

SHALA BARCZEWSKA
Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce

Communicating Conflict: Language of “War” in Tennessee’s Struggle with Evolution

Abstract

The debate over teaching evolution in the US is often construed in terms of a metaphorical war. As the conflict first drew national attention with the 1925 trial of John T. Scopes in Tennessee, and again returned to Tennessee in 2012 with the passage of a science education bill, we believe that analyzing the language used to describe these events will improve understanding of how this conflict is communicated. Our analysis draws on the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) and suggests that participants on either side of the debate view the conflict according to a “just war scenario” (1991). This construal intensifies the moral weight of the conflict, making compromise and dialogue more difficult. The introduction outlines the history of the conflict, which is followed by a description of research conducted to date. section 3 explains the questions addressed in the paper, section 4 presents the conceptual metaphor theory, and section 5 describes the materials analyzed. The results are divided into two parts: section 6.1 looks at articles from the 1920s; section 6.2 looks at articles from 2012. Discussion of the results can be found in section 7 and is followed by ideas for future research.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, semantic domain, discourse analysis.

1. Introduction

The conflict over teaching evolution in the U.S. first became a significant issue in American state legislatures and courthouses in the 1920s. Up until that time, the teaching of evolution in school science books was not only decidedly pro-evolution, but also supported aspects of social Darwinism (cf. Hunter 1914; Larson 2006: 27–28). US legislatures also seemed to accept the societal implications of the theory and eugenics bills were passed across the states beginning in 1907. As a testament towards the reception

of evolution at the turn of the century, White (1896: 85–86) comments in *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*:

But all this opposition may be recoded among the last expiring convulsions of the old theological theory...the old theory of direct creation is gone forever. In place of it science has given us conceptions far more noble and opened the way to an argument for design infinitely more beautiful than any ever developed by theology.

However, the victory hailed by White was premature. Opposition to the theory of evolution, particularly the evolution of man and it being taught to impressionable children, increased after WWI. Historians Ronald Numbers and Edward Larson attribute this to a reaction against the horrors caused by the new weapons developed during the war (Larson 2006: 40; Numbers 1998: 73).¹ Laws were drafted in several states in the 1920s. The third “anti-evolution” bill to pass was the Butler Act in the state of Tennessee, which forbid teaching that man evolved from lower animals (other types of biological evolution were allowed). This was the first bill to pass that included a punishment; hence, the first bill to offer the opportunity to test the law. Indeed, it did not take long for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to offer free defense counsel for any teacher willing to do just that. The leaders of the town of Dayton, Tennessee, saw an opportunity to improve the economic situation of their town through hosting a test case that would hopefully draw national attention and business. At a meeting in the local drugstore, they convinced math and physical education teacher John Scopes, who also substituted occasionally in the biology class, to “confess” to having taught human evolution from Hunter’s (1914) *Civil Biology*.

Before long, two well-known personalities volunteered their services: William Jennings Bryan for the prosecution and Clarence Darrow for the defense. Reporters flocked to the scene and it was the first trial to be broadcast live on radio. The town, and the trial, quickly took on a circus-like atmosphere. One of the reporters that played an important role in constructing the way the outside world viewed the trial was H. L. Mencken of *The Baltimore Sun*, who is said to have coined the phrases “Monkey-Trial” and “Bible Belt.”² Both terms have influenced current views of both the debate over evolution education and the way the US South is viewed (*cf.* Barczewska 2014b, 2017). It is because these construals were so successful that, although Scopes was convicted, the trial is often used as a pro-evolution argument and hence a public relations victory. Nevertheless, many contemporaries on both sides viewed it to be the exact opposite: after the trial, Bryan was immediately on the road campaigning for similar bills and references to evolution were removed from textbooks for the next 30 years.

Tennessee has remained at the center of the debate over evolution, both in a physical and rhetorical sense. The Butler Act stayed on the books until it was repealed in 1967, and later trials related to the teaching of evolution have been framed by the press to as Scopes II (*Epperson v. Arkansas* [1967–1968], *McLean v. Arkansas Board of Education* [1981], *Edwards v. Gaillard* [1987]).

In 1996, Tennessee again became a focal point of the debate over teaching evolution when legislators proposed a bill that forbade the teaching evolution as a fact (as opposed to a theory) in the public schools.

1 This concern is also visible in Bryan’s arguments discussed in this paper.

2 According to *The Baltimore Sun* (<http://www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/sun-magazine/bal-pictures-baltimore-sun-and-reporters-make--002-photo.html>), Mencken used both phrases for the first time during the Scopes Trial. However, other sources suggest that Mencken used the “Bible Belt” in an earlier article published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on November 19, 1924 (Shapiro 2006: 512). The phrase “Monkey Trial” can be found as early as *The Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune* on May 22, 1925.

The attempt failed, and in 2011 a different approach was used. This legislation (proposed as Senate Bill 983 / House Bill 368) shifted the focus to emphasizing critical thinking skills. After acknowledging that subjects such as “biological evolution, the chemical origins of life, global warming, and human cloning, can cause controversy,” the bill states that teaching these subjects may cause a certain amount of uncertainty among teachers.³ As a result, it decrees that governing or school authorities “shall ... create an environment ... [that] encourages students to explore scientific questions, learn about scientific evidence, develop critical thinking skills, respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about controversial issues.” Moreover, are the teachers to be given help in fulfilling this requirement. At the same time, the bill clarifies: “This section only protects the teaching of scientific information, and shall not be construed to promote any religious or non-religious doctrine.” It is important to highlight the contents of the bill and draw attention both to its emphasis on “scientific questions” and “scientific evidence,” and its limits, specifically, that no religious material can be used. Repetition here is necessary as the actual reporting on the bill either ignore or doubt the sincerity of these points (Tennessee 2012).⁴

2. Related work

Analyses of the debate over evolution education are numerous and discuss multiple aspects of the debate (*cf.* Barczewska 2017). Here I will mention a few of those publications that have specifically addressed either the Tennessee context or the language used to discuss the conflict. Among others, both Numbers and Larson (2006), mentioned above, provide balanced reviews of the 1925 Scopes Trial and its modified retellings through history. The language used by the proponents and opponents of evolution has been discussed in detail by Smout (1998). He analyzes key terms different stages in the debate and determines that the problem is not so much the vocabulary available to the participants, but the way in which these words are defined. Of these terms, Thurs (2007) focuses specifically on the development of the current understanding of what is/is not science, arguing that the boundaries frequently placed on science, specifically as regards the evolution debate, are relatively recent developments that were discursively created at the turn of the 20th century. When it comes to the specific context of evolution education in the state of Tennessee, McCune (2003) provides an in-depth analysis of the framing used to report on the 1996 bill and comments on how media and stake holders influence each other in the creation of these frames. In her study, she notes that MONKEY TRIAL and SCOPES are among the frames used, thereby exemplifying the discursive role that the 1925 trial continues to play in contemporary construals of debates over how to teach evolution. Press construals of teachers in press in the context of the 2012 bill can be found in Barczewska (2013), whereas the role of metaphor and metonymy in the headlines for these news stories is presented in Barczewska (2014a). A monograph by the same author (Barczewska 2017) provides a broader analysis of the language used by the US press in describing debates over evolution education and includes reporting from 2003–2012 as well as the era of the Scopes trial.

3 This uncertainty, it can be assumed, would come from teachers who fear criticism from parents or colleagues, either for teaching evolution as true on one hand, or avoiding it on the other (*cf.* Barczewska 2017: 272–274).

4 According to the discovery institute, similar bills have been passed several states across America, including Minnesota, New Mexico, Alabama, Pennsylvania, Missouri, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana (Discovery Institute 2016).

3. Construing science debates as WAR (problem statement)

42

As suggested by the title of White's book cited from above, doubts concerning the veracity of Darwinian evolution are often recast as a battle between religion and science. In order to better understand the frequency of this construal, a search was conducted on *Google Books Corpus* (Davies 2011–) for the phrases “warfare between science and theology” and “warfare between science and religion.” The results show that this way of perceiving science and religion is still salient in English literature (Figure 1). It also suggests that the phrase, if not the concept itself, become more entrenched in popular culture after the publication of the *Origin of Species* (1859).

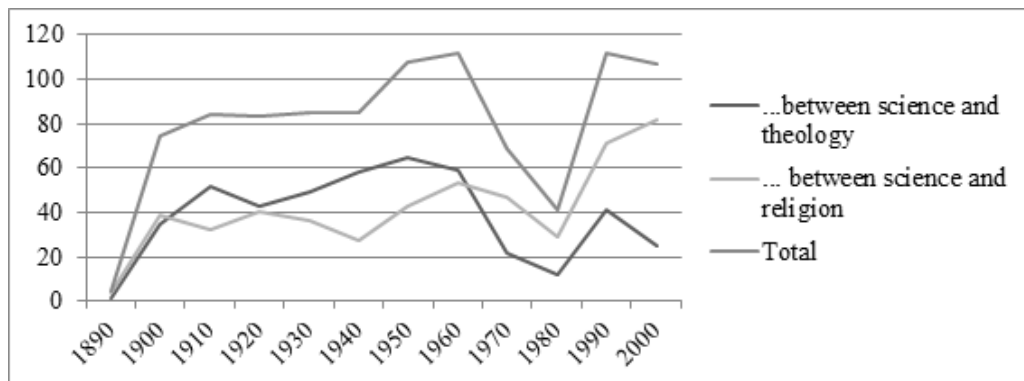


Figure 1. Google books raw numbers

Moreover according to Google N-grams, “religion” and “theology” are the only completions to the phrase “warfare between science and...” frequent enough to be included in its graphic representation. Figure 2 shows the same data in terms of percentages.



Figure 2. Google books percentage of warfare between science and... (<https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph>, ED 13.03.2017)

We checked this observation against the data available in *COHA: the Corpus of Historical American English* (Davies 2010–). A preliminary review of the data indicates that the war/science/religion connection was more common within academic writing and books than newspapers, which suggests that this construal is not merely a journalistic attention-getter. Moreover, while the notion of a potential conflict between the two disciplines is mentioned as early as the 1820s, it becomes more prevalent post Darwin.

- (1) In like manner, only pious men of distinguished science can be fully prepared to encounter those who turn science **against** religion. (academic; Green 1822)
- (2) It is reasonable to anticipate this change, because the **old battle** between religion and science, which placed each in a false position, must come to an end. (academic; Buchanan 1856)
- (3) Folly has its uses, and child’s play is beneficial. The **war** between science and religion must go on forever. **Reconciliation** is simply impossible. That proposed by Herbert Spencer is in effect an absolute **surrender** on the part of theology. (fiction; Bagby 1874)

The first use of “war” to connect these terms given in the corpus is the work of fiction from 1974. That said, the concept is presented as a common knowledge, something that the readers would have been aware of. Hence, it can be assumed that the idea, even if not frequently lexicalized, was present in late 19th century thought. This accomplishes two rhetorical purposes: first, it marginalizes dissenting scientists; then, it recasts them as people nurturing superstitious beliefs that hold them back from modern, rational thought.⁵

WAR seems to be a frequently used source domain when it comes to describing the relationship between science and religion. The theory of evolution, as model for the development of life without supernatural involvement, seems to have further dichotomized the relationship between the two disciplines. Thus, a viable explanation is in the frame of struggle that is at the foundation of the theory of evolution, which is confirmed by its sudden appearance after the Origins. This was visible in fiction and nonfiction (*cf.* Bagby 1874; White 1896) well before the trial of John Scopes. However, in American history and lore the Scopes trial plays a crucial rhetorical role in debates over teaching evolution, particularly in construing the debate as a battle. Moreover, this construal as a battle continues to the present day. This paper sets out to describe how elements of war are mapped on to the debate and how these mappings have changed from the 1920s to the 2012 to describe relevant events in the state of Tennessee. We will look at the following questions:

1. Who are the heroes/villains, the aggressors, and the victims?
2. Where are the battlefields?
3. Has the construal of the debate over evolution as a war changed from 1925 to 2012? If so, how?

4. Conceptual metaphor theory (concept and terms)

The conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provides a framework for understanding and analyzing the almost clichéd construal of religion and science, and their various subsidiaries, in conflict. Thus, before continuing with the analysis we will briefly review the theory and its application for this project.

In their seminal book, *The Metaphors We Live by*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphorical expressions follow certain patterns and can be grouped and organized within a schema of

5 Stark (2003, Ch. 2) argues that the science–religion dichotomy is a rhetorical device that can be traced back at least as far as Hobbes, but is not grounded in historical fact. On the contrary, “Christian theology was essential for the rise of science” (p. 123).

conceptual metaphors. Table 1 gives some examples of lexical metaphors and the conceptual metaphors they explicate. As in the table, conceptual metaphors are expressed in all caps.

Table 1. Examples of conceptual metaphors and their lexical realization (Lakoff & Johnson 1980a: 455, 463, 469–470)

Conceptual metaphor	Lexical expressions
GOOD IS UP/BAD IS DOWN	<i>Things are looking up. We are at an all-time low.</i>
LIFE IS A GAME OF CHANCE	<i>I'll take my chances. The odds are against us</i>
IDEAS ARE FOOD	<i>What he said left a bad taste in my mouth. I just can't swallow that claim.</i>
THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS	<i>The theory needs more support. The argument is shaky.</i>
ARGUMENT IS WAR	<i>He attacked every weak point in my argument. I've never won an argument with him.</i>

The last conceptual metaphor, ARGUMENT IS WAR, is central to this research project. Lakoff and Johnson (1980b: 4) comment :

It is important to see that we don't just talk about arguments in terms of war. We can actually win or lose arguments. We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent. We attack his positions and we defend our own. We gain and lose ground. We plan and use strategies. If we find a position indefensible, we can abandon it and take a new line of attack. Many of the things we do in arguing are partially structured by the concept of war. Though there is no physical battle, there is a verbal battle, and the structure of an argument—attack, defense, counterattack, etc.—reflects this. It is in this sense that the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor is one that we live by in this culture; it structures the actions we perform in arguing.

That said, WAR is not the only source domain used by English speaker to talk about disagreements. The same table also points to BUILDINGS as a source domain for the theories discussed in an argument. Moreover, Ritchie (2003) suggests that the source domain we are accessing is often less clear. For example, the word *won* from the example could just as easily refer to a game of chess as to a military battle. Additionally, Lakoff and Johnson highlight that academic disputes can sometimes take on a different metaphorical construal. For instance, they can be described using the THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS conceptual metaphor, also in Table 1. Alternatively, they may be construed as a JOURNEY undertaken by the disputing parties. Lexical examples given by Lakoff and Johnson (1980b: 90) include *We have set out to prove that bats are birds* and *This observation points the way to an elegant solution. We have arrived at a disturbing conclusion*. This journey may also take the form of a HEROIC QUEST, in which the treasure is knowledge or wisdom.

Recognizing and understanding the conceptual metaphors that underline a given discourse are important because they provide structure for the way in which society not only describes, but also understands, the target domain:

But a convincing account of how concepts function must consider not just the unconscious influence of metaphors but also the way participants in public debates deliberately weigh and make sense of evidence. One of the ways we do that is to organize what we know of the world into relatively fixed, though not unexamined, stories. These stories are indispensable to conceptual metaphors. Without them, conceptual metaphors could not make rhetorical sense. (Eubanks 2008)

5. Methodological approach

Two selections of writing from the 1920s were selected: 13 articles written by H. L. Mencken (1925) about the Scopes Trial and published in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* and two publications by William Jennings Bryan (1922, 1925). Of the latter, the first is an article in the *New York Times* from 1922 and his closing speech for the Scopes trial.⁶ The 2012 corpus was collected via Googlenews between April 5–18, 2012, using the search terms “Tennessee ‘*Teach the Controversy*.’”

Both corpora were analyzed using the WordSmith 6 concordancing tool (Scott 2017) as follows. A list of words related to the semantic domain of WAR was compiled with the help of on-line thesauruses and wordlists. The concordance lines were then examined to determine (a) whether the usage was metaphorical or not; (b) if the source-domain was WAR/CONFLICT; (c) how the expression contributed to the construal of the debate as a WAR. The results discussed below are samples taken from this analysis chosen as representative of the way language from the semantic domain of WAR is used in these corpora.

6. The semantic domain of WAR and the debate over evolution (analysis of results)

6.1. The 1925 trial of John T. Scopes

Although the court case is referred to by Bryan and Mencken as a *battle*, both recognize it as part of a larger story, a greater conflict. Nevertheless, this conflict is construed differently by each. We will begin by looking at H. L. Mencken’s articles.

6.1.1. H. L. Mencken

Journalist H. L. Mencken draws on the source domain of war in writing all 13 of his article covering the trial. There are three main targets that appear in his coverage, often times intermixing with each other: the court case, the battle for civilization, and battles between believers.⁷

- (4) Thus the **battle** joins and the good red sun shines down.
- (5) Before that it had been against the anti-evolution law. But with the actual **battle** joined, it began to wobble, and presently it was printing articles arguing that Fundamentalism, after all, made men happy [...]
- (6) That foe, alas, refused to be alarmed. It insisted upon seeing the **battle** as a comedy. Even Darrow, who knew better, occasionally yielded to the prevailing spirit.

To explain the passing of the Butler Act and the national support for measures against teaching evolution, Mencken blames not only fundamentalism, but also a lack of intelligence, which he believes is systemic of rural areas.

⁶ This speech was never given as the defense confessed just before the case went to the jury and no closing arguments were given.

⁷ It is important to remember that Mencken was as much a dramatist as he was a reporter, known to elaborate, exaggerate and invent in order to make a point (Torley 2014 after Rodgers 2007).

- (7) They have **fought** every new truth ever heard of, and they have killed every truth-seeker who got into their hands.
- (8) The so-called religious organizations which now lead the **war** against the teaching of evolution are nothing more, at bottom, than conspiracies of the inferior man against his betters.

Mencken's construal of the battle in the courtroom is an extension of his perspective on Christianity, the south and what "civilization" should look like. This is seen in his construal of the most visible advocates on either side: Bryan and Darrow. Bryan is described as a *gladiator*, burning with a hatred that transforms him from a village hero to "preposterous and pathetic." Darrow is *a well-fed, well-mannered, spokesman*.

- (9) The old **gladiator** faced his real **enemy** at last. Here was a sworn agent and attorney of the science he hates and fears -- a well-fed, well-mannered spokesman of the knowledge he abominates.
- (10) The hatred in the old man's burning eyes was not for the **enemies** of God; it was for the **enemies** of Bryan. Thus he **fought** his last **fight**, eager only for blood.
- (11) He was winning a **battle** that would make him forever infamous wherever enlightened men remembered it and him.

Darrow emerges from the battle a hero, despite his defeat, for he has achieved what Mencken views as his primary aims: "exhibiting their [Tennesseans] shame to all men near and far" he "showed what civilization can come to under Fundamentalism" and brought the trial "out of the clutches of the village Dogberry and before judges of greater intelligence" by securing a conviction for his client, which could later be appealed to a higher court.

- (12) All this was accomplished, in infernal weather, by a man of sixty-eight, with the scars of battles all over him. He had, to be sure, highly competent help.

6.1.2. *William Jennings Bryan*

The source domain of WAR is less frequent within the two articles written by Williams Jennings Bryan, and less frequent in the 1922 article in the *New York Times* than in his closing speech for the trial. This suggests that the context of the court case in Dayton may have increased and diversified his use of this metaphor. In his 1922 article, Bryan's use of the metaphorical mappings from the domain of WAR is limited to notions of defending or protecting metaphysical beliefs.

- (13) When we **defend** the Mosaic account of man's creation and contend that man has no brute blood in him, but was made in God's image by separate act and placed on earth to carry out a divine decree, we are **defending** the God of the Jews as well as the God of the Gentiles, the God of the Catholics as well as the God of the Protestants.
- (14) Let these believers in 'the tree man' come down out of the trees and meet the issue. Let them **defend** the teaching of agnosticism or atheism if they dare. If they deny that the natural tendency of Darwinism is to lead many to a denial of God, [...]

- (15) As religion is the only basis of morals, it is time for Christians to **protect** religion from its most insidious **enemy**.

In the *New York Times* article, cited above, the attack is implicit. However, the threat he sees as inherent in the theory of evolution is made explicit in his closing statement for the Scopes trial.

- (16) Evolutionists **attack** the truth of the Bible, not openly at first, but by using weasel-words like “poetical,” “symbolical” and “allegorical” to suck the meaning out [...]
- (17) The real **attack** of evolution, it will be seen, is not upon orthodox Christianity, or even upon Christianity, but upon religion - the most basic fact in man’s existence and the most practical thing in life.

For Bryan, the danger is not only in the threat he sees to his own religious beliefs, but also to the moral fiber of society if those beliefs are overrun. There are several reasons for this. One, expressed in (12), is that only religion can provide a basis for morals. Another, is that the theory of evolution is based on struggle and might makes right, thereby favoring selfishness expressed through violence (15). The third argument is evolutionary accounts of origins is based on a system of values that stands in stark contrast to those foundational to the Christian religion.

- (18) [...] world as the product of natural selection in never-ceasing **war** was a product, that is to say, of a **struggle** in which the individual efficient in the **fight** for his own interests was always the **winning** type [...]
- (19) It [evolution] recognizes no cry of repentance and scoffs at the doctrine that one can be born again. It is thus the intolerant and unrelenting **enemy** of the only process that can redeem society through the redemption of the individual.

At the same time, Bryan is careful to distinguish between the theory of evolution and the research and progress of science. For him, as was and continues to be the case for many religious people, Christianity was no sworn enemy of education or science. To the contrary, it had been a patron to science. Thus, in contrast to the conceptual domain of WAR, Bryan suggests the conceptual domain of NURTURE.

- (20) Sees no **Conflict** between Religion and Science Religion is not hostile to learning; Christianity has been the greatest patron learning has ever had.
- (21) Science needs religion, to direct its energies and to inspire with lofty purpose those who employ the **forces** that are unloosed by science.

Bryan argues that when it comes to learning in general and scientific learning in particular, Christianity has promoted and encouraged progress. Moreover, Brian claims that science needs religion to provide guidance for the ethical application of its discoveries. He points to the Great War, just a few years previous, as a prime example of science unleashed without the moral constraints of Christianity. Hence, it is possible to suggest CHRISTIANITY IS A PARENT OF SCIENCE, as a conceptual metaphor that includes both elements of nurture and discipline. Moreover, by using “so-called” to modify the science of evolution,

he rejects the religion vs. science dichotomy and proposes a different framing for the debate. From this perspective, the battle is not between science and Christianity but between unbelief and belief. In his closing arguments, Bryan emphasizes that the decision taken by this court on this case, have a broader reach and greater impact.

- (22) This case is no longer local: the defendant ceases to play an important part. The case has assumed the proportions of a **battle royal** between unbelief that attempts to speak through so-called science and the **defenders** of the Christian faith.

One explanation for Bryan rejecting the theory of evolution is that it proposes WAR or CONFLICT as the primary mode of interaction, whereas, his Christian views prefer the source domain of NURTURE.

6.2. Reporting on the 2012 bill

Even a cursory glance at reporting of the 2012 bill reveals the contemporary importance of the Scopes' trial and its continued role as a discursive event in shaping the way conflicts over teaching evolution are presented in the text. The following excerpt from one of the articles not only draws on this connection, but also draws heavily on the source domain of WAR.

- (23) **Four score and seven years ago**, a Tennessee high school biology teacher named John Scopes was charged with teaching evolution. At the time, Tennessee had a law called the Butler Act, in honor of John W. Butler, the leader of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, that turned Scopes's efforts to educate his students into a criminal offense. The **enemies** of Darwin **won** in court but suffered a nearly **catastrophic loss** in the public sphere. The press portrayed them as anti-intellectual and un-American in their **opposition** to science and progress. They were the "**sharpshooters of bigotry**," according to Scopes' celebrated attorney, Clarence Darrow. "I knew that education was in **danger** from the source that has always **hampered** it — religious fanaticism," he said. The **fallout** was so **toxic** that Christian fundamentalism **retreated** as a political **force** for decades.

First, the way the years between the 1925 and the 2012 bill are counted borrows from President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address. While we as readers can only speculate as to the author's intention, there are numerous possible reasons for this choice apart from simple poetic imagery. It may "good, progressive North" verses "bad, backwards South." The battle is construed as a fight between Darwin and his followers, including Clarence Darrow, and Christian Fundamentals. Fundamentalists are again described with a convenient label *sharpshooters of bigotry* who *hamper* higher education. The excerpt repeats the myth of the trial that has been passed down since the penning of *Only Yesterday* (Allen [1931] 1997) and later reinforced by *Inherit the Wind* (Lawrence & Lee [1955] 1960): a total defeat for Darwin's opponents. However, as has already been discussed, this is less than accurate (*cf.* Larson 2006). Nevertheless, this retelling of the 1925 trial is common in intertextual appropriations and their application to the modern debate. Not only does it frame the debate in terms of a war, but it tells us whom to support.

6.2.1. 1925 in 2012

There are several ways in which the “battle” of 2012 is linked to the “battle” of 1925.

- (24) In a battle **reminiscent of** the Scopes “monkey trial” fought nearly 90 years ago
- (25) Nearly 87 years since the beginning of the Scopes Monkey Trial in Dayton, Tenn., the state is **once again** barreling toward being the battleground state for the debate between supporters of the theory of **evolution** and **intelligent design**.
- (26) When you’ve been fighting over the **same thing for well-nigh 90 years**
- (27) The state held the famous Scopes ‘Monkey Trial’ in 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee, and opponents of the legislation say evolution is **still** under attack in 2012. (x6)

The 2012 bill is seen as an extension (*still, same thing*) or a repeat (*again*) of the 1925 trial, despite the fact that the nature of the bill and the nature of the proponents and opponents of evolution have changed significantly. In terms of the knowledge of evolution at the time, this was still before Mendel and the Neo-Darwinian synthesis. Moreover, much evidence touted in 1925, *e.g.*, Nebraska Man and Haeckel’s embryos, has since been rejected by the greater scientific community as frauds. Finally, racist implications of evolution and the practice of eugenics, encouraged in the book referenced at the Scopes trial (Hunter 1914), are themselves viewed as backward and uncivilized by much of the modern world. As far as opposition to evolution is concerned, young earth creationism had yet to be broadly accepted by evangelical Christians and intelligent design as a formulated alternative was not to appear for another 60 years. Furthermore, the 2012 bill did not single out man from other life forms, nor did it ban the teaching of evolution or encourage any biblically-based perspective. Nevertheless, despite these differences, the events are often construed as battles in the same war.

- (28) the trial was seen as pitting **modernists**, who believed in the march of science, and **fundamentalists** who believed the Bible was the literal word of God
- (29) The ongoing battle of **evolution** versus **creationism** is still alive in Tennessee.
- (30) early in the 20th century, **conservatives** were fighting to maintain the traditional theory of creation following Darwin’s publication ...
- (31) The **creationist offensive** is part of a long-running battle, in a country where only a quarter of the population believes whole-heartedly in evolution

The opposing forces from 1925 are construed as *modernists vs. fundamentalists, evolution vs. creationism, conservatives vs.* an unnamed enemy, and the articles either imply or explicitly state that these same oppositional forces are at play in the current debate. Moreover, a new “enemy” has entered the scene: *intelligent design*.

6.2.2. The 2012 “battle”

One of the main issues in the 2012 debate is whether or not the doubts about the theory of evolution are scientific or religious in nature, with the assumption that the two motivations do not/cannot coexist. These arguments can be seen in (28)–(30), which not only highlight Genesis-based alternatives but seem to presuppose that any resistance to Darwinism must be religiously based since the actual bill itself leaves

no room for faith-based education. An alternative, and at times complementary reading of the modern opposition to evolution are political motivations. For example, in (32), the 2012 bill is construed as *anti-science*, a construct of an aggressive *PR machine*. This suggests that this bill is the result of propaganda rather than scientific doubts. Others see it as a battle between science and politics,

- (32) [...] how to fight back against the **antiscientific PR machine**.
- (33) War Of The Worlds: When **Science, Politics** Collide
- (34) [...] latest example of **scientists** leaving their labs and universities, and clashing with **politicians**.
A number of battles have played out

Those fighting against the bill are glorified, fulfilling the role of the “underdog” in American folk culture – the lone individual or minority group that stands up to and overcomes an oppressive and unjust authority/system/opponent.

- (35) **Activists** were waging a last-minute battle Thursday to scuttle a bill that they say would gut science education...
- (36) **Scientific groups** suspected that they were fighting an uphill battle once the legislature passed
- (37) **Other governors** who find themselves in Mr. Haslam’s position should fight back harder.

The disputed territory is the science classroom, which at times also becomes the battlefield on which evolution/science is attacked. In this scenario, the bill itself is often personified, taking on the position of a combatant who either attacks science, or protects creationists.

- (38) ‘**Monkey Bill**’ Becomes Law, **Imperils Science** In Tennessee
- (39) Tennessee **Monkey Bill Protecting Teachers** Who Teach Creationism Soon Law

Yet another headline construes the bill not as a combatant, but as a distraction from the mission of the schools. Within this construal, the act of teaching could be seen as a battle, perhaps against the implicit enemy of ignorance.

- (40) Frank Daniels III: Evolution bill detracts from educational **mission**

Defenders of the bill would argue the contrary – that the bill advances the educational mission, as expressed in the resistant discourses below.

6.2.3. *Resistant discourses*

Not all reporters covering the bill’s passage agree with these construals of the current debate. Such discourses that differ from the majority voice can be referred to as “resistant discourses,” whose understanding is important if we are to fully understand the debate (Baker 2008: 114).

- (41) Education bill no threat to **science**.
- (42) Marni Sghoupcoff: Tennessee’s ‘Monkey Bill’ won’t immerse schools in creationist chaos

- (43) [John] West noted that the law **defends** a principle Scopes himself had endorsed in the following statement: “If you limit a teacher to only one side of anything, the whole country will eventually have only one thought... I believe in teaching every aspect of every...theory”⁸
- (44) The **threat** to a child’s education is a lack of information, not a surfeit. The **threat** to society is a law that muzzles expression, not one that protects it.

Not only do the bill’s supporters believe the criticisms against it are unfounded, but they also see it as a defense of the same values Scopes fought for. In other words, they argue that the positions have reversed: whereas in 1925 it could be argued that supporters of evolution were fighting for free speech in the science classroom, now they are attacking and stifling free speech. This follows the line of reasoning in the bill, which does not address any alternative theory, but instead supports the discussion and analyses of conflicting research.

6.2.4. *Culture war / internal struggle*

Within all of these discourses, participants in the debates over teaching evolution, and the reporters describing them, continue to see the conflict as part of something larger.

- (45) [Republican Legislators] ‘re still pissing off the right people and **fighting the good fight**, even if **the battle is manufactured**.
- (46) Not content with merely **waging war on women**, Republicans are targeting another enemy of conservatism: **education**.
- (47) “debate” on **culture war issues** like global warming or “intelligent”
- (48) Our endless battling over evolution—not to mention incessant fighting over countless [...]

In the articles from 1925, these larger battles were focused on metaphysical issues and the question of what makes a person civilized. In the 2012 corpus, the bill is a battle in the American culture wars. Within this framing, the bill is construed as a Republican strategy, thereby suggesting that this political position has been mapped onto the role of aggressor within Lakoff’s (1991) just war scenario.

7. Conclusions

Although on the surface it appears as if Mencken and Bryan, as supporters and opponents of the theory of evolution, construe the debate in similar terms, this closer look has revealed some striking differences. For Mencken, the attack on evolution is only symptomatic of what he sees as the force of fundamentalism and ignorance of the masses blocking the forward moving progress of the few and enlightened. Bryan, in turn, sees the battle as an attack on religion, particularly, but not exclusively, the Judeo-Christian religions.

8 John West is the Vice President of the Discovery Institute as well as a Senior Fellow and the program associate director at its Center for Science and Culture. The Discovery Institute is a think tank located in Seattle, Washington. The Center for Science and Culture is its program focused on exploring the theory of intelligent design. Although the Center does not encourage the teaching of intelligent design in class, it does support bills such as this which give students the opportunity to explore the scientific questions that remain regarding evolution (2016).

The dangers of losing the battle includes a loss of the foundation for morality and moral guidance for the application of science and an increase in a “might-makes-right” mentality. Thus, he too sees the battle as a fight for civilization; however, in his view, religion provides the foundation on which a civilized society may be built. While Mencken expresses many of the real concerns of evolutionists of the time, he does so by simultaneously degrading both Bryan and the state of Tennessee and alienating a broad swath of the American population. Moreover, many of his arguments attack a strawman of the opposition’s position. Specifically, the distinction between being anti-evolution and being anti-education or anti-science.

In comparing this data from the 1920s with 2012, there are many ways in which the construals of the participants are similar. This is particularly true when it comes to the way in which defenders of “evolution only” education view those who question the theory. Specifically, they construe it as a conservative or fundamentalist battle against science and education. On the other hand, although there are instances of evolution-doubters picking up the line of argumentation used by Bryan, others argue that the roles have reversed. In this scenario, defenders of the 2012 bill are allies with Scopes in the battle for academic freedom, whereas the bill’s opponents are defending narrow-mindedness.

These construals fit the “just war scenario” described by Lakoff (1991). The danger of using this construal is it presupposes that one group/position is “good” and the other “evil.” If Lakoff, Johnson, Eubanks and others are correct in that the conceptual metaphors we access govern the way in which we reason about elements in the target domain, then this continual is detrimental on several fronts. Most importantly, the enemy is “evil” then dialogue and compromise are out of the question. Thus, we are left with either a standoff reminiscent of the cold war, guerrilla warfare, or an all-out “battle” to the unconditional surrender of the opponent. The problem is, these opponents represent the other half of US society, which is becoming increasingly polarized on many fronts. Moreover, this construal discourages open and honest dialogue.

8. Future research

This study was conducted by applying the conceptual metaphor theory within Cognitive Linguistics. However, there are many avenues in which this research may be developed to better understand not only the historical 1925 trial of John T. Scopes, but the way the viewpoints represented therein continue to influence the debate over evolution education. Within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics, it was observed that one of Bryan’s construal of the relationship between Christianity and science is foregrounded by Christianity, and the relationship is one of NURTURE rather than WAR. It would be interesting to see if this construal continues within the modern debate. Alternatively, it would be worthwhile to explore the way the debate has been retold using the Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl & Wodak 2009), which would also lead to analysis of the Scopes’ trial as a discursive event (Barczewska 2013; Jäger & Maier 2009). Of specific interest would be to study how understandings of the Scopes’ Trial shape the way journalists and their readers view the current debate and its participants. Although this line of reasoning has been used in a limited way to discuss the presentation of teachers in this context (Barczewska 2013), there is much more to be done.

9. Acknowledgement

Analysis of the 2012 debate was presented at Kings College, London 2013, participation in which was funded by a grant from Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce.

References

- Allen, Frederick L. ([1931] 1997) *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920's*. New York, Chichester: John Wiley (Wiley investment classics).
- Bagby, George W. (1874) *What I Did with my Fifty Millions*. Ed. from the posthumous MS by Caesar Maruice. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & co.
- Baker, Paul (2008) *Using Corpora in Discourse Analysis*. London, New York: Continuum (Continuum discourse series).
- Barczewska, Shala (2013) “The 1925 Scopes Trial as a Discursive Event: Does Reference to the 1925 Trial Affect Our View of Teachers in the Contemporary Debate over Evolution?” [In:] *Token: A Journal of English Linguistics* 2; 255–287.
- Barczewska, Shala (2014a) *Conceptualizing Human Evolution: A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Debate in American Press Discourse*. Ph.D. dissertation. Łódź: University of Lodz.
- Barczewska, Shala (2014b) “Headlines of Controversy and the Role of Metonymy and Metaphor.” [In:] Marek Kuźniak, Agnieszka Libura, Michał Szawerna (eds.) *From Conceptual Metaphor Theory to Cognitive Ethnolinguistics. Patterns of Imagery in Language*. Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang; 93–112.
- Barczewska, Shala (2017) *Conceptualizing Evolution Education: A Corpus-Based Analysis of US Press Discourse*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Bryan, William J. (1922) “God and Evolution.” [In:] *New York Times*, February 26.
- Buchanan, Joseph R. (1856) *Buchanan's Journal of Man* 1 (1). Cincinnati: Longley Brothers.
- Green, Ashbel (1822) *Discourses Delivered in the College of New Jersey Addressed Chiefly to Candidates for the First Degree in the Arts with Notes and Illustrations, Including a Historical Sketch of the College, from Its Origin to the Accession of President Witherspoon*. Philadelphia: E. Littell.
- Hunter, George W. (1914) *A Civic Biology: Presented in Problems*. American Book Company.
- Jäger, Siegfried, Florentine Maier (2009) “Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis and Dispositive Analysis.” [In:] Ruth Wodak, Michael Meyer (eds.) *Introducing Qualitative Methods. Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. 2nd ed. London: SAGE; 34–61.
- Lakoff, George, Mark Johnson (1980a) “Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language.” [In:] *The Journal of Philosophy* 77 (8); 453–486.
- Lakoff, George, Mark Johnson (1980b) *Metaphors We Live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Larson, Edward J. (2006) *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lawrence, Jerome, Robert E. Lee ([1955] 1960) *Inherit the Wind*. New York: Bantam Books.
- McCune, C. A. (2003) “Framing Reality: Shaping the News Coverage of the 1996 Tennessee Debate on Teaching Evolution.” [In:] *Journal of Media and Religion* 2 (1); 5–28.
- Numbers, Ronald L. (1998) *Darwinism Comes to America*. Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press.
- Reisigl, Martin, Ruth Wodak (2009) “The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA).” [In:] Ruth Wodak, Michael Meyer (eds.) *Introducing Qualitative Methods. Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. 2nd ed. London: SAGE.

- Ritchie, David (2003) "ARGUMENT IS WAR – Or Is It a Game of Chess? Multiple Meanings in the Analysis of Implicit Metaphors." [In:] *Metaphor and Symbol* 18 (2); 125–146.
- Rodgers, Marion E. (2007) *Mencken: The American Iconoclast*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shapiro, Fred R. (ed.) (2006) *The Yale Book of Quotations*. New Haven, CT, London: Yale University Press.
- Smout, K. D. (1998) *The Creation: A Battle for Cultural Power*. Westport, CT, London: Praeger.
- Stark, Ryan J. (2003) "Cold Styles: On Milton's Critiques of Frigid Rhetoric in *Paradise Lost*." [In:] *Milton Quarterly* 37 (1); 21–30.
- Tennessee (2012) TCA 49-6-1030 Teaching Scientific Subjects in Public Schools: Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1030.
- Thurs, Daniel P. (2007) *Science Talk: Changing Notions of Science in American Popular Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- White, Andrew D. (1896) *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. New York: D. Appleton & Company.

Online sources

- Bryan, William J. (1925) *Bryan's Last Speech: Undelivered Speech to the Jury in the Scopes Trial*. Available at: <http://www.csudh.edu/oliver/smt310-handouts/wjb-last/wjb-last.htm> [ED 3.03.2017].
- Davies, Mark (2010–) *COHA: The Corpus of Historical American English: 400 million words, 1810-2009*. Available at: from <http://corpus.byu.edu/coha/> [ED 3.03.2017].
- Davies, Mark (2011–) *Google Books Corpus: (Based on Google Books n-grams)*. Based on: Jean-Baptiste Michel*, Yuan Kui Shen, Aviva Presser Aiden, Adrian Veres, Matthew K. Gray, The Google Books Team, Joseph P. Pickett, Dale Hoiberg, Dan Clancy, Peter Norvig, Jon Orwant, Steven Pinker, Martin A. Nowak, and Erez Lieberman Aiden*. Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books. *Science* 331 (2011) [Published online ahead of print 16.12.2010]. Available at: <http://googlebooks.byu.edu/>
- Discovery Institute. *Should We Teach Scientific Criticisms of Neo-Darwinism? Many Authorities Say YES!* Available at: Discovery Institute: <http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/filesDB-download.php?command=download&id=523> [ED 3.03.2017].
- Discovery Institute Center for Science and Culture: *Frequently Asked Questions* (2016). Available at: <http://www.discovery.org/id/faqs/> [ED 22.01.2017].
- Eubanks, Philip (2008) "An Analysis of Corporate Rule in Globalization Discourse: Why We Need Rhetoric to Explain Conceptual Figures." [In:] *Rhetoric Review* 27 (3); 236–258. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20176852> [ED 3.03.2017].
- Lakoff, George (1991) *Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf*. Widely republished; reprinted in: Harry Kreisler (ed.) *Confrontation in the Gulf: University of California Professors Talk about the War*. Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, 1992. Available at: <https://georgelakoff.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/metaphor-and-war-the-metaphor-system-used-to-justify-war-in-the-gulf-lakoff-1991.pdf> [ED 3.03.2017].
- Mencken, Henry L. (1925) *H.L. Mencken's Account*. Originally published in *The Baltimore Sun*, from Famous Trials in American History: Tennessee vs. John Scopes The "Monkey Trial." Available at: <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/menk.htm> [ED 3.03.2017].
- Scott, Mike (2017) WordSmith Tools version 6: Stroud: Lexical Analysis Software. Available at: <http://lexically.net/wordsmith/>
- Torley, V. J. (2014). *Mencken's Mendacity at the Scopes Trial*. Available at: <http://www.uncommondescent.com/intelligent-design/menckens-mendacity-at-the-scopes-trial/> [ED 14.02.2017].