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## **THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING – REACTIVATION. THE LANGUAGE OF OPPRESSION AS A THREAT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Abstract.** With far right-wing ideologies coming to prominence in both Europe and the USA, we should ask to what extent the process is stimulated by the right-wing media whose discourse is based on Strict Father morality, grounded in the ancient concept of the Great Chain of Being. The application of such morality in politics and politically-biased media leads to the emergence of language of oppression, with the Other being stigmatised just for being the Other. This is seen as a threat to sustainable development, which aims at reducing inequalities based on disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion.

**Keywords:** right-wing discourse, the Great Chain of Being, sustainable development, mass media, Strict Father morality

## **WIELKI ŁAŃCUCH BYTU – REAKTYWACJA. JĘZYK OPRESJI JAKO ZAGROŻENIE DLA ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU**

**Streszczenie.** Nawrót popularności ideologii skrajnie prawicowych po obu stronach Atlantyku skłania do refleksji nad tym, w jakim stopniu proces ten jest stymulowany przez dyskurs prawicowych mediów, których oceny oparte są w dużej mierze na moralności Surowego Ojca. Ideologia ta ma korzenie w starożytnej koncepcji Wielkiego Łańcucha Bytu, na którym miała opierać się wszelka hierarchizacja świata. Zastosowanie takiej moralności w polityce i politycznie nastawionym dyskursie prowadzi do powstania języka opresji, skierowanego przeciwko Innemu, i stanowi zagrożenie dla idei zrównoważonego rozwoju.

**Keywords:** dyskurs prawicowy, Wielki Łańcuch Bytu, zrównoważony rozwój, media, moralność Surowego Ojca

## 1. Introduction

With extreme right-wing ideologies coming back to prominence in both Europe and the USA, one is tempted to ask to what extent the process is stimulated by the right-wing media discourse, whose judgements are based, to a large extent, on what George Lakoff refers to as Strict Father morality<sup>1</sup>. This type of morality is grounded in the ancient concept of the Great Chain of Being, which Lovejoy saw as a force governing the universe across more than two thousand years of western thought, including Plato and neo-Platonism, medieval scholasticism, early modern cosmology, Spinoza, Leibnitz and the philosophers and scientists of the Enlightenment period. According to Lovejoy, European Romanticism saw the Great Chain of Being collapse<sup>2</sup>. However, as more and more people seem to be categorising the world in terms of the Great Chain of Being, the principle is making an unexpected comeback in the 21st century. The application of morality based on the Great Chain of Being in politics and politically-biased media leads to the emergence of the language of oppression, where the Other is stigmatised just for being the Other. Linguistic “separation”<sup>3</sup> prepares the ground for social stigmatisation of such groups as homosexuals, non-catholics, ethnic minorities and even the sick. If so, this kind of language constitutes a threat to the principle of sustainable development as it aims at strengthening, rather than reducing, the inequalities based on disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion. The main goal of this study is to analyse the way the right-wing media in Poland create and profile the “enemies” of the conservative morality, contributing to the promotion of the ideology that once lead, among other atrocities, to the Holocaust in Europe and the rise of the KKK in the USA.

The methodological tools used in the analysis which follows are based on the theory of metaphor as developed within cognitive linguistics, especially by Lakoff and Johnson<sup>4</sup> and the application of this theory in the analysis of political discourse<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. Defining sustainable development

Schmuck and Schultz<sup>6</sup> note that there is growing evidence that the current ecological, economic and social trends are not sustainable and they cannot be continued indefinitely. Hence the need for sustainable development. The concept of sustainability can be traced back to the

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<sup>1</sup> Lakoff G.: *Moral Politics. How Liberals and Conservatives Think*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Lovejoy A.O.: *The Great Chain of Being*. Harper and Row, New York 1960.

<sup>3</sup> Bosmajian H.: *The language of oppression*. University Press of America, Lanham 1983, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Lakoff G., Johnson M.: *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1980.

<sup>5</sup> Lakoff G.: *Moral...*, op.cit.

<sup>6</sup> Schmuck P., Schultz W.P.: *Sustainable Development as a Challenge for Psychology*, [in:] Schmuck P., Schultz W.P. (eds.): *Psychology of Sustainable Development*. Springer Science+Business Media, New York 2002, p. 3.

German forestry, where in the Middle Ages the principle that there should be no more timber harvested than grows again was given the name „Nachhaltigkeit“<sup>7</sup>. The concept was initially translated into English as „sustainable yield“, and later as „sustainability“. In the 1970s, the concept of „sustainable development“ emerged in the context of development in poorer nations, primarily in the Southern hemisphere<sup>8</sup>. At the same time, serious doubts about whether the lifestyle within industrialised nations was compatible with the carrying capacity of the planet began to emerge<sup>9</sup>. In 1987 the Brundtland Commission report was presented to the United Nations, which aimed the concept of „sustainable development“ at a compromise between continued economic growth and environmental protection<sup>10</sup>. Since then the use of the term has often been extended to refer to all kinds of environmental issues and the UN has defined sustainable development as meeting „the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs“.

In September 2015 a new agenda<sup>11</sup> with new goals was announced in UN Headquarters in New York. 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 associated targets were formulated. The new agenda aims at eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, which is seen as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It also reaffirms the importance of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments relating to human rights and international law and it emphasises the responsibilities of all states to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status. It also recognises the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

To achieve sustainability, it is necessary to find methods of understanding and promoting its goals. A multidisciplinary approach, possibly incorporating such branches of science as economics, sociology, psychology, ecology, political science seems necessary. The current study aims at showing how methods used by linguistics, especially Cognitive Metaphor Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis may contribute to the project.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Olson R.L.: Sustainability as a Social Vision. “Journal of Social Issues”, No. 51, p. 15-36.

<sup>9</sup> Schmuck P., Schultz W.P.: op.cit., p. 5; Meadows D.H., Meadows D.L., Randers J.: The Limits to Growth: a Report for the Club of Rome’s Project on the predicament of mankind. Universe Books, 1972.

<sup>10</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>, 09.04.2017.

<sup>11</sup> Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 2015, [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&referer=/english/&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&referer=/english/&Lang=E), 16.02.2017.

### 3. On Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT)

The roots of the Cognitive Metaphor Theory can be traced back to Generative Semantics initiated by John R. Ross and Paul Postal and continued by, among other scholars, Lakoff<sup>12</sup>, which, based on Chomsky's Generative Grammar and Formal Logic, aimed at resolving to what extent syntax depends on semantics. Lakoff rejected the theory altogether at the beginning of the 1980s, claiming that one of the most important discoveries of Generative Semantics was that most of the Syntax made use of Semantics and Pragmatics to determine whether things were grammatical, and also to determine their structure so there isn't really any independent syntax<sup>13</sup>.

The beginning of the new era of the study of meaning was marked by the publication of *Metaphors We Live By* by Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980. Lakoff and Johnson's theory assumes that ordinary, everyday thought and language are structured metaphorically. One of its main assumptions is opposing objectivist approaches to analysing meaning (such as truth-conditional semantics), which postulate the existence of objective truth about the world. Their approach is neither subjectivist nor objectivist – it is interactional as it claims that humans use a set of basic concepts that arise from our direct interaction with the world which are not metaphorical, and then we have metaphorical projections of those to more abstract concepts. The metaphor TIME IS MONEY is an example of how metaphorical expressions in everyday language can give us insight into the metaphorical nature of the concepts that structure our everyday activities. We waste time, something can save us hours, we spend time just like we spend money, something can be worth your while, you may live on borrowed time etc.<sup>14</sup>. Since we act as if time is a valuable commodity – a limited resource or even money – we conceive of time that way. Such an approach is relatively new and it is not typical of all cultures but it is unique to modern industrialised societies.

The title of the book by Lakoff and Johnson (*The Metaphors We Live By*) clearly indicates that Cognitive Metaphor Theory does not see metaphor as just a figure of speech in literary language. This was different in the earlier approaches to metaphor, such as the popular *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* by Leech<sup>15</sup>. There, the use of metaphors is seen as a particular type of linguistic deviation involving the semantic level of language. Leech<sup>16</sup> states that “In poetry, transference of meaning, or metaphor in its widest sense, is the process whereby literal absurdity leads the mind to comprehension on a figurative plane”. If read literally,

<sup>12</sup> Lakoff G.: On generative semantics, [in:] Steinberg D.D., Jakobovits L.A. (eds.): *Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy, Linguistics and Psychology*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1971, p. 232-296.

<sup>13</sup> Pires de Oliveira R.: *Cognitive Semantics: In the Heart of Language*. An Interview with George Lakoff. “Fórum Linguístico”, No. 1, 1998, p. 88.

<sup>14</sup> Lakoff G., Johnson M.: *Metaphors...*, op.cit., p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Leech G.N.: *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. Routledge, London-New York 1969.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 49.

metaphorical statements can be perceived as illogical and absurd. Semino and Steen<sup>17</sup> point out that even though Leech's approach showed a deep awareness of the cognitive functions of metaphor he explicitly focused on metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon and attributed primacy to literary metaphors going so far as to calling non-literary metaphors "dead" ones<sup>18</sup>.

In their book *More than Cool Reason. A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*<sup>19</sup> Lakoff and Turner point out that metaphors are so commonplace that we often fail to notice them. They point out that the way we talk about somebody dying – "He passed away" is not arbitrary. It is also common to use propositions like "He's gone", "He's left us", "He's no longer with us", "He passed on", etc., but we also speak of a baby being "on the way" and "a little bundle from heaven" and we send out announcements of its "arrival". All of these are extensions of conceptual metaphors BIRTH IS ARRIVAL, LIFE IS BEING PRESENT HERE and DEATH IS DEPARTURE. We also conceive metaphorically of purposes and destinations as paths and we say about "going ahead with our plans", "getting sidetracked", "doing things in a roundabout way" and "working our way around obstacles". All of these are instances of conceptual metaphor PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS<sup>20</sup>. The authors claim that the "literal-metaphorical" distinction should be rejected altogether.

It is worth of note that within the Cognitive Metaphor Theory linguistic metaphors (and metonymies) do not constitute the main object of study, but rather they are seen as evidence of mappings at the conceptual level, or are constructed by researchers in order to be used as stimuli in controlled laboratory experiments. CMT has been criticised for citing unspecified sources, largely dissociated from their linguistics co-text and non-linguistic context<sup>21</sup>. According to Steen<sup>22</sup> CMT approach does not take into account that all language is genre-regulated and that people use language "on particular occasions in specific roles, for particular goals, about particular topics, in particular settings, and against background of specific norms and expectations".

Another strand of research on figurative language, often referred to as the "discoursal" strand, is primarily concerned with the description of figurative language in context and it attempts to describe patterns of linguistic (and non-linguistic) metaphor in use in order to arrive at adequate explanatory models. Researchers in this area have explored the ways in which figurative language is used in authentic communicative situations, such as education, politics or business, in order to perform different functions, such as persuading, entertaining, evaluating

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<sup>17</sup> Semino E., Steen G.J.: *Metaphor in Literature*, [in:] Gibbs R.W. Jr (ed.): *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, p. 234.

<sup>18</sup> Leech G.N.: *op.cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>19</sup> Lakoff G., Turner M.: *More than Cool Reason. A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 1989, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Deignan A., Littlemore J., Semino E.: *Figurative Language, Genre and Register*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Steen G.J.: *Finding Metaphor in Grammar and Usage: A Methodological Analysis of Theory and Research*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2007, p. 552-553.

or supporting particular ideologies<sup>23</sup>. In this second tradition, sometimes called “real world metaphor research”<sup>24</sup>, models such as CMT are seen as a possible means, not the end, and language is the main object of study. Such approach is claimed to allow for accounting for all the complexities and indeterminacies of naturally occurring data in context.

Recent years have seen the rise, and growing interest in, cognitive pragmatics, a field of research which deals with “mental processes of communication”<sup>25</sup> or “the general cognitive-pragmatic principles and processes that underlie and determine the construal of meaning-in-context”<sup>26</sup>. If pragmatics is the study of meaning-in-context, then cognitive pragmatics can be broadly defined as encompassing the study of the cognitive principles and processes involved in the construal of meaning-in-context. According to Schmid<sup>27</sup>, it would seem natural that pragmatics as such should have addressed such cognitive issues anyway but it has failed to do so mainly due to the historical rooting of this discipline in the philosophy of language.

A notable approach (which perhaps should also be included in the discursual strand) aiming at refining and updating CMT to include the analysis of corpora is exemplified by *Metaphor and Political Discourse* by Musolff<sup>28</sup>. The author’s extensive work, which studies Europe as a BODY POLITIC (mapping source concepts of the HUMAN BODY onto sociopolitical INSTITUTIONS) analyses the way metaphors shape the structure of political categorisation and argumentation. The concept of BODY POLITIC, similarly to that of the Great Chain of Being, has had a long tradition in political discourse and thought, dating back to antiquity and permutating over the centuries.

#### 4. Manipulative discourse and Iconographic Frames of Reference

Bralczyk, the author of a comprehensive study Polish communist propaganda of the 1970s (1987), notes that manipulative discourse is difficult to trace, much more difficult than an outright lie, because whatever we say we can always claim to be acting in good faith. Vague as the notion of manipulation is, a large body of research exists within linguistics and semiotics

<sup>23</sup> Littlemore J., Low G.: *Figurative Thinking and Foreign Language Learning*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke-New York 2006; Semino E.: *Metaphor in Discourse*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Low G., Todd Z., Deignan A., Cameron L. (eds.): *Researching and Applying Metaphor in the Real World*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Bara B.G.: Cognitive pragmatics: The mental processes of communication. “Intercultural Pragmatics”, vol. 8(3), 2011, p. 443-485.

<sup>26</sup> Schmid H.J.: Generalising the apparently ungeneralizable. Basic ingredients of a cognitive-pragmatic approach to the construal of meaning-in-context, [in:] Schmid H.J. (ed.): *Cognitive Pragmatics*. De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin-Boston 2012, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Musolff A.: *Metaphor and Political Discourse*. Analogical Reasoning in Debates about Europe. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke-New York 2005. See also: Gries S.Th., Stefanowitsch A. (eds.): *Corpora in Cognitive Linguistics*. Corpus Based Approaches to Syntax and Lexis. Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 172. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2006.

but also social psychology, philosophy, anthropology, communication science, argumentation theory, psychology and critical discourse analysis dealing with the problem<sup>29</sup> (including Bralczyk's own work).

One of the approaches to analysing manipulative discourse has been developed within the theory of Iconographic Frames of Reference. According to Hawkins<sup>30</sup>, an iconographic frame of reference is a common model of textural representation which presents simplistic images of our experiences underscoring familiar values which interlocutors in the particular discourse are expected to endorse. He characterises iconographic reference as:

*[A] process [...] with sets of experiences with particular individuals or groups. Any given act of reference must be selective with respect to the information it presents about the referent. In the case of iconographic reference, this selection of information is driven by the desire to invest a significant measure of power in the referent or exercise a significant measure of power over the referent. This is accomplished in a referential process through which discursants' experience of the referent is structured metaphorically by an iconographic image, i.e., a conventionalised semantic unit which is schematic in nature and bears a direct conceptual link to a strong positive or negative value<sup>31</sup>.*

He further argues that if the speaker or writer intends to invest power in the referent, the selection of information he presents is structured by a revered iconographic image, such as HERO. If the speaker's aim is to establish power over the referent, a more scornful image, such as VILLAIN, will be chosen to structure the particular act of reference<sup>32</sup>.

Hawkins<sup>33</sup> also analyses the Third Reich propaganda, where the Great Chain of Being was used a frame of reference when it portrayed Jews as lower parasites. Another frame of reference was used by Hitler when he described Jews as "black parasites". The word "black" gets its oppressive character as a result of Hitler using light/colour spectrum iconographic reference. The source domain here is based on conventional understanding of human bodily experiences with sunlight and the colour spectrum. In this conceptual system pure, unfiltered and unrefracted sunlight is WHITE. When there is no sunlight the colour we experience is BLACK. WHITE is also related to life, as sunlight is necessary for living organisms to thrive. In contrast, BLACK is related to death. This is how the opposition between BLACK and WHITE is

<sup>29</sup> Also see for example: Charteris-Black J.: *Politicians and Rhetoric. The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke-New York 2005; Dirven R., Polzenhagen F., Wolf H.: *Cognitive Linguistics, Ideology, and Critical Discourse Analysis*, [in:] Geeraerts D., Cuyckens H. (eds): *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010; Goatly A.: *Washing the Brain: Metaphor and Hidden Ideology*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam-Philadelphia 2007; Lakoff G.: *Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf*, [in:] Pütz M. (ed.): *Thirty Years of Linguistic Evolution: Studies in Honor of Rene Dirven on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam 1992, p. 463-481; de Saussure L., Schulz P. (eds.): *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, Language, Mind*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam-Philadelphia 2005.

<sup>30</sup> Hawkins B.: *Ideology, metaphor and iconographic reference*, [in:] Dirven R., Frank R., Ilie C. (eds.): *Language and ideology*, vol. 2, *Descriptive cognitive approaches*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2001, p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 41.

established conceptually. The structure of this conceptual system is hierarchical, with WHITE at the top and BLACK at the bottom, with all the other colours of the spectrum being neither higher nor lower than others.

A further example of the use of iconographic frames of reference is discussed by Dirven, Polzenhagen and Wolf<sup>34</sup>. It is a reinterpretation of Lakoff's analysis of metaphors in Gulf war rhetoric<sup>35</sup>. The authors point out that Lakoff<sup>36</sup> invokes the FAIRY TALE frame with a HERO and a VILLAIN, and a VICTIM. He identifies two scenarios instantiating this frame, which were employed in the justification of the war:

1. the Self-Defense Scenario, where Iraq is villain, the United States is hero, the United States and other "civilized" nations are victims, and the crime is a death threat,
2. the Rescue Scenario, where Iraq is villain, the United States is hero, Kuwait is victim, the crime is kidnap and rape.

While the former scenario did not prove to be popular with the American public, the latter, proved more agreeable and was subsequently maintained<sup>37</sup>.

A fairly recent attempt at explaining the nature of manipulative discourse by combining the traditions of Cognitive Metaphor Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis<sup>38</sup> is presented by Musolff<sup>39</sup> who sets out to investigate how metaphor analysis may help to unmask racist ideology in discourse. He proves that manipulation in political discourse is not limited to just 'mapping' source domains on target domains and the study of manipulative discourse should take into account the discursive meaning of metaphors by making use of the findings of Relevance Theory, such as the category of "ad hoc" concepts<sup>40</sup>.

## 5. The Great Chain of Being and Strict Father morality

In his book *Moral Politics*<sup>41</sup> Lakoff discusses the conservative/liberal conflict in America in terms of Strict Father and Nurturant Parent metaphors. The application of these metaphors results in two models of the state. He argues that the conflict is rooted in the application of strictness and nurturance as ideals at the levels of the family, morality, religion and politics. According to Lakoff<sup>42</sup> the application of the conservative worldview based on Strict Father

<sup>34</sup> Dirven R., Polzenhagen F., Wolf H.: op.cit.

<sup>35</sup> Lakoff G.: *Metaphor...*, op.cit.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, p. 466.

<sup>37</sup> Dirven R., Polzenhagen F., Wolf H.: op.cit., p. 1232.

<sup>38</sup> Fairclough N.: *Critical discourse analysis*. Longman, London 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Musolff A.: *The Study of Metaphor as Part of Critical Discourse Analysis*. "Critical Discourse Studies", No. 9:3, 2012, p. 301-310.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, p. 306; Sperber D., Wilson D.: *A Deflationary Account of Metaphors*, [in:] Gibbs R.W. Jr (ed.): *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, p. 102.

<sup>41</sup> Lakoff G.: *Moral...*, op.cit.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 7.



Morality is in danger of breeding a culture of exclusion which makes people stereotype, demonise and punish the Other just for being the Other and has led to the Holocaust, racism, the KKK and numerous military conflicts.

Lakoff discusses the two family-based moral systems: strict father morality and nurturant parent morality. The former constitutes the basis of the right-wing politicians' worldview and the latter is seen as the foundation of the liberal worldview. According to Lakoff "the Strict Father model takes as background the view that life is difficult and the world is fundamentally dangerous"<sup>43</sup>. So survival is our major concern and we should beware of the dangers and evils lurking everywhere.

Strict Father morality is based on the metaphor of Moral Order which is modelled on a folk theory of the natural order which is exemplified by the Great Chain of Being. The natural order is the order of dominance that occurs in the world. Lakoff<sup>44</sup> enumerates the following levels of the natural order hierarchy:

- God is naturally more powerful than people.
- People are naturally more powerful than animals and plants and natural objects.
- Adults are naturally more powerful than children.
- Men are naturally more powerful than women.

The natural power relations are then transformed into a hierarchy of moral authority by means of The Moral Order Is The Natural Order metaphor. The hierarchy we get is as follows:

- God has moral authority over people.
- People have moral authority over nature (animals, plants, and natural objects).
- Adults have moral authority over children.
- Men have moral authority over women.

Those in a position of moral authority also have a moral responsibility for the well-being of those they have authority over, this is why God cares for men. It is through the metaphor of Moral Order that existing power relations are legitimated as being natural and therefore moral. This metaphor also makes social movements like feminism appear unnatural and therefore counter to the moral order. It legitimates certain views of nature, too, e.g. nature as a resource for human use. It also focuses attention on questions of natural superiority within the humankind, e.g. in Nazi morality, Aryans ranked higher in the moral order than Jews and Gypsies. For white supremacists all over the world, whites rank higher in the moral order than nonwhites. For superpatriots, their fatherland ranks higher in the moral order than any other nation<sup>45</sup>.

A very important element of the Strict Father moral system is the principle of Self-Defence. As Strict Father morality comes with strict notions of good and evil, right and wrong, it is the moral duty of all adherents of Strict Father morality to defend Strict Father morality above all

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<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p. 65.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

else. The list of opponents to the system includes: (1) opponents to absolute criteria for right and wrong, (2) opponents to a hierarchical moral order, (3) opponents to free-market economics, (4) opponents to the priority of moral strength.

A natural consequence of the principle of Self-Defense is the antipathy of Strict Father morality toward homosexuality and feminism.

## 6. Towards conservative demonology

The two opposing moral systems that emerge from the discussion presented in the preceding sections could be summarised in the following way<sup>46</sup>:

Conservative categories of moral action:

1. Promoting Strict Father morality in general.
2. Promoting self-discipline, responsibility, and self-reliance.
3. Upholding the Morality of Reward and Punishment.
4. Protecting moral people from external evils.
5. Upholding the Moral Order.

Liberal categories of moral action:

1. Empathetic behavior and promoting fairness.
2. Helping those who cannot help themselves.
3. Protecting those who cannot protect themselves.
4. Promoting fulfilment in life.
5. Nurturing and strengthening oneself in order to do the above.

Applying these categories to one's worldview will inevitably result in the creation in one's mind models of model citizens but also citizens-from-hell, certain anti-ideal prototypes. In the Strict Father morality these nightmare citizens are those who, by their very nature, violate one or more of the conservative moral categories; and the more categories they violate, the more demonic they are. Lakoff distinguishes five categories of conservative demons<sup>47</sup>:

- CATEGORY 1 DEMONS: Those who are against conservative values (i.e. Strict Father morality). Feminists, gay people, and other “deviants” are at the top of the list, since they condemn the very nature of the Strict Father family. Others are the advocates of multiculturalism, who reject the primacy of the Strict Father; postmodern humanists, who deny the existence of any absolute values; egalitarians, who are against moral authority, the moral order, and any other kind of hierarchy.
- CATEGORY 2 DEMONS: Those whose lack of self-discipline has led to a lack of self-reliance. Unwed mothers on welfare are high on the list, since their lack of sexual self-

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem, p. 182-184.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, p. 187-190.

control has led to their dependence on the state. Others are unemployed drug users, whose drug habit has led to their being unable to support themselves; able-bodied people on welfare who are assumed to be lazy and dependent on others.

- CATEGORY 3 DEMONS: Protectors of the “public good”. Included here are environmentalists, consumer advocates, advocates of affirmative action, and advocates of government-supported universal health care who want the government to interfere with the pursuit of self-interest and thus constrain the business activities of the conservatives’ model citizens.
- CATEGORY 4 DEMONS: Those who oppose the ways that the military and criminal justice systems have operated. They include antiwar protesters, advocates of prisoners’ rights, opponents of police brutality, and so on. Gun control advocates are high on this list, since they would take guns away from those who need them to protect themselves and their families both from criminals and from possible government tyranny. Abortion doctors may be the worst, since they directly kill the most innocent people of all, the unborn.
- CATEGORY 5 DEMONS: Advocates of equal rights for women, gays, nonwhites, and ethnic Americans. They work to upset the moral order.

Lakoff expresses the view that Strict Father, based on the Great Chain of Being, requires a view of human thought that is at odds with what we know about the way the mind works as Strict Father morality often finds morality in harm whereas Nurturant Parent morality does not<sup>48</sup>.

## **7. Lemmings and their demonic friends. The case of the Polish right-wing discourse**

In the following sections I would like to show how using the language of a moral or political conceptual system may reinforce that conceptual system. In Poland conservative morality is popularised by such media as a popular right-wing magazines (e.g. “Do Rzeczy”, “W Sieci”, “Gość Niedzielny”) but also right-wing radios, the most powerful of which is Radio Maryja, headed by controversial priest and media mogul Tadeusz Rydzyk. Rydzyk’s media mass also include the “Nasz Dziennik” and a TV station called Trwam. I have analysed the language of an article I found in “Uważam Rze” in 2012, that is three years before right-wing populist’s triumph in the Polish parliamentary elections.

The text I have selected to illustrate the way conservative demons are produced is “Lemming’s ABC”<sup>49</sup> by popular right-wing scribe Robert Mazurek. In his article, Mazurek

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<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, p. 355.

<sup>49</sup> Mazurek R.: Alfabet Leminga. “Uważam Rze”, 9-15.07.2012.

refers to those who adhere to liberal values and especially the supporters of the then-ruling party (Platforma Obywatelska – Citizen Platform) as lemmings, a practice common in Polish right-wing media. To begin with, it is worth of note that by categorising a social group as a lower life form, the right-wing journalist places himself, and possibly his readers, in the morally superior position in accordance with The Great Chain of Being principle, which, as we have observed before, is the basis for the Moral Order metaphor (people are naturally more powerful than animals, plants and natural objects).

His article discusses, in a satirical manner, an alphabetical list of the lemming's attributes and customs, such as Account (Account Manager, a position supposedly lemmings tend to pursue), Apartment Building, Auris (a popular Toyota model), Paulo Coelho, Espresso (at Starbucks), etc. When we get to G, it turns out it stands for "gay". The author claims that gay is the lemming's "upper-class happy friend" who will "make a good facebook friend" and who may "introduce him to someone from the rock group Maanam". If, however, there is no gay around the lemming will have to "make do" with a Jew, lesbian, dope-smoking traditional medicine man, vegetarian or nudist. If none of them are available, an allergic will do.

Homosexuals are the lemming's equals ("friends"). They are morally inferior because their conduct undermines the Strict Father model of the family. In that model a family has both a father and a mother, with the father having moral authority over the mother. This moral order is legitimated by the metaphor that the Moral Order Is the Natural Order. Homosexuality violates the natural order and so it becomes a threat to the moral system so homosexuals belong to CATEGORY 1 DEMONS.

Besides, Mazurek sees Lemmings as upsetting the moral order by being advocates of equal rights for women, gays, and Jews. As such, they must be classified as Category 5 Demons. Gay people, artists, Jews, non-Christians, drug users, vegetarians, nudists and sick people are all lemming's "friends", morally inferior to white catholics<sup>50</sup>.

Rock group Maanam is another demon. As are all artists adhering to artistic traditions that accept or even promote egalitarianism and homosexuality. Members of the group come from the flower power tradition of the sixties and hippies are known for advocating multiculturalism. This is why they belong to CATEGORY 1 DEMONS. As they are also notorious for marihuana use (both hippies and the band) so they also belong to the CATEGORY 2 DEMONS, their drug use resulting from the lack of self-discipline. Such self-indulgence needs to be fought.

The inclusion of Jews is a direct application of Nazi-style frame of reference, where Aryans ranked higher in the moral order than Jews and Gypsies<sup>51</sup>. Non-Christians in general are CATEGORY 1 DEMONS as they are against the moral order of Strict Father by moving off of sanctioned paths and showing others that living by other moral norms is possible.

<sup>50</sup> Lakoff G.: *Moral...*, op.cit., p. 187-188.

<sup>51</sup> Hawkins B.: op.cit.

Vegetarians are also CATEGORY 1 DEMONS. They violate the Moral Order because they question people's moral authority over animals. People are naturally more powerful than animals and plants and natural objects so to abstain from killing and eating them is immoral.

The inclusion of the sick is another dreary act. It suggests that the healthy have moral authority over the sick and is another example of the application of the Nazi version of the Moral Order metaphor, leading us to the conclusion that what on the surface level may be regarded as just an innocent list of lemming's friends is in fact an example of manipulative language suggesting moral superiority of the Strict Father worldview.

## 8. Conclusions and further research prospects in the field

I have analysed just a few examples of how the use of Strict Father morality and the Great Chain of Being as an iconographic frame of reference contributes to promoting a worldview in which the world is basically dangerous and full of all sorts of enemies. This is also a worldview in which moral domination over the Other because of their views or ethnicity is something natural. The recent successes of Donald Trump's presidential campaign and the Polish right-wing coalition as well as less-recent rise to power of Victor Orban in Hungary, show that this is the worldview many people appear to accept. According to Noam Chomsky<sup>52</sup> this tendency can be explained by the fact that almost everybody intuitively categorises the world in terms of the Great Chain of Being. He claims it even happens in the sciences. For example, there is a lot of work in trying to teach apes the rudiments of language but nobody tries to teach humans the rudiments of bee communication. We do it because intuitively we tend to think of the world in terms of the Great Chain of Being and consider apes to be kind of less evolved humans, which is totally false. Just as bees are not less evolved apes as we have all evolved a more or less the same amount of time.

The research results presented in this paper show that categorising the world in terms of the Great Chain of Being makes achieving some of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development more difficult (e.g. Good Health and Well-Being, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities)<sup>53</sup>. As the idea of sustainable development was first applied to cultivating forests, it seems analysing the right-wing governments' discourse on nature and environment could constitute an possible thread of further research in the area, even though it is likely to show the Great Chain of Being as an even more direct reversal of the idea of Sustainable Development.

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<sup>52</sup> Chomsky N.: Beyond Fascism. Noam Chomsky interviewed by John Holder and Doug Morris, <http://chomsky.info/interviews/20130524.htm>, 14.02.2017.

<sup>53</sup> Transforming Our World..., op.cit.

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