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**JUDGING BY APPEARANCES – A STUDY OF HUMAN-ORIENTED METONYMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DOMAIN OF DRESS<sup>1</sup>**

**Introduction**

The overwhelming role of metonymy in triggering semantic change in everyday communication has been recognized for at least two decades. This has resulted in a number of research projects, both of a theoretical and analytical nature, investigating the mechanism of metonymy, mainly within the framework of the cognitive approach. Here, we also assume the grounding of metonymy in the human thought processes, and accordingly treat metonymy as a conceptual operation relying on contiguity, which – in turn – is understood as closeness in conceptual space (cf. Radden and Kövecses 1999).<sup>2</sup>

The aim of this paper is to discuss the process of semantic change using examples of lexical categories belonging by virtue of their synchronically primary meaning-thread to the **DOMAIN OF DRESS [...]**, and which in the mechanism of metonymy – have enriched the conceptual macrocategory **HUMAN BEING**. For the purpose of the analysis, we have distinguished two subcategories of the main category, that is **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** and **MALE HUMAN BEING**, the division of which clearly reflects the biological world ordering.<sup>3</sup>

At this point, it is important to stress that in our understanding, the **DOMAIN OF DRESS [...]** is conceptually related to the conceptual category

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to express gratitude to **Professor Grzegorz A. Kleparski** for sharing his collection of dictionaries, as well as for his critical remarks concerning the content of this article.

<sup>2</sup> For further details concerning the present-day, cognitive approach to the notion of metonymy see, for example, Kleparski and Kopecka (2007).

<sup>3</sup> Here, we need to note that not all lexemes developed a gender specific secondary meaning-thread related to the macrocategory **HUMAN BEING**. These, however, are not taken into consideration in this study.

**HUMAN BEING**, forming together with it a domain matrix, the fact that both accounts for contiguity and enables metonymic developments.<sup>4</sup>

## 1. Enrichment of the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**<sup>5</sup>

The role of metonymic transfer in the enrichment of the conceptual category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** has already been observed by Kleparski (2000), who in his analysis of the central region of this category identified six lexemes denoting primarily different articles of clothing, namely *strap*, *murrey-kersey*, *skirt*, *smock*, *petticoat* and *placket*. This analysis partly repeats but – more importantly – complements those earlier findings, as well as providing additional examples of metonymic shifts from the **DOMAIN OF DRESS** [...] resulting in the enrichment of different regions of the conceptual category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**.

### 1.1. Articles of clothing and the **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**

Let us commence with what seems a perceptually salient element of female clothing in the eyes of a present-day speaker of English; namely *skirt*. According to the *OED*, the lexeme entered the stock of the English language at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, with the sense ‘the lower part of female dress’. In modern use, the term is also applied to mean a separate ‘piece of female garment covering the body from the waist downwards’. As documented by the *WW*, by the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the lexeme *skirt* became a neutral, standard English denotation for ‘a woman,’ whereas *the skirt* acquired the status of collective reference to women. The following *OED* quotations confirm this usage:

(1560) *Now thow thy tale hes tauld, ...Bot not gottin thow wald, licht skirt for all thy skippis;*

(1928) *And what about your American skirt?-I told him, there was nothing to say about her.*

Additionally, as testified by the SE, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century skirt developed the evaluatively loaded sense-thread ‘prostitute’. The negative, overtly sexual connotations are also inherent in the phrase *light skirt* meaning ‘loose woman’, as well as in the collocation *skirt hunting* denoting a male pastime of ‘searching

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<sup>4</sup> A domain matrix is understood as a combination of domains presupposed by a single concept, that is, in this case **HUMAN BEING** (cf. Croft 1993).

<sup>5</sup> The section dealing with the enrichment of the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** is a slightly modified and extended version of Kopecka (2008).

for a woman for sexual purposes’, which – as attested by the *WW* – made its appearance in English by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Surprisingly, according to the *WW*, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the lexeme ameliorated, and became part of Am.E. slang meaning ‘a sexually attractive woman’. This change may be explained by a general change of attitude towards the sphere of sexual life. Thus, interestingly, the phrase *skirt patrol* – documented by the *WS* – created during World War II by analogy to *skirt hunting*, seems to have had a different axiological charge. The positive evaluative load seems to be echoed in the expression *a bit of skirt* meaning ‘a woman, especially an attractive one’ or in the phrase *super skirt* meaning – as documented in the *OCBSLD* – in the CB radio slang ‘a woman’. Additionally, the *SE* testifies to the use of the compound *mini-skirt* in the sense ‘young girl’, the novel meaning-thread of which has been present in Am.E. slang since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Last but not least, as shown in the *WW*, the semantic pole of skirt provides access to the concept **WOMAN** in the phrase *hide behind skirts* meaning ‘a man who needs female protection’.<sup>6</sup>

In turn, the *OED* informs us that the Romance compound word *petticoat* – meaning literally ‘little or small coat’ – acquired the sense ‘a tunic/chemise worn by women’ in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, whereas in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the word developed the meaning ‘skirt’. Simultaneously, the lexeme *petticoat* developed the secondary sense-thread ‘a woman’, as emerging from the following *OED* material:

(1766) *Ignorance is only pardonable in petty~coats.*

(1864) *Must give up business to-day. Can't do business with a petticoat in the room.*

Additionally – as hinted in the *SE* – apart from the axiologically neutral meaning – the word acquired a negatively charged, slang and colloquial sense-thread ‘a woman considered as a sexual object’ (17<sup>th</sup> century>present), for instance, in the phrase *petticoat merchant*, that is ‘a pimp’. Furthermore – as testified by the *OED* – until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the lexeme *petticoat* was frequent in the phrase *to wear/to be in petticoats* meaning ‘to be a woman’, while the collocation *petticoat government* acquired the meaning ‘(undue) rule or predominance of women in the home, or in politics’.<sup>7</sup> In turn, the *DVT* documents the 18<sup>th</sup> century phrase *petticoat hold* meaning ‘one who has an estate during his wife’s life’, as well as the collocation *petticoat pensioner*, whose meaning is defined as ‘one kept by a woman for secret services’.

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<sup>6</sup> Analogically, in Polish the lexeme *spódniczka* ‘little skirt’ functions as an axiologically neutral reference to ‘a woman’ as – for instance – in the phrase *oglądać się/ganiać za spódniczkami* ‘cast a glance/chase skirts’. Similarly, in German the word form *Rock* ‘skirt’ is applied in the sense ‘a woman’ in the phrase *hinter jedem Rock herumlaufen* ‘to follow every skirt’.

<sup>7</sup> According to the *EDME*, the phrase first appeared in 1702 as a book title.

The ultimate origins of the lexeme *placket* lie in obscurity. According to the *OED*, the word entered the English language at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century meaning, among others, ‘an apron,’ ‘a petticoat,’ as well as ‘a skirt’, thus undoubtedly denoting a piece of female garment. More or less at the same period, the word developed the sense-thread ‘a woman’ (17<sup>th</sup>>19<sup>th</sup> centuries), as testified by the following *OED* contexts:

(a1625) *Not half so troublesome as you are to yourself, Sir; Was that brave heart made to pant for a placket?*

(1810) *Our vicar thus preaches-and why should he not? For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot.*

Moreover, the *SE* points to the fact that in the late 1500s the lexeme *placket* functioned in Br.E. as a euphemism for the female genitalia, and consequently this source testifies to the secondary meaning of the item *placket* as ‘woman/women considered sexually’.

As documented by the *OED*, the lexical item *apron* entered the stock of the English language in the 14<sup>th</sup> century with the primary sense ‘article of dress used for protection from dirt’. Due to their protective function, for centuries, different types of aprons have commonly been worn by women while performing kitchen duties. As attested by the *WS*, in the course of World War II, *apron* was applied in the sense ‘a girl/a woman’ either independently or forming a constitutive part of a number of lexical combinations such as *apron chaser*, *apron crazy*, *apron dizzy*, *apron jumper*, *apron screwy*, all of which refer to ‘one fond of women/a seducer’. Additionally, the *WS* testifies to the use of *apron* in the expressions *apron with flickering flame* meaning ‘a cold or unresponsive woman’, *apron with a nip* referring to ‘a virgin/a virtuous respectable woman’, as well as *apron with round heels* denoting ‘a woman of loose morals’. Last but not least, the *OED* testifies to the existence of the collocation *apron husband* meaning ‘one that meddles with his wife’s business’.

The lexical item *smock* is yet another example of a shift from the **DOMAIN OF DRESS [...]** to the conceptual category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**. As testified by the *OED*, the word *smock* was already in English in the O.E. period with the meaning ‘shift/a chemise’, that is woman’s undergarment, and in this sense it was common until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In turn, the novel sense ‘woman/womankind’ developed in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and continued till the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which is documented by the following *OED* extracted context: (1591) *The Collier...said he would be tried by the verdict of the smock.*

Surprisingly, the conceptual category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** can also be accessed by means of the lexical category *pants*, which by virtue of its primary meaning ‘trousers’ seems a salient piece of clothing relating to men

rather than women. Yet, in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century trousers found their way into the wardrobes of women, and consequently lexicographic sources document the Am.E. use of the lexeme *pants* – forming part of expressions – in the novel sense ‘woman’. Thus, according to the *CDES*, the expression *glamour pants* is a slang reference to ‘an attractive woman’, whereas the *OED* testifies to the use of the phrase *hot pants* in the sense ‘a highly sexed (young) woman’. Note that in the 1970s the collocation *hot pants* denoted a kind of ‘very short trousers worn by women’.

In addition to the lexical categories which have enriched the central region of the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**, we have identified lexical items linked – by virtue of their secondary meaning-thread – to the peripheries of the category. Hence, the compound *bluestocking* whose primary sense-thread is ‘a blue coloured, close-fitting garment covering the leg’ acquired – as documented in the *PE* – the secondary, evaluatively loaded meaning ‘a woman of intellectual attainments or pretensions’.<sup>8</sup> As hinted in the source, this semantic alteration occurred during the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Br.E. in connection with the kind of gatherings where participants – both men and women – discussed issues in literature instead of the earlier practice of playing cards, and – more importantly – blue stockings were part of the casual dress accepted in these circles.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the lexical item *dress*, which in current English primarily denotes ‘an article of clothing that covers a woman’s body from the shoulders to the knees or below’ (*LDCE*), forms a constitutive part of the expression *dress for sale* which – as attested by the *PE* – developed in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Am.E. slang the secondary meaning-thread ‘prostitute’.<sup>10</sup> In addition, apart from denoting an individual piece of clothing, the lexeme *dress* appears in the expression *dress goods*, which in its primary sense denotes ‘pieces of garment collectively’, and hence may be allocated to the **DOMAIN OF DRESS [...]**. As indicated in the *SE*, the phrase *dress goods* acquired the meaning ‘woman’ in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Am.E. slang.

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<sup>8</sup> According to the *PE*, the primary sense-thread of the phrase *blue stockings* had a negative axiological charge as well. Namely, the derogatory undertone resulted from the fact that in comparison to stockings made of black silk, the blue ones were considered less elegant.

<sup>9</sup> We need to note here that even though at present stockings are a typical female garment, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century they were worn by women and men indifferently. Consequently, the *PE* points to the fact that it is far from being certain whose stockings actually gave rise to the compound. Hence, it also remains doubtful whether the rise of the secondary sense-thread ‘a learned woman’ can be qualified as a metonymic change.

<sup>10</sup> In fact, this novel meaning needs to be attributed to two mechanisms of semantic change that is both metonymy and metaphor. To be more specific, the fact that the dress is a female piece of clothing allows us to claim the working of the mechanism of metonymy leading to the novel meaning ‘woman’. In turn, we conjecture that the axiological charge inherent in the sense ‘prostitute’ results from the metaphoric shift. Namely, prostitutes are like a dress for sale in that their body service brings financial benefits, as any other items – including dresses – sold.

## 1.2. Clothing materials and the FEMALE HUMAN BEING

Additionally, our search has proven that the category FEMALE HUMAN BEING has been enriched with lexemes that are originally linked to the category CLOTHING MATERIALS, which is justifiably considered here a subcategory of the DOMAIN OF DRESS [...].<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, in the case of the complex item *murrey-kersey*, both elements belong to the category CLOTHING MATERIALS. To be more precise, the lexeme *murrey* entered English in the 14<sup>th</sup> century with the sense-thread ‘a purple red’, as well as ‘purplish red cloth’. Similarly, the item *kersey* denotes a kind of ‘coarse cloth’ (14<sup>th</sup> century>).<sup>12</sup> The *OED* documents but a single quotation in which the compound *murrey-kersey* functions as a term of contempt applied to a woman: (1607) *Let her pass me; I'll take no notice of her;- scurvy murrey kersey*.

Likewise – as the *OED* informs us – the original meaning of the lexeme *stammel* is ‘a coarse woollen cloth frequently dyed red’ (16<sup>th</sup>>17<sup>th</sup> centuries). Next, in the history of its semantic development, the lexeme acquired the meaning ‘the shade of red’ (16<sup>th</sup>>19<sup>th</sup> centuries), and – in the role of an attribute – it frequently collocated with *petticoat*. Furthermore, at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the lexical category *stammel* acquired the sense ‘wearer of a stammel petticoat’. As specified in the *DVT*, the item *stammel* was 18<sup>th</sup> century slang word used in reference to ‘a coarse, physically strong, muscular girl’.

The lexical item *muslin* is another member of the category CLOTHING MATERIALS. According to the *OED*, the ultimate roots of this lexical category are to be sought in the Iraqi town of Mosul, where muslin – that is ‘cloth of silk and gold’ – was originally made. The item entered the stock of the English language – as a borrowing from the French word *mosulin* – in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with a more general meaning ‘any delicately woven cotton fabric’. Particular varieties of this fabric were frequently used, among others, for ladies’ dresses. In addition, the *OED* alludes to the fact that, occasionally, the lexeme was used in the sense ‘dress made of muslin’. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the phrase *a bit of muslin*, as well as – probably due to the mechanism of ellipsis – the individual item *muslin* functioned as a slang reference to ‘a woman’ or ‘a girl’, as confirmed by the following *OED* data:

(1850) *There was a pretty bit of muslin hanging on your arm – who was she?*

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Rusinek (2008) who, within the scope of the macrocategory CLOTHES, distinguishes, among other things, the subcategories CLOTHING MATERIALS and FASHION AND GARMENT PARTS.

<sup>12</sup> This meaning may also be attributed to the mechanism of metonymy. Namely the name of the cloth seems to stem from the name of the village Kersey in Suffolk, where the cloth might have been manufactured.

(1854) *Keep clear of muslin for the next six of seven years. It's brought as many of your profession to grief as spirits.*

Furthermore, the *SE* testifies to the existence of a negatively charged sense of the item *muslin*, that is 'a woman considered sexually', which was present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Br.E.

### 1.3. Garment parts and the FEMALE HUMAN BEING

In addition to whole pieces of clothing, it is worth noting that some garment parts have also acquired a novel meaning linked to the category FEMALE HUMAN BEING. This is the case with apron strings, which seem conspicuous enough to safeguard the mental access to this category. Hence, as specified in the *DVT*, the expression *apron string hold* denoted in 18<sup>th</sup> century slang 'an estate held by a man during his wife's life'.<sup>13</sup> In turn, both the *DC* and *CDES* document the expression *be tied to apron strings* applied in the sense 'a male dominated/ruled by a woman, usually wife or mother'.

The lexical item *strap* is yet another example of a transfer from the subcategory GARMENT PARTS. Namely, it developed, among others, a meaning related to female garment, that is 'a band inside the skirt of lady's riding clothes' (17<sup>th</sup> century>). The secondary meaning 'woman/girl' is found in Irish English, where since the 19<sup>th</sup> century the lexeme *strap* has been functioning as a term of abuse applied to women, as emerging from the following *OED* context (1848) *You lie, you Orange strap... you were insulting every one you met.*

## 2. Enrichment of the category MALE HUMAN BEING

Cases of transference from the DOMAIN OF DRESS [...] leading to the lexical enrichment of the category MALE HUMAN BEING are relatively rare. In fact, during our search we have managed to identify only one lexeme – *pants* – residing in the center of the category, whereas all the other lexemes are linked to the peripheries.

### 2.1. Articles of clothing and the MALE HUMAN BEING

To begin with, let us now discuss the semantic change that affected the lexeme *pants*. As evidenced by the *OED* material, the word form *pants*

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<sup>13</sup> Most probably, this expression has its roots in the 15<sup>th</sup> century English law called *apron-string tenure* which – as specified in the *DC* – allowed a husband to hold title to property passed on by his wife only during the wife's life.

originated in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Am.E. as an abbreviation of the item *pantaloons* – derived ultimately from French *pantalon* – and was used with reference to ‘trousers’ or ‘shorts’ worn as the outer garment, as well as ‘drawers’ and ‘underpants’. Additionally – as documented by the *SE* – in Am.E. slang the lexeme *pants* functions as a jocular nickname applied with reference to ‘a human male’ (early 20<sup>th</sup> century>). Moreover, the item *pants* is found in the collocation *fancy pants*, which – as testified by the *CDES* – is used in reference to ‘an overdressed, often conceited person, usually male’. Last but not least, the item *pants*, as well as the word form *britches* – denoting originally ‘a kind of trousers’ – acquired the transferred sense ‘man/male human being’ in the collocations *to wear the pants/britches* meaning ‘to be the dominant member of a household’, a role which was traditionally ascribed to male members of the family. However, it is interesting to note that the phrase is most frequently used with reference to women, as in the following *OED* context (1957) *She’s older than he is and she wears the pants*, stressing the oddity of the situation.<sup>14</sup>

In turn, the lexical item *boots* denotes by virtue of its primary meaning-thread ‘a covering for the foot and lower part of the leg’. Additionally – as hinted in *WS* – the word *boots* is applied in reference to the footwear of newly recruited marines, and hence in the mechanism of metonymy the lexeme acquired the novel meaning ‘a navy/marine recruit’. Similarly, the plural form *boots* is used in the military slang in the sense ‘the youngest officer in the army’, as testified by the following *OED* context (1806) *My chief resistance to discipline was at mess where I could not brook the duties of Boots*.<sup>15,16</sup>

Interestingly enough, the lexical item *apron* – apart from the above mentioned transferred sense ‘woman’ – developed a meaning linked to the category **MALE HUMAN BEING**. Namely, as documented by the *SS*, the lexeme *apron* acquired the novel meaning ‘bartender’, whose outfit traditionally

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<sup>14</sup> A similar meaning is inherent in the German phrase *die Hose anhaben* ‘to wear trousers’. In turn, in Polish it is possible to say *To mężczyzna, nie portki/kalesony/sznurek od kaleson* ‘This is a man, not pants/underpants/not a drawstring in the underpants’, where *the pants*, *underpants* and *the drawstring in the underpants* refer metonymically to ‘a wimp’.

<sup>15</sup> In a likewise manner, the Polish word *trep* – used primarily in reference to different kinds of shoes, such as wooden shoes, sports shoes or mountain shoes – acquired the secondary meaning ‘soldier’.

<sup>16</sup> Note that the lexeme *boots* is also present in a number of combinations such as, for instance, *smooth boots*, *clumsy-boots*, *lazy boots* which are used in reference to ‘a cunning, sly or slow-witted person’. These combinations – as hinted in the *PE* – may have originated in reference to servants, stereotypically unintelligent persons polishing boots and shoes and secretly doing dishonest things. Hence, we conjecture that the development of the meaning-thread ‘cunning fellow’ results from highlighting the characteristics of boots as a kind of working tool rather than an article of dress.



includes this garment. Additionally, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the item *apron* formed part of the phrase *green apron* functioning as a contemptuous reference to ‘a lay preacher’, as shown in the following *OED* context (1705) *Unbeneficed Noncons (that live by Alms, and no Paternoster no Penny, say the Green Aprons)*. Note that the garment referred to as *an apron* is part of an official dress of the clergy.

Furthermore, we have observed that the garment terms readily combine with colour terms, together safeguarding the mental access to one or another concept that may be located in the conceptual category **MALE HUMAN BEING**. Hence, as attested by the *DAE*, the expression *blue coat* acquired at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the meaning ‘a soldier serving in the army of the United States’ as well as ‘a member of the Northern Troops’. Additionally, the *DAE* testifies to the sense-thread ‘policeman’ present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Am.E. slang. In turn, the *OED* documents two more metonymically conditioned sense-threads, namely ‘an almsman’, as well as ‘a (blue-coated) sailor’. The following *DAE* and *OED* contexts testify to some of the senses listed:

(1667) *Thither retir'd The stragling blewcoats when their guns were fir'd.*

(1903) *With that, the bluecoat seized Sheeny Joe, and there we were, one in each of his hands.*

Similarly, as attested by the *CDES*, the collocation *red cap* functioned in the 1950s as a slang reference to a ‘military policeman’. In fact, military slang seems to be abundant in collocations of this type. To give but a few examples, the combination *green beret* acquired – according to the *OED* – the sense-threads ‘a member of the British Royal Marines Commando’ and ‘a member of the United States Army Special Forces’.<sup>17</sup> In turn – as documented by the *OCBSLD* – in the language of CB radio users in US, the collocation *blue jeans* developed the novel sense-thread ‘state troopers’. From outside the military slang, the *PE* testifies to the use of the collocation *gumshoe* in the secondary sense-threads ‘a detective’ and ‘a police officer’. Note that rubber-soled shoes are reputedly worn in order to assure noiseless movement.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the *PE* documents the collocation *hard hat* used in the transferred sense ‘a working class conservative’. Here, we need to keep in mind that – due to their protective function – hard hats are indispensable in numerous jobs traditionally performed by men, such as, for instance, of construction workers.

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<sup>17</sup> Along similar lines, in Polish the expression *czerwone berety* ‘red berets’ – used in reference to ‘soldiers in the commando squad’ – is clearly an allusion to the soldiers’ headwear.

<sup>18</sup> In turn, the lexical item *gumofilce* ‘rubber shoes with felt linen’ may – in colloquial Polish – be used in the sense ‘an adherent of an agrarian political party’, as such rubber shoes are a conspicuous piece of dress of Polish farmers.

## 2.2. Clothing materials and the MALE HUMAN BEING

Keeping in mind the relatively small number of items linked primarily to the category ARTICLES OF CLOTHING which developed the transferred sense ‘man/male human being,’ it comes as no surprise that regarding the subcategory CLOTHING MATERIALS our search resulted in only one item. Namely, in its historically primary sense the combination *tarpawlin/tarpaulin* was – according to the *OED* – employed in the sense ‘tarred, waterproof canvas’. In the history of its development, in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century the lexical category *tarpawlin/tarpaulin*, started to function as a nickname for a ‘mariner’ or ‘sailor’.<sup>19</sup> Obviously, the usefulness of such a fabric on ships, and thus its use by sailors, is undeniable. The novel, metonymically-conditioned sense-thread is confirmed by the following *OED* contexts:

(1722) *Every tarpawling, if he gets but to be lieutenant of a press smack, is called captain.*

(1922) *Chews coca all day long, the communicative tarpaulin added.*

### Concluding remarks

All in all, emerging from the analysis above, the number of items which developed the secondary meaning linked to the category FEMALE HUMAN BEING is significantly higher than the number of categories that developed the novel sense-thread that may be ascribed to the category MALE HUMAN BEING, especially as far as the core of each category is concerned. This language phenomenon is no more than a reflection of the real world. Namely, women seem to be more fashion conscious as they are aware of the impact their appearance – in which clothes play a decisive role – has on the opposite gender. Here, we need to remember that for centuries the main role ascribed to a woman in any given society was that of a wife and mother, and consequently their major objective has been to attract a man. Consequently, not only the number of lexemes which originally belong to the DOMAIN OF DRESS [...] and which developed the novel meaning ‘woman’ is much higher, but also in a number of cases the lexemes acquired either a positively charged novel sense ‘a woman attractive sexually’ or the negatively charged meaning-thread ‘woman as a sexual object’.

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<sup>19</sup> Likewise, the Polish term *karmazyn* being a designation of ‘a deep hue of red’ and later ‘fabric of this colour’ developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the meaning ‘nobleman’. This semantic alteration was possible due to the fact that the deep hue of red symbolized power, and hence, it was eagerly chosen by noblemen to be the colour of their costumes.

Additionally, it has been observed that apart from the lexeme *pants* all the other lexemes that developed the novel meanings within the category **MALE HUMAN BEING** are designations of jobs or other social roles performed by men. Interestingly enough, we have been able to identify only one job designation in the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** – *dress for sale* ‘a prostitute’, whereas the combination *bluestocking* is a disparaging reference to a social role performed by women.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, bearing in mind that currently the real world situation is changing drastically in respect to the division between female and male jobs, it may turn out that all the lexemes which developed, for example, the secondary meaning ‘soldier’ function in the present day army slang as a reference to both genders.

Furthermore, our analysis allows us to conclude that the near-synonyms of the lexemes *woman* and *man* whose original sense-threads are linked to the **DOMAIN OF DRESS** [...], derive from three main subcategories of the category **CLOTHES**, that is **ARTICLES OF CLOTHING**, **CLOTHING MATERIALS** and **GARMENT PARTS**. Accordingly, we feel justified to claim the existence of three metonymic relationships, namely ARTICLE OF CLOTHING FOR PERSON WEARING IT, CLOTHING MATERIAL FOR PERSON WEARING IT, as well as GARMENT PART FOR PERSON WEARING IT. Here, we need to stress that all of them are low-level variants of the POSSESSED FOR POSSESSOR metonymic relationship.

Last but not least, we need to note that the above analysis presents but a fragmentary picture of the mechanism of metonymy within the category **HUMAN BEING**, which definitely needs to be verified in a large-scale research. In particular, transfers from other categories contiguous to the category **HUMAN BEING** need to be carefully investigated.

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<sup>20</sup> On the subject of derogation of terms within the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** see, for example, Kochman-Haładaj (2007). In turn, Karwatowska and Szypra-Kozłowska (2005) discuss the phenomenon on the material of the Polish language.

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