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## THE AXIOLOGICAL-COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DOMAIN OF *EQUIDAE* : A PILOT STUDY\*

### Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse selected semantic developments in the domain of **EQUIDAE** belonging to the **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** category from a cognitive-axiological perspective. In what follows we will focus both on the cognitive-semantic approach (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff and Turner 1989), and on the axiological-semantic approach (Krzyszowski 1997), and will make an attempt to analyse various examples of *animal metaphors* involving *equine* terms.

### The Notion of Metaphor

In their *Metaphors We Live By* Lakoff and Johnson (1980:5) formulate the following definition of metaphor: *The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.* The word metaphor stands for a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system (Lakoff 1992:2). The term metaphorical expression refers to a linguistic expression (a word, phrase, or sentence), that is the surface realisation of such a cross-domain mapping. Lakoff and Turner (1989:xi) point out that metaphor is a tool so ordinary that we use it unconsciously, with so little effort that we hardly notice it. A special kind of metaphor is touched upon briefly below.

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\* I would like to express my deepest gratitude to **Professor G.A. Kleparski** for supplying me with relevant data as well as for valuable hints and comments on the earlier version of this paper. My thanks also go to **Doctor Annabelle Mooney** for a critical reading of this article and suggesting a number of improvements.

## The theory of The Great Chain of Being

Since time immemorial much attention of both scholars and laypeople has been devoted to axiological considerations concerning evaluation of things. Indeed, it is natural that certain things represent more value to us than other things thus we are tempted to place them lower in our axiological hierarchy. Since we tend to evaluate things, in that we attribute or ascribe a higher value to some things or entities and a lesser or lower to others, the implication in this connection would be that a *hierarchy of values* of some sort must and does exist. Krzeszowski (1997:64) adopts the view that the idea of a hierarchy of values goes back to the theory of the Great Chain of Being. The Chain is a model of organisation and perception of reality in that all beings/entities both material and spiritual form a hierarchy from the lowest to the highest. Although the theoretical bases of this concept were worked out by the ancient philosopher Aristotle, the model has not only survived into our times but, more importantly, its mechanisms have been reflected in various evolutionary theories and, recently, in semantic considerations. The extended version of The Great Chain of Being, employed in axiological semantics, can be represented schematically in the following way (Krzeszowski (1997:68)):

GOD  
HUMANS  
ANIMALS  
PLANTS  
INORGANIC THINGS

It seems unimportant that the exact border lines between particular levels of the hierarchy may be difficult to establish, e.g. bacteria are beings residing somewhere at the edge of flora and fauna, whereas viruses are animate/inanimate in nature. What is crucial, however, is the fact that the beings/entities belonging to respective levels of the hierarchy are characterised by features which distinguish a given level from lower levels. The features can be transferred from a higher level to a lower one, e.g. *a faithful, friendly dog*, or from a lower level to a higher one, e.g. *This man is a pig* (applied, usually contemptuously or opprobriously, to a person).

Lakoff and Turner (1989:172) point out that the Great Chain of Being Metaphor is *a tool of great power and scope because it allows us to comprehend general human character traits in terms of well-understood nonhuman attributes; and, conversely, it allows us to comprehend less well-understood aspects of the nature of animals and objects in terms of better-understood human characteristics*. Below we pay some attention to the analysis of the horse from a cultural and symbolical perspective.

## The domestication of the *horse*

As noted by, among others, Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995:475) the domestic horse (Latin *Equus caballus*) must be descended from one single species of wild horse. Although several types of wild horses are known, the ancestor of the domestic horse must have been one of the smaller, less massive animals hence more appropriate for domestication, such as the types of horses found far from the glacial zone in eastern Europe and in Asia (Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995:475)). The onager (*Equus hemionus onager*), distinct from possible ancestral wild horses, was used as a draught animal in the broad steppe zone north of Mesopotamia ca. seventh millennium B.C. (see Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995:475)). If the horse remains dating from ca. 4800 B.C., which were found at Anau could be proved to belong to ancestral domestic horses and not to onagers, then Central Asia would have to be considered the area of first domestication of the horse (for further details see Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1995)).

## Symbolism of the *horse*

The most important animal in early Teutonic culture was the *horse*, especially as a symbol of fertility and warrior virtue (see Biedermann (1992), Jaffe (2001)). Horses were the gods' main means of support, since divinities had to ride across Bifrost in order to get to the lower worlds. In some cases, a sacred horse was held to understand the will of the gods more clearly than the priests.

Depending on its colour, a *horse* may symbolise either destruction or victory (fiery-red and white, respectively). It is a maternal archetype, and it might also symbolise impulsiveness, impetuosity of desire, the instinctive impulses that motivate man. This association of the horse with darker human drives, such as virility and sexuality, has been resented by numerous writers (e.g. Nietzsche). In dreams, the black horse of death and destruction is synonymous with misery (see Jaffe (2001)). Since the *horse* is generally recognized as a highly sacred animal, it is considered a taboo to eat its meat (see Biedermann (1992), Jaffe (2001)).

People and horses are often linked, the former being described in terms of the latter, in such areas as virility (*stallion*), fidelity, sensitivity, strength (*work like a horse*), selfishness, anger, stubbornness (*you can take /lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink*), stupidity and vanity (*to be/climb on one's high horse* – 'to assume an attitude of moral superiority'). In psychology it can be the unconscious, subhuman side (see Jaffe (2001)).

In what follows we will focus, in some detail, on the presentation of the relevant data and their discussion.

## The axiological analysis of the mechanism of zoosemy exemplified by the EQUIDAE category operating in English

The term *horse* is used in a number of metaphorical expressions targeted at the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**, e.g. in English, as evidenced by Evans (1990:539) *Hengist* and *Horsa*, the semi-legendary leaders who led the first Saxon war-band to settle in England give rise to the German *Hengst* ‘a stallion’ and to present day English *horse*, respectively. As we have pointed out above, the symbolism of the *horse* is particularly rich, e.g. in Christian art the *horse* held to represent courage and generosity. Below, we present a table with the most interesting metaphorical developments from the **EQUIDAE** category.

<i>Horse – as an excellent, virtuous animal</i>			
<b>Animal</b>	<b>Literal meaning</b>	<b>Metaphorical Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>Thoroughbred</i>	A horse of pure breed or stock;	A well-born, well-bred, or thoroughly trained person;	<i>OED</i> 1894 There is rather a paucity of <i>thoroughbreds</i> among the Methodists.
		A first-rate motorcar, bicycle, or other vehicle;	<i>OED</i> 1901 A vehicle running a race must in some mysterious way be a <i>thoroughbred</i> .
<i>Horse – neutrally loaded expressions (in their primary sense)</i>			
<i>Filly</i>	A young mare, a female foal;	Applied to a young lively girl;	<i>OED</i> 1616 A skittish <i>filly</i> will be your fortune, Welford.
<i>Horse</i>	<i>Equus caballus</i> ;	Applied contemptuously or playfully to a man, with reference to various qualities of the quadruped;	<i>OED</i> 1500-20 Tak in this gray <i>hors</i> s, Auld Dunbar. 1596 If I tell thee a Lye, spit in my face, call me <i>Horse</i> . 1606 The vnknowne Aiax; Heauens what a man is there? a very <i>Horse</i> , That has he knowes not what. 1648 Your Maior (a very <i>Horse</i> , and a Traitour to our City).
<i>Foal</i>	A young horse under one year; one of the male sex, a colt; but also used where the sex is not specified, a colt or filly;	A boy, lad working in a coal mine;	<i>OED</i> 1770-4 What are termed lads or <i>foals</i> ; supplying the inferior place at a machine called a tram.  <i>OED</i> 1835 Where a youth is too weak to put the tram by himself, he engages a junior assistant, who is called the <i>foal</i> .

<i>Colt</i>	The young of the horse, or of animals of the horse kind that have not attained sexual maturity;	A young or inexperienced person, a 'green hand'; now in <i>Sport</i> (originally <i>Cricket</i> ); a young or inexperienced player; a member of a junior team (mostly <i>humorous</i> or <i>slang</i> );	<i>OED</i> 1225 Euer beo acurset <i>colt</i> of swuch cunde.  <i>OED</i> 1592 (1861) Come on, in faith, my <i>colts</i> .
		A lively or spirited person;	<i>OED</i> 1586 (1612) The surest remedy that can be deuised for Cupids <i>colts</i> .
		A lascivious fellow, a wanton (archaic);	<i>OED</i> 1722 She was a wild, untamed colt.
		A cunning fellow, a cheat. (obsolete, rare);	<i>OED</i> 1624 An old trick, by which C. Verres, like a cunning <i>colt</i> , often help him at a pinch.
		The barrister that attended on a serjeant-at-law at his induction (legal slang);	<i>OED</i> 1765 Then Mr. Bailey, his <i>colt</i> , delivered his rings to the Lord Chancellor.
<i>Stallion</i>	A male horse not castrated, an entire horse, especially one kept for mating purposes;	Applied to a person – a begetter (obsolete);	<i>OED</i> 1621 When no choice is had, but still the eldest must marry, as so many <i>stallions</i> of the Race.
		A man of lascivious life;	<i>OED</i> 1553 [They] thinke it more mete for wanton wagtaile weston to be turned out for a <i>stalaunt</i> ,..than to vse ani kinde of communication among worthi ladies.
		A courtesan (obsolete);	<i>OED</i> 1575 (1871) Then folloed the worshipfull Bride... But a stale <i>stallion</i> .. God wot, and an il smelling, waz she.
		Among U.S. Blacks, a tall, good-looking girl or woman (colloquial);	<i>OED</i> 1970 <i>Stallion</i> , a good-looking black woman.

<i>Stud</i>	A collection of mares (also, rarely, of stallions) kept for breeding (Obsolete);  Short for stud-horse –a stallion. <i>U.S.</i> ;	A man of (reputedly) great sexual potency or accomplishments; a womaniser, a habitual seducer of women; also used as a term of familiar address among men;	<i>OED</i> 1895 <i>Stud</i> , a nickname given to a man from his love of venery. <i>OED</i> 1909 ‘Hello, old <i>stud</i> , how are you?’
		(without explicit sexual significance): a man, a fellow, especially one who is well-informed; a youth ( <i>U.S. slang</i> );	<i>OED</i> 1929 <i>Stud</i> , man. <i>OED</i> 1944 If you’re a hipped <i>stud</i> , you’ll latch on.
<i>Cob</i>	A short-legged, stout variety of horse, usually ridden by heavy persons;	A great man, big man, leading man;	<i>OED</i> 1420 Mayntenaunce.. Sustenede is not by persones lowe; But <i>cobbes</i> grete this ryot sustene.  <i>OED</i> 1535 Ther must be some of the gret <i>cobbes</i> served likewise, and the King to have ther landes.
<i>Pony</i>	A horse of any small breed;	A small chorus girl or dancer;	<i>OED</i> 1908 I went into the <i>pony</i> ballet of a LaSalle Theatre show– can you see me as a <i>pony</i> ?
<i>Palfrey</i>	A saddle-horse for ordinary riding as distinguished from a war-horse; especially a small saddle-horse for ladies (now historical or in romantic or poetic language);	A palfrey-man – a person riding on a palfrey;	<i>OED</i> 1530 Palfreyman, <i>palefronier</i> .
<i>Mare</i>	The female of any equine animal, but esp. applied to the female of the domestic horse ( <i>Equus caballus</i> );	Applied, originally contemptuously, to a woman;	<i>OED</i> 1303 And shame hyt ys euer aywhare To be kalled ‘a prestēs <i>mare</i> ’.  <i>OED</i> 1508 This Dewlbeir, generit of a <i>meir</i> of Mar, Wes Corspatrik, Erle of Merche.

<i>Steed</i>	In OE., a stud-horse, stallion (obsolete); In ME. and Early Mod. Eng., a high-mettled horse used on state occasions, in war, or in the lists; a great horse, as distinguished from a palfrey (obsolete). From the 16th c. used only <i>poetically</i> or <i>rhetorically</i> for: a horse, usually one for riding; often with eulogistic adjectives (also sometimes slightly jocular, as being a rather grandiloquent word);	No zoosemic developments applied to people;	
		Applied to a bicycle;	<i>OED</i> 1877 The makers relying on the adopted and favourite types whereon to build a good <i>steed</i> .
<i>Nag</i>	A small riding horse or pony;	A term of abuse for a person;	<i>OED</i> 1598 Hence lewd <i>nags</i> away, Goe read each poast,.. Then to Priapus gardens. The witlesse sence Of these odde <i>naggs</i> , whose pates circumference Is fild with froth!
<i>Curtal</i>	A horse with its tail cut short or docked (and sometimes the ears cropped) (cf. <i>cocktail</i> );	Applied to persons: one whose ears are cropped;	<i>OED</i> 1592 I am made a <i>curtall</i> , for the pillory..hath eaten off both my eares.
		In <i>cant</i> language: a rogue who wears a short cloak;	<i>OED</i> 1561 A <i>Curtall</i> is much like to the Upright man. He useth commonly to go with a short cloke, like to grey Friers.
		A term of derision or opprobrium;	<i>OED</i> 1578 Were you born in a myll, <i>curtole</i> , that you prate so hye.
		A drab – a dirty and untidy woman; a slut, slattern (perhaps referring to short skirts);	<i>OED</i> 1611 <i>Caignardiere</i> , a hedge-whore, lazie queane, lowsie trull, filthie <i>curtall</i> , Doxie, Morte.

<i>Mustang</i>	The wild or half-wild horse of the American plains;	An officer in the U.S. services who has been promoted from the ranks; a volunteer officer as distinct from a regular-army officer (slang);	<i>OED</i> 1931 We have three.. <i>mustangs</i> , two of whom are..completing their probationary periods. <i>OED</i> 1939 He was a ' <i>mustang</i> '—up from the enlisted ranks.
<i>Gelding</i>	A gelded or castrated animal, especially a horse;	A gelded person, a eunuch (obsolete);	<i>OED</i> 1382 Putiphar, the <i>geldyng</i> of Pharao. <i>OED</i> 1483 A <i>Geldyng</i> .. <i>eunuchus</i> . <i>OED</i> 1548 The gospell also hath his Eunuches very blessed, whiche be not <i>geldynges</i> of nature, nor gelded of men.
<i>Horse – as an inferior animal (a term of abuse) or as a worthless animal (a term of contempt)</i>			
<i>Tit</i>	A name for a horse small of kind, or not full grown; in later use often applied in depreciation or meiosis to any horse; a nag;	A girl or young woman: often qualified as <i>little</i> : cf. <i>chit</i> ; also applied indiscriminately to women: (a) usually in depreciation or disapproval: especially one of loose character, a hussy, a minx; (b) sometimes in affection or admiration, or playful meiosis (common in 17th and 18th c.; now <i>low slang</i> ); rarely applied to a lad or young man (obsolete);	<i>OED</i> 1599 He hath his <i>tit</i> , and she likewise her gull; Gull he, trull she. <i>OED</i> 1606 Hang am <i>Tytts!</i> ile pommell my selfe into am. <i>OED</i> 1606 His Dad a Tinker, and his Dam a <i>Tit</i> . <i>OED</i> 1599 Must young court <i>tits</i> Play tomboys' tricks with her, and he [her husband] live?
<i>Cocktail</i>	Any horse of racing stamp and qualities, but decidedly not thoroughbred, from a known stain in his parentage;	A person assuming the position of a gentleman, but deficient in thorough gentlemanly breeding;	<i>OED</i> 1854 Such a selfish, insolent coxcomb as that, such a <i>cocktail</i> .



<i>Hilding</i>	A worthless or vicious beast, especially a horse; a sorry hack, a jade (archaic);	A contemptible, worthless person of either sex; a good-for-nothing;	<i>OED</i> 1601 If your Lordshippe finde him not a <i>Hilding</i> , hold me no more in your respect. <i>OED</i> 1713 This idle Toy, this <i>Hilding</i> [Jane Shore] scorns my power.
<i>Rip</i>	An inferior, worthless, or worn-out horse;	A worthless, dissolute fellow; a rake (used as a term of reproof);	<i>OED</i> 1797 This <i>rip</i> of a son shall be trained to the church.
		Applied to a woman – somewhat rare;	<i>OED</i> 1825 <i>Rip</i> , a vulgar, old, unchaste woman.
		A person or thing of little or no value;	<i>OED</i> 1815 Ah you don't recollect Mrs. Cibber–Mrs. Siddons was a <i>rip</i> to her—about what Kean is to Garrick, ma'am!  <i>OED</i> 1838 <i>Rip</i> , any person or thing completely worn out and worthless.
<i>Jade</i>	A contemptuous name for a horse; a horse of inferior breed, a hack;	A term of reprobation applied to a woman; also used playfully, like <i>hussy</i> or <i>minx</i> ;	<i>OED</i> 1560 Such a <i>jade</i> she is, and so curst a quean, She would out-scold the devil's dame I ween.
		Applied to Fortune, Nature, etc. personified);	<i>OED</i> 1594 These crie out vpon fortune, and call her blind buzzard, and <i>iade</i> .
<i>Hack</i>	A hackney horse – a horse let out for hire; <i>depreciatively</i> , a sorry or worn out horse; a jade;	A person whose services may be hired for any kind of work required of him; especially a literary drudge, who hires himself out to do any and every kind of literary work; hence, a poor writer, a mere scribbler;	<i>OED</i> 1774 Here lies poor Ned Purdon.. Who long was a bookseller's <i>hack</i> .
		A prostitute; a bawd (slang);	<i>OED</i> 1864 Webster, <i>Hack</i> ..a procuress.

<i>Harridan</i>	An old jade of a horse;	A gaunt ill-favoured woman; a haggard old woman; a vixen; 'a decayed strumpet' usually a term of vituperation;	<i>OED</i> 1700 <i>Harridan</i> , one that is half Whore, half Bawd. <i>OED</i> 1706 D'ye hear, d'ye hear, you plaguy <i>harridan</i> , how those bullets whistle! <i>OED</i> 1727 And in four months a batter'd <i>harridan</i> . <i>OED</i> 1745 (1807) The nymphs with whom you first began, Are each become a <i>harridan</i> .
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Stern (1931:320) points out that animal terms used for people are often depreciative, more or less abusive appellations of human beings. The element of similarity is either a quality that is reprehensible or contemptible in itself, or else a quality that is neutral or favourable in an animal, but becomes reprehensible in a human being. Indeed, paying some attention to the data gathered in the table above, we can agree that in a majority of cases equine terms applied to human beings refer to some pejorative traits characteristic of human beings. The only ameliorative development in this connection is *thoroughbred*, a term denoting excellence and virtuousness of both the quadruped and a human being.

Kleparski (1990) in his analysis of evaluative developments in the domain of **HUMANS** puts forward the following classification of evaluatively loaded meanings (ameliorations and pejorations) from the domain of **HUMANS**:

- 1) SOCIAL
- 2) AESTHETIC
- 3) BEHAVIOURAL
- 4) MORAL

Below an attempt will be made to analyse some equine developments in terms of the mechanisms postulated in Kleparski (1990).

### **Evaluative classification of *equine* terms**

Kleparski (1990) postulates the operation of a gradual four-staged pejoration in the domain of **HUMANS** starting with social, through aesthetic and behavioural, finishing with moral evaluatively loaded developments. Interestingly, our observation concerning the development of equine terms is the following. In contrast to the domain of **HUMANS**, where a semantic change of a word does not go beyond the domain, i.e. both primary and secondary meanings pertain to the same semantic domain, in the case of the developments from the domain of **ANIMALS** to the domain of **HUMANS** (zoosemic extension of meaning) we cannot find any cases of social pejoration. Apparently, social belongingness must be regarded as an attribute characteristic only and invariably

of mankind. In contrast, however, it seems plausible that we can analyse the developments within the domain of **ANIMALS** in terms of utility. Hence, negatively marked developments will be considered as *utilitarian pejoration*, which is a refinement of what is proposed in Kleparski (1990). The table drawn below displays an evaluative classification of *equine* developments.

DOMAIN OF EQUIDAE				
Amelioration				
Social / utilitarian	Moral	Behavioural	Aesthetic	
<i>Stallion</i> – a begetter; <i>Stud</i> – a man, a fellow (with respect to virility);	--	Thoroughbred – a well-bred person;	<i>Stallion</i> – a good-looking girl;	
Pejoration				
Social / utilitarian	Moral	Behavioural	Aesthetic	Other
<i>Hilding</i> – a contemptible, worthless person, a good-for-nothing; <i>Rip</i> – a worthless, dissolute fellow; <i>Hack</i> – a poor writer;	<i>Colt</i> – a lascivious fellow; a cunning fellow; <i>Hack</i> – a prostitute; <i>Rip</i> – a vulgar, unchaste woman; <i>Cocktail</i> – a person assuming the position of a gentleman, but deficient in thorough gentlemanly breeding; <i>Stallion</i> – a person of lascivious life; a courtesan; <i>Harridan</i> – an ill-favoured woman, ‘a half-whore and half-bawd’; <i>Tit</i> – a woman of loose character; <i>Stud</i> – a womanizer, a habitual seducer of women; <i>Curtal</i> – a drab, a slut, slattern, a dirty and untidy woman;	---	<i>Horse</i> – an ugly-looking person; <i>Curtal</i> – a person whose ears are cropped; a rogue who wears a short cloak; <i>Cob</i> – a great, big man;	<i>Mare</i> – a contemptible woman; <i>Nag</i> – an execrated, detested person; <i>Jade</i> – a contemptible woman; <i>Tit</i> – a small chorus girl or dancer;

**Residual (neutral) cases of zoosemic developments**

<i>Filly</i>	A young lively girl;
<i>Foal</i>	A boy, lad working in a coal mine;
<i>Colt</i>	A lively or spirited person; an inexperienced person; a barrister;
<i>Cob</i>	A leading man;
<i>Pony</i>	A small chorus girl or dancer;
<i>Mustang</i>	An officer in the U.S. services who has been promoted from the ranks;
<i>Hack</i>	A person whose services may be hired for any kind of work required of him;

In the table above we propose a classification of *equine* terms divided into three categories: amelioration, pejoration and residual cases. Looking at the table we notice that the number of cases of moral pejoration in relation to *equine* terms outnumbers the aesthetic, behavioural and social/utilitarian pejoration. One might wonder what is the reason for this particular direction of pejoration. Following the line of reasoning advocated in Kleparski (1990), where moral pejoration is treated as the final and most extreme stage in the evaluative development in the pejorative direction, we might argue that many *equine* terms have reached the final stage in their pejorative development in a very short time. In order to visualise this observation let us trace the evaluative development of certain lexical items, e.g.: the *OED* registers the first appearance of the entry *rip* with the meaning of ‘an inferior, worthless, or worn-out horse’ in 1778 (I have given him the *rips*, instead of the best team, and he is all submission); in 1791 the word was first used to refer to ‘a worthless woman’ (*OED* The chariot wheels of the coroneted *rip*, hurrying on to the guilty assignation) and finally in 1797 the term came to denote ‘a worthless, dissolute fellow; a rake’ (*OED* This *rip* of a son shall be trained to the church). As we can see, the time gap between the primary and the secondary meaning of the word is only 13 years in the case of the development referring to a woman, and only 19 years in relation to the metaphorical development applied to a man. Thus, the time gap is altogether negligible. Another interesting example is *curtal*, which is listed in the *OED* under the date 1530 with its primary meaning of ‘a horse with its tail cut short or docked’ (*OED* Covrtavlt, a *courtal*, a horse); the first instance of the application of this word to people is traceable to the year 1561, when it has the metaphorical meaning of ‘a rogue who wears a short cloak’ (*OED* A *Curtall* is much like to the Upright man.. He useth commonly to go with a short cloke, like to grey Friers); since 1578 the word started to be used as ‘a term of derision or opprobrium’ (*OED* Were you born in a myll, *curtole*, that you prate so hye); and finally after 81 years the word stands to represent ‘a drab, a slut, slattern, a dirty and untidy woman’ (*OED* 1611 Caignardiere, a hedge-whore, lazie queane, lowsietrull, filthie *curtall*, Doxie, Morte).

The reason why Kleparski (1990) treats moral pejoration within the domain of **HUMANS** as the final and most extreme stage in the evaluative development in the pejorative direction is that in many cases, once associated with morally negative elements, words tend to become archaic, obsolete or restricted to historical usage. Our observation stemming from the analysis of data in the **EQUIDAE** category is that many equine terms having undergone their pejorative zoosemic development also tend to become archaic, obsolete or restricted to historical usage, e.g.: *curtal*, *hilding*, *hack*, *jade*.

Looking for an explanation of the extremely rapid pejorative development within the category of **EQUIDAE**, let us remember that symbolism seems to play a crucial role. As we have stated above *horse* has been associated with virility and sexuality, and, what is more, the early Church Fathers found the animal haughty and lascivious (it was said to neigh longingly when it saw a woman) (Biedermann (1992:178)). Zoosemic interpretations could be, thus, said to reflect a general human perception of reality, in which human behaviour and character traits are expressed and understood in terms of animal behaviour and symbolism.

In what follows we are going to elaborate on the issue of symbolism and mappings of both behavioural and character traits between the two domains, i.e. **HUMANS** and **ANIMALS**.

### ***Equine metaphors within the framework of the Great Chain of Being***

Interestingly enough, some *equine* terms as, e.g. *horse*, *foal*, *colt*, *nag*, *cob*, *mare*, *curtal*, are hardly evaluative (see Krzeszowski (1997:51)) or, to put it differently, are axiologically neutral when used in their directly meaningful senses but become highly evaluative when used figuratively as in: “If I tell thee a Lye, spit in my face, call me *Horse*,” 1596 *OED*, “*Caignardiere*, a hedge-whore, lazie queane, lowsie trull, filthie *curtall*, *Doxie*, *Morte*” *OED* 1611 or “An old trick, by which C. Verres, like a cunning *colt*, often holp him at a pinch”, *OED* 1624. On the other hand, a large set of *equine* terms, e.g. *thoroughbred*, *jade*, *hack*, *rip*, *hilding*, *harridan* are axiologically charged and the process of zoosemy consists in a mapping of evaluatively positive or (in majority of cases) negative animal features onto the domain of **HUMANS**.

Martsa (2001:775–776) in her study of animal-based metaphors expresses the view that:

*Underlying the comprehension of human attributes and behaviour through animal attributes and behaviour are the highly general conceptual metaphors HUMANS ARE ANIMALS and a number of submetaphors pertaining to it.*

Drawing on the idea developed in Martsa (2001), we would like to suggest a list of submetaphors pertaining to the category **EQUIDAE**, where human attributes and behaviour are understood and perceived in terms of animal attributes and behaviour. It will be noticed, however, that in certain cases the pejorative development of a word was so drastic that the secondary meaning the word acquired bears hardly any correspondance to the original one (e.g. *stallion* – a courtesan, *nag* – a detested person, *tit* – a woman of loose character or *colt* – a cunning person), hence in the latter cases we avoid using the wording “because they are perceived as ...”.

WELL-BORN, WELL-BRED OR THOROUGHLY TRAINED PEOPLE ARE **THOROUGHBREDS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **THOROUGHBREDS**  
CONTEMPTIBLE PEOPLE ARE **HORSES**  
PEOPLE EATING A LOT ARE **HORSES** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **HORSES**  
STRONG PEOPLE ARE **HORSES** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **HORSES**  
YOUNG LIVELY GIRLS ARE **FILLIES** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **FILLIES**  
BOYS WORKING IN COAL MINES ARE **FOALS**  
YOUNG OR INEXPERIENCED PEOPLE ARE **COLTS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **COLTS**  
LIVELY OR SPIRITED PEOPLE ARE **COLTS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **COLTS**  
LASCIVIOUS PEOPLE, WANTONS ARE **COLTS**  
CUNNING PEOPLE, CHEATS ARE **COLTS**  
LASCIVIOUS PEOPLE ARE **STALLIONS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **STALLIONS**  
COURTESANS ARE **STALLIONS**  
TALL, GOOD-LOOKING GIRLS OR WOMEN ARE **STALLIONS**  
GREAT, BIG, LEADING MEN ARE **COBS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **COBS**  
SMALL CHORUS GIRLS OR DANCERS ARE **PONIES** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **PONIES**  
DISRESPECTED AND DESPISED WOMEN ARE **MARES**  
EXECRATED, DETESTED PEOPLE ARE **NAGS**  
PEOPLE WHOSE EARS ARE CROPPED ARE **CURTALS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **CURTALS**  
ROGUES WHO WEAR SHORT CLOAKS ARE **CURTALS**  
DERIDED OR OPPROBRIATED PEOPLE ARE **CURTALS**  
UNCHASTE WOMEN ARE **CURTALS**  
PEOPLE ASSUMING THE POSITION OF GENTLEMEN, BUT DEFICIENT IN THOROUGH GENTLEMANLY BREEDING ARE **COCKTAILS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **COCKTAILS**  
CONTEMPTIBLE, WORTHLESS PEOPLE ARE **HILDINGS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **HILDINGS**  
WORTHLESS, DISSOLUTE PEOPLE ARE **RIPS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **RIPS**  
VULGAR, UNCHASTE WOMEN ARE **RIPS**  
CONTEMPTIBLE, REPROBATED WOMEN ARE **JADES** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **JADES**

PEOPLE WHOSE SERVICES MAY BE HIRED FOR ANY KIND OF WORK REQUIRED OF THEM ARE **HACKS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **HACKS**  
PROSTITUTES, BAWDS ARE **HACKS**  
ILL-FAVOURERD WOMEN ARE **HARRIDANS**  
WOMEN OF LOOSE CHARACTER ARE **TITS**  
VOLUNTEER OFFICERS IN THE US SERVICES ARE **MUSTANGS**  
HABITUAL SEDUCERS OF WOMEN ARE **STUDS**  
CASTRATED, GELDED MEN ARE **GELDINGS** BECAUSE THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS **GELDINGS**

Martsa (2001:776) observes that animal metaphors are mappings from the source domain of instinctual attributes and behaviour onto the target domain of human character traits. It is noteworthy, however, that mappings within the Great Chain of Being framework are two-directional, namely human features are mapped onto animals and animal traits, in turn, get mapped onto humans. It must be emphasised that while the former mappings are quite common (as the above-mentioned metaphors indicate), the latter mechanism is of not so great frequency. Some examples representing personification, i.e. in which attributes and behaviour of animals are understood in terms of human attributes and behaviour are the following:

HORSES ARE PERCEIVED AS **NOBLE AND INTELLIGENT** ANIMALS  
HORSES ARE PERCEIVED AS **HAUGHTY AND LASCIVIOUS** ANIMALS  
HORSES ARE PERCEIVED AS EASILY **DISTURBED OR FRIGHTENED** CREATURES

As the above symbolical (Biedermann (1992:177–178)) metaphors show, we tend to ascribe human moral properties to animals in order to indicate particular forms of their instinctual behaviour. In this case the conceptual metaphor **HUMANS ARE ANIMALS** operates in its reversed form, i.e. **ANIMALS ARE HUMANS**. Thus, the Great Chain of Being cannot be viewed as a static category, conversely, it must be perceived as a dynamic entity in which various internal mutations come into play.

Finally, let us conclude that the reason why there are so many metaphors involving equine terms in relation to people is that since its domestication, the *horse* has occupied an important role in human life and culture.

## Conclusion

In this paper an attempt was made to present a sample analysis of zoosemic developments in the domain of **EQUIDAE**. With the aid of some of the mechanisms of cognitivism we have suggested a number of conceptual metaphors displaying the mappings of animal features onto people. Additionally,

we have observed that the richness of equine metaphors as well as the bi-directionality of mappings within the Great Chain of Being point to the fact the *horse* has occupied a special place in human world.

Finally, we wish to stress that the *horse* is one of the oldest domesticated animals, hence the abundance of metaphorical developments involving equine terms, but an interesting topic for further research would be to examine the role of other domesticated animals (e.g. **BOVIDAE**, **CANIDAE**, **SUIDAE**, **FELIDAE**) in the Great Chain of Being.

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