ZOOSEMIC TERMS DENOTING *FEMALE HUMAN BEINGS*: SEMANTIC DEROGATION OF WOMEN REVISITED[1]

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss semantic history of selected zoosemic terms targeted at the conceptual category FEMALE HUMAN BEING in the light of cognitive semantics (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Langacker 1987). In the body of the paper, Schulz's (1975) observation, that of semantic derogation of women, is reconsidered and supported by further examples from English and other Indo-European languages. Specifically, it is shown that meaning pejoration of lexemes used with reference to women is not only a frequent semantic mechanism but a productive linguistic process.

1. Introduction

This paper is a pilot study designed to signal and delineate the scope of a larger research field, that of English *animal metaphor*[2] (henceforth: *zoosemy*) from the standpoint of cognitive semantics. Thus, the aim here is to examine some of *zoosemy* data, Domestic Animals Metaphors, in particular. Specifically, it will be argued that the three conceptual categories, i.e. CANIDAE, FELIDAE and EQUIDAE are particularly abundant in metaphorical developments targeted at the conceptual category FEMALE HUMAN BEING where pejoration of meaning is an extremely frequent semantic mechanism.

In this paper we will reconsider Schulz's (1975: 65) observation that, not infrequently, a perfectly innocent term designating a girl or woman may begin

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[1] The author is greatly indebted to Professor G. A. Kleparski for valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper and to Doctor Annabelle Money for all critical remarks.

[2] For a conceptual analysis of Hungarian data see Martsa (2001) and Kleparski (2002). An interesting analysis of French and Italian zoosemic terms can be found in Baider and Padua (2003).

with totally neutral or even positive connotations, but gradually, it acquires negative implications. At first perhaps, these may be only slightly disparaging, but after a period of time, becoming abusive and ending up as a sexual slur. We will show that Schulz's (1975: 65) observation, holds perfectly true for the range of metaphors that are of interest to us. We hope to give evidence that virtually every originally neutral lexeme designating women has at some point in its history acquired debased connotations or obscene reference (Schulz 1975: 65). The data we will examine in what follows originate in Middle English/Early Modern English (henceforth: ME/EME) (1050-1700) and, in various cases, continue their metaphorical development in the present.

2. Theoretical background

Using some of the tools and insights of cognitive grammar adopted in, e.g. Kardela (1992), Kleparski (1996, 1997), Krzeszowski (1997), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff (1987), Lakoff and Turner (1989), Langacker (1987), Martsa (2001), we will analyse those lexemes linked to the categories EQUIDAE, CANIDAE and FELIDAE which in their semantic history have undergone zoosemic development, targeted at the conceptual category FEMALE HUMAN BEING.

In their analysis of proverbs, Lakoff and Turner (1989) employ the concept of the Great Chain of Being whose theoretical bases were developed by the ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle (cf. Nisbet 1982: 35), and which has not only survived into our times but, more importantly, its mechanisms have been reflected in various evolutionary theories and, recently, also in semantic investigations. The basic Great Chain is defined by attributes and behaviours, arranged in a hierarchy.

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". Specifically, Lakoff and Turner (1989: 195) make use of the mechanism of the Great Chain of Being to explore the meaning of such metaphors as *Achilles is a lion* or *Man is a wolf*, i.e. metaphors of the form *A is a B* where *B* is a concept characterised by a metaphorical schema. In the metaphor *Achilles is a lion* certain instinctive traits of a lion are perceived metaphorically in terms of human character traits, such as courage. The authors claim that the expression *Achilles is a lion* helps us to understand the character of Achilles in terms of a certain instinctive trait of lions, a trait which is already "metaphorically understood in terms of a character trait of humans". Interestingly, to use Lakoff and Turner's (1989: 195) terminology, "understanding the *character* of Achilles in

terms of the *instinct* of the lion, asks us to understand the steadfastness of Achilles' courage in terms of the rigidity of animal instinct". The authors argue that the mechanism by which this works is the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING METAPHOR: steadfastness, being of higher-order character, is understood in terms of rigidity of lower-order instinct.

The lexical items targeted in this paper have been analysed on the basis of the features, traits or attributes being mapped from the source domain (EQUINE/CANINE/FELINE) onto the target domain (HUMAN), in the following way: DOMAIN OF SPECIES, DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS, DOMAIN OF ORIGIN/RANK, DOMAIN OF AGE, DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND MORALITY, DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE, DOMAIN OF ABUSE.[3]

3. Data and analysis

Now we shall cast a closer look at semantic history and metaphorical development of selected lexical items. Specifically, we will show that the main mechanism which can be held responsible for zoosemy is that of metaphorical extension. It has been convincingly proved by, among others, Sornig (1981: 11), Adamska-Sałaciak (1996: 136), Kleparski (1997: 91) that in order for a metaphorical extension between two categories to take place, the two designata must be already perceived as being somehow related through their properties. As Sornig argues (1981: 11), there is always a need for some relationship between the old and the new meaning (or the source and target domain) to bridge the gulf of arbitrariness. Thus, metaphorical extensions stem from the mapping of values from the source onto the target domain. Kleparski (1997: 92) observes that the operation of metaphorical extension means that speakers must conceptualise the two phenomena/objects/actions designated by expressions as internally complex and sharing some elements. In a nutshell, certain subsections of the meaning of one lexical category start to serve as the basis for a functional extension, while other aspects of a given semantic structure remain irrelevant for this purpose.

As mentioned above, the three conceptual categories we wish to concentrate on presently are EQUIDAE,[4] CANIDAE and FELIDAE. It will be noticed that some of the selected lexical items subject to analysis are axiologically neutral when used in their original sense-threads (e.g. *mare, stallion, mule*), and it is only by the process of zoosemy that their axiological (negative) marking comes to surface. Other lexemes (e.g. *jade, hackney, hilding*), are already axiologically loaded as input, and after the process of metaphorisation the axiological marking

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[3] In this paper we largely make use of the domains distinguished by Kleparski (1997).
[4] For a detailed analysis of the conceptual category EQUIDAE see Kiełtyka (2005).

is strengthened when applied to female human beings. Interestingly enough, some other terms under discussion, axiologically unmarked in their original sense (e.g. *stallion*), by the process of zoosemy, come to serve as compliments when applied to men and, significantly, as invectives when used to designate women.

Before we proceed to the presentation and analysis of data, it must be made clear that the examples chosen represent only a subset of those which exist. This paper seeks to suggest, with these examples, a path for future research and a mode of analysis.

3.1. MARE

The word *mare* has been present in the English lexicon since the 10th century and its primary sense is 'the female of any equine animal (as the horse, ass, or zebra), but especially applied to the female of the domestic horse (*Equus caballus*)' (e.g., a900[5] "Cwist ðu þæt þe sy leofre þære *myran* sunu þonne þæt Godes beam?"). The sense-thread 'the female of the domestic horse' belongs to the macro-category EQUIDAE highlighting the value (ADULT) specifiable for the attributive path of DOMAIN OF AGE and the value (FEMALE) presupposed by the attributive path of DOMAIN OF SEX.

In the 14th century, by the process of zoosemy, *mare* was first "applied contemptuously to a woman" (e.g., 1303 "And shame hyt ys euer aywhare To be kalled 'a prestës *mare*'"). In terms of our analysis, the semantics of the metaphorical sense of *mare* can be accounted for in terms of the highlighting of the attributive value (DESPISED) presupposed by the attributive path of DOMAIN OF ABUSE. The continuation of this sense-thread is preserved to present times.

It follows that the association of certain axiologically unmarked elements in the cognitive base of 'MARE', i.e. (EQUINE)^(ADULT)^(FEMALE), with certain axiologically unmarked elements in the cognitive base of 'WOMAN', i.e. (HUMAN)^(ADULT)^(FEMALE) and marginally, axiologically marked, (DESPISED)^(CONTEMPTIBLE) the lexeme *mare* started, at a certain stage of its semantic development (14th century), to function as a contemptuous term denoting a woman. Therefore the basis of semantic change in this particular case has been physical attributes and behaviour.

It is not at all easy to account for *mare* in terms of the Great Chain Metaphor concept. It is not enough to say that in the case of *mare*, equine attributes are mapped onto a human, i.e. human physical attributes are understood via animal attributes. As we have seen, the originally neutral term *mare* becomes highly evaluative when applied to a woman in its metaphorical sense. The lexeme *mare* has simply been chosen as an invective to insult a woman. According to Mills (1989: 179), the word started to be applied contemptuously to a woman "drawing upon the sexual imagery of a woman as a mount to be 'ridden' by a male rider". Therefore, the context *She is a mare* conveys the meaning 'She is a contemptible, despised person'.

3.2. Other lexemes

Other zoosemic terms, which can be analysed in the same way, include the following lexical items:

3.2.1. *Jade*

According to etymological sources *jade* is of unknown origin but often assumed to be a doublet of *yaud* (Icel. *jalda* 'mare'). In its literal sense, the word represents 'a contemptuous name for a horse; a horse of inferior breed, e.g. a cart- or draught-horse as opposed to a riding horse; a roadster, a hack; a sorry, ill-conditioned, wearied, or worn-out horse; a vicious, worthless, ill-tempered horse, a plug'. This lexical item functioned productively in English from the 14th century to the 19th century (e.g., c1386 "Be blithe though thou ryde vp-on a *Iade*, What thogh thyn hors be bothe foule and lene..."). The original sense of this lexeme is accountable for in terms of an entrenchment[6] relation to the attributive path DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE with the highlighting of the attributive value (BONY), DOMAIN OF BEHAVIOUR with the highlighting of the attributive values (ILL-TEMPERED)^(VICIOUS), DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with the highlighting of the attributive values (WORTHLESS)^(WORN-OUT) and DOMAIN OF ABUSE with the attributive highlighting of the value (CONTEMPTIBLE). The 16th century witnessed the rise of a new sense-thread attached to this word, namely, it came to be applied 'as a term of reprobation to a woman'[7] – 'a low or shrewish woman, wench, termagant, also used playfully, a flirtatious girl like *hussy* or *minx*' (e.g., 1560 "Such a *jade* she is, and so curst a quean, She would out-scold the devil's dame I ween") (see also Mills 1989: 128 and Palmatier 1995: 215). This sense-thread is accountable for in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF ORIGIN AND

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[5] All dictionary definitions and examples are, unless otherwise stated, quoted from the 2nd edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (in preparation).

[6] The concept of "entrenchment" is understood in the sense of Langacker (1987: 59). A lexical category may be said to be entrenched in the attributive path of a given conceptual domain if its semantic pole is related to certain locations within the attributive path of a given conceptual domain.

[7] Interestingly enough, in the 16th-17th century the word was in a similar fashion metaphorically applied to a man as 'a term of reprobation', however, then, the meaning was weaker and less explicit than in the case of its female counterpart (e.g., 1596 "What, this Gentleman will out-talke vs all. Luc. Sir giue him head, I know hee'l proue a *jade*").

RANK with the highlighting of the attributive value (OF LOW ORDERS), DO-MAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND MORALITY with the highlighting of the attributive value (SHREWISH)^(WENCH)^(TERMAGANT) as well as DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with highlighting of the attributive value (WORTHLESS) and DOMAIN OF ABUSE with the highlighting of the attributive value (CONTEMPTIBLE).

3.2.2. *Nag*

Some etymological sources (e.g. the *OED*) inform us that *nag*, a word for 'a small riding horse or pony', and later 'an inferior or aged and unsound horse' is of obscure origin but akin to Dutch *negge* 'a small horse' (*WEBSTER*) and probably to Old English *hnægan* 'to neigh', also akin to Middle High German *nēgen* 'to neigh', Old Norse *gneggja*; all from a prehistoric Germanic verb 'to make the loud prolonged calling cry typical of a horse'. The word was first recorded in the 15th century (e.g., c1440 "*Nagge*, or lytylle beest, bestula, equillus"). This sense is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with the highlighting of the attributive value (WORTHLESS), DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND AP-PEARANCE with the highlighting of the attributive values (UNSOUND)^(IN-FERIOR) and DOMAIN OF ABUSE with the highlighting of the attributive value (CONTEMPTIBLE). The 16th century witnessed the rise of the sense 'a term of abuse applied mostly to women' and 'a term for a paramour' (e.g., 1598 "Hence lewd *nags* away, Goe read each poast,Then to Priapus gardens. The witlesse sence Of these odde *naggs*, whose pates circumference Is fild with froth!") (see also Partridge 2002: 775). This sense is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF SPECIES with the highlighting of the attributive value (HUMAN), DOMAIN OF SEX with the highlighting of the attributive value (FEMALE), DOMAIN OF AGE with the highlighting of the attributive value (ADULT), DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with the highlighting of the attributive value (PARAMOUR) and DOMAIN OF ABUSE with the highlighting of the attributive value (CONTEMPTIBLE). Mills (1989: 176) observes that *nag* is "yet another example of the horse meta-phor which suggests a woman is a mount to be 'ridden' by male rider". The word underwent a process of sexual derogation – *WEBSTER* under the entry *nag* lists the sense of 'a prostitute'.[8] It is evident that the connotation of a tired old

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[8] Notice that in the 19th century *naggy/ie* was UK slang for *vagina* – most probably from the earlier sense of 'a prostitute'. Due to the further development of this word by the end of the 19th century *naggie* was a slang term for any woman.

horse started to be used to denigrate and ridicule all women, not just old and tired ones.

3.2.3. *Hackney*

The word derives from OF *haquenée* 'an ambling horse or mare, especially for ladies to ride on'. It was adopted from French in the 14th century and its primary meaning was that of 'a horse of middle size and quality, used for ordinary rid-ing, as distinguished from a war-horse, a hunter, or a draught-horse; in early times often an ambling horse; now technically – hack' (e.g., c1330 "Tille oþer castels about þei sent tueye and tueye In aneus for doute, ilk on on his *hakneye*"). In the 16th century, by the process of zoosemy, *hackney* began its metaphorical evolution. The secondary meaning it acquired at that time was one who is used to do mean or servile work for hire; a common drudge, fag, slave (e.g., 1546 "Whan ought was to doo, I was common *hackney*"). This sense is ex-plicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with the highlighting of the attributive value (USED TO DO MEAN OR SERVILE WORK FOR HIRE)^(FAG)^(SLAVE). Simultaneously, in the 16th century this lexical item developed another sense; 'a woman that hires her person, a prostitute' (e.g., 1579 "Venus ... that taught the women in Cy-prus to set vp a Stewes too hyre out them selues as *hackneies* for gaine") (see also Partridge 2002: 518), which entered the DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BE-HAVIOUR AND MORALITY with the highlighting of the attributive value (PROSTITUTE).

3.2.4. *Filly*

'A young mare or female horse' dates from the 15th century, in the 17th century it was applied to a girl or young woman and gradually came to denote 'a wanton' (e.g., Partridge 2002: 391) "Skittish *fillies*, but I never knew 'em boggle at a man before"), and simultaneously entered the DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND MORALITY with the highlighting the attributive value (WANTON) (see also Mills 1989: 88).

3.2.5. *Stot*

Originally, 'a horse of an inferior kind' (see *HTE*) dating as far back as the 12th century (e.g., a1100 "Þæt is vii oxen ... & ii *stottas*") which highlights the attrib-utive value (OF INFERIOR KIND), and whose secondary sense-thread, devel-oped in the 14th century, is 'a term of contempt for a woman' (e.g., c1386 "Nay,

olde *Stot*, that is nat myn entente"), belonging to the DOMAIN OF ABUSE and highlighting the attributive value (CONTEMPTIBLE).

3.2.6. *Stallion*[9]

Whose primary meaning in the 14th century, when it entered English lexicon, was 'a male horse not castrated, especially one kept for mating purposes'. In the course of the 16th-17th century this lexeme acquired the sense of 'a courtesan'.[10] The *OED* hypothesises that this sense may be owed to a French word *estalon* 'a decoy'; English *stale* (*common stale*): 'a prostitute of the lowest class, employed as a decoy by thieves. It is often used as a term of contempt for 'an unchaste woman' (e.g., 1575 "Then folowed the worshipfull Bride ... But a stale *stallion* ... God wot, and an il smelling, waz she") (see also Partridge 2002: 1143). The relevant sense involves the DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND MORALITY with the highlighting of the attributive value (COURTESAN).

3.2.7. *Curtal*

As evidenced by the *OED* the word entered English lexicon in the 16th century to name 'a horse with its tail cut short or docked (and sometimes the ears cropped); apparently sometimes a horse of a particular breed or small size, with which this practice was usual' (e.g., 1530 "*Covrtavlt*, a courtall, a horse. I wyll cutte of my horse tayle and make hym a *courtault*") highlighting the attributive values (DOCKED TAIL) and (CROPPED EARS) from the DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE. In the 16th-17th century this lexical item surfaced as 'a term of derision or opprobrium' (e.g., 1578 "Were you born in a myll, *curtole*, that you prate so hye"). The pejorative development of *curtal* was so far-fetched that already in the 17th century it was entrenched in the relevant location of the attributive path of DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND MORALITY highlighting the value (PROSTITUTE). In the 17th and 18th century the word denoted 'a drab' (perhaps referring to short skirts), (e.g., 1611 "*Caignardiere*, a hedge-whore, lazie queane, lowsie trull, filthie *curtall*, Doxie, Morte").

3.2.8. *Hilding*

In the 16th-18th century the word was used in the sense 'a worthless or vicious beast, especially a horse; a sorry hack, a jade' (e.g., 1589 "Least standing long still in the open faire, they fall to downeright halting, and so be disclosed for ar-

rant *heldings*"), and represented the DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with the highlighting of the attributive value (USELESS)^(WORTHLESS). In the same century (17th) the lexical item was frequently applied to 'a contemptible, worthless person of either sex; a good-for-nothing' (e.g., 1601 "If your Lordshippe finde him not a *Hilding*, hold me no more in your respect") from the DOMAIN OF ABUSE with the highlighting of the attributive value (CONTEMPTIBLE).

Another sense-thread evidenced by the *OED* in the 16th century and influenced by the mechanism of zoosemy is that of 'a jade; a baggage – applied to a woman' (e.g., 1592 "Out on her, *Hilding*") characterised by the DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with the highlighting of the attributive values (WORTHLESS)^(GOOD-FOR-NOTHING), DOMAIN OF ABUSE with the highlighting of the attributive value (CONTEMPTIBLE), DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND MORALITY with the highlighting of the attributive value (BAGGAGE).

3.2.9. *Yaud*

The word of Germanic origin – ON *jalda* (Sw. *jälda*), 'poetic word for *mare*'. *Yaud* was first used in written sources in the 16th century in the sense 'a mare: usually applied to an old mare; also loosely to an old or worn-out horse (associated with jade)' (e.g., 1500 "Schir, lett it nevir in toun be tald, That I sould be ane uillis *Yald*!"). The relevant sense is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE with the highlighting of the attributive values (SORRY)^(WORN-OUT), DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with the highlighting of the attributive value (USELESS)^(WORTHLESS).

In the 15th-16th century the word was used in the sense 'a strumpet, whore' (e.g., a1400 "Ondire to ȝone ȝaldsones he þat ȝeldes hyme ever ... Be he neuer mo sauede"). The combination ȝaldson the 'son of a whore' is a term of abuse (cf. *whoreson*). The relevant sense is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND MORALITY with the highlighting of the attributive values (STRUMPET)^(WHORE).

3.2.10. *Roil*

The word is of obscure origin. In the 16th century it was used to denote 'an inferior or spiritless horse' (e.g., 1523 "As it were a gote In a shepe cote ... Therin, lyke a *royle*, Sir Dunkan, ye dared"). The relevant sense is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE with the highlighting of the attributive value (SPIRITLESS) and DOMAIN OF ORIGIN with the highlighting of the attributive value (INFERIOR). In the same century (16th) it was applied to 'a

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[9] However, in the 20th century the word ameliorated and acquired yet another sense. It was colloquially used among U.S. Blacks, to refer to 'a tall, good-looking girl or woman' (e.g., 1970 "*Stallion*, a good-looking black woman").

[10] For details see Kiełtyka (2005) and Kiełtyka (in preparation).

clumsy or stoutly-built female' (e.g., 1533 "There is not one crum or droppe of good fashion in all that great royles bodie ... Catullus ther speaketh of a certaine mayden"). The relevant sense is accountable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE with the highlighting of the attributive value (STOUTLY-BUILT)^(CLUMSY).

3.2.11. *Mule*

This lexical item entered written English in the 11th century in the sense 'the off-spring of a he-ass and a mare' (e.g., c1000 "Ne beo ...e na swylce hors and *mulas*"). It was also commonly applied to the offspring of a she-ass and a stallion (technically called a *hinny*). The relevant sense is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF FUNCTIONS with the highlighting of the attributive value (OFFSPRING OF A HE-ASS AND A MARE). The metaphorical sense which developed in the 15th century was that of 'a strumpet, concubine' (e.g., 1494 "Ye Cardynall made sharpe processe agayn prestys, yt noresshed *Cristen-moyles*, & rebuked them by open publysshement and otherwise") (see also Partridge 2002: 765). The relevant sense is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation to the attributive path of DOMAIN OF CHARACTER, BEHAVIOUR AND MORALITY with the highlighting of the attributive values (STRUMPET)^(CONCUBINE).

3.3. Summary

Thus, in a nutshell, as a result of the association of certain axiologically unmarked or marked elements of the cognitive base of 'EQUIDAE, i.e. (EQUINE)^(ADULT)^(FEMALE/MALE) and marginally, such elements as (WORTH-LESS)^(INFERIOR) etc., with certain axiologically unmarked elements in the cognitive base of 'WOMAN', i.e. (HUMAN)^(ADULT)^(FEMALE) and marginally, such elements as (STRUMPET)^(CONCUBINE) etc., the animal lexemes start, at a certain stage of their semantic development, to function as terms of opprobrium denoting a woman.

4. Towards parallels from other conceptual categories

4.1. Conceptual category: CANIDAE

In ME and EME a number of lexical items, originally designating canines, underwent a process of zoosemy which gave rise to their metaphorical development. The most intriguing ones are the following:

4.1.1. *Bitch*[11]

The word was first recorded in the 11th century in the sense 'the female of the dog' (e.g. c1000 "Canicula, *bic...e*"). In the 15th century this lexical item was 'applied opprobriously to a woman[12]; strictly, a lewd or sensual woman; in modern use, especially 'a malicious or treacherous woman' (e.g., ?a1400 "Whom calleste thou queine, skabde *biche*?") (see also Mills 1989: 27; Partridge 2002: 84; Palmatier 1995: 30).

4.1.2. *Puppy*

In the 15th-17th centuries it denoted 'a small dog used as a lady's pet or plaything; a toy dog' (e.g., 1486 "Smale ladies *popis* that beere a way the flees"). In the 16th century it was 'applied to a person as a term of contempt; especially, in modern use, a vain, empty-headed, impertinent young man; a fop, a coxcomb' (e.g., 1589 "Pappe with an hatchet for such a *puppie*"). In the 16th century it was also applied to a woman in sense of F *poupée*: 'a (mere) doll' (e.g., 1594 "Who ... hath no wittie, but a clownish dull flegmatike *puppie* to his mistres"). Another meaning which developed in the 16th-17th centuries was 'a wanton, harlot' (e.g., 1592 "Holding such Maidens as were modest, fooles, and such as were not, as wilfully wanton as my selfe, *puppies*, ill brought vppe and without manners").

4.1.3. *Minx*

In the 16th century the word was used in the sense 'a pet dog; also as proper name' (e.g., 1542 "There been litle *mynxes*, or puppees that ladies keepe in their chaumbers for especiall iewelles to playe withal"). In the 16th century its meaning was extended to 'a pert girl, hussy; now often merely playful' (e.g., 1592 "Thus, you *minx*, Ile teach you ply your worke"). The process of pejoration of this lexeme continued and already in the 16th century the word[13] was applied to 'a lewd or wanton woman' (e.g., 1598 "*Magalda* ... a trull or minxe") (see Mills 1989: 161).

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[11] For a detailed analysis of this lexeme see Kardela and Kleparski (1990: 25) and Kleparski (1990).

[12] It is worth noting that in the 16th century it was applied to a man (less opprobrious than when applied to a woman, and somewhat whimsical, having the modern sense of 'dog'), (e.g., a1500 "He is a schrewed *byche*, In fayth, I trow, he be a wyche").

[13] As a verb the word was used in the 17th century in the sense 'to play the *minx*', (e.g., *OED* 1609 "The Apologue describes Venus trans-formed waiting maide, who beeing trick't vp like a Gentle-woman, *mink'st* it a while til she spied a Mouse, but then made it knowne shee was a Cat").

4.2. Conceptual Category: FELIDAE

Several lexical items from the conceptual category FELIDAE have been employed to designate women. It should be noted that it is predominantly feline terms in ME and EME which became insulting epithets denoting women generally. The category in question embraces such examples as:

4.2.1. *Cat*

The word was first recorded in English in the 9ᵗʰ century and used in the sense of 'a well-known carnivorous quadruped (*Felis domesticus*) which has long been domesticated, being kept to destroy mice, and as a house pet' (e.g., a800 "*Fellus (felis), catte*"). This lexical item was first used figuratively 'as a term of contempt for a human being' in the 13ᵗʰ century; especially one who scratches like a cat; a spiteful or backbiting woman (e.g., a1225 "Hweðer þe *cat* of helle claurede euer toward hire"). As the pejoration started progressing, in the 15ᵗʰ century *cat* acquired the sense of 'a prostitute' (e.g., 1670 "*Cat*, a common Whore") (see Partridge 2002: 188 and Palmatier 1995: 66).

4.2.2. *Puss*

In the 16ᵗʰ century the word was 'a conventional proper name of a cat; usually, a call-name' (e.g., a1530 "I haue sene the day that pus my cat Hath had in a yere kytlyns eyghtene"). In the 17ᵗʰ century it was first applied metaphorically to 'a girl or woman; formerly, as a term of contempt or reproach; in current use, playfully, as a familiar term of endearment, often connoting slyness' (e.g., 1608 "This wench (your new Wife) ... This Shee-cat will haue more liues then your last Pusse had") (see Partridge 2002: 938).

4.2.3. *Pussy*

In the 18ᵗʰ century the word denoted 'a cat: used much in the same way as *puss* but more as a common noun and less as a call-word' (e.g., 1726 "My new *pussey* is ... white ... with black spots"). In the 16ᵗʰ century the word was first 'applied to a girl or woman: cf. *puss*' (e.g., 1583 "You shall haue euery sawcy boy ... to catch vp a woman & marie her ... So he haue his pretie *pussie* to huggle withall, it forceth not"). In the late 19ᵗʰ-20ᵗʰ centuries in coarse slang the word was used for 'the female pudendum, hence, sexual intercourse; women considered sexually' (cf. *WNNCD*; *IRCD*; Palmatier 1995: 304), e.g., 1913 "I'm also sure that it's got something to do with the thing between our legs that I always call my *Pussy*") (see also Partridge 2002: 938 and Mills 1989: 200).

4.2.4. *Gib*

The word is a familiar abbreviation of *Gilbert*. In the 15ᵗʰ century this lexical item was used in the sense 'a familiar name given to a cat' (e.g., c1400 "Gret wel *gibbe* oure cat"). In the 16ᵗʰ century the word denoted 'a cat, especially a male cat; in later dialectal use, one that has been castrated' (e.g., 1561 "Nature she foloweth, and playeth the *gib*, And at her husband dooth barke and ba[w]ll, As dooth the Cur"). In the 16ᵗʰ century *gib* became 'a term of reproach, especially for an old woman' (e.g., a1529 "She is a tonnish *gyb*").

5. In search of parallels from other languages[14]

Indo-European languages like Polish, Russian, Spanish, Norwegian and also certain non-Indo-European ones like Hungarian (Ugro-Finnic) seem to display similar semantic mechanisms to those detected in English. Specifically, it appears that in the languages mentioned above the process of zoosemy is equally productive. Moreover, as the data provided below show, animal terms used for women seem to give support to our claim that derogation of terms denoting women is a general/common linguistic process.

Polish examples (see Kleparski 2002: 12-13) such as *suka* 'bitch' (see above) applied to 'a mean, spiteful female'; *kobyła* '(derogatively) mare' and metaphorically 'a stupid, ugly woman' (see Russian example below); *szkapa, chabeta* 'jade, hack'; *krowa* 'cow' and metaphorically 'a clumsy woman'; *koza* 'goat' used metaphorically with reference to women in the sense 'silly, naïve female'; *geś* 'goose' and secondarily 'a stupid woman' (see Russian examples below); *żmija* 'serpent' metaphorically used in the sense 'bitchy woman'; *klępa* 'female elk' a designation used in the sense 'sluttish woman'; *mewka* '(little) sea-gull' used in the sense 'prostitute' frequently serve as invectives when applied to women.

In Russian, гусь 'goose'[15] denotes 'a stupid or naive woman', e.g. "Вас Курчаев подослал? - Нет, мы с ним поругались. Он тоже гусь пордочный, ввроде вас (Ostrovskij)." [Has Kurchaiev sent you here? – No, we've quarrelled with him. He is also a good *goose* like you.] Кобыла 'mare' is commonly used with the secondary meaning 'a tall clumsy woman', e.g. "Хот сестра Тани неуклжа *кобыла*, все парбни хотели с ней танцевать." [Although Tania's sister is a clumsy *mare*, all the boys wanted to dance with her.] Бабочка 'butterfly'

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[14] Russian examples are quoted from Ожегов and Шведова (1998), Hungarian data are taken from Kleparski (2002) and *English-Hungarian Online Dictionary*, the source of Spanish examples is English-Spanish Online Dictionary, Basque data are quoted from *Morris-English-Basque Online Dictionary* and Norwegian ones from *Engelsk blå ordbok* (1999).

[15] Likewise, German *Gans* 'goose' designates 'naïve, silly woman'.

in colloquial speech denotes 'a prostitute', e.g. "Ночные *бабочки* обычно повлютс здесь, за углом.." [Prostitutes usually show up here, behind the corner.] *Корова* 'cow' is secondarily used to designate 'a clumsy, silly woman', e.g. "Разве умеет сестра свои выгоды соблюсти? *Корова*, суща *корова* (Гончаров)." [Can your sister take care of her comforts? She is a real *cow*.]

Spanish *perra* 'bitch'[16] has the same secondary sense as the English equivalent, i.e. 'a malicious, spiteful, or domineering woman' (*WEBSTER*); *zorra* 'vixen' acquired the secondary sense of 'a whore'. *Lagarta* 'female lizard', when used metaphorically, designates 'a sly woman' or 'a whore'. Moreover, *bicha* 'snake' is used in the sense 'a terrible woman' or 'a woman with guts' and *foca* 'a seal' designates 'a fat person, particularly a woman'. Spanish *vaca* 'a cow' can be applied to 'a fat woman'; similarly, *vaca-burra* 'female donkey' can also denote 'a fat woman'. On the other hand, *loro* 'a parrot' acquired two metaphorical senses 'a chatterbox' and 'an old and ugly woman' and the lexeme *pájara* 'a female bird' stands for 'a whore'.

In Norwegian the word *Hoppe/merr* 'mare' can be used in the sense 'an evil-minded woman', e.g. "Stopp og plag meg, din *merr*!" [Stop bothering me, you *mare*!] The lexeme *puddel* 'poodle' can be applied to 'an unintelligent, selfish woman', e.g. "En venn av meg er virkelig uintelligent. Hun oppfører seg som en *puddel*." [A friend of mine is really unintelligent. She behaves like a *poodle*.]

In Hungarian *liba* 'goose'[17] (cf. the Russian and German examples) is used to designate 'a stupid woman', e.g. "Ez az ostoba *liba* ötödszörre sem érti a feladatot." [This silly *goose* does not understand the task even if you tell her five times.] *Tehén* 'cow'[18] is applied to 'a fat woman', e.g. "Ez a nő akkora *tehén*, hogy nem fér be az ajtón." [This woman is such a big *cow*, that the door is not wide enough for her.] *Szuka* 'bitch' (cf. the Basque example) is used metaphorically as 'a sex-mad woman', e.g. "Nézd a büdös *szukát*, hogy kelleti magát!" [Look at that stinky *bitch* trying to attract attention!] *Éjszakai pillangó* 'night butterfly' is often applied to women in the sense 'prostitute, whore', e.g. "Az utca tele volt *éjszakai pillangókkal*." [The street was full of night *butterflies*.] The lexical item *bestia* 'beast' is used to designate 'ill-natured, selfish woman' or 'sexually attractive, pretty woman', e.g. "Micsoda *bestia*! Lefekszik és beteget játszik." [What a *beast* she is! She has lain in bed pretending to be ill.]

6. Parallels from other semantic categories

According to Lakoff (1973: 20), "metaphors are likely to have wide reference when applied to men, whereas metaphors for women are likely to be narrower and to include sexual reference". The fact that terms for females are more likely to become pejorative and acquire sexual suggestions can be confirmed by examining such lexical items as *cat, dog*, or the example quoted by Lakoff (1973: 30), that is the term *professional*. *Cat* originally denoted 'any spiteful person' but has been restricted to refer only to females and has become an abusive epithet for women. In a similar fashion, *dog* is used pejoratively in many contexts with connotations of inferiority or unattractiveness often 'in half-serious chiding (e.g., the *OED* "He's a sly *dog*") but when applied to women it acquires the sense 'a woman inferior in looks' or 'a prostitute' (e.g. *dog-lady*). Thus *dog*, when used of a man, can mean merely disreputable or untrustworthy, when used of a woman it means ugly, unrefined or sexually disreputable.

Semantic derogation of terms denoting women can also be detected in other semantic categories. Considering Lakoff's (1973: 30) lexeme *professional* one concludes that a man called a professional is regarded as a member of one of the respected professions; conversely if we call a woman[19] a *professional* we imply that she follows "the oldest profession". Similarly, if we refer to a man as a *tramp* we understand that he is "a drifter", however, the same term applied to a woman makes her 'a prostitute'. Analogically, the semantic history of such lexemes as *game, natural, jay* or *plover*[20] reveals that these terms meant merely 'simpleton' or 'dupe' when used to designate men, but 'loose woman' or 'prostitute' when applied to women.

One more intriguing example of the pervasive pejoration of female terms is the pair *bachelor* vs. *spinster* both of which mean 'one who is not married'. The former is at least neutral term, often used as a compliment. *Spinster*, on the other hand, normally seems to be used pejoratively, with connotations of prissiness or fussiness.

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[16] In Basque *txakur emea* 'bitch' designates 'an evil-minded, spiteful woman'; *ahardia* 'sow' is used to denote 'a dirty, despicable woman'.

[17] For details see Kleparski (2002). Hungarian examples are quoted from Juhász *et al.* (1975).

[18] In contrast, German word *Kuh* 'cow' is frequently used in the sense 'foolish female'.

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[19] Lakoff (1973: 30) concludes that a similar situation pertains in Chinese, where the sentence *She's in business* is equivalent in meaning to English *She's a professional*.

[20] For example, *DSUE* provides evidence that ca. 1685-1830 *natural* was used in the sense 'a mistress, a harlot' when applied to women and 'a bastard' when used of men (Partridge 2002: 781). Similarly, game in the 17th -19th centuries was a collective noun for 'harlots, especially at a brothel' and a designation for 'a simpleton, a dupe' (Partridge 2002: 444); *jay* was, in the 16th and 17th century, used in the sense 'a wanton woman' and 'a simpleton' with reference to men (Partridge (2002: 614)). Likewise, *plover* was a 17th century term for 'a wanton woman' and 'a dupe' or 'victim when used of a man', (as in "Thou art a most grene *Plover* in policy, I perceive" (Partridge 2002: 899).

7. Concluding remarks

According to Persson (1996: 162), animal invectives about women are to a very great extent designations of sexuality, immorality or prostitution (see, among others, *nag, hack, stallion, cat, minx*). Persson (1996: 163) argues that another set of invectives designate bad temper. Some of the most well known examples in this category are *grimalkin, jade* and *bitch*, which was described by Whaley and Antonelli (1983: 225) in the following way: "A woman considered a *bitch* is one whose mouth and possibly her sexual behaviour cannot be controlled. Men flee from *bitches* because they have reverted to wild animals."

It appears that pejorative terms denoting bad looks and ugliness are derived from names for domestic animals. Consider, for instance, such metaphorical terms as *cow, mare, gib, sow* to mention but a few.

Another source of invectives is sexual behaviour considered deviant or immoral (cf. Persson 1996: 164). This observation can be exemplified by the history of such terms as *cat* 'a whore', *bat* 'a prostitute', *jade* 'a loose woman', or *pussy* 'a woman seen as a sex object'.

Age (usually in combination with good or bad appearance) seems to be of some importance for the formation of female invectives; *gib* 'a term of reproach for an old woman', *grimalkin* 'a contemptible old woman' can be quoted as examples representing this group.

As can easily be seen in the data analysed, the overwhelming majority of animal terms are pejorative epithets denoting loose morals or prostitution. Following the line of reasoning advocated in Kleparski (1990: 153-156), 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, feline, canine, bovine terms (to mention but a few categories) used to designate women have reached the final stage in their pejorative development. The fact that women become victims of semantic derogation can be readily visualised by noting that what is regarded as typical, standard or even sometimes complimentary behaviour for males is perceived as abnormal and highly promiscuous female behaviour. The case in point is the history of the lexical item *stallion*. When applied to men it is a positive epithet, 'a virile man', but in a context designating women the word acquires the sense of 'a prostitute'.

Ullman (1957: 231-232) mentions three possible sources of the derogation of terms denoting women: association with a contaminating concept, euphemism, and prejudice. Our findings suggest that all three origins for pejoration can be accounted for in the analysis of animal terms denoting women. As far as the factor of contamination is concerned, Schulz (1975: 71) states that since "men tend to think of women in sexual terms, consequently, any term denoting women carries sexual suggestiveness to the male speaker". The semantic history of such words as *hackney* ('a common drudge' > 'harlot', 'bawd'), *curtal* ('a term of de-

rision or opprobrium' > 'a drab') or *nag* ('a term of abuse applied mostly to women' > 'a term for a paramour') seem to confirm the operation of this factor.

As for the second source of pejoration, namely euphemism, it is clear that many terms designating women of "the oldest profession in the world" have arisen from euphemism – a reluctance to refer to the profession directly. The most well known instances exemplifying the case in point include: *alley cat* 'a street walker, a prostitute' (cf. *SOA*), *minx* 'a lewd or wanton woman', *yaud* 'strumpet, whore'.

The third possibility, prejudice, also appears to be a powerful source of derogation. Fry (1972: 131) suggests that male prejudice towards women might stem from the fact that men are "biologically inferior to the female in several respects, they deteriorate biologically and die earlier than women". Consider in this connection *grimalkin* 'an imperious old woman', the term which could be classified as developed out of prejudice. On the other hand, Grotjahn (1972: 53) concludes that "man's fear of women is basically sexual, which is perhaps the reason why so many of the derogatory terms for women take on sexual connotations" (*stallion, cat, jade*).

As mentioned, this paper offers merely a sample analysis of selected zoosemic terms and it allows only for drawing partial conclusions. Only a thorough and extended study of the data will make it possible to draw general conclusions and delineate the path of metaphorical development with due attention to important details. We hope, however, that a pilot study of this form at least outlines the issues at hand and gives a general idea of what should be of interest and the subject of research in a future in-depth study.

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