identifies not only how meaning (or meanings) of social acts are mutually determined in interaction, but how these social acts are component parts of emerging storylines that exists above the level of a single 'speech act'. The ability to move between scales, isolating individual social acts while attending to the storylines, allows the researcher to trace how the trajectories of individual interaction are constituent parts of talk about an emerging social world. Description of positioning, therefore, potentially provides a useful analytic apparatus for investigating how speakers position themselves and are positioned by others within a CofP. From this analysis, storylines can be analysed, and used to identify where disparate social meaning and value may contribute to the development of drama.

This chapter has so far identified a gap in CMC research about YouTube and presented theoretical definitions and tools for describing and analysing the YouTube community. I now turn to developing tools to linguistically describe and analyse the conflict or 'antagonistic debate' in drama in terms of the empirical research on impoliteness.

## **2.3 *Impoliteness***

### **2.3.1 Theories of Im/politeness**

The study of impoliteness has developed in the last twenty years in tandem with the development of theories of politeness in language (Bousfield & Locher, 2008). In laying the groundwork for descriptions of impoliteness, Locher (2004) provides a helpful introduction to four dominant theories of politeness: Leech's 'politeness principle', (1983), politeness as an 'unmarked norm' (Fraser, 1990), Kasper's theory of politeness as a 'marked surplus' (1990), and Brown and Levinson's 'face-saving' politeness theory, built on the notion that speakers attempt to save their own and one another's 'face' (1987). Since research into

impoliteness has grown out of work on politeness, an overview of these four views follows.

Leech's politeness principle is, similarly to Grice's cooperative principle (1975), built on the concept of maxims of interaction (1983): tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Politeness in this model is described as maximising the positive maxims for interaction while minimising the negative. The politeness principle focuses on the 'pragmatic force' of an utterance, conflict avoidance and establishing comity (Eelen, 2001).

Alternatively, Fraser's theory of politeness as an unmarked norm (1990) sees politeness as the normal state of interaction. In Fraser's description of politeness it is not a 'sometime thing' (1990, p. 233) but what individuals expect in normal conversation. Because of this, Locher notes, any breach of the norm is negative (i.e. impolite), but positive breaches of the norm are not possible (i.e. acting especially polite) and cannot be taken into account in this framework.

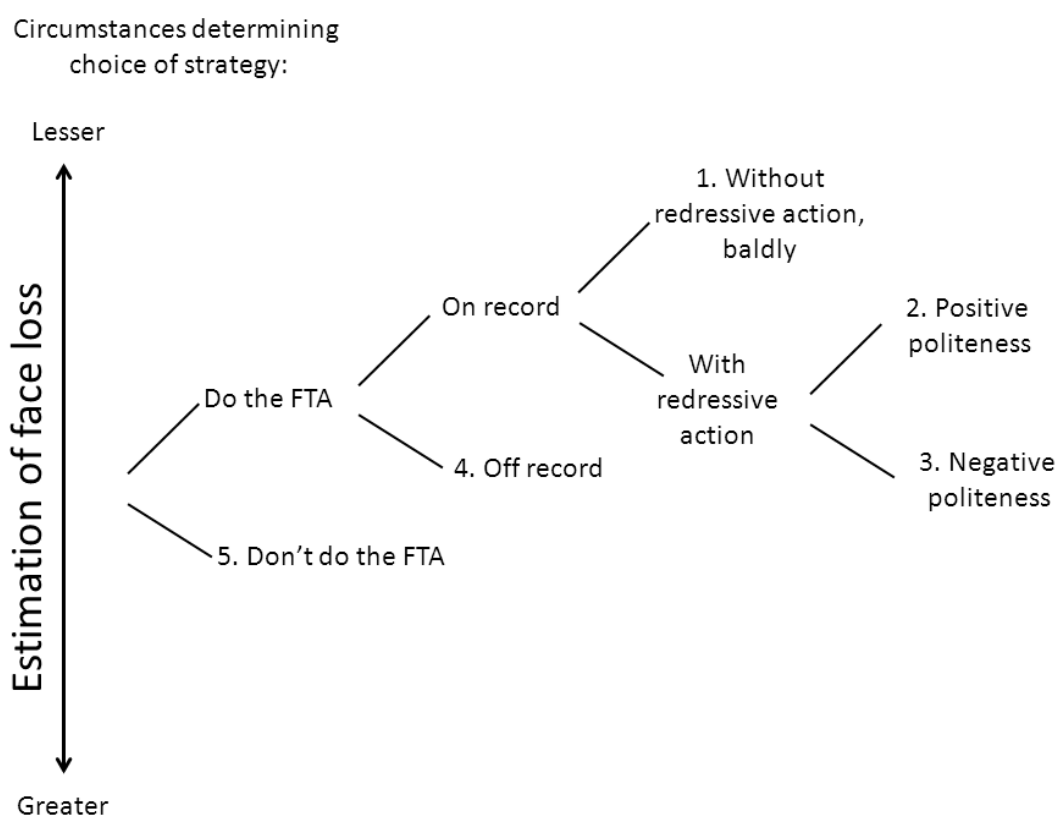
Kasper (1990) as well as Watts (1992b) see politeness as a 'marked surplus', referring to the normal state of interaction not as politeness, but *politic behaviour* or behaviour maintaining the state of 'social equilibrium' (Watts et al., 1992b, p. 50). This view sees an appropriate level of relational work as the norm and allows for both positive and negative breaches of the norm (Locher, 2004).

Perhaps most influentially, Brown and Levinson's (1987) 'face-saving' politeness theory has had a substantial influence on how individual acts of impoliteness have been analysed, particularly in terms of the 'intentional' impoliteness of 'flaming' in online interaction. Brown and Levinson's theory is built on the notion that speakers attempt to save 'positive face', or the positive value they claim for themselves. 'Face' as an analytic principle was originally defined by the sociologist Goffman as 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact' (Goffman, 1967, p. 5), but Brown and Levinson further distinguished between *negative face*, or 'the want of every "competent adult member"' that his actions are unimpeded by others' and *positive face* or, 'the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others' (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62). Brown and Levinson also developed the concept of a 'face-threatening act'



(FTA), (i.e. an action that might undermine the face considerations of a hearer in an interaction) and propose a series of possible actions a person may take in relation to realising a FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 60). Brown and Levinson then rank the choices that a speaker might take in terms of politeness depending on the speaker's estimation of how an FTA might affect the hearer's face concerns, as show in Figure 2-1:

**Figure 2-1. Brown and Levinson's FTA Matrix (from Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 60)**



Although O'Driscoll (1996) notes that Brown and Levinson's 'face dualism' has been successfully employed in various cultural contexts including Singapore and Japan (Kuiper & Lin, 1989; Tokunaga, 1992), he also notes early criticism that 'face dualism' is not a universal concept (Gu, 1990; Matsumoto, 1988), that Brown and Levinson's exposition of 'face dualism' in politeness is inaccurate (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1989), and that inapplicable data can be found (Mao, 1994; Nwoye, 1992). Criticism in these instances largely centred on employing Brown and Levinson's understanding of 'face' in non-Western cultures,

particularly cultures in which priority is placed on the 'wants' of the group over the individual.

In response, O'Driscoll (1996) further elaborates on the notion of positive and negative face:

(a) culture-specific face – the foreground-conscious desire for a 'good' face, the constituents of 'good', because they are culturally determined, being variable;

(b) positive face – the background-conscious (preconscious) desire that the universal need for proximity and belonging be given symbolic recognition in interaction;

(c) negative face – the background-conscious (preconscious) desire that the universal need for distance and individuation be given symbolic recognition in interaction.

Thus positive and negative face are not primary concepts, but compounds derived from the combination of face and wants dualism.

(1996, p. 4)

O'Driscoll suggests drawing a distinction between 'face' and 'wants', or the basic desires that are shared by all humans as primates. Positive wants relate to the need for all humans 'to come together, make contact and identify with others; to have ties; to belong; to merge' while negative wants relates relate to the need for all humans 'to go off alone, avoid contact and be individuated; to be independent; to separate' (O'Driscoll, 1996, p. 4). 'Face', on the other hand, is culturally specific and relates to context, a need for symbolic recognition of self by others. Terkourafi (2008) suggests updating the notion of face and wants to draw differentiation between first-order face, or Face<sub>1</sub> and second-order face, or Face<sub>2</sub>. In this conception of face, Face<sub>1</sub> is the emic, 'cultural specific' notion of face, and Face<sub>2</sub> is the etic, academic notion of face. The distinction then allows the researcher to delineate how face operates in contextual interaction from an academic, operationalised use of the term.

The differentiation between Face<sub>1</sub> and Face<sub>2</sub> draws on Eelen's (2001) distinction between politeness<sub>1</sub> and politeness<sub>2</sub>. Extending the work of Watts and colleagues (1992a), Eelen (2001) has sought to draw a distinction between 'folk politeness', or common sense understandings of politeness, and technical metapragmatic discussions of politeness, both of which can also be applied to impoliteness (i.e. 'impoliteness<sub>1</sub>' and 'impoliteness<sub>2</sub>'). Likewise, Face<sub>2</sub> has two universal features: a biological grounding in the dimension of approach

(O'Driscoll's 'positive wants') versus withdrawal and intentionality (O'Driscoll's 'negative wants') (Terkourafi, 2008). Face<sub>1</sub>, consequently, is cultural or situation-specific, yielding, Terkourafi (2008) argues, distinct conceptualisations. Both O'Driscoll and Terkourafi, then, draw distinctions between biological needs of all humans which are innate and preconscious, and the cultural-specific outworking of these wants.

Given that tracing the discourse activity comprising YouTube drama requires understanding how users view themselves and their action within the community, the concept of 'face' does serve some purpose in describing how users want and don't want to be perceived. However, as O'Driscoll (1996) and Terkourafi (2008) suggest, the notion of 'face' is certainly not unproblematic, particularly when attempting to draw 'universals' (as Brown and Levinson sought) across cultures. Although a simple, universal notion of 'face' may not be applicable, as both O'Driscoll and Terkourafi also suggest, lack of a universal cultural 'face' does not negate the useful descriptive properties of the term. With care taken to understanding the cultural components of 'face', Brown and Levinson's definitions of 'positive' and 'negative face' serve initially as a useful description of how users desire to be perceived and treated in interaction.

Additionally, the Brown and Levinson model of face-threatening acts may not adequately take into account the dynamic nature of interaction because it focuses on speaker intent and cognition (problematic in their own right), but not on the hearer (Werkhofer, 1992). In Brown and Levinson's model, face-threatening acts may prove an insufficiently dynamic conception of interaction, one in which speakers act and respond in strategic ways with individual acts that can then be isolated and analysed. In addition to a need for a nuanced understanding of 'face' and FTAs in dynamic discourse activity, Locher (2004) points out that Brown and Levinson's definition of politeness essentially values indirectness as the 'ultimate realisation' of politeness, but that impoliteness can also be indirect. In describing the discourse dynamics of YouTube drama, rather than seeing impoliteness as a single purposeful act, it may be more useful to see how words and/or actions are evaluated as such and how different users respond to the words and/or actions of others that they view negatively.

### 2.3.2 Describing Impoliteness

The influence of Brown and Levinson's 'face-threatening acts' on the development of definitions of 'impoliteness' can be seen throughout the history of impoliteness research, starting with Culpeper's description of 'impoliteness' as 'the use of strategies designed to attack face, and thereby cause social conflict or disharmony' (Culpeper, Bousfield, & Wichmann, 2003, p. 1545). Culpeper subsequently refined the definition to take into account both speakers and hearers, stating that, 'Impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)' (Culpeper, 2005, p. 38). Bousfield (2008) further shifts Culpeper and colleagues' definition by suggesting that impoliteness can be viewed as intentional or unintentional, depending both on the speaker's reported intent and on the meaning that the hearer constructs from the speaker's words. As I discussed in relation to 'flaming' in Section 2.2.2, these definitions remain problematic because intentionality remains difficult to recover, especially as the analyst must rely on reports of intention in the data. Culpeper subsequently (2008, 2011) downplays the importance of identifying intent in impolite interaction, relying on Gibbs' description of intention as the 'dynamic, emergent properties of interactive social/cultural/historical moments within which people create and make sense of different human artefacts' (1999, p. 17). In this sense, 'intention' is not a static object for the analyst or the hearer to recover, but something dependent on and changing with speaker reports of their intention and perception of speaker intent. Culpeper's (2011) most recent description of impoliteness does not include intent, stating instead that:

Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organisation, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively—considered "impolite"—when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be.

(Culpeper, 2011, p. 23)

In this revised description, Culpeper focuses on perception of specific behaviours (i.e. words and actions) in specific social contexts rather than the

intent of the speaker. Employing this description then requires considering how the actions of an individual are perceived by others in the same social organisation or CofP, and to what extent they do or do not conform with expectations. Culpeper (2008) sees four different kinds of norms interacting in different contexts to influence a person's expectations about impoliteness:

- 'Personal norms' based on the totality of an individual's social experiences.
- 'Cultural norms' based on the totality of an individual's experiences of a particular culture.
- 'Situational norms' based on the totality of an individual's experiences of a particular situation in a particular culture.
- 'Co-textual' norms' based on the totality of an individual's experience of a particular interaction in a particular situation in a particular culture. (Culpeper, 2008, p. 30)

What is or is not considered impolite can therefore differ greatly depending on the norms an individual expects at any given time in any given situation. As expectations, desires and beliefs about social organisation differ among contexts, what is and is not perceived as impoliteness will differ depending on speakers, hearers, and observers. Particularly within YouTube CofP, for example, expectations about how others should behave, and what is and is not appropriate, are fluid depending on the particular users interacting on particular video pages and what each individual user expects of the others. The shared repertoire of negotiable resources of a particular CofP may also lead to changing 'situational' and 'cultural' norms.

Although Culpeper's description of 'impoliteness' provides a useful basis for understanding how users judge certain words and/or actions to be 'impolite', difficulties remain with the broad activities that the definition could potentially include (see Culpeper's [2012] subsequent differentiation between 'impolite' and 'inappropriate'). In an effort to provide a more nuanced description of Culpeper's description of 'impolite behaviour', it is useful to look at how different kinds of impoliteness have been described by scholars. In Hardaker's (2010) academic definition of the CMC term 'troll' (an emic term describing a particular form of

online antagonistic consisting of interrelated conditions of aggression, deception, disruption, and success), a list of different types of impoliteness is drawn from the literature. Taking into account the caveats from Culpeper and Gibbs regarding intention, Hardaker's list will be used as a foundation for describing impoliteness within the YouTube drama analysed in this thesis:

- *Ritual or mock impoliteness* which is 'an offensive way of being friendly' (Leech, 1983, p. 144) and includes highly ritualized insults, usually rhyming and meant to be clearly untrue.
- *Non-malicious impoliteness* which is an utterance performed without malice, but which the speaker anticipates may cause offence anyway (Culpeper, 2005; Culpeper et al., 2003; Goffman, 1967)
- *Rudeness, faux pas, failed politeness* which is the unintentional absence of appropriately polite behaviour (Culpeper, 2005)
- *Failed (malicious) impoliteness* in which speaker-intended impoliteness is not correctly interpreted as such by the hearer (Bousfield, 2008).
- *Thwarted/ frustrated impoliteness* in which, although the speaker's malicious intent is correctly reconstructed by the hearer, the impoliteness is frustrated, or thwarted, because the hearer is simply not offended and either takes no action (i.e. frustrates the attempt), or counters with, for instance, sarcasm, contempt, amusement, or suchlike (i.e. thwarts the attempt). (Bousfield, 2008)
- *(Malicious) impoliteness; genuine, malicious, or strategic impoliteness, or instrumental rudeness* in which the kind of act that speaker carries out the impolite act not only with the intention of causing offence, but also of conveying that intent to hearer. Culpeper et al. (2003), Goffman (1967), Lakoff (1989), Bandura (1973), and Beebe (1995).

(pp. 217-219)

This list provides a useful starting point for different types of impoliteness in YouTube drama, particularly impoliteness that is viewed as 'malicious' because investigating YouTube drama requires describing how impoliteness is realised in different ways within discourse activity. Throughout these descriptions of

different realisations of impoliteness, an awareness of how a speaker's 'intent' is heard and understood in the context plays an important role in how the interaction is categorised. To overcome the difficulty in identifying 'intent' I will attend to 'reports of intent' by speakers and 'perceptions of intent' by hearers. I will return to my adaptation and operationalisation of these terms for analysis in Section 4.5.3.

In this subsection I presented an overview of the theoretical understandings of impoliteness and a working definition of impoliteness for use in my analysis. I shall now discuss empirical research into the effect of impoliteness in social interaction, particularly focusing on the relationship between impoliteness and taking positions of dominance over others.

### **2.3.3 Dominance and Impoliteness**

In analysis of impoliteness, Locher (2004) suggests that struggles for power need always to be a fundamental analytic consideration, and the link between impoliteness and power has also been of continuous interest to researchers. Building on Kasper's (1990) notion of 'motivated' rudeness (see 'malicious impoliteness' above), Beebe (1995) identifies three purposes that 'instrumental rudeness' serves: to appear superior, to get power over actions, and to get power in conversation. In all these instances, the speaker moves to impose him- or herself as the dominant actor in a social situation and take up a position of power. What constitutes a position of power, however, might be unclear particularly considering different conceptions of power that other users might hold.

To elucidate the functions of power, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) describe two levels on which power can operate:

First, [power] is situated in and fed by individual agency; situated power resides primarily in face-to-face interactions but also in other concrete activities like reading or going to the movies. Second, it is historically constituted and responsive to the community's coordinated endeavours; social historical power resides in the relation of situated interaction to other situations, social activities, and institutionalized social and linguistic practices. This duality of power in language derives directly from the duality of social practice: Individual agents plan and interpret situated actions and activities, but their planning and interpretation rely on a social history of

negotiating coordinated interpretations and normative expectations  
(and in turn feed into that history)

(Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 474)

In this description of power, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet make a distinction between power in individual interaction and the socio-historical power structures which these single interactions serve and are instantiations of. The two are inseparable as each display of power in single face-to-face interactions is situated in a social setting in which institutional and societal norms are present. In an effort to capture both senses of power in a single definition, Locher (2004) presents Wartenberg's definition: 'A social agent *A* has *power over* another social agent *B* if and only if *A* strategically constrains *B*'s action-environment.' (Wartenberg, p. 90). Under this definition, power then can operate in both face-to-face interactions of individuals (in which *A* is an individual and *B* is also an individual) and in institutional exercises of power (in which *A* is an institutional power holder and *B* is an individual).

Power is an important consideration in community of practice (CofP) theory because although CofP might be conceived as democratic structures given their emergent properties, Roberts (2006) argues that a CofP member has the ability to dominate others in a CofP if he or she limits the 'fullness' of another member's participation. Who has and controls knowledge can also lead to unequal relationships. Because CofPs are built on the creation, transfer, and holding of knowledge, organisational and institutional structures can also exert control over knowledge (Coopey & Burgoyne, 2000) and expert knowledge created outside of the community can be valued over local knowledge (Yanow, 2004). De Latt (2002) found in analysing messages between police officers in an online forum that the content of participation (particularly what sort of information members provide and how it compares to other member contributions) must be considered in addition to the quantity of participation.

Analysis of power in discourse has also focused on the role of institutions in the exercise of power, most notably in Fairclough's work (1995, 2001). Fairclough develops a Foucauldian notion of the individual in a complex system of power relations (including social, political, and religious forces) (Foucault, 1993), and focuses his analysis on how existing conventions (i.e. common sense and



ideology) are the outcome of power relations. This study of power struggle in language has developed into the field of critical discourse analysis (e.g., Fairclough, 1995, 2001), and has been used to investigate how institutional power is instantiated in interactions between individuals (e.g., police officers and criminal suspects; priests and parishioners). The goal of critical discourse analysis is isolating how institutional power is at work in these one-to-one or small-scale interactions and how interaction perpetuates institutional power.

An orientation towards impoliteness as emerging from situated interaction neither ignores nor foregrounds 'common sense' or ideology, but rather views the situated interaction between two social agents as subject to many different components, specific to the context of the interaction. Ideology can be one component of an interactional context, but it is not necessarily determinate and other factors can influence how and why dominance occurs in interaction. To differentiate between Fairclough's orientation towards analysis of power as the outcome of existing conventions (seeing macro-scale institutional power instantiated in micro-scale social interactions) and analysis of power in individual social agent-social agent interactions (seeing micro-scale social interactions as contributing to macro-scale power structures), I will employ the term 'dominance', rather than 'power', to refer to a social agent exerting 'power over' another in situated interaction. In the same ways as analysts who describe and analyse dominance in conversation, in turn-taking asymmetry (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), interruptions (e.g., West & Zimmerman, 1977), and indirectness (e.g., Tannen, 2003) among other linguistic indicators (Wodak, 1997), I shall use analysis of language to show how dominance is accomplished in individual interaction and how it relates to impoliteness.

Within YouTube CofPs, the role of impoliteness in dominance is of particular importance because, although Burgess and Green (2009) describe 'drama' in terms of 'antagonistic debate', YouTube users often also describe interaction on the site in terms of 'p'wning' or 'p'wnage' (i.e. dominating another user completely, as in an online game) (Pfannenstiel, 2010). In instances of p'wnage, dominance of another user is an explicit goal of the interaction, with users trying to display their ability to argue their position so convincingly that the other cannot respond, similar to Billig's (1996) notion of the 'last word' in which

opponents continue to answer the claims of the other in an attempt to leave the other speechless. How impoliteness operates in dominance over other users, however, remains an open and important question for understanding how drama develops. As this subsection has shown, it also requires an awareness of the institutional factors present in interaction within a YouTube CofP (discussed further in Section 2.6) since the interaction among users is always situated in a larger socio-historical context.

In the preceding sections, I have endeavoured to offer theoretical frameworks for describing and analysing the social context of YouTube as well as adapt empirical research on impoliteness to describe and analyse YouTube drama. Now, I present two tools for describing and analysing discourse activity in YouTube drama: categorisation analysis and a discourse dynamics approach to metaphor analysis.

#### **2.4 Membership Categorisation Analysis**

In Section 2.2.4, I offered positioning theory as a theoretical tool to describe 'the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relativity determinate as social acts' (Harré & van Langenhove, 1998, p. 16). In talk about the social world, categorisation plays an important role in the explicit positioning of self and others, providing labels of positions. To investigate how drama develops in YouTube contexts, categorisation of other users offers the opportunity to empirically observe in discourse activity how users talk about themselves and others on YouTube. In this section, I present an overview of different notions of categorisation before offering a reconsidered model of Sack's (1972) membership categorisation analysis (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002) to describe and analyse the processes of categorisation in the YouTube CofP.

Prior to the interest in social categorisation in the twentieth century and analysis of categorisation in conversation, understanding of categories was dominated by the classical view, developed by Plato and Aristotle, which held that categories had clear boundaries defined by common properties and were uniform in respect to centrality (i.e. no members of the category were more representative of the category than others) (G. Lakoff, 1987). In this view of

categorisation, no member of the category has any special status as all category members are united only by shared attributes. Although this view of categorisation was not, as Lakoff (1987) points out, built on empirical research into categorisation in thought or interaction, pragmatically it is largely sufficient for speakers in day-to-day interaction. Instances when categories are challenged and the process of categorisation is explicitly at issue, however, require a more nuanced description of categorisation phenomena, particularly as they relate to social organisation and interaction.

In the twentieth century, the classical view of categorisation was challenged, beginning with the work of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein (1953) suggested that categorisation may not be based on common attributes, but rather on family resemblance between members of a category, that is, member traits that were similar. Wittgenstein used the example of the category 'games', showing that though there is no common attribute between all games, they are, like family members, similar to one another in a wide variety of ways. Wittgenstein also suggested that categories can have central and non-central members, and that there are good and bad examples of a category, members which are more typical of a category than others. Wittgenstein's work, however, did not focus exclusively on social categorisation and was not based on empirical evidence of categorisation in talk or cognition.

Key research in the field of cognitive science challenged common sense understandings of categorisation with empirical data. Rosch's (1973, 1978) prototype theory of categorisation takes the notion of central and non-central category members further, suggesting that within categories, prototypical members can be found. Drawing on the notion of 'cognitive economy' in which humans attempt to get the most amount of information from a category with the least amount of cognitive effort, Rosch describes a 'prototype' as the clearest case of 'category membership defined operationally by people's judgements of goodness of membership in the category' (1973, p. 36), and this notion of prototypically has been observed in studies of colour prototypes (Rosch, 1974, 1975). Importantly, in line with later work by Gibson (1979), Rosch suggested that, for some categories, rather than arbitrary combinations of features that

comprise a category, cultures and individuals discover correlations and build categories based on the correlations (Markman, 1991).

Following from this research, interest in categorisation emerged in sociology, particularly in social identity theory (Section 2.2.4) which is closely tied to the theory of self-categorisation (Hornsey, 2008; Turner, 1985; Turner & Hogg, 1987). In the social identity theory framework, Tajfel viewed categories as closely related to group membership and self-identity (Tajfel, 1977) and argued that, 'the content of the categories to which people are assigned by virtue of their social identity is generated over a long period of time within a culture' (Tajfel, 1981, p. 134). The basis of categorisation then is the individual's flexible view of themselves as 'I', those they are related to a group as 'we', and those outside of their in-group as 'them' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) with different social categories being emphasised at different times, given situational pressures (Ray, Mackie, Rydell, & Smith, 2008).

Although ostensibly a new theory attempting to refine and elaborate on the cognitive elements of social identity theory, social categorisation theory shares much of the same assumptions about intergroup relations and identity with social identity theory (Hornsey, 2008). Self-categorisation theory (Turner & Hogg, 1987) '[specifies]' the operation of the social categorization process as the cognitive basis of group behaviour. Social categorization of self and others into ingroup and outgroup accentuates the perceived similarity of the target to the relevant ingroup or outgroup prototype (cognitive representation of features that describe and prescribe attributes of the group)' (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 123). Like Rosch's approach, self-categorisation theory treats prototypes not as 'checklists of attributes but, rather, fuzzy sets that capture the context-dependent features of group membership' (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 123; Zadeh, 1965). Like Rosch's notion of categories as culturally and individually dependent, context plays an important role in self-categorisation theory in how an individual categorises him or herself and others at any given time, but the categories map onto social groups deriving from a speaker's own understanding of her or his identity in relation to others.

Group and self-identity remains central in social theory about social categorisation. Banton (2011), developing sixteen propositions synthesising the

work done in categorisation in the past fifteen years, describes categorisation in terms of ethnic categories, stating, 'Recognition that certain others are different is expressed in the use of a proper name' (2011, p. 189). The category, then, is a name for a group, and in the case of ethnicity, a proper name. Tajfel's work argued that in-group bias leads to intergroup discrimination (Tajfel, 1970), a view that has remained dominant in research into intergroup discrimination and impoliteness (cf., Bodenhausen, Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Moreno, 2001; Nelson, 2009; Ray et al., 2008). Categorisation can then serve that purpose of accentuating how individuals in groups view themselves as different from individuals in outgroups. Turner and others (Abrams & Hogg, 2010; Turner, 1981), for example, have argued that categorisation can lead to stereotyping and depersonalisation, based on focusing on several alleged shared characteristics in groups and ignoring diversity within groups (Wetherell, 1996). Categorisations, however, and stereotypes that arise from salient categories are not, Turner argued, fixed mental representations, but contextual, depending on which category and group an individual is comparing themselves to (Haslam & Turner, 1992; Hornsey, 2008).

Employing a cognitive approach to categorisation while exploring the action of categorisation, Billig (1985, 1996) suggests that two opposing, yet integrally related, processes exist: categorisation and particularisation. Categorisation, in Billig's terms, is the process by which particular 'stimuli' are placed into general categories and is associated with distortion leading to prejudice and stereotypes. Particularisation, on the other hand, is the process by which particular 'stimuli' are distinguished from other 'stimuli' and is associated with tolerance. Billig's 'rhetorical' approach to these cognitive processes treats both as forms of contrary arguments, with every categorisation having a contrary particularisation. This approach recognises the ambiguity of social reality as well as the fluidity of categorisation, rather than treating categorisation as a fixed cognitive apparatus which is not contextually dependent.

In contrast to approaches to categorisation as a function of labelling group and self-identity and cognitive approaches focusing on the processes of categorisation in the mind, membership categorisation analysis (MCA) focuses on the local use of categories in interaction between speakers. MCA has

developed from the conversation analyst Sacks' early lectures on analysis of calls made to suicide prevention lines in the 1960s (1992). Drawing on Goffman's (1967) ethnomethodology, Sacks stressed that membership categories were not necessarily labels for social groups (Sacks, 1992), but rather that membership categorisation comprised the 'procedures people employ to make sense of other people and their activities' (Leudar, Marsland, & Nekvapil, 2004, p. 244) and describes the process by which people use everyday knowledge to categorise the world around them in conversation (Lepper, 2000; Sacks, 1992). Sacks and subsequent work by Schegloff (1972), Drew (1978), and Jayussi (1984) focused on describing and analysing acts of membership categorisation in talk, developing means to identify and describe how speakers did the work of categorisation in discourse activity.

Sacks used the following example taken from a child's story to describe the process of categorisation: 'The baby cried, the mommy picked it up'. From the story, Sacks argued, listeners were able to infer the relationship between the mother and child using rules of membership in categories and membership categorisation devices (MCDs), or 'collection[s] of categories plus rules of application...' (Lepper, 2000, p. 17). In the example, Sacks argued the hearer understands the two categories (mommy and baby) in terms of the collection of 'family' and the category-bound activity of 'picking up'. MCDs provide the guide for placing members into categories and provide an accounting for the expectancies people take for granted when categorising others (Eglin & Hester, 2003).

Unlike social identity theory which sees categorisation as a naming of social or self-identity, MCA focuses on the process of categorisation in talk. Membership categories are 'classifications or social types that might be used to describe persons' (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 3), but membership categories can also describe any way of grouping together people, actions, or locations (Drew, 1978; Schegloff, 2007). Membership categories can be grouped together into collections of related categories, such as the categories of 'mommy' and 'baby' comprising the collection of 'family' above, and can be explicitly stated in talk, or inferred from the context. Category-bound activities are the actions which apply to the members of a certain category and tell the kinds of things that members

of a certain membership category do. Watson (1978) subsequently extended the notion of category-bound activities to category-bound predicates, including not only what a member of a certain category does, but any other characteristics of a category.

Sacks (1992) argued there were two key rules for categorisation: consistency and economy. The consistency rule requires that when a category from a collection is applied to one member of the population, the same category or another category from the collection applies to all members; that is, if an MCD is used to categorise one member of a category, the MCD must also apply to all other members of the category. The economy rule is described by Schegloff as: 'When some category from some collection of categories in an MCD has been used to refer to (or identify or apperceive) some person on some occasion, then other persons in the setting may be referred to or identified or apperceived or grasped by reference to the same or other categories from the same collection' (Schegloff, 2007, p. 471). In this case, even if an MCD is not explicitly applied to a category member, the MCD applied to one member may be applied to any other category members, a concept later challenged in the reconsidered model of MCA proposed by Housley and Fitzgerald (2002). Lepper (2000) also points out that from Sacks' example of the mommy and the baby, the linking of members in standardised relational pairs can also be present as a rule for applying an MCD and that pairings of members in standardised relational pairs bring expectations and obligations for the members in relationship to one another.

Two additional key elements of membership categories are that they are 'inference-rich', that is, they store societal knowledge about the particular category, and 'representative'; that is, 'any member of any category is a representative of that category of the purpose of use of whatever knowledge is stored about that category' (Sacks, 1992, p. 41). The knowledge stored about the category, however, may differ depending on the societal knowledge that speakers and hearers hold. For example, the category of 'Christian' will reflect different stored knowledge depending on the person. Rather than consider 'prototypes' for categories as Rosch proposed, the representative nature of Sacks' description of categories suggests that anyone, once categorised,

represents the category they occupy and their actions as typical of that category. Sacks' 'viewer's maxim' also describes this as: 'If a member sees a category-bound activity being done, then, if one can see it being done by a member of a category to which the activity is bound, then: See it that way' (Sacks, 1974, p. 225).

Although within MCA some research investigated 'personalised membership categorisation devices' (Drew, 1978), Housley and Fitzgerald (2002) note that work into membership categories tended to investigate 'non-personalised membership categorisation devices'. There is, however, a potential pitfall of treating membership categorisation devices as a 'pre-existing apparatus' because it sees membership categorisation devices as existing in a decontextualised sense drawing on decontextualised stocks of common knowledge (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 15). In recent applications of MCA, however, the key concepts of MCA have been applied to analysis of contextual categorisation. Housley and Fitzgerald (2002) note that

'utterances often not only derive their sense from 'stocks of common sense knowledge' but can also, in terms of categories in context, be mapped and tied to other categories in terms of locally situated conditions of relevance, activity and context.' (p. 68)

Housley and Fitzgerald suggest, then, a reconsidered model of MCA which takes into account the contextual interaction and resources of individuals. In the reconsidered model of MCA, membership categories are not analysed as pre-existing with accepted referents, but rather 'membership categorisation devices or collections are...regarded as *in situ* achievements of members' practical actions and practical reasoning' (Hester, 1994, pp. 242 cited in Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002) and contingent, like impoliteness, on the knowledge and experiences of those in the context. In this model of MCA, therefore, categorisation is analysed as a contextual phenomenon. Rather than common sense 'stocks of knowledge' dictating the use of categories, repeated uses of categories by speakers in a situated contexts also influence how common sense knowledge about categories emerges over time.

Employing MCA in an attempt to analyse categorisation in context, Eglin and Hester investigate the contextual use of the category of 'feminist' in the Montreal



Massacre (2002), and work by Evaldsson (2005) employs MCA coupled with observations of insult (pejorative comments about a person's actions, possessions or appearance), in groups of multi-ethnic children. These studies showed how categories are co-constructed in talk, and are therefore situated in particular contexts or stretches of discourse activity. Evaldsson (2007) has also showed that categories are tied to moral ordering, with categories used to link to value judgements about individuals to certain categories. These value judgements were, however, embedded in the context in which the categorisation occurred, rather than in common sense understandings of pre-established membership categories.

In this thesis, I use Housley and Fitzgerald's (2002) framework and treat categories as labels for people that are employed in specific contexts and in socially situated conditions. I refer to categories, rather than 'membership categories' to differentiate my use of a 'category', as any label of an individual which differentiates the individual from others in a population or groups individuals in a population together, from an understanding of 'membership categories' as a 'filing system' for common sense knowledge (Schegloff, 2007, p. 469) about the kinds of people or things in the world. In the same way, I refer to 'categorisation devices' rather than 'membership categorisation devices'. I do not treat categorisation devices as 'pre-existing apparatuses' with a decontextualised sense (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 15) of applying common sense knowledge to categorise individuals in a population. Rather, they are dynamic and situated processes of using a collection of categories to differentiate among and group individuals in a population, dependent on 'relevance, activity and context' (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 68).

Having presented categorisation as one tool for linguistic analysis of the dynamics of categorisation in interaction, in the following section, I present a discourse dynamics approach to metaphor analysis as a means of tracing the dynamics of YouTube drama in user interaction.

## **2.5 Metaphor**

The prevalence of metaphor in discourse activity has been well documented (Cameron, 2003; Cameron & Maslen, 2010b; Gibbs, 1994; G. Lakoff & Johnson,

1980; Low & Cameron, 1999; Steen, 2007) and significantly different frameworks for investigating metaphor have developed in the last 30 years. Although various definitions of metaphor exist within these different approaches, as a starting point, a definition of 'metaphor' is useful in framing the review. This research understands metaphor as 'seeing something in terms of something else' (Burke, 1945, p. 503), in language and, potentially, in thought (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b). Metaphor is indicated by a 'focus term or vehicle' in the text or talk which is incongruous with the surrounding text or talk and context, and in which the incongruity can be understood by some 'transfer of meaning' between the vehicle and the topic (Cameron, 2003).

Drawing on complex systems theory, a discourse dynamics approach to metaphor employs the notion of metaphor entering and remaining active in discourse activity, treating it as 'a temporary stability emerging from the activity of interconnecting systems of socially-situated language use and cognitive activity' (Cameron, Maslen, Maule, Stratton, & Stanley, 2009, p. 64). Emerging out of the complex system of situated language use, metaphor is then a phenomenon that develops in discourse activity (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), a claim supported by empirical research (Cameron, 2010b; Tay, 2011; Zanotto, Cameron, & Cavalcanti, 2008). Cameron and colleagues (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b; Cameron et al., 2009) have investigated the discourse dynamics of metaphor use in focus group discussions about the perceived threat of terrorism and shown how metaphor in the complex system of interaction among participants is 'processual, emergent, and open to change' (p. 67). For example, speakers may employ the same metaphor vehicles in a stretch of talk or draw upon the related metaphorical language as they speak together.

This approach to metaphor contrasts with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) influential conceptual metaphor theory, which has described metaphor primarily in terms of human cognition, suggesting that humans talk in metaphorical ways because they also think metaphorically. In this theory, conceptual metaphors are fixed mappings which are manifest in language and do not necessarily require understanding the context of the discourse activity because conceptual metaphors are said to be fundamental to human thought. Similarly, theories that

emphasise the role of comparison of categories, including Glucksberg and McGlone's class inclusion model of metaphor (Glucksberg & McGlone, 1999) and Bowdle and Gentner's 'career of metaphor' model (Bowdle & Gentner, 2005; Gentner & Bowdle, 2001), focus on the cognitive function of metaphor rather than the dynamic use of metaphor in interaction.

Ritchie (2010) notes, however, a recent shift from research into the relationship between thought and language in metaphor production and processing to a focus on metaphor in actual discourse activity, citing Charteris-Black (2005), Musolff (2004), and Cameron (2010a). In research into metaphor use in interaction, the focus is not on how individual speech and thought interact, but on how the interaction between speakers has important consequences for how metaphor is produced and meaning is negotiated. Ritchie, drawing on neurobiological research leading to perceptual simulation theory (Barsalou, 1999, 2008) and the work of Gibbs (2006), understands metaphorical and expressive language as activating entire conceptual schemas rather than fixed conceptual metaphors like those proposed in Lakoff and Johnson's work (Ritchie, 2006). Ritchie then argues, 'Since the simulations activated by a particularly expressive metaphor may remain activated for some time, if subsequent metaphors activate similar or compatible simulations the cumulative effect may be distinct from what could be accomplished by any one metaphor on its own, and may also be more enduring' (2010, p. 66). Metaphor, then, enters discourse activity and remains active in the interaction between speakers over time, dependent on the context of the interaction and the simulations that the language activates.

From a discourse dynamics approach, metaphor use can and does develop and change over time, affected by the particular constraints of a unique instance of interaction. Individual metaphor uses in interaction are not then treated as instantiations of conceptual metaphor, but as potential parts of a 'metaphor trajectory'. The notion of 'trajectory' is also taken from complex systems theory and describes the successive points that the system has occupied as forming a 'path' or 'trajectory' of states in the system's 'landscape of possibilities' (Thelen & Smith, 1994 cited in Cameron, 2010a, p. 83). The tracing of a metaphor trajectory, then, can be used to show connections between metaphor uses

throughout the discourse activity, where and when in the discourse activity metaphor use is occurring, and how different speakers are adapting and modifying metaphor throughout the course of interaction. Compiling this information can then show how metaphor use contributes to and is a part of the development of the discourse activity over time.

Cameron (2008b) describes the various changes and adaptations that are made to metaphors as discourse activity proceeds as 'metaphor shifting', which can occur in three forms, presented in Table 2-2:

**Table 2-2. Types of Metaphor Shifting (from Cameron, 2008b, p. 61)**

<b>Metaphor Shifting</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discourse outcomes</b>
<b>Vehicle re-deployment</b>	The same or semantically-connected lexical item is re-used with a different Topic.	Changes	Emergent Vehicle domain. Topic Reference Shift. Metaphor appropriation.
<b>Vehicle development</b>	Vehicle term is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• repeated</li> <li>• relexicalised</li> <li>• explicated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ exemplified</li> <li>○ elaborated</li> <li>○ expanded</li> </ul> </li> <li>• contrasted</li> </ul>	Remains the same  Moves to connected topics	Explanations through metaphor. Extended metaphors. Challenges to metaphor.  Systematic metaphor
<b>Vehicle literalisation</b>	Vehicle term (bridge) is used in reference to Topic	Merges with Vehicle; can become metonymic	Vehicle contextualisation. Symbolisation of topic.

The first column of Table 2-2 shows the different kinds of metaphor shifting. The second and third columns show how the vehicle and topic change in each kind of metaphor shifting. The fourth column shows the effect of the shift on the discourse outcomes. In vehicle re-deployment, a new metaphor can be formed employing the vehicle term from another metaphor, but changing the topic. Tay (2011), for example, has shown how the vehicle 'journey' develops in a sample of talk about therapy, serving various purposes and holding different meanings dependent on who is employing the vehicle and its context. One form of vehicle re-deployment is metaphor appropriation which occurs when 'a participant [begins] to use a metaphor that had...been the discourse 'property' of the other speaker' (Cameron, 2010b, p. 14). Cameron observes the constructive effects

of appropriation in conciliation discourse in which one speaker 'owns' the metaphor of 'healing' in a conversation, but the term is eventually appropriated by another speaker. When appropriation occurs, the metaphor is explicitly the shared property of both speakers.

In vehicle development, the vehicle term of a metaphor is repeated, relexicalised, explicated, and/or contrasted in the course of discourse activity (Cameron, 2010a). Cameron further defines vehicle development with the following terms (Table 2-3):

**Table 2-3. Types of Vehicle Development (from Cameron, 2008, p. 57)**

Vehicle development	Description
Vehicle repetition	The terms is repeated in identical or transformed form.
Vehicle relexicalisation	A near synonym or equivalent is used.
Vehicle explication	Expansion, elaboration or exemplification of the term.
Vehicle contrast	An antonymic or contrasting term is used.

Table 2-3 shows the different forms of vehicle development and their descriptions, and Cameron (2003, p. 103) shows how in the course of student talk about volcanoes in a science class, a teacher and students develop different vehicles to describe the flow of lava. Four types of vehicle development can be observed: vehicle repetition, when a term is repeated in an identical or transformed way; vehicle relexicalisation, where a synonym or equivalent is used; vehicle explication, where a term is expanded, elaborated, or exemplified; and vehicle contrast, when an antonymic or contrasting term is used. Unlike vehicle redeployment, however, in vehicle development the topic of the metaphor stays the same.

In vehicle literalisation, a vehicle can become literal or metonymic, and the vehicle and topic become indistinguishable, rendering the metaphorical literal and vice versa. Cameron cites the metaphor vehicle 'sitting down with' as a 'bridge term' (Kittay, 1987, p. 166) in conciliation discourse as an example of literalisation in which 'the vehicle domain is brought into the topic domain, and the metaphor is shifted into the literal' (2008b, p. 58 ). 'Sitting down with' in the conciliation data that Cameron analyses comes to have a metaphorical and literal meaning, describing both a physical meeting between victim and

perpetrator, but also a metaphorical recognition of the other and willingness to engage in an open and vulnerable way.

Building on the analysis of metaphor in interaction and tracing metaphor trajectories in discourse activity, Cameron has also shown that systems of metaphor use emerge in discourse activity, instantiated as 'systematic metaphors' (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b; Cameron et al., 2009). While a cognitive approach to metaphor works with conceptual metaphors such as ARGUMENT IS WAR and identifies instantiations of these metaphors in language, a discourse dynamics approach investigates how speakers use metaphor in interaction and how these uses emerge as systematic ways of speaking about topics. Cameron, Low, and Maslen define a 'systematic metaphor' as 'a set of linguistic metaphors in which [semantically] connected vehicle words or phrases are used metaphorically about a particular topic' (2010, p. 127). Systematic metaphors may be limited to individual conversations or interactions, or may emerge in broader social contexts. For example, in Cameron and colleague's (2009) work on the perceived threat of terrorism, focus group participants spoke about terrorism in terms of games of chance. The individual uses of metaphors, when considered together, form a systematic way of speaking, in the case of the focus group forming the systematic metaphor *BEING AFFECTED BY TERRORISM IS PARTICIPATING IN A GAME OF CHANCE*<sup>2</sup>. This systematic way of speaking is the result not only of individual cognitive function, but contextual interaction among speakers.

Metaphor-led discourse analysis is then the process of metaphor analysis that is informed by a discourse dynamics approach to metaphor (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b; Cameron et al., 2009). This process of analysing metaphor begins with identifying metaphor in discourse activity. After identifying metaphor, metaphor vehicles are then grouped by semantic relationships following an inductive, 'grounded' approach to coding. Semantic groups of metaphor vehicles are then formed. After the grouping of metaphor vehicles, the analyst then identifies vehicle topics and produces lists of vehicles related to a particular topic. The set of related metaphors is the 'systematic metaphor' which 'summarises

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<sup>2</sup> Systematic metaphors are typed in small caps and italicised.

metaphorical ways of expressing ideas, attitudes, and values' (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b, p. 128).

After construction and analysis of systematic metaphors, a metaphor-led approach to discourse analysis then investigates the use of metaphor in stretches of discourse activity (Cameron, 2010c). This analysis focuses on local discourse action, investigating how metaphor is used, particularly as it relates to the research focus. Because analysis of metaphor systematicity focuses on the use of metaphor vehicles related to topics, the analysis of metaphor in context investigates how metaphor use develops over time and what actions it accomplishes in discourse activity. As an example, Cameron (2010c) presents a metaphor analysis of a speech by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, showing how patterns in Blair's discourse activity built up a metaphorical scenario using *RELATIONSHIP* metaphors. Blair used this scenario to describe his relationship with voters and accomplish the key goal of repairing his image. By analysing how metaphor use interacted in the discourse activity, what action metaphor use accomplished could then be elucidated.

Cameron also notes that, in addition to patterns of metaphor use observed in systematic metaphors, 'Sometimes participants' metaphors fit into a narrative, construct a metaphorical story, or connect into a larger, coherent 'metaphor scenario' (Musolff, 2004) because of our cognitive tendency to construct explanatory stories for our experiences, a partial story or scenario may invoke a larger story or scenario in hearers' minds' (Cameron, 2010d, p. 11). Cameron draws an important distinction between two forms of narrative systematicity in metaphor use, 'metaphor scenarios' and 'metaphorical stories'.

'Scenarios', in Musolff's terms, allow people to 'not only apply the source to target concepts, but to draw on them to build narrative frames for the assessment of (e.g.) socio-political issues' (2006, p. 36). In this sense, 'scenarios' are the narrative outworking of fixed cognitive mappings. 'Metaphorical stories', on the other hand, describe metaphorical narratives in specific discourse activity: 'The point about a "metaphorical story" is that it recounts (rather than assumes), normally within a single text or discourse event, actions involving one or more participants in settings as, "stories in conversation"' (Cameron et al., 2010, p. 139). Metaphorical stories 'occur within

a single discourse event, and tend to be marked out by the speaker in various ways, so that the listener or reader will recognise that a story, however short, is being told' (Cameron et al., 2010, p. 144). Although metaphorical stories can interact with scenarios, metaphorical stories do not necessarily assume or require an underlying conceptual mapping.

Approaching metaphor use in discourse activity does not exclude considering the cognitive processes involved in metaphor production and interpretation. Metaphor use in discourse activity is seen as a complex interaction between thinking and language use (Gibbs, 1994). Gibbs (2011) highlights this in a recent article suggesting that humans have an 'allegorical impulse', *allegoresis*, 'in which we continually seek to connect, in diverse ways, the immediate here and now with more abstract, enduring symbolic themes' (Gibbs, 2011, p. 122). This 'allegoric impulse' could influence the development of systematic metaphor and metaphorical stories, as speakers draw on shared symbolic themes in their socio-historical context. Rather than see allegory as super-extended metaphor interpreted in a cognitive blend (as in Crisp, 2008), Gibbs argues that allegory exhibits a meaning-making tendency in humans and that interpretation in allegories is dynamic, a process of "soft assembl[y]" in the moment of experience depending on state of person, environment and task' (2011, p. 129). Allegoresis is then a complex, dynamic process in which cognition is only one component and not necessarily the dominant one.

In addition to 'scenarios' and 'stories', allegoresis offers a useful description of metaphor use (and particular narrative systematicity that draws on exophoric texts or narratives) in interaction, not as an artefact with a clear beginning and end, but as a process. The enduring symbols and themes that people employ may also be instantiated as stories or narratives, or they may appear in single uses of metaphors. The process of allegoresis can be influenced by all the factors in a complex system and is not simply conceived of as a linguistic representation of a cognitive process. Tracing when 'abstract, enduring symbolic themes' are introduced in discourse activity and whether or not the same themes are then repeated and/or expanded upon in subsequent talk can, like the analysis of systematic metaphors, elucidate the trajectory of discourse activity. How users employ these themes and the extent to which they employ



the same or different symbols in their interaction then potentially offers the possibility of tracing how agreement and disagreement among users develops, particularly if themes are, like metaphor, developed in user interaction.

Given the importance of users' expectations, knowledge, and values in the CofP, metaphor-led discourse analysis provides a key first step to describe and analyse user expressions of 'ideas, attitudes, and values' (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b, p. 128) in discourse activity. Analysis of metaphor use and trajectories of metaphor in discourse activity has the potential to elucidate how different kinds of systems, including individual lives and socio-cultural groups, contribute to the discourse activity and, subsequently, the social world (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b). By investigating how users employ metaphorical language in their interaction, both similarities and differences in metaphor use will help elucidate why disagreement and misunderstanding may be occurring. Finally, when narrative systematicity is present in discourse activity, insights can be drawn about users' values and beliefs by investigating the enduring themes that they connect to their day-to-day experience. In analysis of interaction on YouTube, therefore, describing the discourse dynamics of metaphor use will be used as a first step in analysis, followed by analyses of categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning.

Having presented metaphor analysis as a tool for close discourse analysis of the trajectory of discourse activity, in the next section, I discuss ways of understanding how Biblical metaphorical language is interpreted and the role of argumentation in Biblical interpretation.

## **2.6 *Biblical Interpretation***

As my previous MRes research showed (Pihlaja, 2010), the use of metaphorical language and stories taken from the Bible is of particular importance to Evangelical Christians on YouTube (Section 4.3.3). For the users I analysed, the text of the Bible was a key resource in the development of metaphorical language in talk about their interactions with others. Because metaphor is extensively used in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament (Charteris-Black, 2004), it has historically been of interest to theologians and researchers in religious studies (c.f., Boeve & Feyaerts, 1999; Lamraque, 1987; Soskice,

2007). However, although some work has been done in analysis of metaphor in sermons (Corts & Meyers, 2002; Graves, 1983), a gap remains in discourse analysis of lay practitioner discussions of the Bible, with no research done to date which takes into account both the development of metaphor in this interaction and the interaction between metaphor development and Biblical interpretation.

Unlike non-religious metaphorical stories, Biblical metaphorical language, particularly among Evangelical Christians like those in the analysed YouTube CofP, must be contextualised in Evangelical Christian belief about the Bible. The Bible, for Evangelical Christians, is the key authority on which their faith is founded, separate from the authority of any church denomination. Bebbington & Bebbington (1989) cite the noted Evangelical theologian J. I. Packer's (1978) work putting Biblical supremacy as the first in a list of Evangelical fundamentals. To exemplify the centrality of the Bible in Evangelical Christian belief, the following extract taken from the statement of faith of the influential American Evangelical denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, is presented:

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

(Southern Baptist Convention, n.d.)

In this definition, the 'Holy Bible' is described, not as a clear collection of writings in a particular book, but rather a series of properties. It is divinely inspired, authored by God, and totally true and trustworthy. This belief statement does not describe the actual, textual content of the Bible, but rather what is believed about it. The Southern Baptist Convention belief statement is

not unique and other denominations and Evangelical organisations make similarly worded claims (Noll, 2001), showing an orientation to the Bible not as a particular book, but as a series of properties applied to a collection of texts that has been historically viewed as a central authority in Evangelicalism (Bebbington & Bebbington, 1989).

Malley's (2004) ethnographic work at an American Baptist church attempted to clarify what is meant by the 'Bible' in Evangelical Christian discourse, and highlights the difficulty that individual believers have in demarcating what is or is not the Bible. Malley proposes four conceptual elements of what Evangelicals mean when referring to 'the Bible':

1. A designation—"the Bible"—that can refer to various modern English Bibles.
  2. An artifactual stereotype...that provides a recognition criteria for Bibles.
  3. An assumption of textuality: the Bible is expected to be a text.
  4. A presumption of common meaning: the various texts called Bibles are expected to have (basically) the same contents to say (basically) the same thing.
- (Malley, 2004, p. 67)

Like the Southern Baptist Convention belief statement, Malley shows that the Bible is also not necessarily conceived of as a particular book, but rather as what is contained within certain books, a 'common meaning' that can appear in different words at different times.

Because of the Bible's centrality in Evangelical Christian belief, Biblical interpretation is of particular importance for Evangelical Christians. A common description of the Evangelical Christian hermeneutic is 'Biblical literalism', the belief that the Bible is 'literally true' or 'infallible' (Bartkowski, 1996), which is often typified with literal understandings of the Biblical creation myth. This description of the Evangelical Christian hermeneutic, however, requires several important caveats. First, in practice, Evangelicals may concede that some elements of the Bible could be read figuratively, particularly language that is explicitly poetic or non-literal, as in the case of metaphorical language of the parables contained in the teachings of Jesus (Malley, 2004). Second, a literal reading of the text does not ensure agreement among readers. As Bartkowski (1996) shows, disagreement among Evangelical Christians about corporal

punishment of children is not resolved by a 'literal' reading of the text; instead, various readings evidence conflicting worldviews with which different readers approach the text. A description of Evangelical Christian understanding of the Bible as 'literal' does not, therefore, account for how and why disagreements arise between two readers applying the same hermeneutic.

The disagreement that Bartkowski highlights shows that reading the Bible may not always be about deducing the 'right meaning' of texts, but rather convincing others of one's worldview using the Bible. The nature of this kind of argumentation, Billig (1996) points out in analysis of Talmudic arguments, is the possibility for any argument to continue indefinitely in the search for the 'last word'. In the momentum of argumentation, Billig argues, opponents continue to answer the claims of the other in an attempt to leave the other speechless. The goal then becomes not the persuasion of the other, but 'winning' an argument by holding the floor last. In this understanding of argumentation, any positive argument can be met with a negative argument and vice versa, with the argument only ending when one opponent gives up. This understanding of argumentation is of importance for analysis of Biblical interpretation because in the momentum of responding to another's exegesis, the reading of the text that best supports an individual's ability to counter the other is the reading that the individual is most likely to offer.

Searching for an empirical description to take into account the different factors contributing to the reading of the Bible, Malley (2004) suggests that Evangelical Christian hermeneutic activity might be described by relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995); that is, in interpretation of the Bible, Evangelical Christians employ the reading that is most relevant to the immediate context. Here, a link between metaphor and Biblical exegesis can be seen in the issue of resolving ambiguity in language. Much as Malley's assertion that Evangelicals employ the most relevant reading of the text, relevance theory has also been used to explain how hearers resolve ambiguous metaphorical language with the least cognitive effort (Noveck, Bianco, & Castry, 2001). Like other models of metaphor that I described (Section 2.5), this view of processing ambiguous language focuses on cognitive processes, but other factors, including the social context of the reading and powerful second-order discourses about the text

(Foucault, 1981), may contribute to how individuals understand Biblical language. Relevance cannot, therefore, completely describe all the components contributing to exegesis in particular settings.

This relationship between the reader and text, and how meaning is deduced, has long been of interest in reader reception studies, and Mailloux (1989 cited in Allington, 2007) notes that theories of reader reception can generally be placed in two categories: 'textual realism' which sees readers as discovering meaning in texts, and 'readerly idealism' which sees readers as creating meaning from texts. Allington (2007) notes, however, that readers seek to avoid the impression that they are the originators of meaning. Malley's (2004) work also shows the complex interaction of both finding and creating meaning in Biblical interpretation by Evangelical Christians, because although they may believe the Bible to be inspired by God and 'totally true and trustworthy' (Southern Baptist Convention, n.d.), they also believe God speaks to the believer and guides their reading (Nuttall, 1992). Evangelical Christian belief dictates 'textual realism', in which the meaning of the text is defined by God and Christians discover the meaning, but Evangelical Christian practice tends towards 'readerly idealism', in which the readers bring their own experiences and knowledge to bear on their interpretation of the text. Particularly in social settings like Bible studies, contextual factors can play a role in how the text is interpreted, and what knowledge is brought to bear in interpretation can differ depending on who is present in the immediate context.

From a discourse dynamics approach, ambiguous language (both metaphorical and/or Biblical) provides an opportunity to the speaker and hearer to determine meaning for the language, but one that is always situated in a particular context with other individuals. How any one individual interprets a metaphor or Biblical text will depend on the complex interaction of experiences, beliefs, and expectations of those with whom they are interacting, as well as the socio-historical context of the interaction. Because of this complex interaction, individuals can come to hold different beliefs about the meaning of particular Biblical texts. The use of metaphor is relevant as it is often used in dominance of others and spreading ideology (Goatly, 2007) as well as in the expression of emotion (Goatly, 1997). Similarly, Charteris-Black (2009) highlights the role of

metaphor in heightening *ethos* (i.e. a leader or person 'having the right intentions') and *pathos* (i.e. a leader or person 'sounding right') in political discourse. In the same way, discourse around the Biblical interpretation can also include not only having the 'right' reading, but being able to persuade others of the validity of one's position.

In the case of interpretation of Biblical—in particular, Biblical metaphorical—language, privileged readings of the text, influenced by the power structures within which these readings are made, impact believers (Foucault, 1981, 1982). This 'pastoral power' of the church exerts influence over the life of the individual, a power that is 'embodied and crystallized' in an institution, but which can also be found outside of the institution (Foucault, 1982, p. 791). In analysis of Evangelical Christian discourse activity, however, the institutionalised church can be obscured by the belief in the transparency and universal accessibility of the Bible (Boone, 1989). No central, hierarchical authority on Biblical interpretation exists (as in the Catholic and Episcopalian churches), and Evangelical Christian hermeneutic activity becomes a complex interaction among individual ideology, context, and institutionalised Bible readings. Analysing interpretation of Biblical metaphorical language in particular must, therefore, take into account other interactional factors beyond whether or not Christians share the same categorical label, attend the same church, or affirm the same statements of belief. To take these other components into account, situating belief about the Bible within a larger belief framework that includes having a 'personal relationship' with God, is essential. Although there is a democratic aspect to the Evangelical understanding of scriptural interpretation, certain powerful, second order discourses do still emerge, instantiated in statements of belief and ritualised liturgical calls and responses (Forrester, 1981). Teachings of church doctrine, therefore, both formally and informally can instil in believers particular ways of reading the Bible that are salient for Christians across denominational lines.

Analysis of a YouTube CofP, as I have shown, must take into account both the local and the socio-historical contexts in which interaction occurs. In a discourse dynamics approach (which investigates the beliefs and attitudes of users revealed in their metaphor use), findings can be used as a starting point for

investigating other elements of interaction. By further investigating the role of the Bible in discourse activity, as well as categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning, a rigorous description and analysis of YouTube video pages can provide insight into how and why drama develops among users.

## **2.7 Summary**

In this chapter, I offered key theoretical and analytic frameworks for accomplishing the aims of this thesis.

- First, I reviewed the literature on research into computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Section 2.2.1), focusing on research into online antagonism (Section 2.2.2). I highlighted that although studies have been done on 'flaming' on YouTube (Section 2.2.2), the research has focused on YouTube comments and user reports of their experiences rather than analysis of sustained interaction among a specific 'community' of users. I showed how research into YouTube 'drama' requires discourse analysis of complete video pages situated in observation of user interaction (Section 2.2.3).
- I offered community of practice (CofP) theory (Section 2.2.4) and positioning theory (Section 2.2.5) as two theoretical frameworks for describing and analysing the interaction of users on YouTube.
- Next, I investigated theories of impoliteness (Section 2.3.1) to provide an operationalised definition of impoliteness for this research (Section 2.3.2) and considered the role of impoliteness in dominance (Section 2.3.3).
- Next, I presented a reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis (Section 2.4) and the discourse dynamics approach to metaphor (Section 2.5) as tools for analysing language and describing the discourse dynamics of YouTube 'drama'.
- I also presented a description of Evangelical Christian belief about the Bible and the role of interpretation and argument in resolving ambiguous Biblical (metaphorical) language (Section 2.6).

I will employ these frameworks in the following ways to answer my research questions:

- A discourse-centred online ethnographic approach (Androutsopoulos, 2008) will be used to identify drama for analysis and situate user discourse activity in the social context of interaction.
- A discourse dynamics approach to discourse activity is adopted to describe and analyse the multi-voiced YouTube video page. Metaphor-led discourse analysis (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b) and the reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002) will be used to analyse discourse activity on the video pages.
- CofP theory (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1991) will be used to describe the group of users analysed in the thesis, focusing on their shared practice of making videos about religious topics rather than their association with a group.
  - Culpeper's (2011) definition of impoliteness and the list of forms of impoliteness for Hardaker (2010) will be used to describe impolite interaction in the CofP.
  - Positioning theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1998) will be used to describe how users orient themselves and others in the CofP.

In the next chapter, I present the research questions arising from the focus and aims of this research and the review of literature.



### **3 Research Questions**

Based on the review of literature and to accomplish the aims of this thesis to investigate how and why YouTube drama develops through a systematic description and analysis of user discourse activity (Section 1.2), I answer the following research questions:

#### **3.1 Metaphor**

RQ1 What metaphors were present in the discourse activity? When did they occur?

RQ2 What were the trajectories of metaphorical language and responses?

RQ3 What action did metaphorical language accomplish?

RQ4 How did metaphor use contribute to the development of drama?

#### **3.2 Categorisation**

RQ5 Did categorisation devices appear in the videos? If so, how were they used and did their use differ depending on the speaker or commenter?

RQ6 How was metaphor employed in categorisation?

RQ7 How did categorisation contribute to the development of drama?

#### **3.3 Impoliteness**

RQ8 What utterances and/or actions were viewed as impolite?

RQ9 How did users respond to impoliteness?

RQ10 How did users justify their own perceived malicious impoliteness?

RQ11 What was the relationship between impoliteness and attempts at dominance?

RQ12 How did impoliteness contribute to the development of drama?

#### **3.4 Positioning**

RQ13 How did users position themselves and others in the drama?

RQ14 Was malignant positioning present? If so, what did it accomplish?

RQ15 What storylines were revealed by the positions that users took? Were there similarities in the storylines that different users followed?

RQ 16 How did positioning contribute to the development of drama?

## **4 Methods**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methods employed for data collection and analysis in this thesis. I describe the research design, provide a description of the data collection procedure, and offer a description of the video pages to be analysed. I discuss the need to employ mixed discourse analytic methods to fully address the research questions, and present the processes of discourse analysis employed in the study: metaphor, categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning analyses.

### **4.2 Research Design**

In Section 2.2.2, I reviewed research into computer-mediated communication (CMC) and presented YouTube 'drama' as a particular form of online interaction involving 'antagonistic debate between one or more YouTubers' (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 98). 'Antagonistic debate' suggests ongoing disagreement among users rather than isolated impolite words and/or actions. In this definition, YouTube drama can be a series of negative interactions between two users or it can be a sustained debate among many users. In previous research into impoliteness in YouTube interaction (Section 2.2.2) datasets have included corpora of YouTube comments (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011), interviews of users and questionnaires about interaction (Lange, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011; Moor et al., 2010), and some qualitative analysis of videos (van Zoonen et al., 2010, 2011; Vis et al., 2011). None of this research, however, has looked at interaction among a single community of practice (CofP) over a period of time or attempted to describe social interaction on YouTube by analysing videos and comments as full video pages.

In my own previous Masters research investigating antagonism on YouTube (Pihlaja, 2011), I analysed a dataset of one video thread (i.e. videos and responses between two users on a single topic), chosen after observation (Sections 2.1 and 2.2.2). Investigating a single thread provided several advantages: first, the dataset boundaries were clearly defined because at the time of analysis, the thread was over a year old, and videos and comments had

stabilised and new content was not being regularly added. I was, therefore, able to analyse the event without concern that new information would be added and change the amount or kind of data in the dataset. Second, observation allowed me to situate the thread in a larger social context, having an awareness of the CofP in which the thread occurred. Finally, the number of participants making videos was limited, allowing for a more concise analysis that could quickly draw on the comparatively simple shared history of only two users, rather than a larger group.

Although investigating a single thread was valuable, it was also limited in scope. First, the time of user interaction was only for three weeks, so although I was able to draw on my own observations to situate the analysis, I did not have any actual discourse data from before or after the thread. Second, including only two users in the analysis limited the implications and required very careful hedging as the individual personalities of the two users played a key role in the development of the thread, making the findings difficult to generalise. Finally, depending on one thread risked users taking down videos either before or during the analysis stage. Although the thread was initially chosen for its relative stability, before transcription could be completed, one user removed a single video from the thread, deleting evidence from an important stage in the development of the interaction. Moreover, one of the users was eventually banned from YouTube and his entire channel deleted. To expand this research, I chose to consider a larger dataset including videos from more users.

Because YouTube drama is an emergent phenomenon, developing out of the individual interactions on video pages, it often cannot be identified until after it has occurred. Drama can develop between two users in isolated single video threads or in comments sections in which two individuals have a disagreement. However, drama can also occur on a larger scale among groups of affiliated users when individual comments and/or video responses become broader disagreements. Drama also does not often have clear beginnings and endings, with past interactions, friendships, and new disagreements affecting how users interact with one another and how they position themselves either in opposition to or affiliation with others. Accurately describing and analysing YouTube drama,

therefore, requires situating individual instances of interaction within broader contexts.

Building on a discourse-centred online ethnographic perspective (Section 2.2.3) and my previous experiences, observation of a CofP of YouTube users and discourse analysis of YouTube video pages was undertaken to provide a systematic description and analysis of discourse activity to answer the research questions. The following procedure was then followed:

1. Observation of a CofP of users was done in order to identify a drama event for analysis (Section 4.3.1).
2. Video pages from the drama event were identified and video talk was transcribed (Section 4.3.2 & 4.3.5).
3. Discourse analysis of video pages was undertaken (Section 4.5).

In discussing the data, I follow these conventions:

- Users are referred to in the way they are best known on YouTube. In most cases, this is a username, while in others it is a first name or nickname. Users may choose to capitalise different characters in their usernames for stylistic purposes, and I use the capitalisation the user has employed even at the beginning of a sentence. For example, users christoferL and Yokeup employ different capitalisation conventions.
- Individual videos pages are referenced by their position in the 20 video page corpus of data analysed for the project. Information about the videos (including their URLs) can be found in Appendix 1. The numbering of videos follows their chronological order with V1 being posted prior to V2 and so forth. Any data extract from individual videos will then include an in-text reference, for example, V12:123–125. In the reference, 'V(12)' represents the video's position in the video page corpus (12) and the numbers following the colon represent the line numbers of the video page transcript (123–125).
- Text comments from videos have been reproduced in their original forms with all typographical errors, alternative spellings, lack of capitalisation, and grammatical inconsistencies left unchanged.

- I have maintained differences in spelling from original texts (both academic texts and comments) without notation.
- The terms 'Christians' and 'atheists' are used to maintain a distinction between users who explicitly professed a belief in the Christian God and those who proclaimed themselves 'atheists' at least once in the period of observation. Users who did not self-proclaim a belief are not labelled.

Finally, as much of the 'drama' analysed in this thesis consists of contested accountings of events, to the best of my ability, I avoid making value judgements about the interactions I observed and strive to provide a factual summary of the events.

I now describe the analytic process in depth, starting with the data collection.

### **4.3 Data Collection**

#### **4.3.1 Observation and Direct Contact**

Systematic observation for this research began in October 2008 and continued through August of 2010. A CofP was identified through a recursive process of observing individual user interactions, identifying users who frequently interacted, and subscribing to and following users over the course of the observation period. I observed approximately 20 users, with individual users making videos and engaging at different levels of involvement over time. Throughout the period of observation, I used the YouTube function of 'favouriting' (or bookmarking for later viewing) videos that related to different drama topics, attempting to identify videos for analysis as they were posted. I observed several different drama events (described below in Section 4.3.2), but because users frequently removed videos, my 'favourites' list would often include videos that had been removed.

During the observation period, I initially attempted to contact users to conduct interviews. Three users (one Christian and two atheist users) agreed to respond to questions via direct message on YouTube, and I spoke via web video (blogtv.com) with the Christian user, TogetherforPeace. Most users, however, did not respond to the request, while others responded but declined to be interviewed. Given the difficulty in gaining access to the CofP, and particularly

to the central figures in the drama events that I observed (Section 4.3.2), I chose to focus primarily on observation of the CofP and of the public interaction among users on video pages. Although this necessarily limits the perspective of the research and does not allow for 'get[ting] familiar' with speaker experience (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 12) held as central to linguistic ethnography, descriptions of contextualised discourse activity do still provide insight about user experience, as well as reports of intention and how hearers interpret the intentions of others. Because interviews were not feasible, I limited my analysis to video pages rather than user reports about experience.

### **4.3.2 Identifying Videos for Analysis**

Several different drama events emerged and were considered for analysis during the observation period:

- The atheist user capnoawesome made a video claiming to have 'epically p'wned' (Section 2.3.3, p. 47) another atheist fakesagan when video of capnoawesome having sex with fakesagan's girlfriend was posted online. fakesagan made several angry videos in response, physically threatening capnoawesome. Many users responded to the drama, giving their opinion of what capnoawesome had done. Both users' channels were, however, suspended and none of the videos between them remained online.
- There was ongoing drama between the Christian users Yokeup and jezuzfreek777 regarding Yokeup's claim that jezuzfreek777's friendships with various atheists were inappropriate. jezuzfreek777 regularly responded to Yokeup at the beginning of the observation period, arguing that the friendships were not inappropriate, but by the middle of 2009, had removed all of his videos referencing Yokeup. Yokeup's videos about jezuzfreek777 had also been largely removed by the time of data collection.
- Another argument began prior to the observation period, but was still a topic of discussion until early 2009. The Christian user and church pastor jthunder73 took a pro-choice position on abortion and his reasoning for his position was a topic of drama. Both Christian and atheist users made

videos about this topic, but jthunder73 eventually removed all his videos and stopped responding to others about the topic.

In considering these events for analysis, the absence of all of the videos of one or more central figures in the drama made analysis impossible as one side of the 'antagonistic debate' was missing. Although it appeared unlikely that all videos from a drama event could be recovered, having videos showing all sides of the central arguments, as well as response videos from others was needed to describe how and why drama developed in discourse activity. The importance of having observed the drama while it was occurring was also evident as the reconstruction of past events by users often included omissions of key facts and descriptions of the circumstances in which an initial drama event had occurred. Because of these considerations, the drama events listed above were not acceptable as data for this study.

Instead, the 'human garbage' drama was identified for analysis. In this drama, the Christian user Yokeup called the atheist user Crosisborg 'human garbage' in mid-January 2009, and disagreement developed throughout the CofP (including responses from both Christians and atheists) when Yokeup defended his words by saying they were actually taken from the Bible (see Section 4.3.3 for a full description). The 'human garbage' drama also centred around Yokeup's channel which I had been subscribed to since the beginning of the observation period, and I had observed the 'human garbage' drama as it occurred, viewing many of the videos that were subsequently taken down. This provided me background knowledge of the events that led up to the drama event. After having observed the 'human garbage' drama as it occurred between January–June 2009, in the summer of 2010, I initially identified 40 videos which appeared to be both related to the 'human garbage' drama and remained posted on the site. Starting with a search for the term 'human garbage', potential videos related to the topic were identified from appearing in the search and from examining responses to these videos and videos made around the time of the controversy. Although the search term 'human garbage' did reveal several hits for music by the death metal band 'Dystopia' and their song 'Human=gabrage', no other vlogs were found employing the term outside the context of the CofP.

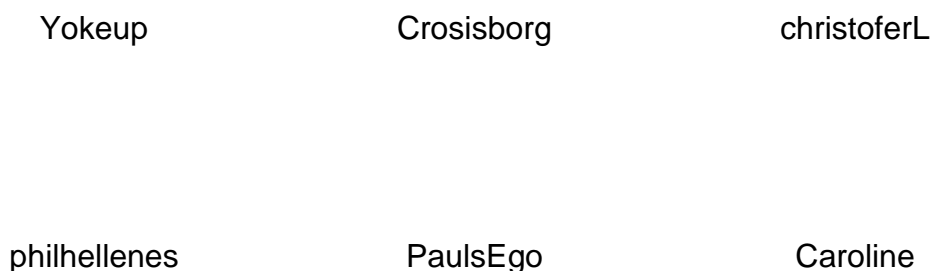


After the 40 videos were identified as potentially having some relation to the 'human garbage' drama, I initially watched all the videos and read all the comments. I then focused on videos made in relation to the initial controversy (i.e. Yokeup's first uses of 'human garbage', the initial responses, and his subsequent defence of the term) (Section 4.3.3) and discarded videos that did not ultimately relate to the drama. Twenty videos posted either near the time of the initial controversy or reposted later were therefore identified for analysis (see Appendix 1 for full list of videos). Within the 20 videos, three specific exchanges between users (i.e. videos and responses) were further identified for close discourse analysis. The three drama exchanges represented three different kinds of interaction: Christian and atheist; atheist and atheist; and Christian and Christian. Collecting a large corpus of data and identifying specific videos within the corpus for close discourse analysis allowed both for a macro-level description of discourse activity throughout the whole of the 'human garbage' drama (particularly as it related to use of systematic metaphor) (Sections 4.5.1), and for a micro-level description and analysis of actual instances of interaction (particularly as it related to metaphor, categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning) (Sections 4.5.1–4.5.5). Findings at both levels of analysis could then be compared and combined, providing a full description of the interaction.

### **4.3.3 Narrative Description of the YouTube Users and Drama**

In the videos analysed in this thesis, the following users played a central role by making videos. Images of these key members of the CofP can be seen in Figure 4-1:

**Figure 4-1. Key members of the Community of Practice**



NB: All images redacted.

The following information about each of the users in Figure 4-1 was collected in the course of the observation of their channels and interactions with others on the site:

- Yokeup, a self-proclaimed 'born-again believer' living in the Southern US state of Louisiana. Yokeup's videos during the observation period were primarily evangelical messages and Biblical teachings, but also included videos about his day-to-day life and conservative politics in the US.
- Crosisborg, a self-proclaimed 'atheist' living in California. The topics of Crosisborg's videos were primarily about atheism or were responses to Christians about Christian theology.
- christoferL, a self-proclaimed 'believer' living in the Northeast US state of Massachusetts. Like Yokeup, his videos primarily comprised Biblical teachings and evangelical messages.
- philhellenes, a self-proclaimed 'atheist' living in the UK. Like Crosisborg's, philhellenes' videos were primarily about atheism or responses to Christians about Christian theology.
- PaulsEgo, a self-proclaimed 'atheist' living in California. The topics of his videos included atheism and responses to Christians about Christian theology, but also videogames, politics, and his day-to-day life.
- Caroline, a self-proclaimed 'born-again believer' and Yokeup's wife. Caroline made frequent appearances in Yokeup's videos. Although

Caroline had her own channel and username (ckrieger36), she primarily used it to promote her music and to comment on other users' video pages. When videos included evangelical messages and Biblical teachings, she tended to post them on Yokeup's channels.

The drama analysed in this thesis began with an argument between Croisborg and Yokeup in which insults were exchanged. There was a long history of drama between Croisborg and Yokeup, which developed from Yokeup's condemnation of Christians who were friendly with Croisborg and his argument that Christians should not be friends with atheists. At one point in their interaction in late-2008/early-2009, Croisborg made a video that included joking about Yokeup's wife, calling her a 'lesbian' and making negative comments about her sexuality. This was offensive to Yokeup and Caroline because Caroline's story of conversion to Christianity included a claim that she had changed her sexuality, having previously been involved in a relationship with a woman before converting (amy2x, 2011, September 20). By calling her a 'lesbian', Croisborg rejected Caroline's own description of herself and insulted Yokeup by appearing to challenge both the validity of their relationship and Yokeup's own masculinity.

In response, Yokeup called Croisborg 'human garbage', and after great outrage from members of the CofP, Yokeup argued that he had only called Croisborg 'human garbage' because all non-Christians were 'human garbage', using the parable of the vine and the branches from John 15 to support his argument. The initial videos that both Croisborg and Yokeup made were subsequently removed and were not online at the time of data collection, although two atheist users did download Yokeup's videos and reused elements of these (including video and images) in their own videos (see Section 4.3.4 for description of these videos). This enabled some reconstruction of what Yokeup had said in the initial interaction with Croisborg.

Both Christians and atheists responded to Yokeup, and drama videos made around the topic of 'human garbage' focused on the offensive nature of Yokeup's words and his exegesis of John 15 (see Appendix 2, p. 276 for full text), which several Christians argued was incorrect. Disagreement in the CofP over how to respond to Yokeup as well as over Yokeup's appeal to the moral

authority of Bible to justify his use of 'human garbage' led to new arguments. The atheist users Crosisborg and philhellenes responded angrily towards Yokeup and insulted him, while PaulsEgo, in contrast, argued that Yokeup was representing the true form of Christianity in his offensive talk and should be encouraged to continue to make videos that highlighted the hateful nature of religion in general, and Christianity in particular. Others, specifically Crosisborg, who was friends with other Christians, felt that Yokeup should be denounced by both Christians and atheists.

Among the Christians, significant debate occurred around Yokeup's reading of the Bible. When Yokeup argued that John 15 supported calling all non-Christians 'human garbage', some self-proclaimed 'believers' (particularly BudManInChrist, huckster271, and ChristoferL) questioned Yokeup's interpretation of John 15, claiming that the use of the term was inappropriate because of the context of the parable. These denouncements came, however, with caveats about the need for Christians to 'preach the truth' about hell and judgement. Although few videos were made in support of Yokeup, evidence that others agreed with him can be observed in the comments sections of his videos. A video made by another user on Yokeup's collaborative Christian channel souledouttojesus in 2010 also showed support for Yokeup's use of the term, although the particular user posting on the channel said he was not comfortable using the term himself (souledouttojesus, 2010).

Although the initial videos were posted primarily from January–May 2009, disagreements about the term 'human garbage' could be seen throughout 2010 as Yokeup continued to use the term and to make the same defence rooted in his interpretation of John 15. In the summer of 2010, videos made by PeaceInChristAlone, and Yokeup's responses to him, showed that the term continued to attract similar responses from Christians: that although the 'truth' of the gospel needed to be preached, some care must be taken in how the gospel was presented to non-believers. As of early-2012, Yokeup continued to argue, however, that it was necessary to produce a harsh accounting of the 'reality of the gospel' to non-believers, so that they would not be deceived into believing that they would not face judgement from God.

#### 4.3.4 Description of Data

Following the data collection and sorting procedure (Section 4.3.2), 20 video pages (see Figure 1-1, p. 13) from the 'human garbage' drama were included for analysis (see Appendix 1 for full information). Table 4-1 presents key information about the whole of the corpus.

**Table 4-1. Video Page Corpus**

<b>Number of video pages</b>	20
<b>Period of video posting</b>	12 January–15 May 2009
<b>Total video length</b>	2:15:42 (hrs:mins:secs)
<b>Total words</b>	86,859
Video transcript text	23,582
Written text	63,277
<b>Range of video lengths</b>	3:31–10:45 (mins:secs)
<b>Total number of comments</b>	1,738
<b>Range of comments per video</b>	1–613
<b>Range of views per video</b>	102–17,510

Table 4-1 shows information regarding the video page corpus included for analysis. The data was collected in August of 2010, 15–19 months after the videos had been initially posted, and comment and view counts were accurate at the end of the data collection period. However, because comments can be deleted and/or posted as long as the video is online, counts can and do change over time. The videos in the video page corpus were all posted from 12 January–15 May 2009. 'Re: "Human Garbage" - searing TRUTH' (V20) was a reposted video (dated 8 September 2009), but the content of the video suggests that it was originally made in early May 2009.

Written text also contained automatically generated text, including 9 words for every comment (the username of the commenter and the timestamp of the comment in relation to when the video was being viewed). There were also 8 automatically generated words per video (information about the date and username). This automatically generated text was included for informational purposes about who had commented on a video and the chronological order of the comments, but will be excluded from analysis and excluded in calculation of metaphor density and distribution (Section 5.2).

Videos varied in length, with the shortest video in the dataset playing 3 minutes and 31 seconds and the longest playing 10 minutes and 45 seconds, with a mean length of 6:47. The numbers of views and comments on videos varied more substantially. The most viewed video, entitled 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) had 17,510 views and 613 comments at the time of data collection, while the least viewed video entitled 'Re: "Human Garbage" - searing TRUTH' (V17), had 102 views and the video with the least comments, 'Human Garbage...Are YOU? (My Response)' (V4), had only 1 comment at the time of collection.

Of these 20 videos, three exchanges (i.e. videos and responses) were identified for close discourse analysis (Section 4.3.2). The total length of these videos was 31 minutes and 58 seconds, with a total of 1,043 comments and 41,176 words, including all elements of the video page as well as the transcripts of video talk.

Information about the specific videos which were included is presented in Tables 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4.

**Table 4-2. Drama Exchange 1**

Video Title	Human Garbage... Are YOU?	Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians
<b>Image</b>	(IMAGE REDACTED)	(IMAGE REDACTED)
<b>User</b>	Yokeup	Crosisborg
<b>Date</b>	10-13 Jan 09	14 Jan 09
<b>Views/Comments</b>	N/A	2,384/107
<b>Time (min:secs)</b>	N/A	3:31

Table 4-2 gives information about the two videos included from the first exchange. Yokeup's initial video was removed soon after it was posted, but audio of the video was included in atheist philhellenes' 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) in which Yokeup can be heard using the term 'human garbage' and arguing that the Biblical parable of the vine and the branches from John 15 (p. 276) supported his use of the term. Responses to Yokeup's video by other

users suggest that the title of the video was 'Human Garbage...Are YOU?' and that it was posted between 10–13 January 2009. Audio and images from another video that Yokeup made during this time were extracted and remixed by theoriginalhamster in a video entitled 'yokeup the crackwhore' (V1). Both theoriginalhamster and philhellenes' videos, and Yokeup's subsequent argument in the videos entitled 'are YOU garbage in GOD's eyes?' (V11) and 'more on...human garbage' (V14) were, therefore, used in the analysis to recover the tone and content of the missing videos. In response to Yokeup, Croisborg posted a video entitled 'Yokeup: Poster Boy for Bad Christians' (V3) on 14 January 2009 arguing that Yokeup's 'bad behaviour' (V3:16) was unacceptable and calling on other users, both atheists and Christians, to condemn Yokeup.

**Table 4-3. Drama Exchange 2**


Video Title	YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.	A Spotlight.
<b>Image</b>		(IMAGE REDACTED)
<b>User</b>	philhellenes	PaulsEgo
<b>Date</b>	14 Jan 09	14 Jan 09
<b>Views/Comments</b>	17,510/613	13,058/266
<b>Time (min:secs)</b>	10:25	7:05

Table 4-3 gives information about the two videos included in the second exchange. In response to Yokeup's initial use of 'human garbage', philhellenes' 14 January 2009 video entitled 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) was made immediately after Yokeup's initial video and contains the extracted audio mentioned above. In the video, philhellenes angrily responded to Yokeup calling him a 'psychopath'. PaulsEgo responded with the video entitled 'A Spotlight.' (V6). In this video, PaulsEgo argued that although Yokeup's talk had been offensive, Yokeup's offensive language was ultimately positive because Yokeup represented 'real' Christianity and his offensive talk illustrated what was 'so bad' about Christian belief.

**Table 4-4. Drama Exchange 3**

Video Title	John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?	more on...human garbage
Image	(IMAGES REDACTED)	(IMAGES REDACTED)
User	ChristoferL	Yokeup
Date	15 Feb 09	17 Feb 09
Views/Comments	578/25	939/32
Time (min:secs)	4:54	6:03

Table 4-4 gives information about the third pair of videos. In this exchange, christoferL posted a video entitled 'John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12) which implicitly challenged Yokeup's exegesis of John 15 and argued that because the parable of the vine and the branches was directed at Jesus' disciples, it could not be used to describe the judgement of 'non-believers'. In response, Yokeup posted a video entitled 'more on...human garbage' (V14) in which he also questioned christoferL's exegesis of John 15 and reasserted his argument that his words were supported by the Bible. He also argued that 'people like christoferL' (V14:139) were more eager to be popular on YouTube than to follow the Bible.

#### **4.3.5 Transcription and Segmentation**

After the videos were identified, I transcribed the spoken language using intonation units (Chafe, 1994), following a full description of this methodology in Stelma and Cameron (2007). After the video talk was transcribed, I segmented the transcribed text for close discourse analysis (Section 4.3.4), following the procedure presented by Cameron and Maslen (2010a). Each segment represented a discourse action in the video, including greetings, introductions of topics, and closings. I segmented the videos when one or more of the following occurred:

- 1) Pauses
- 2) Discourse markers that explicitly signal a move to new activity (e.g., 'so' or 'now')
- 3) Changes in topic



- 4) Changes in address

Table 4-5 shows an example of the segmentation of the video entitled 'more on...human garbage' (V14).

**Table 4-5. Example of Video Segmentation**

---

**Video Title: more on...human garbage (V14)**

- 1. Video Introduction**
  - 2. Addressing christoferL** (topic change and change in address)
  - 3. John 15 Topic Introduction** (topic change)
    - a. Quoting christoferL's argument
      - i. Voicing christoferL's argument
    - b. Quoting christoferL's argument
  - 4. Challenging christoferL's position** (discourse marker 'but first off')
    - a. establishing his own position
  - 5. Return to presenting christoferL's argument** (discourse marker 'but')
  - 6. Countering christoferL** (discourse marker 'but')
    - a. reading of James 4:4
  - 7. Describing the categories of friend of the world/enemy of God** (discourse marker 'and')
    - a. Describing the ooshy-gooshies
    - b. Categorising friends of the world as enemies of god.
      - i. Re-establishing position
    - c. Describing the enemies of god
    - d. Describing people in Christ who are cut off
    - e. Identifying people in Christ who are cut off
      - i. Re-establishing position
  - 8. Conclusion** (change in topic)
    - a. Return to weather
    - b. Evangelical message
    - c. Closing
- 


The eight main segments of the video are numbered, with subheadings showing how the main topics were developed. Each of the main headings also shows the evidence in the discourse activity that suggested a new segment. For example, the second segment began when the address of the video changed from a general audience to a specific user (christoferL). Discourse markers (4–7) and changes in topic (2, 3, and 8) also showed when a new segment in the video began.

Following transcription and segmentation, all additional written text from the video page, including the video title, description, and tags were copied into a Word document containing the video transcript and comments and then

imported into the qualitative analysis software Atlas.TI (Muhr, 1993-2011). Atlas.TI enables analysts to gather large amounts of qualitative data into a single, searchable database, after which 'codes' or labels can be attached to words, images, videos, or extracts of text. Codes then can be organised into 'families' of related codes and queries can be made to investigate co-occurrence of codes or relationships between codes. I first coded all the participants and individuals that were mentioned on the video pages. This included all users who made comments, any reference to a user in a video or comment, and/or any reference to any individual either real or fictional throughout the whole of the dataset. Users who were known by more than one name or username (e.g., Yokeup, who had additional usernames including YokedtoJesus, and occasionally used his real name, Jeff) were included as a single representative code. Subsequent coding for metaphor use will be described below (Section 4.5.1).

In the thesis, I present my transcription of video talk as seen in Video Extract 4-1:

**Video Extract 4-1. 'I was wrong.' (V7:1–11)**

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
1	hi paul	 <b>I Was Wrong. (V7)</b> Posted 15/1/2009 by philhellenes 9037 views 109 comments 5:09 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJctXnFJTt4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJctXnFJTt4</a>
2	... youtube's a funny place	
3	innit	
4	...(2.0) you spend hours	
5	... watching somebody talk to you	
6	direct to cam	
7	...(1.5) and you get the feeling	
8	you know them	
9	I have that feeling about you	
10	we've only ever said	
11	<Q hi Q>	

In the caption for the video extract, the name of the video, and its position in the video corpus as well as the intonation units cited are presented in parentheses (i.e. V7:1–11). In the first column, the intonation units (labelled IU) are numbered. In the second column, the video transcript is presented. The markers <Q and Q> denote beginnings and ends of quoted speech, the marker <@> denotes laughter, and full stops denote pauses. One dot denotes a very brief pause, while three full stops denotes a long pause that is less than a second in duration. For pauses over one second, the length of the pause is denoted in parentheses as number of seconds. Actions which stop the flow of

talk are also marked within <> brackets. In the third column, information from the video is presented, including a screenshot, the title, the username of the individual who posted it, when it was posted, its total running time, the number of views and comments it had at the time of data collection, and the URL. Note that in most cases, the videos were subsequently removed and the URL no longer allows access to the video. Analysis of the video image was included as part of the discourse analysis of positioning, described in detail in Section 4.5.5.

I present comments extracts as in the following example (Comments Extract 4-1):

**Comments Extract 4-1. Straight up....Wolves and Garbage.. call it what it is (V16:726–728)**

---

Mk1615 (user comment)

I am really proud of you my brother...I love you man and I think you are doing a great work for the Lord. (V16:726–728)

---

In the caption of the extract, the name of the video, its position in the video corpus and the line numbers from the comments transcript are presented (i.e. V17:726–728). When more than one comment is included, the caption represents the key topic of the extracts. The username is included first (i.e. Mk1615) followed by the text of the comment. The text of the comment always appears as it was posted on the video page. I have maintained paragraph breaks in comments and, in all cases, produced the comments unedited.

#### **4.4 Ethical Considerations**

In CMC research, despite longstanding debate over the ethical issues of using online content in research, the consensus continues to be that public texts are free to use without consent while private texts require consent (Frankel & Siang, 1999; Herring, 1996; King, 1996; Morris, 2004; Walther, 2002). On YouTube, users can post a video privately or publish it publicly on the site. YouTube states explicitly in their user policy, 'Any videos that you submit to the YouTube Sites may be redistributed through the internet and other media channels, and may be viewed by the general public' (YouTube, 2008). YouTube also explicitly states copyright policy: 'When you create something original, you own the copyright for it. Likewise, when other people create content, they may have a copyright to it. As a creative community, its essential that everyone on YouTube

respect the copyrights of others' (YouTube, 2008). According to YouTube policy, YouTube videos are therefore protected and subject to the laws and rules surrounding the use of copyrighted materials.

I follow the British Association of Applied Linguistics guidelines on good practice for using Internet texts, which state that 'in reaching a decision on consent, researchers need to consider the venue being researched, and any site policy on research and informants' expectations. In the case of an open-access site, where contributions are publicly archived, and informants might reasonably be expected to regard their contributions as public, individual consent may not be required' (British Association of Applied Linguistics, 2006, p. 7). YouTube videos are public and subject to copyright law and, therefore, do not require informed consent. In terms of reproduction of images and texts, use of copyrighted material for research purposes is protected by fair use law in the US (United States Code, 1976) where many of the videos originate and by fair dealing laws in the UK ("Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988," 1988), where the research was primarily carried out.

With regard to the potential for harm to the participants that might occur from analysis of their videos, the videos analysed in this project were all made by adult users who appeared to be aware of YouTube policy about the publicly accessible nature of their work. Although their public position does not guarantee that users would not suffer harm from analysis of their videos, it does appear unlikely. Care was taken in the analysis not to favour any position in the 'human garbage' drama and to present all users with respect and deference. Given the nature of drama interaction, particularly the hateful descriptions of others, I also considered whether or not my analysis might give further voice to the antagonistic language contained in videos. Although I recognise the potential for hateful language to be spread with the dissemination of this research, its value in elucidating how disagreement and misunderstanding occurs between people of different beliefs and faith backgrounds outweighs the potential harm from repeating and reproducing the discourse activity. The value of this kind of research on inter-faith dialogue can be seen in the publication of my earlier work in the practitioner journal *The Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Pihlaja, 2010), and in comments made on the popular US-based

political blog 'The Huffington Post' (Stanton, 2010) about the application of my research.

The next section presents the processes of discourse analysis I used to answer my specific research questions, beginning with metaphor analysis.

## **4.5 Discourse Analysis**

### **4.5.1 Metaphor Analysis**

In Section 4.2, I showed that YouTube drama can emerge at several levels: in individual videos, in video threads, and over longer stretches with many different users responding to each other. Describing and analysing drama then requires analytic methods that provide for both local, micro-level analysis of discourse activity and macro-level analysis. As presented in Section 2.5, a discourse dynamics approach to metaphor provides a useful framework for analysing how individual instances of discourse activity develop into larger emergent systems. This approach treats metaphor as 'a temporary stability emerging from the activity of interconnecting systems of socially-situated language use and cognitive activity' (Cameron et al., 2009, p. 64) which is 'processual, emergent, and open to change' (p. 67). Cameron and colleagues (2010) have developed this theoretical understanding of metaphor into an established process of metaphor analysis, metaphor-led discourse analysis, which includes identifying metaphor vehicles in discourse, grouping vehicles by semantic relationship, constructing systematic metaphors, and analysing vehicle development in talk. I now outline the steps of my analytic process.

#### *4.5.1.1 Vehicle Identification*

I first identified metaphor vehicles in the whole of the dataset. Identification of metaphor followed a modified version of the Pragglejaz Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Cameron & Maslen, 2010a; Pragglejaz group, 2007). The Pragglejaz MIP follows:

1. The researcher familiarises her/himself with the discourse data.
2. The researcher works through the data looking for possible metaphors.
3. Each possible metaphor is checked for:
  - a. its meaning in the discourse context

- b. the existence of another, more basic meaning
  - c. an incongruity or contrast between these meanings, and a transfer from the basic to the contextual meaning.
4. If the possible metaphor satisfies each of the above, it is coded as metaphor, usually by underlining or listing. (Pragglejaz group, 2007, p. 3)

The key modification to this procedure is the identification of metaphor as vehicle term rather than only at the individual word level (Cameron & Maslen, 2010a). I used both the Oxford English and Merriam-Webster dictionaries to search for more basic meanings of words, and I identified metaphor vehicles in the dataset by underlining them. An example of the vehicles identification follows in Comments Extract 4-2:

#### **Comments Extract 4-2. Metaphor Identification Example**

---

I believe that a Christian's job is to work on their OWN life, before pointing out things to others, we SHOULD NOT JUDGE. I will not judge any of you.

---

In the extract, job, work, on, pointing, out, things, to, JUDGE, and judge were marked as metaphor vehicles. After piloting the metaphor identification of a single video page, consistency checks were performed by four metaphor scholars. This served as an informal inter-rater reliability check and discrepancies among vehicle identification were discussed before the procedure was undertaken on the remaining video pages in the dataset. In Chapter 5, metaphor vehicles are underlined in data extracts, and, unless obvious, when discussed in the text. Metaphor vehicle groupings (Section 4.5.1.2) and systematic metaphors (Section 4.5.1.4) will be presented in small italicised capital letters (e.g., *CHRISTIAN BELIEF IS MENTAL ILLNESS*).

The identification of metaphor initially proved difficult in marking vehicles in metaphorical stories, particularly those taken from the parables in the Bible. Where these metaphorical stories began and ended in the discourse activity was not always clear. Following the metaphor identification procedure, I constantly returned to whether or not a constituent element of a story had a more basic meaning when deciding to mark individual words as metaphor vehicles (see Section 5.4.2 for a further discussion of vehicle identification in

metaphorical stories). I coded all metaphor vehicles using Atlas.TI, and chose to code individual metaphor vehicles in consolidated forms to preserve a manageable number of codes for the grouping of metaphor vehicles in the next stage of analysis. For example, I chose to use the singular form of words, such as 'lion' for instances of the words 'lions' and one code for all tenses of a verb, such as 'look' for 'looked' or 'looking'. This reduced the number of codes and allowed for simpler searches and groupings of codes. I also used single codes for phrasal verbs, compound nouns, and proper nouns rather than coding them as two more codes. A screenshot of the Atlas.TI coding (p. 278) and all vehicle types (p. 285) are included in the Appendix.

All prepositions which were used with potential metaphoric meaning were also marked in the dataset. Prepositions that collocated with metaphorical verbs were, in most cases, marked as metaphor as in pointing out...to in Comments Extract 4-2, and the commonly occurring collocations of remain in and look at. In instances where the verb was not used metaphorically, the preposition was normally not marked as a metaphor, with the key exception of believe in which occurred regularly in the dataset. Given the nature of the discourse activity in which users discussed Biblical metaphorical language at length, physical action was very rarely described.

#### *4.5.1.2 Vehicle Grouping*

Metaphor vehicles were then grouped together in 'code families' in Atlas.TI. The grouping of vehicles followed the process established by Cameron, Low, and Maslen (2010) to identify potential systematic metaphor use in discourse activity. In this process, metaphor vehicles are grouped together and labelled based on semantic field. For example, brilliance, glitter, sparkle, and enlighten among other vehicles shared a semantic field of *LIGHT* and were, therefore, grouped together. The process of grouping metaphor vehicles cannot be, however, a totally objective process, and Cameron, Low, and Maslen (2010) emphasise the need for flexibility and recursion in grouping metaphor vehicles.

Initially, I grouped by semantic field, employing the following categories used by Cameron and colleagues (2009):

**Table 4-6. Vehicle Groupings (from Cameron et al., 2009)**

<i>BALANCE</i>	<i>FOLLOWING-LEADING</i>	<i>PHYSICAL ACTION</i>
<i>BLOW</i>	<i>FORM</i>	<i>POINT</i>
<i>BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES</i>	<i>GAME</i>	<i>READING-WRITING</i>
<i>BUILDING</i>	<i>GIVING-TAKING</i>	<i>RELIGION</i>
<i>CIRCLE</i>	<i>HARD</i>	<i>SEEING</i>
<i>CLEAN-DIRTY</i>	<i>HOME</i>	<i>SORT</i>
<i>COMMERCE</i>	<i>HORIZONTAL (LANDSCAPE)</i>	<i>SOUND</i>
<i>CONCEALMENT</i>	<i>HOT-COLD</i>	<i>SPEAKING/LISTENING</i>
<i>CONCRETISING</i>	<i>INCLINE</i>	<i>STRENGTH</i>
<i>CONNECT-SEPARATE</i>	<i>LABEL</i>	<i>SUPPORT</i>
<i>CONSTRAINT</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>THEATRE/STORIES</i>
<i>CONTAINER</i>	<i>MACHINE</i>	<i>VIOLATE/LIMITS</i>
<i>CRAZY/WILD</i>	<i>MILITARY</i>	<i>WATER</i>
<i>DEPTH</i>	<i>MOVEMENT</i>	<i>COMPONENT PARTS</i>
<i>DIMENSION</i>	<i>NATURAL WORLD</i>	<i>THING</i>
<i>FEELING</i>	<i>NUMBER</i>	<i>EXPLETIVE</i>
<i>FINDING-LOSING</i>	<i>OPEN-CLOSE</i>	<i>OTHER</i>

After initial grouping of the vehicles, I discarded several groupings which contained no vehicles (including *HOME* and *HARD*) and evaluated the *OTHER* grouping for patterns among vehicles potentially forming new groupings. I also considered the labels for the groupings from the list and renamed several to better fit the vehicles in the dataset. For example, I chose to label the grouping of *WILD/CRAZY* more precisely as *MENTAL ILLNESS* given the vehicles contained in the grouping. I also chose to group all *EXPLETIVE* vehicles in semantic groupings rather than have a separate grouping.

#### 4.5.1.3 Topic Identification

After identifying metaphor vehicles and grouping them, I attempted to identify the topics of the metaphor vehicles where possible. Although Cameron, Low, and Maslen (2010) note that topics can be difficult to identify, particularly in spoken discourse, within the CofP, instances of explicit categorisation of others (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6) employing metaphorical language often included a clear topic, such as 'Yokeup is a psychopath' and 'Crosisborg is human garbage'.

Biblical metaphor used to describe spiritual experience, however, proved particularly difficult in topic identification. Vehicles such as 'hearing God's voice' were used to describe spiritual experiences for which a concrete description is



not made explicit. Biblical metaphorical language also presented difficulties when metaphor vehicles served as topics in metaphors quoted from the Bible, such as those in the parable of the vine and branches: remaining in Christ is being connected to a vine. A concrete topic for remaining in Christ is not present in the Bible and development of the vehicles in the discourse activity suggested that users again employed the term to describe a spiritual experience that could not be expressed as a concrete process.

To help resolve this issue, after identification of explicit topics, and following Cameron, Low, and Maslen (2010), a refined set of key discourse topics was developed, based on the aims and goals of the research. As this research aims to describe the development of YouTube drama, I chose topics which highlighted user responses to drama and evaluation of self and others' actions. The discourse topic of the drama was Yokeup's use of the term human garbage and his development of vehicles from the parable of the vine and branches to justify its use. Since all videos were made in response to this action, the data collection procedure limited the topics of videos and comments to how a user responded to Yokeup, how a user responded to another user's response to Yokeup, and/or how Yokeup's use of scripture either represented or misrepresented the Bible or Christian theology. Given my aims and the particular importance of responding to others, justifying one's own words, and arguing about the Bible, the following key discourse topics were employed:

- Responding to and evaluating the actions (A) and character (B) of others (Coded as DT1A&B)
- Evaluating and describing one's own actions (A) and character (B) (Coded as DT2A&B)
- Bible and theology, including explicit and implicit reference to the text and/or talk about Christian theology (coded as DT3)
- Topics outside the interests of the research (Coded as DT4)

These discourse topics allowed me to deduce the topics of many of the ambiguous vehicles. Above I mentioned the how Biblical language such as remain in Christ presented difficulties when attempting to identify topics. By investigating surrounding talk which included, for example, a positive response

to another user's actions, concrete actions which were also described in tandem with the remain in vehicle could be used to identify a potential metaphor topic (e.g., loving others). Further, even when metaphors had explicit topics and vehicles (as in the case of Yokeup is a psychopath), identifying the user talk about the actions associated with the vehicle showed how it was redeployed to new topics or used without an explicit topic in subsequent development. In the case of the psychopath vehicle, knowing which concrete actions were described in proximity to the vehicle's use showed the contextual meaning of psychopath. With this information, I was then able to analyse how individual metaphor use may have contributed to an emerging systematic metaphor in the discourse activity (Section 5.3.4).

#### 4.5.1.4 Systematic Metaphor

Connections among vehicles identified in discourse activity were then considered and systematic metaphors were constructed, again following Cameron, Low, and Maslen (2010). I investigated metaphors in which 'connected vehicle words or phrases [were] used metaphorically about a particular topic' (Cameron et al., 2010, p. 127). For example, after identifying the metaphor Yokeup is a psychopath in the user philhellenes' video entitled 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5), I investigated other vehicles in the *MENTAL ILLNESS* grouping, describing the systematic metaphor as *CHRISTIAN BELIEF IS MENTAL ILLNESS*. After constructing systematic metaphors in this way, I then compared results across the videos employing both the vehicle groupings and the metaphor density figures (Section 4.5.1.7) to see if the same or different systematic metaphor had emerged across the dataset or if it was limited to one or several video pages.

After identifying systematic metaphors and focusing on the aims and goals of the research, I analysed which metaphors contributed to the development of drama by considering systematic metaphor use in tandem with the additional discourse analysis of categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning outlined below. Considering the research aims, I focused my analysis on systematic metaphors which were central to the 'human garbage' drama; that is, first, they contributed implicitly or explicitly to the 'antagonistic debate' among users; and second, they provided insights about user beliefs, values, and expectations,

particularly in how they emerged from use by different individuals. I looked particularly at systematic metaphors which were used in disparate ways by opposing users (particularly users who were self-proclaimed Christians and those who were self-proclaimed atheists) to see what the metaphor use revealed about users' different positions.

#### *4.5.1.5 Narrative Systematicity and Metaphor Trajectories*

After the initial grouping of vehicles by semantic field, I also grouped vehicles based on narrative systematicity, including vehicles which were constituent parts of metaphorical stories that were told explicitly in video talk and subsequently developed by users in comments and responses. In analysis of narrative systematicity and its role in drama, I focused on the action that metaphor accomplished, looking specifically at instances when metaphor shifting (Section 2.5, Table 2-2) was contested or led to further disagreement among users. I also investigated if and how metaphors which showed narrative systematicity tied the immediate context to more 'enduring themes' (Gibbs, 2011) and whether or not the themes revealed anything about the users' own beliefs, values, and expectations about, in particular, social interaction on the site.

I exercised caution in this process because tracing metaphor use over time on YouTube can be difficult. Cameron and colleagues' (2009) used data from speakers in real time engaged in prolonged conversation, but YouTube discourse activity, and in particular vlogs in which one speaker addresses a camera without interaction with another user, does not include real-time interaction. Comments can occur after the posting of a video and are generally oriented towards the video talk, but users do not necessarily read others' comments or watch an entire video and caution must be taken in mapping connections and the 'trace' of a metaphor on a video page. Although the chronology of videos can be observed based on their posting date, the chronology of subsequent comments, and how many or which comments a user has read before posting their own comment, can be difficult to deduce. Commenters can also watch videos in any order after they have been posted, so a user may have watched a video posted on 2 February before watching a video posted on 30 January, and their comment could subsequently refer to

both videos. To account for this difference in investigations of connections between metaphors, I adapted the analytic procedure to begin by identifying all the metaphors in video talk and then investigating whether or not the same metaphors and/or vehicles from the same groupings were used in comments rather than investigating metaphor use trajectory in comments sections.

#### *4.5.1.6 Biblical-related Metaphor*

In the process of grouping vehicles by semantic and narrative systematicity, a useful 'Bible' grouping emerged as particular to the dataset; that is, metaphor vehicles that alluded to or made explicit or implicit reference to the Bible. The process of constructing the grouping included identifying vehicles that were explicitly used in reference to Bible (as in the reading of John 15 which occurred regularly in the dataset) as well as vehicles that did not have a direct reference, but appeared to be taken from the Bible. In these cases, I searched different versions of the Bible using an online resource, Bible Gateway (n.d.), to confirm if the vehicle was in the Bible and if the usage could potentially allude to the passage. I discuss the findings related to the Bible grouping in Section 5.2.3.

#### *4.5.1.7 Metaphor Density and Distribution*

Finally, following Cameron (2003), metaphor density was calculated. After excluding text that was automatically generated on the YouTube page which was not coded for metaphor vehicles (including usernames on comments) and transcription notes, I calculated the overall metaphor density of the entire video page corpus as well as the metaphor density for each grouping of vehicles by counting the number of occurrences of a vehicles from a single grouping, dividing by the adjusted number of words in the corpus, and multiplying by 1,000. I also calculated the distribution of individual vehicles in the same way. Using this information, I analysed whether or not vehicles occurred regularly across all videos or if they occurred in clusters (Cameron & Stelma, 2004). This information was then used to support analyses of groupings and trajectories of metaphorical stories, suggesting which vehicles and groupings were most prominent.

Findings from the analysis of metaphor were then used as the basis for further analysis of categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning and findings from those analyses were then used to modify and reconsider analysis of metaphor.

#### **4.5.2 Categorisation**

In Section 2.4, I presented several different approaches to categorisation including Wittgenstein's (1953) family resemblance, Rosch's (1973, 1978) prototype theory of categorisation, Billig's (1985, 1996) opposition between categorisation and particularisation, and self-categorisation theory (Turner & Hogg, 1987). I then presented Sack's theoretical concept of membership categorisation devices (Sacks, 1992) and the development of membership categorisation analysis (Eglin & Hester, 1992; Hester & Eglin, 1997; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002) as a useful tool for describing the construction and use of categories. Now, I describe how I have adapted membership categorisation analysis to meet the needs of my research questions and context.

Analysis following Sacks (1992) has been used by researchers to trace how categories are produced in interaction, which categories they co-occur with, and what membership categorisation devices (i.e. collections of categories with rules of application) are present. Housley and Fitzgerald's reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis (MCA) (2002) adapts Sacks' notion of the membership categorisation device. As I noted in Section 2.4, in contrast to Sacks' original conception of the membership categorisation device as a 'pre-existing apparatus' (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 15), Housley and Fitzgerald do not pre-suppose relationships between predicates, and collections and devices based on prior 'common sense' knowledge about categories. Rather, they see devices as emerging from the interaction of cognitive processes and context.

As I stated in Section 2.4, I refer to 'categories', rather than 'membership categories' to differentiate my use of a 'category' as any label of an individual or group, from an understanding of 'membership categories' as a 'filing system' for common place knowledge (Schegloff, 2007, p. 469). In the same way, I refer to 'categorisation devices' rather than 'membership categorisation devices', treating them not as a decontextualised 'pre-existing apparatuses' (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 15), but as a dynamic and situated processes of using a collection of categories to differentiate among individuals in a population,

dependent on 'relevance, activity and context' (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 68).

Housley and Fitzgerald also state that categorisation analysis has been historically perceived as concerned with 'categorisation and the display of categories and their associated predicates' while conversation analysis has been perceived as being concerned with 'sequential organisation of conversation' (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 71). This, they argue, is not necessarily helpful because sequentiality plays an important role in how categories are heard and how they come to be tied to predicates in conversation. In the YouTube context, the sequence of categorisation is also important, both on the video page level and in the ongoing interaction among users over time. First, as videos are produced before comments, they influence how discourse activity develops in comments sections and, potentially, foreground certain categories. And second, as videos are often responses to other users, the categories, predicates, and categorisation devices in previous videos may also have an impact on how categorisation is accomplished on subsequent videos pages.

Building on Housley and Fitzgerald's work, I adapted the key analytic concepts of the reconsidered model of MCA to analyse the contextual categorisation of users within the three drama exchanges contained in the larger video corpus (Section 4.3.4) taking into account the sequential development of drama. I first described the individual, constituent elements of categorisation, including category-bound activities and predicates, potential collections of categories, and implicit and explicit (standardised) relational pairs, in all the elements of the video page transcripts. I identified category-bound activities as actions (such as, 'having a salvation moment' in the example below) linking subjects and objects (see Transcription Grid, Section 4.5.4), and category-bound predicates as any other characteristics of a category that did not necessarily involve actions. Potential collections (such as, 'types of Christians') and relational pairs of categories (such as, 'religious' and 'saved') were also identified as two or more categories that were related in the discourse activity, either through adjacency or semantic meaning.

To describe the sequential development of categories in user talk, I also used a transcription grid (Section 4.5.4) noting where category-bound activities were shared among more than one category and how users employed them in different ways over time. Next, the development of the individual components of categorisation on the video page were identified and shifts in uses recorded. I then constructed potential categorisation devices where categories were used, and noted how different users employed the same or similar categories within different devices. Finally, to answer the research questions and aims, I looked in more detail at examples on categorisation devices which were either the main topics of videos and/or disputed or developed by commenters and in video responses to investigate the role of categorisation in the development of drama.

An example of analysis of categorisation in the dataset is shown in Video Extract 4-2:

**Video Extract 4-2. I doubt JezuzFreek is saved... (V15:65–83)**

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
65	but one interesting thing	<b>I doubt JezuzFreek is saved... (V15)</b> posted 25/2/2009 by Yokeup 2,426 views 93 comments 9:54 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAm5HUfSO4U">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAm5HUfSO4U</a>
66	that-	
67	that I've been thinking about	
68	I wonder if jezuzfreek is saved	
69	.. I-I wonder if he's had a	
70	salvation moment	
71	I wonder if paula's saved	
72	if she's had a	
73	salvation moment	
74	and	
75	you know	
76	I-I wonder <@> about a lot of people	
77	..a lot of people that claim to be christians	
78	and it seems to be a theme in the	
79	baptist community	
80	you know	
81	.. are they religious	
82	or are they	
83	saved	

Here, the Christian Yokeup is speaking about another user in the CofP, jezuzfreek777. In describing jezuzfreek777, Yokeup uses two categories: 'religious' (V15:81) and 'saved' (V15:68 & 83), and uses the category-bound activity of 'having a salvation moment' (V15:69–70) to differentiate between the two. Additionally, 'claim(ing) to be a Christian' (V15:77) was identified as the category-bound activity of the 'religious'. A potential categorisation device of 'types of Christians' was then constructed as Yokeup, at this moment in the

discourse activity, appeared to be differentiating between two kinds of Christians. As the discourse activity continued in the video, I traced whether or not these activities were consistently used in the 'types of Christians' device, whether other category-bound activities were offered, and/or whether new devices were used either to build on or to contrast with this device. I then compared and contrasted this particular 'types of Christians' device with other 'types of Christians' devices employed by other users. I investigated the ways in which users employed similar or contrasting devices in their own discourse activity and whether or not consistencies among users could be observed.

Although explicit categorisation with explicit reference to category-bound activities was present in discourse activity, in many cases (particularly in very short comments), the category-bound activities which linked the subjects to the objects were implicit. For example, in the comment 'Yokeup is a sick twisted asshole' (V5:1523), no category-bound activities or predicates were present in the comment and the user did not post any more comments on the page. Where category-bound activities were not explicitly stated, following work by Eglin and Hester (2003) that investigated the construction of the category of 'feminist' in the context of discourse activity about a single event (the Montreal Massacre), I looked for the same categories ('sick' and 'asshole') with explicit category-bound activities at other places on the video page. In this case, the commenter repeated two categories from the video talk in which philhellenes' description of Yokeup as 'sick' and an 'asshole'. The category-bound activities in philhellenes' discourse activity, namely, 'speaking in a hateful way' and 'using the Bible to justify bad behaviour' (V3:16) could therefore potentially be used to elucidate the meaning of the commenter's categorisation.

After piloting the procedure on a single video page, I then followed the same procedure on the remaining four videos in the drama exchanges. The action of categorisation was then considered in tandem with positioning, impoliteness, and metaphor analysis, to identify how categorisation contributed to the development of drama.

### **4.5.3 Impoliteness**

In Section 2.3.1, I presented several different approaches to impoliteness and presented the following description from Culpeper (2011):



Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organisation, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered "impolite" – when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be.

(Culpeper, 2011, p. 23)

Importantly, this description emphasises the situated and binary nature of impoliteness in which a behaviour (i.e. actions and words) is accomplished by one person and viewed negatively by another. Because the negative attitude is sustained by 'expectations, desires, and/or beliefs about social organisation', analysis of impoliteness in interaction must take into account how different individuals view the same interaction as well as take into account differences in expectations, particularly in conflict situations like drama.

As I have reviewed in Section 2.3, impoliteness in online interaction has been of substantial interest. Research has shown that although impoliteness on YouTube is present and perceived as frequent (Alonzo & Aiken, 2004; Burgess & Green, 2008; Lange, 2007a; O'Sullivan & Flanagin, 2003), and that user perceptions of interaction on the site are complicated (Lange, 2007b), an important gap remains. Although much has been done to elucidate how users experience negative interaction on the site, this work has not been situated among particular user groups over time. To investigate drama in a particular CofP requires, therefore, an adaptation of previous work into online interaction to analyse impoliteness in the drama (Section 4.3.4).

Studies such as those by Lorenzo-Dus, Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, and Bou-Franch (2011) and Moor, Heuvelman, and Verleur (2010) have employed corpus analysis of YouTube comments and/or questionnaire responses from users to analyse impoliteness strategies as well as to describe user perception of impoliteness. YouTube drama, however, and impoliteness are not necessarily equivalent. 'YouTube drama', as I explained in Section 4.2, includes 'antagonistic debate between one or more YouTubers' (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 98), and suggests more than simply an isolated instance of words causing offence, but an ongoing disagreement in which impoliteness is present. To investigate impoliteness in YouTube drama, therefore, research tools must

describe both instances of impoliteness in individual videos and their effect on the development of drama.

Angouri and Tseliga's (2010) analysis of impoliteness in interaction in two online CofP provides a potentially useful example of research which balances analysis of micro-level interaction with the analysis of macro-level phenomena. In their work, 'impolite talk' was considered on several levels, from the spellings of individual words to analysis of interaction over time, including messages and responses. Their findings then show how im/politeness is 'embedded in the micro (discourse) and macro (social) context' (2010, p. 57), making a connection between individual instances of discourse activity and the situated, unique social reality that interaction creates for users in a particular environment.

To describe impoliteness and investigate the relationship between impoliteness and dominance in discourse activity, the following process was developed:

- 1) Identify impoliteness in discourse activity:
  - a) speaker reports an impolite intention  
and/or
  - b) uptake indicates hearer has taken offence from speaker's words  
and/or
  - c) speaker's words take the form of impolite language occurring elsewhere  
in the dataset.
- 2) Categorise forms of impoliteness.
- 3) Describe how users respond to impoliteness and how these responses developed into drama.
- 4) Describe the co-occurrence of impoliteness and dominance and analysing the role of impoliteness in dominance.

To describe impoliteness, I adapted the forms compiled in Hardaker (2010). Although Hardaker's study of 'trolling' is fundamentally different in both aim and scope (as she attempted to produce an academic definition of an emic, user term), employing previous descriptions of impoliteness to describe interaction within YouTube serves as a useful starting point for credible distinctions about user interactions. I also chose to adapt the descriptions to take into account Culpeper's (2011) description of impoliteness and concerns about intention (Section 2.3.1):

- *Malicious impoliteness*: A user's behaviour (i.e. words and/or actions) explicitly conveyed the intent of causing offence and others viewed the behaviour negatively.
- *Non-malicious impoliteness*: User behaviour was presented without malice, but the speaker conveyed an anticipation that the behaviour may cause offence and attempted to mitigate it.
- *Mock impoliteness*: User behaviour was offensive in a friendly way without the presentation of malicious intent, and the behaviour was not viewed negatively by others.
- *Failed politeness*: A user's behaviour had an absence of appropriately polite behaviour, but the user did not convey an awareness that their behaviour may be perceived as impolite.
- *Failed malicious impoliteness*: A user presented their actions as attempting to cause offence, but others did not recognise it as such and, therefore, did not take offence.
- *Thwarted impoliteness*: User behaviour was offensive and the user presented malicious intent. Others, however, frustrated or thwarted the impolite behaviour, by not being offended, and/or either taking no action, or countering with sarcasm, contempt, or amusement.

Rather than attempt to deduce the intention of a speaker, I only analysed how a user portrayed their own intention and/or how others perceived their intention. I employed a confirmable approach of describing impoliteness by focusing on reports of, and responses to, actions and words that were viewed negatively by users and checking for empirical evidence of either user awareness of causing offence and/or others taking offence. For example, 'malicious impoliteness' was identified by finding evidence that a user was aware their words and/or actions would be viewed negatively, but made no attempt to mitigate the perception and the words and/or actions were viewed negatively. Examples of this were most frequently seen in comments where negative evaluations of others, such as 'Yokeup is an idiot', did not attempt to mitigate the perception of the comment. Conversely, 'non-malicious impoliteness' was identified when a user conveyed that they were aware their words and/or actions may cause offence and made

an attempt to mitigate the offence. For example, in PaulsEgo's response to philhellenes, he said that he did not want his disagreement with philhellenes to be viewed negatively, but anticipated that others might view it in this way. I included all forms from Hardaker's list, but no clear examples of 'failed impoliteness' nor 'failed malicious impoliteness' were identified. Because the potential of these impoliteness forms to occur within YouTube drama appeared possible, I included them in my procedure to maintain a transferable analytic process.

To accurately describe impoliteness, I took into account both reports of intention to cause offence by the speaker and evidence in the uptake of respondents or commenters that the words and/or actions of another user were viewed negatively. This categorisation was, however, dynamic and dependent on the context in which a stretch of talk or comment occurred. Shifts were identified when the same words and/or actions were presented or heard differently in the course of interactions. For example, Yokeup's initial categorisation of the Crosisborg as 'human garbage' was 'malicious impoliteness' because of the offence present in Crosisborg's uptake and because no evidence in Yokeup's talk or response to Crosisborg suggested that Crosisborg had reconstructed Yokeup's intent wrongly. However, in subsequent uses of 'human garbage', Yokeup's use of the term was non-malicious impoliteness because he recognised the term might cause offence, and attempted to mitigate it by claiming the term was not his own, but derived from the Bible. The different presentations and uses of the same term meant that the form of impoliteness changed.

I next analysed the relationship between dominance and impoliteness. I employed Wartenberg's definition of 'power over' another to describe instances of 'dominance' in the CofP; that is, 'A social agent *A* has *power over* another social agent *B* if and only if *A* strategically constrains *B*'s action-environment.' (Wartenberg, p. 90). In Wartenberg's definition of power strategically limiting another's action-environment was considered taking a position of power (1990), not unlike Robert's (2006) description of power in a CofP as limiting another member's ability to fully participate in the CofP. When one user's description of another resulted in impoliteness and/or a user encouraged others to take action

against another user, an attempt to limit the other's action-environment and was identified.

After piloting the analysis on a single video, I followed the procedure on all five videos in the drama exchanges. Finally, as with analysis of metaphor and categorisation, the action of impoliteness was then considered in tandem with categorisation, metaphor, and positioning analyses to identify how impoliteness contributed to the development of drama.

#### **4.5.4 Transcription Grid**

To aid in synthesis of the individual components of the linguistic analysis outlined above in the three drama exchanges, the transcripts from the video pages were pasted into the transcription grid seen in Table 4-7.

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Table 4-7. Example of Transcription Grid

IU	Transcript	Metaphor	Categorisation	Impoliteness		
8	<u>share</u> the truth	With the vehicle <u>share</u> , Yokeup establishes his talk as a good thing he will give to viewer.  <u>Word</u> as a metonymy for the Bible.		Yokeup does not present the Bible passage as malicious impoliteness, but as the word of God that he is repeating and sharing with the viewer.		
9	<u>share</u> the love					
10	<u>share</u> the					
11	.. gospel of jesus christ					
12	I'm gonna to the book of john					
13	... I'm gonna <u>go to</u> the book of john					
14	ver-					
15	uh					
16	chapter 15					
17	... (2.0) because it's God's <u>word</u>					
18	now I want you to-					
19	I want you to listen to this					
20	... I'm gonna start at verse one					
21	chapter 15 verse 1					
22	.. um					
23	it <u>says</u>					
24	<Q I am the true <u>vine</u>				Introduction of metaphorical story of the vine from John 15, taken directly from the text of the Bible. Introduction of <i>FAMILY</i> vehicles with God is a <u>father</u> .	Category of 'father' implies category of 'child of god'.  Opposing categories are implied through opposing metaphorical category bound activities: bearing/not bearing fruit.
25	and my <u>father</u> is <u>vine dresser</u>					
26	.. every .. <u>branch</u> in me					
27	that does not <u>bear fruit</u>					
28	.. he <u>takes away</u>					
29	and every <u>branch</u> that <u>bears fruit</u>					
30	he <u>prunes</u> Q>					
31	all the glory honour and praise					
32	<u>goes to</u> God					
33	without					
34	him	The metonymy of God's <u>word</u> is literalised as the words of Jesus. <u>Red ink</u> as a <i>BIBLE</i> vehicle highlights that the quote is Jesus' exact words.				
35	we can do					
36	<u>nothing</u>					
37	<u>period</u>					
38	<u>end of story</u>					
39	.. that's the words—					
40	this is all <u>red ink</u>					

Table 4-7 shows a transcription grid section for the video entitled 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5), in which Yokeup is heard speaking about his use of 'human garbage'. In the first two columns, the line numbers for the intonation unit (IU) and transcript can be seen. In the subsequent column, notes from the metaphor analysis have been included followed by notes for categorisation and impoliteness. The notes correspond on the page with the relevant stretch of talk and overlap between any one of the three linguistic elements can then be clearly observed. For example, where the metaphor 'God is a father' is identified, the implicit category of 'child of god' is also identified. Each column was completed in the first instance independently and then revised as connections between the columns were considered, making potential interaction between metaphor vehicles, categorisation, and impoliteness evident. An example of the extended transcription as well as comment grids can be seen in the Appendices 4 and 5.

#### **4.5.5 Positioning**

In Section 2.2.4, I reviewed several different theories of community, including speech community theory (1972a, 1989), social network theory (Daugherty et al., 2005), and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981, 1983; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). To take account of the unique nature of YouTube as an open virtual space with no gatekeeping mechanism and following Angouri and Tseliga's (2010) investigation of impoliteness in online fora, I offered Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice theory as the best framework to describe the users interacting on YouTube. Given the dynamic nature of drama, I further proposed using Harré and van Langenhove's (1998) positioning theory to describe and analyse positions users took within the CofP. In this section, I briefly discuss what discourse analysis employing positioning theory attempts to accomplish and why it is useful for this study.

Harré and colleagues (2009) describe the work of the positioning analyst as 'display[ing] the positions that seem to have been immanent in an interaction in

a description of the norms' (p. 9). Positioning analysis has been employed in descriptions of conflict to uncover symmetrical storylines told by opponents, by displaying how people 'define and allocate positions for their rivals' (Harré, 2000; Harré et al., 2009, p. 9). Because positions are not static 'roles', the positioning analyst takes into account how positions shift over time, including within individual instances of discourse activity. Positions are dynamic, but can also be stable over time, or shift gradually or immediately, depending on the context of any given stretch of discourse activity or the social situation.

Analysis of positioning can also be used to see how individuals take similar positions in different contexts. For example, in Jones' (2006) analysis of elderly people's narratives about age categories, interviews were used to produce narratives about ageing. The analyst served as interviewer, prompting particular narrative oriented towards a particular topic, and then used narrative analysis to describe how speakers defined and allocated positions within their talk. The unit of analysis was the narrative from the interview, and the analyst interviewed 23 individuals and also compared how participants positioned themselves and other 'older people' in their separate narratives, producing an analysis that took into account both individual narratives and how norms emerged across the narratives. In addition to spoken discourse activity, both Harré's (2000) study of the positions allocated in discourse activity about terrorism and Sabat's (2003) studies of malignant positioning in talk about Alzheimer's patients included additional texts, such as newspaper articles, speeches as well as interaction between speakers. By comparing narratives and investigating similarities and differences, a macro-level understanding of how individual narratives relate to a larger social world and how different people talk about the world in different ways could be accomplished.

Building on these methods, I first adapted Jones' (2006) approach to narrative analysis of positioning for the YouTube video page, treating the video talk as the primary unit of analysis. After completing the procedures described in Sections 4.5.1–4.5.3 identifying metaphor, categorisation, and impoliteness in the video page transcripts, I began by describing explicit first and second-order positioning (Section 2.2.5, p. 35). I began my description of user positions by analysing video talk, building on analysis of categorisation because explicit



positioning often occurred as a categorisation. For example, the categorisation of some users as 'the lost' by a Christian was also an explicit positioning of these users. Descriptions of implicit positioning then followed from description of explicit positions, particular when user positioning of another implied a position for the speaker. For example, whenever a user read aloud from the Bible, they took an implicit position for themselves as a 'scriptural authority', often contrasting with the explicit or implicit positioning of another user as ignorant of the Bible.

Following this analysis, I analysed the effect of user positioning. In Sabat's (2003) definition, 'malignant positioning' has a negative effect on how a person is subsequently treated by others. The effect of malignant positioning can, therefore, be traced by investigating how individuals respond to the positioning of another. Within the YouTube context, responses to positioning can be seen in comments sections and video responses, showing what effect user positioning has on the discourse activity of others. When, for example, Croisborg accomplishes a malignant positioning of Yokeup as 'American White Trash' in the video entitled 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3), the negative effect of the positioning can be seen in the comments section when commenters respond by treating Yokeup negatively. When user positioning of another resulted in a negative response, I then described that positioning as malignant. Analysis of malignant positioning added to analysis of impoliteness by providing a description of potential negative effects of, in particular, malicious impoliteness.

After describing positioning, I then investigated how positions defined and allocated within individual videos followed particular 'storylines'. Because positioning analysis followed from metaphor, categorisation, and impoliteness analyses, in constructing potential storylines, I was able to return to the metaphorical stories users told, user discourse activity which employed categories derived from the Bible, and negative attitudes towards certain words and/or interactions, in describing how storylines emerged in talk and what moral authority the users accepted. For example, users employed Biblical parables and categories to position themselves and others, establishing the Bible as a moral authority and following storylines derived from the text. After constructing

storylines from user talk, I then compared them across the video pages to investigate similarities and differences among users, particularly as they related to the positions users defined and allocated in the interactions.

Unlike audio recordings and written texts analysed in the work of Sabat (2003) and Jones (2006), YouTube videos offer another important layer of positioning in the visual and physical presentation of the speaker. The physical position a speaker takes as well as other non-verbal features of the video (including positioning of the camera, lighting, audio quality, and video effects) are an important part of implicit positioning in YouTube discourse activity. The need to take into account multimodal features of online video was identified before the founding of YouTube (Herring, 2004a), and is a particularly relevant concern for analysis of YouTube interaction, where the image is potentially a key element of the video page. Contemporary tools for analysis of multimodal texts, particularly online video, based in Kress and van Leeuwen's work applying systemic functional grammar principles to analyse images have been especially influential (Kress, 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006) with key concepts such as sign, mode, medium, frame, and site of display (Bezemer & Kress, 2008). Multimodality is now a well-established field for analysis with a growing diversity in approaches (Jewitt, 2009), but remains closely tied to systemic functional grammar, treating interaction and communication as the making of signs in different modalities, the meanings of which are then co-constructed in interaction (Kress, 2009). The focus of the investigation is then the recovery of meaning in interaction rather than emergent social phenomena.

Although some overlap might be seen between interactional co-construction of meaning through use of signs and a discourse dynamics approach to language, since both theories conceive of meaning as dynamic and contextual, the 'social semiotics' approach of Kress and others is concerned with the apparatus by which this meaning is constructed. A discourse dynamics approach, by contrast, focuses on a description of component interaction, in which 'linguistic and cognitive phenomena are processes, flows or movement, rather than as objects' (Cameron, 2010a, p. 81). Although a 'social semiotic' approach to multimodal analysis is not essential to investigating the field of multimodality, it does limit the usefulness of more established methods of analysis in this project. More

practically, as the research questions foreground the development of drama in discourse activity, analysis focuses primarily on how language use contributes to drama.

Because of the centrality of verbal and written communication on video pages and the research focus, aims, and questions, this project foregrounds analysis of discourse activity in drama. The vlogs analysed in this research consist primarily of users speaking directly to a camera with the framing of the user's face or body stable over the course of the recording. In several instances, audio from another user's video is extracted and replayed, but no videos include appearances by more than one user. Presentation of self, however, including how a user dresses, where they position the camera, where they shoot the video as well as the tone of their voice and gestures are potentially additional elements which could factor in how a user is perceived by others online and there is evidence that multimodal interactional elements can be fundamentally important to how a particular interaction develops (Cienki, 2010). Taking into account the kind of videos which I analysed, I chose to include the image as part of my analysis of the positioning. I first described how positions were defined and allocated in user discourse activity and then returned to the video image to analyse how positioning in discourse activity was embodied in the video image. For example, in the video entitled 'John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12), the user christoferL positions himself as a friend of both atheists and Christians and a screenshot from the video can be seen in Figure 4-2:

## Figure 4-2. 'John 15 for Dummies' screenshot

(IMAGES REDACTED)

NB Video still taken at 0:40 from christoferL's video titled 'John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12) (see Appendix 1, p. 273).

christoferL presents himself seated and apparently reading from notes he has made, including a passage of the Bible. He speaks directly into the camera, and does not frame the image above or below his line of sight, emphasising his position of equality with the hearer. After comparing the physical position of the video maker with the discourse positioning in the video talk, I then compared physical positioning in all the videos in the drama exchanges (Section 4.3.4), investigating whether users employed the same or different physical positions and whether or not physical positioning always reflected user positioning in discourse activity.

I completed analysis of positioning after analyses of metaphor use, categorisation, and impoliteness, and, as above, findings from positioning analysis were then compared with findings of the other forms of analysis to describe the development of drama and investigate potential connections across the different forms of analysis.

### 4.5.6 Additional Reference Tools

General searches of three additional resources were used when contextualising terms and concepts which emerged in the discourse activity in the CofP. First, using the website Bible Gateway ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)), various translations of Bible were searched when Biblical language was used explicitly or implicitly

in the user discourse activity. Second, the free online version of the British National Corpus (n.d.) as well as the Corpus of Contemporary American English (n.d.) were also consulted on occasion to investigate conventional use and compare the frequency of terms in the dataset with general usage. Third, general searches of the Internet using Google as well as Wikipedia were also employed to investigate conventionalised use of terms, general surveys of Christian (particularly Evangelical) theological positions, and brief introductions to belief systems and religious movements which are referenced in the dataset.

#### **4.5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the research design of the study and the adaption of discourse analytic methods for online environments. Building on a review of data collection and analytic methods in previous research, I presented my research design, which focused on data collection and discourse analysis after a period of observation. I described the data that I collected and how I prepared the data for analysis as well as how each step of the analytic procedure was undertaken to answer the research questions.

Going forward, I will employ these analytic tools in the following ways to answer my research questions:

- Metaphor-led discourse analysis (Cameron & Maslen, 2010b) will be used to investigate how user 'ideas, attitudes, and values' (Cameron et al., 2010, p. 128) are evidenced in language use, focusing on how micro-level metaphor use in stretches of discourse activity on individual video pages emerges as macro-level systematicity, both in systematic metaphor and metaphorical stories.
- The reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002) will be used to describe individual instances of categorisation in discourse activity, and patterns of categorisation.
- Culpeper's (2011) definition of impoliteness and the revised list of forms of impoliteness from Hardaker (2010) will be used to describe how users evaluate and react to the words and/or actions of others they view negatively, and identify where users evaluate impoliteness differently.

- Descriptions of user positioning (Harré & van Langenhove, 1998) will be used to describe how users positioned themselves and others, and how user discourse activity is made understandable in storylines with specific moral authorities, affecting the development of drama.

## 5 Biblical Metaphor and Metaphorical Stories

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from analysis of metaphor in 20 videos pages relating to the 'human garbage' drama. Analysis of metaphor employed a discourse dynamics approach to metaphor-led discourse analysis explained in Section 4.5.1 to answer the research questions:

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RQ1 What metaphors were present in the discourse activity? When did they occur?

RQ2 What were the trajectories of metaphorical language and responses?

RQ3 What action did metaphorical language accomplish?

RQ4 How did metaphor use contribute to the development of drama?

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As presented in Sections 2.5 and 4.5.1, metaphor-led discourse analysis provides a useful framework for elucidating users' 'ideas, attitudes, and values' (Cameron et al., 2010, p. 128) from discourse activity. This approach does not treat metaphor as a static, cognitive phenomenon, but rather 'a temporary stability emerging from the activity of interconnecting systems of socially-situated language use and cognitive activity' (Cameron et al., 2009, p. 64) and as 'processual, emergent, and open to change' (p. 67). In my analysis, I first identified all metaphor vehicles in the video page corpus and coded vehicles using Atlas.TI. I grouped vehicles together by semantic field in code families. After identification of explicit topics, I then created a refined set of key discourse topics based on the aims and goals of the research and coded the vehicles with these topics. Connections between metaphors identified in discourse activity were considered and systematic metaphors were constructed, following Cameron, Low, and Maslen (2010). I also identified and grouped vehicles that showed narrative systematicity. I then calculated metaphor density for the vehicles on each page. After identification and normalisation, finally, I analysed metaphor trajectories to investigate the role of metaphor in the development of drama.

I first describe my analysis in-depth, showing the distribution of metaphors and then describing the grouping of vehicles. I then present the systematic metaphors that emerged as central to the 'human garbage' drama and the trajectories of two key metaphorical stories. Finally, I discuss the findings of the analysis in relation to the literature presented in Section 2.4.

## **5.2 *Metaphor Vehicles and Groupings***

### **5.2.1 Metaphor Density and Description of Groupings**

Following the procedure described in Section 4.5.1, 11,773 vehicles and 1,792 unique metaphor vehicles types were identified in the video page corpus. After excluding automatic text and transcription notes (15,136 words) and accounting for phrasal verbs and compound nouns in vehicle codes, a metaphor density of 17.5% was calculated. Although no similar research of metaphor in CMC has calculated metaphor density, this figure compares to densities of written texts found by Steen and colleagues (Steen, Dorst, Herrmann, Kaal, & Krennmayr, 2010) (11.7%–18.5%), while high in comparison to Steen and colleagues' work on conversation (7.7%) and Cameron's work on different forms of classroom talk and reconciliation talk (2.7%–10%) (2008a). Given the data collection procedure which focused on discourse activity about Biblical parable (including users often reading aloud from Biblical parables and pasting the texts in comments sections and descriptions), a high metaphor density was expected (see Section 5.2.3 for further discussion) .

The 11,773 unique metaphor vehicles formed 42 groupings, presented in Table 5-1.



**Table 5-1. Vehicle Groupings**

Grouping	Vehicles	Occurrences	Metaphor Density
<i>BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES</i>	219	806	11.0
<i>BUILDING</i>	47	126	1.8
<i>BURNING*</i>	23	144	2.0
<i>COMMERCE</i>	42	141	1.9
<i>COMPLETE</i>	18	188	2.6
<i>CONNECT-SEPARATE</i>	58	652	9.0
<i>CONSTRAINT</i>	33	101	1.4
<i>CONTAINER</i>	53	1271	17.7
<i>DEPTH</i>	51	265	3.7
<i>DISEASE*</i>	8	39	.5
<i>DIMENSION</i>	40	201	2.8
<i>DIRTY-CLEAN</i>	56	436	6.1
<i>FAMILY*</i>	11	205	2.9
<i>FEELING</i>	20	135	1.9
<i>FOLLOWING-LEADING</i>	5	53	.7
<i>FORM</i>	15	34	.5
<i>GAME</i>	20	53	.8
<i>HOT-COLD</i>	8	30	.4
<i>LAW*</i>	84	319	4.4
<i>LIGHT*</i>	19	82	1.1
<i>LOCATION</i>	73	1200	16.7
<i>MACHINE</i>	5	8	.1
<i>MENTAL ILLNESS</i>	42	173	2.4
<i>MILITARY-WAR</i>	28	96	1.3
<i>MOVEMENT</i>	101	858	11.9
<i>NATURAL WORLD</i>	166	656	9.1
<i>NAUTICAL*</i>	16	94	1.3
<i>NUMBER</i>	56	186	2.6
<i>OPEN-CLOSE</i>	5	32	.4
<i>OTHER</i>	11	49	.7
<i>PHYSICAL ACTION</i>	172	1526	21.2
<i>READING WRITING</i>	11	50	.7
<i>RELIGION</i>	48	149	2.1
<i>SEEING</i>	59	554	7.7
<i>SOUND</i>	22	77	21.1
<i>SPEAKING-HEARING</i>	38	599	8.3
<i>STRENGTH</i>	4	41	.6
<i>THEATRE-STORIES</i>	15	36	.5
<i>THING</i>	8	364	5.1
<i>TIME*</i>	4	7	.1
<i>VIOLENT ACTION</i>	106	591	8.2
<i>WATER</i>	23	37	.5

Table 5-1 shows the semantic groupings of metaphor vehicles followed by the number of unique vehicle types, occurrences in the video page corpus, and the metaphor density. All the unique metaphor types from each group can be seen in the Appendix (p. 285). The grouping with the most vehicle types was *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* (see below) with 219 types occurring 806 times and a metaphor

density 11.0. *PHYSICAL ACTION* vehicles occurred with the most frequency (1,526) and therefore had the largest metaphor density (21.2). The high density of physical action vehicles as well as *LOCATION* (16.7), *MOVEMENT* (11.9), and *VIOLENT ACTION* (7.7) reflect the way in which the YouTube environment was talked about as a physical space (Section 5.3.1). The high metaphor density of the *CONTAINER* grouping (17.7) with a relatively low number of unique vehicle types (53) reflected in part the extensive metaphorical use of the preposition *in*.

As noted in Section 4.5.1, the groupings include those taken from Cameron and colleagues (2009), and groupings which were added have been marked with an asterisk (\*) in Table 5-1. The following semantic groupings were added to or modified from the original list of groupings in Cameron and colleagues (2009): *TIME*, *NAUTICAL*, *DISEASE*, *LAW*, *LIGHT*, *FAMILY*, and *BURNING*. The *NAUTICAL* and *BURNING* groupings related to topics which developed uniquely in the 'human garbage' drama. For example, *BURNING* vehicles related specifically to the development of vehicles from the parable of the vine and branches as well as discussions of hell and the Holocaust, which I discuss below (Section 5.4). Similarly, the grouping of *NAUTICAL* vehicles also related to the development of the specific metaphorical story told by the user philhellenes in the video titled 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) (Section 5.4). The grouping of *FAMILY*, by contrast, did not appear to develop from a specific moment in the discourse activity, but rather from Christians speaking about one another in terms of *FAMILY* relationships (Section 5.3.6).

Table 5-2 presents an example of a single grouping of vehicles, the 219 vehicles in the *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* grouping as well as the number of occurrences of each vehicle.

**Table 5-2. *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* Grouping**

fruit 110	skin 3	munch 1	meal 1
heart 41	feet 3	feedback 1	brow 1
head 28	embody 3	subwhore 1	clap 1
grits 26	feed 3	levelhead 1	tacos 1
asshole 23	redneck 3	shins 1	panty 1
sick 19	beef 3	cute 1	belly 1
strong 19	crave 3	lap 1	gut 1
hurt 19	style 3	limb 1	dress up 1
hand 18	skeletons 2	blink 1	dainty 1
eye 18	sate 2	spine 1	cheese 1
face 16	drink 2	carnal 1	neck 1
ass 14	tears 2	last supper 1	Shake & Bake 1

blood 13 nut/ nutter 9 voice 9 mouth 8 spew 7 sideburns7 handle 7 sense 7 blind 7 prick 7 hungry 6 drunk 6 thumb 6 foot 6 cunt 6 eat 6 fashion 6 ill 6 crap 6 healthy 5 brain 5 tongue 5 suck 5 fucker 5 crackwhore 5 pain 4 sad 4 taste 4 blow out 4 butt 4 disgust 4 piss off 4 body 4 clothes 4 sicken 4 spit out 3 sweet 3 bones 3 ear 3 blow 3 hat 3 bile 3 unrest 3	wound 2 thirsty 2 flavor 2 blow off 2 blow up 2 fat 2 ache 2 grits 2 kool aid 2 peel 2 trauma 2 suckerfish 2 spit 2 dick 2 flesh 2 nose 2 muncher 2 dish out 2 giant 2 cheek 2 ugly 2 marrow gnaw 2 wormfood 2 bitter 2 spam 2 coat 1 meat 1 pig-headed 1 sickness 1 regurgitate 1 gummies 1 brainwashed 1 underfoot 1 sugar 1 savor 1 toast 1 sicko 1 cure 1 closets 1 shirt 1 lip-sync 1 consume 1	headlock 1 vocal 1 knee 1 loudmouthed 1 fuckface 1 nutso 1 cup 1 breadcrumbs 1 tongues 1 tampon 1 cloth 1 legs 1 habit 1 ramen 1 poison 1 button 1 teeth 1 thrive 1 apples 1 arms 1 noodle 1 chew up 1 salad 1 reflavor 1 posture 1 smile 1 baloney 1 Carrots 1 starving 1 delicious 1 breathe 1 rubberneck 1 lunch 1 fist 1 anal 1 spoon-fed wig 1 clothing 1 stomach 1 beer 1 facepalm 1 doctor 1 nerve 1	ankles 1 shoe 1 piss 1 salt 1 butter 1 tooth 1 sewing 1 bloody 1 spaghetti 1 leftover 1 appendage 1 addiction 1 milestone 1 hairy 1 armed 1 twinge food 1 badmouth 1 shoulder 1 pocket 1 unsavory lips 1 distasteful 1 delectable 1 beforehand 1 breath 1 blackheart 1 disease 1 sandwich 1 snack 1 lick 1 backbone 1 bowels 1 drivel 1 nostrils 1 sweat 1 sober 1 throat 1 lame 1 hill-of-beans 1 toes 1 unquenchable 1 Skittles 1
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In this grouping, all the vehicles have an explicit semantic relationship to the body and/or bodily functions. *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* vehicles appeared across the whole of the video page corpus and were not isolated to one particular video page or group of pages. The vehicles in the *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* grouping were also identified in both video talk and comments in videos made by many users in the video page corpus. Some vehicles were included in more than one grouping. For example, the vehicle wormfood was included both in the *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* as well as the *NATURAL WORLD* grouping which included all other

animal vehicles. Given the specificity of the groupings, however, most vehicles were only included in one grouping.

The distribution of the *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* across the whole of the video page corpus appears in Figure 5-1.

**Figure 5-1. Distribution of the *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* Grouping**

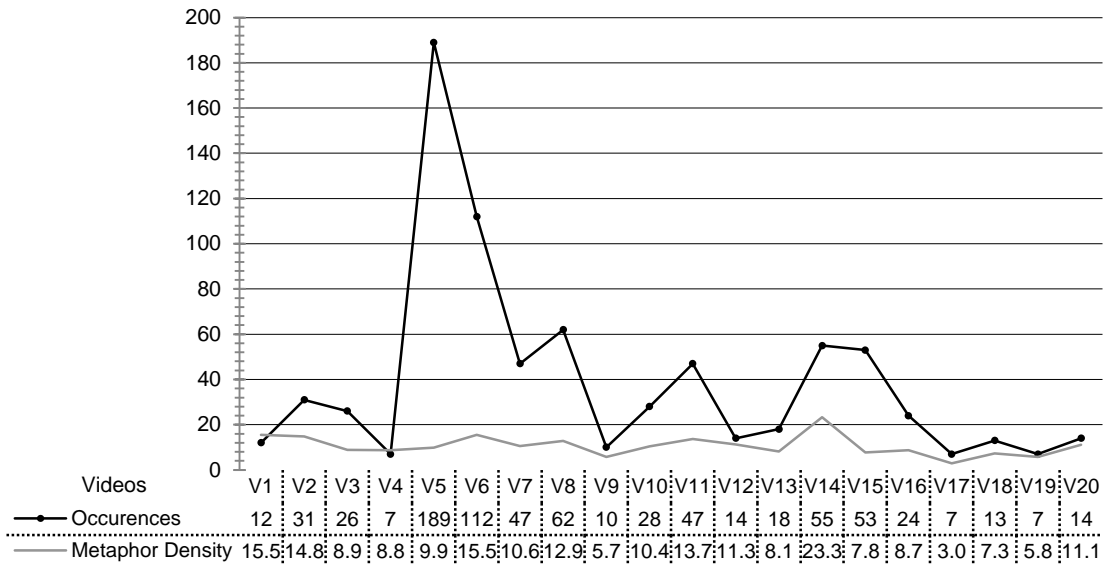


Figure 5-1 shows the occurrences and metaphor density of *BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES* vehicles across the 20 video pages. The black line shows the number of uses while the grey line shows the metaphor density to normalise for video pages which included significantly more words (Section 4.5.1). The range of the metaphor density is between 3.0–15.5 with a majority of the pages having a metaphor density within two points of the average density of 10.7, suggesting that vehicles from this grouping did not cluster on any one particular page, but were used regularly throughout the whole of the video corpus. The same pattern of consistency could be seen in other groupings with high occurrences including *LOCATION*, *CONNECT-SEPARATE*, *PHYSICAL ACTION*, *SEEING*, and *VIOLENT ACTION* which all had more than 500 occurrences and were distributed evenly throughout the video corpus.

In the focus group data analysed in Cameron and colleagues' work (2009), a diversity of groupings related to landscape including *HORIZONTAL (LANDSCAPE)*, *POINT*, *CIRCLE*, *VIOLATE/LIMITS*, and *INCLINE* were present, but in the YouTube drama, discourse activity about landscapes appeared to be less prevalent.

Other groupings, including *BALANCE*, *BLOW*, *CONCEALMENT*, *CONCRETISING*, *HOME*, *LABEL*, *FINDING-LOSING*, and *GIVING-TAKING* also did not appear relevant to the video page corpus, reflecting differences in discourse activity of talk about terrorism in focus groups and YouTube talk about the Bible.

## 5.2.2 Narrative Systematicity

After initially grouping the vehicles by semantic field revealed the potential for vehicles to be related by narrative systematicity in the *NAUTICAL* groupings (Cameron et al., 2010), vehicles from metaphorical stories in the discourse activity were also grouped together by first locating metaphorical stories and parables that were told in discourse activity, and then identifying vehicles which were developed from the story both in subsequent video talk and comments. Two groupings were constructed from narrative systematicity, one containing vehicles from the parable of the vine and branches (John 15) (see Appendix 2, p.276 for full text of parable) and one containing vehicles from the 'Titanic story' told by philhellenes in the video entitled 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5). In the story, he described himself as the captain of the sinking Titanic who needed to make a decision between giving the final seat in a lifeboat to a puppy or Yokeup (Section 5.4.2, Video Extract 5-8, p. 149). The story was subsequently developed in the comments section and in a subsequent video posted by philhellenes entitled 'I was wrong.' (V7). Table 5-3 shows the 24 vehicles in the Titanic story and their occurrences in the story and its development.

**Table 5-3. Titanic Story Vehicles**

arm 1	cruiser 1	on-board 2	sink 6
baby 1	deckchairs 1	puppy 24	swim 1
beer 1	dog 1	rescue 1	swimmer 1
bird 1	drown 2	rubber raft 1	tapeworm 1
boat 2	save 9	sandwiches	titanic 3
captain 5	lifeboat 10	seat 1	water 1
cat 1	overboard 1	ship 6	

Although some of the Titanic story vehicles share the same *NAUTICAL* semantic field (e.g., captain and overboard), semantically unrelated vehicles (e.g., puppy) are also included, reflecting the shared source in the unique metaphorical story in which a puppy plays a central role (Section 5.4).

Vehicles relating to the parable of the vine and branches were also linked in narrative systematicity, beginning with Yokeup's use of the term 'human garbage' and his exegesis of the parable to justify the term's use (Sections 4.3.3 and 5.4). Although many of the vehicles are taken directly from the Biblical parable in John 15, the narrative development of the vehicles led to additional vehicles being included, such as those taken from other parts of the Biblical text (e.g., grapes and leaf) and those that resulted from user vehicle development (e.g., garbage). Analysis of development of the parable vehicles will be further presented in Section 5.4.

### 5.2.3 Biblical Metaphor

Lastly, the cross-grouping of 'Bible' represents metaphorical vehicles that appeared to have an allusion to the Bible (Section 4.5.1.6). These vehicles differed in relationship from the parable of the vine and branches in that they did not always occur in particular narratives in drama, but appeared to allude to or reference the Bible. The Bible vehicles can be seen in Table 5-4.

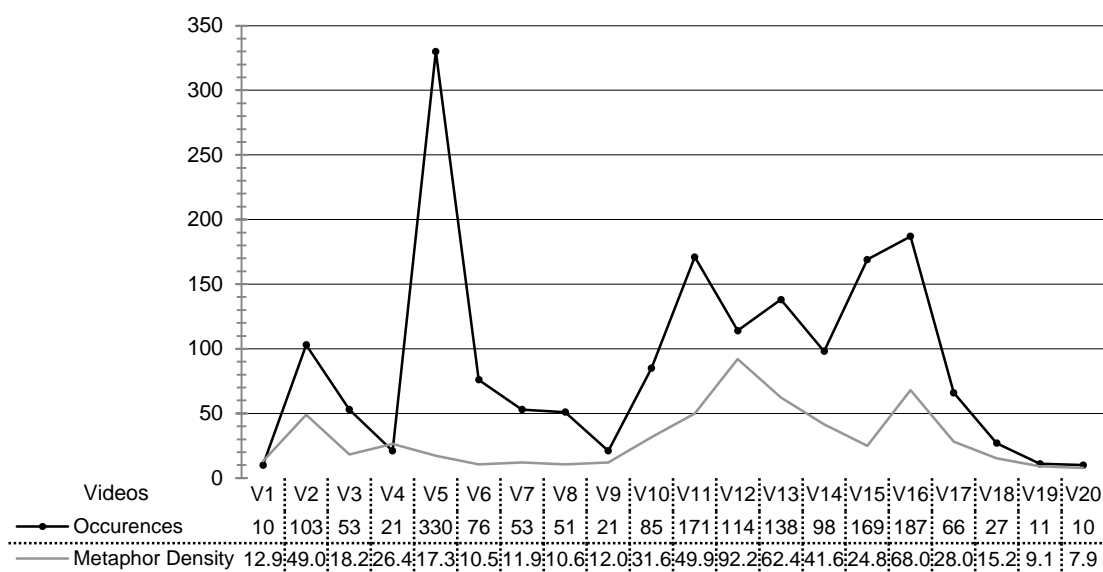
**Table 5-4. Bible Vehicles**

brother 118	cross 12	law 3	might 2	last supper 1
fruit 110	lost 12	vine dresser 3	overflow 2	knock 1
word 84	follower 12	unclean 3	load 2	thorns 1
burn 80	power 12	beast 3	akin 2	idol 1
branch 65	tree 12	church 3	serpent 2	husbandman 1
save 60	son 11	flock 3	overcome 2	throne 1
message 53	convert 10	toss 3	kingdo2	jezebel 1
bear 47	justify 10	holy 3	king 2	pits 1
wolf 39	gather 9	gardener 3	strength 2	messenger 1
hear 43	depart 8	halo 3	curse 1	partake 1
judge 43	weak 8	pay 3	uplift 1	office 1
heart 41	burden 8	plank 3	rich 1	swine 1
remain 39	testament	read 3	disservice 1	penalty 1
father 36	servant 8	rapture 3	sow 1	leaf 1
speak 33	light 7	pull 3	work out 1	thistles 1
stand 28	pure 7	price 3	diamond 1	temple 1
vine 28	hell 7	shepherd 3	adultery 1	perish 1
wither 27	judgment day 7	goat 2	remnant 1	promised land 1
lord 24	witness 7	covenant 2	descendants 1	unsaved 1
follow 23	master 6	chaff 2	author 1	farmers 1
fire 23	slave 6	commandment 2	confess 1	real1
salvation 23	door 6	cleanse 2	confessor 1	figs 1
serve 22	prophet 6	heap 2	seed 1	family 1
sister 22	lamb 5	rule 2	weed 1	red ink 1
preach 22	tare 5	dust 2	virgin 1	draw in 1
abide 21	dry 5	rebuke 2	wheat 1	enslave 1
repent 21	daddy 5	familiar 2	ruler 1	dwell 1
cut 20	spirit 4	doves 2	cup 1	tyrant 1
accept 20	justice 4	flow 2	cult 1	harvest 1
sheep 19	prince 4	cry out 2	authority 1	grapevine 1

prune 17	part (v) 4	pull away	ax 1	tongues 1
cast 17	dog 4	demon 2	sermon 1	speck 1
news 17	yoke 4	flames 2	royal 1	grapes 1
lead 15	minister 4	flesh 2	barn 1	pull back 1
clean 13	redeem 4	snake 2	vessel 1	transformation 1
pile 13	end times 4	mission 2	pluck 1	grain 1
judgement 13	lion 3	pig 2	pour 1	godsend 1
saviour 12	martyr 3			

Table 5-4 shows the 195 Bible vehicles which occurred 1,794 times and had a metaphor density of 25.0. Bible vehicles included some of the most common vehicles in the video page corpus, including brother (118), fruit (110), word (84), burn (80), branch (65), save (60), message (53), judge (43), hear (43), wolf (39) and Bible vehicles were distributed across the video page corpus, and appeared on all of the video pages. Unlike the John 15 parable vehicles, the Bible vehicles were not necessarily a part of a narrative or explicitly developed from the Biblical text, although some vehicles in the grouping did share these attributes. For example, the vehicles sheep and wolf were identified in the explicit retelling of a Biblical parable in Yokeup's video entitled 'Straight up....Wolves and Garbage.. call it what it is' (V16). Vehicles such as saviour and message, however, are examples of Biblical metaphors that were used in the video page corpus, but were not used with explicit reference to a particular Bible passage. Users read aloud from the Biblical text in videos, copied and pasted portions of Biblical text in the description box and/or comments section, as well as indirectly quoting scripture both in text comments and video talk. The distribution of the vehicles from this grouping is shown Figure 5-2.

**Figure 5-2. Distribution of Bible vehicles in the Video Page Corpus**



The pattern of distribution shows how instances of explicit use of Biblical metaphor coincide with high density rates; all videos with a metaphor density above 20 included the reading of Biblical parable in the video and/or copying and pasting the same text in the description box of the video (V2, V11–14, V16). Biblical metaphor was not only used by Christians; non-Christians (users who did not profess a Christian belief) also made explicit and implicit reference to the Bible. For example, the atheist dumoktheartist read aloud from the Bible in an attempt to confront Yokeup in 'Human Garbage...Are YOU? (My Response)' (V4). Similarly, Croisborg employed judgement vehicles to confront Yokeup in 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3). The distribution of all vehicles in the grouping appears in Appendix 7 (p. 291).

The pattern of Bible vehicles appearing more frequently on pages where the Bible was quoted or read aloud is more apparent looking at uses of particular vehicles from the parables, such as the vehicle branch (Figure 5-3).



**Figure 5-3. Distribution of Branch in the Video Page Corpus**

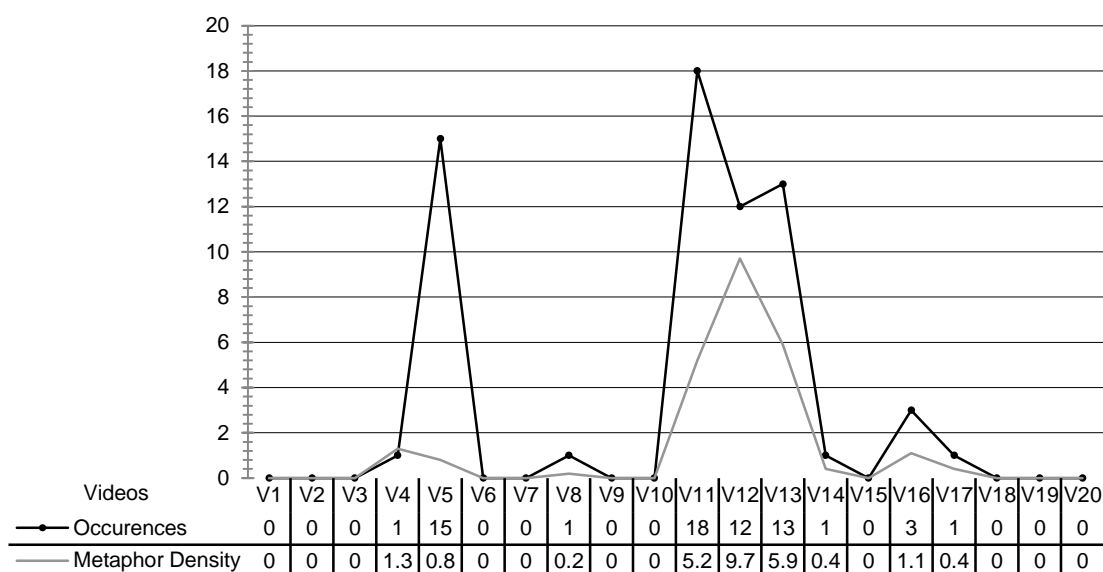


Figure 5-3 shows the distribution of branch which was a key element of the John 15 parable (see Appendix p. 276 for full text). Branch occurred on several videos pages, particularly V11, V12, and V13, while appearing only once in three other videos and with no occurrences in 11 videos. The spikes in usages, in the same way as the overall user of Bible vehicles in the dataset, occurred when users read the parable aloud from the Bible, quoted it, and/or posted it in the description box or the comments. The uses of this vehicle included not only the quotations from the text of the Bible, but also development of the vehicles in user discourse activity both before and after the quotation of the text. I discuss the development of vehicles from the parable in more detail in Section 5.4.1.

Allusion to Biblical metaphorical language also appeared to account for the semantic grouping of *FAMILY*, with 9 of the 11 vehicles also included with the Bible grouping. A Biblical narrative in which God is a father and fellow Christians are brothers or sisters in Christ was regularly used and understood in the 'human garbage' drama. However, this grouping did not appear to have narrative systematicity in the same way as vehicles from the parable of the vine and branches because use of these vehicles did not have an empirically observable trajectory from a single starting point. I discuss this more in relation to *FAMILY* vehicles in Section 5.3.6.

I now present the key systematic metaphors that emerged from the analysis.

### **5.3 Systematic Metaphors**

After identification of vehicles and topics, and grouping of vehicles, I constructed systematic metaphors following Cameron, Low, and Maslen (2010). Focusing on the aims of the research to describe the discourse dynamics of YouTube drama, I now discuss the use of systematic metaphor in the development of the 'human garbage' drama:

#### **5.3.1 YOUTUBE IS A PHYSICAL LOCATION**

With important entailments for social interaction on YouTube, the systematic metaphor *YOUTUBE IS A PHYSICAL LOCATION* was present in how users talked about their orientation to others on the site. The systematic metaphor emerged from use of *LOCATION* vehicles to talk about YouTube as a topic, when users described YouTube explicitly as a place, as in 'here on YouTube' (V6:42) or 'YouTube's a funny place' (V7:2). YouTube is a place was also implicitly present in user discourse activity including *MOVEMENT* vehicles, like the comment: 'I have been gone from this place a year and come back to find this douche still here' (V1:161). User channels could also be locations to which a user could go and because users talked about different channels as different places, videos and channels could have meaningful metaphorical distance between them. Users also could block others from leaving comments on particular videos or channels, limiting their movement on the site.

YouTube was spoken about using *LOCATION* vehicles, but in contrast to earlier MRes research in which community roles such as pope and garbage collector were used to describe others (Pihlaja, 2011). However, the space was generic rather than a more concrete location, such as a town, church, or room. Although videos and channels were at times places to which users went, they were sometimes also objects which could be put up or taken down. Further, in other contexts, they were also objects like a notice board that comments and videos could be posted on. The *NAUTICAL* metaphor of channel appeared to be conventionalised and although comparison between YouTube channels and television channels could be observed in several instances, the vehicle represented, as with other site functions, conventionalised metaphors about technology for which non-metaphorical language does not exist.

*LOCATION* metaphors, particularly against and opposition, were also used to describe interactions of users holding different opinions. Arguing with another was described as coming out against or opposing them. Differences in ideology or belief were not, however, metaphorised as physical separation between users, and metaphor use in discourse activity about oneself and others did not appear to represent a social landscape in which distance separates different groups as in Cameron and colleagues' work (2009). This may be in part due to the nature of the YouTube interface which, in contrast to other online communities (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Pfannenstiel, 2010), does not offer a 'group' function or other mechanism which would allow likeminded users to occupy a separate, shared online space. Although users could block others, the open nature of the site may inhibit the ease with which groups can occupy a unique space separated from others.

### **5.3.2 YOUTUBE ARGUMENT IS VIOLENT STRUGGLE**

*YOUTUBE ARGUMENT IS VIOLENT STRUGGLE* also emerged as a systematic metaphor. Although descriptions of arguments in terms of violence were observed, as with critique of war as a primary conceptual metaphor to describe contentious argument (Ritchie, 2003), the nature of the violent conflict was not clearly cast as a particular kind of struggle. Although vehicles from the *WAR-MILITARY* grouping were occasionally present in descriptions of arguments between users, particularly enemy, general *VIOLENT ACTION* vehicles were more often employed to describe aggressive action taken towards another. Users most frequently referred to arguments as attacking and defending. These vehicles not only described impoliteness (Section 7.3), but also arguments that included 'personal' attacks and criticism of another.

The ambiguity of the violent struggle of YouTube drama could be seen in the following examples of attack taken from video talk and comment extracts:

### Video Extract 5-1. "'Human Garbage' - searing TRUTH' (V17:163–169)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
163	.. you know	(IMAGES REDACTED) "Human Garbage" - searing TRUTH Posted 29/4/2009 by Caroline on the YokedtoJesus channel 769 views 39 comments 5:31 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVmRr3gstbs">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVmRr3gstbs</a>
164	everybody's <u>attacking</u> jeff	
165	for human <u>garbage</u>	
166	they're <u>attacking</u> they-	
167	they're--	
168	people are <u>attacking</u> jeff for	
169	.. <u>things</u> that he didn't even do	

### Video Extract 5-2. 'Re: "Human Garbage"-searing TRUTH' (V20:244–246)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
244	I hope you guys <u>take</u> this <u>in</u>	(IMAGES REDACTED) Re: "Human Garbage" - searing TRUTH Reposted 9/8/2009 (initial posting May 2009) by gdy50 102 views 7 comments 7:21 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfMxbf2AlrU">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfMxbf2AlrU</a>
245	and not <u>feel</u>	
246	like you're being <u>attacked</u>	

### Comments Extract 5-1. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5:1851–1858)

peartreeeven (user comment)

You dont know Yokeup and yet you judged him, like the others here, who verbally attacked him on a personal level. (V5:1851–1858)

In Video Extract 5-1, Video Extract 5-2, and Comments Extract 5-1, examples of attack describing YouTube drama videos are presented. In the first extract, Caroline, Yokeup's wife, used being attacked to describe the experience of arguing about Yokeup's videos. Although the topic for attack is not stated explicitly, from the preceding talk, attacking appeared to include insults and malicious criticism. This was also clear in the third extract in which attacking occurred on a personal level. In the second extract the Christian user gdy80 attempted to make clear that his questioning of Yokeup and Caroline did not consist of attacking and asked them not to take it as such. Attacking could, therefore, also include non-malicious argumentation perceived as an insult; that is, users could attack others without necessarily having an intention to do so.

Surprisingly, the potential systematic metaphor *ARGUMENTS BETWEEN USERS ON YOUTUBE IS DRAMA* could not be constructed from the metaphors used in the dataset. Although the vehicle drama was present in the video page corpus, it

only appeared 4 times. Users did not develop the vehicle to describe their interactions, and related metaphor either in terms of stories or theatre were not present. The labelling of the event as 'all the latest drama going on' (V15:36–29) by Yokeup suggests that drama was an emic term used for the interaction in the video page corpus much like channel and not developed in interaction.

### **5.3.3 SPEAKING HATEFULLY IS VOMITING**

Throughout the 'human garbage' drama, users talked about the offensive actions of others in terms of both physical and mental illness. The systematic metaphor *SPEAKING HATEFULLY IS VOMITING* was constructed from use of *DISEASE* vehicles to describe the actions of Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church<sup>3</sup> in the discourse activity. In PaulsEgo's video 'A Spotlight.' (V6), Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church show off the beating heart of hatred that most Christians conceal, but when they attack others, they spew hatred. In PaulsEgo's talk, hateful speech was metaphorised as bile. Other comments in the video page corpus suggest that the metaphor was a systematic way of framing hate speech, as seen in the following examples in Comments Extract 5-2.

#### **Comments Extract 5-2. Spew out**

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Acrimonator (user comment)

your religion is an excuse for your intolerance and a way to spew your hatred (V5:495–498)

LogicalSanity (user comment)

i think the title should be changed to "Yokeup: Poster Boy For Perfect Christians" That is exactly what a christian should be like. The vile things that come out of his mouth should be a red flag for the fake christians.' (V3:331)

ravenslaves (user comment)

How do you respond to Yokeup? And the banal tripe that spews forth? (V5:1422)

---

Comments Extract 5-2 show three examples of users employing similar metaphors to describe offensive language. The three comments followed

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<sup>3</sup> The Westboro Baptist Church is a fundamentalist Christian movement in the US, famous for picketing funerals of US soldiers and making incendiary messages directed at homosexuals. They are widely viewed as a hate group by both Christians and non-Christians in the US.

patterns similar to PaulsEgo's description of Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church spewing hatred. In the first comments, the action of speaking hatefully was metaphorised as hatred coming out of the mouth. In the second and third comments, speaking hatefully was metaphorised as spewing out hatred, and hatred was metaphorised as banal tripe and vile things, bearing a clear resemblance to PaulsEgo's use of spew, bile and vile things to describe the same process.

#### **5.3.4 CHRISTIAN BELIEF IS MENTAL ILLNESS**

Descriptions of offensive language as illness were not limited to physical *DISEASE*, but also included metaphors related to *MENTAL ILLNESS*. The verbal metaphor Yokeup is a psychopath was used in philhellenes' video entitled 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) (Sections 5.4 & 6.3.4), and throughout the course of his video, philhellenes explicated the meaning of psychopath, using literal, medical descriptions of psychopathy to describe Yokeup and Yokeup's actions. Commenters then further employed *MENTAL ILLNESS* vehicles in categorisations of Yokeup both in short, one-line insults such as Yokeup is insane, as well as development of *MENTAL ILLNESS* vehicles in descriptions of Yokeup's concrete actions. Further investigation of the topics of *MENTAL ILLNESS* metaphors suggested that *MENTAL ILLNESS* was used to negatively evaluate not only Yokeup's character and actions, but also Yokeup's reported belief that God approved of what he said (further discussed as categorisation in Section 6.3.4). Through vehicle redeployment, *MENTAL ILLNESS* vehicles were then applied to all Christians, constructing a systematic metaphor *CHRISTIAN BELIEF IS MENTAL ILLNESS*.

Although the philhellenes made numerous negative evaluations and descriptions of Yokeup, when describing him particularly as a psychopath, philhellenes said the following (Video Extract 5-3):

**Video Extract 5-3. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5:315–322 & 328–343)**

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
315	.. so when you're a <u>psychopath</u>	<b>YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup. (V5)</b> Posted 14/1/2009 by philhellenes 17,510 views 613 comments 10:25 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5jzMkHL80">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5jzMkHL80</a>
316	.. and you are jeff	
317	...(3.5) if you <u>feel</u> God's love	
318	then	
319	God has just <u>given</u> his blessing	
320	<u>in</u> your mind	
321	.. to	
322	.. being a <u>psychopath</u>	
328	you think	
329	that because you can	
330	<u>feel</u> God's love	
331	.. then God approves	
332	.. of the <u>filth</u>	
333	that <u>comes out</u> of your <u>mouth</u>	
334	.. and that's the problem	
335	with all Christians	
336	really	
337	the biases they <u>have</u>	
338	<u>against</u> those who don't believe	
339	.. they <u>feel</u> real anger <u>towards</u> them	
340	.. and because they still <u>feel</u> God's love	
341	they <u>feel</u> that God is almost	
342	encouraging them	
343	to <u>have</u> those negative emotions	

In Video Extract 5-3, philhellenes employed the metaphor 'you're a psychopath' (V5:315) in reference to 'Jeff' (V5:315), Yokeup's given name. In his explication of the metaphor, philhellenes followed a pattern of redeploying *MENTAL ILLNESS* vehicles from Yokeup to all Christians. Although philhellenes negatively evaluated Yokeup's words as 'filth that comes out of your mouth' (V5:332–333), he also highlighted Yokeup's perceived spiritual experience as 'feel(ing) the love of God' (V5:330). This description of spiritual experience was then presented as a 'problem' for 'all Christians' (V5:335), a problem that philhellenes said reinforced bias and created irrational anger. In the development of the psychopath vehicle and philhellenes' description later in the video of Yokeup's insanity, *MENTAL ILLNESS* vehicles were implicitly redeployed to all Christians. Yokeup's 'insanity' and his beliefs were presented as prototypical of Christians, similar to Dawkins' (2006) description of religious belief as 'delusion'.

A similar description of Yokeup's reports of his beliefs and motivations is present in the video entitled 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3). In this video, Croisborg followed a similar narrative pattern, comparing Yokeup's

actions, beliefs, and character with 'Christianity' more generally (Video Extract 5-4):

**Video Extract 5-4. 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3:148–153)**

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
148	he also alluded to the fact	(IMAGES REDACTED)
149	that he's a <u>prophet</u>	
150	because he <u>made</u>	
151	numerous statements about how	
152	God <u>speaks through</u> him	
153	.. that is a <u>clear sign</u> of <u>insanity</u>	<b>Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians (V3)</b> Posted 14/1/2009 by Croisborg 2384 views 107 comments 3:31 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpslWW9Vavo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpslWW9Vavo</a>

In Video Extract 5-4, as in philhellenes' video, Croisborg presented Yokeup's purported descriptions of spiritual experience and true belief. Up to this point in the video, Croisborg had insulted Yokeup's intelligence and his social status, but in this description of Yokeup's belief, Croisborg negatively evaluated it as 'a clear sign of insanity' (V3:153). Yokeup's faith, therefore, led to an evaluation of Yokeup as insane. Through vehicle redeployment, *MENTAL ILLNESS* vehicles were then extended to not only individual users, but the categories they occupied, creating a description of not only Yokeup, but Christian faith more generally. This happened explicitly in philhellenes' video, extracted above, and implicitly in Croisborg's video as he described Yokeup's character as representative of what was wrong with 'Christianity'.

Finally, examples of commenters following the same pattern of conflating Yokeup's actions with those of Christians in general were also observed:



### Comments Extract 5-3. *MENTAL ILLNESS*

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BreadWinner06 (user comment)

no you're wrong *hes a poster child* for christianity (hes a real christian) (V3:461–464)

howtofoldsoup (user comment)

I believe it was best worded as such: Good men tend to do good. Evil men tend to do evil. For a good man to do evil -- that takes religion. (V5:2558)

Cootabux (user comment)

I think label psychopath is too light...but your commentary in the video makes up for it!

Oh yes, he's keeping right in line with the true "spirit" of christian dogma! He would've been right at home had he been alive during the early church period. (V5:905–906)

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In these comments, users responded to Crosisborg's claim that Yokeup was the poster boy for bad Christianity, which Crosisborg stated at the beginning of the video and which served as the video's title. In all three comments, users followed the same pattern as in philhellenes' and Crosisborg's video: the evaluation of Yokeup as a psychopath was repeated and Yokeup's actions and traits were extended as descriptions of Christians in general, Christian belief, and God. The first comment in particular highlighted that Yokeup was insane because he behaved maliciously out of true belief. Although other insults of Yokeup as stupid or an asshole evaluated his actions as offensive, the comments did not link the insult to Yokeup's presentation of himself as acting out of true belief.

Yokeup's offensive words and actions coupled with his apparent sincere belief afforded users an opportunity to present Christian belief and practice negatively, encapsulated in the systematic metaphor *CHRISTIAN BELIEF IS MENTAL ILLNESS*. This systematic metaphor can be constructed from discourse activity on atheist video pages, but, unsurprisingly, did not appear on Christian video pages in discourse activity about belief. This showed that within the CofP, different users could employ different systematic ways of talking about the world. Here, the values and attitudes of the users employing the systematic metaphor were displayed because the metaphor included an obvious negative evaluation.

Users who held a negative view of Christianity employed the metaphor, while users who were Christians or held positive views of Christianity did not.

### **5.3.5 GOD SPEAKS TO CHRISTIANS**

Metaphor use about spiritual experience produced the systematic metaphor *GOD SPEAKS TO CHRISTIANS* from *SPEAKING-HEARING* vehicles. The systematic metaphor appears to be derived from the Bible (e.g., Exodus 19:19, Job 37:5, Hebrews 4:7) and was used primarily on Christian video pages to talk about spiritual experience and belief. On Yokeup and christoferL's video pages, the ability to hear the voice of God was spoken of as unique to Christians and represented a privileged spiritual position.

In contrast to other descriptions which linked hearing God's voice to *MENTAL ILLNESS* (Section 5.3.4) and concrete instances of 'bad behaviour' (V3:16), this systematic metaphor was constructed from talk about of spiritual experience that was not linked to concrete actions or events. For example, when asked by a user in the comments section of the video titled 'irrelevant' (V10) to further explain the process of hearing God's voice, Yokeup responded in the comments: 'well, if you don't believe in God, if you don't have a relationship, you won't understand. ask any born-again believer and they will know exactly what it means to hear from God...' (V10:437). As Yokeup described, 'We listen to what God tells us and as believers, sold-out to Christ, His voice is clear to us' (V10:417). In these comments, Yokeup presented his spiritual experience in terms of verbal communication: Yokeup, as believer, listened, and God spoke to him. The voice of God, in this metaphorical representation, was also clear, and the experience of hearing God's voice was described in certain and exact terms. Moreover, this belief did not appear to be unique to Yokeup and similar Biblical narratives can be found (e.g., Romans 10:17).

Communicating with God was, therefore, not limited to a single religious practice such as reading the Bible or praying, but was used to describe spiritual experience more generally. Whether or not a Christian heard God's voice through the speaking of another (as in preaching), from individual religious practice (as in prayer), or in reading the Bible, in the video page corpus all are described as God's word. Although the reading of the Bible appeared to be the most effective way for God to communicate with Christians, Christian religious

practice or spiritual experience in the CofP was consistently spoken about with *SPEAKING-HEARING* vehicles. Moreover, God was presented as using Christians to communicate with others. For example, a commenter praised another Christian user JeromeStein4U writing, 'I see God speaking through you lately, brother' (V2: 352). This commenter, like Yokeup's discourse activity, referred to God as speaking and themselves as being able to see this speaking, using mixed perception metaphors to describe their spiritual experience.

The speaking of God was also used in discourse activity about Bible where the Bible was presented as saying something or as the words of God. As in research into Evangelical Christian faith communities by Malley (2004) (Section 2.4), a relationship between the Biblical text and personal experience could be observed in the 'human garbage' drama as users supported their own thoughts and arguments while using the Bible. Although non-Christians questioned Yokeup's descriptions of his spiritual experience as communicating with God, the metaphor did not become an object of disagreement on Christian video pages, and christoferL and Yokeup were praised for speaking God's word and encouraged to listen to God. When disagreement about what God says occurred, users argued about Biblical interpretation rather than challenge the reporting of spiritual experience as in christoferL's video entitled 'John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12) and Yokeup's video entitled 'more on...human garbage' (V14) (Section 7.3.1).

The metaphorical description of spiritual experience as communicating with God did appear to allude to the Bible, but a specific passage or quotation was never cited in the video page corpus. Yokeup, christoferL, and commenters on their video pages did not explicate stories of Biblical characters hearing the voice of God and no Biblical examples of a hearing God's voice metaphor could be observed in the corpus. The presence of the metaphor in the Biblical text in both the Old and New Testaments (c.f., Proverbs 20:12, Isaiah 30:21, John 10:3, Hebrews 3:7) suggested it is a key framing device for speaking about spiritual experience in Christian belief, particularly because only abstract language exists for describing it. Given, however, that the metaphor was derived from the Bible, the development of *SPEAKING-HEARING* vehicles in user talk away from the Bible and into the semantic field of *MENTAL ILLNESS* highlighted how an

individual's beliefs influenced which metaphors users employed. For many of the atheists and non-Christians, hearing God was associated with a negative evaluation, but for Christians, it was associated with a positive evaluation.

### **5.3.6 CHRISTIANS ARE MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY**

Throughout the video page corpus, *CHRISTIANS ARE MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY* was used in Christian discourse activity. Nine of the 11 vehicles in the *FAMILY* grouping were either taken from direct quotes of Biblical text or used by Christians to refer to other Christians. *FAMILY* vehicles within this grouping appeared to be used primarily in describing God as a father and other users within the CofP as brothers or sisters in Christ. The *FAMILY* grouping shows how different kinds of systematicity can be present in metaphor use. The use of *FAMILY* metaphors can be described as a 'systematic metaphor', a 'scenario' like those described by Musolff (2006), or an extension of Biblical parables which describe the relationship between God and Christians in terms of familial relationships. Evidence supporting all three of these descriptions of systematicity in metaphor use could be applied to the use of *FAMILY* vehicles.

Use of the brother/sister in Christ could be observed particularly in Christian comments on other Christians' videos. *FAMILY* vehicles were primarily employed when users were praising the spiritual message of a video and encouraging the video maker, and showing emotional closeness and solidarity. An example of this pattern can be seen in a comment on christoferL's video titled 'We Can't Choose Our Brothers' (V2) (Comments Extract 5-4):

#### **Comments Extract 5-4. 'We Can't Choose Our Brothers' (V2:212)**

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joeXcel (user comment)

Excellent message you shared ChristoferL. This is deep and will impact many on YT in/with their walk with Christ, and with each other. I have been reminded many, many times by brothers and sisters in Christ on YT that we are 'Family'.

God bless you and Diana. 5/5 (V2:212)

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Comments Extract 5-4 contained a comment made by joeXcel, which praised the message of christoferL's video and christoferL's positive impact on both Christian user spiritual experience as well as users' relationships with each other, metaphorised as a walk with Christ and other Christians. The relationship between Christian users was then metaphorised as fraternity and sorority,

within the construct of the family. christoferL's use of *FAMILY* vehicles and the response by commenters suggested conventionalisation given their ubiquity in the dataset.

As the title to christoferL's video 'We Can't Choose Our Brothers' (V2) suggested, *FAMILY* vehicles did not necessarily denote agreement or friendship, but shared belief and affiliation. Within the video, christoferL stated that arguments with other Christians did not make them any less brothers in Christ and christoferL literalised the *FAMILY* vehicles, discussing an argument with his own biological sister. Similarly, in the video titled 'more on...human garbage' (V14), Yokeup referred to christoferL as a little brother while criticising christoferL's exegesis of scripture and his relationship with atheists on YouTube. In both these examples, *FAMILY* vehicles were applied to users that shared belief, but were not necessarily emotionally close.

The metaphorical vehicles comprising the *FAMILY* grouping alluded to the Biblical text, but not necessarily to a specific passage. As with the voice of God, descriptions of God as father are ubiquitous in Bible, with different representations of this metaphor occurring throughout (e.g., Psalm 68:5, John 6:46, Romans 1:7). However, unlike the *GOD SPEAKS TO CHRISTIANS* systematic metaphor, atheist users responding to Yokeup including Crosisborg, philhellenes, and PaulsEgo did not engage the *FAMILY* metaphors in the same way as the voice of God metaphor. PaulsEgo's insulting of Yokeup in his video entitled 'A Spotlight.' (V6) included a mocking reference to Yokeup as a brother who has rejected him, a use that subverted the metaphor for humour. Cameron (2010b) has shown the value of metaphor appropriation in conciliation discourse activity in bringing together former enemies by creating shared ownership of language; here, PaulsEgo's use shows that appropriation can be used to mock another and create distance.

### **5.3.7 SPIRITUAL PUNISHMENT IS BURNING**

Use of the systematic metaphor *SPIRITUAL PUNISHMENT IS BURNING* also appeared to have a connection to the Bible. When Yokeup retold the parable of the vine and branches in defence of his use of human garbage (Section 5.4), he repeatedly emphasised the vehicle burn to describe the fate of unbelievers. Although the passage did not explicitly describe a Christian belief in hell, the

presence of burn in the parable was used to compare the parable's burning with spiritual destruction in hell because both described spiritual judgement and punishment as burning. However, as with the other examples of Biblical metaphorical language, more concrete, non-metaphorical descriptions of this punishment were not present either in the 'human garbage' drama or the Bible, and it was unclear in Christian discourse activity whether or not they understood punishment in hell to include a physical burning or understood 'burning' as a metaphorical representation of punishment.

When christoferL and Yokeup employed descriptions of *BURNING*, no other Christians responding to their videos challenged their use of the metaphors, suggesting burn was accepted as a vehicle for spiritual punishment among them. Moreover, although I have marked burn as metaphor vehicle, in Christian discourse activity, the metaphoricity of the term might be questioned since belief in a literal hell with physical punishment persists in Christian belief and was observed in the course of my two-year observation of these users. In the video page corpus, however, this argument was not explicitly discussed, and there was no evidence in the discourse activity to suggest a definitive literal understanding of the term.

An accepted use of *BURNING* vehicles to describe spiritual punishment after death among Christians did not appear to influence the understanding of burn as spiritual punishment for other users, as evidenced by their development of the vehicle. Particularly for non-Christians, the use of burn with the object human garbage dumps in Yokeup's discourse activity appeared to index a literal burning of physical human bodies. philhellenes, in particular, developed burn to semantically related vehicles, and literalised the vehicle in talk about the Holocaust, a process which was entirely absent in christoferL and Yokeup's discourse activity about burning in the 'human garbage' drama context. When commenters on philhellenes' video referenced hell and burning, some subverted the metaphor, suggesting, for example, that Yokeup should burn in hell. philhellenes' framing of Yokeup's video (particularly the collocation of the John 15 parable vehicles and human garbage dumps) as well as his suggestion of a link between Yokeup's discourse activity and Holocaust imagery were reflected in the ways in which commenters on his video pages subsequently wrote about

burning. Neither christoferL, Yokeup, nor the Christians who commented on their videos, however, appeared to recognise or address the literalisation of burn by philhellenes and others, and there were no instances in the data of the Christians attempting to clarify the meaning of burn.

In this section, I presented the systematic metaphors that played a central role in the development of drama. I showed how systematic metaphor revealed users' beliefs and evaluations of others as well as how YouTube interaction was talked about among all users. I discussed how Biblical metaphorical language was used by both Christians and non-Christians to talk about user relationships and spiritual experience. I now discuss metaphor shifting in discourse activity, particularly as it relates to Yokeup's use of 'human garbage' and responses to him.

#### **5.4 *Metaphor Trajectories and Metaphorical Stories***

As I presented above (Section 5.2.2), relationships between vehicles from two metaphorical stories, the parable of the vine and branches (John 15) and the Titanic story, were identified in the grouping of metaphor vehicles. In this section, I investigate the relationship between these vehicles by analysing metaphor shifting. As described in Section 4.3.3, Yokeup presented the Biblical parable of the vine and the branches from John 15 throughout the 'human garbage' drama as support for his use of the term human garbage and to argue that the term was the word of God. User response to this included the most viewed and commented on video in the video page corpus, 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) in which philhellenes described Yokeup as a psychopath and told a metaphorical story about the Titanic to illustrate his response to Yokeup. I begin by presenting metaphor trajectories and metaphor shifting from the parable of the vine and branches before presenting the stories told by users in response to Yokeup, including the Titanic story.

##### **5.4.1 The Parable of the Vine and Branches (John 15)**

The first vehicle used from the parable of the vine and branches (John 15), human garbage, was part of an insult of Crosisborg (Section 4.3.3) in the videos subsequently removed from the site. In this first instance, Yokeup's categorisation of Crosisborg formed the metaphor, Crosisborg is human

garbage. The development of human garbage from the parable occurred, however, after the initial use in response to criticism from others, Yokeup made an explicit defence of the term based on Biblical exegesis of John 15, but because none of the initial videos remain online, I make use of the first video that offered an explicit exegesis: Yokeup's video entitled 'more on...human garbage' (V14). Although the video represents Yokeup's restating of his argument after the initial negative response, the content of the argument appeared to be essentially the same.

In the video titled 'more on...human garbage' (V14), Yokeup explicitly described how human garbage was developed from the John 15 text. In this video, Yokeup read from the text of the Bible and posted the text, taken from the King James Version of the Bible in the video description box (see p. 276 also for the complete chapter). The text of the description box, taken from the New International Version of the Bible, can be seen in Video Extract 5-5.

#### **Video Extract 5-5. 'more on...human garbage' (V11:Video Description)**

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John 15:1–8

1 I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. 3 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

5 Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

---

In the description box of the video (Video Extract 5-5), the text of John 15 presented Jesus speaking to his disciples using a parable. The parable included the following metaphors: the disciples are branches, Jesus is the vine, and the father is the gardener. Within the parable, the following story was told: branches which remain in Christ, bear fruit and were pruned. Branches which did not bear fruit were cut and thrown away, and subsequently withered and were burned. The parable emphasised the importance of remaining in Christ and, therefore,



showing oneself to be a true disciple of Jesus. The implication of the parable, further explicated in the following verses not included in the video description box (John 15:9–17), was that the hearer should follow Jesus' commands if they wanted to remain in in Christ.

Although Yokeup did not provide commentary on the parable in the description box, he did explicitly reference the text in the video. Yokeup read directly from the Bible passage, commenting on the scripture throughout his reading. Although the term human garbage was not contained in the parable of the vine and branches Yokeup presented the vehicle as a development of the parable's withered branches vehicle (Video Extract 5-6):

### Video Extract 5-6. 'more on...human garbage' (V14:49–57)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
49	.. that if you are not <u>connected to</u> christ	(IMAGES
50	if you not <u>connected</u>	REDACTED)
51	you cannot <u>bear fruit</u>	<b>more on...human</b>
52	if you don't <u>bear fruit</u>	<b>garbage</b>
53	God <u>prunes</u> you	posted 17/2/2009 by
54	you <u>wither in</u> a pile	Yokeup
55	you are <u>burned</u>	939 views
56	you're--	32 comments
57	you're <u>garbage</u>	6:03 running time
		<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR-uo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR-uo</a>

In Video Extract 5-6, Yokeup drew an equivalence between the metaphorical language in the parable and his own discourse activity. He accomplished this by first relexicalising remain in Christ to be 'connected to' Christ (V14:49) and then implicitly redeploying the topic 'you' from the Biblical parable (V14:55–57). Yokeup developed withered branch from garbage using 'wither in a pile' (V14:54) to illustrate the relationship between the words. Although the 'you' in the context of the parable was ostensibly Jesus' disciples, the text establishes a new topic for the vehicle branch in verse six: 'Anyone who does not remain in me...' (John 15:6) which Yokeup explicated as anyone who 'is not connected to Christ' (V14:49) to include contemporary readers of the text, using the generic 'you' as the topic for the metaphor you are garbage, and establishing an implicit metaphor anyone who does not remain in [Christ] is garbage. The use of the topic you also made the language of the parable more direct. Whereas the Bible referred only to 'anyone who does not remain in me' (John 15:6), Yokeup's retelling of the parable directly addressed the viewer in a confrontational

manner. The parable was, in Yokeup's discourse activity, not only about the burning of 'people who do not remain in Christ', but of the video viewer.

In this vehicle development and retelling of the parable, Yokeup was able to present his own words as the words of the Bible and to, as Foucault writes, 'say something other than the text itself' (1981, p. 58). In Yokeup's discourse activity, there was no clear demarcation between where the words of the Bible ended and where his own began, enabling the development of garbage from withered branches to be potentially heard as part of the Biblical text. From Yokeup's discourse alone, one would not be able to determine which vehicles are contained in the parable and which ones are the result of his own development. Yokeup's exegesis of the parable, therefore, showed how vehicle development from the text of the Bible could be used to extend the language of the parable to new vehicles through comparison of Biblical metaphorical terms with exophoric metaphorical language. The development of the metaphorical language also appropriated the moral authority of the Bible to Yokeup's own words by taking on the 'pastoral power' (Foucault, 1982) that is present when the Bible is quoted. Yokeup further redeployed garbage in the videos that were taken down, using it to describe others as human garbage dumps (as heard in the audio extracts at the beginning of philhellenes' video entitled 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' [V5]). Garbage was then redeployed from 'people who do not remain in Christ' to 'agnostics, gays, lesbians, and homosexuals'. Yokeup then relexicalised the vehicle of piles into which the withered branches were thrown (John 15:6) as dumps. Drawing on the development of withered branches to human garbage, the piles of withered branches were relexicalised as human garbage dumps. The development of the vehicle then implicated many more users as the topic for the vehicle garbage, including anyone who did not identify themselves as remaining in Christ. Yokeup did not comment on the development of the vehicles or address in later videos the potential problems of using these words. Instead, Yokeup consistently presented his language as the word of God, and as maintaining the meaning as the Bible.

Yokeup's vehicle development and use of the Bible in this way was challenged by other Christians, particularly the user christoferL. In his video entitled 'John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12), christoferL took

issue not explicitly with Yokeup's development of human garbage from the Bible, but the redeployment of the topic you to the vehicle withered branches. christoferL read from the entire John 15 passage to further emphasise the accuracy of his exegesis. After reading from John 15:9–17, which emphasises the hearer of the parable must 'obey [Jesus'] commands' (V12:110) to 'remain in [God's] love' (V12:113), christoferL said the following:

**Video Extract 5-7. 'John 15 for Dummies-Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12:148–169)**

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
148		<b>John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage? (V12)</b> posted 15/2/2009 by christoferL 578 views 25 comments 4:54 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAnou0jiOOA">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAnou0jiOOA</a>
149		
150		
151		
152		
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154		
155		
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157		
158	(Transcript Redacted)	
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In Video Extract 5-7, christoferL used the verses that follow the parable to further challenge Yokeup's exegesis and use of human garbage to refer to 'unbelievers'. In the same way that Allington (2007) found readers arguing about whether or not a textual quotation had been taken 'out of context' in another's interpretation, christoferL took into account the context in which the parable was told and argued that withered branches in the parable could only be applied to the topic 'believers who do not remain in Christ' (V12:159–160) and not 'unbelievers' because the parable was told specifically to Jesus' disciples. christoferL argued that because 'unbelievers' cannot be in Christ, they cannot become withered branches. The vehicle garbage therefore could not take the topic 'you' if the hearer was an 'unbeliever'. christoferL, therefore, did not explicitly challenge the development of garbage from the parable, but rather the redeployment of it to groups and people who might be considered 'unbelievers'.

christoferL's video suggested that the problem was that the development did not maintain the original meaning of the parable, not that Yokeup's use of the term was wrong.

Although christoferL did not accept Yokeup's development of the human garbage, he developed the parable's use of burn to refer to spiritual punishment in hell and specifically stated that, 'This isn't to say that unbelievers won't burn because unfortunately you guys you will if you don't accept Christ' (V12:168–171). In this statement, christoferL affirmed his own belief in the Christian doctrine of hell, and the belief that 'people who do not accept Christ' will burn. The statement is ostensibly the same as Yokeup's assertion about human garbage that 'people who do not remain in Christ' will burn, but unlike Yokeup, christoferL did not suggest that any specific user would burn. Moreover, christoferL's use of the Christian term 'unbeliever' compared to Yokeup's use of 'agnostics, gays, lesbians, and homosexuals' also made the assertion that some people would burn less direct, since no users in the 'human garbage' drama self-identified using the word 'unbeliever'. I further discuss christoferL's presentation of burning and his avoidance of impoliteness in Section 7.3.1.

The development of garbage from the parable of the vine and the branches parable was also opposed by other Christians who followed christoferL's reasoning. BudManInChrist (V13) and gdy50 (V20) as well as commenters appealed to other parts of the Bible to support their exegesis and to further interpret the meaning of the parable. Conversely, users who agreed with Yokeup also appealed to scripture to support Yokeup's exegesis and development of garbage. Acceptance of the term among Christians was in part contingent on whether or not they believed the development maintained the original meaning of the Biblical text. In the same way that Bartkowski (1996) showed that a 'literal' reading of the Bible did not resolve disagreements about corporal punishment because Bible passages supporting both sides of an argument can be offered, quotation of other parts of the Bible did not resolve the argument between Yokeup and christoferL.

Yokeup's development of human garbage from the parable resulted in a strong response from many users. In particular, the atheist philhellenes' video entitled 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) was the most viewed video in the corpus

and also had the most comments. In the video, philhellenes rejected the redeployment of human garbage dumps to 'agnostics, gays, lesbians, and homosexuals', and presented himself as shocked and angered by Yokeup's words. philhellenes suggested that Yokeup's references to human garbage dumps burning was reminiscent of the Holocaust, drawing an implicit comparison between Yokeup and the Nazis and presenting Yokeup's discourse activity as evidence that Yokeup lacked empathy for other humans and was, therefore, a psychopath. The use of metaphor in this way exaggerated negative evaluations of Yokeup with metaphorical hyperboles which presented Yokeup in the worst possible way (Section 6.3.4).

For philhellenes, the use of the term human garbage did not lead to, as it did in christoferL's video, a discussion of whether or not Yokeup was interpreting the Bible in the correct way, but as evidence that Yokeup was a bad person. Support from the commenters further indicated the differences in reception to human garbage between Christians and non-Christians. Only one commenter made mention of Yokeup's exegesis of the parable, but instead, users developed philhellenes' *MENTAL ILLNESS* descriptions of Yokeup and extended descriptions of burning to discourse activity about the Holocaust, particularly in descriptions of Yokeup as 'Hitler' (Section 6.3.4). For these users, the discussion of the importance of the Bible in the development of the vehicle did not occur, but rather they developed philhellenes' hyperbolic language, further escalating and exaggerating his negative evaluations of Yokeup. philhellenes' use of the metaphor Yokeup is a psychopath resulted in the development of *MENTAL ILLNESS* vehicles by users who evaluated Yokeup with language similar to philhellenes. Of the 613 comments on the video, 70 comments employed vehicles from the *MENTAL ILLNESS* grouping. Users repeated the vehicle psychopath and developed the vehicles to include batshit insane (V5:1192), deranged (V5:922), and a lunatic (V5:1052), among others, emphasising a negative evaluation of Yokeup's actions as unacceptable for mentally healthy individuals.


After its initial use and Yokeup's initial defence in response to others, the development of garbage from the parable of the vine and branches stabilised in the same form that Yokeup had used it in the video entitled 'more on...human

garbage' (V14). Yokeup continued to argue that because the Biblical description of anyone who does not remain in [Christ] included contemporary readers of the text, and because garbage was thrown away in the same way that withered branches are thrown away, garbage was an acceptable development of withered branches. Subsequently, the metaphor anyone who does not remain in [Christ] is garbage was not only acceptable, but the word of God taken directly from the Bible.

#### **5.4.2 The Titanic Story**

In addition to calling Yokeup a psychopath, philhellenes told a metaphorical story which mapped the interaction between Yokeup and philhellenes onto the tragic historical narrative of the sinking of the Titanic. The story developed out of philhellenes' reaction to hearing Yokeup talk about human garbage dumps and his negative evaluation of Yokeup (Section 5.2.2). Video Extract 5-8 presents the story philhellenes told about Yokeup framed as a retelling a 'joke' about another Christian user named geerup:

## Video Extract 5-8. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5:257–284)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
257	...(1.5) I once <u>made</u> a joke	 <p><b>YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup. (V5)</b>            Posted 14/1/2009 by philhellenes            17,510 views            613 comments            10:25 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5jzMkHL80">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5jzMkHL80</a></p>
258	.. that if I was	
259	the <u>captain</u> of the <u>titanic</u>	
260	.. and it was a choice	
261	<u>between</u>	
262	I think it was geerup	
263	that I <u>used</u> the analogy <u>with</u>	
264	if it was a choice <u>between</u>	
265	.. geerup	
266	and a <u>puppy</u>	
267	nobody had to worry	
268	<u>about</u> the <u>puppy</u>	
269	.. but after hearing this video	
270	in all sincerity	
271	...(1.5) the <u>puppy</u> would survive	
272	...(3.0) and you would have to be	
273	the best <u>swimmer</u>	
274	that the <u>world</u> has ever <u>seen</u>	
275	to survive	
276	yokeup	
277	.. and I mean it	
278	.. I'd <u>save</u> a <u>puppy</u> before you	
279	and anyone <u>on</u> the <u>lifeboat</u>	
280	who wanted to complain	
281	.. they can complain all they like	
282	.. I'll have no problem	
283	.. I won't <u>lose</u>	
284	a moment's sleep	

In Video Extract 5-8, philhellenes told a story which presented himself as the captain of the sinking Titanic and Yokeup as a passenger on the ship. In the metaphorical story, there is a full lifeboat and only one seat remaining. philhellenes must make a decision between a puppy that is also on the ship and Yokeup. philhellenes argued that he would choose the puppy rather than Yokeup without explicitly saying why. The story, therefore, described and explicated philhellenes' opinion that Yokeup was worthless, but in such a way that the opinion was a 'joke' rather than concrete statement about Yokeup's real worth as a human (Section 7.3.2).

Following philhellenes' talk, users also developed metaphor from the metaphorical story to describe Yokeup and their response to him. Of the 613 comments on the video page, 36 made reference to the metaphorical story, including six comments by philhellenes and 30 other unique users. In philhellenes' subsequent video entitled 'I was wrong' (V7), in which he clarified his statements about Yokeup, there were 109 comments, of which 11 explicitly

referenced the metaphorical story, one of which was philhellenes with 10 other unique users. Comments Extract 5-5 presents examples of commenters developing elements of the metaphorical story.

### **Comments Extract 5-5. Titanic Story Development**

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ComradeAgopian (user comment)

Excellent response Phil. I for one would pick a cute puppy, stupid cat, or a flightless bird, over Yokeup. My only question would be did we get enough cold beer and sanwich's on the life boat. (V5:3043–3054)

awormyourhonor (user comment)

I would choose the man. But the moment he said anything like "thank God" and started preaching to the boat. I would tell him to thank the rubber raft he was in, and probably kick him into the water with the yapping dog. I choose both. (V5 :3111–3113)

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In Comments Extract 5-5, vehicle development within the metaphorical story occurred when the user ComradeAgopian suggested a substitution of the puppy for potentially less desirable animals (V5:3043). Additionally, the story was extended in time beyond the moment that philhellenes has ended it (with others in the lifeboat potentially complaining about the choice) to include other possibilities. In the extension of the story by awormyourhonor, Yokeup is taken on the lifeboat, but kicked out upon doing something more offensive (V5:3111–3113). Similarly, in ComradeAgopian's extension, the need for food and supplies in the lifeboat is problematised (V5: 3043-3045). The comments show that the use of the metaphorical story encouraged users to also respond with metaphorical language, developing the same evaluation of Yokeup and his actions that philhellenes employed in his video.

Marking metaphor vehicles in these comments was challenging. Unlike philhellenes' story which had a clear beginning and ending, the beginnings and endings of the metaphorical stories in comments which developed the vehicles were more obscure. Particularly in awormyourhonor's comment in Comments Extract 5-5, in which Yokeup's preaching is taken into the metaphorical world of the story, the story's boundaries were not explicit. The vehicle development in both comments in Comments Extract 5-5 showed that my approach to marking vehicles was valid because users developed individual elements of the metaphorical stories in the same way as the Biblically derived metaphors in the previous section. In the development of each vehicle, user discourse activity



further displayed beliefs and opinions about interaction in the context of the drama, supporting, extending, or opposing the original meaning of the story.

The Titanic story also served to present a moral question to the viewer about the relative worth of Yokeup's life. In philhellenes' telling of the metaphorical story, the choice of the puppy over Yokeup was explicitly resolved, but in response users engaged the question: who should be chosen to occupy the final seat in the lifeboat? The resulting discussion employed elements of the story to not only evaluate Yokeup, which was the initial purpose of the metaphorical story, but also to prime further discussion about the moral choice. awormyourhonor's comment in Comments Extract 5-5 highlights that the story encouraged users to consider Yokeup's actions and their own reaction to them in the same way that philhellenes had.

The tone of the initial telling of the metaphorical story also affected the tone of commenter response. After the story was presented by philhellenes as a 'joke' with comedic elements, comments were also often written in a 'joking' manner, with commenters producing comedic extensions of the story. For example, ComradeAgopian's comment in Comments Extract 5-5, made light of the hypothetical situation on the lifeboat, using a joking tone to ask whether or not there would be enough beer and food on the boat. Similarly, awormyourhonor's comment in Comments Extract 5-5 offers a comedic extension to the story in which Yokeup is kicked out of the boat and must swim with the 'yapping dog' (V5 :3111-3113). Although this comment also suggested some violence against Yokeup, as with philhellenes' joking use of violent imagery, the comment did not appear to be treated as a legitimate threat against Yokeup (Section 7.3.2).

The development of vehicles continued as philhellenes described his strong reaction to Yokeup's comments, further escalating the story through juxtaposing elements of both the Titanic story and with images of burning. In philhellenes' next video entitled 'I was wrong' (V7), the new story complemented the Titanic metaphorical story, and more explicitly highlighted the Holocaust imagery that he initially claimed to have tried to avoid, as seen in Video Extract 5-9.

## Video Extract 5-9. 'I was wrong' (V7:115–145)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
115	I think it <u>comes from</u> the image his video	 <p><b>I Was Wrong. (V7)</b> Posted 15/1/2009 by philhellenes 9037 views 109 comments 5:09 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJctXnFJTt4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJctXnFJTt4</a></p>
116	<u>put in my</u> head	
117	of <u>field</u> after <u>field</u>	
118	of endless <u>piles</u> of humans	
119	.. the <u>animal</u> that suffers the most	
120	...(1.5) <u>burning</u>	
121	.. and that <u>tiny little</u> laugh	
122	that yokeup <u>let out</u>	
123	...(1.0) he'd <u>get into</u> the <u>lifeboat</u>	
124	I'm sure	
125	.. but if we were both	
126	actually	
127	witnessing those <u>piles</u>	
128	of so many <u>burning</u> people	
129	.. atheists	
130	agnostics	
131	homosexuals	
132	muslims	
133	hindus	
134	sikhs	
135	buddhists	
136	the amish	
137	and the jains	
138	.. and all the others	
139	that disagreed <u>with</u> the <u>prophet</u>	
140	yokeup	
141	.. and that <u>bastard</u>	
142	was <u>at my side</u>	
143	.. and he <u>let</u> that <u>tiny</u> laugh <u>out</u>	
144	.. and I was <u>armed</u>	
145	.. it would be	
146	the last sound he ever <u>made</u>	

In this story, Yokeup and philhellenes are both surveying 'field after field' (V7:117) of burning bodies when Yokeup laughs. In addition to extending the metaphorical story to explicitly state his reaction to Yokeup, this version of the story further redeployed human garbage dumps to 'atheists, agnostics, homosexuals, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, the Amish, and the Jains, and all the others that disagreed with the prophet yokeup' (V7: 129–140). philhellenes again retold the metaphorical story in the comments section of 'I was wrong' (V7), focusing on describing burning bodies and rejecting the initial story as seen in Comments Extract 5-6:

### Comments Extract 5-6. 'I was wrong.' (V7: 431–433)

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philhellenes (user comment)

Forget the lifeboat. It's a different scenario. I think you're inviting me to imagine my other scenario; endless fields of burning humans (practically all of humanity) as far as the eye could see, a sky black with the smoke, and yourself instead of Yokeup letting out a laugh. How would I react?

Fascinating, thought provoking question. It feels different, certainly. Also feels different if I imagine JF777 laughing. I'd put it down to trauma in both cases. I don't feel anger in that scenario. (V7: 431–433)

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In Comments Extract 5-6, philhellenes began by stating, 'Forget the lifeboat' (V7:427). Rather than continuing to explicate and extend the Titanic metaphorical story like other commenters, philhellenes posited a new story, one the video suggested he saw when he first heard Yokeup's video. Here again, philhellenes focused on Yokeup's lack of empathy and the moral question that emerged as a key element after responses by commenters to the initial story. The references to the Titanic are removed, but the trace of the metaphor remains in how the story is constructed, reflecting the initial action the story accomplished: voicing philhellenes' displeasure with Yokeup. The retelling of the stories, particularly the piles of 'so many burning people' (V7:128) changed the emphasis of the metaphorical story from a joke told about another user, to a focus on Yokeup's description of others burning, which philhellenes had originally found offensive. The development of metaphors, therefore, followed philhellenes' attempts to engage users in his own reaction to Yokeup and emphasise what he believed to be offensive about the use of garbage dumps and piles in describing other users.

Users not only repeated and developed individual vehicles in response to philhellenes, but the user oakleywellington also told a subversive version of the parable of the vine and branches, producing a new metaphorical story (Comments Extract 5-7):

## Comments Extract 5-7. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5:1947–1949)

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oakleywellington (user comment)

...And so I was cast into the pile of withered tree limbs, my friends leaves shaking with uncertainty, but I lay there unafraid and my fellow tree limbs did wonder how I was so confident up until God's fire did start to burn. And my friends did realise why my leaves stayed calm and true as did theirs when they saw the fire consume us and we felt nothing for God's fire cannot burn us, for God's fire cannot burn logic and truth and love for each other. We lay intact in the fire against God's will. (V5:1947–1949)

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In Comments Extract 5-7, the parable of the vine and branches was retold with the main elements and actions of the parable preserved without redeployment. The parable was extended in time, however, and although the branches are thrown into a fire, they are not burned. Vehicle development occurs as the tree limbs are presented as having leaves which shake with fear. Although the branches are thrown into a pile to be burned, the fire is unable to burn them because of their 'logic and truth and love' (V5:1949) for each other. oakleywellington, therefore, appropriates power from the moral authority of the story and subverts it, by suggesting that those who Yokeup had said will ultimately be burned cannot be destroyed.

In the same way as the development of the Titanic vehicles seen above, oakleywellington's comment shows how all the vehicles in a metaphorical story can be developed and extended. The individual, constituent elements of the John 15 parable, were manipulated and subverted to display oakleywellington's beliefs and opinions. All the elements of oakleywellington's new story convey meaning in comparison and contrast to the meaning of the parable and the development of the stories by philhellenes. The pain and suffering of the burning from philhellenes' story is contrasted with leaves staying calm. The cut off branches of the John 15 parable lay intact. The construction of the new story becomes a contextualised re-voicing of the previous discourse activity, with a particular meaning at a particular time.

Reference to the Titanic story did not reappear in subsequent discussions of Yokeup, despite vehicles, including burn and the Holocaust related imagery re-emerging in subsequent videos. The metaphorical story was, therefore, temporarily stable in the two videos, by elements of discourse activity preceding it, but not enduring or becoming a long-term resource for users. The parable of

the vine and the branches, by contrast, continued to be a source of discussion. Analysis of the trajectory human garbage in the dataset shows that the response users had to Yokeup influenced how they developed the metaphorical language. When user response to Yokeup was oriented towards his use of the Bible, the responses focused on whether or not he maintained the meaning of the Biblical text. On the other hand, when user response oriented towards the action of the metaphor as an offensive categorisation of others, the responses focused on negatively evaluating Yokeup and using metaphorical language to further creative negative descriptions of him. In both cases, however, drama developed and both responses resulted in disagreement among users over whether or not what Yokeup had done was 'right', either in the exegesis of the text or in his words and/or actions.

Having presented the trajectory of metaphorical language and responses that contributed to the development of drama, I now discuss the findings of the analysis in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

### **5.5 Discussion**

Throughout the 'human garbage' drama, the use of metaphorical stories as well as parables from the Bible showed evidence of Gibbs' notion of *allegoresis* (Gibbs, 2011, p. 122) (Section 2.5, p. 62). This occurred in the form of metaphorical stories told explicitly in discourse activity, but also implicitly in reference to metaphorical language from the Bible and references to the Holocaust which never appeared as complete stories. Both implicitly and explicitly, use of metaphorical stories and systematic metaphor in discourse activity about the present, immediate context was a process in which users drew on relevant socio-historical themes to talk about their own experiences. The themes that were relevant to the CofP emerged and shifted over time as different users interacted.

Metaphorical stories and metaphorical language, therefore, became a part of the 'shared repertoire of negotiated resources' (Wenger, 1999) in the community of practice that users engaged in once they were introduced into the discourse activity, often in creative ways, extending not only the stories, but the action embedded in the story. The stories as resources didn't necessarily

'accumulate' as Wenger (1998) suggests, but moved in and out of prominence at different times. Users recognised metaphorical language that was specific to the CofP, in particular, the use of 'human garbage' and the metaphorical language taken from the Bible surrounding Yokeup's justification for its use, but this resource of metaphor was specific to the context and did not necessarily endure as a 'jargon' or 'in-group/out-group' language, a feature of Internet 'community' that Herring (2004a) has observed. Metaphors as a resource in the CofP were then temporary stabilities that endured on different timescales, depending on the interaction of users.

The symbolic themes to which users connected their own actions and the actions of others evidenced interconnecting systems of socially-situated language use and cognitive activity, a key assumption of the discourse dynamics approach to metaphor (Cameron et al., 2009). When stories and systematic metaphor use emerged in discourse activity, users developed them in ways that revealed their own attitudes and beliefs, adapting and adjusting different elements in the course of interaction. The stories and themes did not, however, remain separate and were observed developing with inter-connected trajectories. The result of this inter-connection was evidenced in philhellenes' final story in which he and Yokeup have gone from standing on the deck of the Titanic to a generic space where they are looking at fields of burning bodies. In this instance, two otherwise unrelated historical stories, the Holocaust and the Titanic, became connected in a meaningful way because of unique discourse activity that proceeded it.

The development of metaphors from both parables and historical stories evidenced how metaphor from fixed, written texts or stable tragic historical narratives could take on new meaning as resources in local contexts of discourse activity where they can be adjusted and adapted. The result of this adaptation was not only new metaphors such as Yokeup is Hitler or unbelievers are human garbage which became meaningful in the particular CofP, but also systematic metaphors like *CHRISTIAN BELIEF IS MENTAL ILLNESS*. Like the stories, the individual systematic metaphors could be stable at different timescales, for a single video page, or across several video pages, or over a much longer period, depending on how they used and reused. The parables and stories from which

the metaphors were developed, however, remain fixed and accessible for new formulations in different contexts, enduring beyond and separate from their development in the CofP.

The relationship between the stories and systematic metaphor also supports a dynamic description of metaphor use, in which differentiating between 'systematic metaphor', 'metaphorical stories', 'scenarios', and 'parables' can be difficult when considering actual discourse activity. The development of the metaphorical stories could be empirically observed in metaphor shifting when users interpreted and developed the language to meet the particular context of the discourse activity, but stories could, at different times, be described as 'scenarios' or 'systematic metaphors' or Biblical metaphorical language, depending on the particular stretch of discourse activity being analysed. At any given point in the 'human garbage' drama and the development of metaphorical language, the discourse activity that proceeded the individual use was essential to understanding why certain metaphors were being produced at certain times. The emerging context of discourse activity elucidated metaphorical language in a way that conceiving of 'scenarios' only as 'idealised cognitive models' (G. Lakoff, 1987) or setting up blended cognitive spaces (Crisp, 2008) might not. Because the metaphorical language was particular to the discourse context, describing the use in terms of fixed conceptual mappings or cognitive blends would likely to be insufficient.

Analysis of metaphor also showed that within the CofP the enduring themes were often drawn from the Bible and users often spoke about the 'human garbage' drama metaphorically using language from the Bible. Although the users disagreed about how the parables should be interpreted, Christians did not disagree that that Bible *should* be used to describe the actions of others. The text of the Bible was a key resource in exegesis and users supported their readings of particular passages of the Bible by using other passages in the same way Bartkowski's (1996) research showed that Christians interpreted the contested passages in the Bible using other parts of the Bible. Because the authority was inherent in Biblical words and not in a fixed institutional reading, a Christian could claim, using evidence from other parts of the Bible, that their reading represented the true meaning.

The words of the Bible were also used to extend moral authority to a user's own words, similar to the 'second-order discourses' and 'pastoral power' in Foucault's (1981, 1982) description of the institutional church in which the words about the Bible appropriate and extend its authority (Section 2.6). When Yokeup developed metaphor vehicles from the parable of the vine and the branches (John 15), claiming that the extension was all 'red ink' (V5:40) (or the exact words of Jesus), Yokeup implied that the words were authoritative because they were the words of the Bible and not simply his own. The right to speak in the way that he had was rooted in the words of the text (discussed further in Section 8.4). For users who recognised the authority of the Bible, Yokeup's words then also had the authority of the central text standing in for the institution of the church, provided that they would accept his exegesis.

The effective use of Biblical metaphorical language highlighted the role of metaphor in *pathos* in user arguments, a finding which supports Charteris-Blacks' (2009) work showing how metaphor is used in political discourse. For Christians, including Yokeup, christoferL, and commenters on their video pages, metaphorical language taken from the Bible was used often without qualification, evidencing its ubiquity as a shared reference among Christians from diverse backgrounds interacting on the site. By using Biblical metaphor, Christians could 'sound right' in their interaction with one another, drawing on a shared socio-religious context that they, despite their differences in exegesis of scripture, appeared to share. The use of Biblical metaphor helped them heighten the *pathos* of their argument because others both implicitly and explicitly might be expected to recognise their words as coming from the Bible.

Because the metaphorical language often included negative evaluations of others, the extension and development of metaphor also often repeated the negative evaluation. In this way, drama developed when metaphor shifting was tied to the mistreatment of another user or category of user, both in Yokeup's development of 'human garbage' to describe everyone he did not view as a 'believer' and in other people's offensive language about Yokeup. In both cases, whenever the development of this negative metaphorical language occurred, it prolonged drama by giving users new ways to negatively evaluate others. Metaphor was also used to escalate negative evaluations of others, using



hyperbolic, exaggerated metaphorical language related to an initial metaphorical description of another. This was particularly important in the categorisations of Yokeup, when, for example, philhellenes' categorisation of him as a psychopath was developed to the extreme, eventually comparing Yokeup with Hitler. In this way, the creative use of metaphor in the 'human garbage' drama interaction tended towards exaggeration and hyperbole as users developed descriptions of Yokeup. I will discuss this further in Chapter 6, on categorisation.

Description and analysis of metaphor using metaphor-led discourse analysis has elucidated how users employed both metaphorical stories and systematic metaphors in discourse activity about social interaction to display their 'ideas, attitudes, and values' (Cameron et al., 2010, p. 128). Analysis of metaphor has also show the action of this metaphor use, that users employed metaphor to not only describe their social interaction, but also to effect change in the CofP, presenting others and their actions in a negative way and using metaphor to present themselves and their own action in a positive way.

In review, analysis of metaphor found:

- Metaphorical stories and Biblical parables were developed throughout the video page corpus, and arguments about the interpretation of Biblical metaphorical language were central to the 'human garbage' drama.
- Users regularly employed metaphor to explain and describe the actions and character of themselves and others in terms of Biblical language, often disagreeing with others about how the Bible should be applied to the YouTube context.
- Metaphor use led to the development of drama when negative evaluations of individual users employing metaphorical language were extended to other users in subsequent metaphor shifting.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings from metaphor analysis in the video page corpus. First, I presented the grouping of metaphor vehicles both by semantic and narrative systematicity. Grouping and cross-grouping of metaphor vehicles

revealed the prevalence of Biblical metaphorical language in the 'human garbage' drama as well as other instances of narrative systematicity. Key systematic metaphors were presented to show how opposing users talked and wrote about their interactions, beliefs, and experiences in conflicting way. I then discussed metaphor trajectories, particularly metaphorical stories that emerged in responses to Yokeup's use of human garbage and his subsequent defence of the term. Analysis of the trajectory of human garbage showed how users responded to the metaphor in different ways, by engaging in Biblical exegesis, telling metaphorical stories, and insulting Yokeup. Finally, I discussed my analysis in terms of the literature, showing how my work extended research into the role of metaphor in conflict and further elucidating how Christians engage in exegesis of Biblical metaphorical language.

Having identified the role of metaphor in categorisation of others, in the next chapter, I further investigate how categories were employed in the drama in talk about others.

## 6 Categorisation in Context

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from analysis of categorisation in the 'human garbage' drama outlined in Section 4.5.2. Analysis of categorisation employed the reconsidered model for membership categorisation analysis (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002) to answer the following research questions:

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RQ5 Did categorisation devices appear in the videos? If so, how were they used and did their use differ depending on the speaker or commenter?

RQ6 How was metaphor employed in categorisation?

RQ7 How did categorisation contribute to the development of drama?

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In Section 2.4, I presented Sacks' (1992) theoretical concept of membership categorisation devices and the reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis (Eglin & Hester, 1992; Hester & Eglin, 1997; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002), which treats categorisation as '*in situ* achievements of members' practical actions and practical reasoning' (Hester, 1994, pp. 242 cited in Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002) rather than a 'pre-existing apparatus' with a decontextualised sense (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 15) drawing on common sense 'stocks of knowledge'. In Section 4.5.2, I presented my procedure for analysis of the dynamics of categorisation in the 'human garbage' drama in which I described the constituent elements of categorisation and investigated how categories were employed throughout stretches of discourse activity (for definitions of key terms see p. 99).

In my analysis, I first described the individual, constituent elements of categorisation in the transcripts of video talk from the three drama exchanges (Section 4.3.4) including category-bound activities and predicates, potential collections of categories, and implicit and explicit (standardised) relational pairs. I identified categories as any label of an individual or group, category-bound activities as verbs or descriptions of actions linking subjects and objects, and category-bound predicates as any other characteristics of a category that did not necessarily involve actions. Potential collections of categories were also

identified as two or more categories that were related in the discourse activity and relational pairs were identified as any two categories that are connected by a binary relationship. Next, the development of these individual components within the video talk and video page were identified and shifts in uses recorded. I constructed potential categorisation devices, and noted how different users employed the same or similar categories within the same or different devices. Finally, to answer the research question and aims, I focused my analysis on categorisation devices which were either the main topics of videos and/or disputed or developed by users in response.

In this chapter, I present an overview of findings from categorisation analysis. I then present the analysis of the recurring categorisation device of 'types of Christian', the use of Biblically-derived categorisation devices and categories, and finally, the use of metaphor in categorisation.

## **6.2 Overview of Findings**

Analysis of categorisation revealed that:

- Users employed the category of 'Christian' dynamically, with different category-bound activities and predicates in different categorisation devices.
- Biblical language was often used in the categorisation of others, but users did not agree on how categories and category-bound activities and predicates derived from the Bible should be applied.
- Users employed metaphorical language in categorisations which they often developed in escalating negative evaluations of others.

Arguments around who was and was not a Christian were central disagreements in the three drama exchanges (Section 4.3.4), but although many users employed the category of 'Christian', it was often used by different people to mean different things. Users distinguished between different 'types of Christians', creating their own category-bound activities and predicates to describe the different kinds of Christians. Although the category of 'Christian' was used in many different ways, it often appeared as a relational pair, with users differentiating between two kinds of 'Christians'. The category of

'Christian' was used in negative evaluations of others, and self-proclaimed 'believers' did not frequently refer to themselves or others as 'Christians', but rather categories derived from the Bible as well as Biblical metaphorical language (Section 5.2.3).

Users employed 'types of Christians' categorisation devices to present the offensive actions of individuals as representative category-bound activities of 'Christian'. The actions of the representative 'Christian' were then used to negatively evaluate and reject Christianity more generally (Section 5.3.4). Commenters disputed whether a single user could be representative of the 'Christian' category or not, challenged the categorisation of others, and asserted their own 'types of Christians' devices. Arguments about 'Christian' categories contributed to the development of drama by giving users a topic of disagreement and conflict. Moreover, when categorisation was used to connect the negative action of a single user to a category, drama developed in resistance to the extension of the negative evaluation to others.

Self-proclaimed 'believers', including Yokeup, christoferL, and commenters on their video pages, used the moral authority of the Bible to support categorisations, deriving categories, category-bound activities, and categorisation devices from Biblical language. To highlight the source of the language, Yokeup and christoferL read Biblical passages aloud prior to categorisation, presenting their subsequent categorisation of others as authoritative (Section 5.5). The moral authority of the Bible was applied not only to categories taken from the text of the Bible, such as 'enemy of God' or 'withered branches' (which I discussed in Chapter 5), but also categories developed from Biblical metaphorical language, including 'human garbage' (Section 5.4). Many of the Biblical categories and category-bound activities were also metaphorical and included conventionalised metaphors taken directly from the Bible, such as 'saved' and 'born again', as well as categories taken from specific Biblical parables (Section 5.4). Biblical categories were also often interpreted in different ways, with users employing the same language to describe different people and actions. Disagreements about categories derived from the Bible, like disagreement about Biblical metaphorical language, exposed disagreements among Christians about Biblical interpretation.

However, although users disputed the categorisations and argued about the meaning of particular Biblical texts, they did so without disputing the moral authority of the Bible.

Metaphor use in categorisation included both metaphorical categories and category-bound activities, and was often used to negatively evaluate others, particularly Yokeup. Like categorisations employing Biblical language, users interpreted metaphorical categories and category-bound activities in different ways and employed the same metaphorical categories in unique categorisation devices. Use of metaphor in categorisation of others, particularly those including a negative evaluation, contributed to the development of drama when subsequent discourse activity about a category developed the negative evaluations, often in escalating negative, offensive descriptions (as shown in Sections 5.3.3 and 5.4).

Having presented an overview of 'types of Christians' categorisation devices, Biblical language in categorisation, and categorisations employing metaphor, I now describe the dynamics of categorisation in the 'human garbage' drama, beginning with analysis of 'types of Christians' categorisation devices.

### ***6.3 Dynamics of categorisation***

#### **6.3.1 The Categorisation Devices of 'Types of Christians'**

Because much of the disagreement in the 'human garbage' drama included arguments about whether Yokeup should be considered a 'Christian', 'types of Christians' categorisation devices occurred in all the videos in the drama exchanges (Section 4.3.4). In this section, I show exemplary instances of these devices to show how different users employed the category of 'Christian' to influence perception of others in the particular context in which the category was used.

As described in Section 5.4, Yokeup's initial description of others as 'garbage' led to the development of drama when users rejected and opposed the use of the category. The categorisation of other users as 'garbage' developed as drama when Yokeup continued to use the term. Although he initially only categorised specific users as 'garbage', he subsequently repeated and explicated 'human garbage' as 'human garbage dumps' to describe many other

people, including 'atheists, agnostics, gays, lesbians, and homosexuals' (V5:55–59). He then suggested that the shared category-bound activity of being 'burned' applied to all the users he categorised as 'human garbage dumps'. As I showed in Section 5.4, 'human garbage' had a unique impact on the development of drama not only because it contained a negative evaluation of others, but because 'human garbage dumps' was literalised to invoke images of the physical burning. Users, upset at Yokeup's categorisation of them, responded by categorising him, and Yokeup's action of calling others 'human garbage' was used to support descriptions of him as violent and mentally ill.

Yokeup and his words were subsequently widely discussed, with users arguing over whether or not he should be considered a 'Christian'. The first use of the category of 'Christian' in relation to Yokeup occurred in the title to the video 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3), in which Crosisborg categorised Yokeup as a 'bad Christian' and then presented Yokeup's actions as category-bound activities of 'bad Christians'. Although Crosisborg's categorisation of Yokeup as a 'bad Christian' appeared to include a relational pair in which an implicit 'good Christian' category complemented the explicit category of 'bad Christian', no users were explicitly categorised as 'good Christians' in Crosisborg's discourse activity. Crosisborg not only presented Yokeup as a representative 'bad Christian', but also said that Yokeup's actions could be representative of Christian belief more generally, as seen in Video Extract 6-1<sup>4</sup>:

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<sup>4</sup> Metaphor vehicles will not be underlined in transcripts in this and the following chapters.

## Video Extract 6-1. 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3:92–118)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
92	.. this is what shows me	<b>Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians (V3)</b> Posted 14/1/2009 by Crosisborg 2384 views 107 comments 3:31 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpsIWW9Vavo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpsIWW9Vavo</a>
93	is so bad	
94	about christianity	
95	... (1.5) jus-	
96	ah	
97	.. yokeup is actually	
98	defending his position by saying	
99	<Q it's okay	
100	if I'm	
101	wrongly accusing these people of things	
102	.. it's okay	
103	if I'm	
104	.. disregarding their faith	
105	and	
106	you know	
107	the—	
108	I'm not looking	
109	.. past my own prejudices of	
110	my brand of christianity	
111	it's okay that I'm harassing	
112	and I'm causing them stress	
113	.. and I'm causing	
114	ill will	
115	and	
116	I'm defaming them	
117	because	
118	I'm forgiven in the end Q>	

In Video Extract 6-1, Crosisborg said that Yokeup's 'bad behaviour' (V3:16) showed him 'what's so bad about Christianity' (V3:93–94) and Crosisborg described Yokeup as believing that he would be forgiven 'in the end' (V3:118) for 'harassing' (V3:111) others. In this way, Crosisborg suggested a series of category-bound activities of Christians as first, 'causing others stress, ill will, and defaming' others (V3:111–116) and second, believing they will be 'forgiven in the end' (V3:118). In this description, Yokeup's actions were presented as representative category-bound activities of 'Christians' rather than the 'bad Christians' mentioned in the video title, extending a description of Yokeup's actions as representative category-bound activities of all Christians.

Crosisborg's use of the category of 'bad Christian' and the omission of a 'good Christian' category showed the complexities of employing categories in a context that included both Christians and non-Christians. By categorising Yokeup as a 'bad Christian' and referring in the course of the video to other Christians that Yokeup had 'harassed' (V3:75), the categorisation potentially differentiated between Yokeup and other Christians on the site, an example of



'particularisation' rather than 'categorisation' (Billig, 1985, 1996) (see Section 2.4, p.51). Yokeup was not simply a 'Christian' like other Christians, but a 'bad Christian' who was behaving badly, a description that would likely appeal to a Christian audience. By omitting the category of 'good Christian', however, and suggesting that Yokeup showed what was 'so bad about Christianity' (V3:92–95), Crosisborg also presented the belief that Christianity was generally negative, appealing to his predominately non-Christian audience (as evidenced in the comments section). The use of 'bad Christian' and the omission of 'good Christian' allowed the audience to understand the video in two ways, both of which would result in supporting Crosisborg.

Crosisborg's categorisation of Yokeup was disputed in interaction by some other users, and devices produced in response to Crosisborg offered both new categories and category-bound activities. The devices, however, followed the same pattern of presenting only negative evaluations of Christians. Two examples of these comments are presented in Comments Extract 6-1.

#### **Comments Extract 6-1. Types of Christians**

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JACKtheRIPP3R189 (user comment)

"good christian" is a nonexistant thing. Someone can be good and christian, but of someone defines their being as "christian" then they are mentally unhealthy. (V3:281–282)

LogicalSanity (user comment)

i think the title should be changed to "Yokeup: Poster Boy For Perfect Christians" That is exactly what a christian should be like. The vile things that come out of his mouth should be a red flag for the fake christians. (V3:329–331)

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In both of the comments in Comments Extract 6-1, users employed different categorisation devices with relational pairs of 'Christians' categories. JACKtheRIPP3R189 rejected the distinction between 'good' and 'bad Christian' as well as Crosisborg's categorisation device, suggesting instead that self-categorisation of one's 'being' as 'Christian' was 'mentally unhealthy', providing a negative evaluation of all Christians. LogicalSanity's comment, by contrast, offered a new categorisation device in response to Crosisborg. In LogicalSanity's 'types of Christians' categorisation device, two new categories were offered, 'perfect Christians' and 'fake Christians', with 'having vile things come out of their mouths' (V3:331) (Section 5.3.3) presented as a category-

bound activity of 'perfect Christians'. LogicalSanity's use of 'fake Christian' also subverted Yokeup's categorisation of Christians he disagreed with elsewhere as 'fake' (V8:889) by evaluating the 'fake Christians' positively and the 'perfect Christians' negatively.

As with Crosisborg's categorisation device, neither of the commenters allowed for a positive 'Christian' category. Within LogicalSanity's categorisation device in particular, both the categories of 'perfect Christian' and 'fake Christians' had negative evaluations. Although the implication was that 'fake Christians' are less offensive than 'perfect Christians' and that 'fake Christians' do not say vile things, the modifier 'fake' also implied negative category-bound activities and predicates. Within LogicalSanity's device, therefore, there were no 'good Christians', only Christians who say vile things and Christians who are fake.

The negative evaluation of all Christians was, however, not accepted by all commenters. Although 'good Christians' was not explicit in Crosisborg's 'types of Christians' categorisation device, 'good Christian' did appear in the categorisation device of a Christian responding to Crosisborg. huskyfan1982 rejected both Crosisborg's categorisation device and Crosisborg's ability as an atheist to categorise Christians. huskyfan1982, like the other commenters, also offered a new categorisation device seen in Comments Extract 6-2.

**Comments Extract 6-2. 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3: 423–425)**

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huskyfan1982 (user comment)

First of all you are a swine and why Jezfreak and yokeup give any of you the time of day is beyond me(Matthew 7:6) Are they hitting on the most popular atheist for channel views? That would be wrong IMO. A spiritual man judges all things. Also do not judge based upon appearance but judge righteous judgment(John 7:24) Your reasoning ability on what a good Christian is, is laughable. God forbid when a atheists says, though you are a Christian, I like you. The world is to hate us-John 15:18 (V3: 423–425)

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In contrast to Crosisborg, huskyfan1982 used a 'types of Christians' categorisation device which included 'bad Christian' as an implicit category and 'good Christian' as an explicit category. This 'types of Christians' categorisation device employed the same categories as Crosisborg, but the category-bound activities of 'good Christian' and 'bad Christian' were disputed and Biblical reference was used to describe a category-bound activity of 'good Christian':

'being hated by the world' (V3:425). The Biblical text is not only explicitly employed from the reference to Matthew 7:6, but also with the use of the Biblical register, referring to Croisborg as a 'swine' (e.g., Proverbs 11:22, Matthew 8:30, Luke 15:16 in the King James Version), which implicitly appropriates authority to his categorisation. Croisborg's reasoning for categorisation was rejected as 'laughable' and huskyfan1982 suggested that an atheist cannot make this categorisation (V3:423), further disputing Croisborg's claim. Croisborg was disqualified from categorising 'Christians' as 'good' or 'bad' because his lack of belief in God limited his understanding of the Bible and made his implicit attempt to appeal to Christians irrelevant.

huskyfan1982's reference to John 15:18 and to the 'good Christians' category-bound activity of 'being hated by the world' also revealed an important insight about expectations regarding 'hate' in development of drama. Although 'being hated' might imply a negative evaluation, huskyfan1982's comment suggested the opposite: that being hated was actually positive because it was a category-bound activity of a 'good Christian'. huskyfan1982's comment showed that, for Christians, conflict with non-Christians which resulted in 'hate' may ultimately show one to be a 'good Christian', particularly if the 'hate' was the result of actions that were inspired by the Bible or God's word to an individual. Furthermore, huskyfan1982's metaphorical categorisation of Croisborg as a 'swine' in Comments Extract 6-2 showed the willingness of a Christian to provoke 'hate' using the Bible. In this way, calling Croisborg a 'swine' was the same as Yokeup's presentation of human garbage as 'red ink' (V5:40), or the authoritative word of God (Section 5.4). Neither were presented as gratuitously insulting categorisations because they employ the language and authority of the Bible. I will return to this below, in the analysis of impoliteness (Chapter 7).

Arguments about the category of 'Christian' and Yokeup's actions developed from Croisborg's initial video in responses by others. Using a 'types of Christians' categorisation device, philhellenes also presented Yokeup's actions as category-bound activities of a 'perfect Christian'. This process can be seen in the following video extract.

## Video Extract 6-2. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5:232–252)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
232	.. you are	 <p><b>YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup. (V5)</b>            Posted 14/1/2009 by philhellenes            17,510 views            613 comments            10:25 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5jzMkHL80">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5jzMkHL80</a></p>
233	...(1.0) you're the perfect christian	
234	on youtube	
235	.. no matter	
236	.. what the fluffy christians say	
237	about the doctrine	
238	underpinning it all	
239	.. they can't argue with you	
240	because you've got it on your side	
241	.. the words are there	
242	the book is there	
243	... the loving God	
244	that anthony talks about	
245	.. the fluffy jesus	
246	...(1.0) certainly	
247	there are lines in there	
248	that are--	
249	in the bible	
250	that are extremely fluffy	
251	.. but underlining it all	
252	.. is the God that you worship	

In Video Extract 6-2, philhellenes used a relational pair of categories, 'fluffy Christians' (V5:236) and 'perfect Christians' (V5:233), and the category-bound predicate of 'having the Bible on their side' (V5:240) for 'perfect Christians', to categorise Yokeup and negatively evaluate him. Yokeup was a 'perfect Christian' because he did what the Bible says, and his actions were then applied to the whole of the category of 'perfect Christians' making them category-bound activities. Like LogicalSanity's categorisation device including 'perfect Christians' and 'fake Christians', philhellenes' 'types of Christians' categorisation device included two 'Christian' categories, neither of which included a positive evaluation. The 'fluffy Christians' (V5:236), like 'fake Christians', were excluded from the hateful activities of the 'perfect Christians', but the metaphorical modifier 'fluffy' included a negative evaluation because Yokeup and others had described 'fluffy' Christians as those who were weak and avoided conflict with others. Also, because philhellenes said that 'perfect Christians' had the Bible 'on their side' (V5:240), the implication was that 'fluffy Christians' did not actually follow the Bible. This category-bound predicate furthered a negative evaluation not only of 'Christians', but also 'Christian' belief because it presented the Bible as the basis for Yokeup's offensive words. As in Crosisborg's categorisation device, there were no 'good Christians' in philhellenes' discourse activity.

Both support for and disagreement with philhellenes' categorisation device were present in response. In particular, Christian commenters challenged philhellenes' categorisation of Yokeup as a 'perfect Christian', seen in the following comment by the Christian user PenguinSymphony:

**Comments Extract 6-3. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5:1167–1169)**

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PenguinSymphony (user comment)

Whoa whoa this text is misinterpreted the tree and the branch and pruning is metaphoric for God burning sinners in hell (burning the branch) and encouraging those who spread the word of God (pruning the branch). I can c y u r angry at Yokeup but u shouldn't believe that christains despise those who r against their religion based on one man's misinterpretation. (V5:1167–1169)

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In Comments Extract 6-3, Yokeup's reading of John 15 was described as a misinterpretation of scripture and, therefore, not representative of 'Christians'. Based on this, the activity of 'despising those who are against their religion' (V5:1169) was rejected as a category-bound for 'Christian'. PenguinSymphony did not categorise Yokeup explicitly, but rejected the argument made by philhellenes that being 'hateful' was a category-bound activity of 'Christian' because Yokeup had misinterpreted the text. The comment did not, however, like the responses of other Christians presented above (Section 5.4), explicitly reject Yokeup, only his interpretation of the Bible. In contrast to philhellenes and others using categorisation to stereotype all Christians actions, PenguinSymphony distinguished Yokeup from the category, again exemplifying Billig's (1985, 1996) distinction between 'categorisation' being used to stereotype and leading to prejudice, and 'particularisation' being used to distinguish and leading to tolerance (Section 2.4, p. 51).

Representation of the offensive words of some individuals as category-bound activities of the 'Christian' category was not limited to talk about Yokeup and, following the same pattern as Crosisborg and philhellenes, the negative actions of others were also used in the video entitled 'A Spotlight.' (V6). PaulsEgo used a 'types of Christians' categorisation device that, like philhellenes' categorisation device, also included the relational pair 'fluffy Christians' and 'Christians'. However, while philhellenes and Crosisborg modified the category of 'Christian', PaulsEgo categorised, Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church (see footnote on p. 131) simply as 'Christians' who behave in hateful ways and use the Bible

to support their words and/or actions. These 'Christians' were then contrasted with 'fluffy Christians' who 'hide the truth of Christianity' (V6:277). PaulsEgo described the actions of both the Westboro Baptist Church and Yokeup as 'spewing out unadulterated hatred' (V6:120–122) before making the following statement (Video Extract 6-3):

**Video Extract 6-3. 'A Spotlight.' (V6:201–212)**

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
201	they are shining a fuckin	(IMAGES REDACTED)
202	spotlight	
203	on everything	
204	that is dirty	
205	and depraved	
206	and disgusting	
207	and wrong	
208	about christianity	
209	and they're doing it from the inside	
210	okay	
211	these are christians	
212	from the inside out	

In Video Extract 6-3, PaulsEgo presented Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church as 'Christians from the inside out' (V6:211–212), and their offensive words and actions were used as category-bound activities of 'Christian'. PaulsEgo's categorisation device, particularly categorising 'Christians' in contrast to 'fluffy Christians', therefore presented Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church as representative of the 'Christian' category. By not modifying 'Christian' in the relational pair of 'fluffy Christians' and 'Christians', PaulsEgo also did not allow for any positive evaluation of 'Christian'. 'Fluffy Christians' were weak people who liked the warm aspects of Christianity, and hid the truth of Christianity, while 'Christians' behaved in hateful ways.

As with philhellenes' video, commenters on 'A Spotlight.' (V6) used 'types of Christians' categorisation devices similar to PaulsEgo's, and relexicalised the categories. For example, Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church were categorised as 'real Christians' (V6:1394) and 'authentic Jesus worshipers' (V6:1102). The user TovChapaev contrasted 'people like Yokeup' and 'fundies' with 'wishy washing revisionist christian types', establishing a category-bound activity for 'wishy washy Christians' as 'having not read the Bible' (V6:1072). Although the specific names of the categories were changed, similar categories and category-bound activities had only negative evaluations of Christians and

presented Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church as representative of a 'Christian' category.

Resistance to negative evaluation of all Christians was also present in responses to PaulsEgo's video, and his device was rejected by commenters who constructed new 'types of Christians' devices. Largo64 and cdavis9999 both suggested that 'Christians' would reject 'Yokeup and Fred Phelps' (the leader of the Westboro Baptist Church) as not 'Christian' (V6:589 & 748). In this 'types of Christians' device, a new pair of 'Christians' is offered: 'false Christians' and 'Christians'. The user Vezoksfriend also wrote, 'I don't even want to call them christians' (V6:492) instead categorising Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church as 'fundamentalist assholes', a negative categorisation that drew a distinction between 'fundamentalists' and 'Christians'. Commenters also challenged the 'Christian' category-bound activity of 'acting in a hateful way' by suggesting that atheists act in a similar way (V6:656). crazylaughscomedy challenged PaulsEgo more directly, saying, 'Whats the diference between you saying christians are 100% evil and youkup saying atheists are scum?' (V6:1442). PaulsEgo's categorisation device and the category-bound activity of 'hateful action' were then rejected because non-Christians also behaved in the same way. If atheists also act hatefully, then the action could not be used in a categorisation device differentiating between the two.

Describing the actions of individual users as representative category-bound activities of particular categories was, as I have shown, frequent in the dataset. 'Types of Christians' categorisation devices were made possible through presenting Yokeup as a representative of the category of 'Christian' and using his actions as category-bound activities of 'Christians', particularly given Yokeup's insistence that he was only repeating the words of the Bible. For non-Christians, Yokeup's offensive words and actions were used to negatively evaluate and present all Christians as either hateful, or 'fake Christians' and 'false Christians', hiding the 'real' Christianity. Atheists like philhellenes and PaulsEgo were able to then present a negative evaluation of 'Christianity' rather than simply rejecting the actions of a single user. Christian commenters disputed these 'types of Christians' categorisation devices, arguing that Yokeup was not a representative Christian and that using his actions as category-bound

activities of 'Christian' was, therefore, not acceptable. Both responses led to stereotyping, and drama surrounding the categories consequently continued because users disagreed and challenged the opinions and reasoning of others.

I now discuss how the moral authority Bible was used in categorisation.

### **6.3.2 The Role of the Bible in Categorisation and Interaction**

Although 'types of Christians' categorisation devices were central to discussions about Yokeup, relational pairs of categories and category-bound activities derived from Biblical language were more common in christoferL and Yokeup's videos from the three drama exchanges. Discussion of Biblical categories was oriented towards Yokeup's development of the 'human garbage' category from the parable of the vine and branches (John 15) (Section 5.4). In this section, I present analysis of the categorisation devices in the interaction between the Christian users christoferL and Yokeup.

As I mentioned above, arguments about John 15 and categorisation devices derived from the passage, centred on how the parable could be used to produce devices for both believers and non-believers (Section 5.4). In the video entitled 'John 15 for Dummies-Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12), christoferL read directly from the Bible and distinguished between people using two metaphorical categories contained in the John 15 parable: 'branches that bear fruit' and 'withered branches.' By reading from the Bible, christoferL's categorisation device was also derived from the same parable that Yokeup presented to categorise others as 'human garbage'. In contrast to Yokeup, who had used language from the parable to categorise Crosisborg, christoferL argued that, because Jesus was speaking only to his disciples in John 15, the categories from the parable could not be applied to 'unbelievers'. christoferL explicated the device in Video Extract 6-4:



**Video Extract 6-4. 'John 15 for Dummies-Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12:84–104)**

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
84	... jesus is the vine	<b>John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage? (V12)</b> posted 15/2/2009 by christoferL 578 views 25 comments 4:54 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAnou0jiOOA">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAnou0jiOOA</a>
85	and	
86	his followers are the branches	
87	if we remain in him	
88	we will bear much fruit	
89	but without him	
90	we can do nothing	
91	we are fruitless	
92	if we do not remain in him	
93	.. we are thrown away and wither	
94	only to be burnt up	
95	now	
96	really the key here is	
97	remaining in him	
98	an unbeliever is never in him	
99	only	
100	a believer can be considered in him	
101	and only a believer	
102	can remain in him	
103	as unbeliever cannot remain	
104	where he has never been	

christoferL emphasised the category-bound activity of 'not remaining in him' (V12:87) for 'withered branches' and stated that this category-bound activity could not apply to 'unbelievers' because 'unbelievers' were never considered 'in [Christ]' (V12:100). christoferL, therefore, argued that John 15 could only be used in categorisations of 'believers', not 'unbelievers'. By rejecting the possibility that an 'unbeliever' could be categorised as a 'withered branch', christoferL implicitly rejected Yokeup's categorisation of 'unbelievers' as 'human garbage'. The basis for this challenge was, however, Yokeup's exegesis of scripture rather than his use of the category 'human garbage', which christoferL does not comment on. christoferL argued instead that Yokeup had used the parable in the wrong way by ignoring the context of the passage.

How users interpreted the metaphorical categories from the parable in the YouTube context was central to the disagreement among users in the community of practice (CofP). Throughout his video, christoferL applied the language of the parable to categorisation in the YouTube context. In the relexicalisation of 'believer' (V12:10) from 'follower of Christ' (V12:86) and 'disciple' (V12:83), the Biblical categories derived from the text were applied to users in the CofP through the metaphorical category-bound activity of 'remaining in [Christ]' (V12:87). Through use of the Biblical categories,

christoferL presented his categorisation device (and his rejection of Yokeup) as derived from the Bible. Particularly through reading from John 15 before giving his interpretation, christoferL presented his own words as an extension of the Biblical text, in the same way that Yokeup also read from the Bible before presenting his relexicalisation of 'withered branches' as 'human garbage'.

Christians including Yokeup, christoferL, and commenters on their video pages did not, however, rely on single categorisation devices derived from the Bible for all contexts. Within the same video, christoferL presented a second device to distinguish between all people. christoferL emphasised that 'being burned' was a category-bound activity of 'unbelievers' by stating: 'This isn't to say that unbelievers won't burn because unfortunately you guys you will if you don't accept Christ' (V12:168–169). In this statement, a 'believers/unbelievers' categorisation device reinforced the Biblically derived category-bound activities of 'believers' and 'unbelievers': 'believers' 'accept Christ and go to heaven' while 'unbelievers' 'do not accept Christ and burn in hell'. christoferL asserted that even if John 15 did not, by itself, make this point, the activity of 'burning' still applied to unbelievers.

christoferL's emphasis that 'unbelievers' will burn also appeared to serve as an attempt to clarify his belief in a literal interpretation of hell for a Christian audience. In the comments, another Christian user, Elizabeth01010101, who had not viewed the entire video, voiced concern that christoferL might not have been explicit enough in telling unbelievers that they will burn if they do not accept Christ, writing, 'I do think you should have added that unbelievers go to hell. This video could be interpreted as if unbelievers have no consequence' (V12:321) to which christoferL responded, 'At 4:10<sup>5</sup> - I said "This isn't to say unbelievers won't burn - because unfortunately you guys - you will if you don't accept Christ" - I thought that would suffice... maybe I should add an annotation?' (V12:325). By showing an eagerness to stress the point that unbelievers 'burn', christoferL maintained a Biblically derived categorisation device that was recognised and supported by other Christians. Like Crosisborg's categorisation of 'bad Christians', christoferL showed an interest in

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<sup>5</sup> A reference to the time code in the video.

appealing to both Christian and non-Christian audiences who could view his actions as both more caring than Yokeup's, but still as maintaining the meaning of the Bible.

Support for christoferL (including his use of 'believer/unbelievers' and the category-bound activity of 'being burned') as well as for his implicit rejection of Yokeup's 'human garbage' category can be seen in the acceptance by the commenters. Users praised the video, saying, for example, that christoferL had spoken 'simply and truthfully' (V12:234) as well as calling the video a 'Great message' (V12:230), 'right on' (V12:222), a 'great job' (V12:275), and a 'good video' (V12:279). Although the majority of comments were positive, some resistance to the category-bound activity of 'burning' can be observed when the Christian user RJL738 praised christoferL as a 'compassionate person' (V12:345) and another Christian, Huckster271, responded, writing: '@RJL738<sup>6</sup> as compationate as anyone who condones the 'burning' of anyone can be' (V12:349). The presence of both positive and negative comments highlighted the fact that there was no single accepted approach to Biblical exegesis and use of the scripture was consistently debated.

Disputes over readings of the Bible were constant and ongoing in the 'human garbage' drama. In response to christoferL, Yokeup's video entitled 'more on...human garbage' (V14) categorised even more users by reference to the parable of the vine and branches, and also employed an 'unbelievers/believers' categorisation device including the same pair of categories as christoferL. Unlike christoferL, however, Yokeup argued that the categorisation device derived from the John 15 parable could be applied to everyone, not just Christians. In Yokeup's device, because the categories of 'unbelievers' and 'believers who do not remain in Christ' share the category-bound activity of being 'burned', they were equivalent, both being 'withered branches'. Disagreement about devices stemmed in part from the ambiguous use of Biblical language. The precise meaning of the category-bound activity of 'remaining in Christ' or 'remaining connected to Christ' was never resolved, despite a suggestion later in the chapter that 'remaining in Christ' referred to

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<sup>6</sup> The '@' mark followed by a username represents a reply to another user.

'obeying [Christ's] commands' (John 15:10). Although the activity was drawn from the Bible, the lack of a clear, concrete action associated with the metaphor (apart from 'obeying Jesus' commands') allowed Yokeup to describe others' actions as evidence they were 'not connected to Christ' or 'not bearing good fruit'. For users who shared the same exegesis of the Bible, the meaning was clear and did not require any further description. For Christians with different understandings of the same passage or who did not share the same exegesis, Yokeup had misread the passage, and his subsequent words were unacceptable.

Challenges also led Christians to engage in further exegesis of the Bible to support their claims. In his response to christoferL, Yokeup not only reiterated his reading of John 15, but continued to relexicalise 'human garbage' with new categories. In developing categorisations, Yokeup continued to employ the privileged voice of the Bible as the 'word of God', adding legitimacy to his own words. The voice of the Bible was both explicit, in the direct quotation, and implicit as in the development of metaphorical language from the Bible. For example, Yokeup read from James 4 in Video Extract 6-5 to support his categorisation of other users as 'garbage'.

#### **Video Extract 6-5. 'more on...human garbage' (V14:120–137)**

<b>IU</b>	<b>Video Transcript</b>	<b>Video Information</b>
120	for the believers	<b>more on...human garbage (V14)</b> posted 17/2/2009 by Yokeup 939 views 32 comments 6:03 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR-uo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR-uo</a>
121	if you think the believers	
122	are considered garbage	
123	.. if they disconnect	
124	james chapter four	
125	verse four	
126	<Q adulterers and adulteresses	
127	do you not know that	
128	friendship	
129	with the world	
130	is enmity	
131	with God	
132	.. whoever	
133	therefore	
134	wants to be a friend of the world	
135	makes himself	
136	an enemy of God	
137	an enemy of God Q>	

In Video Extract 6-5, Yokeup used James 4:4 to further support his categorisation of others as 'garbage'. Yokeup first presented additional Biblical categories: 'friends of the world' and 'enemies of God' from James 4. Then,

using the shared category-bound activities of the categories 'friend of the world' and 'enemy of God' from James 4, Yokeup categorised all 'ooshy-gooshy' (V14:144) Christians who want to be 'friends of the world' as 'enemies of God' (V14:134–136). In addition to presenting a negative evaluation of many Christians, Yokeup's categorisation of some users as 'ooshy-gooshy, wishy-washies' (V14:144–145), 'friends of the world', and 'enemies of God' again were treated the same as the categories of 'Christians who do not remain in Christ' and 'unbelievers' as 'garbage'. Yokeup applied the category-bound activity of 'being burned' and the metaphorical category of garbage to both 'believers who do not remain in Christ' and 'unbelievers', using a categorisation device in which all users and people can be categorised in device with a relational pair of categories: 'people who are connected to Christ' and 'people who are not connected to Christ'.

As with christoferL's video, general praise for Yokeup can be seen in the comments section of 'more on...human garbage' (V14), including, 'Amen brother, Amen.....' (V14:386) and 'Preach it Brother.' (V14:347) Commenters also repeated and developed the 'believer' category, relexicalising it as 'the elect, the saved, the true church' (V14:343) and 'saved people' (V14:339) or employing it as part of a relational pair with 'false Christians' (V14:355). The repetition and development of categories similar to other conventionalised categories showed that Yokeup's distinction between two kinds of 'believers' was understood and accepted among some of the viewers.

Although comments were generally supportive of Yokeup, resistance was also present in the comments section. The Christian user dreamwarrior2008 challenged Yokeup, particularly the category-bound activity of 'enemies of God' as 'wanting to be friends with the world' (V12:134) seen in Comments Extract 6-4:

**Comments Extract 6-4. 'more on...human garbage' (V14:451–458)**

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dreamwarrior2008 (user comment)

so are you saying that when jesus was being friends with tax collectors, prostitutes and others that that was wrong? (V12:451–453)

YokedtoJesus (Yokeup user comment)

what did Jesus say to them about their sin when He hung out with them? remember that part? and by the way, Jesus did nothing wrong (V12:455–458)

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In Comments Extract 6-4, dreamwarrior2008 used the categories 'tax collectors' and 'prostitutes' (V12:453) as examples of 'unbelievers' with whom Jesus was friends, and the comment challenged Yokeup's relexicalisation of 'friend of the world' as 'enemy of God', using the activity of Christ as prototypical good activity. In response, Yokeup (under the username 'YokedtoJesus') agreed with the presentation of Jesus' actions as prototypical, writing that Jesus 'did nothing wrong' (V12:457), but maintained the imprecise categories and category-bound activities explicated in the video by saying that 'friendship' with 'unbelievers' is not acceptable as although Jesus 'hung out' with sinners, he was not their 'friend' (V12:457). By continuing to describe the category-bound activities of 'friend of the world' in metaphorical language, Yokeup rejected dreamwarrior2008's challenge without rejecting the actions of Jesus.

### **6.3.3 Institutional Categories**

Within Christian interaction, the Bible was consistently invoked when users disagreed about the categorisations of others, but categories of denominational affiliation (such as, Catholic and Lutheran) were infrequent. Only nine unique institutional categories were identified in the whole video page corpus: Catholic, Calvinist, Baptist, Quaker, Unitarian, Westboro Baptist, Protestant, Mormon, and Puritan. On further investigation, a majority of denominational categories appeared in lists of different belief systems when commenters were arguing that all beliefs systems were essentially the same. Categorisation using a denominational affiliation, either of self or others, was completely absent, and denominational disagreements were never invoked.

A key exception was the category of 'fundamentalist', which occurs 12 times in the video page corpus. Although historically a Christian movement (Nagata, 2001), in the dataset 'fundamentalist' was used with negative category-bound activities rather than category-bound predicates of belief or church membership. Furthermore, 'fundamentalist' was not used by Christians in discourse activity about others and no one in the video page corpus self-identified as a 'fundamentalist'. This corroborates with other research that found Evangelical Christians avoid the term in self-categorisation (Malley, 2004; Nagata, 2001) and it also appears linked to the Evangelical avoidance of denominational labels in self-categorisation, a finding which corroborates Malley's findings from

ethnographic interviews of Evangelical Christians (2004). Instead, the use of 'fundamentalist' reflected the occasioned nature of categorisation within the CofP because 'fundamentalist' was not limited to discussing the negative actions of Christians in the CofP (Comments Extract 6-5):

**Comments Extract 6-5. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5: 2125-2127)**

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PurushaDesa (user comment)

Well antitheism deals with the immorality with theism. Atheism alone deals with logic and rationality. There's absolutely no truth in this 'atheist fundamentalist' label of causation at this moment in time. Aggressively arguing a point about immoral theisms is certainly not akin to actual Christian, Muslim and Jewish fundamentalism. It's a theoretical possibility, but the people given this label like Dawkins, Hitchens and Harris don't preach violence and hatred as they do. (V5: 2125-2127)

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In Comments Extract 6-5, PurushaDesa differentiated between categories by saying that a 'fundamentalist' 'preaches violence and hatred', whereas an 'atheist' 'deals with logic and rationality and argues points about immoral theisms' (V5:2127). In this context, the categorisation included a category-bound activity of 'preaching violence and hatred', rather category-bound predicates of belief or institutional affiliation. The use of 'fundamentalist' to describe hateful actions rather than belief highlighted a consistent trend in three drama exchanges for categorisation devices to differentiate between users based on differing category-bound activities rather than category-bound predicates such as belief or ethnic or socio-political identity. With the exception of 'American white trash' (Section 6.3.4), focus was almost exclusively on the actions of the categorised user.

The lack of institutional categories as well as the adaptation of the category of 'fundamentalist' shows two important aspects of interaction in the 'human garbage' drama. First, Christians foregrounded categories and categorisation devices from the Bible rather than their own denominational affiliations, highlighting the Bible's importance in Christian interaction in the dataset. Second, adaptation of 'fundamentalist' showed that some categories could have very different contextual meanings, depending on who was using the category and for what purpose. 'Fundamentalist', a category which has historically been a denomination of 'Christian', could potentially be used to categorise anyone using a comparison of shared category-bound activities.

The avoidance of denominational categories in favour of Biblically derived categories contributed to the development of drama because it allowed users to argue about what was or was not appropriate for those who claimed to be 'Christian' or 'believers'. Yokeup's categorisation of others, and particularly his eventual claim that everyone was either a 'believer' or 'garbage', contributed to the development of drama because users who were self-proclaimed Christians were categorised as 'enemies of God' based on their actions. Yokeup's use of the Biblical categories 'friends of the world' and 'enemies of God' further dictated what was acceptable for Christians in terms of friendship with non-Christians through his description of category-bound activities of 'believers'. The challenging of others' often implicit self-categorisation led to angry responses to Yokeup furthering the development of drama. As users opposed Yokeup, his response was to read again from the Bible and assert the moral authority of the text in his categorisations.

Having discussed the use of institutional categories, I now discuss the role of metaphor more generally in categorisation.

#### **6.3.4 Metaphorical Categories and Category-bound Activities**

Although Biblical language was central to the discourse activity, not all categorisations using metaphor were derived from the Bible. As I showed in the analysis in the preceding chapter (Sections 5.3.3 and 5.4), metaphorical descriptions of Yokeup were repeatedly used, particularly in negative responses to his use of 'human garbage'. In this section, I present analysis of the metaphors used to describe Yokeup, primarily in the responses made by atheist users Crosisborg, philhellenes, and PaulsEgo, showing how negative metaphorical categorisations of Yokeup developed further negative evaluations of him.

Central to the development of drama was not only Yokeup's categorisation of others as 'human garbage', but the categorisations of Yokeup that developed in response, seen most vividly in the video entitled 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) in which philhellenes called him a 'psychopath' and used his actions to construct category-bound activities of psychopaths (Video Extract 6-6).



## Video Extract 6-6. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5:298–304)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
298	...(3.0) when you're a psychopath	(IMAGES
299	... as you are	REDACTED)
300	jeff	V5: YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup <i>philhellenes</i>
301	... when you become a chris--	14 January 2009
302	and not all psychopath's have to do killing	10:25
303	.. it's a state of mind	dX5jzMkHL80
304	a complete lack of empathy	

NB 'Jeff' is Yokeup's real name

The categorisation of Yokeup as a 'psychopath' in Video Extract 6-6 included two elements: an assertion of the category-bound activity of 'having a complete lack of empathy' (V5:304) and a rejection of a category-bound activity of 'doing killing' (V5:302). Yokeup's discourse activity, particularly calling others 'garbage' was therefore used as a category-bound activity of 'psychopath' because it showed Yokeup's lack of concern for other people. *philhellenes*, however, remained ambiguous about whether or not he intended for the categorisation to be heard literally or metaphorically, instead focusing on Yokeup's apparent lack of empathy, highlighted in the telling of the Titanic story (Section 5.3).

Although *philhellenes* explicitly rejected 'doing killing' (V5:302) as an activity for 'psychopaths', comments implied that Yokeup may be capable of violence. *SecularNATION* wrote, 'Sociopath suffering from christ-psychosis is a lethal combination' (V5:3189) while another compared Yokeup with the serial killer John Wayne Gacy (V5:2622). Two more commenters wrote Yokeup was capable of violence (V5:2112) and was sadistic (V5:1064), suggesting the category of 'psychopath' included an inference of violent action, despite *philhellenes* explicit statement that it did not. In these responses, because 'psychopaths' are violent and Yokeup's words proved he was a 'psychopath', Yokeup was also capable of violence. Although *philhellenes*' use of metaphorical stories suggested that he was only comparing Yokeup to a 'psychopath' to emphasise Yokeup's lack of empathy, the response by commenters extended the categorisation and escalated the negative evaluation by suggesting that Yokeup could also hurt others physically.

This escalation continued in further commenter responses which described Yokeup as being like 'Hitler', a prototypical 'Nazi'. In development of *philhellenes*' stories in the comments section and the subsequent video (Section

5.3), philhellenes emphasised Yokeup's use of 'human garbage dumps' with descriptions of burning bodies. Commenters then used the action of 'burning human garbage dumps' to describe Yokeup as acting like 'Hitler'. A commenter wrote, 'It was only a matter of time until the little square mustache popped out under his nose' (V5:2093), using a reference to Hitler's iconic moustache to draw a comparison between the two. This comparison was repeated throughout the comments section, and in subsequent descriptions of Yokeup's 'calling others human garbage' was repeatedly used to compare Yokeup to 'Hitler'.

Not all categorisations of Yokeup, however, drew comparisons between him and violent or mentally ill individuals. In the video titled 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3), Croisborg categorised Yokeup as 'American white trash' without reference to any of Yokeup's particular words or actions. Croisborg stated in the comments section of the video that he categorised Yokeup this way because 'trash' was a bad thing and he viewed Yokeup as bad (V3:193). 'White trash' appeared to be a response to Yokeup's use of 'garbage' (Section 5.3), but although the 'trash' and 'garbage' are semantically similar, 'white trash' is also a conventionalised metaphorical category used to describe the rural poor, particularly in the US South (Wray & Newitz, 1997). The use of the category implied that Croisborg negatively evaluated not only Yokeup's words and actions, but also his socio-regional position, further stereo-typing him as racially and economically inferior to others (Wray & Newitz, 1997).

Commenters also made inferences about the category 'American white trash' and described Yokeup as a racist in escalating negative evaluations. Examples of this escalation can be seen in Comments Extract 6-6:

#### **Comments Extract 6-6. Categorisations of Yokeup**

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theenforcer1977 (user comment)

Yokeup is racist, arrogant, violent and an egomaniac. (V3: 199-201)

Francie32 (user comment)

People must flag his videos, he is not safe for America, he is a militant Nazi, I stand by my comments, that I trust you and Tommy way more than the Xtian commuinty on YT. (V3: 230)

TheMajorD (user comment)

Yoke-up: Hitler Re-flavored! lawlz (V3:452-454)

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Although Croisborg did not call Yokeup a 'racist' in this video nor describe his actions as violent, all three comments in Comments Extract 6-6 developed categorisations of Yokeup as a 'Nazi'. Croisborg's follow-up video entitled 'Yokeup Reaches New Low (Adult Language)' (V8) also developed explicit categorisations of Yokeup as a 'Nazi', further suggesting a relationship between being 'American white trash' and being a 'racist'.

Implicit categorisation was also present in responses to Yokeup, and PaulsEgo's video 'A Spotlight.' (V6) implied a negative evaluation based on Yokeup's socio-regional identity. In the video, after mocking Yokeup, PaulsEgo concluded by voicing sarcastic support for Yokeup and encouraging him to eat 'a nice spoonful of piping hot hate grits with butter' (V6:380-382). By using a Southern US accent and referring to 'grits' (a food typical of working class cuisine in the Southern US), PaulsEgo associated Yokeup's identity with hatefulness. The implicit categorisation of Yokeup therefore showed that category-bound activities or predicates were not always necessary for categorisations and implicit category-bound predicates could be mobilised to categorise others. In these instances, the predicates were difficult to identify, but in user response, evidence from the inferences made could be seen in how users subsequently developed categories.

As I have shown, the categorisation of Yokeup as a 'psychopath' used Yokeup's action of calling others 'human garbage dumps' as a category-bound activity of 'psychopath' from which users inferred category-bound activities of violence. The use of 'human garbage dumps' coupled with the development of violent category-bound activities led to Yokeup subsequently being categorised as a 'Nazi'. The same pattern occurred in Croisborg's video in which the category of 'American white trash' was associated with the categories of 'racist' and 'Nazi'. These descriptions of Yokeup were not simply, as Croisborg claimed, 'bad', but represented categories of individuals who, like the Westboro Baptist Church, were likely to be viewed extremely negatively by most people in the YouTube audience. The narrative development of the categorises, therefore, increased and escalated the negative evaluation of Yokeup in vivid ways, using hyperbole to draw comparisons between Yokeup's offensive words and violent actions

drawn from the socio-historical context (such as those of Hitler) that were recognisable as hateful by members in the CofP.

Shifts in use of metaphor and categorisation of other users had direct impact on one another, with development of metaphor leading to new categorisations which, in turn, developed new metaphorical descriptions of Yokeup. The categorisations which resulted implied that Yokeup was the worst possible person, and a member of increasingly offensive categories. The implication of violence further described Yokeup as potentially dangerous. This contributed to the development of drama because Yokeup was subsequently not simply a Christian 'nutter' (as a commenter suggested) talking on YouTube, but a potentially violent individual. Users were then implicitly warned to avoid and disregard Yokeup, isolating him in the CofP and encouraging others to act negatively towards him (Section 8.3.2).

I now discuss the findings of the analysis in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 as well as the findings from the metaphor analysis.

#### **6.4 Discussion**

In Section 2.4, I noted Lakoff's (1987) observation that in day-to-day interaction, categories do not cause difficulty for speakers because categories are thought to be 'common sense' constructions. The interaction in the 'human garbage' drama, however, shows how categorisation can become complicated in contexts where speakers do not share a 'common sense'. The interaction of a diverse group of users within the CofP changed the immediate context in which categories were heard and understood and required users to interact with others who may regularly employ different categories or the same categories in different ways. Through categorisation analysis, investigating the constituent parts of category construction and use in the 'human garbage' drama, the findings suggest that within the CofP, although the same categories were often used, they evoked different meanings for different users. When the same categories were employed to describe different things, drama developed because users constantly needed to clarify and make explicit what would otherwise be 'common sense'.

This finding also supports Housley and Fitzgerald's criticism of Sacks' (1992) conception of static membership categorisation devices (Hester & Eglin, 1997). The findings show how users employed devices in the 'locally situated conditions of relevance, activity and context' (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 68), meeting the needs of a particular interaction. The conditions of relevance, activity, and context were dynamic, with different users interacting at different times on different pages. How categories were used was never fixed, even conventionalised categories such as 'Christian' or 'fundamentalist'. Although temporary stabilisations could be observed in stretches of discourse activity on particular video pages (with use, for example, of the category of 'psychopath' in a stabilised way on philhellenes' video entitled 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' [V5]), these stabilisations did not necessarily endure beyond a particular video page. Categorisation devices were not only, therefore, common sense stocks of knowledge being applied in local use, but also local, specific uses emerging as stable on different timescales.

Categories, like metaphorical language, also became a part of the 'repertoire of negotiated resources' (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999) (Sections 2.2.4 & 5.5) drawn as artefacts from the socio-historical context and localised in the 'human garbage' drama. In particular, the category of 'Christian' taken from the shared socio-historical context was appropriated and re-appropriated in user interaction, with the new formulations having different trajectories depending on how users employed it. The meaning of the category, given the instability of its use and its localised character, could not be treated as only an artefact of a user's 'common sense stock of knowledge' or a label for a fixed group of referents as Sacks' (1992) conception of 'membership categories' do. Instead, the meaning of the category was determined by the purpose it served, most frequently to negatively describe another user.

The dynamic nature of categorisation also challenged a notion of categories acting as labels for group membership, as suggested in self-categorisation theory (Abrams & Hogg, 2010) (Section 2.4) and showed instead, how categorisation met the needs of a particular discourse context. Because categorisations were 'achievements of members' practical *actions* and practical reasoning' (Hester, 1994, pp. 242 cited in Housley and Fitzgerald, 2002, my

emphasis), categorisations effected change in the CofP. The categorisation of Yokeup by philhellenes as a 'perfect Christian' (Section 6.3.1), for example, was a part of extending a negative evaluation of Yokeup to all Christians, based on Yokeup's actions. In the context of the video page, the categorisation was useful in negatively evaluating all Christians, but that did not necessarily mean that the same categorisation would be useful in other contexts or for different users. The categorisation accomplished a particular action at a particular point with a particular outcome, namely to discredit Yokeup and Christianity, but other users were never grouped together with Yokeup as 'Christians'.

The practical nature of categorisation which Hester and Eglin (1997) also provides some explanation for why denominational categories in particular were not frequently employed to distinguish between users. Because the focus of discourse activity was consistently on the actions of others, which formal group a user may or may not be a member of was not an explicit topic of disagreement nor a useful way to distinguish between users who, for example, felt that 'human garbage' was an accurate development of Biblical metaphorical language or not. Throughout the 'human garbage' drama, little discussion occurred about what another user believed or how their actions were based on their belief, the focus instead being on what a user had done or should do. Categorisation based on denomination (or any other formal institution with formal membership) arguably would have not have been relevant for evaluating a particular action.

This same characteristic of categorisation was present in how Christians used Biblical language in categorisation. As with the extension of metaphor (Section 5.5), the use of categories and category-bound activities from the Bible included an appropriation of the authoritative voice of the Bible. By categorising users with Biblical language, Yokeup and other Christians were able to re-voice the moral authority of the text. The categorisations were then presented as based on the words of the Bible rather than simply as the opinion of a single user. The use of Biblical categories allowed the user to apply the Biblical text to a particular person or interaction in the CofP and recontextualise any interaction between users in terms of the 'enduring themes' of the Bible in the same way that Malley's (2004) work showed Evangelical Christians applying the most

'relevant' interpretation of the Bible. The continuous presence of Biblical language and categories in Christian discourse activity showed the predominance of this practice in the CofP.

Although Christians Yokeup and christoferL appropriated the moral authority of the Bible in categorisation and appeared to ostensibly have the same beliefs about the Bible and its interpretation (outlined in Section 2.6), they still disagreed about categories and the category-bound activities and predicates that should be applied in categorisation of others. Their arguments showed that the Christian practice of using certain passages of the Bible to interpret other passages of the Bible can felt to be done 'wrongly' when a user believes a text has been, as Allington states, taken "'out of context'" (i.e. that the meaning or significance the quoted portion of text bears in context of the interpretation is not one that can reasonably be ascribed to it in context of the text in which it originated)' (2007, p. 47) (Section 5.5). Although Yokeup and christoferL used many of the same categories, how they were used differed despite referencing the same Biblical passage. The disagreements about how Biblical language should or should not be used in categorisation showed again that while the moral authority of the Bible was appropriated in the process of categorisation, others who accepted the moral authority of the Bible would not necessarily agree on its appropriation.

Metaphorical language in categorisation highlighted the ways in which disagreement in the 'human garbage' drama often led to negative evaluations of other users and their actions. When one user's categorisation of another included a negative evaluation, the category was often metaphorical. In Section 5.3, I discussed how users developed *MENTAL HEALTH* vehicles in escalating negative descriptions of Yokeup. With each development of the category of 'psychopath', the categorisation of Yokeup was also extended and further negative evaluations of him were exaggerated, particularly as users added new category-bound activities and predicates.

Similar to the findings of Turner and others (Abrams & Hogg, 2010; Turner, 1981), categorisation could also imply stereotyping of and discrimination towards others; categorisation was used to build stereotypes by describing another's action and then applying the action to the category. Rather than

presenting an individual as acting in a certain way because they were a member of a certain category, the categorised individual was presented as acting in a certain way and therefore a member of a certain category. Here, Billig's (1985, 1996) distinction between 'categorisation' and 'particularisation' (Section 2.4, p. 51) was relevant. If a user categorised Yokeup as a 'Christian' based on his actions, the categorisation led to stereotyping of all Christians. If a user worked to distinguish Yokeup from other 'Christians', the particularisation implied tolerance.

In tracking the development of drama in discourse activity, after describing how categorisation occurred and how it led to disagreement, a final step of analysing the action categorisation accomplished was needed to understand its role in the 'human garbage' drama. Moreover, although categorisation analysis revealed how users spoke about others in the CofP, users rarely self-categorised. Understanding a speaker's own position therefore requires further analysis to describe how categorisation related to positions users took for themselves, what action was accomplished in categorisation, and how that action may have contributed to the development of drama. I will return, therefore, to categorisation as a part of positioning analysis in Chapter 8 to further consider these issues.

In summary, analysis of categorisation revealed that:

- Users employed the category of 'Christian' dynamically, with different category-bound activities and predicates in different categorisation devices.
- Biblical language was often used in the categorisation of others, but users did not agree on how categories and category-bound activities and predicates derived from the Bible should be applied.
- Users employed metaphorical language in categorisations which they often developed in escalating negative evaluations of others.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented analysis of categorisation in the 'human garbage' drama. I first presented how 'types of Christians' categorisation devices were used to



negatively evaluate Yokeup and present his actions as representative category-bound activities of 'Christian'. I then presented analysis of Biblically derived categories, category-bound activities, and categorisation devices, showing how they were used in the YouTube context. I also showed how development of categories from the Bible led to further disagreements when users disputed exegesis of Biblical texts. I discussed the role of metaphor in categorisation and particularly how metaphorical categories were used to negatively evaluate others. I discussed how metaphorical categorisations prompted responses and resulted in escalating negative evaluations and further disagreements between users. I also showed how the ambiguity of metaphorical categorisations contributed to the development of drama when it provided users an additional topic of disagreement and, therefore, another topic to make videos about. Finally, I showed how my analysis contributed to an understanding of categories as practical resources in discourse activity and how, rather than showing group membership, categories were used to extend negative evaluations of individuals to others.

After discussion of the use of metaphor and categorisation and having identified negative evaluations as a central, recurring theme, in the following chapter, I discuss the role of impoliteness in the 'human garbage' drama.

## 7 Justifying Impoliteness

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of impoliteness analysis outlined in Section 4.5.3. Analysis of impoliteness was accomplished to answer the following research questions:

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RQ8 What utterances and/or actions were viewed as impolite?

RQ9 How did users respond to impoliteness?

RQ10 How did users justify their own perceived malicious impoliteness?

RQ11 What was the relationship between impoliteness and attempts at dominance?

RQ12 How did impoliteness contribute to the development of drama?

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In Section 2.3, I presented an overview of theories of (im)politeness, and in Section 4.5.3 I introduced my methods for analysis of impoliteness. Employing Culpeper's (2011) description of impoliteness as 'a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts' and impolite behaviour as '[s]ituated behaviours [which] are viewed negatively...when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be' (Culpeper, 2011, p. 23), my analytic procedure adapted Hardaker's (2010) list of impoliteness forms (Section 2.3.1 and Section 4.5.3) to describe impoliteness. I took into account both reports of intention to cause offence by the speaker and evidence in the uptake of respondents or commenters that the words of the speaker had caused offence. Shifts in the form of impoliteness were identified when the same words were viewed differently in the course of interaction. I then analysed the relationship between dominance and impoliteness, employing Wartenberg's definition of 'power over' another (i.e. strategically constraining another's action-environment) (1990, p. 90) (Section 2.3.3; pg. 46) to describe instances of 'dominance'.

Below, I first present an overview of findings, describing how drama developed in responses to malicious impoliteness and how impoliteness was used to

dominate others. I then present analysis of the dynamics of impoliteness and its role in the development of drama, focusing on how users justified their own malicious impoliteness and how impoliteness co-occurred with attempts at dominance. Finally, I discuss my analysis and findings in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and in relation to the analyses of metaphor and categorisation reported in preceding chapters.

## **7.2 Overview of Findings**

Analysis of impoliteness revealed that:

- The words and actions that were considered impolite differed among users.
- The malicious impoliteness of others was often offered as a justification for subsequent malicious impoliteness.
- Differences in expectations about positive and negative face affected how users responded to the words and actions of others.
- Impoliteness often co-occurred with attempts at dominance.

In the 'human garbage' drama, users disagreed about what words (such as 'garbage') and actions (such as evangelising on the site) were impolite; discourse activity about malicious impoliteness oriented towards individuals' own attitudes and expectations rather than any community standards. Christians and non-Christians also showed a pattern of differing evaluations of what was and was not malicious impoliteness, particularly in regard to Biblical language. The Christian users christoferL and Yokeup suggested that when others viewed their words negatively, it was the Bible that had actually caused offence because they were only reading and repeating what was said in the Bible. Other users, however, rejected this notion and showed contempt for Yokeup in particular when he repeated and derived language from the Bible to which they took offence.

The malicious impoliteness of others was often presented as justification for further malicious impoliteness. Users regularly conveyed an awareness that their words and/or actions might be viewed negatively by others, and they pre-empted this negative evaluation by offering reasons for speaking in the way

they did. In particular, users attempted to justify insults of Yokeup by recounting his words and actions while attempting to persuade others to view him negatively. Christian users Yokeup and christoferL also showed an awareness that their words might be viewed negatively and pre-empted this negative evaluation by reading from the Bible and arguing that their words were not their own, but taken from scripture.

How users responded to negative evaluations was also connected to different conceptions of 'positive and negative face' (Section 2.3.1; p. 38). Users viewed the negative response to their actions by those they opposed as a positive sign they were acting in the right way. For some Christians, being opposed by non-Christians resulted in positive face because persecution for their belief was treated as the result of 'preaching the gospel' and their position as 'believers'. This pattern contributed to the development of drama because users persisted in or escalated the malicious impoliteness to effect further negative reactions.

Impoliteness was often a part of an attempt by one user to dominate another by influencing how they interacted with others on the site. Impoliteness could be seen as a part of a larger struggle between users to act freely and suppress opposition from others. Both malicious impoliteness and non-malicious impoliteness were identified in attempts at dominance, however, because the community of practice (CofP) included many different users with different beliefs about what should be viewed negatively, exerting social pressure on another to influence their interactions with others was rarely successful. Rather than influence how another user interacted with others, users often responded to malicious impoliteness in kind.

Having presented an overview of the impoliteness findings, in the next section, I describe the dynamics of impoliteness, first in how users responded to the malicious impoliteness of others and second, in its relationship to attempts at dominance.

### ***7.3 Analysis of Impoliteness in Interaction***

#### **7.3.1 Responding to Malicious Impoliteness**

In the 'human garbage' drama, malicious impoliteness was the source of much disagreement in the CofP and every video contained some discussion about

whether or not Yokeup's interaction with Croisborg and others should be viewed negatively or not. Videos about Yokeup resulted in responses from many users, and in this section, exemplary responses of atheists and Christians to Yokeup are used to illustrate analysis. I also discuss Yokeup's videos made in response to other users' negative reactions to him.

In the previous chapter, I showed how users in the 'human garbage' drama argued back and forth about, among other things, the meaning of the Biblical language and categories (Section 6.3.2). This pattern of response, both a function of YouTube drama as 'antagonistic debate' (Burgess & Green, 2008) and a technical feature of commenting and video responses, also supported escalation of malicious impoliteness. When Yokeup initially called Croisborg 'human garbage', he was reacting to Croisborg calling his wife, Caroline, a 'lesbian'. This was offensive to Yokeup and Caroline because they both viewed homosexuality negatively and Caroline had described herself as a 'former lesbian' (amy2x, 2011, September 20) (Section 4.3.3 & Section 8.3.1). Yokeup's description of Croisborg as 'vile' and 'nasty' (V1) and calling Croisborg 'human garbage' was then an attempt to counter his insult with another insult. Croisborg, in turn, responded to Yokeup, calling him a 'bad person' (V3:9) and 'American white trash' (V3:21), but like Yokeup, framed his response as motivated by his interlocutor's malicious impoliteness. In an attempt to justify calling Yokeup 'American white trash' which could potentially be viewed negatively as an unjustified attack on Yokeup's socio-regional identity (Section 6.3.4; p. 184), Croisborg explicitly described Yokeup as negatively affecting users and told a story of Yokeup's interaction with other Christians, seen in the following extract taken from the video entitled 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3):

## Video Extract 7-1. 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3:97–122)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
97		<b>Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians (V3)</b> Posted 14/1/2009 by Croisborg 2384 views 107 comments 3:31 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpslWW9Vavo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpslWW9Vavo</a>
98		
99		
100		
101		
102		
103		
104		
105		
106		
107		(IMAGES REDACTED)
108		
109	(Transcript Redacted)	
110		
111		
112		
113		
114		
115		
116		
117		
118		
119		
120		
121		
122		

In Video Extract 7-1, Croisborg purported to quote Yokeup's own justification for mistreating other Christians (V3:98), but did so by exaggerating Yokeup's argument, speaking in the first person as Yokeup (V3:99–119). Croisborg highlighted how Yokeup was 'harassing' others and 'causing them stress' (V3:111–112), and only after a hyperbolic revoicing did Croisborg categorise Yokeup as an 'idiot' (V3:122). Yokeup's treatment of others was next implicitly offered as a justification for Croisborg's own categorisations of Yokeup, and Croisborg's own malicious impoliteness was presented as having been provoked by Yokeup's malicious impoliteness.

This same pattern of presenting an exaggerated, hyperbolic pseudo-quotation of Yokeup before insulting him can be seen in the comments. th3d3wd3r wrote, 'It's the ultimate hypocrisy. "oh you're an atheist so you can sin without remorse". Then they can sin, repent and still get into heaven. Insane, really insane' (V3:321). Like Croisborg th3d3wd3r revoiced and exaggerated Yokeup's words before categorising him, providing Yokeup's own words as justification for calling him 'insane'. PaulsEgo's also employed descriptions of Yokeup's use of 'human garbage' to justify mocking him. Like Croisborg and th3d3wd3r,

PaulsEgo revoiced Yokeup's words, saying, '[Yokeup] calls them human garbage uh just <@> <in a southern accent> comin' right out there and sayin' it there <@> <Q human garbage dumps human garbage Q>' (V6: 141–148). PaulsEgo then used 'human garbage' as the reason for suggesting that others 'leave an angry comment' (V6:151) on his video. Finally, philhellenes in 'Youtube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) explicitly framed his insult of Yokeup as provoked by Yokeup calling others 'human garbage dumps'. Rather than revoicing Yokeup's words, he used the technical features of YouTube to replay and extract quotes from Yokeup's video. philhellenes was then able to subvert the words for the purposes of his own video.

Exaggerating Yokeup's words and presenting his intentions as malicious before responding to him was consistent in all negative responses to Yokeup. This framing suggested that within the CofP, malicious impoliteness could be justified if users were able to present their response as provoked by another's more offensive words. The malicious impoliteness directed at Yokeup was supported and approved by others in the CofP who held Yokeup responsible for provoking the argument. As might be expected from Moor, Heuvelman, and Verleur's research (2010) showing that YouTube users saw 'flaming' on YouTube as often a response to perceived offence, users involved in the 'human garbage' drama worked to position their own malicious impoliteness as provoked by another user, and, therefore, as acceptable.

After the initial exchange with Crisisborg, Yokeup suggested that his description of others as 'garbage' should not be viewed negatively because he had only quoted the Biblical parable of the vine and the branches (John 15) and had not intended to hurt anyone. Yokeup made this argument in two videos, 'are YOU garbage in GOD's eyes?' (V11) and 'more on...human garbage' (V14). In both, he read aloud from the Bible before describing others as 'human garbage', explicitly linking his own words to the Biblical text. As described in Section 5.3, Yokeup said, 'John fifteen six where Jesus is telling his disciples .. that if you are not connected to Christ if you not connected you cannot bear fruit if you don't bear fruit God prunes you—you wither in a pile you are burned you're—you're garbage' (V14:48–58). Yokeup, however, presented his words as not intended to offend by specifically acknowledging that 'human garbage' might

potentially be viewed negatively, saying, 'You might not like the way I'm saying this' (V5:97-98). Yokeup insisted that 'this is all red ink' (V5:40), or the exact quotation of Jesus from the Bible, rather than his own words, suggesting that he is not the source of the term and implying only an intention to tell others what was written in the Bible, not offend them.

Presenting 'human garbage' in this way justified its use by allocating to the Bible the offence the words had caused and suggesting it not be viewed negatively because it was the 'word of God'. Yokeup then argued that any negative responses to his words were actually negative responses to the Bible, and any malicious impoliteness towards him was misdirected. In this way, Yokeup subverted the negative response he received from Christians and non-Christians, taking the 'hate' as a sign of piety, that he was doing what God wanted him to do. As in the commenter huskyfan1982's category-bound activities of a 'good Christian' (Section 6.3.1; pg. 168), which included 'being hated by the world' (V3:423), any criticism that Yokeup received could then be presented as further proof that he was acting correctly and needed to persevere. Yokeup's presentation of the Bible as justification for his use of 'human garbage' was not accepted by any non-Christian user. PaulsEgo challenged Yokeup's justification for his actions, saying:



## Video Extract 7-2. 'A Spotlight.' (V6:141 & 149–167)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
141	he calls them human garbage	<b>A Spotlight. (V6)</b> Posted 14/1/2009 by PaulsEgo 13,058 views 266 comments 7:05 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEvsCXHmWuw">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEvsCXHmWuw</a>
	...	
149	and	
150	before you go	
151	and make an angry comment on his video	
152	not to dissuade you	
153	from doing that	
154	because he certainly deserves them	
155	but uh	
156	just know	
157	that he backs that up with scripture	
158	all the way	
159	and I'll let you go watch his video	
160	I'm not gonna rehash the whole fuckin	
161	scriptural evi-	
162	just-just	
163	let it be known	
164	.. that those words	
165	are right there in the bible	
166	uh	
167	<Q human garbage Q>	

In this extract, PaulsEgo suggested that Yokeup illustrated Christian willingness to behave in ways that PaulsEgo felt were impolite. PaulsEgo mocked Yokeup's attempt to allocate the offence his words caused to the Bible by focusing on the use of 'human garbage dumps' and then saying, 'Just know that he backs that up with scripture' (V6:157–158). PaulsEgo's comments, saying that Yokeup deserved 'angry comment(s)' (V6:151) showed PaulsEgo's rejection of the Bible's authority as well as the use of the term. PaulsEgo also stated that the words 'human garbage' were in the Bible (V6:165), showing that Yokeup's development of metaphor vehicles were perceived as indistinguishable from the Bible. PaulsEgo then used the development to provide further evidence that Yokeup was willing to say or do anything provided he believed that the Bible supported him.

Although the term 'human garbage' began as malicious impoliteness towards Croisborg, the term was used in different ways over time. By presenting his own words as an extension of scripture, Yokeup developed the term to be part of his exegesis, rather than malicious impoliteness towards Croisborg, and rejected attempts to change how he spoke about others. Yokeup's attempt to allocate his words to the Bible was, however, interpreted by atheists, particularly Croisborg, philhellenes, and PaulsEgo, as evidence that Christians were willing to act offensively regardless of the consequences. Instead of treating the Bible as authoritative in the same way as Yokeup, the atheists used Yokeup's

justification of his actions as further proof that he and other Christians were 'insane' and did not deserve to be heard in the CofP because they were willing to say anything if they believed that the Bible supported them.

The Christian christoferL also followed the same pattern of attempting to present potentially offensive Biblical language as not motivated by an intent to offend others, but rather, simply the words of the Bible. In his video entitled 'John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12), christoferL explicitly presented the belief that unbelievers would go to hell if they didn't believe in God (Section 6.3.2) by saying, 'This isn't to say that unbelievers won't burn because unfortunately you guys you will if you don't accept Christ' (V12:168–171). In this statement, christoferL carefully asserted a belief about the judgement of non-believers, but hedged the potentially offensive language by saying that the burning was 'unfortunate', attacking the face of 'non-believers' but with positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In the same way as Yokeup, christoferL presented his words as not intended to offend, and although others might view his belief negatively, the Bible was the authoritative word of God and should be accepted. If anyone was subsequently offended, it was because the Bible had offended them, not christoferL. Unlike Yokeup, however, christoferL did so in a way that was presented as part of a larger narrative showing concern for 'unbelievers' rather than as an attack on another user without redressive action.

christoferL's treatment of language from the Bible about hell also showed the care christoferL took to balance community expectations about impoliteness and maintain relationships in the CofP. christoferL's video showed an awareness that for different users, different language could result in a negative attitude and, therefore, be considered impolite. Because no strong response to christoferL's presentation of hell was present, christoferL appeared to be successful in limiting the offence caused by his assertion that unbelievers would also burn. This lack of a negative response may have contributed to whether or not others viewed the action negatively (or how offensive others thought his discourse activity was) since evaluation of malicious impoliteness can depend on how others respond to words and/or actions (Lorenzo-Dus, 2009). Furthermore, when christoferL was mentioned in others' videos, no offensive

language was directed at him. Christians in the comments section of the video praised christoferL's presentation of the Bible and his exegesis showing his ability to maintain positive face with Christians as well.

The different treatment of the Bible among users resulted in further drama by exposing differences in expectations and beliefs about social interaction when users argued about the impoliteness of words or actions. PaulsEgo's mocking response to Yokeup's use of the Bible showed a difference in orientation towards the Bible by Christians and non-Christians among users in the CofP. For Yokeup and christoferL, reading aloud from and citing the Bible showed that their claims were authoritative and that what they said was supported by the 'word of God'. Non-Christians, however, treated the inclusion of offensive language from the Bible as further evidence that the Bible could be used to make Christians behave negatively. I will discuss the role of the Bible as a moral authority further in the following chapter.

Although I have focused on Yokeup's categorisation of others as 'human garbage', not all of Yokeup's interactions were aggressive and confrontational. In the video entitled 'more on...human garbage' (V14) which appeared after the initial disagreement, Yokeup's categorisation of other self-described Christians as 'friends of the world' and 'enemies of God' was carefully hedged and also allocated offence to the Bible. Yokeup avoided directly categorising specific Christians as seen in Video Extract 7-3:

### Video Extract 7-3. 'more on...human garbage' (V14:132–161)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
132		
133		(IMAGES
134		REDACTED)
135		<b>more on...human</b>
136		<b>garbage (V14)</b>
137		posted 17/2/2009 by
138		Yokeup
139		939 views
140		32 comments
141		6:03 running time
142		<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR">http://www.youtube.co</a>
143		<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR">m/watch?v=afgcewnR</a>
144		-uo
145		
146	Transcript redacted	
147		
148		
149		
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161		

Although the sequential structure of Yokeup's talk in Video Extract 7-3 implied that the users he named were 'enemies of God' (particularly through the use of shared category-bound activities), the categorisation was actually implicit. Yokeup never directly said that any individual user was an 'enemy of God', instead hedging his language by saying, 'People like Christopher or Javid' (V14:139–141). Unlike Yokeup's initial insult of Crosisborg, Yokeup's treatment of Christians in this video avoided explicit categorisation. Instead, Yokeup presented his words as directly following from the Bible, but required the hearer to construct the categorisation. Just as christoferL took care in presenting the 'burning' of unbelievers, Yokeup's response and his careful use of the Bible suggested an attempt to maintain relationships with christoferL and other Christians even while acting in a way that could potentially be viewed negatively. Changes in how Yokeup addressed others were evidenced in the comments section of 'more on...human garbage' (V14). Although Yokeup had attempted to

avoid explicit categorisation of christoferL in the video, commenters did not. The user mackiemoo addressed christoferL directly as well, saying, 'nice try Christofer the only one here that is a disgrace is you' (V:414) as well as using the threat, 'I would like to kick him in the shins myself' (V14:395). Yokeup also used offensive metaphorical descriptions of christoferL directly in the comments, writing, 'Christofer doesn't have back-bone, no spine for the fight for Jesus and what is right' (V14:400). Yokeup and others were, in this instance, more aggressive towards christoferL, and although the comments were also public, Yokeup appeared to be more willing to aggressively challenge christoferL in the comments section than the video.

In commenter response to Yokeup's videos, no one suggested that Yokeup's use of 'garbage' should be viewed negatively and commenters also agreed and reinforced Yokeup's presentation of potentially offensive Biblical language as 'God's word' which was authoritative. Users commented, 'Yeah, everyone should check out the word of God for themselves' (V14:382) and 'I think gods word is clear on this matter' (V14:386), showing support for Yokeup's categorisations of others. The lack of strongly offended responses to his video, however, must take into account Yokeup's censorship since he explicitly moderated the comments, possibly deleting those that disagreed with him. Still, it was clear in these comments as well as from the rest of the video page corpus that at least some users did support and encourage Yokeup, holding similar beliefs and expectations about the Bible and what should or should not be viewed negatively.

The care taken to avoid presenting his words as malicious impoliteness suggested that Yokeup was seeking positive face with other Christians in the CofP. Although he repeatedly claimed that the opinions of others were irrelevant, his response to some users in careful, hedged language showed that he was eager to be a positive influence among other Christians and to be regarded as an authority on scripture. At different times, Yokeup appeared to address others, both Christians and non-Christians, in different ways, sometimes treating them harshly and speaking aggressively towards them, and other times treating them in a friendly way. Changes in his interactions with and orientation towards others illustrated the dynamic nature of relationships in the CofP, in which users

who opposed one another could eventually agree, and vice-versa, changing their interactions with each other.

Having looked at responses to malicious impoliteness in the 'human garbage' drama, I now discuss how impoliteness often co-occurred with attempts at dominance.

### **7.3.2 Impoliteness and Dominance**

In the preceding section, I described and analysed impoliteness in terms of users holding different views about what constituted malicious impoliteness and how it was used as a justification for further offensive language. Further analysis of the action viewed as impolite, however, shows that it was often a component part of an attempt by one user to dominate another in the interaction. In this section, I analyse this aspect of impoliteness, firstly in Crosisborg, philhellenes, and PaulsEgo's attempts to dominate Yokeup and secondly, in christoferL and Yokeup's attempts to dominate each other.

In the initial argument between Crosisborg and Yokeup, all the impoliteness occurred within a struggle by both users to influence how the other was perceived. When Yokeup called Crosisborg 'human garbage', and described Crosisborg as 'vile' and 'nasty' (V1:53–54), Yokeup was attempting to warn other Christians that they should not be friends with Crosisborg, citing a Biblical text which said 'friends of the world' were 'enemies of God' (Section 7.3.1). Although calling Crosisborg 'human garbage' did cause offence, the use of the term was part of a message to other self-proclaimed Christians to stop being friendly with Crosisborg. The argument between Crosisborg and Yokeup was, therefore, part of a larger struggle between the two to encourage or discourage what other users did and said on the site. Crosisborg attempted to delegitimise Yokeup's message and maintain his friendships with other Christians, and Yokeup's calling Crosisborg 'garbage' attempted to dissuade Christians from befriending Crosisborg. For both, their words and actions attempted to limit the ability of the other to act freely on the site and be viewed positively by others, but they were largely unsuccessful in changing the behaviour of the other.

Yokeup's attempt to dominate Crosisborg by calling him garbage had the effect of motivating Crosisborg and others to challenge Yokeup. Crosisborg's

response to 'human garbage' in the video entitled 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3) attempted to undermine Yokeup's ability to influence others on the site. Crosisborg described Yokeup as an 'idiot' (V3:122) and 'insane' (V3:153), highlighting Yokeup's perceived illogical discourse activity and his inability to recognise his own hypocrisy. By evaluating Yokeup in a negative way, Crosisborg made an implicit attempt to impede his message among others. Commenters employed and extended Crosisborg's discourse activity in descriptions of Yokeup, and comments repeated the aggressive, condescending tone of the video. By extending categorisations of Yokeup (Section 6.3.4), commenters not only offered negative evaluations of Yokeup, but also supported Crosisborg's attempt to dominate him.

Although Yokeup's description of Crosisborg as 'garbage' was an attempt to limit Crosisborg's ability to befriend other Christians, as I showed in the analysis of metaphor (Section 6.4.2), calling others 'human garbage' was viewed negatively, and users made connections between Yokeup and the actions and words of violent people, including Hitler. The comparison suggested that Yokeup's malicious impoliteness would lead to violence and he should be stopped. Attempting to silence Yokeup by directly challenging him was, therefore, common in responses to Yokeup. In the same way that Crosisborg's categorisation of Yokeup as 'insane' attempted to delegitimise Yokeup's voice, philhellenes' categorisation of Yokeup as a 'psychopath' attempted to impede Yokeup's message. philhellenes' response not only described Yokeup's opinion as wrong, but as the result of a 'lack of empathy' for others (P5:313) that Yokeup felt was supported by God and the Bible. By calling Yokeup a 'psychopath' and telling the story of the Titanic, philhellenes suggested that Yokeup needed to be stopped.

As in Crosisborg's video, commenters on the 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) video page also engaged and developed philhellenes' descriptions of Yokeup as a 'psychopath', and redeployed Yokeup's description of others as 'human garbage' to Yokeup himself (Section 5.4 and 6.3.4). Commenters repeated philhellenes' description of Yokeup also calling him 'filth' (V5:667 & 671) and 'shit' (V5:1476 & 1626), and, as seen in Section 5.3, developed vehicles to categorise Yokeup, including 'rubbish' (1566), 'scumbag' (V5:1412 &

3072), 'scum' (V5:1412), and 'douche(bag)' (V5:1613, 1985, 2008 & 2906). By subverting 'garbage' and applying it back to Yokeup, the action of the categorisation was then also applied to Yokeup, delegitimising him in the same way that philhellenes talked about Yokeup as delegitimising others. The repetition of offensive language served to support philhellenes' claim that Yokeup should be silenced.

In addition to negatively evaluating Yokeup by calling him a 'psychopath', philhellenes' response also included metaphorical verbal threats. In the Titanic story, which I discussed above in Section 5.3, the conclusion implied that philhellenes would prefer Yokeup to be dead. However, philhellenes' threats towards Yokeup were hedged as hypothetical or metaphorical, rather than as actual physical threats on Yokeup's life, because philhellenes presented the story as hypothetical (Video Extract 7-4).

#### **Video Extract 7-4. 'I was wrong' (V7:125–128 & 141–146)**

<b>IU</b>	<b>Video Transcript</b>	<b>Video Information</b>
125 .. but if we were both	(IMAGES	<b>I Was Wrong. (V7)</b> Posted 15/1/2009 by philhellenes 9037 views 109 comments 5:09 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJctXnFJTt4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJctXnFJTt4</a>
126 actually	REDACTED)	
127 witnessing those piles		
128 of so many burning people		
141 .. and that bastard		
142 was at my side		
143 .. and he let that tiny laugh out		
144 .. and I was armed		
145 .. it would be		
146 the last sound he ever made		

In Video Extract 7-4, philhellenes implied that Yokeup's laugh would lead to killing Yokeup, but the situation in which he and Yokeup were watching 'piles of so many burning people' (V7:127–128) emphasised the imaginary nature of his threats. Although the scenario was not explicitly a joke (as the Titanic story), philhellenes' use of the discourse marker 'if' (V7:125) at the beginning of the story as well as use of 'would' (V7:145) in describing the potential outcome marked the story as hypothetical. philhellenes made no suggestion that he actually intended to harm Yokeup physically. The threat of physical violence within a metaphorical story, therefore, allowed for hearers to interpret philhellenes' threat as non-violent while still asserting philhellenes' position of dominance over Yokeup.



Similar, hedged, hypothetical verbal threats directed at Yokeup were also present in responses to philhellenes' story, as seen in Comments Extract 7-1:

### **Comments Extract 7-1. Threats**

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FarSideofTown (user comment)

But after the initial reaction to his video, well, are you not right, about his version of the Christian doctrine,... so if he truly thinks he is in some way trying to save souls, ... I mean, well, um, er, ... Oh Screw Him!

I still hope a cartoon piano falls out of the sky and crushes him! (V5: 2835-2837)

spleefrog9 (user comment)

wow...yokeup should die a miserable death. (V5: 440-443)

TheSuicidalOptimist (user comment)

How can u watch his vids? I cannot as I find them so distasteful. According to YokeUp my loving, kind, generous parents (atheists and deceased) r now being tortured for eternity by his God. Now this alone would enrage me but for him to condone it is unforgivable. Any fundie espousing this to my face would be the recipient of violence, sorry to say. (V5: 1872-1875)

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Three strategies for making threats can be observed in Comments Extract 7-1. In the first comment, FarSideofTown used a joke in the same way as philhellenes' Titanic story to present a violent action occurring to Yokeup, but the comedic nature of the comment made clear that the user was not presenting an intention to harm him. The next commenter wrote that Yokeup 'should die a miserable death' (V5: 440-443), but did not suggest that the commenter would take violent action against Yokeup, rather that it would simply be good if it occurred. The final comment by TheSuicidalOptimist also created a hypothetical narrative in which, if TheSuicidalOptimist were to meet Yokeup, TheSuicidalOptimist would respond violently. Neither the commenters nor philhellenes' threats appeared to violate the basic community standards on YouTube since they were not specific nor worded to suggest actual physical violence.

Within the 'human garbage' drama, although no evidence of users intending to physically harm Yokeup was present, in the summer of 2009, Yokeup made several videos claiming to have been physically threatened and showing himself placing loaded handguns in his truck. Never in the video page corpus nor in my subsequent observation was any physical altercation reported. The displaying of handguns and Yokeup's pledges to protect himself and his wife also

appeared to be attempts to counter malicious impoliteness rather than suggest physical aggression towards others, and I saw no evidence in the video page corpus or observation period that Yokeup made verbal threats towards anyone. This suggests that the users intended for their words and threats to be understood within the context of the CofP in which users could not physically harm one another, but only encourage others to view them as dominant. The comments, however, did express the clear message about Yokeup that philhellenes had voiced in his video: that Yokeup's words had made him worthless and that he should be stopped.

philhellenes' attempt to dominate Yokeup did not go without challenge. Yokeup attempted to counter philhellenes by responding with his own categorisation of philhellenes. Interaction between Yokeup and philhellenes occurred briefly in the comments section of 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) seen in Comments Extract 7-2:

**Comments Extract 7-2. 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5:2267–2270 & 2276–2279)**

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Yokeup (user comment)

the searing truth got to ya... it always does and no matter how you edit what is said, the truth... to evil like you...will be haunting... Good job here. yep, my words, your editing.... but the truth will always prevail. You need Christ, and you know that. (V5:2267–2270)

philhellenes (user comment)

Keep telling it as you see it, Jeff. Never stop. Pick up your efforts to a new level. You need to work harder. Make more videos like the one that got to me (which I admit DID get to me). Jesus is patting a cushion at his right side just for you. (V5:2276–2279)

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In Comments Extract 7-2, philhellenes' verbal treat contained in the video became thwarted impoliteness when Yokeup failed to be offended. Instead, Yokeup again presented his belief that other users were offended, not by his own use of 'garbage', but by the 'truth' (V5:2270) of the Bible. Yokeup countered philhellenes, saying that philhellenes was unable to understand the truth because he was 'evil' (V5:2270). philhellenes' comment then attempted to thwart Yokeup by treating Yokeup in a condescending and sarcastic way and encouraging him to continue to 'tell it as you see it' (V5:2279). In both cases, the

users presented themselves as not being offended, but instead attributing their own meaning to the other's words.

This interaction between Yokeup and philhellenes also showed the difficulty of actually dominating another user on the site. Although contempt shown for Yokeup did not stop him from using 'human garbage', Yokeup's initial videos containing the insult of Crosisborg were taken down, and Yokeup employed a new approach, using the Bible to support his categorisation of others as 'garbage'. Crosisborg also removed his videos containing descriptions of Yokeup's wife Caroline after Yokeup expressed contempt for Crosisborg. Although Crosisborg continued to make drama videos about and directed at Yokeup, the change in actions towards Caroline showed that contempt may have affected how he subsequently behaved, although Crosisborg did not admit this. None of Yokeup's subsequent videos explicitly referenced Crosisborg and no more drama between the two individual users occurred in the video page corpus.

Responses to Yokeup did not always take an aggressive tone or imply physical domination. PaulsEgo, in the video entitled 'A Spotlight.' (V6) responded negatively to Yokeup and his actions, using humour rather than aggression. PaulsEgo reported that Yokeup actually made him happy because Yokeup was doing something PaulsEgo couldn't do in his 'position as an atheist' (V6:191–192) by 'shining a spotlight on everything that is dirty and depraved and disgusting and wrong about Christianity' (V6:201–208) and doing it 'from the inside' (V6:209). In this description, Yokeup's malicious impoliteness became thwarted impoliteness because, rather than being offended, PaulsEgo interpreted Yokeup's actions as evidence that Christianity was bad. In this response, Yokeup's message was impeded through PaulsEgo's reinterpretation, and PaulsEgo attempted to dominate Yokeup, not by limiting his ability to speak freely, but taking away his ability to define the meaning of his words.

Humour continued to play a central role in PaulsEgo's response to Yokeup and in effecting a negative response to Yokeup in the comments. At the end of 'A Spotlight.' (V6), PaulsEgo voiced mock support for Yokeup, concluding the video by offering 'peace' (V6:372) to his viewers and 'a nice spoonful of piping hot hate grits with butter' (V6:380–382) to Yokeup. PaulsEgo implicitly devalued

Yokeup in a similar way to Crosisborg calling Yokeup 'white trash' (Section 6.3.4). Although philhellenes' video implied a verbal threat of Yokeup in an apparent attempt to stop Yokeup from making videos, PaulsEgo encouraged Yokeup to continue to make videos. In philhellenes' approach, Yokeup's removal from YouTube would restrict Yokeup by making it impossible for him to interact with others on the site. In PaulsEgo's approach, perception of Yokeup as representative of Christianity would limit Yokeup's ability for his message to be heard because what he said ultimately reflected negatively on him and Christianity. Although the tactic of the response was different, both videos suggested that restricting Yokeup's message from being heard as he desired and encouraging negative responses would result in less influence for Yokeup.

Attempts to restrict Yokeup's influence were not limited to non-Christian responses. christoferL, rather than calling Yokeup out by name as the others had done, presented an exegesis of the Bible which contrasted with Yokeup's. This allowed christoferL to avoid both directly disagreeing with Yokeup and clearly stating whether or not he viewed calling another user 'human garbage' negatively. Although christoferL did not explicitly mention Yokeup, the suggestion that Yokeup's exegesis was wrong did appear to attempt to limit Yokeup's influence on others. christoferL stated that in the justification for 'human garbage' using John 15, 'a rather obvious point has been ignored' (V12:19), suggesting that Yokeup had not read the parable carefully and his subsequent words and actions were, therefore, illegitimate. Christian commenters who responded to christoferL's video were also indirect and avoidance of using Yokeup's name can also be observed in comments such as: 'I'm sure I know who used the term "human garbage" and one thing he fails to remember is that Christ can redeem all' (V6:283). Explicit presentation of Yokeup's use of 'garbage' as offensive was also avoided with users stating, 'humans are wonderfully and fearfully made.' (V6:304) and 'Bit of an oximoron "human garbage" (V6:296). The commenters used language that did not necessarily result in impoliteness, and an intention to cause offence was not presented. Instead, the Christian commenters wrote in a way similar to christoferL, suggesting that Yokeup was wrong without explicitly attempting to silence him.

During the observation period, some Christians did, however, like Crosisborg, philhellenes, and PaulsEgo directly and aggressively oppose Yokeup in comments and through response videos. These videos and comments publicly and explicitly rebuked him, but by the time of data collection, none of them were publicly available. Indeed, finding aggressive videos made by Christians proved to be difficult. One video made by the user PeaceInChristAlone in the summer of 2010, well after the initial drama, did name and receive a negative response from Yokeup, but otherwise, no evidence of strong opposition to 'human garbage' from Christians in videos remains online, suggesting a reluctance among some Christians to preserve drama videos.

Yokeup's explicit reporting of his intentions and reasons for his words and actions presented himself as attempting to follow his religious convictions and receive what he perceived to be the approval of God rather than that of other users. His discourse activity, however, suggested that he perceived influence over others, particular other Christians in the CofP, as desirable since he repeatedly attempted to persuade them to agree with his exegesis. There was no explicit evidence, however, in the video page corpus that Yokeup was successful in convincing users to agree with him. This had the potential to occur, but given the limited nature of observation, attaining this information simply by analysing video pages seems unlikely. Still, the lack of evidence in the video corpus showed that at least in the short term, his attempts to broaden his influence were not successful.

Although the word 'p'wning' (the emic, user term for dominating another user) was not regularly used in this drama, showing dominance over other users and, in particular, the search of the 'last word' (Billig, 1996) did contribute to the development of drama as users responded to malicious impoliteness in chains of attempts to dominate others. However, in the same way as Billig's theorisation of argumentation (1996) shows that responses can lead to an endless answering of claims, response to others did not necessarily resolve arguments. Instead, users became caught up in answering one another. The responses did not always take the same form, and three different ways of attempting to respond to Yokeup have been identified. First, philhellenes and Crosisborg responded to Yokeup by explicitly undermining his message.

Second, PaulsEgo thwarted Yokeup's impoliteness by responding to Yokeup with humour. And third, christoferL responded to Yokeup through use of scripture and challenging Yokeup's exegesis. These responses also attempted to dominate Yokeup and led to more drama when users disagreed over the appropriate response to Yokeup or when Yokeup himself responded.

Having discussed how impoliteness was used in attempts to dominate others, I now discuss the findings of the analysis in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 as well as the findings from the metaphor and categorisation analysis.

#### **7.4 Discussion**

I began my literature review by discussing both research into patterns of impoliteness in computer-mediated communication and attempts to describe 'flaming' or 'antagonism' on YouTube (Section 2.2.2), but the different and often conflicting responses to impoliteness complicates attempts to describe 'typical' YouTube interaction. Analysis of responses to particular videos or events on YouTube, such as responses to the anti-Islam film 'Fitna' (van Zoonen et al., 2011) or the 'Obama Reggaeton' video (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011), has provided insights about salient features of YouTube interaction, particularly the diversity of comments and responses to videos, but this current project has shown that a longitudinal perspective complicates descriptions of YouTube 'flaming' and 'antagonism'. As analysis has shown, what users view negatively is both contextual and individual, a finding which supports both Lange (2007a) and Moor, Heuvelman, and Verleur's (2010) interview and questionnaire research. Furthermore, over time, even what an individual views negatively may shift, and users do not maintain the same expectations over time.

The differences in user responses to malicious impoliteness also agree with and extend Angouri and Tseliga's (2010) findings that expectations develop in unique ways depending on the online context. In contrast to the online fora in Angouri and Tseliga's study, YouTube does not have 'gate-keeping' (i.e. access restricting) devices through which users make a particular effort to become a part of a particular CofP moderated by an individual or individuals. YouTube CofP are completely open, involving interaction among users from a variety of different backgrounds, often from conflicting socio-political and religious

positions which sustain different user understandings of impoliteness. Different beliefs about what should be viewed negatively, therefore, inevitably follow.

Although some have described politeness and impoliteness in social interaction in terms of 'social norms' (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Kasper, 1990; Stommel, 2008; Watts et al., 1992b), YouTube presents a particular problem in identifying norms because of the diversity of interaction among users from disparate socio-political, regional, and religious positions, the community guidelines of the site offer a very basic norm around impoliteness. These are written by the administrators and enforced in the official 'YouTube community' (i.e. everyone interacting on the site). However, although YouTube does maintain community standards rejecting 'hate speech' (YouTube, n.d.), it does not appear that any of the videos in the dataset was held to have broken these standards. The 'social norms' of the users interacting appeared, therefore, to be completely emergent from interaction, rather than explicitly set out as YouTube policy.

The differences in expectations about social interaction were made most clear in the welcoming position Yokeup took towards 'hate'. Confounding a simple notion of positive and negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987) or even a more nuanced understanding of face as culturally specific (O'Driscoll, 1996), Yokeup's stated proud acceptance of 'hate' from others, including both Christians and non-Christians, showed how negative evaluation from others could be desired and sought out, in the same way that Internet 'trolls' seek negative attention (Hardaker, 2010). Yokeup's desire for negative reaction, however, was rooted in a belief about God from the Bible. His response to others' negative reactions highlights how different beliefs can lead to different outcomes and continue to generate drama. Because receiving negative attention for acting in a way that was perceived as affiliated with God resulted in positive face and a dominant position for Yokeup, he continued to pursue negative attention. This position, however, was also complex because other Christians made a distinction between impoliteness resulting when one had acted in accordance with the Bible and impoliteness resulting when one had acted in a negative way that was not justified by the Bible. Among Christians, drama developed around this disagreement, and user interaction revealed

differences in how users believed they should respond to impoliteness, stemming from Christian belief.

Belief about the moral authority of the Bible (discussed in relation to metaphor and categorisation in Sections 5.5 & 6.4) also complicated drama because it appeared that Christians often spoke of and appealed to the Bible's authority without viewing it negatively, while atheists often appeared to have a negative view of the Bible. Yokeup's attempts to justify himself by appealing to the Bible's authority then only resulted in more impoliteness. Because atheists viewed the Bible negatively, any use of the Bible, rather than diminish the negative views of others, only resulted in more impoliteness. Since Yokeup regularly appealed to the moral authority of the Bible, the language of the Bible was consistently a central topic of discussion and disagreement among all users.

The complexity of the drama also challenges Brown and Levinson's (1987) depiction of 'face-threatening acts' as strategic ranked choices oriented towards estimation of face loss, a criticism also made by Watts and colleagues (1992b) and Werkhofer (1992). Analysis of impoliteness has instead revealed that users were not necessarily aware of what others considered positive or negative face, and rather than a series of choices to intentionally effect a certain reaction, impoliteness depended both on what a user said and how others perceived what was said. Particularly given the diverse group of users, norms about face wants, like social norms more broadly, were difficult to identify and relied on the local context of interaction.

In the same way that previous research has shown (Bousfield, 2008), attempting to dominate other users often correlated with impoliteness. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) description of power (Section 2.3.3) distinguishing between individual interaction and social-historical structures was relevant in the YouTube interaction. The use of the Bible in arguments and appeals to exegesis indicated how 'enduring' socio-historical power resources contributed to each individual attempt at dominance and evidenced the same appeals to the authority of the Bible and the institutional church that have been used throughout history to exert control (Foucault, 1981). Exegesis by Yokeup and christoferL and the lack of appeals to denominational authorities also revealed the 'supremacy' of the Bible not only in Evangelical Christian theology



(Packer, 1978), but in defining 'right' words and actions. The practice of exegesis to assert the authority of one's position showed that although Christians had shared beliefs, these beliefs did not necessarily lead to agreement, a finding that supports Bartkowski's (1996) observation that 'literal' readings of the Bible can still result in disagreement among Christians.

Differences in beliefs and conceptions of faith also had implications for perceptions of dominance, and who had or did not have power depended on the user's conception of positive face. Having a large number of subscribers and views appeared to be one measure of perceived power since it allowed users to spread their message. In this instance, power was equated with influence. For the Christians, however, although a positive value was placed on influence, a higher value appeared to be placed on the perception that their words were sanctioned by God and the Bible. Although influence was something that Christians like Yokeup and christoferL evidently sought, when it was seen as conflicting with piety, they evaluated it negatively.

The socio-historical level of power was also instantiated in Crosisborg's attempt to describe Yokeup as 'American white trash' (Section 6.3.4). In this categorisation of Yokeup, Crosisborg appealed to a context beyond the 'human garbage' drama to a power structure in which the rural poor are dominated and devalued. By categorising Yokeup in this way, Crosisborg's attempt at dominance revealed the larger social world in which YouTube was embedded. The power structure of the online world was not separated from the offline world, and users brought the same prejudices and stereotypes from their offline contexts. The use of 'American white trash' revealed that, in this drama, conceptions of larger power structures could influence small-scale, Internet interaction. I discuss this further in the final analysis chapter.

As I have noted above, the only technical means of limiting another's ability to use the site was blocking him or her from commenting on one's own page. Although users may negatively affect another's ability to freely speak on the site and have their message heard by the largest number of people, all users are free to comment on others' pages as well as post videos on their own channel. Because, as Lange's (2007a) research has shown, users utilise the site in different ways, effectively limiting another's ability to use the site is different

depending on who they are. For users who comment regularly on the pages of others, being 'blocked' might limit the ability to spread their message. In the 'human garbage' drama, however, the main users posted videos on their own channels and were, therefore, unrestricted in their primary use of the site. The extent to which negative talk about another restricted how they were heard was difficult to judge. While blocking another user is a clear, empirical tool to limit another's actions, the success of appealing to the CofP to react negatively to individual user cannot necessarily be confirmed as effective or not.

During the observation period, there were several cases of users permanently closing their accounts and leaving the site after a high volume of offensive responses, although none of the video makers did so. In most cases, changes in interactions or removal of videos was done for unknown reasons and a direct causal relationship between attempts at dominance and a restricted action environment was never observed. In all cases, like impoliteness, user beliefs and expectations about social interaction influenced user perceptions of who was and was not dominant. I will return to this in the discussion section of the following chapter (Section 8.4).

In summary, analysis of impoliteness revealed that:

- The words and actions that were considered impolite differed among users.
- The malicious impoliteness of others was often offered as a justification for subsequent malicious impoliteness.
- Differences in expectations about positive and negative face affected how users responded to the words and actions of others.
- Impoliteness often co-occurred with attempts at dominance.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter began by describing patterns of impoliteness, particularly the centrality of discussions about impoliteness in the 'human garbage' drama and its responsive nature. I discussed how the malicious impoliteness of others was used as a justification for further malicious impoliteness, and I showed how Christians attempted to justify non-malicious impoliteness using the words of

the Bible. I then described how malicious and non-malicious impoliteness was used in attempts to dominate others. I also discussed how different user expectations and beliefs about social interaction and organisation led to different evaluations of what was impolite and what constituted dominance, particularly in relation to different perceptions of positive and negative face. Finally, I discussed how this study contributes to research about YouTube impoliteness and antagonism, by showing it to be a contextual phenomenon, but one that is complicated when different people present in interaction hold different views and beliefs, inhibiting the development of social norms on the site.

Having analysed metaphor use, categorisation, and impoliteness, I next present analysis of positioning to show how discourse activity resulted in positioning within the CofP.

## 8 Shifting Positionings and Conflicting Storylines

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from analysis of positioning outlined in Section 4.5.5. Analysis of positioning (Harré & van Langenhove, 1998) was employed to answer the following research questions:

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RQ13 How did users position themselves and others in the drama?

RQ14 Was malignant positioning present? If so, what did it accomplish?

RQ15 What storylines were revealed by the positions that users took? Were there similarities in the storylines that different users followed?

RQ 16 How did positioning contribute to the development of drama?

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In Section 2.2.4, after reviewing several theories of community, I suggested using Lave and Wenger's community of practice (CofP) theory (1991) to describe the interaction of YouTube users, and further proposed using Harré and van Langenhove's (1998) positioning theory to describe and analyse positions users took within the CofP. In Section 4.5.5, I presented my procedure for describing how users allocate and define positions in their discourse activity. In analysis of positioning on the video pages, I first described explicit first order positions taken by users and explicit second-ordering positioning of others. I subsequently analysed the effect of user positioning, particularly how it potentially resulted in other users treating someone negatively. After describing positioning, I then investigated how positioning within individual videos followed particular storylines. After constructing storylines from user talk, I then compared them across videos to investigate similarities and differences among users. Finally, I returned to the video to analyse how positioning in discourse activity was embodied in the video image.

In this chapter, I first present an overview of findings from analysis of positioning. I then present analysis of the shifting positionings users took in discourse activity, and how storylines were revealed in positioning. Finally, I discuss my analysis and findings in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and in

relation to the analyses of metaphor, categorisation, and impoliteness reported in preceding chapters.

## **8.2 Overview of Findings**

Analysis of positioning revealed that:

- Users understood and described positionings of themselves and others in conflicting ways.
- Users attempted to explain their own apparently contradictory words and beliefs by shifting positionings.
- Users took positions with and against others, but these positions were temporary and shifted depending on the context .
- Malignant positioning prolonged and encouraged drama.

Analysis revealed that users evaluated the positioning of others in conflicting ways, with one user describing an action (such as evangelising other users) as 'good' while another described the same action as 'bad'. The evaluation of what others said and did was unpredictable and did not depend on whether a user was a Christian or not, or whether or not the users shared the same positioning. Christians users who shared the same self-categorisations still disagreed about which words and actions were 'good' or 'bad', despite a shared belief in the moral authority of God and the Bible. Because users evaluated the actions of others in conflicting ways, drama developed in disagreements over what constituted 'good' words and actions.

Users took varying positions to appeal to different users at different times within videos and at different points in the drama. This variability in positioning was often the result of attempting to appeal to many different users. Because videos often addressed more than one person or topic, how users positioned themselves and others could shift over time or within a single video. One outcome of these shifting positionings was that distinct groups of Christians and atheists did not emerge in interaction. Instead, user positioning changed in responses to the individual contextual circumstances rather than emerging as in-group/out-group identities.

Because positioning was dynamic and depended on the immediate context,

users could not necessarily expect to be supported by others who had supported them in the past or who shared the same belief. Christians in particular did not always agree with one another, and shifting positionings allowed both self-proclaimed Christians and self-proclaimed atheists to appeal to any user to support them, regardless of how the user being appealed to self-identified. This was a predominant characteristic of interaction and appeared to lead to conflict because the question of who would support whom was not stable and conflict could occur among anyone in the CofP, including among users who had supported one another in previous conflicts.

Malignant positioning was frequent in the drama and contributed to the development of drama when it was extended by users repeating and/or developing negative categorisations and when users subsequently resisted malignant positioning and attempted to convince others in the CofP to view them positively. Drama continued to develop when users struggled back and forth, each attempting to influence how the other was viewed, and drama between users only ended when one user stopped responding to the other.

Having provided a brief overview of the findings, in the following section I describe in detail how Christians took shifting positionings to account for their words and beliefs, and how Croisborg, philhellenes, and PaulsEgo accomplished malignant positioning of Yokeup.

### ***8.3 Shifting Positioning and Conflict***

#### **8.3.1 Positioning within Christian Discourse Activity**

Throughout the 'human garbage' drama, the Christian users Yokeup and christoferL explained their own words, actions, and beliefs using the Bible, particularly when replying to negative responses from others. The way that Yokeup spoke of 'preaching love' while claiming that the term 'human garbage' came from the Bible, however, was viewed negatively, and Yokeup attempted to resolve this conflict by shifting positionings which appealed to different users at different times. To illustrate this phenomenon, I now describe Yokeup's attempt to position himself as an 'ally of God' in a storyline of <war between

allies and enemies of God<sup>7</sup> while also positioning himself as a 'loving preacher' led to disagreement among users about what Christians could say about themselves and others by appealing to the Bible.

Prior to the first videos posted in the 'human garbage' drama, Croisborg called Yokeup's wife Caroline a lesbian, an insult that was offensive to both Yokeup and Caroline (see Section 4.3.3 for a full description of the drama context). In many videos posted on Yokeup's channel, Caroline described her conversion to Christianity, a narrative which included the claim that although she was originally a homosexual, she had become a heterosexual after she converted. In her discourse activity, she positioned herself as a 'wife' in a storyline of <marriage> with Yokeup. When Croisborg challenged Caroline's self-positioning, Yokeup initially responded angrily, making an aggressive video that was quickly taken down, but elements of which were remixed and reposted by theoriginalhamster in the video entitled 'yokeup the crackwhore' (V1). The video showed Yokeup angrily calling Croisborg 'human garbage' and contrasted with the subsequent videos Yokeup posted, in which he claimed that he was only preaching the Bible when he made the first video.

Yokeup's justification for 'human garbage' and his self-positioning prompted responses from other Christians who used the opportunity to both distance themselves from Yokeup and present a more positive Biblical message. christoferL's video entitled 'John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12), in which he took a position of openness towards unbelievers, highlighted attempts made by some Christians to position themselves as 'loving Christians' in contrast to Yokeup (Video Extract 8-1).

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<sup>7</sup> In this chapter, positions will be marked with inverted comments, while storylines will appear in brackets.

**Video Extract 8-1. 'John 15 for Dummies-Unbelievers are human garbage?' (V12:4–20)**

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
4	.. I recently saw a video	<b>John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage? (V12)</b> posted 15/2/2009 by christoferL 578 views 25 comments 4:54 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAnou0jiOOA">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAnou0jiOOA</a>
5	where someone used	
6	john fifteen	
7	to justify calling unbelievers	
8	as human garbage	
9	... this was sent to me	
10	by someone who's not a believer	
11	who wanted my opinion	
12	of the bible said about him	
13	... at first	
14	I wasn't sure what to say	
15	if you saw this video and how	
16	it uses	
17	the passage	
18	.. it's quite convincing	
19	but there is a rather obvious point	
20	that has been ignored	

Video Extract 8-1 shows how christoferL framed his response to Yokeup as addressing the concerns of an someone who was not a 'believer' and who wanted to know what 'the Bible said about him' (V12:12). By reading aloud from the Bible, christoferL's self-positioning also emphasised that he was presenting the 'real' meaning of the Bible and that Yokeup had 'ignored a rather obvious point' (V12:19–20), accomplishing a tacit malignant positioning of Yokeup as a Christian who 'had gone his own way' (V12:160). Since Yokeup had claimed the right to call others 'garbage' from the moral authority of the Bible, challenging Yokeup's ability to interpret the Bible also challenged Yokeup's position as a 'loving preacher'. If the moral authority to call others 'garbage' came from the Bible and Yokeup's reading of the Bible was wrong, then his words were not acceptable.

christoferL, on the other hand, maintained a position of a 'loving Christian' by both following the Bible and being open to others. christoferL's response followed a storyline of <sharing the good news> derived from the Bible, in which 'believers' were, unlike Yokeup, open and friendly, offering the love of God to others without any malice or aggression. christoferL emphasised the theme of openness and concern, tagging the video with the word 'love' and reading from John 15:9–17 which includes 9 references to 'love'. In this position, he offered an alternative to Yokeup's aggressive videos and personality. At the same time, however, christoferL's asserted that he believed in a literal understanding of hell



and was not afraid to tell unbelievers the 'truth' about the Bible. Throughout their interactions, Yokeup had positioned christoferL as a 'weak Christian' (or 'fluffy' Christian, see Section 6.3.1) who was quick to avoid unpopular parts of the Bible. In his response to Yokeup, however, christoferL rejected this positioning by stressing that unbelievers will still 'burn' and positioning himself as a 'strong Christian' as well as a 'loving Christian'. christoferL's response to Yokeup did not, therefore, represent a belief that was fundamentally different from Yokeup, and positive responses in the comments showed that many Christians accepted christoferL's self-positioning and saw the two positions as complementary rather than conflicting.

By contrast, in Yokeup's response video entitled 'more on...human garbage' (V14) posted two days after christoferL's video, Yokeup used metaphorical language to position Christians with whom he disagreed as 'enemies of God' in a storyline of <war between allies and enemies of God> in which every person was either allied with God or God's enemy. Yokeup positioned 'people like christoferL' (V14:139) as 'friends of the world' using the same category-bound activities of 'friends of the world', 'enemies of God', 'unbelievers', and 'human garbage' (Section 6.3.2). This positioning of christoferL as an 'enemy of God' rejected christoferL's self-positioning as a 'loving Christian' and described christoferL's interaction with atheists as befriending people opposed to the moral authority of God. In the storyline of <war between allies and enemies of God>, because 'friends of the world' and 'enemies of God' were destroyed by God in the same way, there was no difference between the positions of christoferL and the unbelievers.

The storyline of <war between allies and enemies of God> also made sense of Yokeup's treatment of 'hate' from others as 'positive face' (Section 7.3.1) because it described interaction between opposing users as part of a struggle between 'good' and 'evil'. Yokeup again presented himself as fervently aligned with God and God's word, and therefore, more pious than other Christians in the CofP, particularly christoferL. Throughout his video, Yokeup first read aloud from the Bible before sharing his own opinion, positioning himself and his words as following from the parable of the vine and branches (John 15) (outlined in Section 5.3) as well as James 4 (which explicitly referred to 'friendship with the

world' and 'enmity with God') to establish the authority of his words. By explicitly imploring users to '[not] believe anything I'm telling you right now about scripture until you check it out for yourself' (V14:84–97), he reinforced his self-positioning as Biblical, again affirming his right to call others 'garbage'. By taking this position for himself, Yokeup offered explanations for the criticism he received: he was being hated by the 'world' for following God's word.

Although Croisborg was not mentioned directly in Yokeup's video, Yokeup's self-positioning within a storyline of <war between allies and enemies of God> also provided justification for his initial use of 'human garbage'. It was not an insult, but a response to an attack from an 'enemy of God' on another 'ally of God', Caroline. Any resistance from Christians to his use of the term could also then be described as a lack of courage by Christians attempting to be friends of the 'world' (i.e. Croisborg) rather than fighting for God and God's word. Instead of changing his words, negative evaluations by others served as a further impetus for Yokeup to continue to behave in a similar way. Any attacks on his face were then proof that he was acting in alignment with God.

Some Christians affirmed Yokeup's self-positioning and his right to call others 'human garbage'. As in christoferL's videos, commenters accepted the storyline of <war between allies and enemies of God> that Yokeup's talk constructed and the malignant positioning of christoferL as an 'enemy of God'. Christian user mackiemoo's verbal threats towards christoferL (Section 7.3.1) showed that Yokeup's positioning of christoferL was taken as malignant, and she also evaluated christoferL's actions negatively and responded aggressively towards him. Commenters' discourse activity also followed the same conventionalised Christian narrative and a storyline of <war between allies and enemies of God> in which only two positions were allocated, 'allies of God' and 'enemies of God', accepting Yokeup's positioning of some self-proclaimed Christians as 'enemies of God'. No commenters challenged Yokeup's positioning of others and his use of 'garbage', and no commenters challenged Yokeup's right to position others, although this apparently reflected Yokeup's moderation of the comments.

Although Yokeup's discourse activity followed a storyline of <war>, he also positioned himself as a 'loving preacher'. While positioning others as 'enemies of God' and calling them 'garbage', Yokeup also attempted to present himself as

friendly and non-aggressive. At the beginning 'more on...human garbage' (V14), Yokeup talked happily about the 'beautiful' sunrise, laughing and smiling frequently in the video while speaking in a friendly way. Although he positioned others as 'enemies of God' and said, 'You burn—you're garbage, that's just God's word' (V14:226–228), Yokeup again insisted his words were simply part of an evangelical outreach motivated by concern for others rather than misanthropy (Video Extract 8-2).

### Video Extract 8-2. 'more on...human garbage' (V14:234–244)

IU	Video Transcript	Video Information
234	God bless you guys	<b>more on...human garbage (V14)</b> posted 17/2/2009 by Yokeup 939 views 32 comments 6:03 running time <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR-uo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR-uo</a>
235	... enjoy your day	
236	.. that is one	
237	... beautiful	
238	.. sunrise coming up	
239	.. God bless you	
240	jesus loves you	
241	he has a great plan for your life	
242	if you haven't surrendered to him	
243	it'd be the best decision	
244	you ever made in your life	

In Video Extract 8-2, Yokeup presented himself (both in his discourse activity and physical presence) as speaking frankly with a friend and showing concern for the viewer, drawing an implicit contrast to positioning of him a misanthropic person who wanted others to be burned (Section 6.3.4). By ending the video in this way, Yokeup repositioned himself as a 'loving preacher' rather than as a 'bully' attacking others. By asserting that '[Jesus] has a great plan for your life' (V14:241), Yokeup again highlighted the conventionalised Christian narrative in which individuals can be saved from being burned by God's love. Yokeup positioned himself in a manner similar to christoferL, saying 'Jesus loves you' (V14:240) and following a narrative in which Jesus forgives everyone who 'surrenders' to him (V14:242). The term 'surrender' suggested that, for Yokeup, the positions of an 'ally of God' and 'loving preacher' did not conflict in the <war between allies and enemies of God> storyline because 'enemies of God' could become 'allies of God' through conversion. In this storyline, attacking 'enemies of God' and 'sharing the love' were complementary, not conflicting.

This positioning was reinforced by Yokeup's presentation of himself in the video image (Figure 8-1).

## Figure 8-1. Yokeup in the video 'more on...human garbage' (V14)

(IMAGES REDACTED)

NB Video still shot taken at 0:58 taken from Yokeup's video titled 'more on...human garbage' (V14) (see Appendix 1).

Seen in Figure 8-1, Yokeup's physical presence reinforced positioning in his discourse activity as a 'loving preacher' in response to Croisborg and challenged philhellenes' positioning of him as an aggressive, violent person. By framing the video as though he were chatting with a friend in an informal way, Yokeup presented himself as a non-threatening person who was simply and honestly 'sharing the love' (V5:9). Standing in the front garden of his house, with the sun rising behind him, the natural surrounding was bright, and Yokeup used the setting as a resource for positive self-positioning, remarking about the sunrise, 'My daddy painted that' (V14:5). Referring to the beautiful natural setting and calling God 'daddy' implicitly challenged negative descriptions of Yokeup and emphasised his childlike appreciation for God and the natural world. Further, by presenting himself in his workout clothing with a hand towel around his shoulders and backwards baseball cap with the words 'Jesus Rocks' written on it, Yokeup reinforced the casual position of a friend talking intimately with another friend. The visual content reinforced the message that the video was not an attack, rather a simple and frank repetition of what the Bible said.

Although Yokeup emphasised this self-positioning as a 'loving preacher', users continued to respond negatively to Yokeup's evangelical outreach and presence on YouTube. Yokeup's use of 'human garbage' as well as his continued

aggression towards others appeared to affect his ability to take the position of a 'loving preacher'. Yokeup's attempts to reposition himself in response to others contributed to the development of drama because each positioning was also an attempt to resolve words and beliefs others in the CofP evaluated as conflicting. Yokeup continued to speak in a way that others viewed negatively and continued to argue that his words were acceptable because they were taken from the Bible.

Analysis of both christoferL and Yokeup's discourse activity revealed that, within the 'human garbage' drama, their positions shifted according to the audience they were addressing. Although both users' discourse activity was derived from a similar belief in a conventionalised Christian narrative and the moral authority of the Bible, drama developed around whether or not the other saw their beliefs and words as compatible with the Bible. Where disagreement occurred about the rightness of what Yokeup had said, he repositioned himself based on the reactions of others, but never admitted that what he had done or said in the past was wrong. I will return to these issues in the discussion section of this chapter.

Having presented analysis of dynamic positioning in Yokeup and christoferL's discourse activity, I will now present analysis of the positions and storylines within atheist responses.

### **8.3.2 Positioning in Response to Yokeup**

Atheists who responded to Yokeup followed a storyline which positioned him as an aggressive, unstable member of the CofP who attacked and bullied others. Crosisborg, philhellenes, and PaulsEgo not only rejected Yokeup's positioning of himself, but the moral authority of the Bible, and the storyline of <war between allies and enemies of God>. These users focused on Yokeup's use of the Bible to justify his actions, and positioned themselves as protectors of the CofP by opposing Yokeup. To illustrate this response, I describe how the atheists rejected Yokeup's calling others 'garbage' and show how they accomplished malignant positionings that undermined his right to call others 'garbage', drawing on response videos posted immediately after Yokeup's first use of 'human garbage' (14–16 January 2009).

Responding to the insult of 'human garbage' in the video entitled 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3), Crosisborg was the first to position Yokeup as a 'bully' who was acting aggressively towards others in the CofP. In previous chapters, I have analysed in depth the insults that Crosisborg directed at Yokeup (Sections 5.3.3, 6.3.4, and 7.3.2), which described him as attacking others without caring about the consequences. To further highlight the negative response Yokeup had received from both Christians and non-Christians, Crosisborg also reported that the Christian christoferL had rejected Yokeup's words and was likely to have told Yokeup that he was 'not supposed to judge people' (V3:54). By revoicing christoferL's words, Crosisborg positioned Yokeup as acting so inappropriately even that other Christians rejected him. This malignant positioning limited Yokeup's ability to be heard in the CofP by encouraging Christians (to whom Yokeup had appealed by explaining his actions using John 15) to view him negatively, and to oppose him.

Crosisborg also described the interaction among users in terms of struggle, but in contrast to Yokeup's storyline of <war between allies and enemies of God>, Crosisborg described Yokeup as one individual user 'harassing' others (V3:75) rather than a <war> between Christians and atheists on YouTube. In this storyline, Yokeup was simply a 'bully' and Crosisborg was standing up to him. By taking this position, Crosisborg claimed the right to also act aggressively since he was responding to Yokeup's violence, a pattern I highlighted in reference to malicious impoliteness in the preceding chapter. The storyline not only provided justification for malicious impoliteness (as I showed in Section 7.3.1), but a moral imperative for Crosisborg to act because the safety of the CofP was in jeopardy.

Crosisborg's self-positioning as someone protecting others from Yokeup allowed him to describe his actions as both opposed to Christianity in general, but friendly towards Christians whom Yokeup had mistreated (Section 7.3.1). In the <bullying> storyline, atheists and Christians were not necessarily positioned as opposing groups; instead, Yokeup alone was the 'bully' whose actions had a negative effect on the whole CofP. By describing Yokeup as attacking everyone regardless of whether they were Christians or atheists, Crosisborg accomplished a more effective malignant positioning of Yokeup, one in which

both Christians and atheists viewed him negatively and exerted social pressure on him to stop. By identifying Yokeup's 'bad behaviour' (V3:16) as directed toward Christians, Crosisborg maintained a position that appealed to all users.

Descriptions of Yokeup attacking others within the CofP were recurring in video responses to his use of 'human garbage'. Both philhellenes and PaulsEgo's discourse activity followed a storyline of <bullying>, and as I have shown in previous chapters (Sections 7.3.1), philhellenes and PaulsEgo also rejected Yokeup's attempt to appropriate the Bible's power and to claim the right to speak as he had. Both philhellenes in the video entitled 'YouTube's psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) and PaulsEgo in the video entitled 'A Spotlight.' (V6) accomplished a further malignant positioning of Yokeup in which Yokeup, as a Christian, accepted the Bible as an authority without question and used the words of the Bible as a justification for violent and hateful words. philhellenes juxtaposed Yokeup's own words that he was 'sharing the truth' and 'sharing the love' from the Bible (V6:8–9) with audio extracts of Yokeup calling others 'human garbage dumps', implicitly comparing Yokeup to Hitler by suggesting that Yokeup's words reminded him of concentration camps. In describing Yokeup as a potentially violent, psychopathic Christian, philhellenes took the same position as Crosisborg, that of someone protecting others from violence. Illustrated in the Titanic story (Section 5.3), philhellenes positioned himself in a dominant way, standing between helpless victims and Yokeup. He presented his aggression towards Yokeup as justified because it was only a reaction to others' suffering.

These positions meant that Christians and atheists were not presented as separate groups in the CofP, struggling against each other, but rather as users struggling against the 'bully', Yokeup. This position made him dangerous and a threat to everyone with whom he interacted, but other Christians in the CofP were not positioned as 'bullies'. Although at times, negative evaluations of Yokeup were extended to 'Christianity', these evaluations were used to reject Yokeup and Christian doctrine, not reject other self-proclaimed Christians or 'believers'. Throughout the 'human garbage' drama, Yokeup was described negatively, but no specific users were grouped with Yokeup. When self-proclaimed Christians were mentioned, for example in Crosisborg's discourse

activity, they were distinguished from Yokeup and presented as members of the CofP, not as members of a Christian 'out-group' in contrast to an atheist 'in-group'.

In the final atheist response to Yokeup, PaulsEgo followed the same storyline as Crosisborg and philhellenes: that Christians like Yokeup and the Westboro Baptist Church position themselves to be friendly and kind people, but act hatefully and use the Bible to justify their hateful language. PaulsEgo elaborated the storyline, claiming that, 'The problem is that if you dig through that fluff what you find is basically .. this beating heart of Christianity that's made of one hundred percent unadulterated hate' (V6:249–251; 255–261). The moral imperative to act strongly against Yokeup was taken, not from a comparison to a historical narrative (like the Titanic or the Holocaust), but to the contemporary example of the Westboro Baptist Church (Section 6.3.1). By using an example of a group that was a well-known for hate, PaulsEgo made a clear moral argument for attacking and stopping Yokeup. Although Crosisborg and philhellenes' malignant positioning of Yokeup attempted to silence Yokeup, PaulsEgo suggested a different tactic. He stated that he hoped Yokeup's 'entire channel becomes this hate filled fuckin' bile' (V6:321–325) as this would continue to illustrate what he claimed to be the 'beating heart of Christianity' (V6:257). This malignant positioning, therefore, didn't attempt deny Yokeup the right to speak, but rather the right to determine the meaning of his own words and position himself.

How Crosisborg and philhellenes positioned the camera and addressed the audience also reinforced their attempts to take dominant positions over Yokeup (Figure 8-2).



**Figure 8-2. Crosisborg in the video ' Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3)**

(IMAGES REDACTED)

NB Video still taken at 1:26 from Crosisborg's video titled 'Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians' (V3) (see Appendix 1).

Crosisborg positioned the camera below him, with only his head and shoulders showing while speaking aggressively about and towards Yokeup. The lighting of the video produced dark edges, emphasising Crosisborg's aggressive tone. Crosisborg stood and talked down to the camera, accentuating the effect of a superior physical position. Crosisborg also maintained an aggressive and mocking tone throughout the video, addressing Yokeup directly and using his physical stance to reinforce the storyline of Crosisborg standing up to a 'bully'.

As with Crosisborg, philhellenes took a superior position for himself in relation to Yokeup, reinforced by his physical stance. Speaking in a patronising tone when addressing Yokeup and referring to him casually as 'Jeff' (V5:300) rather than his username, philhellenes' discourse activity was embodied in the physical presence he took for himself, emphasising the actions of aggressively challenging and threatening Yokeup (Figure 8-3).

**Figure 8-3. philhellenes in the Video 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5)**



NB Video still taken at 6:02 from philhellenes video titled 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5) (see Appendix 1).

In Figure 8-3, philhellenes is positioned slightly above the viewer with his face dominating in the frame. The video was shot in black and white, and the dark background and dim lighting accentuate philhellenes' aggressive physical presence, as with Croisborg's presentation. philhellenes addressed Yokeup as 'you' throughout the video, and the image embodied the direct and confrontational tone of the video with philhellenes positioning himself aggressively and authoritatively. The image implied a face-to-face confrontation, with philhellenes standing up to Yokeup.

After philhellenes and PaulsEgo made videos about Yokeup, both implicit and explicit malignant positioning resulted in others speaking about and treating Yokeup negatively. The atheists' responses to Yokeup challenged the meaning Yokeup attributed to his words and his storyline of <war between the allies and enemies of God>, instead following the same storyline of <bullying> in which Yokeup created discord in the CofP among both Christians and non-Christians. The storylines that Yokeup and the atheists told contrasted in their descriptions of themselves, with Yokeup's description of his own 'good' action being described as 'bad' in the atheist response. The resulting drama then centred around not only an evaluation of words or actions as impolite or not, but the right that users had to speak in the CofP.

I now discuss the findings of the analysis in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 bringing together the findings from metaphor, categorisation, and impoliteness analysis.

#### **8.4 Discussion**

In Chapter 6, I described and analysed categorisation in the drama, but also showed that users very rarely used categories to describe themselves. An additional step of analysis was therefore needed to describe how categorisation of others related to a user's own positioning and how these positionings interacted. Categorisation and positioning analysis complemented one another by first revealing explicit positioning of others (in categorisation) and showing how those categorisations affected the positions available to the user who was categorised, the speaker, and others (in positioning). Positionings were often accomplished with categorisations, but more than one category could be used to accomplish a single positioning (such as 'friend of the world' and 'enemy of God'), and comparison between the predicates of the two categories further elucidated the positioning. In this way, the two analytic frameworks provided a fuller description of both the development of categories in discourse activity and the action they accomplished.

The storylines revealed in analysis reflect the findings about metaphorical stories (discussed in Section 5.5), showing how users engaged in *allegoresis* (Gibbs, 2011) (Section 2.5, p. 62). While metaphorical stories connected interaction in the drama to specific parables or tragic historical narratives, storylines described interaction in terms of larger, non-specific socio-historical themes such as war. In both metaphorical stories and storylines, users described interaction as a struggle between 'good' and 'evil', in a manner similar to Harré's (2000) observations about contrasting accounts from al-Qaeda and the United States' administration in discourse activity about terrorism. The storylines that users followed also showed striking contrast for the way in which users described the same actions. The ongoing drama, and the positions that users took within it, suggested that disagreement went beyond whether or not calling another person 'human garbage' was malicious impoliteness or not. Conflicting storylines and ways of talking about interaction with others evidenced differences in beliefs and expectations that users held about the

world, and the conflicting moral imperatives that both felt they had to act in a way that others viewed negatively.

This conflict between Yokeup and the atheists, and the differences in beliefs and expectations which it reveals, might be understood as a microcosm of a larger conflict between so-called 'New Atheism' and Evangelical Christianity. With both attempting to get the last word in the argument, books by atheist authors and scholars like Dawkins' *The God delusion* (2006) and Harris' *The end of faith* (2004) are met with evangelical author responses: *Deluded by Dawkins? A Christian response to the God delusion* (Wilson, 2007) and *The end of reason: A response to New Atheists* (Zacharias, 2008). This analysis has shown, however, that disagreement stemming from conflicting beliefs and expectations need not be limited to theological or philosophical arguments, but can also include disagreements about social interaction in particular communities. In these disagreements, the global, historical difficulties of interreligious dialogue (often tied to differences in cultural and socio-political identities) are now also present on the Internet and social media (Kluver, Detenber, Lee, Hameed, Chen, & Cheong, 2008; Selvan, 2003). The site for the disagreement and the way in which its done, rather than the disagreement itself, is what is new.

Conflict within the CofP was also not limited to Christians and atheists, with disagreements among Christians central to the ongoing drama. Different positions and storylines were derived both explicitly and implicitly from the Bible in conflict between Yokeup and christoferL, and both used the Bible to justify positioning both of themselves and others. This positioning evidenced Christian belief about the supremacy of the Bible (Packer, 1978) and the importance of second-order discourses about the Bible in shaping belief about the text (Foucault, 1981, 1982) since the Bible was used to add legitimacy and authority to the positions that users took for themselves from the Bible. The moral authority of the Bible was never questioned by Christians, but the authority *claimed* from the Bible was consistently and constantly questioned. Particularly when malignant positioning based on the Bible's moral authority resulted in impoliteness, Christians responded strongly, attempting to maintain positive views of the Bible and Christianity, while still positioning themselves positively.

Roberts (2006) states that communities of practice represent a social configuration which reflects wider social structures and institutions, a description that my findings support. In Section 7.4, I discussed how Crosisborg's use of 'American white trash' showed that the wider social structures in which the users interacted influenced the way users dominated one another. In the same way, by repeating and extending malignant positioning of Yokeup, users showed that some malignant positions do not necessarily require explanation from the speaker and in particular contexts, users can accomplish malignant positioning by employing conventionalised categories from which others infer a negative position or stereotype. Negative categories from the offline world, and the positionings they represent, are, therefore, also present in the online world.

Malignant positioning on single video pages was successful in that the voice of the user positioned could be effectively silenced. While Sabat (2003) notes that individuals can effectively reposition themselves in response to malignant positioning, on YouTube, users can block others on their video pages through moderation of comments and video responses. The individual who has been affected by malignant positioning must either choose to ignore the malignant positioning or respond on their own video page. None of these options, however, allow the user to respond with an equal voice in the context in which they have been positioned. When users responded to malignant positioning by making response videos, drama developed. Malignant positioning of another user was, however, never completely successful given the lack of restrictions in the YouTube platform (which I discussed in Section 7.4 and in contrast to communities studied by Angouri and Tseliga [2010]) and because no user could deny another's ability continue making videos. There was some evidence that negative evaluations of certain users and attempts to dominate them were successful (Section 7.4), any user always had recourse to make videos on and moderate their own channel. This did not, however, diminish the effect of malignant positioning of users within the CofP whose ability to post comments and make videos without negative response was subsequently limited.

The differences in user positioning showed that users within the CofP had very different perceptions of themselves and their role on the site. While studies into YouTube interaction have described 'YouTube users' or 'YouTubers' (Lorenzo-

Dus et al., 2011; van Zoonen et al., 2011) and Lange (2007a) has described YouTube users based on differences in engagement, the dynamics of positioning show that within interaction on YouTube, different contextual factors influence what position a user may take at any given time and these positions lead to different outcomes depending on the context. Because of this complexity, 'typical behaviour' is difficult to define and suggests that credible analysis of users requires observation and analysis of users over time, in a variety of interactions, something that has not historically been a part of YouTube research.

In Chapter 2, I critiqued Herring's (2004a) definition of 'community' which focused on identifying certain traits and characteristics in virtual communities, suggesting that a CofP approach would likely prove more useful in describing interaction in a free, open online environment like YouTube. Analysis in this chapter showed that users did not describe themselves as members of groups, but rather took positions within the CofP depending on the context. Rather than drama emerging as conflict between pre-existing groups, drama occurred when users positioned themselves and others in conflicting storylines, often in response to the particular discourse activity of another. Although similarities could be observed in the storylines of Yokeup and christoferL, and Crosisborg, philhellenes, and PaulsEgo, Christians did not necessarily group with Christians and atheists with other atheists. User positioning was dynamic and contextual, changing as users appealed to others for support.

In summary, the key findings of positioning analysis were as follows:

- Users understood and described positionings of themselves and others in conflicting ways.
- Users attempted to explain their own apparently contradictory words and beliefs by shifting positionings.
- Users took positions with and against others, but these positions were temporary and shifted depending on the context .
- Malignant positioning prolonged and encouraged drama.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

This chapter began by analysing how Christian users Yokeup and christoferL positioned themselves, and, in particular, how they attempted to make their own words and beliefs understandable in the CofP. I showed how their positioning was made understandable in storylines that were derived from the Bible. I discussed how users did not position themselves as members of particular user groups, but rather took dynamic positions that addressed different users at different times. I then presented analysis of positioning in response to Yokeup's actions and showed how users positioned themselves as protecting others from Yokeup. I discussed how malignant positioning occurred frequently in drama and how users accomplished malignant positioning to devalue the voices of others in the CofP. I discussed how responses to malignant positioning encouraged drama because users were continually attempting to reassert their position in response to others. Finally, I showed how users attempted to limit the voices of others based on stereotypes and biases that extended beyond the CofP.

Having completed metaphor, categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning analysis, in the following chapter, I revisit the research questions presented in Chapter 3 and discuss the findings.

## **9 Discussion & Conclusion**

### **9.1 Introduction**

In the preceding four chapters, I presented analyses of metaphor, categorisation, impoliteness, and positioning to accomplish the research aim of investigating how and why YouTube drama develops, through a systematic description and analysis of user discourse activity. In this chapter, I discuss the findings of analyses in light of the research questions posed in Chapter 3 (p. 71) and a description of the limitations of this thesis. I then offer suggestions for further research before presenting my concluding thoughts.

### **9.2 Overview of Findings**

Doing discourse analysis of YouTube drama after a period of observation, and undertaking systematic analysis of full video pages with more than one method of discourse analysis provided a rigorous description of one drama event. Accounting for micro-level language use on individual pages in terms of macro-level development of drama allowed for the many factors affecting the drama to be identified, described, and analysed. Close qualitative analysis of user communication showed how drama emerged from interactions of contextual factors. On the surface, the reasons for drama in a community of practice (CofP) comprising Christians and atheists with a shared practice of discussing religious issues over the Internet seem obviously rooted in different beliefs and worldviews, and the affordances of de-individuation in computer-mediated communication. Analysis has shown, however, that the complexities of this interaction go beyond theology, group membership, and the use of computers. Instead, the 'human garbage' drama emerged from different responses to a particular situated interaction and was sustained by user attempts to create and sustain social spaces which matched their own beliefs about how the world should be. I now present how my findings relate to the specific research questions I investigated.

#### **9.2.1 Metaphor**

The first set of research questions in this thesis was concerned with the development and action of metaphor use. (Section 3.1, p. 71)



The findings showed that metaphor was used to develop ideas and positions both in opposition to and in support of others through shared metaphor use and metaphor shifting. Metaphor use both shaped, and was shaped by, the social interaction among users. While Cameron's (2010b) work showed how metaphor appropriation and development became an important component of conciliation discourse activity, this research has shown how metaphor use in interaction can also lead to incitement and antagonism in ongoing conflict. Metaphor use describing others as 'garbage' and 'trash' increased distance among users who opposed each other, with insults being repeated and extended when metaphors were developed. Metaphor allowed users to creatively engage in negative descriptions of others and escalate negative evaluations, often in relation to larger narratives both from the Bible and tragic historical events like the Holocaust.

When users told metaphorical stories, they did so in creative and unexpected ways that evidenced not only a simple mapping of the one concept on to another in an 'idealised cognitive model' (G. Lakoff, 1987) or a blended cognitive space (Crisp, 2008), but an acute awareness of others' discourse activity. Metaphorical stories and language drawn from the Bible and the socio-historical context became temporary resources in the CofP. These stories could be stable for specific stretches of discourse activity, or could endure for months, depending on how they were employed. Users did not simply repeat the stories of others—they wove the stories into their own narratives. philhellenes took the burning of branches from John 15 and the story of the Titanic and created his own narrative that cast Yokeup as the enemy and philhellenes as the hero. In a vivid way, this use of metaphor not only expressed philhellenes' own attitude towards Yokeup, but enabled and provoked responses in which others extended and elaborated his story to present their own attitudes and values. The conflict of these values, embedded in arguments and extensions of stories, contributed to the 'human garbage' drama.

Throughout this thesis I have employed terms—'metaphorical stories', 'systematic metaphor', and 'parable'—to describe systematicity in metaphor use in the data. The emergent, dynamic nature of metaphor use in the videos, however, showed the difficulty in applying these terms definitively to describe

what occurred when metaphor was taken from Biblical metaphorical language and animated in discourse activity. Supporting a key assumption of the discourse dynamics approach, which treats metaphor as a 'temporary stability emerging from the activity of interconnecting systems of socially-situated language use and cognitive activity' (Cameron et al., 2009, p. 64), the findings suggest that although different kinds of systematicity in metaphor use may be theoretically distinguishable, in real discourse activity, the distinctions are blurred. Gibbs' (2011) description of the allegorical impulse—*allegoresis*—was a useful starting point, but actual metaphor use around the connection of immediate context to enduring themes occurred in diverse, inter-dependent ways.

Findings also showed how metaphorical language from the Bible permeated discourse activity as users attempted to appropriate its moral authority. In revoicing and extension, the 'word of God' was not only the actual (or literal) words of the Bible, but the extension of metaphors taken from the Bible. Second-order discourses and pastoral power, like the dogma of the institutional church in Foucault's (1981, 1982) work, held the same power as the actual text of the Bible. When users then spoke about the immediate context and the actions of others using Biblical metaphorical language, they attempted to effect change by representing their own desires as those of God, the ultimate authority. When individuals held differing opinions about how Biblical language should be interpreted, a struggle resulted among users to make their own worldview dominant, obscured in arguments about the meaning of metaphors and the Biblical text.

### **9.2.2 Categorisation**

The second set of research questions concerned the use of categories and their effect on interaction. (Section 3.2, p. 71)

Categorisation served as a practical resource to attach negative associations to others and connect the actions of an individual to a category of people. Categories were constructed in discourse activity using the immediate resources of the context, and in their occasioned use, often led to generalisations that inhibited dialogue among opposing users. When a category of people was condemned on the basis of an individual member, arguments

about categories, rather than the rightness or wrongness of their words, developed. In the antagonistic debate, what an individual had said mattered less, ultimately, than whether or not what they said and did was considered a characteristic of the category they represented. In this way, categories, like use of the Bible, obscured debate about social interaction in the CofP and instead encouraged users to take sides in larger arguments about Christian belief or Biblical exegesis.

The dynamic use of categories showed the importance of the immediate context in categorisation and challenged the notion of categorisation devices as decontextualised pre-existing apparatuses, a criticism of Sacks' (1992) work on categorisation made by Hester and Eglin (1997). Categories did not appear to serve as labels for group membership in the way that self-categorisation theory has assumed (Turner, 1985; Turner & Hogg, 1987), but rather were primarily descriptions of individuals and their actions. In this way, categories were given meaning in their use in a particular stretch of discourse activity. Even the conventionalised category 'Christian' took on numerous meanings, but it was always tied to an evaluation, in a particular context with a particular purpose: a feature of categorisation devices emphasised in the reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis (Hester, 1994; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002). Denominational categories were rarely used and category-bound predicates were never abstract beliefs or statements of faith. Instead, category-bound activities were what particular people did at particular times, actions which were evidence of the 'sort of things' that Christians do. Categories were filled with meaning, but they had different meanings at different times.

Analysis of categorisation provided a detailed, micro-level description of categorisation work within discourse activity on video pages. However, how their use was influenced by a broader social context and how the categories were heard and understood by users who were present but did not contribute to the discourse activity could not necessarily be identified using the tools of categorisation analysis. Although categorisation analysis allowed for a description of how the category 'American white trash' was developed in discourse activity, knowledge of the interaction between the socio-historical and local-historical context was essential for understanding the meaning of the term.

Here, the 'common sense stocks' of knowledge crucial to Sacks' (1992) membership categorisation devices are relevant to understanding how a categorisation is accomplished. The empirical evidence in the discourse activity provided some evidence of inference based on 'common sense', but a full analysis of the use of such categories requires the analyst not only to understand the immediate, 'local' discourse context, but also to situate the use in the broader socio-historical context in which the users were interacting, something which is not immediately accessible from the video page.

Users who were categorised in a negative way often responded, attempting to dispute the categorisation, resist stereotyping, and discredit the user who had categorised them. When categorisations were rooted in Biblical metaphorical language, drama further developed into arguments about the meaning of the Bible, with Yokeup and christoferL asserting that each other's categorisation devices were not authoritative because the Bible had been misread. The discourse activity continued like the Talmudic arguments analysed in Billig's (1996) work, with both users attempting to get the 'last word'. This too represented a struggle to assert one's own perception of how the world should be, illustrated in how one read the Bible. In the same way that Christians in Malley's (2004) research used their own experience to interpret and apply the text of the Bible, Christians in this data used that text as a resource for describing and understanding the social world, albeit a malleable one shaped by how a user read it and which parts they chose to emphasise.

### **9.2.3 Impoliteness**

The third set of questions considered how users evaluated the words and actions of others and what impoliteness accomplished. (Section 3.3, p. 71)

Malicious impoliteness was not the only reason for the 'human garbage' drama. Instead, drama was a complex interaction among different contextual factors, and impoliteness was often part of an expression of disagreement and/or response to others, rather than simply a means of entertainment for users disrupting or 'trolling' the CofP. As in previous research into YouTube 'flaming' (Lange, 2007a; Moor et al., 2010), interaction which was considered impolite by some users was not always viewed negatively by others. Different views depended on individual beliefs and expectations, and a single set of social

norms about impoliteness did not emerge. Instead, different user norms and expectations for 'right behaviour' were present alongside one another and frequently led to conflict.

YouTube's technical features also afforded the development of drama by allowing users both to respond quickly to others and to remove their videos if they chose. Users could speak in anger in a retributive response and receive no immediate negative feedback from the individual they were addressing. They could then reformulate their arguments in new videos which were more carefully worded and avoided inflammatory language. The interaction between what the user had said and deleted and the reconstruction of removed videos in discourse activity meant disagreements occurred not only over what was done and said in the past, but also over how past interactions were remembered and reformulated in the present, as in Edwards' (2008) findings about the recovery of 'intentionality' in past events in police interrogations. The reconstruction and reformulation of the initial malicious impoliteness provided content for drama to continue when users attempted to position themselves and others based on memories and experiences of what had been said and done in the past.

This analysis, in the same way as Culpeper's (2011) updated definition of 'impoliteness', downplayed a notion of strategic attack on face, and focused instead on how individuals experienced different situated interaction. Because the CofP contained many opposing relationships between users with dynamic, 'mutually defining identities' (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999) which were conflictual and contrasting, negative responses from opposed users could be seen as signs of 'positive face'. The 'positive face' was not only 'culture-specific' (O'Driscoll, 1996), but, like impoliteness more generally, contextually specific, dependent on who was engaged in the interaction and what their desired response from a particular audience was. Here, my work highlighted Culpeper's (2008) notions of different levels of 'norms' (Section 2.3.2, p. 43) in the conflicts in the CofP between how users expected social organisation and interaction to be, how they wanted it to be, and/or how they thought it ought to be. Users had such different views about what constituted 'right' and 'wrong', and there was little opportunity for social norms, like those observed by Angouri and Tseliga

(2010) in other online CofP, to emerge. Instead, the expectations and beliefs of users were in perpetual conflict.

The definitions of 'face' and 'impoliteness' that I employed throughout the study were, at times, useful in describing interaction, but the complexities of the 'human garbage' drama showed their insufficiencies. In particular, 'face' and 'face-threatening act' did not provide a dynamic enough description of the actual interaction between users which showed nuance beyond Brown and Levinson's (1987) face dualism and O'Driscoll's (1996) elaboration of 'wants' and 'desires' (Section 2.3.1). Instead, my research found that 'malicious' and 'non-malicious impoliteness' were the most useful descriptions of 'impoliteness' because they described both sides in the binary process of impoliteness in interaction. By including both perception and reconstruction of 'intent', my reformulation of the impoliteness forms, taking into account Culpeper's (2011) most recent definition of 'impoliteness', more adequately described how users dynamically perceived and presented their own actions and the actions of others.

Locher's rhetorical claim that 'all impoliteness is about power' (Culpeper, 2008, p. 17) appeared to be true of the 'human garbage' drama. Impoliteness observed in the dataset was often part of an attempt by one user to dominate another. The long history of disagreement in the CofP, however, meant that malicious impoliteness had little effect on changing the content of others' videos and comments. Users instead traded malicious impoliteness back and forth, with each new insult prompting another response. Current malicious impoliteness could be linked to what had been said or done in the past and arguments continued as long as users showed interest in the topic, and ongoing conflict became a characteristic of the CofP.

#### **9.2.4 Positioning**

The final set of research questions was concerned with the positioning of users, and how this affected the development of drama. (Section 3.4, p. 71)

Positionings of Yokeup by atheist users who responded to him, and vice versa, were crystallised in the storylines followed by the users' discourse activity and which represented struggles between 'good' and 'evil' in conflicting ways. Although similar in describing their disagreements in terms of violent struggle,

users often talked about action (such as evangelising others) in contrasting ways. One user described his or her own words and/or actions as 'good' while another called the same action 'bad'. As in Harré's (2003) study of the positions allocated in discourse activity about terrorism, one user's hero was another user's villain; Yokeup's 'sharing the love' (V5:9) was PaulsEgo's 'unadulterated hate' (V6:122). Storylines evidenced how the socio-historical context of conflict between new atheism and Evangelical Christianity (Section 8.4) in which two sides label the other as the true enemy became embedded in the local-historical context of the CofP.

However, malignant positioning (Sabat, 2003) occurred among all users, even Yokeup and christoferL, two self-proclaimed 'believers' who ostensibly held the same views about the Bible and the social world. Both claimed to believe that the Bible was completely true and trustworthy, and both said explicitly that non-Christians were bound for hell. The difference was then not in beliefs they held, but in how they interacted with others and positioned themselves in the social world. These different positions led to different reactions in the CofP to their 'preaching the gospel'. As in Lorenzo-Dus and colleagues' (2009) work showing the importance of interactional response in evaluating impoliteness, the ways in which users positioned themselves and in which others responded to that positioning were central to how others subsequently viewed what they had said or done and whether or not a larger disagreement among users emerged.

Positioning frequently did lead to the development of drama because each new controversy provided a new opportunity for users to assert their own beliefs and attitudes from whichever position was the most advantageous. Shifting positionings meant that users did not talk about struggles in terms of fixed in-group and out-group membership as social identity theory might suggest (Tajfel, 1981, 1983; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), but in terms of the immediate drama context. In contrast to a narrative of atheists and Christians fighting over the hearts and minds of people (Section 7.4), the CofP was not simply comprised of groups of atheists and Christians attacking one another. The actual drama was much more nuanced, with users making concessions and taking hard lines in debates depending on whom they were addressing. When it was advantageous, users would take a position in support of someone they had previously opposed or

oppose someone they had previously supported. As in impoliteness, categories, and the meaning of metaphors, contextual factors influenced user positioning.

In positioning analysis, the real value of Androutsopoulos' (2008) 'discourse-centred online ethnography' and the discourse dynamics approach was evident. By situating the discourse activity of users in a larger context of interaction, the positions that users took were not analysed as isolated acts on individual pages, but part of a larger unfolding narrative in the CofP. Analysis of any individual page included elements that needed to be understood and analysed in the larger context of the interaction among users, particular when considering how the users were employing different resources that emerged in the CofP to position themselves. The perspective of observation showed how patterns of positioning related to the immediate needs of the drama context, what words and/or actions user positioning was a response to, and how it affected the overall development of drama.

### **9.3 *Limitations***

Given the scope of the thesis, analysis of the video image was necessarily backgrounded. The moment-to-moment visual representations of the user, their tone of voice, changes in the video image, and user facial expressions and gesture are potentially rich sources of information about social interaction and communication, and the YouTube video page is filled with potential elements for analysis. From close transcription of intonation to network analysis of commenters' interaction over time, more data could further elucidate the dynamics of interaction. Given the scope and constraints in resources, compiling this information was not possible in the timeframe of the project. Although access to users in this study proved impossible (Section 4.3.1), user reports of their intentions and experience of drama might have provided another useful aspect to understanding how drama developed. The study, therefore, also showed that the contentious nature of YouTube drama can make access to users very difficult and that discourse activity on the video page can provide useful insights about user reports of their own intentions.

Throughout the analysis, the challenges of using YouTube videos as data were apparent. Because of the inevitable fact that some key videos would be



removed, potentially important information about how the interaction developed was liable to be lost. The missing videos highlighted the temporal nature of YouTube interaction, in which content is posted and available only for as long as users and/or administrators allow. Indeed, in all the drama I observed on the site, posting and removing videos was a feature of how the site was used (Section 4.3.2). When videos were frequently taken down, the discourse activity that ensued in their absence, particularly the reconstruction of what a user 'actually meant' or 'intended' in videos which had subsequently been removed proved to be as significant as the initial video. The study showed that potentially lost data can be recovered in part by analysis of subsequent discourse activity.

Closer observations of individual video pages could still be accomplished, noting changes to the video page over time, including changes to text boxes, tags, and titles. Closer observation notes could be useful in following the development of the individual videos pages noting how many views videos received at certain times and when comments were posted. This information would be useful in determining, in particular, to what extent users exercised their power as administrator of their own pages to control comments by seeing which comments were deleted and which remained on the page. These suggestions extend the notion of what could be considered data in research of YouTube interaction, which this study has revealed in its analysis of discourse activity.

#### **9.4 *Suggestions for Further Research***

The different responses to Yokeup and christoferL's 'preaching of the gospel' suggests that less confrontational approaches can lead to positive interaction between opposing users. Further empirical research into the factors explaining and leading to positive interaction between opposed users could better elucidate how and why dialogue can begin and be encouraged to continue. Moreover, positive instances of interreligious dialogue on YouTube could be further investigated, catalogued, analysed, and contrasted with work like this study, with the goal of identifying the factors contributing to how positive and negative interactions differ. Discourse analysis, as I have shown in Chapters 5–8, can be an important resource in identifying exact moments of disagreement between individuals and, coupled with research into conflict resolution, scholars

may be able to identify tools and practices to help individuals overcome disagreements online and move towards more empathetic responses to one another.

The prominence and dynamic use of metaphor in Christian discourse activity about the Bible suggests the potential for further research into whether this was a particular feature of the 'human garbage' drama, or whether Christians in different faith traditions also interact with metaphor in the Bible the same way. The dynamic nature of narrative systematicity in metaphor use also remains a potentially useful area of research, particularly whether or not metaphors taken from the Bible regularly shift to non-religious metaphorical stories in different contexts.

More work could be done in investigating the emergence of social norms on social media sites like YouTube in which users have open access to others and the freedom to engage whomever they please without a gatekeeping mechanism. Findings from this kind of research may then offer suggestions to site administrators about how to implement and improve mechanisms to protect users from negative experiences which lead to account closures or users leaving websites after being harassed. The extent to which this is possible particularly in light of the positive value placed on Internet free speech (and YouTube in particular) (Moor et al., 2010) requires more research before concrete suggestions can be made.

### ***9.5 Concluding Thoughts***

This research has shown how interaction on YouTube both brings users closer together and distances them from each other. Although YouTube allows users with vastly different worldviews to suddenly become virtually present in each other's lives, speaking to the camera is not the same as speaking with another human being. The deindividuation of early Internet communication thus persists on YouTube, despite improvements in technology and lack of anonymity. Drama highlights this dichotomy: two opposing users are only able to interact because of a technology that also enables their interaction to be more confrontational and argumentative than it might otherwise be if they met face-to-face. Users adopt and adapt the technology both to create meaningful

connections they wouldn't otherwise have made in their local context and to perpetuate disagreements with distant 'talking heads'. The technology affords both possibilities and the two are never completely separate from one another.

The empirical study of disagreement among people of different worldviews can help elucidate disagreements, showing where, when, and why discourse activity becomes contentious and leads to larger conflicts. Instead of only viewing arguments between people of different worldviews on the Internet in terms of large issues about differences in theology or philosophy, it is worth learning from the 'human garbage' drama that even big disagreements on the Internet can begin as careless insults, heightened by a medium that separates users. When attention is given to how technology shapes the tone and tenor of disagreement, good things can and do happen. Having done the work of analysing this interaction, my desire is for practitioners to take the lessons learned from this research and effect positive change. There is potential in the simple fact that atheists and Christians are speaking to each other on YouTube.

## 10 Postscript

Given the history of antagonistic interaction within the community of practice, the emergence of drama was not surprising, but the outcome of interaction was not always negative. Near the end of my observation, something quite unexpected occurred. Yokeup and TheAmazingAtheist, arguably two of the most ideologically opposed users on YouTube, made a collaborative video. Both users lived in the Southern US state of Louisiana where in 2003, Hurricane Katrina had devastated much of the coastal region. TheAmazingAtheist had begun to work with a charity organisation in New Orleans to raise money to help rebuild a particularly hard hit section of the city, the Lower Ninth Ward. As part of this money-raising effort, he held a 24 hour broadcast on the live-streaming video site, BlogTV.com, and sought the support of other users, including Yokeup, in raising funds.

On 14 January 2010, one year after the 'human garbage' controversy began, the two met at a truck stop and made collaborative videos in support of the charity (TJdoeslife, 2010, January 17; YokedtoJesus, 2010, January 17). The subsequent dialogue showed the two joking about being the most unpopular atheist and the most unpopular Christian on YouTube, building an affiliation based on their mutual disdain for (and perceived persecution from) the respective 'communities' they are often seen as occupying. No malicious impoliteness occurred in video footage and both seemingly put aside the adversarial personas they had cultivated on their channels. Yokeup praised the work that TheAmazingAtheist did to help charity, agreeing that by meeting together, they were 'going beyond labelling' and 'beyond divisiveness' (TJdoeslife, 2010, January 17) to help one another. Putting aside their differences, both users affirmed that the work of the charity was right and beneficial. By physically 'sitting down together' and speaking face-to-face rather than through a camera, the two presented themselves as united in the shared enterprise of supporting the charity with the shared goal of helping rebuild the place both called home. Yokeup addressed the camera saying that spiritual battles between the two could be vicious and brutal, but that when they sat down at table and 'started talking about things,' he was surprised at how much they had in common.

This positive interaction was not isolated and other relationships with a history of conflict could find temporary stability in harmony rather than discord. There were several other anecdotal instances when Christians, despite publicly stating that non-Christians were going to hell, formed friendships with atheists and worked together to produce joint videos. This also occurred between conflicting Christian users, most notably christoferL and Yokeup who, after several years of opposition, reconciled in 2010. The two were eventually able to put aside their differences about each other's behaviour which they did not always like, and embrace each other as 'brothers'. Indeed, the narrative of conflict was, in most cases, much more intense than the actual conflict between users and it appeared that when given the chance to find common ground and reach past their categorical divides, all users were willing to do so.

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## 12 Appendices

### 1 Video Page Corpus

Videos		
V1	<p><b>yokeup the crackwhore</b>            posted 12/1/2009 by theoriginalhamster            1,889 views, 41 comments 3:32 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usEOTu78FC8">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usEOTu78FC8</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
V2	<p><b>We Can't Choose Our Brothers</b>            posted 13/1/2009 by christoferL            696 views, 41 comments 5:18 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv09vg75iqc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv09vg75iqc</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
V3	<p><b>Yokeup: Poster Boy For Bad Christians</b>            Posted 14/1/2009 by Crosisborg            2384 views, 107 comments 3:31 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpslWW9Vavo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpslWW9Vavo</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
V4	<p><b>Human Garbage...Are YOU? (My Response)</b>            Posted 14/1/2009 by dumoktheartist            178 views, 1 comment 6:59 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smyyp07r0mo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smyyp07r0mo</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
V5	<p><b>YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.</b>            Posted 14/1/2009 by philhellenes            17,510 views, 613 comments, 10:25 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5jzMkHL80">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5jzMkHL80</a></p>	
V6	<p><b>A Spotlight.</b>            Posted 14/1/2009 by PaulsEgo            13,058 views, 266 comments 7:05 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEvsCXHmWuw">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEvsCXHmWuw</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
V7	<p><b>I Was Wrong.</b>            Posted 15/1/2009 by philhellenes            9037 views, 109 comments 5:09 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJctXnFJTt4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJctXnFJTt4</a></p>	
V8	<p><b>Yokeup Reaches New Low (Adult Language)</b>            Posted 19/1/2009 by Crosisborg            6581 views, 168 comments, 4:32 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLmNL5QbpYw">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLmNL5QbpYw</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
V9	<p><b>A Message for sistersunshine</b>            Posted 10/1/2009 by dumoktheartist            340 views, 28 comments 6:53 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSaeX3GZ0pE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSaeX3GZ0pE</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)

## Videos

<b>V10</b>	<p><b>irrelevant</b>            posted 9/2/2009 by Yokeup            638 views, 37 comments 7:34 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DJs141L56k">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DJs141L56k</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V11</b>	<p><b>are YOU garbage in GOD's eyes?</b>            posted 13/2/2009 by Yokeup            2,450 views, 67 comments, 7:02 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fShrXBWn1tl">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fShrXBWn1tl</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V12</b>	<p><b>John 15 for Dummies - Unbelievers are human garbage?</b>            posted 15/2/2009 by christoferL            578 views, 25 comments, 4:54 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAnou0jiOOA">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAnou0jiOOA</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V13</b>	<p><b>John 15:1-8 and Human Garbage Part 1</b>            posted 10/3/2009 by BudManInChrist            293 views, 16 comments, 10:43 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkFI6vCJEk">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkFI6vCJEk</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V14</b>	<p><b>more on...human garbage</b>            posted 17/2/2009 by Yokeup            939 views, 32 comments, 6:03 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR-u0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afgcewnR-u0</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V15</b>	<p><b>I doubt JezuzFreek is saved...</b>            posted 25/2/2009 by Yokeup            2,426 views, 93 comments, 9:54 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAm5HUfSO4U">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAm5HUfSO4U</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V16</b>	<p><b>Straight up....Wolves and Garbage.. call it what it is</b>            Posted 17/3/2009 by Yokeup            524 views, 21 comments, 10:45 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE5FeqjC8s0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE5FeqjC8s0</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V17</b>	<p><b>"Human Garbage" - searing TRUTH</b>            Posted 29/4/2009 by Caroline on the yokedtojesus channel            769 views, 39 comments, 5:31 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVmRr3gstbs">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVmRr3gstbs</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V18</b>	<p><b>YokeUp sculpture - confusion on Human Garbage!</b>            Posted 2/5/2009 by Yokeup            313 views, 14 comments, 9:19 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPoSU6SzkYm">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPoSU6SzkYm</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)
<b>V19</b>	<p><b>absolute human Garbage!</b>            Posted 15/5/2009 by Yokeup            1,403 views, 14 comments, 3:12 running time  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DafJbFm9yxQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DafJbFm9yxQ</a></p>	(IMAGES REDACTED)

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## Videos

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**Re: "Human Garbage" - searing TRUTH**

**V20** Reposted 9/8/2009 (initial posting May 2009) by

gdy50

102 views, 7 comments, 7:21 running time

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFmXbf2AlrU>

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(IMAGES  
REDACTED)

## 2 Text of John 15

<sup>1</sup> I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

<sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

<sup>3</sup> Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

<sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

<sup>5</sup> I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

<sup>6</sup> If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

<sup>7</sup> If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

<sup>8</sup> Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

<sup>9</sup> As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

<sup>10</sup> If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

<sup>11</sup> These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

<sup>12</sup> This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

<sup>13</sup> Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

<sup>14</sup> Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

<sup>15</sup> Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

<sup>16</sup> Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

<sup>17</sup> These things I command you, that ye love one another.

<sup>18</sup> If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

<sup>19</sup> If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because

ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

**20** Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

**21** But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

**22** If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

**23** He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

**24** If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

**25** But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

**26** But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

**27** And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Extracted from the online Bible, Bible Gateway (King James Version):

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2015:1-27&version=KJV>

### 3 Atlas.TI Screenshot

The screenshot displays the Atlas.TI software interface. The main window shows a transcript with time-coded segments. The transcript text is as follows:

0018 [PaulsEgo] you know  
 0019 one of the things I've always found really  
 0020 interesting  
 0021 uh  
 0022 about youtube  
 0023 is that you-  
 0024 you watch the material  
 0025 that people put out there  
 0026 and you react to it  
 0027 and then you can go back  
 0028 and watch video responded to that material  
 0029 and see people reacting  
 0030 in very different ways  
 0031 to that same material  
 0032 um and that of course  
 0033 is what happened today  
 0034 that's why I'm making this video  
 0035 I'm making this video response  
 0036 to a guy named philhellenes  
 0037 who you just heard  
 0038 um  
 0039 he's a guy that I've  
 0040 subscribed to  
 0041 for quite some time  
 0042 1:00 here on youtube  
 0043 uh  
 0044 always makes thought provoking videos  
 0045 always great shit  
 0046 uh  
 0047 I never find myself  
 0048 uh  
 0049 disappointed  
 0050 in a philhellenes video  
 0051 um  
 0052 but I had a  
 0053 very different reaction  
 0054 then he had  
 0055 to the yokeup video

On the right side of the interface, a list of codes is displayed, each with a corresponding colored bar indicating its application to the transcript segments:

- DS
- DT 1A: Self actions
- M find
- m thing
- m material
- m put-
- m there
- m react
- m back
- M go
- m material
- m react
- M way
- m material
- P philhellenes
- DT 3A: Others actions
- m subscribe
- M here
- M on-
- m provoke
- m great
- M shit
- DT 1A: Self actions
- M find
- M in
- m react
- P yokeup/YT/Jjeff/MBHT

The interface also shows a top menu bar with 'P-Docs' and 'Codes', and a bottom status bar with the file path: 6: 090114PaulsEgo A Spotlight.rtf -> <HUPATH>\Dataset\Human garbage\Transcripts\090114PaulsEgo A Spotlight.rtf



## 4 Video Talk Transcription Grid

V5: YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup	
<b>Description</b>	In early January 2009, Crosisborg and Yokeup traded insults, beginning with Crosisborg asserting that Yokeup's wife Caroline was a lesbian. Yokeup responded by calling him human garbage based on his reading of John 15. philhellenes used the audio of that video in his own video entitled 'YouTube's Psychopath: Yokeup.' (V5), contained below to emphasise the most offensive parts of the video Yokeup had taken down. Care was taken, therefore, in considering how the language might have been misrepresented.

IU	Transcript	Metaphor	Categories	Impoliteness
38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50  51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62  63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72	<p><u>end of story</u> .. that's the words this is all <u>red ink</u> man this is all the words of jesus ... now listen to this .. this is what I want you to <u>focus on</u> .. verse &lt;Q if anyone does not <u>abide in</u> me ...1.5) he is <u>cast out</u> as a <u>branch</u> .. and is <u>withered</u> .. and they <u>gather</u> them</p> <p>and they <u>throw</u> them <u>into</u> the <u>fire</u> and they are <u>burned</u> .. if anyone does not <u>abide in</u> me Q&gt; atheists agnostics <u>gays</u> lesbians homosexuals human <u>garbage dumps</u> .. human <u>garbage dumps</u> .. human <u>garbage dumps</u></p> <p>.. atheists agnostics 1:30 <u>gays</u> lesbians homosexuals human <u>garbage dumps</u> .. human <u>garbage dumps</u> .. human <u>garbage dumps</u> &lt;Q if anyone does not <u>abide in</u> me he is <u>cast out</u></p>	<p><u>Red ink</u> as a Bible vehicle highlights that the quote is Jesus' exact words.</p> <p>Focuses on the violent element of the parable, particularly the <u>burning</u> vehicle, but also the condition of not <u>abiding in</u> Christ. Topic of <u>withered branch</u> is he (anyone who does not <u>abide in</u> me), but the topic of human <u>garbage dumps</u> is established as 'atheists, agnostics, gays, lesbians, and homosexuals'</p>	<p>'Anyone who does not <u>abide in</u> Christ' is specifically elaborated as categories of people defined lack of belief in god and non-heterosexual orientation Not <u>abiding in</u> Christ and being <u>burned</u> are both category-bound activities of <u>withered branches</u> in the world of the parable. Through relexicalisation of <u>withered branches</u> to human <u>garbage</u> they are also category bound activities of human <u>garbage</u>.</p> <p>Human <u>garbage dumps</u> is established as a collection of categories including atheists, agnostics, lesbians, and gays. Not <u>abiding in</u> Christ is, by extension, a category-bound activity of all the categories in the collection.</p>	<p>Yokeup does not present the Bible passage as malicious impoliteness, but the words of Jesus that he is repeating and sharing with the viewer.</p>
73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82	<p>as a <u>branch</u> .. and is <u>withered</u> Q&gt; okay .. it's <u>withered</u> it's-it's <u>pruned</u> <u>from</u> the <u>vine</u> it's <u>thrown</u> <u>to</u> the <u>side</u> it <u>dries up</u> it <u>withers</u> .. and it's <u>burned</u></p>	<p>Reference back to the text again re-establishes that the metaphorical language including the relexicalisation is not Yokeup's, but from the text.</p>	<p>Category-bound activities of <u>withered</u> branches are being <u>pruned from</u> the <u>vine</u>, <u>thrown to</u> the <u>side</u>, and being burned.</p>	

IU	Transcript	Metaphor	Categories	Impoliteness
83 84 85 86	you <u>burn</u> <u>garbage</u> you <u>burn</u> <u>garbage</u>	<u>Garbage</u> and the parable vehicles are linked through the use of <u>burn</u> and the assertion that <u>garbage</u> and <u>withered branches</u> are equivalent because they are both things that are <u>burned</u> .	A category-bound activity of garbage is 'being <u>burned</u> '.	
87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95	human <u>garbage dumps</u> .. human <u>garbage dumps</u> .. human <u>garbage dumps</u> you <u>burn</u> <u>garbage</u> ... you <u>burn</u> <u>garbage</u> god is very- god's <u>word</u> is very--	Topic domain of human <u>garbage</u> [ <u>dumps</u> ] redeployed from atheists, agnostics, <u>gays</u> , lesbians, and homosexuals to the generic you, present at the beginning of the video.		
96 97 98 99 100	now you may not like the <u>way</u> I'm saying this you <u>burn</u> <u>garbage</u>			Yokeup is aware of the offensive nature of the <u>way</u> in which he is talking, but attempts to frame the offensive action as non-malicious. He is not intending to be impolite, but it is God's <u>word</u>
101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113	human <u>garbage dumps</u> <@> <@> <@> 2:30 you <u>burn</u> <u>garbage</u> .. human <u>garbage dumps</u> <@> <@> <@> you're gonna be <u>burned</u> just like	Repeated vehicle development: BIBLE (JOHN 15) to VIOLENCE to GARBAGE with <u>burn</u> linking the three groupings and finally positioning you as human <u>garbage</u> .		The generic you remains the topic of human <u>garbage</u> which is inherently negative term
114 115 116 117 118 119	<u>garbage</u> <@> human <u>garbage dumps</u> <@> <@> and-and			
120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131	we're going to continue to proclaim and preach the good <u>news</u> of jesus christ <u>in</u> the <u>way</u> that he talks about it you are <u>cut away from the vine</u> you <u>dry</u> you <u>wither</u> you're <u>burned</u> you're <u>garbage</u> .. you're human <u>garbage</u> it's not me it's god's <u>word</u>	Good <u>news</u> of Jesus Christ and God's <u>word</u> come through preaching and proclaiming, something Yokeup is explicitly doing.		Continues to attempt to present the use of potentially impolite language a proclaiming and preaching the good <u>news</u> , rather than a malicious insult.

## 5 Comments Transcript Grid

Comments developing *MENTAL ILLNESS* vehicles on V5

COMMENT	Metaphor	Categories	Impoliteness
<p>DezzyRayz</p> <p>Honestly I think that this man is <u>crazy</u>. <u>Calling</u> yourself a Christian does <u>in know way</u> <u>make</u> you a good person nor does it <u>give</u> you the <u>right</u> to <u>make</u> yourself as self righteous as this <u>weirdo</u> is behaving. He is <u>filth</u>. I agree with you. I still <u>see</u> nothing wrong <u>with</u> living <u>by</u> a good <u>guide</u> which to me is the ten commandments. Peace. Religious doctrin is different than Christian doctrin.</p>	<p>Redeploys <i>PSYCHOPATH</i> and <i>GARBAGE</i> vehicles with Yokeup as the topic, repeating philhellenes' redeployment.</p>	<p>'Calling oneself a Christian' is not a category-bound activity of being a 'good person', implicitly categorising Yokeup as a bad person.</p>	<p>Repeats philhellenes' insult of Yokeup .</p>
<p>ookami16</p> <p>Human <u>garbage dumps</u>? <u>Look</u> at Yokeup himself, he <u>looks</u> like he <u>eats garbage</u>.</p>	<p>Redeploys <u>garbage</u> as food .</p>		<p>Comically insults Yokeup by suggesting he is fat and unkempt</p>
<p>Largo64</p> <p>I wonder what Caroline thinks when she hears her husband call lesbians "human <u>garbage</u>." Does anyone really believe you can pray <u>away</u> homosexuality? Does she? Only time will <u>tell</u>.</p> <p>One <u>thing</u> is <u>clear</u> about YokeUp, if he thought God had ordered him to he would hack a baby to death, just as Joshua's soldiers did in Jericho.</p> <p>Isn't he some kind of youth <u>counselor</u>? Scary!</p>	<p>The second paragraph contains a potential metaphorical story, but it does not appear that 'hack a baby to death' is meant to be understood in comparison or contrast to another action.</p>	<p>Categories Yokeup's wife as a Lesbian.</p>	<p>Categorisation of Caroline as a Lesbian subverts Yokeup's insults, potentially causing offence to Yokeup.</p>

COMMENT	Metaphor	Categories	Impoliteness
nickrose83 go on phil! i <u>flagged</u> that other vid! the <u>scumbag</u> !	Relexicalisation of <u>garbage</u> to <u>scumbag</u> and redeployment of Yokeup as topic.		Insults Yokeup in the manner as philhellenes.
geffel What a surprise - a <u>born</u> again Christian <u>mental</u> who <u>uses</u> phrases like " <u>share</u> the love" <u>calls</u> decent human beings "human <u>garbage</u> " and he has a gun. What a <u>cunt</u> .	Repetition of Yokeup's metaphorical description of his talk.	Links <i>MENTAL ILLNESS</i> with non-metaphorical violent description (Yokeup does have a gun).	Insults Yokeup with expletive.
Evilenlil Hay must of my family is <u>white trash</u> , i wouldn't refer to most people as <u>garbage</u> as it is <u>usefull</u> and most people are not.	.	Commenter comically self-categorises. Implies that <u>White Trash</u> as a potentially less offensive category than garbage that a user might self-apply.	.
thequantumflux I cannot <u>recall</u> referring to another human being as <u>garbage</u> , there is a certain <u>level</u> of hate involved <u>with</u> associating someone <u>with</u> <u>garbage</u> . To <u>see</u> them as <u>worthless</u> . What an <u>asshole</u> that guy is, and <u>here</u> I was thinking he couldnt be a <u>bigger dick</u> than when he did that <u>fast</u> that wasnt a <u>fast</u> .		The category-bound activities of 'referring to another human being as <u>garbage</u> ' is established for the categories of <u>asshole</u> and <u>dick</u> .	Insults Yokeup using body metaphors.
profglavin This guy is a moral <u>fucking</u> <u>garbage dump</u> . Talks like <u>Travis Bickle</u> . <u>Fucking</u> misanthropic <u>arsehole</u> .	Redeploys <u>garbage</u> to Yokeup, but modifies <u>garbage dump</u> with moral, suggesting that Yokeup is not a <u>garbage dump</u> , but rather his morals are.	Travis Bickle is a character from the film 'Taxi Driver' who is a perceived as a psychopath.	Subverts Yokeup's insult, resulting in thwarted impoliteness by implying that being hated by Yokeup is actually a good thing

COMMENT	Metaphor	Categories	Impoliteness
<p>TruthSurge</p> <p>I've heard of <u>broken records</u> but man... hehehehe hu.. hu... human <u>garbage dumps</u>. hehehe</p>	<p>Repetition of human <u>garbage dumps</u> for comedic purpose and reference back to the way in which philhellenes has edited the video.</p>		<p>Subverts Yokeup's insult through comedy</p>
<p>mordinvan</p> <p>He is. Yokeup <u>calls entire segments</u> of the human population human <u>garbage</u>, like several other individuals throughout history responsible for the deaths of millions. People <u>with</u> attitudes like that are not only wrong but evil, and not only evil, but genuinely dangerous.</p>	<p>Non-metaphorical description of genocide that links Yokeup to actual violence.</p>	<p>Calling someone human <u>garbage</u> is a category-bound activity of violent people implicitly categorising Yokeup as someone who is willing to commit genocide.</p>	
<p>sapperbloggs</p> <p><u>Gays</u>, lesbians AND homosexuals, you <u>say</u>?'</p> <p>Maybe the <u>gays</u> and lesbians that aren't homosexual don't qualify as human <u>garbage dumps</u>?</p> <p>Either <u>way</u>, I'd rather be the actual <u>living</u> definition of a human <u>garbage dump</u>, than be whatever the <u>fuck</u> Yokeup is</p>		<p>Self-categorisation as a human <u>garbage dump</u>.</p>	<p>Thwarts Yokeup's impoliteness through taking on the category.</p>

COMMENT	Metaphor	Categories	Impoliteness
<p>philhellenes</p> <p>You should <u>take</u> the Bible <u>by</u> ALL the words it <u>contains</u> and <u>judge</u> it, and not let it <u>judge</u> you.</p> <p>With no animosity AT ALL, I want you to notice how scripture <u>controls</u> your wisdom. Who <u>attacked</u> whom? I am "<u>attacking</u>" a man for referring to <u>99%</u> of humanity as <u>garbage</u>? In what other scenario, where a non-Christian had said what Yokeup said, would your mind <u>interpret</u> my <u>reaction</u> as an "<u>attack</u>"? Your thoughts <u>have strings attached</u>. <u>Cut</u> them.</p>	<p>Argument around what is or isn't an <u>attack</u> in the YouTube drama and if philhellenes has overreacted with his video. De</p>		<p>Present impoliteness from the Bible as 'non-malicious' since .</p>

## 6 Vehicle Groupings

### Code Families

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HU: PhD (Year Three)  
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\ssp64\My Documents\Dropbox\Academics\PhD\PhD (Year Three).hpr6  
Edited by: Super  
Date/Time: 2012-09-19 15:20:38

#### Code Family: g BODY-FOOD-CLOTHES

Created: 2011-10-06 14:39:26 (Super)

Codes (219): ache addiction anal ankles appendage apples armed arms ass asshole backbone badmouth baloney beef beer beforehand belly bile bitter blackheart blind blink blood bloody blow blow off blow out blow up body bones bowels brain brainwashed breadcrumbs breath breathe brow butt butter button carnal Carrots cheek cheese chew up clap closets cloth clothes clothing coat consume crackwhore crap crave cunt cup cute cure dainty delectable delicious dick disease disgust dish out distasteful doctor dress up drink drivell drunk ear eat embody eye face facepalm fashion fat feed feedback feet fist flavor flesh food foot fruit fucker fuckface giant gnaw grits gummies gut habit hairy hand handle hat head headlock healthy heart hill-of-beans hungry hurt ill knee kool aid lame lap last supper leftover legs levelhead lick limb lip-sync lips loudmouthed lunch marrow meal meat milstone mouth munch muncher neck nerve noodle nose nostrils nut/nutter nutso pain panty peel pig-headed piss piss off pocket poison posture prick ramen redneck reflower regurgitate rubberneck sad salad salt sandwich sate savor sense sewing Shake & Bake shins shirt shoe shoulder sick sicken sickness sicko sideburns skeletons skin Skittles smile snack sober spaghetti spam spew spine spit spit out spoon-fed starving stomach strong style subwhore suck suckerfish sugar sweat sweet tacos tampon taste tears teeth thirsty thrive throat thumb toast toes tongue tongues tooth trauma twinge ugly underfoot unquenchable unrest unsavory vocal voice wig wormfood wound

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#### Code Family: g BUILDING

Created: 2011-10-06 15:16:56 (Super)

Codes (47): architect balance bars base baselessly basic beam block bolts bridge build carpet closet construct cottage door edify establish facade floor fundamental fundie ground hammer home house manmade Masterpiece nail next-door pave pedestal pillar platform room rug screw set up shack shed staircase structure sure tool unfounded wine cellar wrench

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#### Code Family: g BURNING

Created: 2011-10-06 21:59:05 (Super)

Codes (23): Ash Wednesday backfire burn coal coals dammit faggot fire fire up firestorm flames fuel heck hell holocaust immolate roast sacrifice sear smoke smoking smolder toast

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#### Code Family: g COMMERCE

Created: 2011-10-06 14:48:05 (Super)

Codes (42): accountable bailout bankrupt boors business buy cheapen coin company compensate compromise credit deal discredit earn exchange hireling idle industry inherit lend market money monger negotiate pay poor price priceless profit redeem rich salesmen sell sell out solve spend two cents unproductive value worth yield

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#### Code Family: g COMPLETE

Created: 2011-10-12 08:35:36 (Super)

Codes (18): absolute all bit complete entire half measure nice part piece portion proportion quarter section segment total unadulterated whole

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#### Code Family: g CONNECT-SEPARATE

Created: 2011-10-07 11:28:38 (Super)

Codes (58): adhere apart band bunch bundle catalyst chain clump connect contact disconnect disown distinct ditch divide engage fault gap gather gravitate hold off implicate indistinguishable join knit line link lump match meet mix net network notch part (v) paste pull away pull back reconcile relate relationship remix remote repulse run off run out separate sort split stick (v) strain stretch thread through union unite web with

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**Code Family: g CONSTRAINT**

**Created: 2011-10-08 22:03:05 (Super)**

Codes (33): ahold catch clog clutch crowd embrace free freedom grab grasp hold hold back Hold on huggy impression insecurity key let go lock loose overwhelm own ratchet up release repel screen strings tie tight unharnessed unravel ventilate wrap

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**Code Family: g CONTAINER**

**Created: 2011-10-06 16:59:30 (Super)**

Codes (53): access allow bag blanket box bucket can capacity contain cover draw in dropout empty encapsulate enter fill fulfill full get out input in include input inside inside out into inward jump out keep let out lining open open up out outlet outright outside outstanding outward pressure pull put away reach out roll out set out shut shut up stand out sugar take out teflon-coated throw out within

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**Code Family: g DEPTH**

**Created: 2011-10-11 09:43:57 (Super)**

Codes (50): above back up beneath bottom bring down bring up bump up deep depth descend down download downward drop fall fall apart fall away fall out get up heap high hold up incline inferior level low over pile pits put up raise raise in rise spot on subside superior take down top under underfoot underline undermine underneath underpin undertake up upload upon upraise upright

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**Code Family: g DIMENSION**

**Created: 2011-10-11 10:03:01 (Super)**

Codes (40): bent big bulging colossal corner diminish enormous extend fine flat great heavy huge large least length light (weight) little long masses massive mere middle midst moderate obtuse outweigh plain radical short sizable slight small spread out thick tiny ton twisted weight wide

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**Code Family: g DIRTY-CLEAN**

**Created: 2011-10-06 16:27:30 (Super)**

Codes (56): batshit bile cauldron clean cleanse corrupt crud defile dirty disinfectant douche douchebag dredge dumpster dust filter filth flaw garbage garble greenwaste horrible junk kotex mess muck muddy nasty pile pollute puke pure purge rag recycle rubbish scum scumbag sewage shit smear smell smudge spew spoil spout stain stench taint tarnish tinge trash unclean unwashed vile white trash

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**Code Family: g DISEASE**

**Created: 2012-03-08 08:14:43 (Super)**

Codes (8): bile cure regurgitate sick sickness sicko spew spit out

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**Code Family: g FAMILY**

**Created: 2012-03-09 14:42:08 (Super)**

Codes (11): bastard brother daddy descendants familiar family father husbandman motherfucker sister son

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**Code Family: g FEELING**

**Created: 2011-10-06 15:28:43 (Super)**

Codes (21): abrasive adamant bland blunt comfort feel firm fluffy fuzzy gummies hard hardcore harsh plush rigid rough slick soft solid touch tough

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**Code Family: g FOLLOWING-LEADING**

**Created: 2012-03-09 15:43:49 (Super)**



Codes (5): catch up follow follower lead mislead

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**Code Family: g FORM**

Created: 2011-10-07 11:20:49 (Super)

Codes (15): circle compatible construe feature fit form formulate model mold pattern reform shape spiral square suit

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**Code Family: g GAME**

Created: 2011-10-06 21:20:52 (Super)

Codes (20): ball bat bet bingo colors defeat foul game handicap hockey play ploy prize prize race score teamwork trick victory win

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**Code Family: g HOT-COLD**

Created: 2011-10-06 15:03:16 (Super)

Codes (9): ardent chill chill out cold cool heat hot lukewarm warmth

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**Code Family: g LAW**

Created: 2011-10-06 14:51:52 (Super)

Codes (84): accessory accuse advocate agent appeal appear author authority Bush Doctrine campaign case censor challenge charge chastise citizens civil commandment condemn confess confessor convict cop-out crimes cronies defendant dictate disappear discriminate dismiss disservice enslave fraud get off gist guilt jeopardy judge judgement judgment day jury justice justify king kingdom law legislate lord manage master office outlaw penalty perpetrator prejudice prince profess prosecution realm reappear reign royal rule ruler scam sentence servant serve slave steal submit swear teacher testament testimony throne thug tick off trial tutor tyrant valid vote witness

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**Code Family: g LIGHT**

Created: 2011-10-09 18:12:13 (Super)

Codes (18): black blur brilliance clarification clear dark enlighten flashlight glitter halo highlight icon light mirror sparkle splendid spotlight unclear

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**Code Family: g LOCATION**

Created: 2011-10-12 08:20:06 (Super)

Codes (73): across after against ahead alone along alongside among anywhere area around aside away back before behind beside between beyond bias centre close close (v) closeup coast direct direction distance edge end extent extreme far forefront forth forward from front further here limit local lost middle middleground midst near obvious off on opposite opposition parallel place playground position precede prominent right seat side space spot stance straight stranger territory there throughout towards void west world

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**Code Family: G MACHINE**

Created: 2012-03-08 07:46:32 (Super)

Codes (6): dipstick machine maintenance mechanical system tube

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**Code Family: g MENTAL ILLNESS**

Created: 2011-10-06 16:08:55 (Super)

Codes (42): batshit cell certifiable chump commit crazy deranged dumb dysfunctional fool freak freak out fuckwit giddy idiot insane knucklehead kook lunacy lunatic mad MEGLOMANIAC mental moron psychopath psychosis psychotic rabid rave retard sadist sane sanity Santa Syndrome schitzophrenic schizoid sicko sociopath stupid Travis Bickle weirdo yokel

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**Code Family: g MILITARY-WAR**

**Created: 2011-11-08 21:19:05 (Super)**

Codes (28): alarm alliance ballistic banner battle bombs bunker colour dagger dud enemy flag guard hitler mission Nazi parade stance standard strategy sword tactics target war warrior watchman weapons zealot

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**Code Family: g MOVEMENT**

**Created: 2011-10-06 15:37:25 (Super)**

Codes (101): advance approach arrive back away back up backslide bring bring out bumper calm carry carry on carry out catch up come come down come off come on come up course crawl creep creep out depart draw draw back end up fast find find out flee flightless fly follow follower forthcoming get on go go away go down go on guide guideline instigate lead leave misguide mislead miss momentum move move on obstacle pass pass away pass by passage path prompt pursue quick repent return road roll run scare seek seethe sheer shift slow speed up spin start start off start out start over stay stay away step stop by street stumble swift tend trace track trail tramp trend trip trot out turn turn away vanish visit walk wander way wayward

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**Code Family: G NATURAL WORLD**

**Created: 2011-10-06 14:38:43 (Super)**

Codes (165): acid adult alive amber animal ax baby bambi batshit beast beget bill bird bitch born branch brand brat breed bud bug bullshit/BS cat chaff child cockroach coffin cow day dead destiny die dog doves dry earth elder evolution farmers figs fish fleece field flies flock fresh gardener geezer generation generic gnat goat goodies grain grapes grapevine grave grow up grown up growth guts harvest herd infantile Iron Age jewel juvenile kidding lake lamb land leaf life lifelong lion live living log manhood meat mongrel monostrous monster name nature nurture old oldies onion oranges period pig pig-headed plant posies Poster Boy prey primitive prune puddle punk boy puppy pussy rabbit hole rabbit trail rat-bastard raven reap red herring rightwing rock root rose rot sand sap scotsmen seed serpent shade sheep shepherd shine silver skunk sky sliver slug snake sow spade spawn star straw sub-animal supernatural swine tapeworm tare thicket thistles thorns time tree tripe turd unicorn venom vine vine dresser viper viral vital weaner weanie weasel weed whale wheat wild wind wither wolf woods yoke

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**Code Family: g NAUTICAL**

**Created: 2012-03-08 08:16:34 (Super)**

Codes (16): boat captain channel cruiser deck deckchairs harbour life saver lifeboat mate overboard rubber raft sea ship sink titanic

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**Code Family: g NUMBER**

**Created: 2011-10-06 14:41:05 (Super)**

Codes (56): #1 100% 12 180 5/5 6/5 666 90% 99% add calculate class act classic classy code count count out countdown couple degrade disorder equal equation equivocate exact fellow figure figure out last lot major manner million minus negate negative numbers odds order overgeneralise petty plus positive product promote rank rate relegate scale second single out singularity sum up trillion two thirds underestimate

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**Code Family: g OPEN-CLOSE**

**Created: 2012-03-09 15:57:02 (Super)**

Codes (5): close (v) open open up shut shut up

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**Code Family: g OTHER**

**Created: 2011-10-08 22:09:18 (Super)**

Codes (11): affair background belong clue impression job lesson nightmare pornography pose unsaved

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**Code Family: g PHYSICAL ACTION**

**Created: 2011-10-06 14:39:51 (Super)**

Codes (174): abandon abide accept act act out address adjust adopt apply attend ban bask bear become bend bend over brush brush up change chuck compartmentalise condense control convert copy create dampen dance deliver depend dig drag dream drive dump dwell ease up endorse erase escape etch exercise fence-sitting fix flip fuck gain get give give up graft hang hang on hang out haunt have help hide hurl instill introduce invent jump knock label lack laugh launch lay lie lose make morph mull note nudge obtain offer operate overcome paint partake pat pick up pop possess post practically practice produce progress provide pull pull pull away pull back push put rapture reach reach out react read receive reclaim recondition redirect refuse rehash reinforce relief remain remove renew replace replicate rescue rest restore retract rile up save send set settle share shrink shuffle sit sit around sit back sit down sleep slide smell splatter spread spring stand stand up steer stir stoop stop stress strip stroke support survive tag take take away take back take off take up takeover teach toss transfer transformation translate tremble turn out turn over upset use wake up wash waste wield work work up write write off

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**Code Family: g READING-WRITING**

Created: 2012-03-08 08:09:52 (Super)

Codes (11): annotation book letter message board page poster question mark read sidebar subscribe tabloid

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**Code Family: g RELIGION**

Created: 2012-03-08 07:18:02 (Super)

Codes (48): adultery akin barn bible burden church covenant cross cult curse demon diamond dogma end times ghastly godsend holy idol jezebel Jim Jones kumbaya load magic magick up martyr minister plank pour priest promised land prophet pulpit pimp red ink red letters remnant salvation sanctuary saviour sermon speck spirit strength temple unorthodox uplift vessel virgin weak

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**Code Family: g SEEING**

Created: 2011-10-08 22:09:50 (Super)

Codes (59): apparent check contrast convey demonstrate depict discover display examine exhibit expose fade fancy focus ignore illustrate image imagery imaginary look look down look forward look up looks observe outlooks peep perspective picture point point out pointless portray presence present project re-examine recognise reflect remark represent reveal revelation review scrutiny search see show show up sight sign study tunnel vision view viewpoint watch witness wonderful wonders

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**Code Family: g SOUND**

Created: 2011-10-07 11:40:30 (Super)

Codes (22): amplify bang blatant chime in distortion echo harmony listen loud loudmouthed noise record ring roar silence sound soundbite soundtrack squeek sycophancy tone trumpet

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**Code Family: g SPEAKING-HEARING**

Created: 2011-10-08 22:25:11 (Super)

Codes (38): assert avow beg bicker call chat conversation cry cry out gab hear interpret investigate lament message messenger news prattle preach profess ramble rebuke say shout speak speak out speech spokespeople talk tell unspeakable utter vocal voice whisper witness word yap

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**Code Family: g STRENGTH**

Created: 2012-03-08 07:52:43 (Super)

Codes (4): might power strong weak

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**Code Family: g THEATRE-STORIES**

Created: 2012-03-08 07:03:55 (Super)

Codes (14): character clown drama fable fairy perform role scarlett letter shobiz story tagline tragedy troll Withering Heights

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**Code Family: g THING**

**Created: 2012-03-08 07:27:59 (Super)**

**Codes (8):** anything everything material nothing something stuff substance thing

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**Code Family: g TIME**

**Created: 2012-03-08 07:30:50 (Super)**

**Codes (4):** age bronze age clock minute

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**Code Family: g VIOLENT ACTION**

**Created: 2011-10-06 14:54:19 (Super)**

**Codes (106):** abusive aggressive attack backstab banter barbarian bash beat beat up blast bludgeon break break down break off broken bully burn bust call out captive cast challenge chap collapse conflict crack up crush cut damage defeat defend destroy destroyer destruct disturb drown enforce feud fight flay fling force fuck harm hew hit hostile hunt impact inflict kick kill lash lethal nail oppress perish pick pick on picket pluck poke pound protect provoke punch rebel rebuke resist ruin sabotage scratch scream sever shake shatter shock shot shove slam slap slaughter sling smash snip spare strike strike out struggle suffer surrender tantrum tatter threat threaten throw throw away throw out throw up trainwreck trigger twist violence warp wear out whack

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**Code Family: g WATER**

**Created: 2011-11-10 07:17:29 (Super)**

**Codes (23):** boil drench drip flow fluid flush genepool lake mote overflow pool puddle sea source steamer swim swimmer undercurrent water down water up waterboard wave wishy washy





Videos Vehicles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	TOT
stand		2	3		7	4	3	1	1	1	1			1	3				1		28
strength					1	1															2
swine			1																		1
tare													2				3				5
temple															1						1
testament					6	1				1											8
thistles																1					1
thorns																1					1
throne					1																1
tongues										1											1
toss						1											2				3
transformation						1															1
tree					1						1					9	1				12
tyrant					1																1
unclean					1								1		1						3
unsaved			1																		1
uplift					1																1
vessel					1																1
vine				1	4						7	5	6	2		1	1	1			28
vine dresser					2								1								3
virgin												1									1
weak		2			4		1					1									8
weed					1																1
wheat																	1				1
wither					7	1	1				3	4	3	3		2	2	1			27
witness				1			1				2				1		1				6
wolf	1				1				1							42					45
word	2	4	2		23	2	2	1	2	2	9	2	5	5	12	7	3			1	84
work out			1																		1
yoke										3	1										4
TOTALS:	10	103	53	21	33	76	53	51	21	85	171	114	138	98	169	187	66	27	11	10	1794