

Anti-Slavic imagery in German radical nationalist discourse at the turn of the twentieth century: a prelude to Nazi ideology?

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ABSTRACT By applying methods of cognitive metaphor theory, Jaworska examines metaphorical scenarios employed in the discourse of anti-Slavism, which featured prominently in radical nationalist propaganda in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century. She does so by analysing metaphorical expressions used to refer to the Polish population living in the eastern provinces of Prussia, in the so-called *Ostmark*. Her article is based on an analysis of a range of pamphlets and newspaper articles written by some of the leading figures of two nationalist organizations: the Pan-German League (Alldeutscher Verband) and the Eastern Marches Society (Ostmarkenverein). The main research questions it addresses are: What kind of metaphoric scenarios were used to depict the Polish minority, and to what extent were the metaphorical patterns of anti-Slavic imagery similar to those employed in the antisemitic propaganda of the Nazi era? Is there a discursive continuity between the radical nationalism of imperial Germany and the National Socialism of the Third Reich at the level of metaphorical scenarios? Ultimately, Jaworska attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the cognitive mechanisms underlying radical and essentially racist attitudes.

KEYWORDS Alldeutscher Verband, anti-Slavism, cognitive metaphor theory, imperial Germany, metaphor, metaphorical scenario, Ostmarkenverein, radical nationalism

The radical nationalism of imperial Germany and the National Socialism of the Third Reich: a discursive continuity?

The view that the language of National Socialism was an utterly new form of discourse, which fooled the population of Germany and Austria into

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supporting Nazi ideology, held sway after 1945.¹ Nazi propaganda employed a very specific form of racist and aggressive language. However, it was by no means an entirely new kind of discourse. Lexically orientated research has demonstrated that a large proportion of the key racist vocabulary employed by the Nazis was used prior to 1933.² More recent studies within the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and cognitive metaphor theory (CMT) have further revealed that the language of National Socialism relied chiefly on a rather conventional phraseology and easily understandable rhetorical figures.³ Hence, the novelty of the discourse of National Socialism cannot be assumed and, indeed, there is evidence to suggest that its roots extended into the nineteenth century.⁴ However, with a few exceptions, there has been little research into the linguistic traces of that discursive continuity. This might in part be due to the way in which the question of the roots of National Socialism, especially the role of nationalist associations of the German *Kaiserreich*, was approached by German historiography after 1945. According to Roger Chickering, many West German historians tended to downplay the role of nationalist associations as ideological precursors of National Socialism, and portrayed them as small, unimportant groups of fanatics. In his view, such an interpretation fitted well with the construction of the pre-1914 period as an acceptable past.⁵ Since the 1970s historical research has substantially re-evaluated the ideological role of nationalist associations in paving the way for National Socialism. New evidence has come to light demonstrating that these associations, the Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*) in particular, had a powerful influence on public opinion and the policy of the state.⁶ As Chickering observes, the ideological stance promoted by these associations led to the creation of a 'master discourse' that supplied 'intellectual weapons' for other societies in imperial Germany.⁷ Hans-Ulrich Wehler argues that the outlook of the radical nationalists in Wilhelmine Germany was a 'Wurzelgeflecht, aus dem der Nationalsozialismus wenige Jahre später

1 Peter von Polenz, *Deutsche Sprachgeschichte vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*. III: 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 1999), 548.

2 Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter 1998).

3 Andreas Musolff, 'What role do metaphors play in racial prejudice? The function of antisemitic imagery in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2007, 21–43; Felicity Rash, *The Language of Violence: Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf* (New York: Peter Lang 2006).

4 Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886–1914* (Boston: Allen and Unwin 1984); Peter Walkenhorst, *Nation, Volk, Rasse: Radikaler Nationalismus im deutschen Kaiserreich 1890–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht 2007).

5 Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*, 7.

6 Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Nationalismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen* (Munich: Beck 2001); Walkenhorst, *Nation, Volk, Rasse*.

7 Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*, 9.

seine rassistische Heilslehre herleitete' (proliferating root from which National Socialism derived its racist doctrine in subsequent years).⁸

In the light of historical evidence, an ideological continuity between the radical nationalism of imperial Germany and the National Socialism of the Third Reich has been asserted by historians. How this continuity manifested itself in discourse still remains to be explored. Chickering's analysis of metaphorical expressions from the source domain of natural, destructive forces used by pan-Germans to describe the ethnic Other was a seminal step in this direction.⁹ Peter Walkenhorst expanded this analysis by focusing on the discursive and political constructions of the two notions 'nation' and 'race'.¹⁰ By drawing on Michel Foucault's notion of biopolitics, he pointed to the gradual biologization of the concepts of the German state and the foreign Other that were central to the *Weltanschauung* of radical nationalists.¹¹ However, Walkenhorst's account was a historical one and not a systematic linguistic analysis. Although he focused on metaphors, his approach was selective and he barely made reference to research conducted using the methods of CMT or CDA. For example, he pointed to metaphorical expressions used extensively by pan-Germans—such as *Volkskörper* (the body of the people) or *Keime des Verfalls* (seeds of decay)—and then implied links between the discursive practice of radical nationalists and their aggressive political measures such as, for example, ethnic cleansing.¹² While metaphors play an important part in capturing some aspects of socio-political reality, the question of how they may legitimize political actions is one that needs to be asked.

Most socio-political phenomena are complex, and understanding them requires a great deal of abstract thinking or imagining.¹³ Recent studies in cognitive science have demonstrated that people's understanding of abstract domains is largely underpinned by analogical reasoning, and that metaphors play a particularly crucial role in this process.¹⁴ More importantly, metaphors do not only help people understand complex non-material entities; they also exert a powerful influence on their decisions and how they act and solve problems. In a series of experiments, Paul Thibodeau and Lera Boroditsky were able to demonstrate that different metaphorical framings of a social problem (in this case, crime) led their subjects to

8 Wehler, *Nationalismus*, 83. All translations, unless other stated, are by the author.

9 Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*, 82–6.

10 Walkenhorst, *Nation, Volk, Rasse*.

11 *Ibid.*, 130.

12 *Ibid.*, 96–7.

13 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso 2006).

14 Lera Boroditsky and Michael Ramscar, 'The roles of body and mind in abstract thought', *Psychological Science*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2002, 185–9; Paul H. Thibodeau and Lera Boroditsky, 'Metaphors we think with: the role of metaphor in reasoning', *PLoS ONE*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2011, 1–11.

develop different lines of reasoning about crime, and different scenarios of crime prevention.¹⁵ At the same time, the suggested scenarios were consistent with the dominant metaphorical frame. For example, framing crime as a dangerous beast prompted subjects to suggest preventive measures similar to those one would use to fend off an attack by an actual wild animal. The authors concluded that, far from being 'fancy ways of talking', metaphors instantiate frame-consistent knowledge structures and invite structurally consistent inferences.¹⁶ In so doing, they have 'real consequences' for how people conceptualize and solve social issues.¹⁷ A systematic analysis of metaphors in nationalist discourse can, therefore, add a new cognitive perspective to the traditional socio-political and historical account of oppression and discrimination, and contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying the formation of prejudice and essentially racist attitudes.

By applying the methods of CMT, this paper examines metaphorical scenarios used to describe the Polish minority in imperial Germany in the period between 1894 and 1912, when a range of discriminatory laws was introduced that aimed at the Germanization of the Polish population. This examination is based on an analysis of a corpus of pamphlets and newspaper articles written by members of the two major nationalist associations, the Pan-German League and the Eastern Marches Society (Ostmarkenverein). Two main research questions were asked: What kind of metaphoric scenarios were utilized in the depiction of the Polish minority? And to what extent were the metaphorical patterns of anti-Slavic imagery similar to those employed in the antisemitic propaganda of the Nazi era? This study hopes to contribute to the linguistic analysis of German nationalist discourse at the turn of the twentieth century. More specifically, it attempts to examine whether a discursive continuity can be detected between the radical nationalism of imperial Germany and the National Socialism of the Third Reich at the level of metaphorical scenarios.

Linguistic analysis of nationalist and racist discourse

Since the end of the Second World War, there has been considerable interest in the language of National Socialism and antisemitism. In fact, research in this area has grown at such a rate that to provide an overview of even the major studies would be impossible within the scope of this paper.¹⁸

15 Thibodeau and Boroditsky, 'Metaphors we think with'.

16 *Ibid.*, 1.

17 *Ibid.*

18 For overviews, see, for example, Konrad Ehlich (ed.), *Sprache im Faschismus* (Frankfurt on Main: Suhrkamp 1989); and Michael Kinne and Johannes Schwitalla, *Sprache im Nationalsozialismus* (Heidelberg: Julius Groos 1994).

This section focuses on the two most recent research traditions: critical discourse analysis (CDA) and cognitive metaphor theory (CMT).

From the 1970s onwards, CDA has made a considerable contribution to the study of nationalist and antisemitic discourse.¹⁹ Assuming a dialectical relation between language and society, as well as a critical role for language in 'legitimizing inequality, injustice, and oppression',²⁰ CDA introduced a move away from the investigation of isolated lexical and syntactic features to the exploration of discursive strategies and extra-linguistic socio-political, historical and institutional factors.²¹ In this vein, Ruth Wodak and her colleagues examined the discursive continuity of post-war antisemitism with pre-war antisemitism in Austria, while Margret Jäger and Siegfried Jäger investigated nationalist and racist discourse in Germany since the collapse of the Berlin Wall.²² These studies revealed that one of the dominant themes of nationalist and antisemitic discourse is a negative other-representation and a positive self-representation. Within that discourse, the Other is frequently portrayed as an enemy that poses a threat to the homogeneous unity of a nation, and against which a nation must defend itself. The defensive measures it adopts are justified by a series of strategies that frequently dehumanize, demonize or criminalize the Other. As such, they make it easier to rationalize the exploitation and oppression of the Other 'while minimizing the complicating emotions of guilt and shame'.²³ This leads to a victim-victimizer reversal, in which the victims—the Other—are made responsible for actions against them.²⁴

19 See, for example, Ruth Wodak, 'Das Ausland and antisemitic discourse: the discursive construction of the Other', in Stephen Harold Riggins (ed.), *The Language and Politics of Exclusion: Others in Discourse* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 1997), 65–87; Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl and Karin Liebhart, *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, trans. from the German by Angelika Hirsch, Richard Mitten and J. W. Unger, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2009); Margret Jäger and Siegfried Jäger, *Gefährliche Erbschaften: Die schleichende Restauration rechten Denkens* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag 1999); and Ruth Wodak, 'The discourse-historical approach', in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Sage 2001), 63–94.

20 Theo van Leeuwen, 'Critical discourse analysis', in Keith Brown (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 2nd edn, 14 vols (Amsterdam, London and Boston: Elsevier 2006), III, 290–4 (290).

21 Central to CDA is the concept of 'discourse' understood as 'a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts, which manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as "texts"' (Wodak, 'The discourse-historical approach', 66). Discourses are not fixed units but open and hybrid systems that evolve as a result of historical processes.

22 Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart, *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*; Jäger and Jäger, *Gefährliche Erbschaften*.

23 Stephen Harold Riggins, 'The rhetoric of othering', in Stephen Harold Riggins (ed.), *The Language and Politics of Exclusion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 1997), 1–30 (9).

24 Wodak, 'Das Ausland and anti-semitic discourse', 74.

While CDA has made an invaluable contribution to the analysis of discursive mechanisms of nationalist and racist discourse, Paul Chilton raises doubts about the methodological underpinnings of the CDA approach.²⁵ In particular, he points to the fact that CDA too easily pre-sumes a causal relationship between discourse and social action. By highlighting the simple fact that discourse can only be produced and interpreted by humans in their minds, Chilton argues for a stronger consideration of the cognitive processes that are involved in language processing.²⁶

Over the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of studies attempting to combine CDA with models derived from cognitive science.²⁷ Central to this new undertaking has been the exploration of metaphors. In contrast to the traditional understanding of metaphors as stylistic ornaments, the cognitive sciences define them as conceptual references to one domain with vocabulary more commonly associated with another domain.²⁸ As first pointed out by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, such cross-domain mappings are primarily grounded in human physical and spatial experience, and stored as conceptual or image schemata in the mind, such as GOOD IS UP, BETTER IS MORE.²⁹ The relationship between the source and target domains is systematic and involves a conscious or unconscious projection of associations. By exploiting the associative power of language, metaphors create powerful evocative and connotative representations that, in turn, substantially influence views, beliefs and decisions.³⁰ As Jonathan Charteris-Black emphasizes, metaphors possess great persuasive potential because they can appeal to both cognition and emotion at the same time.³¹ This makes them powerful tools in propaganda, particularly in justifying and legitimizing political actions.

By drawing on cognitive science and conceptual blending theory, Chilton examines the cognitive mechanisms underlying the mapping of the source category 'parasite' to the target category 'Jew' in *Mein*

25 Paul Chilton, 'Missing links in mainstream CDA: modules, blends and the critical instinct', in Ruth Wodak and Paul Chilton (eds), *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis: Theory, Methodology and Interdisciplinarity* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2005), 19–53.

26 *Ibid.*, 23.

27 See, for example, Paul Chilton, 'Manipulation, memes and metaphors: the case of *Mein Kampf*', in Louis de Saussure and Peter Schulz (eds), *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, Language, Mind* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2005), 15–43; Rash, *The Language of Violence*; Musolff, 'What role do metaphors play in racial prejudice?'

28 Seana Coulson, 'Metaphor and conceptual blending', in Brown (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, I, 32–9 (33).

29 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1980).

30 Thibodeau and Boroditsky, 'Metaphors we think with'.

31 Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave 2005), 13–20.

Kampf.³² ‘Blending’ is a cognitive notion attempting to explain the way humans process and understand language in working memory. Blending occurs in so-called ‘blended mental space’, which is represented by four elements: two or more input spaces, a generic space, and the blended space that ‘inherits partial structure from the input spaces, and has an emergent structure of its own’.³³ Chilton demonstrates that the blend PARASITE IS JEW was created by combining selected concepts from two input spaces: the domain of biology/medicine (the human body frame, the illness frame) and the domain of state/society (the host/people frame). These blends were then reinforced on every textual level to become a memorable concept implying that the parasite is *actually* the Jew, who poses a danger to the host body of the German nation.³⁴

Andreas Musolff has conducted an in-depth analysis of the link between the inferential potential of the biological/medical source domain and the conclusion at the target level of genocidal ideology in the antisemitic imaginary in *Mein Kampf*.³⁵ Central to his examination is the concept of a metaphorical scenario, which is understood as a complex, narrative schema ‘that tells a mini-story, complete with apparent causal explanations and conclusions about its outcome’.³⁶ Musolff demonstrates how the main scenario employed in *Mein Kampf*—the body-illness-cure cluster—triggered the story line of a body suffering illness because of blood poisoning, and therefore needing a radical cure. This scenario was subsequently mapped on to the social, political and religious target domains, and led to the creation of a plausible belief system that implied that the radical cure—genocide—was necessary for the body—the German *Volk*—to survive. The blood poisoning was further conceptualized as a danger to the grand design of the Creator, suggesting that the radical cure was also a moral imperative and a divine mission. Metaphors, accordingly, are not mere stylistic ornaments. They are constitutive elements of racist discourse, forming a coherent and systematic image with explicit and vicious ideological baggage and used to justify political actions. This is why they necessitate careful examination.

Radical nationalist associations in imperial Germany and the Polish Question

In the view of many historians, German radical nationalism emerged as a reaction to the Bismarckian notion of a ‘saturation point’ for imperial

32 Chilton, ‘Manipulation, memes and metaphors’.

33 Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, ‘Blending as a central process of grammar’, in Adele E. Goldberg (ed.), *Conceptual Structure, Discourse, and Language* (Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications 1996), 113–30 (113).

34 Chilton, ‘Manipulation, memes and metaphors’.

35 Musolff, ‘What role do metaphors play in racial prejudice?’.

36 *Ibid.*, 28.

Germany.³⁷ Following the defeat of Austria and France, Bismarck claimed that the process of state-building was complete, and that the country had no further territorial claims.³⁸ This gave rise to dissatisfaction among some members of the middle and upper classes and, in 1891, led to the creation of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Verband, which three years later was renamed the Alldeutscher Verband, the Pan-German League. Its first chairman and ideological leader was Ernst Hasse (1846–1908), a professor of statistics at the University of Leipzig.³⁹

The core ideology of the Pan-German League was based on the premise that the German Reich of 1871 was an unfinished national project that, in order to be completed, needed to acquire colonies and to unite all Germans living in *Mitteleuropa*. The ideology fed on the ideas of Paul de Lagarde, Heinrich von Treitschke and Arthur de Gobineau, to whom the leaders of the Pan-German League frequently referred.⁴⁰ The underlying ideological principle was that of ethnic nationalism (*völkischer Nationalismus*). The pan-Germans believed that a nation, in order to survive, has to consist of one homogeneous group, a *Volk*, whose members belong to the same race and share the same language and culture. It is evident that, by definition, this concept of nation excludes members of different languages and cultures. In fact, in radical circles, ethnic minorities were increasingly perceived as a threat to national homogeneity and as an enemy within.⁴¹

The foremost internal enemy was the Polish-speaking population, which towards the end of the nineteenth century formed by far the largest ethnic minority group in Wilhelmine Germany.⁴² It is estimated that there were over 3 million Poles living in the territory of the *Kaiserreich*, which amounted to nearly 6 per cent of the total population.⁴³ The high number of ethnic Poles was a consequence of the eastward expansion of Prussia in the

37 Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*; Walkenhorst, *Nation, Volk, Rasse*.

38 Lynn Abrams, *Bismarck and the German Empire, 1871–1918* (London and New York: Routledge 2006), 43.

39 Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*, 53–4.

40 Treitschke was, for example, seen as the ideological father of the pan-German movement (Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*, 80). The pan-Germans were enthusiastic readers of Gobineau's work *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, 4 vols (Paris 1853–5). Out of 1,000 copies of a German translation published by the German Gobineau Society between 1897 and 1901, 100 were directly sold to the Pan-German League; Peter Weingart, Jürgen Kroll and Kurt Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene: Geschichte der Eugenik und Rassenhygiene in Deutschland* (Frankfurt on Main: Suhrkamp 1992), 96.

41 Walkenhorst, *Nation, Volk, Rasse*.

42 There were also other Slavic groups, including Masurians, Kashubians and Sorbs, but their numbers were, compared to the Polish-speakers, very small. Hence, when pan-Germans referred to Slavs, they meant, in the first instance, the Polish-speaking population.

43 Kaiserliches Statistisches Amt, *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs: Die Volkszählung am 1. Dezember 1900 im Deutschen Reich*, vol. 150/1 (Berlin: Puttkammer und Mühlbrecht 1903).

eighteenth century and successive partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793 and 1795. As a result, a large part of the former Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth (nearly 20 per cent) came under Prussian rule.⁴⁴ In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Prussian *Polenpolitik* made some allowances for the preservation of the Polish language and culture, and some modest political rights were granted but, after 1871, there was a radical turn. Initiated by the Bismarckian policy of *Kulturkampf*, a range of legislative steps that excluded and discriminated against Poles living in the eastern provinces were gradually implemented. These measures included the introduction of the German language as the only language of administration, education and the judiciary, as well as internal colonization. The latter refers to the settlement law (*Ansiedlungsgesetz*) of 1886 and the establishment of the Prussian Colonization Commission, whose main aim was to buy land and estates from Poles and sell them cheaply to German settlers. These measures were in part a reaction to demographic changes in Prussia. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, many Germans in search of work migrated to the booming industrial region of the Ruhr basin. As a consequence, there were more Poles than Germans in some parts of the eastern provinces. For the pan-Germans this was an alarming fact. They stirred up fierce agitation demanding radical action to reverse the trend.

In 1894 Ernst Hasse suggested the foundation of an association for the protection of German national interests against the Slavic population and its lack of culture ('zur Wahrung der deutschnationalen Interessen gegen das . . . Slawentum und seine Unkultur').⁴⁵ The idea was soon acted on by three Prussian landowners: Ferdinand von Hansemann, Hermann Kennemann and Heinrich von Tiedemann-Seeheim, who in Posen (now Poznań) established the Ostmarkenverein (Eastern Marches Society). By 1914, it had 50,000 members.⁴⁶

From the first day of their existence, the Pan-German League and the Eastern Marches Society criticized the stance of the government for being too lenient towards the Polish minority. In the name of the national interest, the leaders of both associations proposed a range of drastic measures to reduce the number of Poles, including, for example, large-scale evacuations.⁴⁷

44 Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1986).

45 Hasse, quoted in Walkenhorst, *Nation, Volk, Rasse*, 74–5. All translations, unless otherwise stated, are by the author.

46 *Ibid.*, 75. The Eastern Marches Society was, in fact, a sister organization of the Pan-German League (Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*, 55–6).

47 Hasse made this very clear by stating: 'Wir müssen den unterlegenen Gegnern, die uns im Wege sind, Reservate zuweisen, in die wir sie zurückdrängen, um unserer Entwicklung Raum zu schaffen' (We will have to allocate zones for the inferior enemies who stand in our way, into which we will force them in order to create more space for our development); Ernst Hasse, *Die Zukunft des deutschen Volkstums* (Munich: J. F. Lehmann 1907), 44.

Although antisemitism was rife among the radical nationalists, at that point Jews were not their main target.⁴⁸

Metaphors and metaphoric scenarios in anti-Polish propaganda

In order to identify metaphorical scenarios used in radical nationalist discourse, a text corpus was compiled that consisted of newspaper articles published between 1894 and 1912 in the major organs of the Pan-German League and the Eastern Marches Society, the *Alldeutsche Blätter* and *Die Ostmark*, respectively. Only articles that focused exclusively on the Polish minorities were considered. The corpus also included a range of political pamphlets produced by high-ranking figures and publicists of both associations, including *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär'* (If I Were Emperor) by Heinrich Claß, published in 1912, and *Die preussischen Ostmarken* (The Prussian Eastern Marches) by Christian Petzet, published in 1898.⁴⁹ The former is considered the manifesto of the Pan-German League, while the latter was the third and last book published in the pan-German series *Der Kampf um das Deutschtum* (The Struggle for Germandom) and pertained solely to the situation in the *Ostmark*.

Body metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson observe that one of the most fundamental human sensations is experiencing the body as a container.⁵⁰ This primary experience, which derives from the human instinct of territoriality, is then mapped on to entities outside the human body in the natural environment as well as on to abstract concepts such as knowledge, ideas and states. One of the most frequently used metaphors from this category in political discourse is that of A STATE/NATION IS A BODY. Such a mapping is not solely a phenomenon of the twentieth century. It dates back to

48 Walkenhorst argues that, until 1918, antisemitism was not part of the official propaganda policy of radical nationalists (Walkenhorst, *Nation, Volk, Rasse*, 281). The pan-Germans began to express their antisemitic attitudes in the period preceding the First World War. For example, in 1912, Heinrich Claß, the successor to Hasse as leader of the Pan-German League, published a pamphlet entitled *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär'* in which he proposed a range of measures to eliminate (*ausschalten*, literally 'to switch off') the Jews in Germany; Daniel Frymann [i.e. Heinrich Claß], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär'* (Leipzig: T. Weicher 1912), 76.

49 Frymann [i.e. Claß], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär'*; Christian Petzet, *Die preussischen Ostmarken, Der Kampf um das Deutschtum*, vol. 3 (Munich: J. F. Lehmann 1898).

50 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 25–30.

ancient times and was frequently applied in political writings of the Renaissance.⁵¹

In the corpus under examination, body metaphors were the most frequently used. The term *Volkskörper* (the body of the people) was repeatedly used to describe the German-speaking majority, while the Polish minority was referred to as a *Fremdkörper* (foreign body). Indeed, the Germanization of the Polish population was understood as a biological process of the absorption and digestion of foreign elements. Christian Petzet, a spokesman for and a member of the Pan-German League, made it clear when he wrote that Germany—the nation of culture (*das Kulturvolk*)—‘muss auch ein Stück fremden Elements in seinem Körper vertragen und verdauen können’ (must tolerate and digest in its body a piece of a foreign element).⁵² In the corpus under investigation the German body was often portrayed as wounded or ill, and the causes of the illness were assumed to be located in the eastern provinces. In this vein, Polish people were described as an ‘ungesunde Grundlage’ (unhealthy base),⁵³ causing ‘Krebsschaden’ (cancer).⁵⁴ The members of both associations were alarmed that the Polish population might expand ‘bis in das Herz des Deutschen Reiches’ (to the heart of the German Reich).⁵⁵ Prussia seemed to be unable to cope with this expansion, which was perceived as ‘ein Schlag ins Gesicht für das Deutschtum’ (a slap in the face for the German people).⁵⁶ The German government was frequently criticized for being too soft towards the Poles. It was therefore nurturing ‘die Schlange am eignen Busen’ (a viper in its breast),⁵⁷ which would in turn lead to the cultural and economic demise of the *Deutschtum* in the eastern provinces: ‘Dies Deutschtum hat . . . seine wirtschaftliche Basis verloren und kränkelt’ (The German element has . . . lost its economic base and is ill).⁵⁸ Members of both associations demanded more radical measures to reverse the trend. A ‘rauhe Hand’ (rough hand) was needed because ‘die bisherigen Maßnahmen können die Wunde nicht heilen’ (the measures taken so far cannot heal the wound).⁵⁹

51 See Andreas Musolff, ‘Are shared metaphors the same: English and German body imagery in comparison and contrast’, in Falco Pfalzgraf and Felicity Rash (eds), *Anglo-German Linguistic Relations* (Frankfurt on Main, Berlin, Bern, Brussels, New York, Oxford and Vienna: Peter Lang 2008), 33–52; Andreas Musolff, *Metaphor, Nation and the Holocaust: The Concept of the Body Politic* (London and New York: Routledge 2010).

52 Petzet, *Die preußischen Ostmarken*, 3.

53 ‘Der preussische Staat als Polonisor’, *Alldeutsche Blätter*, no. 16, 1894, 34.

54 Petzet, *Die preußischen Ostmarken*, 55.

55 *Ibid.*

56 ‘Zur Polenfrage’, *Mitteilungen des Allgemeinen Deutschen Verbandes*, vol. 3, 1892, 27.

57 ‘Eine andere deutsche Polenpolitik’, in *Alldeutscher Verbandes* (ed.), *Zwanzig Jahre alldeutscher Arbeit und Kämpfe* (Leipzig: Weicher 1910), 114–26 (114).

58 *Ibid.*, 124.

59 *Ibid.*, 122.

According to the radical nationalists, the German body desperately needed remedies (*Heilmittel*) to avoid irreparable damage. This view was formulated explicitly by Heinrich Claß:

Unser Ziel ist: die Reform des Reiches, die die Zukunft unseres Volkes sicherstellt, es reinigt vom Kranken und das Gesunde stärkt . . . Deutschland den Deutschen.⁶⁰

Our aim is: the reform of the Reich, which will secure the future of our nation, cleanse the body of illnesses and strengthen its health . . . Germany for the Germans.

One of the remedies proposed by the radical nationalists was a territorial and demographic expansion to the East justified by the desire for land that was awakening in the German nation.⁶¹ Claß was afraid that, if this desire were not satisfied, the German *Volk* would 'im eignen Fett ersticken' (suffocate in its own fat).⁶² To aid the recovery of the ailing German nation, he insisted on 'die Räumung des Reichsgebietes von den Ausländern . . . die wir nicht brauchen können, also *vor allem* [emphasis added] Slawen jeder Art' (clearing the Reich territory of foreigners . . . that we do not need, *particularly* those of Slavic origin).⁶³ A strong and healthy German nation had a mission. By paraphrasing a famous verse from Emanuel Geibel's poem 'Deutschlands Beruf' (Germany's Vocation),⁶⁴ Claß created a vision of a world that, under German leadership, would recover: 'dass am deutschen Wesen die unter germanischer Führung stehende Welt genese' (that the world under German leadership would recover because of the German character).⁶⁵

These examples of metaphors used in radical nationalist discourse in relation to the Polish population indicate considerable similarity to the discourse of National Socialism. The resemblance between the metaphors from biological and medical source domains is striking.⁶⁶ The story line constructed by the radical nationalists using the implications arising from these domains can be summarized as follows: the German people form a homogeneous unit, a body (*Volkskörper*), that is, however, in poor health. One of the causes of this state of affairs is the growing number of Polish people in the eastern provinces and the influx of foreign blood, which potentially leads to racial degeneration. The main task, therefore, is to

60 Frymann [i.e. Claß], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär'*, 135.

61 *Ibid.*, 9.

62 *Ibid.*, 139.

63 *Ibid.*, 93.

64 Franz Emanuel Geibel (1815–84) was a German poet and writer. In his poem 'Deutschlands Beruf', he places Germany at the 'core' of the world and proclaims its special cultural vocation.

65 Frymann [i.e. Claß], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär'*, 188.

66 Musolff, 'What role do metaphors play in racial prejudice?'

Table 1 Body-illness-cure scenario in radical nationalist discourse

Domains	Cause	Present situation	Action needed	Immediate objective	Long-term objective
Source domain: body ↓	Intrusion of a foreign body	Health is poor	Treatment or more radical remedies (removal of the foreign body)	Restoration of health	A strong and resistant body
Target domain: German nation German people	Destructive influence of foreigners, mainly the Polish population, their increasing numbers and high birth rate	Retreat of the Germans from the eastern provinces, their weak instinct for self-preservation and lower birth rate	Germanization, radical measures such as evacuations	Homogeneous Germany without Slavic influences, higher standards of living	The strong Germanic race as redeemer of the world

reverse the situation by employing a number of remedies (such as expropriation) to aid the recovery of the *Volksgesundheit* (the health of the nation). If these remedies do not yield the desired results, a more radical treatment would be needed to cleanse the *Volkskörper*, namely, the removal of the cause through evacuation or even war. The ultimate goal is a healthy German empire, populated by ethnically pure Germans.⁶⁷ Moreover, a healthy and pure German nation with a long-term objective to fulfil, having been chosen to be the redeemer of the world, a divine calling that justified even the most radical means.⁶⁸ If the health of the *Volkskörper* is not restored, then decay will continue to the point that 'kein Arzt mehr helfen kann' (no doctor will be able to help).⁶⁹ Table 1 summarizes the story line based on the cluster of body-illness-cure metaphors detected in the corpus under examination.

This cluster was mapped on to social and political target domains similar to the way in which Hitler later justified his antisemitism.⁷⁰ By mapping the

67 This was explicitly stated in one of the programmatic articles on pan-German policy towards the Polish population: 'Als Endziel ist also natürlich festzuhalten, daß innerhalb der Grenzen des deutschen Reiches eine rein deutsche Bevölkerung lebt' (The ultimate goal is of course a German empire within whose borders lives a pure German population) ('Eine andere deutsche Polenpolitik', 115).

68 The view of one's own nation as a chosen people or a divine redeemer was not uniquely German. Such visions were also prevalent in other nations, notably in Poland with its concept of Polish messianism or in France with its *mission de la France éternelle*. See Hannah Arendt, 'Imperialism, nationalism, chauvinism', *Review of Politics*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1945, 441–63 (458).

69 Frymann [i.e. Claß], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär*', 39.

70 Musolff, 'What role do metaphors play in racial prejudice?'

source domain BODY on to the target level of GERMAN NATION, a chain of analogical inferences was built up that seemed to offer a plausible, coherent and logical justification for the radical measures that the pan-Germans had in mind. The logic made the necessity of the cure, that is, the removal of ethnic minorities, 'obvious'. If we compare this scenario to the one constructed by Hitler, the similarity of analogical inferences is evident. There are, however, also differences. Hitler disseminated the body-illness-cure scenario by highlighting one specific cause, the blood poisoning of the German nation's body, which was presented as a real act of blood defilement.⁷¹ Furthermore, Hitler elaborated inferences from the universal, religious domain: the Jews were the evil forces ranged against the grand design of the Creator. The measure—Hitler's genocidal plan—was a part of the programme of universal redemption. Although the pan-Germans were convinced that the German nation was destined to be a redeemer, no instances of portraying Slavic minorities as daemonic forces were identified in the corpus.

Other metaphors: natural entities and the Great Chain of Being

Natural processes and elements such as plants or light are also common source domains for metaphors in political discourse. A particularly productive subgroup includes metaphors from the source domain of light, darkness and natural weather conditions. Light is normally associated with positive feelings and knowledge, while darkness stands for negative states and ignorance. Metaphors of light and darkness are common in religious discourse, in which the former is related to goodness and faith, and contrasted with the latter, representing badness and the devil.⁷² Other frequently used source domains in this category are those of natural elements such as water and fire. Fire is often associated with strong emotion, while water, particularly in the form of springs, symbolizes life and new beginnings. However, masses of water such as floods can cause catastrophes and are therefore seen as destructive. Negative emotions are also invoked by images of natural phenomena like plant decay. Moreover, plants that grow quickly, such as weeds, signify danger and unwanted, uncontrolled situations. In contrast, blossom and fruit are signs of creation and fertility.

In the corpus under investigation, there were a high number of metaphors from the source domain of natural processes, particularly those associated with natural disasters. Thus, the Polish-speaking population is frequently referred to as a 'slawische Flut' (Slavic tide), 'polnische Hochflut' (Polish high tide), 'dieses lawinenartige Anwachsen' (this avalanche-like growth),

71 Ibid.

72 Charteris-Black, *Politicians and Rhetoric*, 51.

'polnische Überflutung' (Polish flooding) or as waves that destroy the shores of the German state.⁷³

Some of the metaphors employed in the analysed texts convey an image of spreading weeds, symbolized by the word *überwuchern* in phrases like 'das Überwuchern des Polentums' or 'slawische Überwucherung' (Polish/Slavic weed-like growth).⁷⁴ Poles are often described as 'zersetzende Elemente' (decomposing elements) or as belonging to the 'Ferment der Dekomposition' (ferment of decomposition), which would inevitably lead to the 'Verfall' (decay) of Prussia and the German empire.⁷⁵ This is in sharp contrast to the vision of the Germans and the German culture as 'das Salz der Erde' (the salt of the earth) and 'das Lebenselement' (the life force),⁷⁶ which had, from the point of view of the Pan-Germans, a 'befruchtender Einfluss' (fruitful influence) on the Polish population.⁷⁷

The Great Chain of Being is another source domain frequently employed in political discourse. It refers to a vertical hierarchy of beings that had divinity at the top, followed below by humans, animals and plants. All are ranked primarily in accordance with their physical properties. As for humans, the hierarchy is also structured with reference to moral, cultural and social criteria.⁷⁸

Clear hierarchical patterns could also be identified in the corpus, though they were less frequent than body metaphors. Poles are normally described as a lower-order being, such as an *Esel* (donkey), a *Schlange* (viper) or as having lower standards or belonging to a lower culture.⁷⁹ In contrast, the Germans are seen as a *Herrenvolk* (master race), descended from the Germanic race of 'langschädliche Arier' (long-skulled Aryans) who are the real 'Träger der europäischen Kultur' (bearers of European culture).⁸⁰ This is in stark contrast to the view of Poles as inferior beings with different and distinctive racial characteristic, such as 'Kurzschädel mit gelber (mongolischer) Blutmischung' (short skulls with a mixture of yellow (Mongolian) blood).⁸¹ In the view of the pan-Germans, Polish people have no ambition to achieve a 'höhere Lebenshaltung' (higher standard of living) and are 'ein

73 'Eine neue Polenpolitik?!', in Alldeutscher Verbandes (ed.), *Zwanzig Jahre alldeutscher Arbeit und Kämpfe*, 13–22 (16).

74 See 'Eine neue Ära nationaler Politik', *Die Ostmark*, no. 11, 1897; 'Eine neue Polenpolitik?!', 15; and 'Die Frage der slawischen Gefahr in der Ostmark', in Alldeutscher Verbandes (ed.), *Zwanzig Jahre Alldeutscher Arbeit und Kämpfe*, 71–5 (71).

75 'Aus unserer Ostmark. Realpolitische Betrachtungen', *Die Ostmark*, no. 10, 1897; Frymann [i.e. Claß], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär*', 39.

76 'Die politischen Ergebnisse der Rassenforschung', in Alldeutscher Verbandes (ed.), *Zwanzig Jahre Alldeutscher Arbeit und Kämpfe*, 272–5 (275).

77 'Eine andere deutsche Polenpolitik', 115.

78 Rash, *The Language of Violence*.

79 'Die Frage der slawischen Gefahr in der Ostmark', 72; 'Eine andere deutsche Polenpolitik', 114.

80 'Die politischen Ergebnisse der Rassenforschung', 273–4.

81 *Ibid.*, 273.

Hemmnis für die Hebung der Kultur in den Ostmarken' (an obstacle to cultural enlightenment in the eastern provinces).⁸² Moreover, the growing Polish population might essentially lead to 'ungünstige Auslese' (disadvantageous natural selection) and, as a result, cause 'Rassenverschlechterung' (racial degeneration) and the demise of the German race.⁸³

The idea of the cultural superiority of the Germanic race originates in the theories of Gobineau, which, towards the end of the nineteenth century, were winning more and more support in academic and public spheres in Wilhelmine Germany, and led to the creation of a new 'scientific' discipline called 'racial hygiene' (*Rassenhygiene*).⁸⁴ Given that the pan-Germans had close links with the members of this movement, it is not surprising to see references to concepts such as natural selection or racial degeneration in their writings.⁸⁵ The 'scientific' theories provided further justification for their discriminatory and drastic 'cures'.

The Great Chain of Being is also the basis for metaphors that signify human actions and interactions with society and other humans.⁸⁶ This leads us to the political sphere that, in racist discourse, is often exclusively associated with war, based on the metaphorical category POLITICS IS WAR. In the corpus under investigation, a high number of compound words with *Kampf*- (struggle, battle) were identified. In fact, any political or economic activity directed at the Polish population was perceived as a battle: 'Kampf gegen das Überwuchern des Polentums' (battle against the weed-like growth of the Polish population);⁸⁷ 'Der Kampf gegen das polnische Volk ist einer der Riesenkämpfe, die wir noch auszufechten haben' (the struggle against the Polish people is one of the gigantic battles that we have yet to fight).⁸⁸ Human life is, on the whole, portrayed as a Darwinian struggle for existence (*Kampf ums Dasein*), in which weaker, unhealthy beings will finally perish: 'an dem einzelnen Deutschen ist nichts gelegen, an der Gesundheit des Deutschtums alles. Was faul ist, muss entzwei gehen' (a single German does not mean much, the health of the whole German people means everything. What is rotten will break into pieces).⁸⁹ Thus, the aim is to make the Germans in the eastern provinces 'angriffsfähig' (able to attack); otherwise, they will not be 'healthy' and able to achieve 'sittliche Wiedergeburt' (moral rebirth).⁹⁰

As these examples demonstrate, the metaphorical expressions from the source domains of natural elements and the Great Chain of Being are

82 Petzet, *Die preußischen Ostmarken*, 61.

83 'Die politischen Ergebnisse der Rassenforschung', 275.

84 Weingart, Kroll and Bayertz, *Rasse, Blut und Gene*.

85 *Ibid.*, 91–103.

86 Rash, *The Language of Violence*.

87 'Eine neue Polenpolitik?', 15.

88 'Unsere Polenpolitik', *Alldeutsche Blätter*, no. 11, 1899.

89 'Eine andere deutsche Polenpolitik', 122.

90 *Ibid.*

interwoven with the underlying body-illness image, and thus offer further justifications for radical ‘remedies’. The high cultural standards of the German ‘master race’, and its continuing progress, could be ‘lowered’ by foreign, predominantly Slavic, ‘elements’, leading potentially to the demise of the German nation. There is no alternative: ‘die ewige Fortdauer des deutschen Volkes’ (the eternal existence of the German people) and its higher cultural standards can only be preserved and further developed if there is no ‘Einmischung und Verderbung durch irgendein Fremdes’ (intrusion and degenerative influence of anything foreign).⁹¹

Metaphorical scenarios as ‘cognitive weapons’

As other studies of nationalist discourse have found, the underlying theme of anti-Slavic discourse in German radical nationalist propaganda is that of a negative other-representation and positive self-representation.⁹² A striking linguistic feature of this discourse is an extensive use of metaphors. As this paper has shown, there seems to be a similarity between the metaphorical expressions employed in the discourse of radical nationalism and those of National Socialism during the Third Reich. Many metaphors frequently used by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* appear in propaganda texts written by prominent figures of the Pan-German League and the Eastern Marches Society, pointing to a discursive continuity. This continuity goes beyond the level of single lexical units or single metaphorical expressions. In fact, it manifests itself in the larger scenarios or story lines constructed mainly from the conceptual domains of biology and medicine. Both ideologies are based on a vision of the German state as a homogeneous unit—a body, *Volkskörper*—whose health is in a poor state because of the influx of ‘foreign bodies’. By mapping the body-illness-cure cluster on to the social and political sphere and, in this context, to the depiction of ethnic minorities, radical nationalists stigmatized the ethnic Other as an illness that had to be eradicated. Ultimately, a ‘logical’ and unequivocal belief system was constructed that was not open to any alternative vision and defied any questioning. Accordingly, even the most radical conclusions were justified as ‘necessary remedies’. Thus, the story lines constructed by National Socialists were not as unusual or alien as it may appear. They were part of far right-wing propaganda well before Hitler sat down to write *Mein Kampf*. The radical nationalists provided, in a sense, a cognitive frame of reference or, paraphrasing Chickering, the

91 ‘Die politischen Ergebnisse der Rassenforschung’, 275. Here, the author of the article is quoting a statement made by Johann Gottlieb Fichte in his *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808).

92 See, for example, Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart, *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*; and Riggins, ‘The rhetoric of othering’.

'cognitive weapons' that the discourse of National Socialism subsequently proliferated.⁹³

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93 Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German*, 9.

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