Fallen Females

On the Semantic Pejoration of *Mistress* and *Spinster*

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"Perhaps it is better to think of words as bottles of wine. The wine may
change as it ages, and people may argue about whether it is really good or bad.
No one doubts, however, that the bottle does contain something besides air, and
it is even possible for most people to agree most of the time on the nature of
what is inside."

- Hugh Rawson, *Wicked Words*

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INTRODUCTION

Much to the horror of language purists, language is not set in stone. Although its change is slow and subtle, it is present nonetheless. There are many ways a language might change and these changes affect different aspects of language: phonology, syntax, morphology and semantics. The present study is concerned with semantic change and in particular the process of pejoration or degradation of word meaning.

Pejoration is a process in which words with positive or neutral meanings acquire more negative semantic meanings or features. Pejoration does not always entail an immediate semantic shift towards these new negative meanings; the word that has undergone pejoration may exist for a long time in a state of polysemy. However, according to Gresham's law of semantic change (Trask 52), bad meanings will always drive out the good.

Pejoration is a type of semantic change that introduces evaluatively charged semantic features to words. Although pejoration is a mechanism that operates on a large scale and on a large number of words, it is especially common in words pertaining to females (Duda 259). This becomes particularly clear in word pairs that have male and female counterparts. Compare, for example, *lord* and *lady*. Although *lord* still denotes a person of high rank, somewhere in the history, or etymology, of the word *lady* the word broadened to include all women instead of just those of high rank ("lady" def. 4[1,2]). This is known as a process termed semantic polarization by Miller and Swift (57). As *lady* can now be applied to anyone, it has lost some of its positive connotations pertaining to a high social status.

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[1] Throughout this thesis the *OED online* was used a source for word definitions, meaning that all word definitions from hereon will be from the *OED online* unless otherwise specified. For these references the specific guidelines as imposed by the *OED online* were followed.

[2] It should also be born in mind when dates denoting first attestations of particular meanings of a word are mentioned; the date denotes the composition of the earliest surviving text in which the particular meaning first emerged. This meaning might well have been used in earlier texts that do not survive, and it can be assumed that the word would have been used with this particular meaning in speech before this date.

The pejoration of words denoting females does not constrain itself to terms of rank for women, it can affect names as well; for instance, a *Kitty* was a term for a prostitute for a while (Kochman- Haładyj 213). There is even a disparity between the use of certain adjectives in conjunction with the word *woman* or *man*, or any other term denoting a female. Compare, for example, *old woman* and *old man*. For many, *old* in *old man* denotes wisdom and knowledge. However, in *old woman*, *old* mainly affects the way we visualise her: ugly and withered (Dorda 6). Even a critical look into cursing will reveal a certain bias. Calling someone a *pussy* or 'you throw like a girl' is often taken as an insult, whereas 'having balls' or 'acting like a man' denotes courage. In short, the bias of pejoration is clearly female oriented and as "language [is] a mirror of societal dispositions" (Kochman-Haładyj 208) this tendency might be reason for concern with regard to the position of women in society.

This thesis will try to elucidate what drives the pejoration of words pertaining to females through the diachronic analysis of the word pairs *master/mistress* and *bachelor/spinster*, as the female counterparts of these words pairs both underwent pejoration while the male counterpart did not. Furthermore, it will explore whether there is a singular mechanism or multiple different mechanisms at work in pejoration.

This study will start off with a chapter dedicated to the theory of semantic change and particularly pejoration. Chapter 2 analyses the differences between the etymology of *master* and *mistress*. In this second chapter changes in word meaning will be put into a theoretical framework and an explanation for the pejoration of *mistress* will be sought. The next chapter analyses word pair *bachelor*/*spinster* in a similar manner. Finally, a concluding chapter will summarise this study's findings, attempt to account for general tendencies from a theoretical perspective and will also include suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 1

Theoretical Framework

1.1 Semantic Change

How semantic change comes about is still a subject of debate but it is widely agreed that

semantic change involves an intermediate stage of polysemy (Campbell 233). This becomes

especially clear in seemingly unrelated cognates in related languages, for example: the

English *timber* and German *Zimmer* ('room'). In these cases the intermediate polysemous

stage explains how these words acquired such divergent meanings despite the fact that they

both originated from the same Germanic ancestor **tem-ram* ('building'). Campbell (233)

explains this process of meaning change and intermediate polysemy as follows:

Stage 1: **tem-ram* has one meaning, namely 'building' (A).

Stage 2: **tem-ram* undergoes polysemy and morphological change in both English and

German.

The English *timber* comes to mean 'building' (A) and 'a material for building'

or 'wood that supplies building material' (B).

The German *Zimmer* means 'building' (A) and 'room' (B).

Stage 3: *timber* and *Zimmer* undergo specialisation and their meaning narrows.

Timber only retains meaning B: 'a material for building', 'wood which

supplies building material'.

Zimmer only retains its B meaning as well: 'room'.

As meaning A falls out of use, and *timber* and *Zimmer* are no longer polysemous, the link

between the two words is lost and they now seem unrelated. However, it is through this

intermediate stage of polysemy, stage 2, that their relation can be uncovered.

Additionally, it is worth noting that semantic change often occurs in a direction from

more concrete to more abstract meanings (Campbell 237). Traugott and Dasher based their

"Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change" on this phenomenon. Polysemy plays a key role in this theory, realised by the invited inference. Campbell exemplifies this theory as follows: *as long as* only had a temporal and spatial meaning originally. In sentences such as 'this ship is as long as that one' or 'use the cough syrup for as long as she needs', the meaning of *as long as* is respectively spatial and temporal, although the temporal meaning could be interpreted as being conditional as well (Campbell 237). In this way this new meaning is invited by the original temporal use of the word: invited inference. *As long as* now is in stage 2, the intermediate stage of polysemy. Later, in some contexts *as long as* is only applicable in its new conditional sense.

Traugott and Dasner specifically noted that a general mechanism behind semantic change was that it moves from "real world" characteristics towards having more subjective characteristics (Campbell 237). Specifically pertaining to evaluative change, in 1926, Meillet noted the overall tendency to move away from the external and objective and towards the discourse-driven and the subjective through pejoration and amelioration as well (Trask 53).

Besides tendencies in semantic change, different types of change can be discerned as well. In order to classify semantic change Stern developed a now widely used system in which seven different classifications are differentiated within the category of semantic change (Borkowska and Kleparski 34). His classification of substitution, analogy, shortening, nomination, regular transfer, permutation, and adequation is helpful in classifying semantic change but fails to explain its origin. Another such system is the logico-rethorical classification system by Paul, which recognises the widening, narrowing and transfer of meaning (Borkowska and Kleparski 35). In both these classification systems pejoration falls within the category of (regular) transfer. The next section will first explore different categorisation systems within the process of pejoration and then delve into the many theories that attempt to explain pejorative semantic change.

1.2 Pejoration

Research into semantic change, and especially into the evaluative development of meaning concerning human referents, works with a system that discerns **WORD CATEGORIES** and their corresponding <FEATURES>. Pejoration is the negative evaluative development of the meaning of lexical items belonging to a specific word category or domain. In his analysis of the power balance between genders, Mills argues that terms for females, i.e. lexical items and subcategories within the macrocategory **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**, almost always acquire negative, sexual, connotations (Mills 1989, xiv, qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 209). A more recent study by Duda confirms that **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** lexical items are especially prone to pejorative downfall (259). On the other hand, for words within the macrocategory of **MALE HUMAN BEING** the opposite process, amelioration, is more common (Borkowska and Kleparski 38). Pejoration and amelioration both introduce elements to the meaning of words that belong on an evaluative scale. These evaluative aspects fall outside the realm of linguistics and have thus been termed extra-linguistic phenomena (Borowska and Kleparski 40).

Within the macrocategory of **HUMAN BEING** Kleparski (1990 qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 210) discerns several phases of pejoration. The different phases seem to always take place subsequent to another in a unidirectional manner wherein neutral words acquire first a pejoratively loaded sense, which then increases to eventually become negative. The fact that this process cannot reverse direction is also reflected in Gresham's law of semantic change, wherein bad meanings always drive out the good (Trask 52). Words with positive connotations undergo an additional step in this scheme where they go from positively loaded to neutral, see Figure 1 (Kochman-Haładyj 214).

(<POSITIVE> →) <NEUTRAL> → <PEJORATIVELY LOADED> → <NEGATIVE>

Figure 1. Schematic representation of the unidirectional mechanism of pejoration (Kochman-Haładyj 214).

This step from <POSITIVE> to <NEUTRAL> is especially interesting as it might not be as obvious a form of pejoration as the other steps. However, although the change from positive to neutral seems subtle, it happens in abundance to terms denoting women of power. As stated before, *lady* used to denote a woman of high position, but came to mean simply 'woman' through pejoration (Kochman-Haładyj 214). The same goes for *dame,* which used to denote high position but was also used to refer to any woman or girl ("dame" def. 2c) and *governess* came a long way from women who governed kingdoms to coming to denote nothing more than an ordinary nursemaid (Schulz 40). Meanwhile, *lord*, *baronet*, and *governor* retained their high status connotations. When a word that denotes <HIGH STATUS> undergoes pejoration and is generalised to be applicable to all people, this pejoration is known as democratic levelling[3] (Schulz 40). As exemplified above for *lady, dame,* and *governess*, democratic levelling more often occurs in titles denoting women than men (Schulz 40). With "language as a mirror of societal dispositions" (Kochman-Haładyj 208), a language without terms for powerful women seems to mirror a society ill disposed towards such women.

Another method that tries to classify pejoration looks at the evaluative result of pejoration rather than the different stages as described above. Within this method, four types of pejoration can be distinguished (Kleparski 1990 qtd. in Kochman-Haladyj 210):

1. social pejoration

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[3] Democratic levelling is not to be confused with semantic polarisation. Democratic levelling only pertains to the pejoration from a positive to a neutral sense in a female referent, while the male referent does not undergo evaluative change or vice versa. Semantic polarisation encompasses any pejoration of a female referent while the male referent stays the same or vice versa. Democratic levelling is therefore only one form of semantic polarisation.

As seen in *lady* earlier, this word shifted from meaning 'a woman of high position or noble manners' to simply mean 'woman'. This shift in meaning takes place in the social domain.

2. aesthetic pejoration

    Mopsy once denoted a 'pleasant, pretty person', however it pejorated in meaning to come to mean "slatternly, untidy woman" (Kochman-Haładyj 211). Both 'slatterny' and 'untidy' reflect badly on the appearance of this person, and are forms of aesthetic pejoration.

3. behavioural pejoration

    Once, a term for woman was simply *quean*, however this became to mean a "bold, impudent woman" and later even "spiteful, unchaste woman" or "effeminate homosexual" (Kochman-Haładyj 211). The elements of bold, impudent, spiteful and effeminate all reflect on this person's behaviour and acquiring these semantic features is a form of behavioural pejoration.

4. moral pejoration

    This type of pejoration occurs least frequent. However, it is often seen in euphenisms for prostitutes. For example, this type of pejoration accounts for the semantic feature of 'unchaste' in *quean*, a semantic feature *mopsy* also acquired at a later stage. *Harlot* is another example, which went from the already negative "beggar, vagabond" to "woman of loose morals" (Kochman-Haładyj 214).

These types of pejoration are arranged according to their frequency of occurence in the pejoration process (Kochman-Haładyj 211). The process of pejoration word most frequently leads to words assuming socially negative elements. Much less frequently, aesthetically or behaviourally negative features will be added (Kleparski 1990 qtd. in Kochman-Haładyj 212). Kleparski regarded moral pejoration as the final and most extreme

stage in pejoration. As discussed above, this stage is most abundantly reflected in words belonging to the category **PROSTITUTE** (1990 qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 213).

Pejoration involves emotive aspects more often than amelioration does (Stern 1931, 411 qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 222). According to Stern this is because "the causes triggering pejorative extensions are to be sought in circumstances when the user of the language finds one of the characteristics of the referent disadvantageous, contemptible or ridiculous" (1931, 411 qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 222).

1.2.1 Euphemisation or the Law of Successions

As early as 1929, Schreuder observed that euphemisation and pejorative downfall often go hand in hand (qtd. in Duda 259). In order to avoid a term that is considered taboo or unfavoured a new word is used euphemistically. However, through continued use of the same euphemism for the tabooed term the word used as a euphemism starts to adopt and share the features that makes the taboo a taboo until the euphemism becomes a taboo in itself. This way new words are continually tainted by taboos in order to euphemistically reference taboos. This is also known as the Law of Successions (Rawson 4-5).

1.2.2 Metaphorisation

It seems that metaphorisation is an important factor in the formation of evaluatively charged meanings (Kleparski 71). Collins argues that the process of feature sharing, or rather, the overtaking of features could be considered a metaphor. He argues many instances of pejoration can in fact be rightly termed metaphors. He looks at the etymology of the word *bitch* and finds that over time *bitch* is used to describe women that share some, but not all features ascribed to the original meaning of female dog. Interestingly enough he argues that the original applications of a metaphor is very language specific as the chance of the same

application happening simultaneously would be very small indeed (Collins 66). However, this is directly in contrast with what is seen within the macrocategory of **<u>FEMALE HUMAN BEING</u>**, as lexical items in this category undergo pejoration in many different languages (Borkowska and Kleparski).

Duda splits the category of metaphors into the classical metaphor, zoosemy and foodsemy (268-69). Foodsemy is the "metaphorical use of food terms with reference to people" (Kochman-Haładyj 218) while zoosemy encompasses all animal-related metaphors (Kochman-Haładyj 219). The reason zoosemic pejoration is often seen might have to do with the rather sexist notion that "a woman in a 'mount' to be mounted and to be ridden (and overridden) by a male rider" (Kochman-Haładyj 219).

1.2.3 Contaminating Concept

Proposed by both Ullman (1957) and Schultz (1975), the contaminating concept works through the power of association (both qtd. in Kochman-Haładyj 223). Its working mechanism is similar to that of euphemisation in that certain unwanted features are assimilated by a new word. However, from the perspective of contamination, features are not assimilated because the word that undergoes pejoration is used to describe a taboo, but rather because the to-be-pejorative word is often used simultaneously with other negatively loaded words. When a word, for example the plural *women*, was used time and time again with words denoting "disagreeable, obscene, offensive and degraded objects or ideas" (Kochman-Haładyj 223), as it would allude at "the sense of intercourse with women […] as in 'Wine, Women, and Song'" (Schulz 46). The original word eventually "tends to degrade or depreciate in its sense" as well (Kochman-Haładyj 223). This did happen as *women* was avoided in polite circles around 1800 because of this association (Schulz 46).

However, according to the contaminating concept theory, the actual cause of the pejoration of words denoting women has to do with the way women are perceived. Women are often viewed, or even solely viewed, by men as sexual objects or within a sexual context. Due to this strong association between **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** and a sexual perspective the contaminating concept explains why so many lexical items within this category acquire a pejorative sexual meaning (Kochman-Haładyj 223).

1.2.4 Prejudice

Ullman also posed prejudice against women as a reason for the pejorative development of women words (1967, 231-32 qtd. in Kochman-Haładyj 223-24). According to Fry this prejudice finds its roots in a fear of women, shared by all men. Sexual references and jokes are the result of this fear and aim to establish dominance and power over the female sex, which has some biological advantages when compared to its male counterpart (131). Another belief is that of sexual inadequacy as posed by Grotjahn. Herein lies the belief that the men's fear is in fact sexual and in order to reclaim power they use this power of sexuality as a tool for pejoration of lexical items in the macrocategory **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** (53).

CHAPTER 2

Master & Mistress

The first word pair under scrutiny is that of *master* and *mistress*. An overview of the different

semantic features these words acquired and lost can be found in Appendix A1. Originally

both these words denoted a person who was in charge, respectively a man or a woman[4].

However, over the years the meaning of both these words has changed. *Mistress*, although

still sometimes used to refer to a woman with authority, predominantly came to mean a long-

term extra-marital sexual partner of a married man ("mistress" def. 7). That is to say the word

mistress, which falls into the category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING**, acquired a <SEXUAL>

feature in addition to <CONTROL>. This negative, sexual, evaluative meaning has slowly

supplanted the positive one of control ("mistress" in Rawson 250). *Master* on the other hand

retained its meaning of having control over something, or being in charge. However, halfway

through the twentieth century the meaning of *master* broadened to include reference to

women as well ("master"). So although the semantic feature <CONTROL> remained intact,

the category broadened from **MALE HUMAN BEING** to **HUMAN BEING**. For an

overview of these changes see Table 1. This chapter will try to elucidate how these changes in

meaning came about and what the societal implications of these instances of semantic change

are.

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[4] Both *master* and *mistress* also have meanings linked to teaching, titles of rank, specific titles and technical
terms. Although these meanings also pertain to control they will not be analysed in this chapter for the sake of
conciseness.

	master		mistress	
	Original semantic feature	PDE	Original semantic feature	PDE
Category	**MALE HUMAN BEING**	**(MALE) HUMAN BEING**	**FEMALE HUMAN BEING**	**FEMALE HUMAN BEING**
Features	<CONTROL> <AUTHORITY>	<CONTROL> <AUTHORITY>	<CONTROL> <AUTHORITY>	<CONTROL> <AUTHORITY> <SEXUAL>

Table 1. Changes in category and features of *master* and *mistress*.

2.1 *Mistress*

The term *mistress* came into use around 1330 and was used to refer to a woman in charge of a child ("mistress" def. 1). From here it developed several other distinct meanings within this **CONTROL/AUTHORITY** domain. *Mistress* was quickly adopted into the domain of **TEACHING**, from 1340 onwards ("mistress" def. 8), and into the domain of **ADDRESS/ TITLE OF RANK**, from 1425 onwards ("mistress" def. 10a).

However, it is the **CONTROL/AUTHORITY** domain that is especially interesting as this domain gave rise to the most strongly negatively charged evaluative meaning of *mistress*, namely "a woman other than his wife with whom a man has a long-lasting sexual relationship" ("mistress" def. 7). Within this domain, *mistress* had already broadened in meaning before 1400 to include women in charge of a household and women who employed others in service ("mistress" def. 2ab). However, with this semantic shift a form of social pejoration took place, as the meaning denoting women in charge of a household also includes "a woman holding such a position in conjunction with a male counterpart," ("mistress" def. 2a). That is to say authorative power would only be held as an extension of a woman's husband's authority. This can be seen as early as 1375 in "Alisaundrine..attlede þe soþe, þat hire maistres & þat man no schuld hire nouȝt misse, þeȝh sche walked..from here siȝt" (Skeat

qtd in "mistress" def. 2a). Later, from 1683 onwards, *mistress* pejorated even further in the social sense to only represent the wife of an important man: "The tacksmen, or principal tenants, are named by their farms, as Kingsburgh, Corichatachin; and their wives are called the mistress of Kingsburgh, the mistress of Corichatachin" (Boswell qtd in "mistress" def. 2e). These are two very clear examples of social pejoration, as in both instances the word does not necessarily acquire negative connotations, but rather it loses its positive connotations pertaining to high social status (Kochman-Haładyj 214).

Within the **CONTROL/AUTHORITY** domain, *mistress* also developed a positively charged evaluative meaning pertaining to a woman as a patron, goddess or guiding influence. This meaning came into use around 1387, but was only used for a few hundred years as it became obsolete around 1710 ("mistress" def. 3).

Mistress also enjoyed status as a term of endearment. Between 1425 and 1891 it meant "A woman loved and courted by a man; a female sweetheart" ("mistress" def. 5). Shortly after the onset of this meaning, a more negatively, and especially, sexually loaded meaning emerged. In 1439 *mistress* came to mean "A woman other than his wife with whom a man has a long-lasting sexual relationship. In early use: †a woman notorious for some act (obs.)" ("mistress" def. 7)[5]. The earlier use of *mistress* in this sense might allude to some form of prostitution, if assumed that the referenced act is of a sexual nature. The chronology of this semantic shift as well as Kleparski's notion that terms of endearment often pejorate and come to denote <SEXUAL> features, suggests that it was *mistress* <ENDEARMENT> that underwent pejoration. The section below theorises several reasons as to where this pejoration originated.

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[5] The date provided indicates date of composition for the text in which *mistress* appeared with the <SEXUAL> feature, as opposed to date of documentary evidence.

2.1.1 Terms of Endearment

The process of pejoration that affected *mistress* might have been set in motion by the use of *mistress* as a term of endearment. As noted by Kleparski, many words that now bear negative or sexual connotations used to be terms of endearment (Borkowska and Kleparski 48). How these words then shift to become evaluatively negative is not explained, however it might well be through the process of euphemisation or the Law of Successions (Rawson 4-5). With *mistress* the evaluative charge is predominantly negative because a man is having an illicit sexual relationship with a woman, their relationship is a taboo. This taboo can only be addressed by society by using a euphemism. Sweetheart terms are often used euphemistically, especially in denoting prostitutes (Kleparski 1990, 149 qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 213), but since there is a notion of affection in this long-lasting sexual relationship between the *mistress* and the husband a sweetheart term would be especially fitting. So *mistress* as a term for sweetheart is used as a euphenism, and slowly this new meaning with the added <ILLICT RELATIONSHIP> features takes over. Once the sweetheart meaning has become too tainted it becomes obsolete, following the Law of Succession (Rawson 4-5). This might explain how the sexual and illicit relationship meanings were acquired and how it tainted the sweetheart meaning enough for it to become obsolete. This is also in line with Gresham's law of semantic shift (Trask 52), as the bad meaning drove out the good. However, the question remains how it came to compete with the original <CONTROL> and <AUTHORITY> features enough to gain an upper hand over those features. The following section outlines how the medieval conventions of courtly love might have caused the pejoration of *mistress*.

2.1.2 Courtly Love

The concept of courtly love, a popular theme in lyrical poetry in the Middle Ages when the <SEXUAL> feature in *mistress* arose, might explain why the <SEXUAL> feature supplanted the <CONTROL> features in the **CONTROL/AUTHORITY** domain.

It is believed that courtly love originated in twelfth-century Provence in Provençal poetry (Boase 5). An important theme in this type of literature was the idealisation of love as the humble service of a lady worshipped from afar by a knight of lower rank. Although this service was often unrewarded it was sought nonetheless (Hill and Bergin; Chambers). It was illicit love that was glorified by the German and Provençal lyrists in the 11th century (Lee 18); "medieaval love" seemed to be all about female superiority as "love was inspired by the moral, aesthetical, and social superiority of a woman, a belief which sometimes reached 'the point of actual worship." (Paget 128, qtd in Boase 24). This becomes clear in Chaucer's "Complaint to his Lady" in which he writes "But I, my lyf and deeth, to yew obeye" signifying he will obey his lady in every sense. Another example is that of Guinevere and Lancelot in *Lancelot, Knight of the Cart* (de Troyes). Although the tradition of courtly love allowed men to show their admiration of women, they were not free to act upon their desire. However, when Lancelot saves Guinevere from Meleagant they start an affair. Guinevere shows her power over Lancelot by manipulating his performance in a tournament, and Lancelot does not refuse his mistress (de Troyes). Of course, this is not the only power imbalance between the two of them; Guinevere as the queen would have been higher in the social hierarchy than Lancelot, who was but a mere knight.

Additionally, the pervasive use of the courtly love theme also sprouted medieval parodies of courtly love conventions, such as Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, which also emphasises the power women were seen as holding over men. These medieval conventions of love may have triggered a semantic shift from the <CONTROL> features of *mistress* to the

<SEXUAL> feature of *mistress.* As love was inspired by the "moral, aesthetical and social superiority of a woman" this woman would have been higher up in any sort of hierarchy and would have had control and authority over her lover, making her his literal *mistress* <CONTROL> <AUTHORITY>. This might explain the introduction of two semantic feature <LOVE> to the features of *mistress* through Ullman (1957) and Schulz's (1975) contamination concept (both qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 223); a notion further strengthened by the fact that *mistress* was briefly used as a sweetheart term ("mistress" def. 5), as discussed above. Since *mistress* was so often associated with love, <LOVE> became an added feature besides <CONTROL> and <AUTHORITY>.

Nevertheless, this does not explain how *mistress* acquired <ILLICIT RELATIONSHIP> features. Paget, however, also stated that "the feudal Middle Ages gave […] a love steeped in the poison of adultery" (126 quoted in Boase 24). This might be where the <SEXUAL> and <ILLICIT RELATIONSHIP> features came from. Furthermore, as seen in the examples of the courtly love theme, often the desired *mistress* already had a husband, which could also have sprouted the association with <ILLICIT RELATIONSHIP>. Although courtly love might have been celebrated in lyrical poetry it mirrored the reality of the Middle Ages and thus affected semantic change during this period.

2.2 *Master*

Interestingly enough, throughout the years *master* has been in use it has not acquired evaluatively negative <SEXUAL> features, but it did broaden in meaning. Although the *OED online* does not exemplify this semantic shift, it does state that *master* "is still normally used of a masculine referent; however, especially in the latter half of the 20th cent. its meaning has been extended to include women" ("master").

This broadening might have come about as a result of the pejoration of *mistress*. As the <SEXUAL> features supplanted the <CONTROL> features, the English language lacked an appropriate term for a female with control or authority. However, if we compare when the pejoration of *mistress* occurred, before 1439, and when the broadening of *master* took place, around 1950, a five-hundred-year gap becomes apparent. This makes it safe to assume that the disappearance of a term denoting a woman with control/authority was not the reason for the broadening of master to include such a person.

If a linguistic explanation cannot be found to explain the broadening of *master*, this semantic shift might have been of an extra-linguistic nature. So why was it that in the latter half of the 20th century there was a broadening of the meaning of *master*? The timeframe coincides with the emergence of the first wave feminism, a term first coined by Marsha Lear in 1968. As women were (re)claiming their position in society it seems the appropriate vocabulary was (re)claimed as well. World War I caused many women to have jobs that they had to forfeit to returning soldiers after the war was over. However, this brief period of social change did kickstart movements that fought for equality in all aspects of society. This would explain why especially in this latter stage of the 20th century there would be a necessity for a word describing a woman of power. Rather than trying to rid *mistress* of the negative connotations it had already had for many years, the term *master* was adapted to include women. The same happened in the domain of **FILM**, where women took offence to the term *actress* as it would "[fall] into the same category as authoress, comedienne, manageress, 'lady doctor', 'male nurse' and similar obsolete terms that date from a time when professions were largely the preserve of one sex (usually men)" (Pritchard). Similarly to the broadening of *master*, *actor* is now "increasingly preferred for performers of both sexes as a gender-neutral term" ("actress" def. 2a).

2.3 Sadomasochistic Sexual Activity

Lastly, both *master* and *mistress* were incorporated as terms into sadomasochistic sexual activity, SM for short. *Master* entered this realm in 1901 as "A person, usually a man, who plays the dominant role in sadomasochistic sexual activity" ("master" def. 2d). *Mistress* was first used as its female counterpart in 1921 ("mistress" def 2g). For both *master* and *mistress* these meanings are particularly interesting because they remain in use to this day and seem only to be applicable in this very specific context. With regard to *master* this meaning has not led to the development of other sexual connotations through the contaminating concept (Ullman 1957, Schulz 1975 both qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 223). Furthermore, as regards *mistress*, it has not led to new sexual connotations either, nor does it seem to have forced other meanings of *mistress* into obsoletion.

For *mistress* especially, the emergence of new negatively charged evaluative meanings would be expected; this situation would be a perfect locus for the contaminating concept (Ullman 1957, Schulz 1975 both qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 223) and female terms are prone to pejorative semantic shift (Duda 259), as discussed above. However, it might be the very strong pairing with *master* in this context that has prevented this. As *master* and *mistress* are only used in the SM sense in a very specific context they are very strongly associated with one another. Therefore, pejorative evaluative change of the one would lead to evaluative change in the other term as well. As the female *mistress* would be more prone to pejorative semantic shift, and the male *master* would more readily undergo amelioration it might be that, within the domain of SM, these evaluative tendencies balance each other out.

An alternative explanation might be that SM in general already has quite negative connotations and <SEXUAL> features. In this sense it might have become impossible for either *mistress* or *master* to pejorate further in the direction of either <SEXUAL> or other negative evaluative features.

CHAPTER 3

Bachelor & Spinster

The second word pair to be analysed is that of *bachelor* and *spinster*. Interestingly enough these words have quite different origins, yet both came to denote an unmarried man or woman, respectively, see Table 2 ("bachelor" def. 4a, "spinster" def. 2a). However, from here *spinster* underwent pejoration, while *bachelor* did not. *Spinster* acquired negative evaluative semantic features on a par with *old maid* ("spinster" def. 2b), which has been described as "the most calamitous Creature in nature" (Rawson 276). Furthermore, *bachelor*, much like *master*, underwent a type of broadening where some senses of the words are directly applicable to women, and other senses achieved this broadening through compounds such as *bachelor-girl*, *bachelor lady* or *bachelor party* ("bachelor" def. C1a). The analysis that follows is limited to the meanings of the words *bachelor* and *spinster* that belong in the macrocategory **HUMAN BEING**.

	bachelor		*spinster*	
	Original semantic feature	PDE	Original semantic feature	PDE
Category	**MALE HUMAN BEING**	**(MALE) HUMAN BEING**	**FEMALE HUMAN BEING**	**FEMALE HUMAN BEING**
Features	<OCCUPATION> <UNMARRIED> <INEXPERIENCED>	<UNMARRIED> <FREE> <INEXPERIENCED>	<OCCUPATION>	<UNMARRIED> <UNDESIRABLE>

Table 2. Changes in category and features of *bachelor* and *spinster*.

3.1 *Spinster*

Spinster was used from 1362 onwards to denote women, and very rarely men, whose

occupation encompassed spinning ("spinster" def. 1a). Spinning was seen as a respectable

occupation, taken up by women, as can be inferred from this quote by Africanus: "their

women are excellent spinsters, whereby they are saide to gaine more than the men of the

towne" ("spinster" def. 1a). However, by 1700 *spinster* was used as "the proper legal

designation of one still unmarried" ("spinster" def. 2a). This new use became abundantly

clear in legal texts as well as in glossaries, "*Spinster*;.. this is the onley addition for all

unmarried women, from the Viscounts Daughter downward" (Blount).

This shift from denoting an occupation to denoting social marital status can be seen as

the first step in the uni-directional model of pejoration. A word that previously had a

positively evaluative feature, <OCCUPATION>, shifts to a meaning without evaluative

features, <UNMARRIED>, see Figure 2.

<POSITIVE>   →   <NEUTRAL>
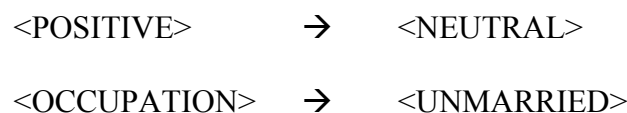
<OCCUPATION> →   <UNMARRIED>

Figure 2. Schematic representation of the unidirectional mechanism of pejoration pertaining to *spinster*, part 1.

This can be seen as a form of social pejoration (Borkowska and Kleparski 40). Both semantic

features denote a social status, namely that of a working woman and that of an unmarried

woman, respectively. However, the word *spinster* no longer denotes any positive features an

unmarried woman may possess, such as being a hard-working, skilled worker, instead it just

describes her as being unmarried. This social pejoration coincides with a form of behavioural

pejoration (Borkowska and Kleparski 40); positively charged behaviourally loaded elements

such as +HARD WORKING, +INDEPENDENT, +SKILLED are lost in favour of the new

semantic feature <UNMARRIED>. The first stage of pejoration from a positive meaning to a neutral meaning encompasses these two types of pejoration.

3.1.1 Contaminating Concept

The contaminating concept (Ullman 1957, Schultz 1975 both qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 223) can explain how this semantic shift from a positive value to a neutral one was triggered. As it was expected of women that they would stop working once they married, a working woman, in this case a *spinster*, would be strongly associated with the concept of being unmarried. This association with *spinster* specifically was further reinforced by the fact that spinning was one of the very few professions open to women. With this strong association between the two meanings, the word *spinster* started to assimilate the semantic feature <UNMARRIED> over the course of four-hundred years. This assimilation of a shared feature (namely <UNMARRIED>) between spinsters and unmarried women triggered the semantic broadening of *spinster*. This assimilation of a shared feature is also what underlies Collin's theory of metaphor. The word now no longer denoted just working women who spun, who were probably unmarried, but all unmarried women alike, working or not. However, it is this secondary <UNMARRIED> feature that facilitated the further pejoration of *spinster*.

In 1719 the meaning of *spinster* shifts to denote "[a woman] beyond the usual age for marriage, an old maid" ("spinster" def. 2b). This is where the shift to a negative meaning occurs. The sense of "one beyond the usual age for marriage" ("spinster def. 2b") is pejoratively loaded, additionally, the semantic feature "old maid" as attributed to *spinster* by the *OED online* ("spinster" def. 2b) can definitely be seen as a negative semantic feature (Rawson 276), see Figure 3.

<NEUTRAL>   → <PEJORATIVELY LOADED>   → <NEGATIVE>

<UNMARRIED>   → "beyond the usual age for marriage"   → "old maid"
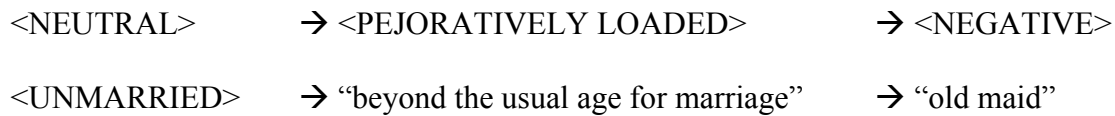
Figure 3. Schematic representation of the unidirectional mechanism of pejoration pertaining to *spinster*, part 2.

This shift of <NEUTRAL> to <NEGATIVE> meaning of *spinster* encompasses all four types of pejoration described by Kleparski; social, aesthetic, behavioural and moral pejoration (Kochman-Haładyj 210). Firstly, *spinster* acquires aesthetic pejoration in this shift. Aesthetic pejoration pertains to the visual associations with the word *spinster*. As described by Wohlfarth, *spinster* especially denotes "an older woman" (2), *old* as a modifier can denote wisdom, however, when combined with words from the domain **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** *old* usually denotes fading beauty or flaws in character. The association between *spinster* and faded beauty, or even being "seen as rejected and undesirable" (Duda 3) projects an image of the *spinster* as an ugly, bitter old woman. The feature of bitterness however, is not a form of aesthetic pejoration, is better categorised as behavioural pejoration, the second form of pejoration *spinster* acquires in this semantic shift. *Spinster* does not have its own entry in Rawson's dictionary, but is, as in the *OED online*, presented as a synonym for *old maid* ("old maid" Rawson 276). In Rawson's dictionary *Wicked Words*, an elderly *spinster* is described as a fussy person ("old maid" 276), another form of behavioural pejoration. However, an *old maid* is also described as "almost always [appearing] in a negative context" ("old maid" Rawson 276). Thirdly, moral pejoration is reflected in *spinsters* by their failed attempt to secure a husband. This failure means they are no longer considered to be respectable. Or worse even, in the way spinsters are described it almost seems that the lack of respectability in character and/or appearance is what caused their marital status. Finally, the culmination of all these different instances of pejoration furthered the fourth type of pejoration: social pejoration. Through the presentation of *spinsters* as disreputable, ugly, fussy and bitter

women, their social status was reduced even further compared to the first semantic shift
spinster underwent.

3.1.2 Prejudice

Ullman posed a model that poses prejudice against women as the cause of the pejorative
development of words denoting females (1967, 231-32 qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 223).
Although he posed it as an explanation for the many instances of explicitly sexual pejoration,
at the root of Ullman's theory harbours the assumption that men fear women for the threat
that they pose to male dominance and power. This model might well serve as an explanation
as to why *spinster* underwent pejoration, albeit it pejoration without the explicit sexual
undertones. Unmarried women could have posed a very real threat to male dominance as they
were self-sufficient, or at least, more so than their married female contemporaries. Their self-
sufficiency allowed them independence and therefore they proved that they did not need a
man to live a happy life. Through pejoration of a type whereby *spinster* came to denote a
woman who could in no way be seen as a representation of happiness, this notion was
suppressed. Through societal views and the resulting pejoration an image was sketched of the
independent, working woman, a *spinster*, as someone disreputable and loathsome. This
discouraged women to strive for this kind of independence, and allowed men to retain their
dominant position in society.

3.2 *Bachelor*

Bachelor, on the other hand, did not undergo pejoration over the years. *Bachelor* started out
to denote "one low in rank" and from this several meanings within this domain sprouted,
making *bachelor* polysemic. For example from 1297 onwards in knighthood a *bachelor*
would signify "a novice in arms" ("bachelor" def. 1a), it denotes someone who has taken the

lowest degree in university since 1386 ("bachelor" def. 3a) and from 1390 to 1806 it also

denoted a junior member of a trade-guild ("bachelor" def. 2). However, in 1386 it also came

to mean "an unmarried man (of marriageable age)" ("bachelor" def. 4a). It seems that

bachelor was also used briefly to refer to an unmarried woman, as in "Hee would keepe you

A Batchler still..And keepe you not alone without a husband, But in a sicknesse" recorded in

1637 (Jonson). However, this is the only documented attestation of this use, which has since

become obsolete.

The polysemy *bachelor* has exhibited can be explained in the words of Wohlfarth; a

bachelor denotes the "first state of a man in society after adolescence" (3). This is also

reflected in the now obsolete meaning of the word "an inexperienced person, a novice"

("bachelor" def. 3b). Societal changes explain the loss of meanings such as 'knight' and

'trade-guild member'. Furthermore, nowadays *bachelor* in universities is used to either any

person, not just a man, who has taken the first or lowest degree in university (Wohlfarth 3).

In the 20th century, once women were admitted into universities, *bachelor* also became

applicable to women who had taken such a degree (Wohlfarth 3). Interestingly enough, before

this broadening *bachelor* had technically denoted professions dominated by men, much like

spinster did for a profession dominated by women. However, different from the semantic

development of *spinster*, the semantic feature <OCCUPATION> is not what instigated the

addition of the semantic feature <MARITAL STATUS> to *bachelor*.

The semantic feature <MARITAL STATUS> of *bachelor* seems to have come about

through association with <INEXPERIENCE> ("bachelor" def. 3b). As stated before, *bachelor*

used to denote "the first state of a man in society of adolescence" (Wohlfarth 3) or "an

inexperienced person, a novice" ("bachelor" def. 3b). Much like being on the lowest tier when

it came to knighthood, being a junior trade-guild member or a student in university, a young

man unmarried was on the lower tier of social status. Getting married was a logical step for

any adolescent man once he came of age. Such a *bachelor* still had much to learn and was, in

fact, in a disadvantaged position compared to the learned, married man. So, in many ways this

definition is very similar to the one of *spinster* as this, for a while, also denoted women who

were on their way to marriage but not quite there yet ("spinster" def 2a). However, *bachelor*

has not pejorated in meaning. It might even be said that *bachelor* underwent amelioration, as

nowadays being a bachelor is a state often celebrated. Many jokes actually thrive on the fact

that marriage is nothing but pure hell for the average man: a wedding day is the worst day of

his life (Rofik 3) and mothers-in-law are a nightmare (Rofik 5, 10). So, in a way, *bachelor*

represents a preferred social state for a male to be in. This is quite a contrast to the original

<INEXPERIENCED> feature although this was the precursor for the <UNMARRIED>

feature of *bachelor*. In its early use *bachelor* used to denote <UNMARRIED> but also

<INEXPERIENCE>, yet nowadays *bachelor* sooner seems to denote <UNMARRIED> and

(thus) <FREE>, see Figure 4. This probably represents society's skewed idea of marriage: the

celebration of the <FREE> *bachelor* is mirrored in language change through the amelioration

of *bachelor*, while the reproach unmarried women face is reflected in the pejoration of

spinster.

<NEUTRAL>   →   <POSITIVE>

<UNMARRIED> <INEXPERIENCED>   →   <UNMARRIED> <FREE>

Figure 4. Schematic representation of a hypothetical unidirectional mechanism of amerlioration (freely adapted
to Kochman-Haładyj's model) of the word *bachelor*.

3.2.1 Compounds

Another interesting aspect in the development of *bachelor* is the emergence of compounds.

Compounds such as *bachelor-maid*, with a recorded use in 1894, and *bachelor-lady*, 1924,

have enjoyed brief usage but are now rare ("bachelor" def. C1a). However, they were

necessary to denote an independent unmarried woman without the negative connotations *spinster* already held then. Interesting is the compound *bachelor-girl* which arose in 1895 and seems to have been used for an extended period of time, even today ("bachelor" def. C1a). It has several documented usage sources. Firstly, in 1906 in a reader's letter to the newspaper *Harbor Grace Standard*:

> Old maids are dying out. In a few years' time the typical old maid of our youth will rarely be seen, and a hundred years hence she will probably be dead altogether. The term, 'old maid' is now seldom or never heard: the expression 'bachelor girl' has taken it place, and many and happy are the bachelor girls in Britain to-day, with their independence, their little homes, and their own well-arranged lives.

A few years later, in 1955, *American Speech* penned that "A way of living no doubt explains *bachelor girl* and not any consideration of gender", affirming that it was indeed a lifestyle choice that was being applied to the macrocategory **HUMAN BEING** rather than exclusively to **MALE HUMAN BEING**. However, since the compound that represents **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** in *bachelor-girl* involves *girl*, which has quite a strong connotation with the idea of being young, it remains to be seen whether this compound will ever be used to refer to older women. Then again, the *Harbor Grace Daily* contemporary seems to prompt that it can be used to refer to older women, arguing that *bachelor-girl* would take the place of *old maid*. All we know now is that a hundred years have passed and *old maid* has not completely died out yet and nor has *spinster*. Both words are still in circulation as insults, whereas *bachelor* is not. However, *bachelor* has given rise to a **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** term, namely *bachelorette* ("bachelorette" def. a). *Bachelorette* denotes an unmarried woman without the predominant negative connotations attached to older terms such as *spinster* and *old maid* ("bachelorette" def. a).

3.2.2 Bachelorette

The compound *bachelor-girl* actually served as a precursor to the term most often used these days to refer to an unmarried woman, namely *bachelorette* ("bachelorette" def. a). *Bachelorette* has assumed the role of being a neutral referent for unmarried women. Its first use is dated 1935 and not long after, in 1973, the word was also used to denote a living space for unmarried women (bachelorette" def. b) and parties thrown for a soon-to-be-wed woman, in 1943 ("bachelorette" draft addition). These two later uses of the words mirror some of the compounds with *bachelor*, like *bachelor-apartment*, *bachelor-cottage*, *bachelor-flat* ("bachelor" def. C1.b) or *bachelor party* ("bachelor" def. C1.a). These similarities between *bachelorette* and *bachelor* put these two terms much more on a par than *bachelor* and *spinster* ever were. Furthermore, it seems to conform to the unidirectional model of pejoration as proposed by Kochman-Haładyj (214). Within this model, once *spinster* had pejorated and acquired negative evaluative features it would not be able to move backward to regain a neutral or even positive meaning. In order to realise such a neutral word, a new term derived from the male counterpart *bachelor* ("bachelorette" def. a) was coined.

In 1719 *spinster* gained a fully pejorative meaning, which supplanted the original <WORKING> feature in subsequent years. This means that by the time *bachelorette* was coined in 1935 it would have been near impossible to associate *bachelorette* with *spinster* as the <UNMARRIED> feature would already have been overshadowed by the prominence of the <UNDESIRABLE> feature in *spinster*. The fact that this association was never made probably contributed to the fact that *bachelorette* has not (yet) pejorated. Rather, it seems that by coining a completely new term at a time where the association between <UNMARRIED> and <UNDESIRABLE> was less strong, pejoration was avoided and this resulted in a **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** *bachelorette,* which is on a par in meaning with the **MALE HUMAN BEING** *bachelor.*

CONCLUSION

These analyses looked into the drive behind the pejoration of female words and the mechanisms behind this pejoration. Based on the etymological analysis of *mistress* and *spinster* and contrasting their etymology with that of *master* and *bachelor*, respectively, there are several conclusions that can be drawn. It does seem that words belonging to the macrocategory **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** undergo pejoration frequently. Both *mistress* and *spinster* did. In both instances pejoration included moral pejoration, producing features that would deem anyone referred to as a *mistress* or *spinster* disreputable or wretched ("mistress" def. 7, "spinster" def. 2b). Further findings included some evidence for the amelioration of **MALE HUMAN BEING** words. However, *master*, already very positively charged from its origination, did not seem to have ameliorated. With *bachelor* it seems that some amelioration did take place. First *bachelor* simply meant a man who had just taken his first steps into adulthood ("bachelor" def. 1a, 2, 3ab), however, nowadays *bachelor* represents much of the freedom a man supposedly loses once married ("bachelor" def. 4a), and the bachelor life is envied and idolised. The most interesting additional finding, however, might be that of the semantic broadening of both *master* and *bachelor. Master* broadened in meaning to include women with the features <AUTHORITY> and <CONTROL> ("master"), and *bachelor* allowed its features to be applied to women through compounds such as *bachelor-maid*, *bachelor-lady*, *bachelor-girl* ("bachelor" def. C1a) and *bachelorette* ("bachelorette" def. a).

When it comes to the pejoration of words in the domain **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** it does not seem like there is one mechanism at work. Rather, there are different reasons for different instances of pejoration. For *mistress* it seems that the feudal system and its social hierarchies provided most of the triggers for pejoration, and especially the literary

conventions of courtly love played an important role. In the case of *spinster* reasons for pejoration seems to solely belong in the domain of sociology. With regard to both *mistress* and *spinster*, extra-linguistic processes motivated the pejoration. This is in line with Borkowska and Kleparski's statement that "language is utterly dependent on the social group which employs the language for communicative purposes, it is only natural that changes in the language employed by the social group should be of social nature" (32).

These analyses of *master/mistress* and *bachelor/spinster* confirm Kleparski's uni-directional model of pejoration (Borkowska and Kleparski 214). The semantic features of *mistress* and *spinster*, once pejorated, were not restored to become positive or even neutral again. This uni-directional model might even be applicable to amelioration as well, as *bachelor* did not return to having more neutral connotations either. Regarding the different types of pejoration, it seems that moral pejoration is the most severe case of pejoration. As posed by Kleparski, social pejoration seems to be the least severe form, and is usually associated with shifts from <POSITIVE> semantic features to <NEUTRAL> semantic features (1990 qtd in Kochman-Haładyj 223), as was seen in the shift from <OCCUPATION> to <UNMARRIED> of *spinster* ("spinster" def. 1, 2a). Other instances of social pejoration, not analysed in this study reflect this step as well, for example the shift in *lady* <WOMAN OF HIGH STATUS> to *lady* <WOMAN> ("lady" def. 5a).

As Stern pointed out, pejoration often involves more emotive aspects than amelioration (qtd in Borkowska and Kleparski 34). This notion is confirmed in the present, albeit limited, analysis of pejoration and amelioration. The amelioration of *bachelor* is mostly social and behavioural, whereas *mistress* and *spinster* undergo much more emotive moral pejoration as well.

Campbell's theory of intermediate polysemy proved true also (233). In *spinster* the intermediate polysemous form between <OCCUPATION> and <UNDESIRABLE> was

easily traced, as <OCCUPATION> was almost always accompanied by <UNMARRIED> in earlier times these two features became closely associated. *Spinster* <UNMARRIED> then further pejorated with the underlying thought that any woman unmarried at a certain age would be <UNDESIRABLE>, thus completing the full set of features. Of course, the polysemy still holds today, as neither the <OCCUPATION> or <UNMARRIED> meanings of *spinster* are obsolete yet ("spinster" def. 1a, 2a). However, the <UNDESIRABLE> meaning is the most prominent in feature in PDE. With regard to *mistress*, the present study hypothesised that the intermediate feature of <LOVE> that bridges the meanings of <CONTROL> and <ILICIT RELATIONSHIP> may lie in associations found in the conventions of courtly love. Together with the adulterous nature and the illicit and adulterous nature of courtly love, *mistress* not only became a medium for affection but also one for illicit relationships. However, an alternative explanation presents itself in the brief use of *mistress* as a term of endearment, which could have been used as a euphenism and later have pejorated.
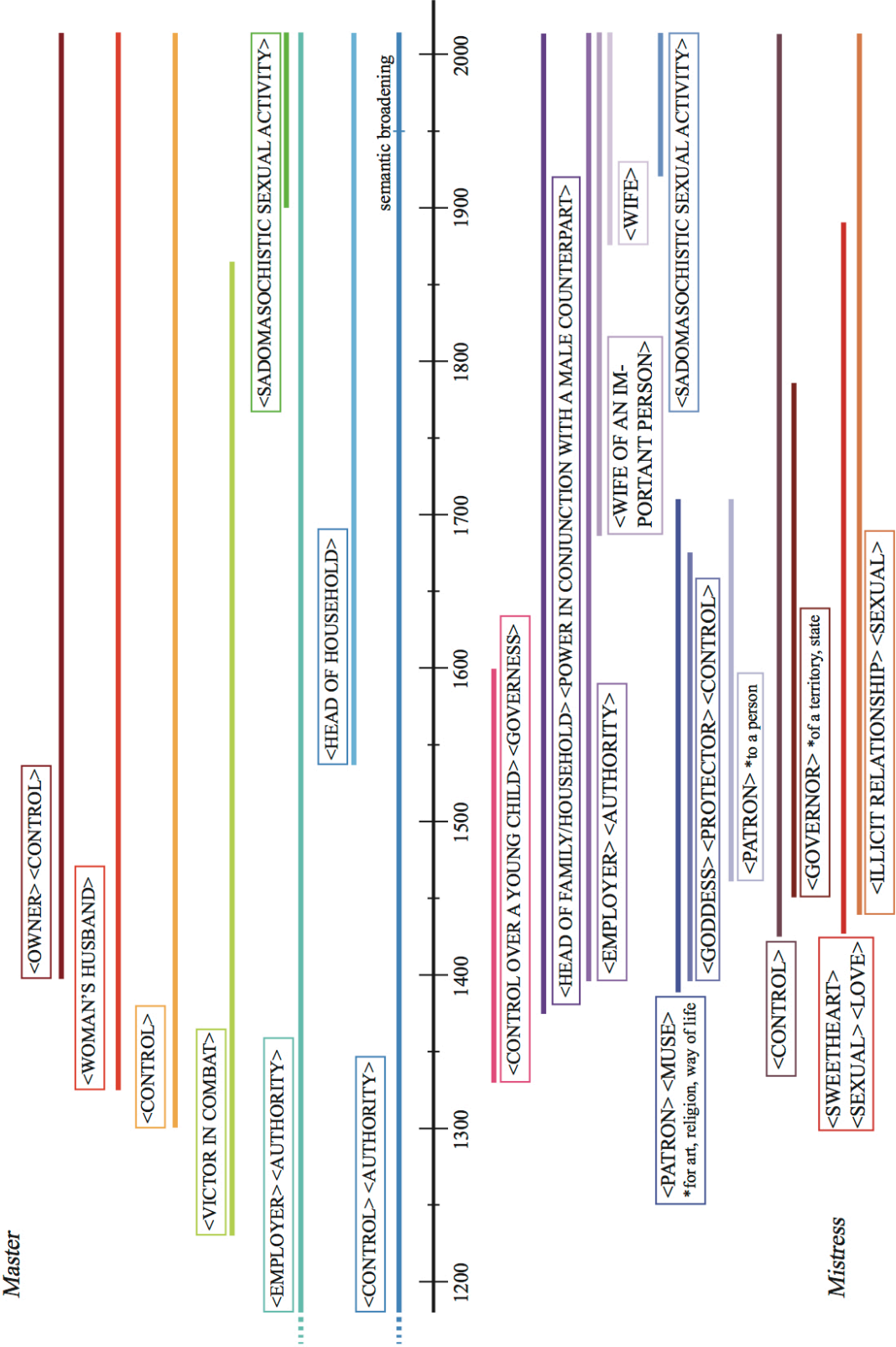
The present study shows that in the case of *mistress* and *spinster* the mechanism of pejoration differed as well as the reason for pejoration. Future research could focus on other similar word pairs in which one component pejorated and the other did not. Furthermore, broadening of the word belonging to the macrocategory **MALE HUMAN BEING** could be well worth looking into as well. Is it a coincidence that this happened to *master* and *bachelor* or is this common in word pairs where the **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** counterpart has pejorated? Additionally, this analysis limited itself to four words in total, a small sample size. Future research might want to include a bigger sample in order to ascertain results that can be seen as representative for the entire English language and maybe even look into other languages to see if this is a mechanism that operates on a broader scale.

For now, the theory that words belonging to the macrocategory **<u>FEMALE HUMAN BEING</u>** pejorate sooner than those in the macrocategory **<u>MALE HUMAN BEING</u>**, has been confirmed. There is even some evidence in this analysis for the tendency of **<u>MALE HUMAN BEING</u>** words to ameliorate. However, there is still a lot to research, and research is still very much necessary because language reflects the societies we live and language and how it changed throughout history can teach us something about ourselves as a society.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A1 holds a chronological overview of the different semantic features of *master* and *mistress* over the years as documented by the *OED online* ("master", "mistress"). It also notes the semantic broadening that *master* underwent halfway through the 20th century. The dotted lines indicate that the semantic feature has been in use since before 1200.
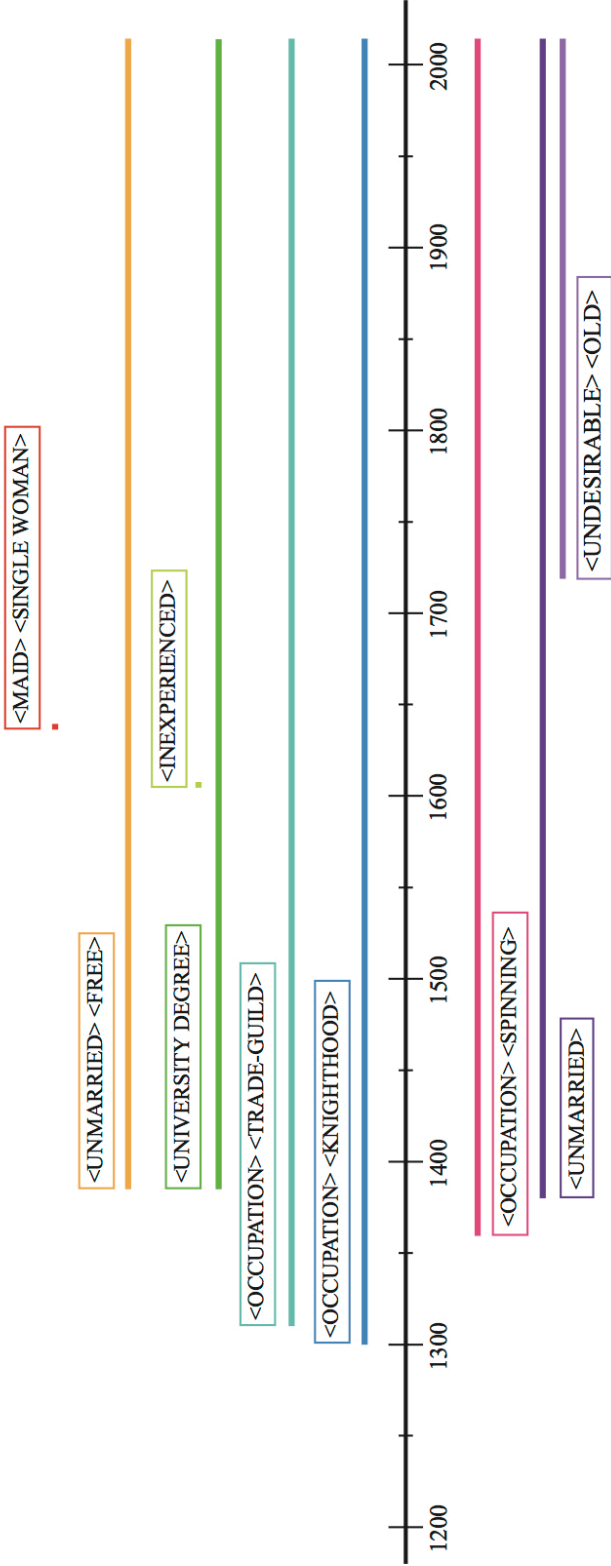
Appendix A2 holds a chronological overview of the different semantic features of *bachelor* and *spinster* over the years as documented by the *OED online* ("bachelor", "spinster"). It also includes the *bachelor* compounds discussed in this thesis (*bachelor-girl, bachelor lady* and *bachelor woman*) and later derived *bachelorette* ("bachelorette").

A1

Master

- <OWNER> <CONTROL>
- <WOMAN'S HUSBAND>
- <CONTROL>
- <VICTOR IN COMBAT>
- <EMPLOYER> <AUTHORITY>
- <SADOMASOCHISTIC SEXUAL ACTIVITY>
- <HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD>
- <CONTROL> <AUTHORITY>
- semantic broadening

Mistress

- <CONTROL OVER A YOUNG CHILD> <GOVERNESS>
- <HEAD OF FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD> <POWER IN CONJUNCTION WITH A MALE COUNTERPART>
- <EMPLOYER> <AUTHORITY>
- <WIFE OF AN IMPORTANT PERSON>
- <WIFE>
- <GODDESS> <PROTECTOR> <CONTROL>
- <SADOMASOCHISTIC SEXUAL ACTIVITY>
- <PATRON> *to a person
- <PATRON> <MUSE> *for art, religion, way of life
- <GOVERNOR> *of a territory, state
- <CONTROL>
- <SWEETHEART>
- <SEXUAL> <LOVE>
- <ILLICIT RELATIONSHIP> <SEXUAL>

1200 1300 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800 1900 2000

A2

Bachelor

Spinster

<MAID> <SINGLE WOMAN>

<INEXPERIENCED>

<UNMARRIED> <FREE>

<UNIVERSITY DEGREE>

<OCCUPATION> <TRADE-GUILD>

<OCCUPATION> <KNIGHTHOOD>

<UNDESIRABLE> <OLD>

<OCCUPATION> <SPINNING>

<UNMARRIED>

bachelor-girl
bachelor woman
bachelor lady
bachelorette
<UNMARRIED> <FREE>

1200 1300 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800 1900 2000

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