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**THE IMAGE OF POLICE OFFICER AS EMERGING FROM
ROAD MOVIES AND ROAD LINGO**

Road movies: The roots of the genre

American society holds many things to be dear – indeed one might say that, becoming to such a heterogenous notion these notions are equally varied. However, one might define a number of values which are commonly held to be of great importance to America as a whole, such as mobility, independence, fairness, individualism, freedom, determination and courage. These values are best encapsulated in the film genre known as ‘road movies’, through which Hollywood has sought to celebrate the very nature of Americanness. The purpose set to the pages that follow is to outline the concept of freedom as the guiding force of the characters in the road movies and – in particular – the role and the concept of **POLICE OFFICER** who either turns out to be a constraint on freedom or – on rare occasions – its facilitator. The second part of the paper concerns the trucker language, and – more specifically – the picture of the **POLICE OFFICER** in the language of CB radio. In particular, we shall analyse the linguistic mechanisms involved in shaping the concept discussed; that is the working of the devices of **zoosemy** and **metonymy**.

From the very outset, it can be observed that right from the very origins of settlement in the New World, the first Americans were always connected – in some way – with the road and the concept of travelling.¹ The early settlers were pioneers wandering westwards; crossing wide stretches of land, constantly on the move in search of a place to live. Thus, the first road stories describe people seeking escape and a change of fortune and these – not infrequently – turn out to be new immigrants who had found that the East Coast lacked the space or career opportunities they had sought. Significantly, most road pictures feature

¹ Various types of American journeys are described by Ferens, Kociatkiewicz and Klimek-Dominiak (eds) (2004) in *Traveling Subjects: American Journeys in Space and Time*.

movement from East to West, rather than the reverse. Symbolically, for both heroes and villains of all sorts the road west was always perceived as a way of escaping from reality.

As a rule, the road movie has been synonymous with the image of America to the world.² Roads, and in particular the interstate system, are shown – either briefly or extensively – in hundreds of films in which they provide, as in real life, a conduit for the characters caught up at the centre of the action. The irony of the road movie is that the weak are left behind (or choose to stay behind), while only the strong survive (and go on). To elaborate, the road either makes or breaks a person and – therefore – it functions as a testing ground for the main characters. This does not mean, however, that all characters in road movies are weak and helpless. On the contrary, those people who seek escape often discover depths of courage and determination they never knew they had, and it is the road that enables them to find that courage, but – sooner or later a character emerges whose main role appears to be to frustrate those who seek freedom; the image of the **POLICE OFFICER** with his inherent, somewhat animalistic attributive values such as (MENACE), (FRUSTRATOR) and (OBSTACLE TO FREEDOM).

And so, Arthur Penn's landmark road epic *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) begins in West Dallas, Texas, where Bonnie Parker (Faye Dunaway) fatefully meets Clyde Barrow (Warren Beatty), and the couple set out upon their bank-robbing spree that ultimately ends in their bloody deaths in Louisiana. One is justified in saying that the film depicts the values of American neoromanticism; the young lovers living in the years of Great Depression long for the times which passed – a happy childhood and colorfulness of the past – because earlier everything seemed to be both more romantic and less complicated.

The characters want cultural freedom and rebel against the traditional values of Puritanism and the institutions of the government. However, the desire for freedom is aimless because the law – guarded by the various manifestations of the **POLICE OFFICER** – is only for the rich and those who rule. The law is repressive for the poor and that is why the characters have to kill in order to live. The viewer sympathises with the killers because they are shown as the ultimate victims of the oppressive institutions. The fantastic slow motion hailstorm of bullets at the end was a defining moment in the late 1960s and 1970s cinema.³ A worthy addendum is that the film had a great impact on fashion and what was considered acceptable in screen violence.

Members of the **POLICE FORCE** appearing in car chase movies are apportioned various names, such as *police officer, detective, sheriff, cop, captain*

² The overview of the American cinema reflecting changing social trends and political situation in the USA is presented by Boyer's (1995) "Amerykańska kultura masowa po 1945."

³ The final scene is described by Gołębiowski's *Dzieje kultury Stanów Zjednoczonych* (2004:431).

and so on. They are somewhat consistently described with negatively loaded attributive values such as (DETERMINED), (OBSESSED), (AMORAL), (BAD), (CORRUPT), (CROOKED) and (POWER-MAD). It is important to note that the protagonists escape in a car, but the police have a wide variety of vehicles and tools at their disposal, including the use of helicopters.

The example of a car (helicopter) chase movie is a cult classic of the 1970s speed cinema *Dirty Mary Crazy Larry* (1974) directed by John Hough. The story follows an aspiring NASCAR driver named Larry (Peter Fonda), and his mechanic Deke (Adam Roarke) as they attempt to hold up a large grocery store. The theft is a success but complications ensue when they find themselves with an unwanted third party in their midst, Mary (Susan George), who spent the previous night in the bed of Larry. She is presumably dirty because she engages in sex freely, if that is the word, and he is obviously crazy because he drives with reckless abandon (and without a seatbelt). It is not long until the supermarket owner (Roddy McDowell) informs the police of the robbery. The police enlist the help of **CAPTAIN** Franklin (Vic Morrow) to help track them with a **HELICOPTER**.

With Mary along for the ride, Larry and Deke try to outrun the cops and make their way to freedom, though **SHERIFF** Franklin is (DETERMINED) to hunt them down. Even though they engage in high speed chases they never come into direct conflict with any of the cops that are after them. The escape culminates in a memorable ending – that is the surprise collision with a freight train. Having spent the entire film being chased by the police, our heroes are finally home free, when they drive straight into the side of a train.

The characters of *The Driver* (1978) by Walter Hill have no names. They are *The Driver*, *The Detective*, *The Connection*, and so forth. These symbolic names are clues to the viewer that what initially appears to be a fast-paced action film is really a study of people evolving into the best person they can be. It makes no difference that these characters are (AMORAL) people, they all strive to be the best. Even if they are bad guys they evolve into the best bad guys they can be. The characters are archetypes defined by their roles, existing purely to drive the plot forward. The man known as *the Driver* (Ryan O’Neal) drives getaway cars in the L.A. underworld. The man who may be characterised as (OBSESSED) with catching *the Driver* is a member of the **POLICE FORCE** and is called *the Detective* (Bruce Dern). The attributive values that may be ascribed to the cop are (CORRUPT) and (POWER-MAD), who will stop at nothing to catch him, even if it means blackmailing a gang of bank robbers to help lure *the Driver* into a trap. *The Driver* and *the Detective* play a deadly game of cat and mouse. Aiding *the Driver* is the beautiful and mysterious *Player* (Isabel Adjani), who helps double-cross the Detective. Bruce Dern as the cop is always one frustrating step behind *the Driver*.

In fact, this movie is a western in disguise; hence the cowboy hats and Winchester rifles. O’Neal’s country music-loving driver is referred to as “The

Cowboy”. Dern portrays a character in the vein of every (CROOKED) sheriff from *Rio Lobo* to *Unforgiven*.⁴ Ryan O’Neal’s “Driver” also compares favorably with the lone samurai warriors. Instead of a sword, *the Driver* has his car. At the same time, one may say that this is also a Darwinian crime film. The strong eat the weak. If O’Neal kills someone, it is because there is no other way out. When he acts, he expends only the amount of energy necessary to get the job done. *The Driver* never stands over the body of a fallen enemy and gloats. O’Neal does not speak much in the movie, but he does more with facial expressions and body language than most actors do with thousands of lines of dialogue. On the contrary, *the Detective* talks a lot and tries to convince all around him that he is the king of the hill.

The movie shows O’Neal’s thought processes as he flees from hoards of police. Following the first chase, O’Neal is shown disposing of the car by dropping it with a crane into a junk yard. He does it in a meticulous and almost loving way. It seems that he has more in common with the automobile than with human beings. He has almost become a machine himself.

The films that have been outlined so far show that the representatives of male species dominate as the heroic protagonists of road movies, yet *Thelma and Louise* (1991) is not typical in this respect because it stars women; the film is centered on the notion of running from the **POLICE OFFICER**, seen as the guardians of law in the animalistic hunt for prey, hidden in their driving and flying monsters – having a vast array of tools at their disposal: police cars, helicopters, guns, good cops and bad cops, but it is a woman’s film. Two women run away from their unhappy lives to find liberation, but a foolish encounter with a rapist which leads to a lethal shooting in a car park, haunts them for the rest of their journey.⁵ One of the women on the run robs a grocery store. When a police officer stops them Thelma points a gun at him and shoots bullets in the trunk of his car. From that moment on, the two women are wanted by the law for murder, kidnapping and armed robbery. Yet, the in-film realisation of the concept of **POLICE OFFICER** is a good policeman who merely wants them in custody, but does not want them harmed in any way. However, most of the embodiments of the broadly understood conceptual picture of **POLICE OFFICER** who are involved in the hunting chase merely want the women in custody, dead or alive. At a certain point of time the two characters see the police helicopter which stands for the tool of oppression employed by the **POLICE OFFICER**, who represents the oppression and violence of the government. They can no longer escape, and draw the

⁴ *Rio Lobo* is a 1970 western movie directed by Howard Hawks. It stars John Wayne. *Unforgiven* is a 1992 western movie directed by Clint Eastwood. It stars Clint Eastwood, Gene Hackman and Morgan Freeman.

⁵ The film analysis is taken from A. Horoszczak’s “Thelma and Louise” (1991:5).

inescapable conclusion that the journey to freedom leads nowhere, so they choose death.⁶

Quentin Tarantino's *Grindhouse-Death Proof*⁷ depicts females who are decisive, determined and dangerous when a charismatic and chauvinistic killer tries to hurt them. In the Tarantino's world there are no divisions into what is typically (FEMALE) and (MASCULINE), although – in general – you can expect anything from anybody, no matter what their gender is. A psycho named Stuntman Mike stalks and kills beautiful women with his black, monster car. In the opening section of the film he encounters Jungle Julia, the hottest disc jockey in Austin, Texas, on a night out with her friends Arlene and Shanna. In the second portion, set in rural Tennessee, Stuntman Mike returns in his maniac car to track down other girls: Abernathy, Zoe, Kim and Lee. This results in one of the greatest car-chasing sequences in the history of the cinema. Both portions of the film are interspersed by a scene taking place in hospital. In the following we quote a dialogue between two police officers:

X: *Well, what we have here is a case of vehicular homicide. That ol' boy in there murdered them pretty little gals. I mean, he used a car, not a hatchet, but they're dead just the same.*

[...]

Y: *So, what are you gonna do, Pop?*

X: *Tsk. Well, I could take it upon myself to work the case, You [sic] know, in my off hours. Search for evidence, you know, prove my theory. Alert authorities. Dog that rotten son of a bitch... wherever he goes, I go. Or I could spend the same goddamn amount of time and energy following the NASCAR circuit. Hmm. I've thought about it a lot. I think I'd have a hell of a lot happier life if I did the latter. And just because I can't punish Old Frankenstein in there for what he's done, I'm gonna tell you like the Lord told John... if he ever does it again, I can make goddamn sure he don't do it in Texas.*⁸

⁶ In a way, Thelma and Louise, in their own unique way, escape male justice and die happy. The film conveys the message that the country which is apparently free, in reality eliminates those individuals who fail to conform. It does not matter that the characters seek escape and not danger, in the road movie, danger seeks them. The road, it seems, is always a dead end. The characters deepen their bond with one another, often repeating the assurance that *What happens on the road stays on the road.*

⁷ Directors Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino present two full-length movies – Rodriguez's *Planet Terror* and Tarantino's *Death Proof* – in a single thriller titled *Grindhouse*. It was designed to replicate the grind house theatergoing experience of the 70s and 80s. In *Planet Terror*, a small-town sheriffs' department has to deal with an outbreak of murderous, infected people called sickos. In *Death Proof*, a psychopathic rebel pursues his victims with his car.

⁸ Quotation from the film. www.napisy.info.

The older police officer is clever, more experienced and understands that Stuntman Mike is a serial killer. However, he does not conform to the stereotypical concept of **POLICE OFFICER** from the road movie as he does not want to start the chase but – instead – sets the murderer free. In other words, the bored and lazy police officer does not choose the righteous alternative, but a more convenient one, or – to put it differently – he treats the criminal as a mere red tape nuisance that – if treated justly – can make him do much, if not too much paperwork. In effect, Stuntman Mike’s freedom is not restricted as long as he commits his crimes away from Texas.

Another movie is especially interesting since it shows how to successfully evade the police. *Cannonball Run* (1981) by Hal Needham is about a crosscontinental highway race of vehicles of all sizes, makes and fitness (sports cars, vans, motorcycles and one Rolls-Royce), from Connecticut to Southern California. There are no real rules as the only objective is to get there as fast as you can without being stopped by the police or killing yourself along the way. This movie has one of the most impressive casts ever assembled in B-movie history. Racing across America were Burt Reynolds, Roger Moore and Peter Fonda.⁹ There are also two Japanese drivers who are bundled into stereotypical oriental roles with a prototype supercar which contains some exclusive technology.

The movie shows the contestants using tricks both to evade the **POLICE FORCE** and to sabotage the other drivers. Burt Reynolds warns a police officer that Dean Martin is not really the priest he is pretending to be. Roger Moore is frequently shown evading police by using James Bond-type gadgets installed in his Aston Martin DB5. At one point, one driver even stops to spray a big red X over a speed limit sign. Adrienne Barbeau and Tara Buckman appeared as two shapely female drivers using sex appeal as their weapon. With the deliberate aim of avoiding speeding tickets, they are wearing low-cut spandex to charm any highway patrolmen. This is not a film that will earn many points from the politically correct world.

Trucking and POLICE OFFICER chase

One may generalise and say that in the mid-late 1970s American society seemed to be getting more and more enthusiastic about trucker culture. Most Americans knew the **CB¹⁰ lingo** and many of them installed CBs in their vehicles.

⁹ Their parts are described by Canby (1981:11) “Cannonball Run with Burt Reynolds.”

¹⁰ The acronym stands for *Citizens Band radio* – a short-range two-way communication system, consisting of a transceiver (a combined transmitter-receiver) and an antenna. CB radio originated in the United States during the 1940s, and was intended to serve the needs of farmers,

This was visible in a number of ways, among them in the publication at that time of a number of specialised dictionaries, such as Floyd's (1976) *Jason's Authentic Dictionary of CB Slang* and Gilbertson's (1976) *The Official CB Language Dictionary Including Cross Reference*. The movie industry portrayed this with such films as *Citizens Band*, *Duel*, *White Line Fever*, *Smokey and the Bandit* and *Convoy* among many others and gave birth to the genre of **trucker movie**. As a rule, truck drivers use CB radio to warn each other of various manifestations of the **POLICE OFFICER**, and their activity, such as highway police patrols, speed limits controlled by them, but also, road accidents or weather conditions. Evidently, a CB radio was the cell-phone of its time, and the culture was analogous to the Internet in some ways. It was a medium used by a few professionals and hobbyists that exploded without warning into a national obsession.

Citizens Band (1977) is a dynamic Jonathan Demme comedy, set during the time of the CB radio craze of the 1970s. CB radios provide a human connection between the lives of a collection of varied characters in a small town. At the center is Paul Le Mat, a CB vigilante named *Spider* who controls if anybody misuses the airwaves. Other characters include a small-time prostitute on wheels and a cattle-truck-driving bigamist (Charles Napier), known by the handle¹¹ *Chrome Angel*, whose two wives (one living in Dallas and another in Portland), unwittingly discover each other when he has an accident. The movie uses the CB trend as a metaphor for the lack of direct human communication. The community they live in is full of disconnected people who yearn to make the kind of real relationships their radios make possible in a fantasy form. The characters weave into the same CB waveband, exemplifying the interconnectedness of an American subculture.

Duel (1971) is Steven Spielberg's debut film, which depicts a salesman, David Mann (Dennis Weaver) who makes the mistake of overtaking a filthy petrol tanker while driving through California. What follows is one long game of cat and mouse during which Mann is pursued by a never-seen truck driver. They are pitted against one another in a motorized duel. There are no explanations and no motivations, except perhaps for an intriguing visual suggestion that this is the old battle between the shining, vulnerable knight and the lumbering dragon. Though Mann comes off better in this race between man and machine, by the end he is lost and alone in the middle of nowhere. *Twenty-five minutes out of your whole life*, he says in the film's key speech. *All the ropes that kept you hanging in there get cut loose. And there you are. Right back in the jungle again.* *Duel* remains a simple yet endlessly fascinating road-movie, loaded with all the sinister intimations of an urban myth.

boaters and hunters. It was later popularized by long-distance truck drivers. See Jurczyński (1995:56–57) for definition of CB radio.

¹¹ *Handle* is a CB air name – the nickname used in CB transmissions.

The title of *White Line Fever* (1975) by Jonathan Kaplan refers to the condition of fatigue while driving long distances on the highway with nothing to stare at but the repetitive lines on the road. In this action film, trucker Carrol Jo Hummer borrows money to purchase a truck of his own, only to discover that part of his payment plan includes smuggling goods on his trips. When Carrol refuses to participate in the scheme, a group of thugs threaten his wife, leading Carrol to fight back. The film is decidedly cynical about corporations, and the influence they exert. It alludes to the fact that they own the police.

In turn, *White Line Fever* is stacked with violence: beatings, arson, vandalism, fisticuffs, stabbing, and vehicular homicide. It is about the political education of Carrol Jo Hummer who was taught that the American economic system is structured to reward individual initiative. Over the CB radio, Hummer announces that he is an owner-operator and *you gotta operate to own*. However, his philosophy is soon tested, because in trying to operate independently of an oligarchic trucking firm to exercise initiative, he quickly learns of the distance between theory and practice. At the end of the film the television announcer says that the truckers are not on strike for hours, wages, benefits, but for a man. They have pulled into the truck stop for some diversion and relief, but it seems likely that they will be on the road again tomorrow. Accordingly, the promise of the film is frustrated.¹²

Convoy (1978) by Sam Peckinpah is a story about a group of struggling truckers who stay in touch by CB and who arrange to form a truck convoy under the leadership of the man whose CB nickname is “Rubber Duck”, which is pursued frantically through several states by Lyle Wallace, the negatively charged representative of the concept of **POLICE OFFICER**, after failing to submit to the phony speed trap. The film has the form of one long, occasionally interrupted chase as the independent truckers, objecting to unrealistic speed limits and corrupt highway police officers, drive across Arizona to New Mexico. Police cars, trucks and bars are destroyed indiscriminately, but none of the characters appears to get hurt. As news of the truck convoy spreads, unexpected allies join the line, and the gigantic illegal protest becomes the subject of national news reports. Peckinpah’s notion was to explore the mystique of truck drivers who own their rigs as modern-day cowboys who used to love their horses.

Smokey and the Bandit (1977), by Hal Needham, tells the story of a truck driver, the *Bandit* who has become a legend throughout the South for his amazing driving skills and his ability to elude the law and *Smokey*, Sheriff Buford T. Justice, father-in-law of unwilling bride Carrie. *Bandit* makes a bet that he can transport a

¹² For a detailed description of the movie plot see Leff (1977:6–7).

shipment of Coors beer from Texarkana to Atlanta in 18 hours.¹³ *Bandit* asks his friend *Snowman* to help him transport the goods in a truck while *Bandit* rides flank in his black Trans-Am. However, he makes a grave mistake because he decides to give a ride to Carrie and angers the local manifestation of the concept **POLICE OFFICER** personified here by Sheriff Buford T. Justice who gives chase to him and *Snowman*, enlisting the help of every police officer along the way. The three main characters, that is *Bandit*, *Snowman* and Carrie go through an endless array of car chases and leave plenty of wrecked police cars.

On the channel: The zoosemic picture of POLICE OFFICER

In a number of road movies there is much CB talk, but in the last movie discussed above, the escape is only possible due to the extensive use of CB radio. Not surprisingly – given the main plot of the film – various manifestations of the concept of **POLICE OFFICER** and all related concepts that either go along with it or are – either explicitly or implicitly – presupposed by the notion of the **POLICE OFFICER** feature prominently in the verbal exchanges on the CB device. To give but a few samples, such lexical items as *smokey*, *Smokey Bear*, as well as longer syntagmas such as *Bear/Smokey in a plain brown wrapper* are used in the sense ‘police officer’ and ‘a law officer in an unmarked police car’ respectively, while the term *bear with ears* is used with reference to a police officer listening to others on the CB.

Throughout the history of mankind various forms of law enforcement agency have existed in all historical periods and cultural zones and these were named in various onomasiological ways. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the history of the present-day core word *policeman* goes back to the beginning of the 19th century (1810), when the word is recorded in the *OED* for the first time, while the female-specific *police-woman* appears in the middle of the 19th century (1855). At the same time, the closest Am.E. synonym of *policeman*, that is *cop*, is the result of the clipping of the original *copper*, and appeared in the language in the middle of the 19th century (1860). Significantly, the epicene *policeperson* gained currency together with the general wave of political correctness in the 1970s and 1980s.

In present-day English, the concept of **POLICE OFFICER** is conveyed by various means and mechanisms and – naturally – the linguistic means and mechanisms employed here yield products that differ both in their axiological charge and stylistic value. At present, in Standard English the most frequent formally marked, yet axiologically neutral denominations for the representatives

¹³ It is important to note that in 1977, it was illegal to sell the Coors brand east of the Mississippi River without a permit.

of law are *police officer, police person, officer, peace officer, patrolman, constabulary, marshal, constable, police inspector* with a substantial number of lexical items with related yet – to a different degree – specialised senses such as, for example, *transport police, special constable, plain clothes police officer, undercover police officer*.

Apart from those, one has at his disposal a number of informal words, expressions ranging from the relatively informal level, such as *badge, bobby, cop, detective* to certain lexical items that must ultimately be classified as low slang such as, for example, *fuzz, smokey* or *shamus* all used in the sense ‘policeman’. Note that – especially in this group – we have a number of terms that are either humorous, disparaging or downright derogatory. Likewise, all the trappings associated with the police officer on the beat, that is the means of transport employed, the means of direct law enforcement clearly linked to the concept of **POLICE OFFICER** such as, for example, the police car are encoded by means of various synonymous expressions such as, for example, *prowl car, squad car, cruiser* or *paddy wagon*, or the police baton that is referred to by, among others, such lexical items as *billy club, baton* or *club*.

One has good reasons to believe that there seem to obtain certain definite onomasiological tendencies linked specifically to the process of naming of the concept **POLICE OFFICER** because a number of such onomasiological tendencies have been formulated in linguistic research for various conceptual domains. For example, as shown by Kleparski (2008) and Kleparski (this volume), the concept of **DEAR/ATTRACTIVE HUMAN BEING** is frequently realised on the plane of natural language by means of the mechanism of **foodsemy**, that is to be understood as a highly general metaphor the wide spectrum of application of which may be summarised as **<HUMAN BEINGS ARE FOODSTUFFS>**, and here – more specifically – **<DEAR/ATTRACTIVE HUMAN BEINGS ARE SWEET FOODSTUFFS>**.

To delve somewhat deeper into the issue, note that there are languages of the world in which the very word for ‘sweetness’ is used metaphorically with reference to people. Thus, for instance, Romanian *dulceață* ‘sweetness’ may be employed in the figurative sense ‘pleasant person’. The English term *sugar*, one of the prime carriers of the conceptual quality (SWEET) – especially in American English – has found its way into many 20th century terms of endearment such as, for example, *sugar baby* or *sugar pie*. Likewise, in the 1960s such forms as *candy, shoulder candy* and *arm candy* developed that now all serve as synonyms to name a ‘young sexy young lady’. While discussing *candy* we might also make reference to the phrase *eye candy*, literally meaning ‘something that is noteworthy for its visual appeal,’ as in the context *She only*

appeared on the game show as eye candy, literally ‘She only appeared in the show because of her physical (sexual) attractiveness.’¹⁴

A broad spectrum of recently published works, such as that of Kiełtyka (2008), Kiełtyka and Kleparski (2005a, 2005b), Fontecha and Catalan (2003) and Hsieh (2003), show how, in natural languages, animal names are widely employed to designate various characteristics of various representatives of the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**, the process that has come to be known as animal metaphor or **zoosemy**. Note that in the process of zoosemic transfer the comprehension of human attributes and behaviour through animal attributes and behaviour results from the application of the highly general conceptual metaphor, that is <**HUMAN BEINGS ARE ANIMALS**>.

As shown by language data, the operation of zoosemy is clearly visible in connection with the naming process related to the concept **POLICE OFFICER** in many languages. Take, for example, the Polish language in which the general word *gad* ‘reptile’ is recorded in the 20th century sense ‘police officer,’ *bażant* used in the second half of the 20th century in the sense ‘police officer’, and *pies/piesek* ‘dog, little dog’, currently employed as derogatory names for police officers. The working of the process of zoosemy is also seen in the process of the naming of objects that are either explicitly linked to or somewhat presupposed by the concept **POLICE OFFICER**, such as *psiarnia* ‘dog kennels’ that is used either as a collective name for police forces or for the police station. Moreover, in contemporary Polish the police officers drive their *suka* (lit. ‘bitch’ > ‘police car’) and – in case of either emergency or chase necessity – switch on their *kogut* which is polysemous meaning either literally ‘cock’ and figuratively ‘roof light.’ Likewise, note that Polish *byk* ‘bull’ is documented in the figurative sense ‘police officer serving

¹⁴ To illustrate this (SWEET)-guided metaphor with data from other languages, note that Italian *zucchero* ‘sugar’ may be used in the sense ‘kind, pleasant or handsome person’), *fico* ‘fig’ is commonly employed in the sense ‘beautiful, handsome person’), while Spanish *bombón* ‘candy’ is frequently used metaphorically in the sense ‘attractive person.’ Likewise, Romanian *bomboană* ‘candy’ may be used in the sense ‘dear, lovely person.’ In the Balto-Slavic group of languages, the Slovak *cukrik* ‘candy’ may be used figuratively in the transferred sense ‘young, attractive, pretty girl.’ Also, the attributive value of (SWEET) undoubtedly linked to the primary sense of Polish *ciacho*, the augmentative form of *ciastko* ‘cake,’ may be said to be at least partially responsible for the slang use of the word in the sense ‘youth/man perceived as sexually attractive.’ Note that English *stud muffin* may be seen as an example of this extrapolation where the whole refers to ‘a young sexually attractive male’, with the use of *muffin* specifically indicating that the man is good enough to be devoured such as – so to speak – a muffin straight from the oven.’

in special forces,’ and *goryl* ‘gorilla’ is currently used in the sense ‘bodyguard.’¹⁵

Below is listed a body of lexical items and phrases used by the road people with reference to police officers in their various aspects. The body of data has been compiled mainly on the basis of Floyd (1976) and Gilbertsdon (1976) and includes the following words and expressions used with reference to police forces, police officer and police means of transport:

POLICE FORCES

Lexical item	mechanism	meaning
<i>Black and whites</i>	<metonymy>	‘police’
<i>Pigs</i>	<zoosemy>	‘police’
<i>Smokey</i>	<metonymy>	‘police of any kind’
<i>Bears</i>	<zoosemy>	‘police of any kind’
<i>Jack rabbit</i>	<zoosemy>	‘police of any kind’
<i>Peter rabbit</i>	<zoosemy>	‘police of any kind’
<i>Porky bear</i>	<zoosemy>	‘police of any kind’ ¹⁶

Note that the most frequent mechanisms employed in naming various manifestations of police forces are the mechanisms of zoosemy (for example, pigs, bears, Jack rabbit, Peter rabbit, porky bear) which feature a number of various animal names, viz., pig, bear and rabbit, and the mechanism of broadly understood metonymy and synecdoche (for example, blue jeans, sloppy Joes, Kojak, country joe. Note that only one animal name employed in the naming process here bears directly negative axiological value, viz., pigs (realized somewhat differently as porky in porky bear), and hence directly negative connotations.

POLICE OFFICER

lexical item	mechanism	meaning
<i>Leo</i> ¹⁷	<acronymy>	‘policeman’
<i>Blue jeans</i>	<metonymy>	‘state troopers’
<i>Sloopy Joes</i>	<metonymy>	‘state troopers’
<i>Kojak</i>	<metonymy>	‘state trooper’
<i>Polar bear</i>	<zoosemy>	‘state trooper’
<i>Bear cave</i>	<zoosemy>	‘police or highway patrol’
<i>Girlie bear</i>	<zoosemy>	‘policewoman’,

¹⁵ See Stomma’s (2000) *Słownik polskich wyzwisk, inwektyw i określeń pejoratywnych*. Let me also express my gratitude to **Ms Krystyna Knutel** who helped collect the relevant data in Polish.

¹⁶ Apart from those, we find such lexical CB items as *barnies* used in the sense ‘police’ and *Big brother* used in the sense ‘police of any kind’.

¹⁷ Acronym for *Law Enforcement Officer*.

<i>Lady bear</i>	<zoosemy>	'policewoman'
<i>Honeybear</i>	<zoosemy>	'policewoman'
<i>Mama bear</i>	<zoosemy>	'policewoman'
<i>Grasshopper</i>	<zoosemy>	'park policeman'
<i>City kitty</i>	<zoosemy>	'local police'
<i>Little bears</i>	<zoosemy>	'local police' ¹⁸
<i>Country joe</i>	<metonymy>	'rural police'

Likewise, there are many zoosemy based words and expressions employed in the naming process of such related concepts as **POLICE STATION** and **POLICE HELICOPTER**, like *bear cage* 'police station,' *bear in the air* 'police helicopter,' *bear in the sky* 'police helicopter,' *spy in the sky* 'police helicopter,' *fly in the sky* 'police helicopter,' *bird in the air* 'police helicopter,' *eye in the sky* 'police helicopter,' *bear trap* 'radar set-up' and *bear's den* 'police station.' The working of zoosemy is also visible in the multitude of expressions related to police forces, such as *bears are crawling* 'police or troopers are patrolling the expressway,' *pink panther* 'unmarked police car,' *pole cat* 'highway patrol car' or *pig panic* 'driving slowly due to sighting police.'

The picture of the **POLICE OFFICER** one obtains from the data presented above is very much animalistic in nature and it seems to mirror – yet only to a certain degree – the picture that emerges from the road movies. Although the CB radio lingo employs a number of animal names, either alone, in compounds or parts of phrases such as *pig*, *rabbit*, *bear*, *grasshopper*, *kitty*, *fly*, *bird*, the animal terms that feature the naming process of the category **POLICE OFFICER** are not downright negatively loaded, and hence – one could say – the picture of the **POLICE OFFICER** is dualistic in nature. Were it to be outright negative, other animal terms could be expected to be employed in the process of naming, such as, for example, *donkey*, *snake*, *viper*, *vulture*, etc., that may hardly be said to be linked to any positively loaded attributive values. Note that – interestingly enough – of all the animal names that are metaphorically employed here only *pig* may be said to be somewhat intrinsically negatively loaded with its connotations of (DIRTINESS), (MEANESS), while the remainder do not seem to be evaluatively loaded in any way. Likewise, we observe a substantial number of names resulting from the operation of metonymy and synecdoche used in naming various manifestations of **POLICE OFFICER**, such as *black and whites*, *leo*, *blue jeans*, *country joe*.

Apart from this, one feels justified in saying that the essential element of both the road films and the road lingo is dynamics; that is everyone is on the move in pursuit of freedom, and as an act of rebellion against those values

¹⁸ Apart from the names listed here, such composite lexical items as *boogie man* 'state trooper', and *local yokel* used in the sense 'a city policeman' have been found in specialised dictionaries that have been consulted.

predominant in the contemporary society. It is interesting that the characters reach freedom at the moment they break the law. What happens next depends on the reaction of the various representatives of the janus-faced category **POLICE OFFICER**, that is will they start the chase and (try to) restrict the characters' freedom or will they (for whatever reason) let the criminal get away? Harvey Keitel in *Thelma and Louise* portrays a determined police officer who never gives up, but has good intentions and empathises with the characters he is chasing. On the contrary, the second type of the police officer (Bruce Dern from *the Driver*) is crooked, obsessed with the chase, amoral and so bad that we can say he is good at being bad. The third type is exemplified by the cop from *Grindhouse–Death Proof*. He commits the act of negligence and sets the criminal free. The police officer is the key figure in the road movie and his actions, or their lack, determine the characters' pursuit of freedom.

To a certain extent, road films can be compared to both the western genre and samurai movies. Cowboys have their horses, samurai warriors – swords and the police officers also have their tools – cars, helicopters and guns. The car in road movies serves three functions; it can be a means of escaping, a chase vehicle and a murder weapon in cases of vehicular homicide. The trucker movies are a special category within the road films genre. They make use of the tool facilitating the characters' escape, *viz.* CB radio, which may be viewed as the cell phone and the Internet of its time. It enables communication, the grouping of truck drivers fighting for their cause and the organization of mass protests against the establishment, which is guarded and protected by the various manifestations of the category **POLICE OFFICER**.

The dynamics of the road lingo are achieved by, among other factors, the richness of metonymic device – the effect of which is to ease, shorten and accelerate the process of communication. In turn, the extremely frequently employed device of zoosemy adds expressive colour to the language of the road people. Their life is full of *bear traps* set for them somewhere ahead by *pigs/bears/Jack rabbits, Peter rabbits/porky bears* that are here and there and everywhere. Above their heads there loom *bears in the air/bears in the sky/flies in the sky/birds in the air* ready to put them into a *bear cage/bear's den* and if the road people are not hunted directly by any of *blue jeans/sloppy joes/country joes* the *pink panther* will track you unawares, so *pig panic*, before the *pigs* panic you!

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