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NOT TO BE IMPOLITE, BUT THIS IS WAR: How the impolite strategy of challenge is utilised and countered in debates between atheists and Christians

NIE CHCĘ BYĆ NIEGRZECZNY, ALE JESTEŚMY NA WOJNIE: Jak strategie niegrzeczności językowej są wykorzystywane do ataku i obrony w debatach między ateistami i chrześcijanami

W artykule analizowane są wybrane debaty między chrześcijanami i ateistami/ewolucjonistami z punktu widzenia strategii niegrzeczności i kontrstrategii.

Key words:　　　　impoliteness analysis, challenge strategy, WAR metaphor, debates
Słowa kluczowe:　analiza niegrzeczności, strategia „wyzwania", metafora wojny, debata

Introduction

The goal of the study was to investigate impoliteness strategies and counter-strategies in debates between Christians and atheists. The inspiration for this pilot study was the perceived conflict between atheists and Christians within the mass media. Numerous video-recordings of debates between representatives of Christianity or Creationism on one side, and Atheists or Evolutionists on the other, are available online, and the debate in the comments sections that accompany these recordings appears to be even more heated. In the course of the study the impoliteness strategy of *challenge* emerged as very productive. We believe that the deployment of challenging questions as a dominating impoliteness strategy is significantly influenced by the metaphor of WAR underlying these debates. The frame of WAR comes in the first place from the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT (DEBATE) IS

WAR, which is the main focus of our attention, reinforced by the idea of 'holy war' in the ranks of ardent Christians, and the concept of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest on the part of evolutionists. This paper comprises of six sections. Section 2 provides details of the material analysed, section 3 is devoted to the discussion of the metaphor DEBATE IS WAR, section 4 presents the analysis of challenges present in the sample – what triggers impoliteness in the debates under investigation, how *challenge* manifests itself and how it is countered or managed. Section 5 is a summary of the findings and section 6 provides suggestions on further research. The analysis has revealed that the metaphor informs not only the use of challenge as an impoliteness strategy, but also the strategies used to counter these challenges.

1. The material

In order to look at impoliteness within the atheist/Christian debate, two recordings of approximately 50 minutes were chosen. One is a TV studio interview/debate with Richard Dawkins, a renowned evolutionist carried out by Howard Conder, an evangelical Christian, founder of Revelation TV (retrieved from Youtube 1st Jan 2013). Howard Conder is the host of the show which supposedly has an interview format, but where the questions asked are bound to inspire controversy. In the course of the programme he also responds to Dawkins answers, and is asked questions by Dawkins. The other recording analysed is a public debate between Richard Dawkins and John Lennox, a Christian mathematician and philosopher of science, which was held in Oxford Museum of Natural History, entitled 'Has science buried God?' (Fixed Point Foundation, 2009). It is moderated and an audience is present.

2. The metaphor

One of fundamental assumptions of Cognitive Semantics is metaphorical nature of human conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act. Thus, conceptual metaphors are claimed to structure "what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:3). While a typical enterprise of Cognitive Semantics involves identifying metaphorical linguistic expressions though which conceptual metaphors surface in language, our objective in this paper is to

investigate the impact of the metaphor ARGUMENT (DEBATE) IS WAR on how discourse is shaped and managed.[1]

Cognitive Semantics defines conceptual metaphor as "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain" (Kövecses 2002:4). The domain which is described is called the **target domain** and the other domain in terms of which the target is described is the **source domain**. The two domains are connected via a number of mappings or correspondences which reflect the transfer of the knowledge (and usually language) associated with the source domain onto the target domain. In the case of the metaphor ARGUMENT (DEBATE) IS WAR the mappings between the domain of WAR and the domain of DEBATE are presented in Table 1. below.

Table 1. ARGUMENT (DEBATE) IS WAR: correspondences between the domains

Source domain: WAR	Target domain: ARGUMENT/DEBATE
sides of a military conflict	debate participants
military conflict, battle	argument/debate
occupying a position	having an opinion
the same position	agreement
different position	disagreement
attack	asking questions and raising objections
defense	responding to questions and objections
counterattack	raising new questions and objections
strategy	devising a way to convince the opponent

Our analysis of the debates is fully consonant with what Lakoff and Johnson wrote over thirty years ago: "ARGUMENT is partially structured, understood, performed, and talked about in terms of WAR. The concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5). We believe that the pre-existing metaphor ARGUMENT (DEBATE) IS WAR salient for both debaters accounts for the high use of challenge as an impoliteness strategy as well as for how impoliteness is handled. That is why for the purpose of our analysis it is the correspondence between ASKING QUESTIONS AND RAISING OBJECTIONS and ATTACK and RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS and DEFENSE that are particularly relevant.

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[1] The conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is one of the best documented and analysed metaphors in Cognitive Semantics literature. Beginning with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) seminal book, it is used as an example of a conceptual metaphor in innumerable papers and handbooks (e.g. Ungerer and Schmid 1996, Kövecses 2002, Coulson 2001, Evans and Green 2006 to name but a few).

3. The analysis

So as to present the characteristics of the material analysed in more detail, the features of the debates are described following Thomas' features of this activity type (1995: 190−192). On the surface, the goal of a debate is to persuade the opponent to one's position. In the case of the debates analysed in this study, this seems hardly the case. When it comes to such core values as religious beliefs, and taking into account the fact that both opponents advocate for their view for a living, a sudden change of heart in the presence of the audience does not seem likely to happen, and it does not. A more plausible goal for the participants is to present their position as superior (more reasonable, logical, in this case – more satisfactory as a scientific explanation of the world), and as a result perhaps persuade the members of the audience (at home or present at the venue) to their point of view. The formal and public character of the material determines the type of contributions that are acceptable; such impoliteness strategies as *Use taboo Language*, *Threaten/Frighten, Use inappropriate identity markers* (Culpeper 1996: 357−358), would be counterproductive and were in fact absent from the sample. At the same time such strategies as *Seek disagreement* − 'select a sensitive topic' (Culpeper 1996: 357) are at the heart of debate as an activity type. Gricean and interpersonal maxims are generally adhered to, however, strategic violations of (Gricean) maxims of quantity and relevance can be observed (this is discussed in section 4.2 below). Also, the (interpersonal) Agreement Maxim (Leech 1983: 32) is flouted in debate as an activity type, and so it is in the debates analysed. As far as turn taking and topic control are concerned, these depend on the activity type as well as the social and discoursal roles of the participants. Debate has its turn-taking rules, i.e. one has a chance to present their point in full, then the floor is the other's. However, in the case of the Conder vs. Dawkins recording, Conder switches between the roles of interviewer/host and that of debater, which differ in the access to the turn and turn allocation/control (Table 2. Contains a summary of all social and discoursal roles held by the participants in the material analysed; these are not discussed in detail due to lack of space). Finally, face threats are part and parcel of debate as an activity type. Debaters will 'attack' the other's position and thus threaten both the positive face, by implying negative things about the other (e.g. in the sample – that they are unreasonable or downright insane) and the negative face by questioning the other's right to hold their own beliefs.

Table 2. The summary of the social and discoursal roles of the participants in the sample (Thomas 1995; Bousfield 2008)

		Social roles	Discoursal roles
Recording 1	Dawkins	Evolutionist, Darwinist, atheist, university professor, (interviewee, debater)	Speaker: Author Addressee; Real, Ostensible? (when the audience is the real addressee)
	Conder	Christian (fundamentalist Christian), TV show host (interviewer, debater)	Speaker: Author, Spokesperson Addressee: Real
	Audience	TV viewers, unknown, mostly Christian (Christian channel), 'young Earth' etc. But possibly also militant atheist	Audience, real addressee? (when Dawkins is the ostensible one)
Recording 2	Dawkins	Evolutionist, Darwinist, atheist, university professor, (debater)	Speaker: Author Addressee; Real,
	Lennox	Mathematician, Philosopher of science, Christian, university professor (debater)	Speaker: Author Addressee; Real,
	Audience	Unknown, Christian/atheist, educated, bought tickets to be there	audience

3.1. Challenges

Bousfield defines *challenge* as follows: 'ask h a challenging question, question h's position, stance, beliefs, assumed power, rights, obligations, ethics, etc." (2008: 132). In order to investigate the use of challenge in the debates between Christians and atheists we looked at the questions present in the sample. Before they are discussed, let's look at what brings on the challenges in the debates analysed. Within Jay's classification of impoliteness triggers (1992: 9) it would appear that the **offender** is the opponent by the token of his religious affiliation; at their most antagonistic, both to a Christian and a vehement atheist, the opponent represents a world view which ignores the obvious and denies the truth. This is more present in Recording 1, Dawkins vs. Conder. This leads to triggering events – participants contributions are, or are perceived as, attacks on (denials of viability to) the belief system of the opponent, attacks on (denials of) the truth (whatever it is for each participant), attack on (denials of) reason/common sense. All of that can be described as in Bousfield's terms, an **offending situation** (2008: 185). However, while all the above can be said about Recording 1, Dawkins vs. Conder, it is not as easily applicable to Recording 2, Dawkins vs. Lennox. While the opposition atheism vs. Christianity is present, the first 'attack'

comes right after the moderator asks the topic question, 'Has science buried God?', and it is Dawkins' turn to present his position (Example 1):

Example 1   (*LD*)

D: Well, which god? I mean, we could take Einstein's god [... goes on to present the many ways in which people perceive god, god the force, god the mathematician, god of the physicists] *The third kind of god is one of which there are thousands and thousands of varieties, Zeus and Thor, and Apollo, and Amun-Ra, and Jahwe$_1$*, and (.) er we don't actually need to go through all those because I've em as Larry has said I've encountered John Lennox before, *I know what god, the god he believes in, which is the Christian God$_2$.* (.hh) *John Lennox is a scientist who believes that Jesus turned water into wine (.) a scientist who believes that Jesus somehow influenced all those molecules of H_2O, and introduced proteins and carbohydrates and tannins and alcohol (.) and turned it into (.) wine$_3$.* [...] I had been accustomed to debating with sophisticated theologians (.) and *I come across John Lennox who's a scientist who believes in all those things$_4$* in particular. (.hh) he believes that the creator of the universe, [... a long list describing the magnitude of god] this (.) <u>paragon</u> of physical science, *this genius of mathematics couldn't think of a better way to rid the world of sin, (.) than to come to this little speck of cosmic dust, (.) and have himself tortured, and executed, so that he can forgive himself$_5$.* That is profoundly unscientific (.) not only unscientific, it doesn't do justice. To the grandeur of the universe. *It is petty, and small-minded$_6$.* And that's the god that John Lennox believes in.

This three-minute-long turn is abundant in impoliteness strategies, often combining more than one strategy within a single argument. Six of these strategies are italicised and numbered for convenience. Thus, first the other's space is invaded – utterance 1 (speak for another, Culpeper 1996: 358), then politeness is withheld in utterance 2 (Culpeper 1996: 357), where Christian god is equated with mythological gods, utterances 3, 5 and 6 contain *condescend, scorn or ridicule* impoliteness strategy (Bousfield 2008: 114), which in 5 is combined with *associate other with negative aspect* (Bousfield 2008: 115), although here it is not the other but an entity in which the other has invested face that is attacked (Goffman 1967: 5). In 6 the ridicule is combined with criticism which is also present in 4. It may seem that the impoliteness in the example above is unwarranted, yet it has a place within the debate format. It stands to reason to propose that in debate the offending situation has its locus in the frame of WAR: most challenges in the sample occur **without** an overt triggering event.

When the triggering event can be identified, it is always another impolite utterance. In Example 2 below the challenges and counterchallenges have been italicised and numbered. Challenge 1 occurs without an over trigger, but challenges 2 and 3 are responses to the preceding challenges, with 2 combined with *criticise* and *condescend, ridicule* impoliteness strategies.

Example 2   (*LD*)

L: Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but it seems to me that atheism is saying that thoughts in our minds are in the end of the only the results of a mindless unguided process. *Now if that is the case it seems to me that it's very difficult to see how they could tell us anything that is true about ourselves $_1$,*[... develops the argument]. So, it seems to me that your atheism undermines the very rationality, that I assume and you assume when we go to study the universe. So that's the first point i would make-

D: let me answer that. It seems to me a quite absurd thing to say that because we are saying that our minds produced by brains, and brains evolve by evolution by natural selection, therefore that somehow undermines our ability to understand anything. *Why on earth should that be?$_2$* I mean, natural selection builds brains which are good at surviving, and brains that are good at surviving are brains that are surviving in the world.-

L: the concept of truth, *how do they come to recognize things like truth? If those thoughts are simply reducible to physics and chemistry neurophysiology how do they serve truth?$_3$*

Example 2 also illustrates how debaters encroach on each other's space, competing for the floor (hyphens at the end of utterances indicate that next speaker started speaking right at the moment of, or right before, current speaker has achieved a transition relevance place (Sachs et al. 1998[1974]: 198)). Thus, the challenges with an overt triggering event are always counter challenges.

The fact that impoliteness in the debates analysed is triggered by the offending situation rather than event is also apparent in how *challenge* is used throughout the recordings. In the majority of cases the position, not the person, of the opponent is attacked c.f., Example 3.

Example 3   *(CD)*

D: you get pretty mixed sort of morals if you follow the Bible (.) now bits of it are OK but *I don't suppose you wish to follow everything in the book of Leviticus, for example, or the book of Numbers or the Book of Deuteronomy?*

Very rarely the person or the actions of the interlocutor are challenged, as in Example 4 below:

Example 4   *(CD)*

D: time and again you come come back to a biblical quotation as though I'm supposed to be impressed. *Why would you expect me to be impressed?*

When they are, what is challenged is the use of floor or the debating move, so challenges on action include a **role shift** (from debater to self-proclaimed moderator). The strategic value of such a move is discussed in section 4.2.

In the two recordings analysed we identified 44 instances of challenges, traditionally divisible into rhetorical and response seeking which in turn can be divided into challenges that invite account, and verbal traps (Bousfield 2008: 240−244). Table 3 below is a summary of all the challenges present in the sample, divided by type according to Bousfield (2008: 240−244), and by debate participants who utilise them.

Table 3. The summary of the use of challenge in the sample

Challenges		Rhetorical	Response seeking – inviting account	Response seeking – verbal traps	Total
Recording 1	Conder		5	3	8
	Dawkins	1	6	11	18
Recording 2	Lennox	1	3	5	9
	Dawkins	1	4	4	9
Total		3	18	23	44

From the table it is quite clear that rhetorical questions are scarce in the sample. One of the three instances is presented below as Example 5, and is taken from Recording 2, the debate between Dawkins and Lennox.

Example 5   *(LD)*

L: *we have to ask ourselves are we prepared to believe in historical testimony or not*

When one university professor asks another whether he is prepared to believe historical testimony, it can be but a rhetorical question. It is posed after Lennox has presented at length the historical evidence of the resurrection of Christ, but the most interesting is the response this rhetorical question provokes. Example 6 contains the rhetorical question from Example 5, and the response that followed it – one that utilises impoliteness strategy *condescend*, but on closer look turns out not to address the issue raised in the challenge.

Example 6   *(LD)*

L: we have to ask ourselves are we prepared to believe in historical testimony or not

D: (3.0) well you must talk to different historians than the one I talked to- that the ones I talk to that but erm in in any case I still come back to the point that you cannot do science if at any time- you remember that famous cartoon (indistinct)

All three challenges identified as rhetorical questions received a response following this format.

The other type of challenges within the traditional division are response seeking questions, those that invite account, and those that are verbal traps.

An example of an account inviting challenge is given below as Example 7, taken from Recording 1, where Howard Conder asks Richard Dawkins a seemingly genuine question, and the challenge is only visible in the use of 'if' in the first part of the question; 'if we've evolved' calls into question the fundamental assumption on which evolutionists operate, thus making the utterance a challenge rather than a genuine question.

Example 7   *(CD)*

C: *If we've evolved, why have we evolved with such concept? To worship?*

D: yes I think that's not really very difficult, and I think it's very easy to see you could answer that question psychologically and point out that uh… it can be very comforting to people to believe in some sort of supernatural father who looks after you, takes care of you maybe raises you from the dead uh… so it's very easy to see that if people believe what they want to believe then they're likely to believe in […]

Out of the 44 instances of challenges in the sample 18 can be interpreted as belonging to this type. That such classification is subject to interpretation is illustrated and discussed in section 4.2.

The remaining type of a response seeking challenge is a *verbal trap*. 23 of the challenges found seem to fall into this category, making it the most productive category within the sample. The challenge in Example 8 is given in italics.

Example 8   *(LD)*

L: yes well (1.0) d'you know, that disturbs me for the following reason, reading your book. The God Delusion. you say that (.) it's under scholarly dispute among historians. that Jesus actually existed. I- I've checked with the ancient historians. that is not so. (.) and it disturbed me. history is not natural science. *But- what I don't understand is this why you would write something like that*

In the example above the question is asked in such a way that makes it impossible for the opponent to answer it without damaging his face (Bousfield 2008: 243).

Challenges can also be combined with other impoliteness strategies. As has been observed by Labov and Fanshel (1977: 93), challenges always contain a note of criticism (Bousfield 2008: 132). This is illustrated in Example 9 below.

Example 9 *(CD)*

D: *why would you put your money on the Book of Genesis, nothing to do with the Jeremiah, nothing to do with Micah, it's the Book of Genesis, why did you put your money on that*, when all the scientific evidence shows, and I mean not a little bit of evidence that massive quantities of evidence show, that the world is four-and-a-half billion years old. It is absolutely open-and-shut case. Look at the science, you can't deny it, if you would only look at the science.

There are also instances of hinder/block strategy used after response seeking challenging questions, as in Example 10 below (see also challenges 1 and 2 in Example 2 above).

Example 10 *(LD)*

D: It seems to me a quite absurd thing to say that because we are saying that our mind's produced by brains, and brains evolve by evolution by natural selection, therefore that somehow undermines our ability to understand anything. *Why on earth should that be?* I mean, natural selection builds brains which are good at surviving, and brains that are good at surviving are brains that are surviving in the world.-

Here '*Why on earth should that be?*', is not a rhetorical question, because the answer is not obvious for both interlocutors. It is a response seeking question boosted by the use of '*on earth*' emphatic expression and followed with more talk from Dawkins, who in this way bars his interlocutor from talking thus blocking his access to the floor.

The above division has been made for the sake of order and clarity. It has to be put on record, however, that the distinction between the types of challenges is not clear cut, partly because of how challenges can be combined with other impoliteness strategies, but mostly because the interpretation of a challenge as rhetorical or response seeking depends partly on how it is treated by the hearer, and, as it turns out, challenges in debate are subject to re-interpretation by the interlocutor. Just as it is possible to use one's turn to talk past a response seeking question, as in Example 10 above, so it is possible to answer a rhetorical one. This is further discussed in section 4.2.

3.2. Response options

The object of this paper is not only to discuss the use of *challenge* as an impoliteness strategy in debates about religion and science, but also to investigate how the impoliteness is received, managed and countered. The analysis of the sample reveals that the overarching counter strategy is **to respond**. It is particularly apparent in responses to rhetorical questions and *verbal traps*. As was evident from some of the examples above, these responses may contain impoliteness, but more importantly they are often very loosely connected with the issue raised in the challenge (see Example 13). Thus, counter offensive strategies are not the most common responses to challenges in the sample. The most common strategy is *offering account* (28 instances), as illustrated in Example 11 below.

Example 11 (*CD*)

C: … how could we have been bumping around without sight for thousands of millions of years if we've evolved when really it needed to be functioning from the word "go"

D: *well yes, all right, I will answer that that question uh...* certainly, you're absolutely right, the eye is the most remarkable organ and it does the same sorts of things that these television cameras do:… (long explanation) … Now you raise the question: doesn't it all have to be working before it'll would…before it'll it's any any good; how could we bump along for millions of years with only half an eye. That's a bit of a fallacy because actually only a quarter of an eye, only a hundredth of an eye is better than nothing

The challenge in the example above is combined with *ridicule*, another impoliteness strategy, and yet in his response the hearer goes on record as offering account 'all right, I will answer this question'. In the majority of cases, so in this example, what underlies offering account in the sample is the defensive strategy of *ignore face attack* (Bousfield 2008: 201). That the face attack is ignored rather than unheard is apparent from the fact that many accounts are followed or combined with an offensive strategy such as challenge or criticism, as in Example 11, repeated here as Example 12, this time with the criticism italicised.

Example 12   (*CD*)

C: …how could we have been bumping around without sight for thousands of millions of years if we've evolved when really it needed to be functioning from the word "go"

D: well yes, all right, I will answer that that question uh… certainly, you're absolutely right, the eye is the most remarkable organ and it does the same sorts of things that these television cameras do:… (long explanation) … Now you raise the question: doesn't it all have to be working before it'll would…before it'll it's any any good; how could we bump along for millions of years with only half an eye. *That's a bit of a fallacy* because actually only a quarter of an eye, only a hundredth of an eye is better than nothing.

Another interesting issue is that, similarly to responses to rhetorical questions, there are many instances of offering account not to the challenge, but to a point vaguely related to the challenge, as in Example 13 below.

Example 13   (*LD*)

L: (indistinct) we need to step back from this a little bit , because it's actually a highly relevant topic. (.) in your world (3.0) where is justice? (4.0) to be found
D: justice- well it's- justice is a human construct of great importance in human affairs, and it's something that we have- most of us have a sense of, er which I think probably can be given some sort of Darwinian explanation, but I don't see where you're taking this

It is clear that what follows the question 'where is justice to be found?' as a second pair part of an adjacency pair does not address the question in the first pair part. After a fairly lengthy pause what appears to be the answer to the question is in fact not even an account but an assurance of an existence of such an account followed by a role shift (from debater to moderator) and a challenge combined with criticism.

To summarise, what can be observed in the sample is that rhetorical questions receive answers, since *opt out* is hardly a choice within the discourse of debate. Secondly, *ignore face attack* + *offering account* appear to be the most productive strategies. Thirdly, the accounts offered are not actually relevant to the challenges issued. It would appear that the prevailing strategy is *deflect*, defined as 'talk when there does not seem to be any moves available'. This is accounted for by the WAR metaphor, where ASKING QUESTIONS AND RAISING OBJECTIONS is mapped onto ATTACK and RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS onto DEFENSE.

4. Conclusions

The conceptual metaphor DEBATE IS WAR frames impoliteness strategies in the studied debates. This metaphor accounts for the significantly high frequency of challenges. The overarching counter strategy is to respond. This again is grounded in the metaphor, where challenges correspond to attacks and responses correspond to defence. At the same time the WAR frame excludes *opt* out as an option. Consequently, challenging questions are reinterpreted as genuine questions, which makes *ignore face attack* the default defensive strategy. *Deflecting* can be proposed as a counter, defensive strategy, as it allows the addressee of a challenge to appear to be answering (repelling the attack), without going on record with face-damaging submission.

5. Further research

The analysis suggests an apparent ordering (hierarchy) of challenges; weak responses seem to encourage post-intensifying actions (Bousfield 2008: 166-167). Two such sequences have been found in the sample, more material needs to be analysed if the existence of such hierarchy is to be confirmed. Secondly, the are certain indications that prosody may play a role in interpreting challenges; the contour of the response to a challenge may help distinguish between **ignored** and **unrecognised** face attacks. Third, the participants seem to cooperate in the use of impoliteness – there are

very few unexpected seconds (such as submissions or bold on record FTAs) in the sample, as they close the route of interaction. More material needs to be analysed before any definitive conclusions can be drawn.

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Streszczenie

Celem pracy jest analiza strategii niegrzeczności i kontrstrategii w wybranych debatach pomiędzy ateistami/ewolucjonistami (reprezentowanymi przez Richarda Dawkinsa) a chrześcijanami. Analiza łączy metodologię teorii niegrzeczności i semantyki kognitywnej. Ustalono, że strategią niegrzeczności językowej szczególnie efektywną w analizowanych debatach było wyzwanie – „wypowiedzenie wojny" (*challenge*) ze względu na konceptualną metaforę wojny fundamentalną dla opisywanych debat.

Metafora wojny jest przede wszystkim realizowana jako konwencjonalna metafora SPÓR (DEBATA) TO WOJNA, która stanowi ramę opisywanych debat, po drugie, jako idea „świętej wojny" w szeregach gorliwych chrześcijan, a po trzecie, po stronie ewolucjonistów, jako koncepcja walki o istnienie i przetrwanie najsprawniejszych. Wpływ metafory wojny może wyjaśniać rodzaj odpowiedzi stosowanej w celu przeciwstawienia się „prowokującym do wojny" pytaniom (*challenging questions*), w których adresat traktuje je jak prawdziwe pytania i podaje wyjaśnienie. Ta strategia, określona mianem odwracania uwagi (*deflect*), pozwala adresatowi odeprzeć atak i uniknąć przyznania racji adwersarzowi, co z kolei skutkowałoby utratą twarzy.