

# The Conceptual Dimension **SEXUALITY** as a Typical Facet of Zoosemy

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## Abstract

*As one may reasonably expect, sexuality broadly understood seems to play an important role in the formation of zoosemes targeted at the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**. The conceptual domain **SEXUALITY** is not only closely related to the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING** but, more importantly, it may be simultaneously regarded as one of the conceptual dimensions by means of which the conceptual category **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** is related to the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**. Thus the aim of the present paper is to provide a historical account of selected aspects of English zoosemy; that is, the process of semantic alteration whereby animal names come to be employed to designate human characteristics.*

*Keywords: zoosemy, sexuality, conceptual dimension, metaphor*

## 1. Introduction

In this paper, employing the broadly understood mechanisms of cognitive linguistics which treat semantic change as a cognitively conditioned process, we aim to pursue the problem of what has been referred to in relevant literature as a historically testified universal connection between the two conceptual macrocategories, that is **HUMAN BEING** and **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** (see, among others, MacWhinney, 1989; Kleparski, 1997; Hsieh, 2000, 2003; Baider and Gesuato, 2003; Kiełtyka, 2008). Thus, the aim of the present paper is to provide a historical account of selected aspects of English zoosemy; that is, the process of semantic alteration whereby animal names come to be employed to

designate human characteristics. Our analysis of zoosemic metaphor is carried out in terms of the conceptual metaphor theory (henceforth: **CMT**) (see Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, and Lakoff and Turner, 1989 among other authors on the subject). We believe that **CMT** provides a sound methodological framework which is capable of accounting for semantic change in a panchronic perspective. The theoretical approach this study is based upon makes it evident that metaphors are central to the way we think about the world. They provide an essential link between our immediate experience and abstract thought and – what is more – they may not merely elucidate a point but often, without them, understanding the intangible would be virtually impossible (see Lukeš, 2005).

Also, as argued by MacWhinney (1989), the metaphorical extensions associated with the category **HUMAN BEING** point to a certain isomorphism that is established between the world of animal characteristics and the world of human characteristics. We hope to be able to show that the linguistic material analysed in the present paper allows us to formulate certain observations and generalisations concerning the problem of animal metaphors and the issue of isomorphism between various subcategories of the conceptual categories **HUMAN BEING** and **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS**.

## 2. The conceptual dimension **SEXUALITY** in focus

One of the findings of Kiełtyka (2006) is that English zoosemy may be accounted for by reference to seven conceptual dimensions/spheres, or conceptual domains (henceforth CDs) i.e. **PROFESSION/SOCIAL FUNCTION, BEHAVIOUR/CHARACTER, ORIGIN/SOCIAL STATUS, PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS/APPEARANCE, MORALITY, SEXUALITY, CONTEMPT/OPPROBRIUM**, of which one, that is the conceptual dimension **SEXUALITY**, will be scrutinised here in detail. It goes without saying that the conceptual domain **SEXUALITY** is closely related to the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**. More importantly, it seems that the conceptual domain **SEXUALITY** may be simultaneously regarded as one of the conceptual dimensions by means of which the conceptual category **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** is related to the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**. It is therefore of little surprise that, taking the term in its wider context, sexuality seems to play an important role in the formation of zoosemes targeted at the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**.

Extralinguistically, sexuality must be regarded as an inseparable factor in human life which, in turn, is also clearly reflected in language data and the processes language is prone to undergo. The semantics of lexical items analysed below supports the view that in many aspects of human life, behaviour and morality may be represented by reference to animal life and instinctive behaviour. It appears natural that since sexual activity is part and parcel of the process of giving the gift of life, acute observation of the animal kingdom may serve as a rich source of data where this aspect of life in general is embodied in the process of zoosemic extension. Thus, one of the aims addressed in this paper will be to discuss those aspects of the semantics of domesticated animals which are to be held responsible for mappings leading to the zoosemic shift **DOMESTICATED ANIMAL > A HUMAN BEING CHARACTERISED IN TERMS OF SEXUALITY**. Here, we shall propose an in-depth analysis of zoosemic extensions that affected two lexical items, namely *stallion* and *gelding*.

According to many etymological sources (e.g. *EDME*, *OED*), *stallion* is of Romance origin and it corresponds to Mod.Fr. *etalon*, Mod.It. *stallone* and ultimately V.L. *\*stallone* ‘stable, stall’. As the *OED* informs us, the word entered the English lexicon towards the close of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and its primary sense at that time was ‘a male horse not castrated, especially one kept for mating purposes’ (1388>1940). However, one may hypothesise that this lexical unit must have been used much earlier since the metaphorically extended sense discussed below was activated already in c1305. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was applied to a male dog or sheep with reference to its use for breeding (1802>?). Therefore, in an attempt to account for the historically primary sense of *stallion* one must posit an entrenchment<sup>1</sup> relation to the attributive path of **DOMAIN<sup>2</sup> OF SPECIES [...]** for which the attributive value (EQUINE/CANINE/OVINE) is brought to the fore. The activation of this conceptual value is attended by the foregrounding of the sex-specific attributive element (MALE) specifiable for **DOMAIN OF SEX [...]**, as well as the highlighting of the attributive values (ADULT), (NOT CASTRATED) and (USED FOR MATING PURPOSES) forming parts of the attributive paths of **DOMAIN OF AGE [...]**, **DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE [...]** and **DOMAIN OF UTILITY [...]** respectively. The following exemplary contexts extracted from the *OED*<sup>3</sup> illustrate this sense-thread of *stallion*:<sup>4</sup>

- 1388 An hors a *staloun*, so and a frend a scornere, neizeth vundur ech sittyng e aboue.  
Thei be maad horsis, and *stalouns*, louyeris to wymmen.  
↓  
1802 Dash [a dog]..had the misfortune to break his leg, and was sent to Col. T. who..  
considered him in that state a great acquisition as a *stallion* to breed from.  
↓  
1940 The *stallions* of the soul-Eager to take the fences That fence about my soul.

At the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century – by the process of animal metaphorisation – *stallion* developed another sense-thread and started to be used with reference to a person seen as a begetter (1305>1621). Thus, the early 14<sup>th</sup> century evidence given below justifies positing links relating the semantics of this sense-thread to the relevant location specifiable for the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF SPECIES [...]**, such as (HUMAN), the relevant location (MALE) within the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF SEX [...]**, as well as the activation of the age-specific element (ADULT) presupposed for the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF AGE [...]** and – simultaneously – the foregrounding of the attributive value (BEGETTER) forming one of the attributive values of the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY [...]**. The following *OED* quotations illustrate the historically extended sense of *stallion*:

- c1305 Þe monke þat wol be *stalun* gode..He schal hab wiþute danger .xii. wiues euche Zere.  
↓  
1621 When no choice is had, but still the eldest must marry, as so many *stallions* of the Race.

As evidenced by the *OED*, in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the metaphorical sense-thread of *stallion* was extended to include the sense ‘a man of lascivious life’<sup>5</sup> (1553>1978), ‘a courtesan’

(1575>1670) and a woman's hired paramour (17<sup>th</sup>>18<sup>th</sup> centuries). The *OED* hypothesises that the sense 'a courtesan' may be owed to a French word *estalon* 'a decoy' continued in English as *stale* (*common stale*) 'a prostitute of the lowest class, employed as a decoy by thieves or a term of contempt for an unchaste woman'.<sup>6</sup> As evidenced by Partridge (1143), in the 20<sup>th</sup> century *stallion* developed a male-specific sense as 'a prostitute's customer'. Thus, in terms of the theoretical apparatus adopted here, the semantics of the sense-threads in question is accountable for in terms of an entrenchment link to the attributive paths of the three earlier specified conceptually central CDs attended by the activation of the conceptually peripheral evaluatively pregnant attributive values (LASCIVIOUS)/(COURTESAN)/(HIRED PARAMOUR) specifiable for the attributive path of DOMAIN OF MORALITY [...]. The following data extracted from the *OED* illustrate this sense-thread of *stallion*:

- 1553 [They] thinke it more mete for wanton wagtaile weston to be turned out for a *stallion*,...than to vse ani kinde of communication among worthi ladies.
- 1604 That I..Must like a whore vnpacke my hart with words, And fall a cursing like a very drabbe; a *stallyon*, fie vppont, foh.
- a1670 Doth the Adulterer look for impunity that he walks to his *stallion* by twilight?  
 ↓
- 1978 Barton amused himself by keeping a tally of Lasting's women; 'that insatiable *stallion*' he called him.

Finally, in the second half the 20<sup>th</sup> century *stallion* acquired yet another metaphorical sense. Since the 1970s, it has been colloquially used among African Americans, to refer to a good-looking girl or woman. In our interpretation, in order to account for the semantics of the above sense-thread, one is justified to posit an entrenchment link to the attributive path of the conceptually peripheral **DOMAIN OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND APPEARANCE [...]** for which the attributive values (TALL)^(GOOD-LOOKING) are activated. The following *OED* contexts testify to the analysed sense-threads of *stallion*:

- 1970 *Stallion*, a good-looking black woman.  
 ↓
- 1975 I love you Samantha Brown. In black ghetto language, you're a lovely *stallion*.

To conclude, it emerges from our discussion of the semantics of *stallion* that already during the course of the Mid.E. period the analysed lexical category started to function as a zoosem emboding the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY* (14<sup>th</sup>>17<sup>th</sup> centuries), and later – during the course of E.Mod.E. and Mod.E. – it started to be linked to the conceptual spheres *MORALITY* (16<sup>th</sup>>20<sup>th</sup> centuries) and – finally – the conceptual sphere *APPEARANCE/PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS* (20<sup>th</sup> century).

According to *WTNIDU*, *gelding* is of Scandinavian origin. The noun *gelding*, which was first recorded in English in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is linked to O.N. *geldingr* (from *gelda* 'to castrate'), O.E. *gelte* 'a young sow', Mid.Welsh *geleu/gelyf* 'a knife' and Mod.Gr. *gallos* 'a priest of Cybele, eunuch'. Towards the close of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when the word entered the English lexicon, it was originally used with reference to animals in the sense 'a gelded or castrated animal, especially a horse' (1380>1860). Within the canvas of our framework, the sense is explicable in terms of an entrenchment relation

to the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF SPECIES [...]** and the foregrounding of the attributive value (EQUINE), attended by the activation of the elements (MALE) and (ADULT) forming parts of the attributive paths of **DOMAIN OF SEX [...]** and **DOMAIN OF AGE [...]** respectively. Additionally, apart from these conceptually central CDs, the semantics of the historically primary sense of *curtal* involves positing an entrenchment link to the attributive path of the conceptually peripheral **DOMAIN OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY [...]** for which the attributive values (GELDED/CASTRATED) become prominent. The following *OED* quotations illustrate the historically primary sense-thread of *gelding*:

- 1380 Et qe Lawrence eit sie demure en vie un hakney bay *geldyng* et xl. s.  
 ↓  
 1711 The jolly Knight, who rode upon a white Gelding.  
 ↓  
 1860 A grey *gelding* was led up for Philip.

During the course of the 14<sup>th</sup> century – through zoosemic extension – the lexical item started to be applied to humans in the sense ‘a gelded person, a eunuch’<sup>7</sup> (1382>1785). In terms of analytical tools employed here one would be quite justified in saying that, apart from being highlighted for such attributive values as (HUMAN), (MALE) and (ADULT) specifiable for such CDs as **DOMAIN OF SPECIES [...]**, **DOMAIN OF SEX [...]** and **DOMAIN OF AGE [...]** respectively, which construe the conceptual core of this lexical category, the novel sense-thread shows entrenchment links to the attributive path of **DOMAIN OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY [...]** for which the values (GELDED)^(EUNUCH) are brought to the fore. This sense of *gelding* emerges from the following *OED* historical quotations:

- 1382 Putiphar, the *geldyng* of Pharao.  
 ↓  
 1693 The Venerable *Guelding*..O’er-looks the Herd of his inferiour Fry.  
 1785 *Gelding*, an eunuch.

The analysed material clearly shows that by the process of zoosemic extension, animal names undergo the process of metaphorisation via the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY* and give rise to shifts in meaning targeted at the various locations of the conceptual category **HUMAN BEING**.

Having interpreted such metaphorical contexts as *S/he is a stallion* and *He is a gelding* in terms of the mechanisms of the **GREAT CHAIN OF BEING** (henceforth: **GCB**), analysed in detail by Kiełtyka (2008), we may formulate a number of specific observations. Evidently, the human characteristics of being (VIRILE), (LASCIVIOUS), (BEGETTER), (EUNUCH), (PARAMOUR), (COURTESAN), etc., are frequently metaphorically mapped onto the conventional schema for the stallion and gelding to create our commonplace schema of the discussed animals. In other words, the contexts *S/he is a stallion* and *He is a gelding* convey the following meanings:

- ‘He is a begetter’ (*stallion*),  
 ‘He is a lascivious man’ (*stallion*),

‘She is a courtesan’ (*stallion*),  
‘She is a tall, good-looking woman’ (*stallion*) and  
‘He is a eunuch’ (*gelding*).

What is really metaphorical about the contexts in question is that the *steadfastness* of a person’s (VIRILITY), (LASCIVIOUSNESS), (SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR), etc. is understood in terms of the rigidity of the stallion and gelding’s animal instinct. It needs stressing that animals referred to as *stallions* are thought of as (LASCIVIOUS) horses (USED FOR MATING PURPOSES), while *geldings* are (GELDED/CASTRATED) horses. These elements may be considered as the quintessential properties metaphorically applied to the analysed animals by humans. In the CMT framework adopted here, metaphors are analysed as stable and systematic relationships between two conceptual domains (see Grady, Oakley and Coulson, 1999). Therefore, in the metaphorical contexts *S/he is perceived as a stallion* and *He is a perceived as a gelding* the conceptual structures from the source domain of equine physical attributes are put into use to encode human physical attributes in the target domain. Particular elements of the source and target domains, that is equine qualities of being a (LASCIVIOUS) horse (USED FOR MATING PURPOSES) or (GELDED/CASTRATED) horse, etc., are highlighted through the relevant conceptual metaphor, a mapping which indicates how elements in the two domains line up with each other. More specifically, in this metaphor, equine physical structures have been put into correspondence with human physical structures. Because the mapping is principled, human (VIRILITY), (LASCIVIOUSNESS) and (SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR) are associated with equine (MATING PROPERTIES), (FERTILITY) and (LASCIVIOUSNESS).

### 3. In search of parallels in the history of English

Understandably, many other animal names primarily related to the conceptual categories **DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** or **WILD ANIMALS** are also subject to zoosemic extension. As pointed out by Kiełtyka and Kleparski (2005: 81), the historically well-evidenced lexical categories which may serve as terms embodying the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY* are *wether*, *capon*, *stud*, *kitten*, *chick*, *bunny*, *tomcat*, *fox* and *foxy lady*. The lexical category *wether* corresponds to O.E. *weðer*, Mod.Du. *weer*, Mod.G. *Widder*, Mod.Icel. *veðr*, Mod.Norw. *veder/ver* and Mod.Dan. *væder* (see the *OED* and *ODEE*). At the close of the 9<sup>th</sup> century *wether* is recorded in English used in the sense ‘a male sheep/a ram; especially a castrated ram’ (890>Mod.E.). In the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the word developed the metaphorical sense ‘a eunuch’<sup>8</sup> (1548>1724). Moreover, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the compound *wether head* ‘a sheep’s head’ started to be applied figuratively to a stupid person<sup>9</sup> (1796>1896). The Romance *capon* is akin to O.E. *capun*, L. *capōn-em*, Mod.Fr. *chapon*, Mod.Sp. *capon* and Mod.It. *cappone*. At the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century the word was used in the primary sense ‘a castrated cock’ (1000>Mod.E.). In the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the analysed lexical category started to be employed a term of reproach for a person<sup>10</sup> (1542>1590) and at the close of the century it acquired the specific sense ‘a eunuch’<sup>11</sup> (1594>1691). Additionally, in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the compound *capon-justice* started to be used in the sense ‘a corrupt magistrate who is bribed by gifts of capons’<sup>12</sup> (1639>?).

As evidenced by the *OED*, the lexical category *stud* is a continuation of O.E. *stód* and it corresponds to Mod.G. *Stute* ‘mare’, Mod.Dan. *stod* ‘stud of 12 horses’, Mod.Sw. *sto* ‘mare’ and O.Sl. *stado* ‘stud of horses’. The word has been present in English since the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century when it was used in the sense ‘an establishment in which stallions and mares are kept for breeding’ or ‘the stallions and mares kept in such an establishment’ (1000>1898). In the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the meaning range of *stud* was narrowed down and it was applied to a collection of mares or stallions kept for breeding (1340>1607); later – a mare kept for breeding (1480>1570) and, finally, a stallion (1803>1891). The process of semantic narrowing continued, and in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century *stud* developed the senses ‘the horses bred by and belonging to one person’ or ‘a number of horses belonging to one owner’ (1661>1821). At the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – via zoosemic extension – the word in question acquired the sense ‘a man of great sexual potency or accomplishments/a womaniser, a habitual seducer of women’<sup>13</sup> or ‘a boy-friend/escort’<sup>14</sup> (1895>1981). Palmatier (373) claims that in Mod.E. *stud* is used chiefly in the sense ‘a virile or promiscuous young man’. Clearly, human *studs* are so called because of their natural virility or their track record as sexually active males. Finally, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in U.S. slang *stud*<sup>15</sup> started to lose its explicit sexual overtones and started to be employed in the sense ‘a man, a fellow, especially one who is well-informed/a youth’<sup>16</sup> (1929>1970).

The lexical category *kitten* is etymologically related to Mod.Fr. *chaton* ‘a kitten’ (see the *OED*). It has been present in English since the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in the sense ‘the young of the cat/a young cat’ (1377>Mod.E.), and at the close of the 15<sup>th</sup> century its meaning was generalised to include the young of other animals (1495>1972). In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *kitten* started to be applied figuratively to a young girl, with implication of playfulness or skittishness<sup>17</sup> (1870>1970). Moreover, *kitten* entered a number of compounds and collocations, e.g.: *kitten-hearted* ‘faint-hearted, timorous’<sup>18</sup> (1831>?); *to have kittens* ‘to lose one’s composure; to get into a ‘flap’’ (1900>1967);<sup>19</sup> and *sex kitten* ‘a young woman who exploits her sex appeal’ (since 1958).<sup>20</sup>

The word *chick* is a shortened form of *chicken* and it is now treated generally as a diminutive form of *chicken* (see the *OED*). As evidenced by *ODEE*, *chick* corresponds to Mid.E. *chike(n)/chikene* and O.E. *cicen/cicenu*. The analysed lexical category has been present in the English lexicon since the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the sense ‘a young chicken’ or ‘the young of any bird’ (1400>Mod.E.). At the outset of the 17<sup>th</sup> century its meaning was narrowed down to ‘the young bird still in the egg or only just hatched’ (1601>1871). By the process of animal metaphor, in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century *chick* started to be applied to human offspring, especially in alliteration with *child*<sup>21</sup> (1320>1870). Since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in U.S. slang the word has been used in the sense ‘a girl; a young woman’<sup>22</sup> (since 1927).

The history of the lexical category *bunny* goes back to the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when it was used as a term of endearment applied to women and children<sup>23</sup> (1606>1691) and, later, a pet name for a rabbit (1690> 1873). In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century *bunny girl* acquired the sense ‘a night-club hostess, or the like, dressed in a costume which is partly imitative of a rabbit’<sup>24</sup> (since 1960). The English *fox* corresponds to Mod.Du. *vos* and Mod.G. *Fuchs* (see the *OED* and *ODEE*). The word is recorded in English in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century in the sense ‘an animal of the genus *Vulpes*, having an elongated

pointed muzzle and long bushy tail' (825>Mod.E.). At the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century *fox* started – by the process of zoosemy – to be used of a man likened for craftiness to a fox<sup>25</sup> (1000>1851). Moreover, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in U.S. slang *foxy lady* started to be used with reference to a woman in the sense 'attractive, desirable, pretty, sexy'<sup>26</sup> (since 1913), and in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the lexical category developed the sense 'an attractive woman'<sup>27</sup> (since 1963).

Finally, *tomcat* entered the English lexicon in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the sense 'a male cat'<sup>28</sup> (since 1760). According to the *OED*, *Tom*, *Tomcat* or *Tom the Cat* became favourite allusive names for a male cat after the publication of an anonymous work *The Life and Adventures of a Cat* whose hero, a male cat, bore the name *Tom*. As argued by Palmatier (390), today *tomcat* is clearly a synonym for a sexually active male who *tomcats* around like the feline, seeking sexual encounters wherever he can hope to find them.

#### 4. Parallels in other languages: Polish, Czech, Slovak, Russian, Spanish, Italian, French, Sanskrit, Basque and Hungarian

In Mod.Pol. a number of metaphorical developments related to the conceptual zone *SEXUALITY* can easily be singled out. As noted by Zimnowoda (106), in Mod.Pol. men of great sexual potency are referred to as *ogier* 'a stallion/stud', *koń* 'a horse', *buhaj/byczek rozplodowy* 'a (stud) bull', *pies na kobiety/baby* 'a women mad man'. On the other hand, sexually attractive women are referred to as *lania* 'a hind', *sikorka* 'a titmouse' (cf. Mod.E. *chick*) or *kocica* 'a female cat'.

According to Baider and Gesuato (26), in Romance languages one encounters a number of animal terms used for women connoted sexually, e.g. Mod.It. *pollastra* 'pullet-(fem/sing)' > 'a young woman considered as an object of sexual desire', *colombella* 'a stock dove-(fem/sing)' > 'a tender and loving girl', *piccioncina* 'a young pigeon-(fem/sing)' > 'a love-bird, a term of endearment for a woman', *coniglietta* 'a rabbit-(dim-fem)', *pollastrella* 'a pullet-(aug/pej-dim-fem/sing)', *cavallina* 'a horse-(dim-fem/sing)', *poltra* 'a filly-(fem/sing)', *puledra* 'a filly-(fem/sing)', *puledrina* 'a filly-(dim-fem/sing)', *giovenca* 'a heifer-(fem/sing)', *micia* 'a kitty-(fem/sing)', *micetta* 'a kitty-(dim-fem/sing)', *gattina* 'a cat-(dim-fem/sing)', *cagnetta* 'a dog-(dim-fem/sing)', *piccioncina* 'a pigeon-(dim-fem/sing)' all used as terms for 'the immature animal representing the woman as an object of sexual desire'; Mod.Fr. *ma colombe* 'a dove' > 'a tender and loving girl', *ma biche* 'a doe' > 'a term of endearment for a woman'.

On the other hand, the following are the animal terms (listed in Baider and Gesuato 26), used for men regarded as objects of sexual desire: Mod.It. *micio* 'a pussy-cat-(masc/sing)' > 'a man considered sexually' Mod.Fr. *minet* 'a cat' > 'a young man or boy friend', *mon lapin* 'my rabbit' > 'my darling', as well as terms representing the man in the active role of the pursuer of the woman: Mod.It. *stallone* 'a stallion-(masc/sing)', *cavallo da monta* 'a horse-(masc/sing) at stud', *montone* 'a stud-ram-(masc/sing)', *gallo* 'a rooster-(masc/sing)' > 'a womaniser', *galletto* 'a rooster-(dim-masc/sing)' > 'a womaniser', *gallaccio* 'a rooster-(pej-masc/sing)' > 'a bad rooster; a womaniser', *gallastro* 'a rooster-(pej-masc/sing)' 'an ugly rooster; a womaniser', *gallerone* 'a rooster-(aug-masc/sing)' > 'a womaniser', *gallione* 'a rooster-(aug-masc/sing)' > 'a womaniser', *coniglio* 'a rabbit-(masc/

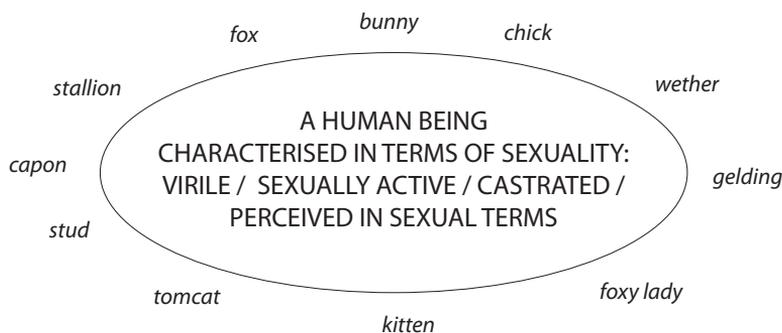
sing)' > 'a man unable to copulate for a long time'. In Mod.Fr. animal terms representing the man in the active role of the pursuer of the woman are the following ones: *coq* 'a rooster' > 'a macho man', *lapin* 'a rabbit' > 'a premature ejaculator', *taureau* 'a bull' > 'a virile man', *étalon* 'a young horse' > 'a stud', *bouc* 'a goat-(fem/sing)' > 'a man who is abnormally horny'.

Moreover, Baider and Gesuato (26) list certain terms originally used with reference to the female genitals which – by extension – started to be used to refer to male homosexuals. This lot includes Mod.It.: *capra* 'a goat-(fem/sing)' > 'a male homosexual', but also 'a sexually available woman', *cavalla* 'a horse-(fem/sing)', *coniglio* 'a rabbit-(fem/sing)', *passera* 'a sparrow-(fem/sing)', *pecora* 'a sheep-(fem/sing)' but also 'a sexually available woman' and *rondine* 'a swallow-(fem/sing)'.

One finds a number of zoosemes embodying the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY* in other Indo-European languages like, e.g. Mod.Slovak/Mod.Czech *kočka* '(slang) a cat' > 'a sexy/attractive woman', *samica* (Czech *samice*) 'a female mammal' > 'a sexually active woman', *bujak* (Czech *bejk*) '(slang) a bull' > 'a sexually active man', *liška* 'a fox' > 'a sexy (foxy) woman', *žrebec* 'a stallion' > 'a sexually active man', *kanec* 'a wild boar' > 'a sexually active man', *kozel* (Czech) 'a goat' > 'an elderly, sexually active man'; Mod. Sp. *capón* 'a capon' > 'a castrated man', *loba* 'a vixen' > 'a vamp, a woman considered sexually', *tigre* 'a tiger' > 'a man of exceptional sexual potency', *tigresa* 'a female tiger' > 'a vamp, a woman considered sexually'; Sanskrit *aśva* 'a horse, stallion' > 'a lover horse-like in strength' (see Komboj, 1986), but also in non-Indo-European languages as Mod. Basque *aketza* 'a hog' > 'a sterile, infertile male' or Mod.Hu. *szuka* 'a bitch' > 'a sex-mad female', *bika* 'a bull' > 'a sexually active person', *kakas* 'a cock' > 'a sexually active male', *kandúr* 'a tomcat' > 'a passionate womaniser', *vén kappan* 'an old capon' > 'an old sexually weak man who nevertheless runs after women', *csődör* 'a stallion' > 'a man of exceptional sexual potency', *pipi* 'a chick' > 'a sexually attractive young woman'.

## 5. Concluding remarks

One of the observations that may easily be formulated is that the semantics of the zoosemes analysed in the foregoing seems to have a prototypical nature in that new sense-threads are, to a varying extent, continuations of original or historically prior senses. Simultaneously, the process of semantic change is non-linear and allows for more than one new sense development at a time. What is more, in the framework adopted here, not only are particular lexical categories believed to display a prototypical nature, but also sets of conceptually interrelated lexemes forming conceptual categories are said to form radial structures, which resemble the structure of a prototype. Thus, the zoosemes analysed here related to the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY* may be argued to form the following radial structure:



**Figure 1.** A radial structure illustrating the relationship between the conceptual categories **HUMAN BEING/ DOMESTICATED ANIMAL** and the conceptual sphere *SEXUALITY*

The zoosemic shift schematically formulated as DOMESTICATED ANIMAL > A HUMAN BEING CHARACTERISED IN TERMS OF SEXUALITY displays many characteristics of a prototype structure, and is viewed here as assuming the form of a radial network. Note that certain aspects of instinctive animal behaviour or their physical characteristics are highlighted and mapped on the category **HUMAN BEING** giving rise to a number of zoosemes in the case of which the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY* is said to trigger semantic change. As mentioned earlier, the outcome of the mechanism of zoosemy are the lexical items which – through their semantic contents – seem to belong to the fringes of the category **HUMAN BEING**, that is, they are less prototypical than such lexical categories as *man*, *woman*, *boy*, *girl*, *mother*, *father*, *son*, etc. which are quite logically located in the core area of the macrocategory in question.

On the basis of the analysis of the linguistic data carried out in this paper a number of other conclusions may be formulated. First, the process whereby the names of domesticated animals start to designate sexuality is not only typical for English but is quite evidently equally productive in many other languages. Second, the analysis of the English data shows that such animal families as **EQUIDAE**, **FELIDAE**, **OVIDAE**, **FOWL** or **LUPIDAE** are a frequently employed source of terms embodying the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY*. We have analysed a representative number of animal terms (*stallion*, *stud*, *kitten*, *wether*, *capon*, *gelding*, *stud*, *fox*, *tomcat*, *foxy lady*, *chick*, *bunny*), which in the history of English have undergone zoosemic shift initiated by the conceptual dimension in question. In any case, this points to the considerable productivity of the said conceptual dimension in the mechanism of zoosemy.

Third, the process of metaphorisation observable in the analysis of the data in this section is by all means bi-directional, that is both acquiring the form ANIMAL > HUMAN and HUMAN > ANIMAL. More generally, the structure of the **GCB** is characterised by its bi-directionality, which involves upward and downward mapping of attributes. Thus, it needs to be emphasised that zoosemes related to the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY* might potentially represent two metaphors coherent with the structure of **GCB**, that is <A HUMAN BEING IS AN ANIMAL> and <AN ANIMAL IS A HUMAN BEING>. However, it is only the latter metaphor, that is the process which involves the shift in the

directionality of mapping from a lower to a higher level on the **GCB**, which becomes involved here. In particular, the zoosemic extension embodying the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY* comprises the following cases:

<i>stallion</i>	<A BEGETTER IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION> (14 <sup>th</sup> >17 <sup>th</sup> centuries)
	<A LASCIVIOUS MAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION> (16 <sup>th</sup> >20 <sup>th</sup> centuries)
	<A HIRED PARAMOUR IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION> (17 <sup>th</sup> >18 <sup>th</sup> centuries)
	<A COURTESAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION> (16 <sup>th</sup> >17 <sup>th</sup> centuries)
	<A TALL, GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION> (20 <sup>th</sup> century)
<i>gelding</i>	<A EUNUCH IS PERCEIVED AS A GELDING> (14 <sup>th</sup> >18 <sup>th</sup> century)

Additionally, it must be pointed out that the list of metaphors schematically presented above includes both simple (uni-thread) cases, e.g. <A EUNUCH IS PERCEIVED AS A GELDING> and complex (multi-thread) cases of evolution, e.g. <A BEGETTER IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>, <A LASCIVIOUS MAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>, <A HIRED PARAMOUR IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>, <A COURTESAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>, <A TALL, GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>. As argued earlier in Kiełtyka (2008) among others, the large number of multi-thread metaphors points clearly to the fact that the mechanism of zoosemy is by no means internally uniform, but rather gradual and multidirectional, based on our knowledge, experience and perception of the world. Semantic change is, therefore, as frequently emphasised in the literature on the subject, a mechanism which is deeply rooted in experience and based on graduality and developmental processes.

Finally, it needs to be stressed that the majority of the metaphorical transfers analysed in this article are pejorative in character, e.g. <A COURTESAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>, <A LASCIVIOUS MAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION> others like, e.g. <A TALL, GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>, <A EUNUCH IS PERCEIVED AS A GELDING> are to be regarded as positive, or at least neutral, that is devoid of evaluatively negative load, still others – however rare – like, e.g. <A BEGETTER IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION> may even be classified as (mildly) complimentary.

Last but not least, it must be stressed that not all of the figurative extensions analysed here are related exclusively to the conceptual dimension *SEXUALITY*. On the contrary, some of the metaphors subject to our investigations may be proved to be linked to other conceptual spheres, e.g. the conceptual zone *MORALITY* (<A LASCIVIOUS MAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>), and *APPEARANCE/PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS* (<A TALL, GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN IS PERCEIVED AS A STALLION>). Clearly, this points to the fact that meaning construal may be said to be based on cross-domain mappings involving several different conceptual dimensions.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The notion of entrenchment should be understood here in the way it is defined and applied by Kleparski (1997) and Kiełtyka (2008). Namely, a lexical category may be said to be entrenched in the attributive path of a given conceptual domain (CD) or set of conceptual domains (CDs) if its semantic pole is related to certain locations within the attributive path of a given CD or set of CDS.

<sup>2</sup> In the view of many linguists, semantic structures may be characterised relative to cognitive domains, which are – after Kleparski (1997) and Kiełtyka (2008) – understood as **CONCEPTUAL DOMAINS**, which, in turn, are viewed as sets of attributive values specified for different locations within the attributive paths of CDs. According to Taylor (1989), a lexical category gets its meaning by the process of **highlighting** (or **foregrounding**) a particular location within the attributive path of a CD or a number of different CDs.

<sup>3</sup> The earliest known printed use of a word, as recorded by the *OED*, provides an index of the date at which the term entered the language.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this paper, following Kiełtyka (2008), we adopt the following notational convention: a continuous temporal presence of a given sense-thread is marked with a bidirectional arrow. However, if the evidence we quote has time gaps – referred to as temporal hiatus by Geeraerts (1997: 24–25) and Kleparski (250) – of more than 150 years we mark the gap with a unidirectional arrow as shown above. Additionally, it must be stressed that Geeraerts (1997: 24–25) develops the notion of semantic polygenesis, in which the same marginal meaning occurs at several points in time that are separated by a considerable period. In this respect Kleparski (251) claims that the discontinuous presence of that meaning is not due to accidental gaps in the available textual sources, but that the meaning in question must have come into being independently at two points in history. It seems that the temporal hiatus in the evidence we quote – in the majority of cases – does not involve semantic polygenesis, but is rather due to accidental gaps in the available textual sources.

<sup>5</sup> See also *ATWS*, *CE*, *IHAT* and *WNNCD*.

<sup>6</sup> Consider the following *OED* quotation: **1593** Can women want wit to frustrate a common *stale*.

<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the *OED* informs us that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century *gelding* was applied to a tree. Consider the following example: **1562** ‘As long as the tre is very yong the fruite hath no stone within him and therefore suche are called *geldynges*’ which may imply that the word could denote anything not capable of producing young.

<sup>8</sup> Consider the following *OED* quotations: **1548** So the great *wether* which is of late fallen..so craftely, so scabedly, ye & so vntruly iuggled wyth the kyng, that [etc.]. > **1724** But the soft voice of an Italian *weather*, Makes them all languish three whole hours together.

<sup>9</sup> This sense emerges from the following *OED* contexts: **a1796** And send us from thy bounteous store A tup or \**weather head!* > **1869** 102 Why didn’t ye tell me, ye d—d *wetherhead?*

<sup>10</sup> This sense is evidenced with the following *OED* quotation: **1542** [He] came flynging home to Roome again as wyse as a *capon*. > **1590** *Capon*, Coxcombe, Idiot, Patch.

<sup>11</sup> Consider the following *OED* contexts: **1594** Of a 1000 such *capons* who addict themselues to their booke, none attaineth to anie perfection, euen in musicke (which is their ordinarie profession). > **1691** If there be a *Capon* in Christendom, I’ll make thee one.

<sup>12</sup> The following *OED* quotation illustrates the sense of the compound: **a1639** Judges that judge for reward, and say with shame, ‘Bring you’, such as the country calls \**capon justices*.

<sup>13</sup> Note that in U.S. *stud* is used in the sense ‘a handsome, debonair ladies’ man (meant as a compliment among men)’, in Mod.Du. it is applied to a man with many children, in Mod.Russ. and Korean it developed the sense ‘a ladies’ man’ and in Mod.Sp. *semental* ‘stud’ is used secondarily with reference to a man with a big penis (see [http://efl.htmlplanet.com/contrast\\_metaphor.htm](http://efl.htmlplanet.com/contrast_metaphor.htm)).

<sup>14</sup> Consider the following *OED* quotations: **1895** *Stud*, a nickname given to a man from his love of venery. > **1981** A notorious seducer; a ladies'-man; a cuckold of the rich; in short, a stud.

<sup>15</sup> As pointed out by the *OED*, *stud* entered a number of compounds, e.g. *stud-groom* 'the head groom attached to a stud' (**1737** At Hampton Court, 2 \**Studd Grooms*. > **1884** No one would think of requiring a stud-groom to groom cart horses.); *stud-herd* 'the servant in charge of a stud'; *stud-man* 'a servant attached to the stud' (**1545** Matt. de Mantua, \**studman*, 4l. 11s. 3d.); *studsman* 'a horse-breeder' (**1902** Few graziers and no \**studsman* can recognise this dangerous fungus in their paddocks.).

<sup>16</sup> This sense emerges from the following *OED* quotations: **1929** *Stud*, man. > **1970** But who's this *stud* they call Billy?

<sup>17</sup> Consider the following *OED* contexts: **1870** The 'Kitten' is a blonde, with black eyes, a pretty, babyish face,..a profusion of golden hair. > **1970** There are the cute animal terms like..*kitten* and *lamb* [to signify a woman].

<sup>18</sup> See the following *OED* context: **1831** The tame \**kitten-hearted* slaves.

<sup>19</sup> The following *OED* quotations illustrate this sense: **1900** In phrases 'get kittens', 'have kittens'. 1. To get angry. 2. To be in great anxiety, or to be afraid. > **1967** When one of the horses has something wrong with it—then everybody *has kittens*.

<sup>20</sup> Consider the following *OED* syntagmas: **1958** Clever film men have moulded her \**sex-kitten* type. > **1977** This is why we like 'sex kittens' more than females who are 'catty'.

<sup>21</sup> The following *OED* contexts illustrate this sense of *chick*: **c1320** He is the fendes chike. > **1870** He..had no *chick* or child to bless his house.

<sup>22</sup> Consider the following *OED* evidence: **1927** He didn't want to marry this brainless little fluffy *chick*. > **1971** Jackie, always a 'with-it *chick*'.

<sup>23</sup> This sense emerges from the following *OED* quotations: **1606** Sweet Peg..my honey, my *bunny*, my duck, my dear. > **1691** *Bunny* is also used as a flattering word to children.

<sup>24</sup> Consider these *OED* examples: **1960** The girls are called *Bunnies* and they're invitingly attired in brightly coloured *rabbit* costumes, complete to the ears and white cotton tails. > **1967** A fallen *Bunny* girl, with strange fetishes.

<sup>25</sup> This sense emerges from the following *OED* examples: c1000 Gað & secZað þam foxe, deofol-seocnessa ic utadrife. > 1851 I could not help reflecting on the strange stratagem by which the old fox [Rube] had saved himself.

<sup>26</sup> The following *OED* evidence testifies to the existence of this sense:

**1913** *Foxy*, stylish looking, attractive. Usage widespread in Nebraska. 'She's a *foxy* looking little lady.' > **1983** W/f [white female]. 21 years old and *foxy*, would like to hear from a gorgeous man with a terrific body.

<sup>27</sup> Consider these *OED* quotations:

**1963** A cat in hot pursuit of a chick or *fox* is said to have his nose wide open. > **1970** A *fox* is a girl. A *fox* is a chick, you see?

<sup>28</sup> This sense is evidenced by the following *OED* data:

**1760** *Tom the Cat* is born of poor but honest parents. > **1881** A cur.unexpectedly confronted by a large *tomcat*.

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