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On Zoosemic Tendencies in the Vocabulary of Prison Slang

Abstract

The multifaceted prison slang may be considered to be the linguistic phenomenon which has relatively recently started to attract the attention of various representatives of the linguistic world, such as, for example, semanticists, sociolinguists and those who engage in the development of linguistic anthropology. In the past, prison slang was mainly perceived as a part of the prison subculture, and hence it was discussed as a socio-cultural problem, with little or no emphasis being put on its strictly linguistic features. Not to mention the issue of animal metaphors in prison slang forming a part and parcel of its vocabulary. On the basis of the research carried out by Ciechanowska (2017), related to the problem of zoosemy in prison slang, with special attention being given to animal nouns which either function or—at least—functioned as *thief* synonyms, as well as a group of animal verbs, it was possible to draw some conclusions of both qualitative and quantitative character, regarding the tendencies observable in the mechanism of animal metaphorisation. The apparatus applied in the analysis of the group of selected animal nouns and verbs was based on the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the cognitive approach, probably the most productive framework in lexical semantics, combined with some elements of componential analysis.

Keywords: prison slang, semanticists, sociolinguists, zoosemy, animal metaphorisation.

1. Prison slang research as a target of linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics

In contrast to the well-pronounced opponents of prison slang, who consider it as a pathology of language, and—worse still—a source of language pollution, the linguistic repertoire of prisoners is considered by the majority of sociolinguists as a linguistic phenomenon far from being something to be despised and eliminated. Those who perceive prison slang as the enemy and a devastator of the standard would agree with Gross (1969: 188) who points out that the language we use is: "[…] the nervous system of a society, the means by which people learn what is going on and react appropriately. If an animal's nervous system does not transmit sensations and stimuli, the animal atrophies. If a nation's language decays, the

nation declines." Among others, the opponents of slang, including prison slang, blame informal language varieties for a supposed decline in youth literacy and people's carelessness in the use of language embodied in a light-hearted style of speech frequently adopted in much of written communication, where the rules of writing are repeatedly ignored. Nevertheless, there are no better or worse languages, and there are no pathological languages. There is a multitude of different languages and they invariably determine the way people perceive the world. As pointed out long ago by Sapir (1929: 207): "Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society." It would be an illusion to believe that people adjust to the surrounding reality essentially without the use of language. It would be somewhat ridiculous to believe that language is merely a means of solving certain communicative problems.

In fact, the real world is somehow built up on the language habits of its users. And much the same can be said about prison slang, which certainly may be defined as a language variety different from the common register as far as its words and expressions are concerned, but—at the same time—it provides a medium which helps to ameliorate prisoners' harsh life behind bars. It is also the embodiment of their desire to be different to mainstream society and to identify themselves with the subculture of other inmates and thus either reduce or altogether dispel the excessive seriousness of the situation they have found themselves in. These are, among others, the main reasons why prison slang must be considered not merely as a linguistic, but also a social phenomenon which enables prisoners: "[…] to create a specific internal informal society characterised by the specific behaviour of its members and by a specific communication basis for expressing thoughts" (Szabó 2006: 227-228). In other words, the subculture of prisoners finds its reflection in the language they use; the language that influences the way inmates perceive, value and do what there is to be done.

As we can see, the relationship between the linguistic repertoire of inmates and their culture is complex and complicated, and can hardly be understood without the intervening cooperation of other linguistic subdisciplines, such as, among others, linguistic anthropology, which studies the ways in which language influences social life. To be more precise, the science explores practices of language use and the way they shape patterns of communication, as well as social identity and group membership; issues that are of obvious significance in the study of prison slang. Another subdiscipline that is of crucial importance in the study of prison slang is sociolinguistics, a branch of linguistics which has become an increasingly important and popular field of study. Apart from being concerned with language understood as one of the most powerful emblems of social behaviour, it also attempts to answer the question of why people from different linguistic communities or cultures misunderstand what is meant, said and done. In other words, it explores how sociolects differ between certain groups that are separated by social variables, such as, for example, gender, level of education or religion.

All in all, it is fairly obvious that the study of prison slang must not in any way be limited to the linguistic analysis of word meanings, an issue that is tied to semantics, but rather it requires interaction between different academic allies, since prison slang—similarly to language in general—is not merely used to label objects, activities and features, but it is also a powerful tool for cultural transmission, constructing social reality, expressing feelings and reflecting the attitudes and goals of those who use it.

2. General outlook on prison slang literature

The phenomenon of prison slang has not been the recipient of much attention by students of language or others, although it was already in the 18th century that Victor Hugo—a French poet, novelist and a leading dramatist of the Romantic movement—offered an in-depth literary analysis of this particular language variety. Nevertheless, it was not until relatively recently that the field of prison slang started to attract the attention of the international academic world, represented by such names and works as—to name but a few—Clemmer (1940), Maurer (1940, 1981), Sykes (1958, 1959), Cardozo-Freeman (1984), Gambetta (2009), Hensley *et al.* (2003), Hanser (2013), Morawski (1968a, 1968b), Moczydłowski (1991), Skręt (2004) and Jarosz (2011).

Indeed, one may generalise and say that all the scholars mentioned here touch upon various aspects of prison slang; however, the treatment of the problem is most frequently largely fragmentary since—almost as a rule—selected elements of prison slang are analysed within a larger socio-cultural panorama of related problems. However, we strongly support the point of view of Dziedzic-Rawska (2016: 68) who says: "Analysing language with no account of the socio-cultural phenomena associated with it seems rather facile." Although the number of publications targeted at the phenomenon of prison slang perceived and accounted for as an element of the prison setting—with its linguistic features treated fragmentarily or altogether ignored—is substantial, one may speak of a small number of publications whose sole target is the language of the underworld, such as those of Devlin (1996), Mayr (2000), Einat and Einat (2000), Einat and Livnat (2012), Podgórecki (1973), Stępniak (1973, 1974, 1976, 2013), Oryńska (1991), Miszewski (2005, 2007a, 2007b), Chruszczewski (2011), Obara (2012a, 2012b), Niepytalska-Osiecka (2015), Zarzycki (2015), Piotrowska-Wojaczyk (2016) and Dziedzic-Rawska (2016, 2017).

Even though the number of works whose authors concentrate chiefly on the linguistic repertoire used by inmates is relatively substantial, it is hardly at all possible to chance upon publications that deal specifically with the issue of animal metaphorisation that seems to form a part and parcel of this particular language variety. Among the publications targeted at the problem of metaphorisation in the body of prison slang vocabulary one finds Dziedzic-Rawska (2016), who emphasises the extreme figurativeness of prison slang embodied in, among others, the rich use of metaphor and metonymy, and Schulte (2010: 52)—who stresses the critical importance of metaphorical variation in this particular language variety, pointing out that: "[…] underworld argot is a metaphorical entity itself and hence metaphorical expressions are the norm."

Although the phenomenon of prison slang is sometimes perceived as being pathological and corruptive, or even as a linguistic predator that influences the pristine purity of the standard, it must be admitted that it is a linguistic phenomenon that for various reasons fascinates many linguists of today. First of all, it is a language variety full of bizarre words with outlandish sounding metaphors that are highly creative, and—apart from that—it has the power to add some revolutionary flavour to the standard and to introduce some elements of youth.

3. Aims of the present study

The aim set to the sections that follow is to provide the gist of a fully-fledged study of prison slang titled: *The Phenomenon of Zoosemy in English Prison Slang: A Diachronic Study of thief Synonyms*, coupled with

the publication of similarly aimed papers authored and coauthored by the author, that is Ciechanowska and Kleparski (2015, 2017), Ciechanowska (2015a, 2015b, 2016). The main work delivered in the form of doctoral dissertation scrutinises the historical meanderings of a dozen animal-related lexical items with particular stress on their semantic transfers within the limits of prison slang. On the basis of the analysis of twelve animal nouns, including Old English (henceforth: OE) *crow*, *grasshopper*, *rook*, *snake*, *silkworm*, Middle English (henceforth: Mid.E) *spider*, *pigeon*, *rat*, *dromedary* and Modern English (henceforth: Mod.E) *gopher*, *gorilla*, *shark*, which in the course of their evolution developed human-specific sense or senses, including a thief-specific sense, as well as several cases of English verbal zoosemy which resulted from the combination of the mechanism of metaphorisation and metonymy, as emerging from Martsa's (2013) proposal, and the analysis of parallel developments in Polish nouns which either developed thief-specific sense-threads, or—at least—currently function or functioned at one point in time in Polish prison slang, it is possible to formulate several observations and tendencies regarding the nature of the mechanism of semantic change within the body of animal metaphors in English prison slang.[1]

4. Method and research procedure

In order to arrive at factually justified conclusions it was essential to compare the stages of semantic development of several animal-specific nouns, which at a certain time of their history functioned as synonyms of *thief* in English prison slang, and the analysis was based on the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the cognitive approach relying on the achievements of such researchers as, for example, Kleparski (1996, 1997), Kiełtyka and Kleparski (2005a, 2005b, 2007) and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1996, 1998). The elements of the formal apparatus employed for the analysis, such as *conceptual domains*, *conceptual micro/macrocategories* and *conceptual elements* have been modelled mainly on the basis of Kleparski (1996, 1997) and Kiełtyka and Kleparski (2005a, 2005b, 2007).

As argued elsewhere (see, for example, Janda 1993, 1999, Geeraerts 1987), cognitive linguistics, with its focus on the psychological side, gives us an opportunity to reconnect the threads of the history of linguistics and heal the gashes that marked the field in the 20th century. Such developments are possible due to the ongoing heated polemics and dialogue with other allied disciplines, such as anthropology, neurobiology, motor control, artificial intelligence, philosophy and literary criticism. In effect, cognitive linguistics is in no way an exotic endeavour off on its own disconnected tangent, but rather it should be perceived as a framework that interacts responsibly with a community of academic allies, and—what is of primary importance—as stressed by Geeraerts (2010: xiv): "Judged by the sheer amount of publications, this is probably the most productive framework in present-day lexical semantics." Narrowing the perspective to semantic diachrony, such a strong and versatile cooperation of various disciplines allows cognitive linguists to formulate convincing evidence in favour of the view that semantic change is a cognitively driven mechanism.

Cognitive linguistics perceives metaphor as a central mechanism in language and language analysis, not as a rhetorical device. Indeed, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Lakoff and Turner (1989) developed a theory according to which metaphor is regarded as a much more powerful phenomenon than it was

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1 For the full account of the analysis of English prison slang animal metaphors which at a certain point in the history of their development functioned as synonyms of *thief* see Ciechanowska (2017).

generally held before. Their theory, labelled as the *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*, the fundamental tenet of which is the conviction that metaphor operates at the level of thinking, defines *metaphor* as a conceptual rather than a purely linguistic entity that involves systematic linking between two conceptual domains (henceforth: CDs), and it assumes that the mechanism involved is directional. The analysis of meanings is formulated in terms of entrenched conceptual relationships. Let us now bring under scrutiny the notion of CD, which is understood by Kövecses (2002:4) as: "[…] any coherent organization of experience", while Kleparski (1997:73) defines CD as: "[…] an open set of attributive values with respect to which semantic structures associated with lexical categories are defined and compared." The source domain is perceived by Kövecses (2002) as consisting of a set of concrete, more physical, literal entities, attributes, processes and relationships which are semantically related and stored in the mind. They are expressed in language through linked words and expressions, which are organised in groups resembling lexical sets (or lexical fields). It is this domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand the target domain in terms of the source domain. The target domain tends to be abstract and subjective, and that is why it takes its structure from the source domain by means of metaphorical projection, or conceptual metaphor. As a result, the entities, attributes and processes in the target domain are expressed by means of employing words and expressions drawn from the source domain. These domains are regarded as having relationships between entities, attributes and processes which mirror those found in the source domain.

As understood in Kleparski (1997) and adopted for the analytical goals set to the present paper, one may speak of such domains as, for example, DOMAIN OF ACTIVITY […], DOMAIN OF MORALITY […], DOMAIN OF CHARACTER […] or DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE […]. The operation of metaphor involves the projection between the source domain and the target domain which inhere in long-term memory, thereby creating a new understanding of the target domain.

Kleparski (1997: 79) ventures a general claim when he says that: "It is felt that certain CDs tend to be category-specific, while others tend to enjoy more universal application and are required in the analysis of a number of different categories." Obviously, the universality of different CDs tends to vary depending on the nature of conceptual category analysed. Let us visualise the case in hand with the aid of DOMAIN OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY […], which is universally applied in the analyses of many categories, such as THIEVES, MURDERERS, RAPISTS, and HIJACKERS, to mention but a few. On the other hand, there is DOMAIN OF OBJECTS OF THEFT […], which is conceptually narrower and applicable in the analysis of the microcategory THIEVES, but not in the analysis of the category DRUNKARDS. As a result, DOMAIN OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY […] may be considered as one of the most universally required for the account of a great number of microcategories grouped under the general macrocategory CRIMINALS. In a way, on the other end of the spectrum one may place the DOMAIN OF OBJECTS OF THEFT […] since its involvement is far less frequent. The attributive values presupposed by the CD in question, such as (MONEY), (JEWELLERY), (EQUIPMENT), (CARS), etc. are in no foreseeable way involved in the construal of the semantics of such lexical items as, for example, *murderer*, *rapist* or *hijacker.* Instead, such attributive values are required for the analysis of the semantics of those lexical categories which refer to those who steal, namely *pickpockets*, *burglars* or *robbers.* Obviously, the construal of lexical meaning normally implies the involvement of several conceptual domains. For example, when we look at the conceptual category THIEVES, it turns out that such CDs as, for example, DOMAIN OF MORALITY […], DOMAIN OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY […], DOMAIN OF OBJECTS OF

THEFT […], DOMAIN OF PLACES OF THEFT […] are involved in characterising the essence of the conceptual category in question.

An important issue to raise in this context is the question of whether attributive values display the same level of complexity. As proposed by Kleparski (1997) and Kiełtyka and Kleparski (2005a, 2005b), one may speak of two types of attributive values, that is those that are conceptually simple, e.g. (HUMAN) or (ADULT), and those that are conceptually complex, e.g. (PROFESSIONAL THIEF) or (ONE THAT 'STEALS'). It may be argued that the issue of the complexity of attributive values is somehow related to the essence of the componential framework of linguistic analysis, where semantic components are frequently subdivided into simple and complex ones.

Apart from the question of the internal complexity of attributive values, there is the problem of the axiological charge of those attributive elements that are specified for the attributive paths involved in the account of lexical senses. Here, we may speak of *negatively charged values*, *positively marked values* and *neutral values*, that is those attributive values that are in no way evaluatively loaded (see Kleparski 1997). Among those values with clearly felt negative load one finds the value (IMMORAL) specified for *rat*, used in prison slang in the sense 'a prisoner who steals from a fellow prisoner', and (THIEVISH) specified for *grasshopper*, employed in prison argot to convey the sense 'a common thief who sneaks about watching to get up the stairs'. The attributive value (ONE THAT 'HELPS') may be said to be activated for *crow*, used in prison slang in the metaphorical sense 'a thief's look-out man', and it may be classified as a positively charged value, while *gorilla* marked attributively as (BIG), or *elephant* marked as (SLOW MOVING) are felt and marked as neutral values.

Let us stress that the systematic cross-domain mappings do not involve comparing two domains and identifying similarities. Instead, such metaphorical projections are partial because only selected elements of the two CDs are highlighted, while—at the same time—other aspects of a given concept remain hidden, which has come to be known as *the principle of metaphorical highlighting and hiding*, and which is conditioned by the systematic nature of metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). In other words, one may say that all metaphors both hide and highlight certain aspects of a concept through a combination of the source language used and the relevant conceptual metaphor. Due to the fact that those aspects of a given concept that are inconsistent with a metaphor remain hidden we tend to focus on the most relevant conceptual elements. For example, the battling aspect of arguing is highlighted when we are in the midst of a heated argument, whereas the cooperative element of arguing is hidden. In the words of Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 456): "A portion of the conceptual network of battle partially characterises the concept of an argument, and the language follows suit." Finally, let us stress that the metaphorical projection is always partial because if it were total, one concept would not merely be understood in terms of another concept, but instead it would be another concept.

The issue of categorization plays an important role in the framework since—it is argued—the act of categorisation is one of the most basic human cognitive activities (see Croft and Cruse 2004, Lakoff 1987). It is easy to show that categorisation, which is fundamental in decision making and in all kinds of interaction with the environment and in language, is the process that allows human beings to recognise and understand concepts by means of: "[…] apprehension of some individual entity, some particular of experience, as an instance of something conceived more abstractly that also encompasses other actual and potential instantiations. These concepts are classified into categories based on commonalities and usually for certain purpose" (Croft and Cruse 2004: 74). From the point of view of cognitive approach analysts

often distinguish *macrocategories*, such as, for example, HUMAN BEINGS, ANIMALS and INANIMATE OBJECTS from *microcategories*, such as, for example, PLACES OF THEFT, OBJECTS OF THEFT and VICTIMS OF THEFT, the latter of which are simply quantitatively less capacious conceptual categories.

Apart from the analysis of nominal cases of zoosemy in the body of prison slang, we shall also make an attempt to outline the cognitively couched apparatus applied in the analysis of well-evidenced cases of verbal zoosemy, where lexical items that function as names of animals come to be subject to the process of metaphorisation and metonymic projection, and start to be applied as verbs which denote various actions typically performed by human beings. The methodological framework proposed here is based on the division of animal verbs proposed by Martsa (2013) who distinguishes three main types of English animal verbs, that is verbs related to the motivating animal names through metonymic mappings, verbs related to the motivating animal names through metaphoric mappings and verbs related to the motivating animal names through the combination of metonymic and metaphoric mappings.

As recently proposed by Kiełtyka (2016), the sub-type of zoosemy working in the historical evolution of such verbs may be understood as the combination of the general metaphorical schema rendered as <HUMAN BEING/ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) ANIMAL>, and the metonymic transfer that may be formalised as HUMAN BEING FOR ACTION PERFORMED BY HUMAN BEING. Kiełtyka (2016: 163) points out that this: "[…] sub-type of zoosemy […] may be said to lie on the border between metaphor and metonymy, and hence is either understood as an outcome of a metonymic projection of a sense acquired as a result of a conceptual animal metaphor (GCM), or conversely, metaphorisation is complemented by broadly understood metonimisation."

In what follows we shall concentrate only on those animal verbs which belong to the third category of Martsa's (2013) division, where one observes that the metaphorical sense of the verb is overtly related to the similar sense of the *base noun*[2] which results from bidirectional mapping. Moreover, the metaphorical meaning of the verb can also be understood as the semantic extension of the sense of the corresponding noun. Here, Martsa (2013: 157) makes a strong claim that the senses of such verbs are motivated by metonymic transfer: "[…] whereby the person expressed metaphorically by an animal name stands for the activity typical of that person." For example, if a person is labelled as a *pig*, justifiably or not, he or she is considered to be gluttonous and/or greedy, which makes them seem similar to a real-world pig, and hence the verb *to pig* may be used in the sense of the activity or behaviour typical for such a person who 'eats or appropriates food greedily', as defined in the *OED*. In effect, we observe the working of the conceptual metonymy which may be formalised as: ANIMAL FOR THE ACTIVITY /BEHAVIOUR (PERCEIVED AS) TYPICAL OF ANIMAL.

Verbal zoosemy involves two separate yet related stages of metaphorisation. The analysis of the first stage requires the application of certain elements that belong to the tradition of cognitive linguistics which allows to account for the semantics of the noun from which the mechanism starts, as well as the derived noun, which is in turn subject to the working of metonymy. The second stage—apart from the working of the mechanism of metonymy—also involves the process of morphological conversion which may be analysed with the aid of selected elements from the cognitive semantic approach and the tradition of *conceptual semantics*—developed mainly by Jackendoff (1983, 1990, 2002). The division of the

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2   *Base noun* is understood here as the animal-specific noun from which the discussed verbal sense is indirectly derived. For more on this issue see Ciechanowska (2017).

operation of the conceptual mapping into smaller sub-stages will help us to account for the functioning of the *catalytic converter*, understood as the conceptual location related to the meaning of the base noun from which derivation starts directly, and the noun, labelled here as the *agent noun*,[3] developed from the base noun, indirectly giving rise to the novel verbal sense. Finally, catalytic converter is the element that ties the meaning of the base noun, also labelled as the parent noun, and the verb since it further allows for the metonymic transfer which terminates conversion. The elements of conceptual semantics, in turn, enable us to account for the metonymic mapping.

One of the goals of conceptual semantics is to show how lexical concepts are structured, and—secondly—to explain in what way these structures combine with formal aspects of language. What is of primary importance here is the fact that the components proposed by Jackendoff (1976, 1983, 1990, 2002) are hypothesised to be universal since the ultimate aim is to represent and account for not merely language-specific meanings, but rather the general structure of thought. Jackendoff (2002) argues that all elements of content in the semantics of sentences are found in *lexical conceptual structures* of the lexical items combined to form sentences. And it is the notion of *lexical conceptual structure* (henceforth: LCS) which turns out to be useful in accounting for the catalytic converter, which indirectly triggers conversion. What is of primary importance to our goals is the fact that LCS provides a tool for classifying verbs. Plag (1999) and Lieber (2004) argue that the derivation of different meanings associated with denominal verbs is possible through the formalism of LCS. To start with, semantic forms encode conceptual knowledge in linguistic forms by means of semantic primitives, including CAUSE, BEGIN, BECOME, BE-IN, HAVE-ON, etc.[4] In our account of animal verbs we shall concentrate on examples of those verbs which may be categorised as SIMILATIVE conversion verbs, and hence it needs to be emphasised that they are explicable in terms of SIMILATIVE LCS: BE [base/parent noun], for example, *to gossip*—used in the sense 'to act like a gossip'—may be represented in terms of the SIMILATIVE LCS: BE[gossip], 'to act like a gossip' (see Gottfurcht 2008). It also worth remembering that such verbs may be identified by means of common phrases used in their definitions. The *OED* employs such phrases as *to act as*, *to act like*, *to be*, *to become*, *to behave as*, *to imitate*, *to live as*, *to play* and *to work as* to indicate the cases of SIMILATIVE verbs. For example, *to parrot* is defined as 'to chatter like a parrot', *to dog* is described as 'to follow like a dog' and the definition of *to tiger* is 'to act, behave, or walk to and fro, like a tiger'. When we combine all the elements discussed above into one consistent analytical apparatus, we may try to construe, at least, some of the senses of animal-specific verbs.

5. Analysis

An illustrative case of versatile semantic development—analysed by means of the application of the main tenets of the cognitive approach—may be found in, among others, the case of *crow* used in English prison slang both in various nominal as well as verbal senses. To start with, in the history of English there have

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3   *Agent noun* develops from the base noun and it is understood as the performer of the activity expressed by the animal verb, indirectly giving rise to the novel verbal sense. For more on this issue see Ciechanowska (2017).

4   Relying on the assumptions underlying the notion of LCS we may distinguish several types of conversion verbs, that is: RESULTATIVE, PRIVATIVE, LOCATIVE, INSTRUMENTAL and SIMILATIVE conversion verbs (see Gottfurcht 2008).

been various extensions of the lexical category *crow*. The historically primary sense of *crow*—as defined by major etymological sources[5]—corresponds to OE *cráwe*. According to the body of lexicographic sources used in the analysis, the lexical category in question is akin to Dutch *kraai*, Old High German *chrâwa*, *chrâja/krāja* and Middle High German *kræ/kræje krâwe, krâ/krā*. As evidenced by the *OED*, *crow* entered the English lexicon at the beginning of the 8th century and was originally used in the sense 'a large black bird that feeds upon the carcasses of beasts' (700>1885).[6]

In our interpretation, the historically primary OE sense of *crow* is accountable in terms of an entrenchment link to the attributive path of several CDs, that is DOMAIN OF SPECIES […], DOMAIN OF COLOUR […], DOMAIN OF SIZE […] and DOMAIN OF NOURISHMENT […]. In terms of our methodological tools, the original sense of *crow* one is justified to posit the foregrounding of the value (BIRD) that is implied by the attributive path of DOMAIN OF SPECIES […], as well as the activation of the neutral elements (BLACK) and (BIG), presupposed by the attributive paths of DOMAIN OF COLOUR […] and DOMAIN OF SIZE […], respectively. Simultaneously, one may speak of the actuation of the attributive value (CARCASS) linked to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF NOURISHMENT […].[7]

As evidenced by the *OED*, at the outset of the 17th century (1611>1875) *crow* extended its range of reference and started to serve as a common name for 'hooded, Kentish, or Royston crow; and some other types', the sense which is in current use in English.[8] At the outset of the 15th century, by the process of metaphorical transfer, *crow* came to be applied as a name for different kinds of tools, and—as shown by the *OED*—the lexical item developed a new sense-thread, that is 'a bar of iron usually with one end slightly bent and sharpened to a beak, used as a lever or prise; a crow-bar' (1400>1888). As far as other historical meanings related to the microcategory TOOLS are concerned, the *OED* material documents two other sense-threads of *crow*. The first one, obsolete today, goes back to the second half of the 16th century, and it may be defined as 'something used as an agricultural tool' (1573>1737), while the second one emerged in the middle of the 16th century, when—as shown by the *OED*—*crow* started to be used as a name for 'a grappling hook, a grapnel' (1553>1873). There also existed yet another sense-thread clearly linked to the conceptual macrocategory INANIMATE OBJECTS, namely—as evidenced by the *OED*—the sense 'an ancient kind of door-knocker' (1579>1846). The last two discussed sense-threads remained in the system for a period of about 300 years before they fell out of use in the 19th century.

Let us now turn to the phraseological productivity of the noun. The lexical item *crow* appears in a number of phrases and proverbial sayings, such as—as evidenced by the *OED*—*as black as a crow*, meaning 'pitch black', *the crow thinks its own bird fairest (or white)* used in the sense 'parents' opinions are too doting or partial', *a white crow* used in the sense 'something extremely rare' and *to eat boiled crow* which in American English colloquial speech means 'to be forced to do something extremely disagreeable and

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5   The set of lexicographic sources used for the analysis includes: *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* and *The Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth: *OED*).

6   In the following paper, we shall use the convention of putting the first and the last documented *OED* date of use of a given sense in brackets.

7   This early sense-thread of *crow* emerges from the following *OED* quotations: **a 700** Cornacula, *crauuae.*>>**1885** Crow is common to rook and carrion *crow* alike.

8   For the full account of various shades of this sense see the *OED*.

humiliating' (1297>1970). Other phrases with *crow* as a constitutive element are *to have a crow to pluck or pull (rarely pick) with any one*, used either in the sense 'to have something disagreeable or awkward to settle with him' or 'to have a matter of dispute, or something requiring explanation, to clear up or to have some fault to find with him'.[9] The noun also appears in such idiomatic phrases as, for example, *as the crow flies* which serves the sense 'in a direct line, without any of the détours caused by following the road' (1800>1873), and *to stone* or *stiffen the crows* which originally comes from Cockney and in colloquial Australian English means 'an exclamation of surprise or disgust' (1930>1953).

What is of primary interest here is that in thieves' slang, in the middle of the 19th century—by the process of zoosemic extension—*crow* began its zoometaphoric drift. The novel meaning the word developed at that time may be defined as 'one who keeps watch while another steals' (1851>1862),[10] as documented by the *OED*. A similar definition of the sense is given in Partridge's (1949) *A Dictionary of the Underworld* (henceforth: *DU*), which informs us that *crow*—in the first half of the 19th century—started to serve as a name for 'a thief's (or thieves') look-out man (1839 >1937).[11]

In terms of the mechanism put to work here, the rise of the novel sense in question is accountable for in terms of an entrenchment link to the attributive paths of several CDs, attended by the activation of the neutral attributive value (HUMAN BEING), within the attributive path of DOMAIN OF SPECIES […], the relevant locations (MALE)^(FEMALE), presupposed by the attributive path of DOMAIN OF GENDER […], as well as the highlighting of the conceptually peripheral attributive values (THIEF) and (ONE THAT 'KEEPS WATCH') forming one of the attributive elements of DOMAIN OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY […] and DOMAIN OF FUNCTION […].[12]

The historically primary sense of *crow* is 'a large black bird that feeds upon the carcasses of beasts', as evidenced by the *OED*. In Roman mythology crows and ravens used to be white, and a white crow watched over pregnant Dolphos, and—due to the fact that the crow was sent to bring bad news—Apollo turned it black. However, with respect to the zoosemic extension of *crow* used in the sense 'one who keeps watch while another steals', it is by no means the colour of the bird that matters. What is of primary importance in the case of this sense transfer is the fact that the crow is strongly connected with watchfulness since it has always played the role of a sentinel. At the same time, this is related to the fact that the bird builds its nests high in the trees, which—in turn—enables it to get a better vision or perspective on the rest of their surroundings. Moreover, the bird is also watchful of intruders and predators, and warns other crows and other animals of intruders and other threats. Another characteristic feature of the crow is its voice, thanks to the quality of which it is able to successfully warn other creatures. As a matter

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9   The phrase was formerly used in the form of *to pluck or pull a crow with one or together*' (1460>1849).

10   As found at http://www.writeaprisoner.com/prison-slang.aspx (accessed on 5 June, 2015) this sense-thread is still used in present-day English prison slang.

11   According to *the Dictionary of Slang and Colloquial English crow* used in the sense 'a confederate on watch whilst another steals: generally a man, but occasionally a woman: the latter is also called a *canary*, was still present in English at the beginning of the 20th century (1905). *The Routledge Dictionary of Historical Slang* (henceforth: *RDHS*) provides a similar definition of this particular transfer of *crow*, and derives this extension from the early 1820s. As documented by *RDHS*, in the history of English there developed yet two other human-specific senses of *crow*, that is 'a clergyman', dated to the late 18th century—20th century, and 'a professional gambler' (1805>1840), both of which are obsolete today.

12   The following *OED* quotations illustrate the extended human-specific sense of *crow*: **1851** If anyone should be near, the '*crow*' gives a signal, and they decamp.>> **1862** Occasionally they [women] assist at a burglary—remaining outside and keeping watch; they are then called *crows*

of fact, the sound it makes is characteristic of a loud, strident bird noise that can warn the other members of its clan over a great distance. Moreover, not merely nests built high in the trees, sharp vision, but also its ability to fly is the reason why—as pointed out by Cirlot (1971:71)—the crow: "[…] is considered a messenger."[13] Accordingly, one could go as far as saying that these are probably the natural features of crow that extralinguistically conditioned the development of the zoosemic extension of *crow*, rather than the Roman mythology.

Another sense-thread of *crow*, as evidenced by *DU*, is that of 'a man that attests to the honour of those professional gamblers with whom he works in league' (1805<).[14] In terms of the analytical apparatus employed in this work, we can say that for the novel sense of *crow* the conceptually central value (HUMAN BEING), specified for the attributive path of DOMAIN OF SPECIES [...] is brought to the fore, the negatively loaded attributive value (GAMBLER), specifiable for the attributive path of DOMAIN OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY [...] is activated, as well as the relevant location (ONE THAT 'ATTESTS'), presupposed by the attributive path of DOMAIN OF FUNCTION [...].[15]

Other prison slang senses of *crow* include 'the watch kept by a crow' (1857<) and 'a counterfeit coiners' look out man' (1862<). In prison slang, apart from its nominal sense, the lexical category *crow*— as shown in *DU*—came to be used as an adjective that conveys the sense of something which is 'trivial, mean, poor, worthless' (1914<), or 'not real, no good, a double-crosser (1938<).

What is of equal importance here is the fact that within the body of English prison slang—towards the middle of the 19th century—there surfaced a verbal sense-thread of *crow*, defined in *DU* as 'to act as a look-out man for a gang of thieves' (1846>1936), the sense which is obsolete today as no other lexicographic work documents it.

In order to account for the novel Mod.E sense of *to crow*, one should try to distinguish several distinct stages of the derivation in question. Let us start from construing the semantics of the *base noun*, defined as 'a large black bird that feeds upon the carcasses of beasts' (see the *OED*). The sense of the noun is explicable in terms of the foregrounding of such attributive locations as (BIRD), (BIG), (BLACK) and (CARCASS), specifiable for DOMAIN OF SPECIES [...], DOMAIN OF SIZE [...], DOMAIN OF COLOUR [...] and DOMAIN OF NOURISHMENT [...], respectively. As a result of anthropomorphisation—paralleled by the projection of animals back onto humans, collectively

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13 Bukowick (2004:6) emphasises that: "Crows are important messengers, in the Greek culture as well as in Celtic and Scandinavian societies."

14 The convention of using the left-angle bracket indicates that there is no information about when the sense fell out of use, but it is known that it is obsolete in present-day English.

15 The stock of various senses related to the lexical category *crow* is tremendous. According to *The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English* (henceforth: *RDMASUE*), among the zoosemic sense-threads of *crow* in Am.E slang one finds the offensive sense 'a black person' (1823>1969), 'a mawkish, old-fashioned person' (1945), 'an electronic warfare specialist' in Vietnam war usage (1980), as well as 'an eagle insignia in the US Navy' (1905). As shown in the *OED*, in colloquial New Zealand English, *crow* has come to be applied figuratively to 'a person who pitches sheaves to the stacker' (1888>1956), and—in general slang—as 'a derogatory name for a girl or woman, especially one who is old or ugly' (1925>1957). Other developments of *crow*, documented in the *OED*, include an obsolete extension 'a colour of ore, or of substances in a certain state' (1610<). When used attributively, *crow* denotes 'a poor or impure bed of coal, limestone, e.g. in crow bed, crow chert, crow coal, crow lime' (1789>1852). As shown in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English*, *crow* is also used in the zoosemic sense 'a member of a Native American people, many of whom live in the US state of Montana', and—as pointed out in *Merriam Webster*—*crow* serves as a name for 'a member of an American Indian people of the region between the Platte and Yellowstone rivers'.

responsible for the successful completion of the bidirectional cognitive process of conceptual mapping—one may try to account for the *agent noun*, whose role here is played by *crow*, used in the nominal sense 'one who keeps watch while another steals' (see the *OED*). In terms of the analytical tools adopted here, the semantics of the transferred use of the noun is accountable for in terms of an entrenchment link to the attributive paths of several CDs, attended by the activation of the attributive values (HUMAN BEING), within the attributive path of DOMAIN OF SPECIES [...], the relevant location (MALE)[16] presupposed by the attributive path of DOMAIN OF GENDER [...], as well as the highlighting of the conceptually peripheral attributive value (ONE THAT 'KEEPS WATCH') specifiable for DOMAIN OF BEHAVIOUR AND ACTIVITY [...]. In other words, the analysed sense-thread results from the joint working of several processes which include the substitution of the values (HUMAN BEING) for (BIRD), the backgrounding of the temporarily irrelevant elements (BIG), (BLACK) and (CARCASS), coupled with the transfer of the background element (ONE THAT 'KEEPS WATCH') and the foregrounding of the location (MALE).

As we perceive it, the role of the *catalytic converter* is played by the instinctual trait of the animal in question formalised here as (ONE THAT 'KEEPS WATCH') since this is exactly the conceptual value that connects the meanings of the base noun, the agent noun and the analysed verb. As pointed out in the section devoted to the nominal evolution of *crow*, we may justifiably assume that the stereotypical picture of the bird is strongly connected with watchfulness, and this salient instinctual and behavioural trait of crows has become associated with certain human character and behavioural traits. The mechanism of anthropomorphisation scrutinised here—understood in terms of the general metaphorical schema <HUMAN BEING IS (PERCEIVED AS) ANIMAL>—is followed by the sub-mapping of the relevant anthropomorphised traits of crows back onto human beings, which may be said to complete the process of metaphorisation.

The next stage discernible in the mechanism of derivation of the verb involves metonymic mapping, as a result of which the person labelled metaphorically stands for the activity typical of that person. This may be schematically rendered as: ANIMAL[human-specific sense] FOR THE ACTIVITY / BEHAVIOUR (PERCEIVED AS) TYPICAL OF ANIMAL[animal-specific sense]. Again, this pattern of metonymic mapping may be understood in terms of LCS for SIMILATIVE conversion verbs which allows one to account for the relationship held between the base noun, the agent noun and the activity performed by the agent, and this is possible due to the presence of the catalytic converter. The analysed verb may be placed into the category of SIMILATIVE verbs, and its sense may be explained in terms of the LCS: BE[crow], with a gloss 'to act like a crow'. The relationship between the base noun, that is *crow* used in its animal-specific sense, the agent noun, that is *crow* used in the human-specific sense and the discussed verb *to crow* may be interpreted as 'to act like a crow', that is {(ANIMAL)^(ONE THAT 'KEEPS WATCH')} attributed to a crow, that is {(HUMAN BEING)^(ONE THAT 'KEEPS WATCH')^(MALE)}.

6. Conclusions

Other cases of animal metaphors mentioned in the foregoing have been subject to similar changes and, as a result of these transfers, it is possible to draw some conclusions related to the nature of the mechanism

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16 Note that the female look-out is called a *canary* (see *DU*).

of semantic change taking place in English prison slang within the body of animal metaphors. One of the general observations that may be formulated is one that has been labelled as the feature of *quantitative instability* of prison slang metaphorical resources, which may be related to the fact that prison slang tends to be very ephemeral in nature, and its vocabulary items usually enjoy a short period of functionality for those who use them, and—even more so—for those who want to analyse them. As could be seen, all of the historical synonyms of *thief* which have been analysed, with the exception of *shark*, *spider* and *crow*, fell out of use after a short period of existence, most frequently not long enough for lexicographic works to evidence their short-lived currency in English.

One may venture a claim that the thievish profession is, if not as old as the hills, then at least as old as mankind. However, one of the intriguing observations that emerges from the analysis is that the majority of metaphorical transfers that affected the semantics of the animal nouns used in English prison slang in, among others, senses related to the conceptual microcategory THIEVES, took place within the well-defined time frames of the 16th century—20th century, with the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries being the dominant period of metaphorisation. To be more precise, the earliest thief-specific sense that developed within the body of words analysed in Ciechanowska (2017) was that of *rook*, which appeared already in the second half of the 16th century, and its appearance in English was followed by the rise of one of the thief-specific senses of *dromedary*, which emerged towards the end of the 18th century. Likewise, *shark* started to function as a synonym of *thief* towards the end of the 18th century, while in the first half of the 19th century *crow* surfaced as another historical synonym of *thief*, and its appearance was soon followed by the development of the thief-specific sense of *grasshopper*, the thief-related sense of *pigeon*, as well as *snake* related to the microcategory THIEVES. Chronologically speaking, then there appeared *silkworm* employed as a female-specific synonym of *thief*, the thief-specific senses of *pigeon*, another thief-related sense of *dromedary*, and the relevant sense of *gopher*, which all developed in English prison slang in the second half of the 19th century. Further, in the first half of the 20th century metaphorisation processes yielded a thief-related sense of *spider*, two meanings of *rat*, two relevant senses of *gopher*, the relevant sense of *snake* related to the microcategory THIEVES and the thief-specific sense of *gorilla*.

Another quantitative observation that may be formulated is that a number of zoosemic synonyms of *thief* are etymologically rooted in Anglo-Saxon times, and their number prevails over those words that appeared in the language in each of the subsequent historical stages. More specifically, five out of twelve nouns that have been targeted (*crow*, *grasshopper*, *rook*, *snake*, *silkworm*) go back to OE vocabulary, four nouns (*spider*, *pigeon*, *rat*, *dromedary*) derive from Mid.E, and merely three (*gopher*, *gorilla*, *shark*) appeared in Mod.E times. In this context, one may be tempted to ask why there is such a historical distribution of the synonyms that form the corpus of our analysis; yet it seems that this question can hardly be answered.

The nature of zoosemic transfers taking place in prison vocabulary is interesting in other ways, too. Significantly, the vast majority of thief-specific metaphorical senses are entrenched in the conceptual macrocategory MALE HUMAN BEINGS and hardly at all FEMALE HUMAN BEINGS, with the exception of *silkworm* which at a certain point of its evolution developed the sense 'well-dressed women who visit jewellers' shops, and, under cover of making a purchase, are shown a good many valuable articles of jewellery; they spend a small sum and 'palm' as many articles as they conveniently can'. This observation stands in sharp contrast to the results of earlier work on animal metaphorisation processes which reveals that—as shown by Kleparski (1990, 1997) and Kiełtyka (2008)—such pejoratively charged metaphors

tend to pervade predominantly female-specific vocabulary, at least in standard varieties of English. One may hypothesise that one of the reasons behind this state of affairs is that—extralinguistically speaking—the presence of a female element behind prison walls, though certainly much desired, is scarce to say the least.

More generally, it seems that inmates are prone to coin metaphors for those objects, both animate and inanimate, that are immediately necessary and required, and—above all—close to and available in their daily routine. In other words, one may generalise and say that since male and female prisoners are never detained together their mutual interaction of whatever kind is strictly controlled and limited, and that is why—one may conjecture—the number of female-specific synonyms of *thief* and other criminal professions is largely limited. To focus on the key point of women it remains for sociologists to answer why a large number of female-specific metaphors in prison slang must be qualified as synonyms of *prostitute*, for example, *swinging door*, *flash moll*, *flee bag*, *night hunter* and others.

Though far from being central, the language material targeted in Ciechanowska (2017) has enabled the author to formulate a number of contrastive observations because metaphorical transfers that affected English lexical items in prison slang, as compared to the relevant corresponding vocabulary in Polish, show that the metaphorisation paths in the two languages have been entirely different, with the exception of one of the metaphorical senses of English, *rat*, and its Polish equivalent, *szczur* ('rat'). Generally speaking, the nominal metaphorical senses that serve in prison slang communication in the two languages in no way overlap. For example, *crow*, *rook*, *pigeon*, *snake*, *gorilla*, *rat* and *shark* used in English prison slang all serve as synonyms of *thief*, while in the language of the Polish underworld there are only a few equivalents which may be accommodated within the conceptual microcategory THIEVES, for example, Polish *rekin* ('a shark') and *szczur* ('a rat'). One may say that both English and Polish nouns most frequently convey a different kind of thievish art, or thievish art viewed from a different point of view. Such nouns as *goryl* ('a gorilla') *gawron* ('a rook') and *gołąb* ('a pigeon') are evidenced in the language of the Polish underworld, but we may hardly point to any links between the semantics of theses nouns and the conceptual microcategory THIEVES. At the same time, there are Polish nouns that—in contrast to the corresponding English lexical items—have failed to be affected by metaphorisation in the language of the underworld, such as, for example, *suseł* ('a gopher'), *dromader* ('a dromedary'), *pająk* ('a spider'), *jedwabnik* ('a silkworm') and *konik polny* ('a grasshopper').

Another general observation that may be worded is that more than a half of the analysed nouns—apart from being related to the conceptual microcategory THIEVES—are also conceptually entrenched in the macrocategory INANIMATE OBJECTS in prison usage (*crow*, *snake*, *spider*, *pigeon*, *rat*, *gopher*, *rook*), while the remaining five (*grasshopper*, *silkworm*, *dromedary*, *gorilla*, *shark*) are linked exclusively to the conceptual macrocategory HUMAN BEINGS. What is intriguing is the fact that in English prison slang the majority of non-human-specific senses evolved after the coinage of the thief-specific senses, and this holds true for the semantic evolution of *crow*, *snake*, *spider* and *pigeon*. It seems that this piece of evidence may be interpreted as certifying to certain human-specific centeredness of prison slang zoosemic paths of metaphorisation processes and the structure of the Great Chain of Being, but this conjecture requires verification by large-scale analysis to be of any real value.

Another observation is related to the fact that the majority of animal-specific nouns which underwent the process of zoosemic transfer and started to be used as synonyms of *thief* also developed other human-specific senses in the language used behind prison walls (*crow*, *rook*, *snake*, *spider*, *pigeon*, *rat*,

gopher, gorilla, shark), for example, *shark* developed the sense 'a sharper' in the 16th century, *rook* was also employed in the sense 'a knave' (17th century), *crow*—apart from its thief-specific sense—also started to be used in the sense 'a man that attests to the honour of those professional gamblers with whom he works in league' (19th century), *pigeon* evolved to be used in several human-specific senses, such as 'a dupe' (18th century), 'an informer' (19th century) and 'the best embezzler' (20th century), and the noun *snake*—in the first half of the 20th century—developed the sense 'a crooked individual'. The evolution of *rat* is intriguing because its history abounds in the formation of various human-specific senses, such as 'drunken men or women' (17th century), 'a clergyman' (19th century), 'a spy for the police' (20th century) and 'a policeman' (20th century). Within the time frame of the 20th century, the noun *gopher* started to be used in the sense 'a gangster or other hard character', *gorilla* developed the sense 'a brutal mobster', and *shark*—in the same century—was used in the sense 'a man that sells jobs to tramps'. Among the twelve analysed nouns there are merely three (*grasshopper, silkworm, dromedary*) which remained related exclusively to the conceptual microcategory THIEVES, and hardly at all to any other human-specific conceptual microcategories, not to mention other nonhuman-specific categories.

Yet another observation that emerges is that—contrary to the general tendency of mammals to prevail in the working of metaphors—as pointed out by, among others, Kleparski (1990, 1997) and Kochman-Haładyj and Kleparski (2011)—in prison slang vocabulary related variously to the conceptual microcategory THIEVES one can hardly speak of any metaphorical dominance of this particular class of the animal world. In fact, in the metaphorical evolution of the body of nouns analysed here we find lexical items the primary referents of which belong to the world of mammals, feathered creatures, insects, rodents and reptiles (*dromedary, pigeon, spider, rat, snake*). Unfortunately, at this stage one can hardly provide any definite answers to the question of *why*, and neither do we feel sufficiently justified to formulate any reasonable guesses.

Many historical analyses of metaphorisation processes have been directed at the axiological aspect of lexical categories (see, for example, Kleparski, 1986, 1997), Kiełtyka (2008) and Kochman-Haładyj and Kleparski (2011). The analysis carried out in Ciechanowska (2017) and her earlier works allows to formulate a number of observations on the pejorative nature of several cases of semantic evolution analysed in her works. A relatively well-founded tendency observable within the body of prison slang animal metaphors shows a depreciative direction of the human-specific sense developments. To begin with, being one of the most pervasive manifestations of semantic change, the phenomenon of semantic pejoration substantially prevails over the mechanism of semantic amelioration as far as prison slang animal metaphors are concerned. Consequently, on the basis of the analysis of the body of twelve English prison slang animal nouns and their semantic development one may justifiably conclude that the presence of the positive element is scarce and this tendency regards not merely those senses that function or functioned as synonyms of *thief* in English prison slang, but also those related to other conceptual categories. Interestingly, one may also observe that the axiologically neutral element is relatively limited because it is—in most cases—restricted to the conceptual categories PROFESSIONS and INANIMATE OBJECTS.

It is also worth noting that—apart from the mechanism of zoosemy and the prevailing process of pejoration—the semantic changes that have taken places within the body of English prison slang words serving as animal metaphors are also accompanied by the mechanism of narrowing of meaning, and this tendency pertains to all the analysed sense-threads. Ciechanowska (2017) has found ample evidence

for the claim made long time ago by Malmberg (1969) who pointed out that the words which derive from the standard and enter social language varieties are, not infrequently, subject to the mechanism of narrowing of meaning—and the other way round—those words which jump from social varieties to standard language have a tendency to widen their meaning scope.

The immediate conclusion that emerges from the analysis of verbal transfers affecting animal-specific lexical items in prison slang is that the transfers—scarce as they are—affected primarily those lexical items that have remained in the language for the longest period of time. To be more precise, we have discussed four human-specific verbs which evolved from animal-specific nouns within the limits of Anglo-Saxon times, including two sense-threads developed by the verbs *to crow*, *to rook* and *to snake*. Later, in the analysis of Mid.E data we observe that the working of the mechanism of verbal zoosemy affected such animal-specific nouns as *spider*, giving rise to two human-specific verbal sense-threads, *pigeon*, from which one verbal sense evolved, and verbal *rat*, which—at that time—started to be used in the human-specific sense. In the case of the Mod.E noun *shark*, we singled out two verbal human-specific senses.

The majority of verbal senses are related to the language of the underworld. To be more specific, during their semantic shift such animal-specific verbs as *to crow*, *to rook*, *to snake*, *to pigeon*, *to rat* and *to shark* developed seven crime-specific verbal meanings, and there are merely two sense-threads which are hardly related to the language of the underworld, and these are the two sense-threads of *to spider*. These verbal senses of *spider* may be said to be exceptional in yet another way. Namely, the verbal crime-related senses of *to crow*, *to rook*, *to snake*, *to pigeon*, *to rat* and one sense-thread of *to shark* all developed immediately after the transfer of the corresponding prison slang nouns which—in our terminology—served as agent nouns. Significantly, the time span between the transfer of these agent nouns, and the transfer of the relevant verbs was no longer than fifty years. In contrast, somewhat exceptionally, one of the verbal sense-threads of *to shark* took over a hundred years to surface in English prison slang, while the chronology of the two verbal sense-threads of *to spider*, in no way related to the language of the underworld, is hard to determine in this respect since it can in no way be proved when the relevant agent nouns were coined.

Another striking observation relates to what may be termed as *verbal longevity* of animal-specific verbs since—in contrast to zoosemically transferred thief-specific nouns, the majority of which are no longer used in prison slang—at least five out of the nine verbal developments that have been analysed here remain in the system of language, either in standard variety or in prison slang (two senses of *to rat*, two senses of *to spider* and the sense of *to pigeon*). This observation raises the question of the possible causes behind the relative verbal longevity of the products of animal metaphorisation processes over the relatively short-lasting life of the animal metaphorisation processes that affected those nouns.

All the observations and conclusions outlined in the foregoing notwithstanding, Ciechanowska (2017) is fully aware of the fact that her analysis has left many problems and issues partially answered or unanswered, and it remains to be hoped that the analyses undertaken in the future will provide more answers to more questions and problems. The problem of verbal zoosemy—one of the greatest challenges undertaken in Ciechanowska (2017)—has been dealt with only to a limited extent, because we have merely concentrated on a single group of animal verbs, namely those which appeared in the system of the English language as a result of the combination of the metaphorical and metonymic transfers, as viewed by Martsa (2013). To be more precise, the cognitively couched apparatus developed in the work allows us to analyse and describe the stages of the development and the resultant meaning of only those verbs whose evolution was conditioned by the two metaphorisation mechanisms. It must be admitted that in

order to be applied to other categories of animal verbs, the tools developed here may require further elaboration and refinement.

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