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ON FIGURATION OF GENDER IN ENGLISH

The paper deals with figurative lexical resources of English in the conceptual domain of gender. The presentation and analysis are carried out in terms of the most productive cognitive processes of semantic extensions leading to gender senses of particular lexical units. These processes include various kinds of metaphor, e.g. objectification and zoometaphor, and metonymy, as well as a less familiar concept of syntaphor. Of particular importance are the cases of a new kind of metaphor, called “transgender metaphor” and an integration of metonymy with metaphor in the development of a taboo lexeme *cunt* used to refer to male referents.

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At least since the seventies of the twentieth century the problem of gender and its relation to sex and culture has been studied extensively from a variety of perspectives, from purely sociological, through cultural to linguistic.¹ Within linguistics, in turn, it has also been studied within different frameworks and from different points of view, from pragmatic to discourse and sociolinguistic perspectives. The classic studies in this respect were R. Lakoff’s *Language and women’s place* (1975) and Tannen’s *You just don’t understand* (1990). Because of the increasing interest of the feminist movements in the masculine and hence male bias in most languages, important steps were taken to uncover this bias, describe it and finally change it in order to restore the gender balance and build a more fair linguistic system, free from the patriarchal conception of society

¹ Following other researchers, Koller (2004) argues that the history of gender studies started in the first half of the 20th century with the so-called “deficit” approach, followed more or less successively by the “dominance”, “difference” approaches, which finally, in the nineties, gave way to “social-constructivist” and “discourse” approaches.

(some of these efforts are discussed at length by McConnell-Ginet (2014)). Coupled with the growing awareness and sensitivity to the problems of sexual identity, this led to a number of innovations favouring feminine or genderless grammatical forms, such as the feminine pronoun *she*, used with indefinite reference, or *they*, used for generic reference in English, and considerable proliferation of feminine derivations in Polish morphology in the fields of professions, titles and forms of address.

The increased interest in sex and gender in culture led also to increased interest in gender in grammar and its relation to natural sex, culminating in G.G. Corbett's monograph *Gender* (1991), a collection of papers edited by Unterbeck and Rissanen *Gender in Grammar and Cognition* (1999), and a more recent volume *Expression of Gender* (2014), edited G.G. Corbett.

With the advent of cognitive linguistics, a new field of research in gender opened up – the study of gender metaphors and, to a lesser extent, metonymy. In a considerable number of papers and books, linguistic metaphors have been shown to be a reflection but also a formative force of gender asymmetries and inequalities. To give only a couple of examples, Stirling (1987) analysed the role of metaphors and metonymies in the definition of women in Australian newspapers, while Nilsen (1996) investigated the animal metaphors of women and men used by college students. In addition, more and more studies have appeared which are devoted to the use of gender metaphors in particular social contexts. For instance, Koller (2004) presented an analysis of the gender-biased metaphors of business media discourse and Pérez-Hernández (2016) investigated different pragmatic functions of conceptual metaphors used by female and male journalists in Spanish and English newspapers.

This paper is meant as a contribution to cognitive studies of the gender language as such, without taking into account its social and cultural contexts and motivations. In particular, its aim is to systematize the figurative lexical resources of gender in English and the cognitive processes these resources are based on. At the same time, the present study is a part of a larger project comparing the development of figurative gender vocabularies in typologically different languages like English, Polish and others, in order to identify the most important figurative means of dealing with gender in those languages and, if possible, establish the most important universal tendencies in this respect. The initial results of the project indicate that despite formal differences, the cognitive processes underlying the figurative extensions to gender concepts are the same or rather similar. Of particular importance is the mapping across the gender borderlines which I refer to as “transgender metaphor”. In addition, the study shows that in a number of cases the figurative meanings result from an interplay of metaphor and metonymy, thus shedding new light on the relationship between these two “master tropes”.

Most of the presented research is based on the familiar assumptions and findings of cognitive lexical semantics regarding the role of conceptual metaphoric and metonymic mappings in polysemy (cf. e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Sweetser 1990, Dirven and Verspoor 2004, Barcelona 2000, 2011a, Evans and Green 2006, Geeraerts 2010, Dancygier and Sweetser 2014, and Bierwiazzonek 2013, 2020). Since the objective of the study is a qualitative, rather than quantitative, lexicological analysis, the data are drawn from my own collection of figuratively denoted personal nouns, the examples discussed in the available literature on lexical and figurative aspects of gender, well-known dictionaries and COCA as a source of corpus examples.

In Section 1 I discuss the most important aspects of gender as a semantic and grammatical category in Present-day English, beginning with a general description of the gender system. Section 2 deals with various kinds of metaphor used to denote or refer to the two genders: objectivization, zoometaphor, and spiritualization, the last term referring to the mapping from non-natural entities to people, often accompanied by the process of degenderization. In Section 3 I briefly discuss a rather new term “syntaphor” and show its relevance to the language of gender. The last big trope, i.e. metonymy and metonymic lexical extensions referring to or denoting the two human genders, is discussed in Section 4. Section 5 presents a few possible examples of metaphonymy involving transgender metaphor. In “Summary and conclusions” I try to summarize the most important findings of the study and consider briefly the relationship between sex, gender, grammar and cognition in the light of these findings.

1. Gender in English

As is well known, gender in English is not an inflectional category and its formal exponents boil down to a few feminine affixes (-*ess*, -*ette*), *she*-/he- and -*man*/-*woman* compounds as well as referential and anaphoric third person singular pronouns. For a long time English pronominal system had been considered “natural” (e.g. by Bloomfield 1933), because the choice of the pronoun usually depends on the “natural” sex of its referent or antecedent, e.g. *man*, *father* and *brother* are pronominalized as *he*, while *woman*, *mother* and *sister* are pronominalized as *she*. Inanimate nouns are in general pronominalized as *it*. The myth of natural gender in English was dispelled or at least seriously questioned by Corbett (1991), who showed that gender categories in fact reflect the world view of speakers and that “natural” should be understood broadly as not only biological sex but also social concepts of sex and sociocultural gender. Therefore, McConnell-Ginet (2014) argues that instead of “natural”, we should talk about “notional” gender in English. Part of this notional gender is reflected in the lexicon of English, where a number of animate nouns denote distinct

categories considered to be male and female depending on social stereotypes rather than actual biological sex.

Although the relation of lexicon to pronominalization is not simple, it does exhibit regularities. In the chapter on Nouns and Noun Phrases in *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Huddleston & Pullum 2002), Payne and Huddleston (henceforth P&H) proposed that in terms of gender and the related pronouns, three classes of nouns can be distinguished:

- A. Single-gender nouns – pronominalized as masculine *he*² only, e.g. *boy, bridegroom, king*, or feminine *she* only, e.g. *girl, widow, spinster*³, or neuter *it* only, e.g. *window, beer, arrival*.
- B. Dual-gender nouns – masculine/feminine pronominalized as *he* or *she*, e.g. *friend, writer, atheist*; masculine/neuter pronominalized as *he* or *it*, e.g. *brother, bull, tomcat*; feminine/neuter pronominalized as *she* or *it*, e.g. *sister, hen, boat, country*⁴.
- C. Triple-gender nouns – pronominalized as *he, she, or it*, e.g. *baby, child, dog, lion, octopus*.

What is important to bear in mind considering P&H's classification is that different pronouns result from the gender indeterminacy (or vagueness) of the nouns like *friend, cousin, or child* on the one hand, the speaker's "sexist" attitude or relation to the referent of the noun on the other, as in the case of dual-gender categories like *boat, car, or country*, but above all from the stereotypes associated with the seemingly sex-neutral nouns like *surgeon, politician, nurse, student*, etc. As McConnell-Ginet (2014:6) pointed out "pronominal usage cannot be understood without considering sociocultural gender and the ideas about sex and sexuality current at a given time." The questions in the two dialogues below (from McConnell-Ginet 2014:27f) show it quite clearly:

- 1) A: I've got to drive the babysitter home.
B: How far away does she live?
- 2) A: The police have identified the burglar who took Kim's silver.
B: Was he local?

² Whenever the pronouns *he, she* and *it* are mentioned below, all their inflected forms are also included, e.g. *he – his, him, himself*.

³ P&H quote also *queen* here, which has recently acquired the sense 'a gay man, especially an older man, whose way of behaving is noticeable and artificial' (Online Cambridge Dictionary), which means it may be pronominalized as *he* as well and should be moved to the dual-gender class. See Section 3.2. below.

⁴ As is well-known, the choice of feminine or neuter pronouns for inanimate nouns depends on individual preferences. As P&H point out, „there is considerable variation among speakers as to how widely they use *she* for inanimates" (p. 491).

Given the context where B does not know the actual sex of the referents of *the babysitter* in (1) and *the burglar* in (2), his (her?) choice of pronouns is dictated solely by the cultural presuppositions about those two categories. The same is true of so-called generic uses of *she* and *he* (*his*), illustrated below:

- 3) Every student must bring his own writing materials to class
- 4) Students have to check with the teacher regularly so she knows how they're progressing. (McConnell-Ginet 2014:30,32)

In sentence (3) the possessive *his* refers anaphorically to *every student*, which encompasses both males and females, while in sentence (4) *she* refers back to the generic teacher, which again may be either male or female.

On the other hand, as we shall see below, the way nouns are pronominalized may also reflect their polysemy, i.e. the fact they may denote figuratively different ontological categories, including different sexes. This is what we shall turn to now.

2. Metaphorization of people – gender objectifications, zoometaphors and spiritualizations

People may be construed metaphorically in four ways: as inanimate things (objectifications, including plant-metaphors), as animals (zoometaphors), as imaginary or non-natural creatures (spiritualizations), or as other categories of people (gender syntaphors). These categories do not strictly correspond to the hierarchical model of categorization based on The Great Chain of Being, as discussed by Lakoff and Turner (1989) and Krzeszowski (1997), who distinguish five basic categories of being, namely INORGANIC THINGS, PLANTS, ANIMALS, HUMANS, GOD. First of all, partly because of space limitations of an academic paper, but also because neither of them exhibits gender distinctions, objectifications proper and plant-metaphors (also known as “vegetalizations”) are lumped together as one category. Another difference is that instead of “deification”, which I used in another work (cf. Bierwiazzonek 2002), I prefer the term “spiritualization” here, as a more general cognitive process of construing people not only in terms of divine beings like God, but also in terms of less divine and less perfect beings like devils, fairies, dwarfs, etc., which have well-established conceptual representations, but which are referentially doubtful and free from ordinary limitations of natural organisms. In addition, I discuss a number of cases of syntaphor, i.e. mappings across the same human level of categorization, which the other researchers do not distinguish at all. Hegstrom & McCarl-Nielsen (2002) found that objectification, zoometaphor and gender syntaphor are the most common figurative descriptions of familiar people. These were represented by the most frequent lexemes in their study, which were respectively *sun*, *flower*, *rabbit*, and *mother*.

2.1. Objectifications

Objectification is a kind of ontological CONCRETE-TO-CONCRETE metaphor, in the sense of Szwedek (2002), whereby an animate or abstract category is construed as an inanimate, three-dimensional object.⁵

Since inanimate things do not exhibit sexual distinctions, they should not provide sources for gender metaphors, i.e. the metaphors for particular human genders. This is in general true: objectifications like *mug*, *big gun*, *chatterbox*, *windbag*, *shit*, *star*, etc. all belong to the triple-gender class, i.e. they are pronominalized as *it* in their prototypical inanimate sense and may be pronominalized either as *he* or *she* in their metaphoric senses, which is reflected in their gender-neutral dictionary explications as illustrated below:

Shit – ‘an unpleasant person who behaves badly’ (Online Cambridge Dictionary, henceforth OCD):

- 5) He's a spoiled little piece of shit who needed Mama to wipe his own ass, but when she needed him most he couldn't be there for her.

Big gun – ‘an important, usually rich person’(OCD):

- 6) I met that big gun yesterday. First he told me he'd picked up that girl in an uptown hotel and then ...

Windbag, gas bag – ‘a person who talks too much about boring things’ (OCD):

- 7) Do not pay too much attention to flocculent windbags like economic professors.

Other objectifications of this kind are *wet blanket*, *rolling stone*, *slow coach*, etc.

On the other hand, there are objectifications which clearly reflect stereotypical gender roles or traits and tend to denote one sex only, and thus should be classified as dual-gender nouns.⁶ Here are a few examples with OCD explications of their meanings and relevant examples:

Battle axe – ‘a frightening and unpleasant older woman with strong opinions’:

- 8) Our headmistress was a real old battle axe.

Wallflower – ‘a shy person, esp. a girl or woman, who is frightened to involve herself in social activities and does not attract much interest or attention’:

⁵ It should be clear that this sense of objectification is quite different from the one discussed briefly by Dancygier and Sweetser (2014), where it refers to “unpleasant sexual epithets” (p.102) based on the part-for-whole metonymy, like *ass* or *cunt* discussed below.

⁶ See Panther and Thornburg (2012) on the role of stereotypes of animals in so-called verbal critter constructions, like *horse around*, *rat out*, etc.

- 9) Sooner or later someone would take pity on the poor wallflower and ask her to dance.

Tart – ‘a woman who intentionally wears the type of clothes and makeup that attract sexual attention in a way that is too obvious’.⁷

- 10) She actually is asking to be harassed and I am a female from Europe.. but girls don't dress like that at home for sure. I would never let my daughter dress like a tart... I mean she looks like she's should be in some Asian porn film and dressed to get gang-banged on the subway!!!! (COCA: BLOG <http://www.tealeafnation.com/2012/06/shanghai-subway-tells-scantily-clad-women-to-expect-sexual-harassment/>)

Faggot and **puff** both have the meaning of ‘male homosexual’, the latter probably based on the sense of ‘a piece of food made of puff pastry with something sweet or with food such as cheese’ (OCD).

The two objectifications most common in Hegstrom & McCarl-Nielsen’s (2002) study, i.e. *the sun* and *flower*, have been found to be used predominantly with female targets.⁸

2.2. Zoometaphors

Sakalauskaite (2010:17) defines zoometaphors as “metaphors in which the behavior, emotion or appearance of an animal is a reference to the behavior, emotion or appearance of the human.” Gender zoometaphors map particular animal categories on human female or male categories.

With respect to gender, English animal terminology can be divided into three classes:

Class A, which exhibits a full range of lexical distinctions denoting species X, female X, and male X, e.g. *horse*: *mare_F*, *stallion_M*;⁹ *pig*: *sow_F*, *hog_M*; *cattle* (*bos taurus*): *cow_F*, *bull_M*; *deer*: *doe/hind_F*, *buck/stag_M*; *sheep*: *ewe_F*, *ram_M*.¹⁰

Class B, which uses one of the gender terms to denote the whole species and has another lexeme for the opposite gender, e.g. *dog*: *bitch_F*, *dog_M*; *cat*: *cat_F*,

⁷ See Duda (2014:108ff) for the diachronic account of *tart*. One the reviewers of the present article pointed out that we could easily distinguish a special category of gender FOOD metaphors, represented, in addition to *tart*, by e.g. *beefcake* and *studmuffin* (both denoting ‘sexually attractive man’). I can’t but agree. However, because of space limitations of a journal article, this category will be ignored here, pending future research.

⁸ This is somewhat surprising for *the sun*, which in poetry is often pronominalized as *he*.

⁹ The subscripts F and M are used to indicate the natural sex of the category, female and male respectively.

¹⁰ We could count *cat*, *pussy/tabby*, *tom(cat)* here as well, although *tomcat* is clearly derived, so it may be a borderline case between Class A and Class B (see below).

tomcat_M. This class comprises also a number of cases with derived female terms, e.g. *tiger*: *tigress_F*, *tiger_M*; *lion*: *lioness_F*, *lion_M*.

Class C, which has the general species term X and the two gender terms derived by means of compounding involving pronominal gender-specific modifiers, i.e. *she-X* and *he-X* for the female and male genders, respectively, e.g. *goat*, *she-goat*, *he-goat*. As P&H (p.1682) point out “this type of compounding is still productive, but the resultant forms rarely become established.”

Zoometaphors use either basic level epicene terms of species of animals, or female or male only terms. When the gender-neutral basic level species terms from Class A are used metaphorically, they often, predictably, exhibit dual gender. For instance, the metaphoric meanings of *pig* are explicated as follows:

***Pig*¹¹**

1. ‘a person who is unpleasant and difficult to deal with’;

11) He was an absolute pig to her. (OCD)

12) HEY, HOW ARE YOU? - HI. OH, GOD. THERE'S MY FUTURE MONSTER IN LAW. SHE'S SUCH A PIG. MOM, HI. DEB. HEY. SO, ANY UPDATE ON MY SOON-TO-BE EX-HUSBAND? (COCA: *Dorfman in Love*, Year 2011/Genre: Comedy, Drama, Romance)

2. ‘a person who eats too much’:

13) You greedy pig! You're not having another biscuit! (OCD)

Another example is the species lexeme *sheep*, which metaphorically means ‘someone who is easily persuaded into doing things, who obeys orders without thinking, or acts in a particular way because others are doing so.’

Likewise, species terms from Class C are often gender neutral, e.g. the metaphoric human meaning of *mouse* is ‘a shy, quiet, nervous person’.

2.2.1. Gender zoometaphors

Gender zoometaphors are mappings from animals to one human gender only. It seems that we should distinguish two kinds of gender zoometaphors – those based on the natural sex of the source concept and those based on the cultural stereotype associated with the source concept. For short, we may call them natural gender zoometaphors and, to use McConnell-Ginet’s term discussed above, notional gender zoometaphors. Let us discuss them in turn.

¹¹ There is a third metaphoric sense of *pig*, namely ‘a police officer’. My guess is that its default gender is male on account of the social stereotype according to which police officers tend to be male. However, this intuition needs verifying.

Natural gender zoometaphors are based on what I shall refer to as Natural Gender Fit Condition (NGFC):

If the source and target concepts of metaphor both exhibit natural gender, then the gender of the source must be the same as the gender of the target.

According to NGFC, female humans tend to be metaphorized as female animals, e.g. *cows*, *bitches*, *hens*, or *vixens*, while male humans tend to be metaphorized as male animals, such as *stallions*, *stags*, or *foxes*. Thus, most of these nouns are dual-gender nouns. It will be observed that NGFC may be considered as a particular case of the Invariance Hypothesis (Lakoff 1990) as it requires that the choice of the source domain should be compatible with the target domain. Here are two examples:

Cow – ‘an unkind or unpleasant woman’ (OCD)

- 14) TOO LONG to get you up to speed; your feckless dickless gutless mindless slobbering support of what you think a pussy wants to hear is, frankly, hilarious. I predict grinding celibacy for you followed by a short marriage to a cow who first cuckolds you, then divorces you. (COCA: BLOG <http://www.zerohedge.com/news/how-us-will-become-3rd-world-country-part-2>, 2012)

Stag – ‘a man who is going to get married soon, when he is at a stag party (= a party with only men to celebrate this)’ (OCD)

- 15) The red-fat man cut in, and looking up at Edith smiled radiantly. # " Did you bring any one?" she asked. # No. The red-fat man was a stag. # " Well, would you mind –would it be an awful bother for you to –to take me home to-night?
(COCA: WEB <http://www.sc.edu/fitzgerald/mayday/mayday.html>, 2012)

Notional gender zoometaphors occur when a gender-neuter animal concept is or, more often, tends to be mapped on one human gender only. These are the cases when epicene nouns denoting animals tend to be used more often as source concepts for one gender rather than the other. As Holland and Davidson (1983) found, different “subtypes” of men and women may be designated by different gender-neutral animal nouns, e.g. women, apart from being offended as “bitches”, are referred to as *dogs*, *cats*, *foxes*, *chicks*, *birds*, *shrews*, among others, while men, apart from being “studs” and “bucks”, are metaphorized also as *rats*, *snakes*, and so on (p. 12). Similar findings were reported by Nilsen (1996). Likewise, Hegstrom and McCarl-Nielsen (2002) showed that a number of gender-neutral nouns tend to be used as source concepts for one gender only. The most plausible explanation is that certain animals are associated with certain traits which are in turn associated stereotypically with one human gender. One such noun is *rabbit*. Apparently, a stereotypically salient attribute of rabbits is unrestrained sexual

activity, which is stereotypically associated with young men as well. Therefore the noun *rabbit* is used to denote young, sexually active men. Other zoometaphors they identified in their study were *bird*, *butterfly*, *tiger*, used more often for women¹², and *fish*, *lion*, *bear*, *fox*, *snake*, more often used to denote men.

Particularly telling dictionary examples of metaphoric gender senses of sexually neutral nouns are the metaphoric senses of *trout* ‘an old person, especially a woman, who is unpleasant or not attractive’, and *cougar* ‘an older woman who has sexual relationships with younger men’, illustrated below:

- 16) She's a miserable old trout who complains about everything. (OCD)
- 17) But it's the same, to be honest, as some liberal cougar who wants to tell her NPR friends that she likes black guys so much that she let one put his dick in her. Sometimes it's not even a racial or a cultural thing; it's an ego thing. (COCA, 2012, BLOG <http://splitsider.com/2012/09/black-ops-post-racial-comedy-in-the-age-of-obama/>)

2.2.2. Transgender metaphors

NGFC seems to be natural, well-motivated and predictable, given the general structure and direction of mapping of zoometaphors. What is more interesting and theoretically challenging are exceptions to NGFC. These are all the metaphors whereby the natural gender of the source is different from that of the target, e.g. a “male” noun has a metaphoric “female” meaning or a “female” noun has a metaphoric “male” meaning. I suggest that these kinds of cross-gender mappings be termed “transgender metaphors”. Their general form is GENDER X IS GENDER Y, with two varieties: FEMALE IS MALE and MALE IS FEMALE. As we shall see further below, transgender mappings are by no means restricted to zoometaphors.

Let us consider a few examples.

Bitch

The dictionary entry for *bitch* specifies its two metaphoric senses: the first one in agreement with NGFC, and the other, which allows for transgender mapping, as illustrated by the corpus example below:

1. offensive ‘an unkind or unpleasant woman’
- 18) She can be a real bitch. (OCD)
2. ‘someone who will do everything you tell them to do because you have complete control over them’

¹² Considering that there is a derivation *tigress*, meaning ‘female tiger’, this female sense of *tiger* may be regarded as an example of transsexual zoometaphor, analogical to the female sense of *dog* discussed below.

- 19) Also he said" Think he thought I was the bellman" Nowhere does it say Jonah, himself thought this dumbass bitch was a bellman, this is just the assumption Lemon made. (COCA <http://www.dlisted.com/2012/11/09/don-lemon-and-jonah-hill-got-douche-fight-twitter>)

Although it might be tempting to account for sense 2 in terms of generalization, the history of the word suggests that the “male” sense of *bitch* was added to the semantic structure of this lexeme after it was first extended by gender metaphor to the sense ‘an unkind or unpleasant woman’, so generalization may be a result of the transgender metaphor, rather than the other way round. The quote from *Online Etymology Dictionary* (henceforth OED) makes it quite clear:

“As a term of contempt applied to women, it dates from c. 1400; of a man, c. 1500, playfully, in the sense of “dog” Used among male homosexuals from 1930s. In modern (1990s, originally African-American vernacular) slang, its use with reference to a man is sexually contemptuous, from the “woman” insult.”

In addition, as we shall see below, that is not an isolated case, but rather an example of a more general tendency which applies to other kinds of metaphor as well.

As mentioned above, the species terms of Class B are ambiguous because they may denote either the entire species or only one of its sexes. This raises the question if this sexual bias affects (narrows) the metaphoric scope of these terms. The example of *dog* shows that this is not the case since it may be used as sources for the opposite sex target concepts.

Dog

1. (slang) ‘a man who is unpleasant or not to be trusted’ (Ayto & Simpson, henceforth A&S):
- 20) He tried to steal my purse, the dirty dog.
2. (offensive) ‘a woman who is not attractive’:
- 21) Shut up! I don't want to be your boyfriend, you ugly dog. I don't want to be your girlfriend, big head. Get off me! Big head. (COCA: Love & Basketball (IMDB) (Open Subtitles) Year: 2000/Genre: Drama, Romance, Sport. Monica and Quincey)

Since there is no metaphoric sense of *dog* which denotes people as a species and sense 2 applies only to women, it may be considered as a case of “transgender zoometaphor”.

2.3. Spiritualizations

Spiritualizations are ontological metaphors which allow us to talk about various categories of usually animate entities, particularly people, in terms of imaginary, mythological or religious beings, such as angels, devils, fairies,

gnomes, spirits, ghosts, gods, titans, nymphs, sirens, etc.¹³ Thus, the general conceptual metaphor here is: HUMAN BEING IS A SPIRITUAL BEING. These spiritual beings in their basic meanings can be divided into three groups according to their gender:

a) Male spiritual beings – *god, angel, giant, gnome, devil, faun, dwarf, wizard*, etc.

b) Female spiritual beings – *goddess, giantess, fairy* (and *fairy god-mother* from the Cinderella story), *siren, witch, amazon, nymph, mermaid*¹⁴

c) Gender neutral or androgynous beings – *ghost, deity, spirit, apparition, spectre, genius*

The simplest case of spiritualization, which obliterates gender distinctions, involves the whole category of people, i.e. both men and women, metaphorized as gender-neutral beings, such as ghosts, spirits, apparitions etc., none of them having an entrenched “human” sense. When the source concepts do exhibit sexual distinctions, spiritualizations follow the spiritual version of NGFC, say Spiritual Gender Fit Condition (SGFC), which results in gender spiritualizations: men are metaphorized as male spiritual beings, e.g. as gods, devils, dwarfs, etc., while women are metaphorized as female spiritual beings, e.g. goddesses, fairies, nymphs, etc.

Probably because of their spiritual nature and the fact that not all spiritual species have two genders, the gender of spiritual beings is not their salient attribute so there are rather common exceptions to SGFC. First of all, a number of male spiritual beings provide sources for both male and female concepts, e.g. *angel, dwarf, wizard*. This is probably due to the scope of the metaphoric mapping, which is restricted to one or few related properties, e.g. *god* – AUTHORITY, *dwarf* – SMALL SIZE, *wizard* – GREAT SKILL. It seems then that these concepts undergo a particular type of generalization involving the process which may be called “degenderization”. It should be stressed that gender spiritualization and degenderization are not mutually exclusive and degenderization may be a consequence of prior gender spiritualization. This is what probably happened to the noun *angel* discussed below. Another process that can be observed is the

¹³ In fact, spiritualization may be viewed as a secondary metaphor following the primary process of anthropomorphization of spiritual or non-natural beings associated with mythologies and religions (cf. Barret and Keil 2006, Bierwiazzonek 2008). Although I propose a single cognitive mechanism of spiritualization, it is perfectly possible to construe the source concepts of this process as originating in two or more different conceptual domains, e.g. RELIGION and LITERARY FICTION.

¹⁴ According to Duda (2014:108) *mermaid* and (*kennel*-)*nymph* were used in early Modern English in the metaphoric sense of ‘fallen woman’. I agree with one of the reviewers of this article that the ontological status of wizards and witches is somewhat problematic and they can be construed both as humans and as imaginary beings, so my decision to include them in this section is to some extent arbitrary.

mapping from a spiritual concept of gender X to a human concept of gender Y. This mapping may take on the form of a direct “transgender spiritualization”. The processes of gender spiritualization, degenderizing spiritualization and transgender spiritualization are specified and illustrated below.

2.3.1. Gender spiritualization

SPIRITUAL ENTITY_{GENDER X} >> [METAPHOR]>> HUMAN BEING_{GENDER X}¹⁵

Gender spiritualisations usually follow SGFC and involve paragons of properties culturally associated with particular genders, e.g. *Venus* and *Adonis* used as the source concepts to refer to individuals representing the ideals of female and male physical beauty. As for common nouns, an obvious example is *goddess*.

Goddess

– ‘a female god’ e.g. *Aphrodite was the ancient Greek goddess of love.*
(OCD)

Dictionaries do not specify the metaphoric meaning, but there are a number of examples in corpora which suggest that it is used in the sense of ‘powerful and beautiful woman’, as in the example (22) below.

- 22) The Shiar stared in unabashed appreciation, and laughed openly, saying to Nahad, " You have a goddess for a daughter, my friend!" (COCA: WEB <http://www.fantasy-magazine.com/non-fiction/articles/the-story-of-love-by-vera-nazarian>, 2012).¹⁶

2.3.2. Degenderizing spiritualization

SPIRITUAL ENTITY_{GENDER X} >> [METAPHOR]>> HUMAN BEING

God

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, God is male and grammatically masculine. This goes back to the Book of Genesis (2.2), where we read: “On the seventh day God had completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing”. The “maleness” of God is further emphasized in the Bible when he is anthropomorphized as Father. Another indication that God is conceptualized as a male is that there exists its morphologically derived feminine counterpart – *goddess*. Thus the ordinary spiritualization of a human as god in accordance with SGFC applies to male humans, as in the OCD example (23). However, *god* may also designate a female, according to the OCD explication ‘someone who is admired a lot or too

¹⁵ I’m aware that I have departed the standard X is Y representation of metaphoric mappings, but I believe this graphic convention is more suitable for showing metaphor and other forms of mapping as processes leading to new senses of the analyzed lexemes.

¹⁶ Other examples are easy to find in poetry and songs, e.g. in Bob Dylan’s *Tough Mama* (in the album *Planet Waves*), where it is used rather sarcastically.

much'. Therefore, *Dr. Tay* in the OCD example (24) below may refer either to a man or a woman and may be pronominalized either as *he* or *she*.

23) His most devoted fans think of him as a sort of god

24) Dr. Tay is a god to me.

Because this new sense is not gender-specific, it cannot be regarded as a case of transgender mapping, and thus it should be classified as generalization of meaning involving degenderization (following its original masculine anthropomorphization) .

As we have seen above, *goddess* may be also used metaphorically, but then it can only refer to women, so the spiritualisation of *goddess* complies with SGFC.

Devil

Although in its religious meaning *devil* is described as 'an evil being, often represented in human form but with a tail and horns' (OCD), it is usually unequivocally associated with masculinity and in Hebrew as well as in all the Indo-European languages I am aware of it is denoted by a masculine noun and pronominalized with a masculine pronoun. Nevertheless, at least in English, *devil* has developed also a sex-neutral human sense of 'a person who enjoys doing things people might disapprove of' (OCD):

25) "I'm going to wear a short black skirt and thigh-length boots""Ooh, you devil!"

26) Have another slice of cake - go on, be a devil! (OCD)

Since *devil* has undergone metaphoric degenderizing generalization, when the female sex of the referent is relevant, the gender specific compound *she-devil* may be used, explicated as 'a woman who is considered to be dangerous or evil' (OCD).

Angel

Angel is thought of and is often depicted visually as androgynous. Nevertheless, it seems that the male features prevail, as confirmed by the biblical story of annunciation, where the angel Gabriel is pronominalized as *he* and so is the angel Remiel in a modern blog below:

27) In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" (Luke 1:26-38 English Standard Version)

28) The angel Remiel loses everything that's meaningful to him, and changes hell in the process, while his counterpart Duma chooses to accept his duty and change without giving up his identity. (COCA: BLOG <http://www.avclub.com/articles/the-fourth-sandman-collection-gathers-myths-legend,88343>, 2012)

Apart from its familiar religious male sense, *angel* exhibits at least two general, sex-neutral human senses:

1. ‘someone who is very good, helpful, or kind’:

29) Be an angel and help me with this.

In James Blunt’s song *You’re Beautiful*, the angel is a girl who struck the onlooker as particularly beautiful, so he sings:

30) I saw an angel/Of that I’m sure/She smiled at me on the subway¹⁷

2. ‘a rich person who invests in a new company’:

31) Wealthy individual investors, known as angels, differ from lenders in that they want a stake in your business.

As in the case of devil, since neither of the metaphoric human senses of *angel* is gender specific, references to female humans should not be regarded as transgender metaphor, but rather as examples of degenderizing spiritualisations.

Wizard

The male spiritual meaning of *wizard* of ‘a man who is believed to have magical powers and who uses them to harm or help other people’ has been generalized and degenderized to ‘someone who is an expert at something or who has great ability in a particular subject’ (OCD), which may be used both with reference to males and females, as in example (32) below.

32) Harry Dresden, whose complete name is Harry Blackstone Dresden, is a male human wizard with a talent for thaumaturgy, alchemy and necromancy (Google Search: Harry Dresden | Dresden Files | Fandom)

33) Your mother’s a wizard at Scrabble (OCD)

Dwarf

A good case of non-religious degenderization is the semantic development of *dwarf*, which has extended its basic “spiritual” sense ‘in stories for children, a creature like a little man with magical powers’, e.g. *Snow and the Seven Dwarfs*, to the domain of people; where it means (often offensively) – ‘a person who is much smaller than the usual size’ (OCD), as in the COCA example (34) below:

34) Jepp progresses from adoration of frail Lia to love for Magdalene, the daughter of Tycho Brahe, who is not a dwarf. (COCA: WEB <http://www.tnr.com/book/review/jepp-who-defied-the-stars-katherine-marsh>, 2012)

¹⁷ The whole lyric is available at <https://www.groove.pl/james-blunt/youre-beautiful/piosenka/283931>

2.3.3. Transgender spiritualization

Transgender spiritualization involves a mapping from the spiritual domain to the domain of people accompanied by the change of gender of the target concept, which may be represented as follows:

SPIRITUAL ENTITY_{GENDER X} >> [METAPHOR]>> HUMAN BEING_{GENDER Y}

A telling example of transgender spiritualization seems to be the noun *fairy*.

Fairy

The basic meaning of *fairy* is explicated as ‘an imaginary creature with magic powers, usually represented as a very small person with wings’ (OCD) or ‘an imaginary creature with magical powers. Fairies are often represented as small people with wings’ (LDELC). It might seem then that fairies are not specified in respect of their gender. However, in the actual fairy tales I have read, e.g. *Our favourite fairy tales and famous histories, told for the hundredth time* by H.W. Dulcken and *The Welsh Fairy-book* by W. J. Thomas, fairies are invariably presented as female characters systematically pronominalized as *she*, so the extension of the meaning of *fairy* to ‘a homosexual man who behaves in a female way’, recorded by 1895 (OED), may be safely regarded as a case of transgender spiritualization. A&S illustrate it with the following sentence from E. Waugh:

- 35) Two girls stopped near our table and looked at us curiously. ‘Come on,’ said one to the other, ‘We’re wasting our time. They’re only fairies.’ (1945)

3. Syntaphors

The term “syntaphor”, a blend of “synecdochic metaphor”, was recently introduced by Bierwiazzonek (2020, 2021) in order to account for the cases of mapping across different concepts representing the same basic or subordinate level category, e.g. a St. Bernard’s referred to as a *poodle*, both *St. Bernard’s* and *poodle* being subcategories of DOG, or referring to a surgeon as a *butcher*, both terms belonging to the same subordinate level of PROFESSIONAL MAN.¹⁸ Thus it may be regarded as a refinement of Barcelona’s (2011a) observation that in certain kinds of metaphor, e.g. *John is a lion*, the source and the target domain are included in the same taxonomic domain and they are not linked by any kind

¹⁸ It must be remembered that syntaphor pertains not only to strict taxonyms but also to other kinds of hyponyms of basic level, including what Cruse (1986) called “plesionyms”, i.e. the terms which are daughters of the same basic level term which are not mutually exclusive, e.g. the basic level term *woman* may have as its hyponyms plesionyms like *mother*, *daughter*, *queen*, *nun*, *prostitute*, *actress*, etc. For the sake of simplicity, in the *surgeon* – *butcher* example I have classified those two nouns as representing “notional” male gender.

of pragmatic function. If the superordinate domains of FURNITURE and MAMMAL, are taken as an example, as in Figure 1 below, metaphoric mappings may occur between concepts on the basic level and above, e.g. *chairs* and *dogs*, and *mammals* and *furniture*, etc.¹⁹, whereas syntaphor pertains to the concepts below the basic level, e.g. b' and b'', or c' and c'', e.g. calling humorously a dentist chair *an electric chair* is an instance of syntaphor ONE KIND OF CHAIR IS ANOTHER KIND OF CHAIR, whereas calling a surgeon *a butcher* illustrates the syntaphor ONE KIND OF PERSON IS ANOTHER KIND OF PERSON. The bold vertical lines in Figure 1 indicate the major conceptual borders between the categories.

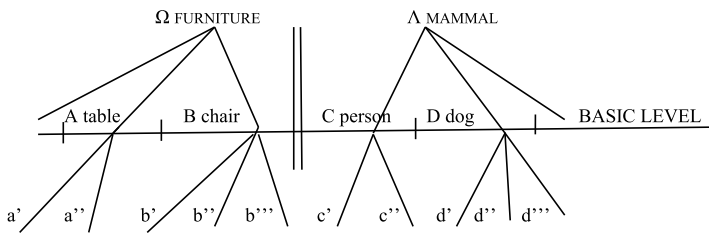


Fig. 1. Schematic partial taxonomy of furniture and mammals (based on Bierwiazzonek 2021).

The diagram above was proposed for the sake of illustration and was rather simplified. One important simplification has to do with the taxonomic position of the category of PERSON. In particular, although the problem calls for empirical verification, it seems to me that the basic level terms (or rather categories) are MAN and WOMAN, whereas the category HUMAN BEING should be considered as superordinate. I base my claim on the fact that, despite various gender unification efforts, man and woman satisfy almost perfectly all the crucial attributes of basic level categories usually cited in the literature (e.g. Taylor 1995, Croft & Cruse 2004):

- They combine the greatest conceptual distance on the same level of categorization with the maximal similarity of the subordinate categories;
- They represent different patterns of behavioural action and interaction, although these may differ from culture to culture;
- Despite various trends in fashion and hairstyle, their visual images usually still differ considerably;
- They continue to represent the most inclusive level at which distinctive part-whole relations can be identified, even if we reduce those parts to human anatomy;
- They are used for everyday neutral reference, e.g. in the form distinct form of address *Miss/Misses Mister*, or when speakers point to unknown individuals

¹⁹ In Polish, coffee tables are often referred to as *jamnik* (lit. 'dachshund').

and use expressions like *Look at that woman/man* rather than *Look at that person*, or when they describe real-life situations or pictures;

- The terms *man* and *woman* as well as their synonyms, like most basic level terms, tend to be short and, barring *woman*, morphologically simple, e.g. *girl*, *lady*, *lass*, *guy*, *boy*, *bloke*, *mate*, *dude*,

As we shall see this reorganization of the taxonomy has consequences for the decision whether transgender mappings should be considered as metaphors or syntaphors. If the taxonomy in Figure 1 is modified along the lines suggested above, it should have the form as shown in Figure 2.

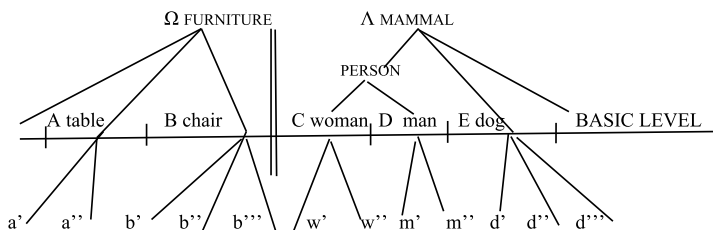


Fig. 2. Schematic partial taxonomy of furniture and mammals with categories of woman and man having the status of basic level categories.

The consequence of this modification is that mapping between various subcategories of men, e.g. $m' - m''$, and women, e.g. $w' - w''$, are classified as syntaphors, whereas the mapping across the categories of WOMAN and MAN will be considered as metaphoric.

3.1. Gender syntaphors

The term “gender syntaphor” is meant to designate those transfers of meaning whereby a single-gender noun is used to target another same-gender concept or gender-neutral noun is used to target a single natural-gender category.

Thus, the general structure of the gender syntaphoric mapping may be represented as follows:

SUBCATEGORY Z OF CATEGORY Y OF GENDER X >> [syntaphor] >> SUBCATEGORY W OF CATEGORY Y OF GENDER X

or

SUBCATEGORY Z OF GENDER-NEUTRAL CATEGORY Y >> [syntaphor] >> SUBCATEGORY W OF CATEGORY Y OF GENDER X

Predictably, since gender syntaphors are all based on two basic level concepts WOMAN and MAN, all gender syntaphors comply with Natural (or at least

Notional) Gender Fit Condition discussed in Section 2.2.1 above – female categories are sources for female targets, and male categories are sources for male targets. As in other kinds of figurative mappings, gender syntaphors may be simplex, e.g. *nun* in the sense of ‘prostitute’, or complex, as in the case of compounds like Late Modern English *market dame* or *call-girl*.

Before we look at Present-day English, it might be interesting to observe that gender syntaphors were already common in Old English. For instance, Duda (2014) in her study of synonyms of *fallen woman* shows that a number of those synonyms were compounds with the head, usually *cwene* (OE ‘woman, wife, queen’) or *wif* (OE ‘woman, female, lady’) (OED), and a modifier specifying the category of that woman, e.g. *portcwene* (‘public woman’), *horcwene* (‘woman whore’), *forligerwif* (‘woman in a lying position’). Beside compounds there were also gender derivations, e.g. *synnecge* (‘female sinner’), and the formations with the female suffix *-estre*, e.g. *bepæcestre* (‘a woman under a roof’), *myltestre* (from *meltan* ‘digest’).

More examples of gender syntaphors are discussed in greater detail below.

Nun* and *abbess

The gender syntaphoric extensions of these nouns date back to the 14th c. France where the most famous brothel in the then capital city of the Catholic Church Avignon was called *The Abbey* and its inhabitants, i.e. the prostitutes, were referred to as *nuns* and *abbesses* (Duda 2014: 86).

In addition to *nun* and *abbess*, there was no shortage of compounds specifying various other source concepts of syntaphors of prostitutes in Early Modern, Late Modern, and Present-day English, e.g. *public woman*, *hackney-woman/wench*, *town woman*, *pavement-princess*, *model*, *hackney-lady*, *marma-lade madam* (Duda 2014:108).

A few other Present-day English examples are discussed below:

Mama* (spelt also “mamma” and “momma”) and *daddy

The basic, almost international sense of ‘mother’ has been extended to the US slang ‘a woman, especially an attractive one’. In addition, according to A&S, it may also mean ‘a girlfriend or female lover, a wife’.

Likewise, the basic family meaning of *daddy* has been extended in slang to ‘older, male lover’ (often premodified with *sugar* in the compound *sugar daddy*, meaning ‘an elderly man who lavishes gifts on a young woman’), or a popular form of address to a male, particularly common in jazz culture (A&S).

Other family terms used syntaphorically include *aunt* (‘prostitute’), *uncle* (‘pawnbroker’) and a common form of address *bro* (short for *brother*), meaning ‘male friend’.

Sister is also used as a form of address to a woman, but it has developed a transgender sense as well, which is discussed below.

Boys and girls

These examples involve using one, usually younger, age-group of a gender category X for another, typically older, age-group of the same category X.²⁰ Consequently, the noun *boy* may be used to refer to an adult man and the noun *girl* may be used to refer to an adult woman. As is well-known, in French the lexeme *filles*, which originally denoted the category of young girls, has developed the main sense ‘prostitute’, so now the conventional way of referring to young females is *jeune fille* (‘young girl’). The English compounds *street-girl*, *call-girl*, *town-miss*, *B-girl*, all synonymous with *prostitute* (Duda 2014: 104f), are based on the same syntaphor.

Special cases of the syntaphoric use of *boy* are the familiar compounds *playboy* and *old boy*, as well as the slang compound *toy-boy* – ‘a woman’s much younger male lover’ (A&S).

Tramp

The prototypical sense of *tramp* ‘a person with no home, job, or money who travels around and asks for money from other people’ (OCD) is gender neutral, but it has also developed a gender syntaphoric slang sense: ‘a sexually promiscuous woman’ (A&S).

The same mechanism of using a gender-neutral sense in a gender-specific sense may be found in the development of Early Modern English *night-trader* or Present-day English *sex-worker* in the sense of ‘prostitute’ (Duda 2014: 103).

Man-eater

According to A&S, the idiomatic gender sense of *man-eater* is ‘a sexually voracious woman’.

This is a rather complex case of “metaphor in syntaphor”, as its syntaphoric meaning seems to be motivated by the metaphor SEX IS CONSUMPTION (EATING). Although the compositional meaning of this compound should be gender-neutral and display dual gender (as a synonym of *cannibal*), the cultural bias strongly favours female-only denotation.

A number of compound gender syntaphors indicate their gender by one of their constituents. We have seen some such cases, e.g. *playboy* or *old boy*, above. However, there are many others, especially the compounds with the prototypical gender head *-man* and *-woman*, e.g. the male compounds *visiting fireman* (‘visitor given a specially cordial treatment’, according to A&S), *tool-man* (‘lock-picker’ or ‘safe breaker’), *swing man* (‘drug pusher’), *hitman* (‘hired killer’), and the female compounds *public woman*, *hackney-woman/wench*, *town woman* (all synonymous with *prostitute*).

²⁰ Of course, the most common example of the process is the use of double-gender noun *baby* (or *babe*) for a grown-up person. This transfer cannot be considered as gender syntaphor, however, since the syntaphoric sense retains its double gender (i.e. it may refer either to a man or a woman).

There are also compounds indicating the central or peripheral status of their referent in their gender category, e.g. the ideal (or culturally prototypical) member of the male gender may be referred to as *he-man*, whereas a member on the borderline between the two genders may be designated as *she-male* ('a passive male homosexual or transvestite').

3.2. Syntaphor and transgender metaphor

In some cases gender terms are extended by means of both syntaphor and transgender metaphor. Two such cases are *queen* and *sister*, both representing the transgender metaphor MALE IS FEMALE.

Queen

The prototypical sense of queen, i.e. 'a woman who rules a country because she has been born into a royal family, or a woman who is married to a king' (OCD), has been extended to a syntaphoric gender sense 'any woman who is considered to be the best at what she does' (OCD), e.g.

36) She's the reigning queen of crime writers.

In addition to that, however, *queen* has also developed a transgender metaphoric sense: 'a gay man, especially an older man, whose way of behaving is noticeable and artificial' (OCD):²¹

37) James is such an old queen.

Sister

As I already mentioned, *sister* has acquired a syntaphoric sense 'woman, esp. one whose name is unknown' and is often used as a form of address. However, at the same time it has also extended its meaning to 'a fellow homosexual; a male homosexual, esp. one who is a friend rather than a lover' (A&S), representing transgender metaphor.

Tomboy

The compositional meaning of *tomboy* suggests a definitely male sense. However, as a result of transgender metaphor, the compound means 'a girl who acts and dresses like a boy, liking noisy, physical activities' (OCD), as in sentence 38 below.

38) She likes to think of herself as a tomboy, but her attractive looks and rebellious streak find her many admirers (OCD)

²¹ OED links the male sense of *queen* with that of the homophonous *quean* ('woman'), which also developed a metaphoric male sense, at least in the compound *cotquean* ('peasant's hut woman'). Here is the suggested explanation: "the transition is easy on the one side to 'one who has the manners of a labourer's wife, rude, ill-mannered woman, vulgar bedlam, scold ...' and on the other to 'a man who acts the housewife.' " These senses – "rude, ill-mannered woman" and "man who busies himself with affairs which properly belong to women" – both are attested from 1590s".

4. Gender metonymy

Analogically to different kinds of metaphors and syntaphors, there seem to be several groups of metonymies referring to people: metonymies based on human body, human properties, salient objects and characteristic behaviour. These are discussed below with particular attention drawn to gender metonymies, i.e. the metonymies whose targets are either female or male humans or particular female or male human referents.

4.1. Body metonymy - part of human body for person

Body metonymy may be designated either by simplex lexemes or bahuvrihi compounds.

Simplex body metonyms consist only of body part names standing for the whole person. In terms of their denotation and gender, we may distinguish three cases:

- “species” metonyms, or s-metonyms for short, which designate the whole category of people or a particular person as a representative of the whole species, e.g. *head*, as in *Two heads are better than one*, or *face* in *There are some new faces in our office*. These are typically triple-gender nouns, pronominalized as *she* or *he* in their personal senses and *it* in their body-part sense.
- “sub-species” metonyms, or ss-metonyms, for short, which denote a particular subcategory of the human species or a particular member of the subspecies, e.g. *finger* – ‘a police informer’, or *asshole*, ‘an unpleasant or stupid person’ (A&S). These are again typically triple-gender nouns, pronominalized as *she* or *he* in their personal senses and *it* in their body-part sense.
- “gender” metonyms, or g-metonyms for short, which denote only one sex of the human species, or a particular member of that sex, e.g. *ass*²² (Br.E. *arse*) used by men to refer to ‘women considered only as possible sexual partners’ or two rude synonyms of *penis* the noun *prick* and *dick* in the sense of ‘stupid man’. The two examples (39) and (40) below may serve as illustrations:

39) He could never let a great ass pass him by without having a look either. (COCA)

40) I’m not wearing that – I’d look a complete prick (OCD)

²² *Ass*, in the sense of ‘donkey’, may also be used zoo-metaphorically in the sense of ‘a stupid person’ (OCD). Of course, the sense under discussion here is ‘the part of the body that you sit on’.

These are usually dual-gender nouns, pronominalized as *it* and *she*, or *it* and *he*. Two triple gender nouns *cunt* and *tit* are discussed below as cases of metaphonymy.

Bahuvrihi compounds consist of an adjective and noun or noun and another noun and usually have the right-headed structure Modifier Adjective + Head Noun, e.g. *fathead*, *paleface*, *blackleg*, or Modifier Noun + Head Noun, e.g. *birdbrain*, *skinhead*, *egghead*, *smartmouth*, *redneck*, etc.²³ As Barcelona (2011b) pointed out, most of them typically denote people and are usually derogatory and de-humanizing by reducing people to “a reified physical property, a ‘thing’”. At the same time, their adjectival or nominal modifiers serve to restrict their denotation to the people exhibiting that particular property, so most of them are ss-metonyms. Since they are independent lexical units and their link with the body-part, which is pronominalized as *it*, is only motivational, most of them are dual-gender nouns which are pronominalized both as *she* and *he*. However, some of them narrow down their meaning not only to a particular sub-species but also to a particular sex of that sub-species, as their properties are culturally and/or stereotypically associated with one sex only, e.g. *longhair* means ‘a man with long hair’ and *egghead* means ‘a person, especially a man, who is very clever and interested only in studying and other mental activities’ (OCD). This means that we should also allow for a blended sub-species and gender metonymy, ssg-metonymy for short. By definition, ssg-metonyms are single-gender nouns, e.g. *an egghead* will be pronominalized predominantly as *he*, while *a pretty face* is pronominalized predominantly as *she*.

4.2. Property metonymy - CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTY FOR PERSON

Property metonymy used in conceptualizing humans usually involves Adjective to Noun conversions (Bierwiazzonek 2013), such as the colour of the skin in *black*, *white*, *grey* (‘a white skinned person’ in Black English slang, A&S), their political, philosophical views, as in *red* or *green*, nationalities, e.g. *Chinese*, *Japanese*, *Russian*, *Pakistani*, or sexual orientation, e.g. *homosexual*,

²³ Since the modifiers in the bahuvrihi compounds designate properties of body parts, these compounds may be regarded as a combination of body and property metonymies (see below). Therefore, it seems that Barcelona’s (2011) claim that they are based on the metonymy CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY should be modified. The metonymy CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY should be reserved for transfers of meaning from the property to the category exhibiting this property, discussed below, e.g. conversions like *black* (for ‘black person’), *reds* for ‘footballers wearing red jerseys’ or ‘communists’, *democracy* for ‘a country with a democratic political system’, etc., whereas bahuvrihis should be regarded as cases of the metonymy PART X OF ENTITY OF CATEGORY Y WITH CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY Y. The reason why I classify them as body metonymy is that their main constituent, i.e. the head noun, denotes body parts.

homophile, *gay*, etc. By definition, they are ss-metonyms represented by double-gender converted adjectives. The only gender metonyms in this group are the ones which prototypically designate sexual properties of their sub-species, e.g. the adjectives *female* and *male* used as nouns. In addition, there are a few cases of ssg-metonymy, where the sub-species metonyms are restricted to one gender only, e.g. female only subspecies of homosexuals *lesbian* (often clipped to *lez*), which apparently derives from the name of female inhabitants of the island of Lesbos (cf. OED), and *sapphic*, referring to the homosexual poetess Sappho living on Lesbos (cf. OED), and predominantly male *queer*.

4.3. Related object metonymy - SALIENT OBJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH PERSON X FOR PERSON X

This metonymy is well known from the classic examples like *the pork chop is waiting for his* check, articles of clothing for person, as in a *red cap*, where the NPs *the pork chop* and *a red cap* refer to salient objects associated with the target individuals (cf. Bierwiazzonek 2013).

Again, these may be simplex, typically nominal, e.g. *frog* ('French person'), *macaroni* ('an Italian'), *kiwi* ('New Zealander'), *whip* ('a party member responsible for the discipline of other members'), or compound, typically represented by right-headed endocentric compounds, e.g. *white/blue collar*, *red cap*, *old ship* meaning 'old shipmate' (A&S), *Kraut* – 'German soldier' (a clipped form of *sauerkraut*, which was believed to be the favourite German food, A&S), etc. Since the associated objects are characteristic of selected groups of people, these metonyms are usually simple ss-metonyms and only some of them may be associated with one gender only for historical and cultural reasons, e.g. most "old ships" and "Krauts" were men. There are also a number of gender metonyms in this class, as the objects they use as vehicles are associated with one sex only. The most common vehicles of this kind are typical female or male clothes. For instance, in Middle English women were often referred to by means of various articles of clothing they wore, such as *strap*, *murrey-kersey*, *skirt*, *smock*, *petticoat* and *placket*, discussed by Kleparski (2000).²⁴ For the same reason, *red-cap*, *stuffed shirt* and *red coat* usually referred to men. At times the link was less direct, e.g. *boots* used to mean 'a male hotel servant who cleans shoes and carries bags' (LDELIC).

²⁴ According to OED one possible source of the lexeme *strumpet* is Middle Dutch *strompe* 'stocking'.

4.4. Behaviour metonymy - PERSON X'S CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOUR/STATE FOR PERSON X

Probably the most common personal metonyms based on the metonymy PERSON X'S CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOUR FOR PERSON X are so called "scarecrow nouns" (Tuggy 1987), e.g. *pickpocket*, *killjoy*, which access the target category by specifying their characteristic behaviour by means of compounds composed of the verb and its direct object.²⁵ However, as I pointed out in Bierwiazzonek (2013, Ch.3: 138), the same metonymy motivates simplex cases, whereby intransitive verbs are converted into personal nouns, e.g. *cheat*, *creep*, *tear-away*. As expressions denoting forms of behaviour, most Tuggy's (1987) examples are ordinary ss-metonyms. I have found only two examples of gender metonyms in this class, both involving, non-prototypically, the stative verb *lack*: *lack-land* ('younger son') and *lack-beard* ('immature male youth').

5. METAPHTONYMY in English gender terms

There seems to be at least one case in English of the process known as metaphonymy, i.e. a combination of metaphor and metonymy, first proposed by Goosens (1990), which results in a shift in gender designation. The particular form of metaphonymy we will consider is a PART-FOR-WHOLE metonymy in metaphor, shown schematically below in the format used by Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera Masegosa (2014), who refer to it as "metonymic expansion of the metaphoric source domain" (p.109).

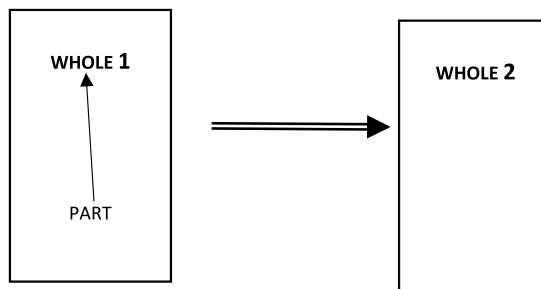


Fig. 3. General structure of the PART-FOR-WHOLE METONYMY IN METAPHOR. The single line arrow indicates metonymy, whereas the double arrow indicates metaphor. WHOLE 1 is the source for the target represented as WHOLE 2.

²⁵ The form of the metonymy given above is a more specific formulation restricted to humans of the general metonymy ACTIVITY FOR AGENT OF THIS ACTIVITY (cf. Bierwiazzonek 2013: 140). I must admit that the latter formulation was too restrictive as it failed to comprise non-agentive subjects, e.g. instruments, such as *cure-all*, *saws-all*, *door-stop*, *paper-punch*, etc., or themes of stative relations, such as *lack-land*, *lack-beard*, *lack-brain*, etc.

The word which seems to represent the development shown in Figure 3 is a taboo noun *cunt*.

Cunt

As is well known, the basic most common sense of this famous “mono-syllable” is ‘vagina’ or, as earlier lexicographers used to define it, ‘female genitalia’.

According to OED:

First known reference in English apparently is in a compound, Oxford street name *Gropecuntlane* cited from c. 1230 (and attested through late 14c.) in “Place-Names of Oxfordshire” (Gelling & Stenton, 1953), presumably a haunt of prostitutes. Used in medical writing c. 1400, but avoided in public speech since 15c.; considered obscene since 17c.

In Present-day English *cunt* has another sense, namely it has become an offensive word for ‘a very unpleasant or stupid person’, as in *You stupid cunt!*

The semantic extension from ‘vagina’ to ‘unpleasant or stupid person’ is not obvious because only females have vaginas. Thus, the gender metonymy which might motivate the extension should be restricted to women, in the same way as the personal sense of *prick* is restricted to men. What I propose, therefore, is that the development of *cunt* involves two process: the first is the PART OF FEMALE BODY FOR WOMAN metonymy and the second – the transgender metaphor whereby the sense ‘unpleasant or stupid woman’ is a source concept for the sense ‘unpleasant or stupid man’.

*Cunt*₀ ‘vagina’ >[metonymy]> *cunt*₁ ‘unpleasant or stupid woman’> [transgender metaphor]> *cunt*₂ ‘unpleasant or stupid man’

Using the format shown above in Figure 3, the development of may be represented as follows:

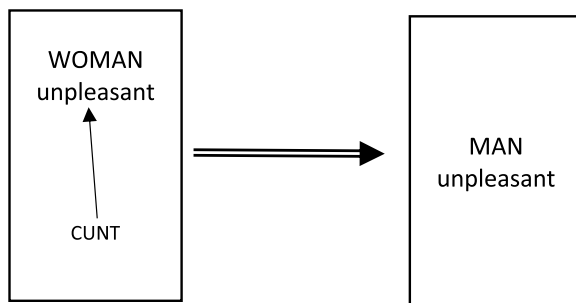


Fig. 4. PART-FOR-WHOLE METONYMY IN TRANSGENDER METAPHOR. The case of English *cunt* in the sense of ‘unpleasant woman’.

Tit

The other possible example of the metaphonymic extension of meaning is more controversial. In particular, it involves the development of the semantics of lexeme *tit*. According to OED, the origins of *tit* in English can be traced to OE, where it meant ‘teat’, ‘nipple’, ‘breast’. Then, around the 16th c. (attested in 1599, according to A&S), it acquired the sense of ‘woman’, often in deprecatory sense of ‘a hussy, minx’, which in the 20 c. was extended to ‘foolish, ineffectual person’, e.g. *I always took a gun and it kept me quite alert, not wishing to make a tit of myself in front of the laird* (1947), quoted in OED.

As in the case of *cunt*, the development indicates two steps, namely the metonymy FEMALE BODY PART FOR WOMAN, followed by transgender metaphor MALE IS FEMALE, resulting in the general sense ‘foolish, ineffectual person’. However, according to OED, there seem to be arguments that the ‘woman’ sense developed from another sense of *tit*, namely ‘small thing’ (the most likely source of the name of the common small bird), in which case its modern senses would result from a chain of two metaphors, i.e. first the metaphor WOMAN IS SMALL THING, again followed by transgender metaphor and the resultant generalization.

Summary, conclusions and final comments

I have tried to show what figurative means to designate the two basic sexual/gender categories of men and women are or have been used in English. Crucially, new figurative gender senses are reflected in the semantic extensions of particular lexemes and the resultant gender-specific pronominalization in the third person singular. The discussed data suggest that, by and large, gender figuration in English is motivated and constrained by the Natural or Notional Gender Fit Condition, which ensures that in the case of zoometaphors, spiritualizations, syntaphors and metonymies the gender of the source is the same as the gender of the target concept. As for objectifications, i.e. the metaphors construing people as inanimate concrete objects, the gender bias of those metaphors is usually motivated by gender stereotypes. Alongside the well-known processes of gender metaphor and metonymy, I have suggested that a number of figurative gender lexemes result from the process of syntaphor and a new kind of metaphor, called here “transgender metaphor”, whereby a source concept denoting one gender is used to access the opposite gender, e.g. *queen* or *sister* in the male senses in English. This is hardly surprising in the age of extremely vocal feminist and LGBT+ communities and should be studied further, also in the so-called grammatical gender systems, like Russian and Polish, in which transgender mappings are to different degrees reflected in grammar, e.g. in pronominalization and concord. For instance, in my research on figuration of gender in Polish, I have found examples of the same kind of metaphonymy as in

the semantic extension of the English noun *cunt*, except that in Polish the taboo lexemes for both female and male sexual organs (*pizda/cipa* and *chuj*, respectively) can undergo metonymic extension to the whole person, which is then transferred to its opposite gender by means of the appropriate form of transgender metaphor. What makes the Polish metaphonymies even more expressive and offensive is that they involve transgender mappings not only on the conceptual level, but also on the level of grammar, since a feminine noun (e.g. *pizda* – ‘vagina’) is used to refer to male referents and a masculine noun (i.e. *chuj* – ‘penis’) is used to refer to female referents.

Furthermore, it seems that beside the processes of “genderization”, which are the main focus of this study, we should also observe and describe the opposite process of “degenderization”, as a conceptual and linguistic attempt to minimize the long tradition of gender inequity. We have seen examples of this tendency in the spiritualizations like *angel*, whereby the source concept is deprived of its original gender. However, degenderization may also pertain to the target concepts. In grammatical gender languages, this may be done by changing the grammatical category of gender nouns morphologically from feminine or masculine to neuter, e.g. in Polish the grammatically feminine colloquial synonym of *kobieta* (‘woman’) - *baba* is often used in a neuter form *babsko*. Another form of degenderization is the strategy of avoiding gender reference altogether, as in the case of English singular *they* or the use of *person* rather than gender-marked personal nouns. In figurative language degenderization may be achieved by means of objectifications and/or increasing extension of gender metaphors and metonymies to both genders. The presented data and analyses show that the two trends of genderization and degenderization are likely to continue in the future and it will be interesting to see how the old and new conceptual and linguistic resources, some of which have been described in this study, are going to be used in the present tug of war between the rather slowly changing nature and the increasingly fast changing culture.

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