

From *huswif* to *slut*

A diachronic Look into the Pejoration of Women Terms

Phoebe Adamietz

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich

phoebeadamietz@gmail.com

Introduction to the topic



My analysis



Starting Points

- *The semantic derogation of women*, Muriel Schulz (1975)
 - “The semantic change discussed here, by which terms designating women routinely undergo pejoration, both reflects and perpetuates derogatory attitudes towards women.” (p.73)
- Linguistic relativity; entrenchment-conventionalization model¹
- Linguistic reclamation²

¹ after Schmid's *The dynamics of the linguistic system: usage, conventionalization and entrenchment*

² after Brontsema's *A Queer Revolution: Reconceptualizing the Debate Over Linguistic Reclamation*

Methodology

- Qualitative analysis of four selected terms used to denote women
 - Utilizing *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760*, *British National Corpus*, *Oxford English Dictionary*
- Focus on specifically the process of zoosemy³ and linguistic reclamation

³ after Kieltyka's *Zoosemic terms denoting female human beings: Semantic derogation of women revisited*

Mistress⁴

- (1) “The female head of a family, household, or other establishment; a woman holding such a position in conjunction with a male counterpart.”
- (2) “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 (*obsolete*).”
- Etymology
 - Latin *magistrissa* -> Old French *maîtresse* -> Middle French *maistresse*
 - Borrowing from Middle French into Middle English

⁴ *OED* s.v. *mistress*, n.

simple mistress • 141
 103.72 per million tokens • 0.01%

 Details

Left context KWIC Right context

	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	1560-1599 • Dra... I laide in their graues, but I fetcht me two or three fine capers aloft, and took my leaue of them, as men do of their	mistresses	at the ending of a galiard; Besilos manus . O brutish nature, how accurst was I euer to indure the sound of this dan
2	1560-1599 • Tri... hope, to have seen your Master in higher State to advance you; you had more Respect to your Master than to your	Mistress	.</s></s>But this is nothing to the Matter.</s></s>So his purpos'd longer Speech was cut off, and then he said shor
3	1560-1599 • Tri... ishop of Rosse hath accus'd you of Malice; but you answer nothing to that which the Bishop of Rosse wrote to his	Mistress	, the Scottish Queen, in Secrecy, wherein could be no Malice.</s></s>Ledington broke it to me, and the Earl Murra
4	1560-1599 • Tri... uestions were asked him, he said, He was an Ambassador, and not so to be dealt with, but to be refer'd to his own	Mistress	the Scottish Queen.</s></s>When he was committed to the Tower , and there again examin'd, seeing things confes:
5	1600-1639 • Dra... lfe a dozen kisses were not lost, Vpon this Gentle-woman, for you must know, These waiting maides are to their	mistresses	Like Porches vnto doores, you passe the one Before you can haue entrance at the other.</s></s>Or like your muste
6	1600-1639 • Dra... st not skorne To be dipping in the other, I tell you Maister Tis not a few mens tales which they preferre, Vnto their	Mistresses	in compasse of a year, Be ruld by me, vntrusse your selfe to her, Out with all your loue-sicke thoughtes to her, Ki
7	1640-1679 • Dra... ld not have him heare: for Prentises though they are bound to keepe their Masters secrets, are not all privy to their	Mistresses	; that's more a Journeymans Office.</s></s>Your Ladiship is pleas'd.</s></s>Not very well with my selfe, for I hav
8	1640-1679 • Dra... ight it you: you have virtuous inclinations, and I would not have you ruine your self.</s></s>He that serves many	Mistresses	, surfeits on his diet, and grows dead to the whole sex: 'tis the folly in the world next long ears and braying.</s></s>
9	1640-1679 • Dra... can't Abide you -- Harry , Come, you Must along with me to my Lady Woodvills . I am going to slip the Boy at a	Mistress	.</s></s>At a Wife Sir, you wou'd say.</s></s>You need not look so glum, Sir, a Wife is no Curse when she brings
10	1640-1679 • Dra... </s></s>Pray where's your Friend, Mr Dorimant ? Soliciting his affairs, he's a man of great Employment, has more	Mistresses	now depending Than the most eminent Lawyer in England Has Causes.</s></s>Here has been Mrs. Loveit , so un
11	1640-1679 • Dra... 'd not have Been a currant excuse for another; A Modish Man is always very busie When he is in pursuit of a new	Mistress	.</s></s>Some Fop has brib'd you to rail at him; He had business, I will believe it, and will forgive him.</s></s>Yr
12	1640-1679 • Dra... d here I vow revenge; resolve To pursue, and persecute you more impertinently Than ever any Loving Fop did his	Mistress	, hunt You i'the Park , trace you i'the Mail , Dog You in every visit you make, haunt you at The Plays, and i'the Dr
13	1640-1679 • Dra... , is a sign of his generosity: Marriage is rather a sign of interest, then love; and he that marries a fortune, covets a	Mistress	, not loves her: But if you take Marriage for a sign of love, take it from me immediately.</s></s>No, now you hav
14	1640-1679 • Dra... money to Painters to draw you like? and are you afraid of your Pictures, at length in a Play-house, where all your	Mistresses	may see you.</s></s>A Pox, Painters don't draw the Small Pox, or Pimples in ones face; come damn all your silly
15	1640-1679 • Dra... either she, nor her Brother, wou'd let me come near her now: when all's done, a Rival is the best cloak to steal to a	Mistress	under, without suspicion; and when we have once got to her as we desire, we throw him off like other Cloaks.</s></s>
16	1640-1679 • Dra... hrow him off like other Cloaks.</s></s>Aside Exit Sparkish, and Harcourt following him Re-enter Mr Pinchwife,	Mistress	Pinchwife in Man's Cloaths Sister, if you will not go, we must leave you -- The Fool her Gallant, and she, will mu
17	1640-1679 • Fic... as called, The Knight of the Red Cross . So likewise, the Grocers Apprentice, before he could be fit to wait on his	Mistresses	daughter, was knighted, and called, The Knight of the Burning Pestle . First, therefore, let us learn to dance, then I
18	1640-1679 • Fic... FRONTED HIM; AND WHAT HAPPENED THEREUPON <head> Sir Samuel being now in the presence of his	Mistress	, though at first he were a little daunted at the Majestie of her person, yet finding that he must either speak, or be
19	1640-1679 • Fic... OW SIR SAMUEL SENT HIS MISTRIS A COPY OF VERSES, WISHING HIMSELF A PUPPY-DOG FOR HIS	MISTRESS	SAKE: WHICH HE SENT BY HIS GOOD PAGE, JACK WATERHOUSE; AND HOW JACK WATERHOUSE (
20	1640-1679 • Lan... <head> I Pray' Father give mee your blessing.</s></s>Daughter, you are welcome home.</s></s>How does your	Mistress	?</s></s>She is very well, Sir.</s></s>Have you not forgot your English quite?</s></s>No, Sir.</s></s>I suppose y

Mistress – according to the Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760

simple mistress • 1,184
10.54 per million tokens • 0.0011%

	Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... e had my record straight in the 1959 Register, but mysteriously erroneous in 1970!	Mistress	at Shrewsbury High School (G. P. D. S. T.) in 1959 and Headmistress of Basingstoke High School in 1965.
2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... e Lyons, 1977a: 673ff). (93) The man who gave his paycheck to his wife was wiser than the man who gave it to his	mistress	where it is not co-referential with his paycheck, but refers to what a repetition of that NP would have referred to (
3	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... paycheck, but refers to what a repetition of that NP would have referred to (namely the paycheck of the man whose	mistress	got it) if it had occurred in place of it. One could perhaps say that the pronoun here refers successfully via a
4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... dismissal 'without a character', i.e. a recommendation to future employers from the former master, or more likely	mistress	For the world of the established bourgeois was also considered to be basically insecure, a state of war in w
5	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... quoting the Proverbial Philosopher Martin Tupper, there flitted 'the good angel of the house, the mother, wife and	mistress	' whose work, according to the great Ruskin, was: I To please people II To fe
6	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... job, being treated merely as yet another instance of that 'servant problem' which filled the conversations of their	mistresses	The crucial point is that the structure of the bourgeois family flatly contradicted that of bourgeois society.
7	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... proceed by fits of undulation. Square buses stop by the gate and laugh to themselves. The whipper's	mistress	, stuck at the end of her graph, cuts an almost geometric figure, with boots, legs, bum, bust
8	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... y and Kenneth Connor were members of the staff room - led by the formidable-as-ever Hattie Jacques, as the maths	mistress	who wore her gown and mortar board as much in this film as she had worn her matron's uniform in the previous on
9	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Spoken context-... tch, they really don't match I mean sexy little telephone calls between he who will be king and his, is she a	mistress	, is she a girlfriend, is she merely a friend, but at any event she's married and her husband's in the next bedroom as I
10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... e always getting worked up about him Moorlake has everything," she added. Except a master and	mistress	, " Matthew said," and a nursery full of children. A big house like this should really hum with life. But
11	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... otice cannot effectively be registered against a house owned solely by the husband and in which he has installed his	mistress	A Class F Land Charge or Notice is binding on a husband's trustee in bankruptcy, subject to the provisions
12	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... patiently on the sidelines, knowing that one day Miguel would realise how much he loved her and wanted her to be	mistress	of the Casa Madrid. Shelley drew back from Miguel's hungry mouth. That's enough psycho-analysis
13	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... Yes, Señora Constanza. Brisk and obedient, Lina had already decided what she would call her new	mistress	When she had left the room, the old lady said, 'Oh, Shelley, that was a naughty trick to play on me.
14	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... id Victoria greeted the newcomer with a torrent of Spanish. It was Lina Freitas. She said, 'I go to my	mistress	, but señoritas , first I invite you both to my wedding.' And when the congratulations and kisses had died do
15	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... nd kisses had died down, she went on, 'Señorita Shelley, without you I could not dream of finding such a wonderful	mistress	She buy for Pablo and me a house with furniture, and she consent to be godmother to our child.' G
16	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... d,' said Victoria, kissing her again. 'God bless you, Lina, and make your marriage happy.' I owe my	mistress	everything, and I am very sad because she is old and will not live to see my child growing up.' Shelley said,
17	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... you. A serious offer. Lucky me! Caroline glared at him. You want to make me your	mistress	Well, it will never happen! Never! This trip was a waste of time and effort. You sho
18	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... f there are, naturally I will pay for your courses. Oh, God. God! He was asking her to be his	mistress	This was what he'd wanted of her all the time; now, he was finally getting to it, baiting the trap not with jet
19	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... ain. Caroline? He smiled. Have you nothing to say to me, cara ? I - I won't be your	mistress	, she whispered. No matter what you say. His brow furrowed. My mistress? Santa M
20	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/>	Written books a... - I won't be your mistress,' she whispered. No matter what you say. His brow furrowed. My	mistress	? Santa Maria , what sort of man do think I am? I love you, Caroline. That means I want to n

simple **mistress** • 1,184
10.54 per million tokens • 0.0011%

Details Left context KWIC Right context

41	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... ay for what?' she cried hysterically.</s></s>'For Steve?</s></s>Some sort of warped vengeance for him being your	mistress's	previous lover?</s></s>Oh, God, but he must really love her to be able to lower himself to this.</s></s>'What do you
42	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... e either lying through your teeth, putting on a brave face or you have the same loose sort of arrangement with your	mistress	as you accused me of having with Steve.</s></s>'Or I have supreme confidence in myself that she will return to me
43	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... face back to him.</s></s>'Why, because you might not be able to control that white-hot passion of yours while your	mistress	is away?</s></s>You sicken me.</s></s>'That's why I'm here, isn't it?</s></s>'It's more than just revenge.</s></s>Yo
44	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... : I was saying, we usually dress for dinner '</s></s>'Well, we can't ruin an age-old custom for the sake of an absent	mistress	, can we?' she interrupted as she untwined her legs and stood up to face him.</s></s>'Pain and jealousy had spurred
45	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... orated and her eyes narrowed coldly.</s></s>'You walk alone, Fernando, because I don't trot submissively in absent	mistresses'	footsteps!</s></s>'The glasses and the bottle of wine were slammed back down on the bedside table and then his ha
46	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... playing on her brow.</s></s>'She really didn't understand this side of him.</s></s>'He was taking it all so coolly, his	mistress	away with a past lover.</s></s>'I've told you, I've every faith she'll come back.</s></s>'Because you have that some
47	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... ver happened between them.</s></s>'But of course this wasn't a personal call to her.</s></s>'This was to do with his	mistress	, their baby, and her partner Steve.</s></s>'Still sleeping.</s></s>'Is it important enough to drag him out of bed?' she
48	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... Just watching it all is tiring.</s></s>'Kids are jumping, twitching, jerking their arms.</s></s>'You don't need a dance	mistress	to learn these steps - you need a gym.</s></s>'There may be a dozen of the older fellers - early thirties, dressed you
49	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... ave fired her, you know?</s></s>'But I didn't.</s></s>'I thought, no, she is Floyd's special young friend.</s></s>'His	mistress	or something.</s></s>'She isn't.</s></s>'Not even once?</s></s>'No.</s></s>'OK.</s></s>'She's pretty.</s></s>'A g
50	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... u're the Mamur Zapt, are you?</s></s>'That is so, mother.</s></s>'He addressed her in the same way as he had her	mistress	, with the deference due to age.</s></s>'What has she done wrong?</s></s>'Leila?</s></s>'I do not know that she hi
51	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... appened next I do not know,' said the servant, 'but a year later she came to our house here and threw herself into the	mistress's	arms and begged her to take her in.</s></s>'Of course she said yes.</s></s>'Leila was her sister's child.</s></s>'Besid
52	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... none of her own and Leila had always been a favourite.</s></s>'And I thought at first that it was good, because my	mistress	had lost her interest in life and I thought this might renew it.</s></s>'She lifted the pot, stirred the ashes and then re
53	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... ing, seemed to forget she had been speaking and sat waiting passively.</s></s>'Owen realized suddenly that like her	mistress	she was old.</s></s>'You thought that at first,' he prompted gently, 'but afterwards you changed your mind?</s></s>
54	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... with a start.</s></s>'Not at first.</s></s>'She was so glad to be with us and we were so glad to have her.</s></s>'The	mistress	fussed over her - still does - and they were like mother and daughter.</s></s>'And Leila needed a mother.</s></s>'By
55	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... Leila needed a mother.</s></s>'But then -' She broke off.</s></s>'Then?</s></s>'Owen prompted softly.</s></s>'The	mistress	became - as she is now.</s></s>'Leila nursed her tenderly.</s></s>'But as the months went by she became restless.</s></s>
56	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... lightly amused, though probably not very surprised, that his advice has been rejected.</s></s>'He has a master (or a	mistress) with a will of her own - always more engaging for a Civil Servant, whatever outsiders think.</s></s>'He reads on,
57	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... the Direktor's favourite - he snorted at this point and said he really did believe Therese must have been old Franz's	mistress	years ago in Vienna - he was being treated like a pariah, no consideration, everyone being rude and unkind to him,
58	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... nothing other than soprano parts.</s></s>'Mr le Gros, who sang a serenade filled with double entendres to his fickle	mistress	in the Ballet des plaisirs, must have had quite a high voice since he was normally assigned parts notated in either al
59	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... san to the power of Music.</s></s>'Movement 1 apostrophizes Music: 'Lovely Enchantress, Cupid's daughter, sweet	Mistress	of our pastimes, what can your aid not accomplish?</s></s>'Movement 3 depicts Arion's ability to command Nature
60	<input type="checkbox"/>		Written books a... ie of several works whose movements are united by their opening themes.</s></s>'But if Jacquet de la Guerre was a	mistress	of the grand gesture, Camppra's forte was delicate understatement.</s></s>'Prominent French-style figuration and uni

Mistress – according to the British National Corpus (2)

Pussy⁵

- (1) *nursery* and *colloquial*. A cat. Frequently used as a proper or pet name.
- (2) Chiefly *colloquial*. A girl or woman exhibiting characteristics associated with a cat, esp. sweetness or amiability. Frequently used as a pet name or as a term of endearment.
- (3) The female genitals; the vulva or vagina.
- (4) A woman, or women collectively, regarded as a source of sexual intercourse.
- Etymology
 - derivation puss n. + -y suffix

⁵ OED s.v. *pussy*, n.

a. *nursery* and *colloquial*. A cat. Frequently used as a proper or pet name.

Also used occasionally as a call to attract a cat's attention (cf. *PUSS* n.' 1).

In quot. 1873 (*humorous*): a tiger (cf. *PUSS* n.' 2).

- 1699 T. D'URFEY *Choice Coll. New Songs* 7 As Fleet as my Feet Could convey me I sped; To Johnny who many Times Pussey had fed.
- 1726 M. DELANY *Autobiogr. & Corr.* (1862) 2nd Ser. 124 My new pussey is..white,..with black spots.
- 1764 K. O'HARA *Midas* 21 And pussey Can counterfeit sleeping, When mousey Steals tip-a-toe creeping.
- 1800 MR. UPTON in *Myrtle & Vine* III. 8 Says I, 'Pray who's been here?' When she, who thought me boozy, Cries, 'Nobody, my dear, 'Twas only Tom our Pussey!'
- 1821 J. CLARE *Village Minstrel* I. 167 Ah mice, rejoice!.. 'Tis yours to triumph, mine's the woe, Now pussy's dead.
- 1873 *Routledge's Young Gentleman's Mag.* 535 I should have liked to have potted a pussy, particularly such a blood-thirsty brute as this one seems to be.
- 1889 J. K. JEROME *Idle Thoughts* 119 He strokes the cat quite gently, and calls it 'poor pussy'.
- 1915 L. M. MONTGOMERY *Anne of Island* xxxviii. 297 'What are you going to do with Rusty?' asked Phil, as that privileged pussy padded into the room.
- 1927-9 H. WHEELER *Waverley Children's Dict.* VI. 3486/1 Another pet name for a cat is pussy.
- 1960 P. WILLMOTT & M. D. YOUNG *Family & Class in London Suburb* ix. 107 Next door but one has pussy when we go on holiday.
- 1992 *Los Angeles Times* 11 June (Orange County ed.) O.C. Live! 4/2 They'll choose the pussy with the longest whiskers..and the splashiest color.
- 2006 *Herald Sun (Austral)* (Nexis) 26 June 16 Pussies were purring as they were snapped up for as little as \$40 at the society's annual cat clearance.

(Hide quotations)

a. Chiefly *colloquial*. A girl or woman exhibiting characteristics associated with a cat, esp. sweetness or amiability. Frequently used as a pet name or as a term of endearment. Cf. *PUSS* *n.*¹ 3, *PUSSYCAT* *n.* 2.

In later use merging with sense A. 3c.

- ?a1560 in T. Wright *Songs & Ballads Reign Philip & Mary* (1860) lxxiv. 209 Adew, my pretty pussy, Yow pynche me very nere.
- 1583 P. STUBBES *Anat. Abuses* sig. Hv You shall haue euery sawcy boy..to catch vp a woman & marie her... So he haue his pretie pussie to huggle withall, it forceth not.
- 1836 W. M. THACKERAY *Let.* 2 July (1945) I. 314 How have you passed the night dear Pussy?
- 1852 H. B. STOWE *Uncle Tom's Cabin* I. xvi. 266 'What do you think, pussy?' said her father to Eva.
- 1932 A. CHRISTIE *Thirteen Probl.* xi. 193 'The *dame de compagnie*, you described, I think, as a pussy, Mrs. Bantry?' 'I didn't mean a *cat*, you know,' said Mrs. Bantry. 'It's quite different. Just a big soft white purry person. Always very sweet.'
- 1941 A. CHRISTIE *N or M?* iii. 38 Old boarding-house pussies. Nothing to do but gossip and knit.
- 1952 M. TRIPP *Faith is Windsock* iv. 73 'Your rear gunner is a hit with the ladies.' 'Jake knows how to make the pussies purr; it's an old Jamaican custom.'
- [1959 M. RICHLER *Apprenticeship Duddy Kravitz* I. ix. 50 Milty ran off crying... 'What is it, pussy-lamb?']
- 1986 D. POTTER *Singing Detective* II. 45 But tonight there isn't a pussy in sight. Not even a four-legged one. All good people have gone home.

(Hide quotations)

a. The female genitals; the vulva or vagina.

to eat pussy: to perform cunnilingus (cf. *EAT V.*).

- 1699 T. D'URFEY *Choice Coll. New Songs* 7 As Fleet as my Feet Could convey me I sped; To Johnny who many Times Pussey had fed.
- 1790 A. TAIT *Poems & Songs* 144 Thro' Susan's Holland smock or spare Or on her pussie for to stare.
- 1865 'PHILOCOMUS' *Love Feast* I. 9 My poor pussy, rent and sore, Dreaded yet longed for one fuck more.
- 1879–80 *Pearl* (1970) 268 Her legs are wide open showing the red lips and clitoris of her pussey.
- 1879 *Pearl* Oct. 108 To handle, feel, and revel in such a luxuriously covered pussy and bottom, excited me more every moment.
- 1899 *Mem. Dolly Morton* v. 77 Two or three of them put their hands on the 'spots'—'pussies' they called them.
- 1913 L. STRACHEY *Ermyntrode & Esmeralda* (1969) ii. 12 I'm also sure that it's got something to do with the thing between our legs that I always call my Pussy.
- 1941 G. LEGMAN *Lang. Homosexuality* in G. W. Henry *Sex Variants* II. 1174 *Pussy, to eat, to perform cunnilinctus* [sic].
- 1962 J. BALDWIN *Another Country* I. i. 63 You wouldn't be putting that white prick in no more black pussy.
- 1967 M. McCCLURE *Freewheelin Frank* i. 8 When we talk about eating pussy we make it sound as dirty and vulgar as possible.
- 1973 A. POWELL *Temporary Kings* v. 258 Louis's stuffed a charming little cushion with hair snipped from the pussies of ladies he's had.
- 1999 D. CENTURY *Street Kingdom* iii. 122 Once in a while I used to have her carry some of my compressed coke in her pussy.
- 2006 N. S. DHALIWAL *Tourism* x. 214 She was a great girl; she taught me how to eat pussy, and what to look for when having sex.

(Hide quotations)

c. A woman, or women collectively, regarded as a source of sexual intercourse. Cf. sense A. 1.

[Thesaurus »](#)

[Categories »](#)

c1947 T. SHIBUTANI *Derelicts of Company K* (1978) 387 Them guys were prowling around..lookin' for some pussies.

1951 J. JONES *From Here to Eternity* 311 You concern yourself..whether or not to wear them goddam teeth of yours if you think a pussy's gonna see you.

1966 J. J. PHILLIPS *Mojo Hand* xiv. 156 He collects a bit of pussy on the side. This here Laurine he talking 'bout, well, she one of his womens.

1989 A. BERNAYS *Professor Romeo* (1990) II. xii. 184 Look, there's plenty of pussy around—you can fuck just about any damn female you please.

2005 E. LOCKE *Asian Bi Girl* 9 She did love being intimate with as many pussies as she could coax into trying other forms of cuming [*sic*] off without having to return the favor.

[\(Hide quotations\)](#)

Zoosemy

- Animal metaphors
- Great Chain of Being⁶
 - God
 - Humans
 - Animals
 - Plants
 - Inanimate Objects
- Possibility of [Human is an Animal] and [Animal is a Human]
- [A is a B] where B is a “concept characterised by a metaphorical schema”

⁶ Kieltyka, Kleparski 2005: 23-24

Zoosemy

- Conceptual Metaphor Theory (George Lakoff)⁷ as cause
 - Metaphors cognitive and conceptual in nature
 - Conceptual metaphor vs metaphorical expression
 - Metaphor as a mapping of conceptual correspondences from source domain to a target domain

Bitch⁸

- (1) A female dog.
- (2) *derogatory* (now *colloquial* and sometimes *offensive*). An unpleasant or despicable woman; *spec.* (originally) a lewd or lascivious woman, (later) a malicious or spiteful woman.
- Etymology
 - Cognate with Old Icelandic *bikkja*, Old Swedish *bikia*, etc...

⁸ *OED* s.v. *bitch*, n.

CONCORDANCE

Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760

simple **bitch** • 11
8.09 per million tokens • 0.00081%

Get more space +

🔍 ⬇️ ☰ 🔍 ✂️ ⚖️ ⚖️ GD EX 📄 🔌 KWIC + ⓘ ☆

Details

Left context KWIC Right context

	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1560-1599 • Dra... </s></s>O shamelesse boldnesse.</s></s>Good woman, did ye neuer heare why the Grecians termed Hocuba to be a	bitch	?</s></s>Neuer.</s></s>Because she did as you do now, on whom soeuer she met withall, she railed, and therfore w
2	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1560-1599 • Dra... the woods with you, I see, I heare, I come, I flie, but I cannot get out of these fields.</s></s>Here is an old mastiffe	bitch	stands barking at mee, and by her standes an old goate that beares false witness against many a poore man.</s></s>
3	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1560-1599 • Dra... h vpon those words, take heed.</s></s>Oh this is nothing to the rage he was in euen now.</s></s>He called his wife	bitch	, and all to nought.</s></s>Did ? Thou didst, mad fellow, and threatnedst to ryde ouer me here with a Chariot and I
4	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1600-1639 • Dra... e begotten a' top of a Cart in haruest-time, when the whelp was hot and eager.</s></s>Go, snuffe after your brothers	bitch	, M=rs= Commodity, that's the Liuory you weare, 'twill be out at the elbows, shortly.</s></s>It's time you went to't
5	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1600-1639 • Wit... r: whereunto shee assented And she further sayth, that at the same time, there was a thing in the likenes of a spotted	Bitch	, that came with the sayd Spirit vnto the sayd Demdike, which then did speake vnto her in this Examines hearing.
6	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1680-1719 • Wit... n, and seeing the Wife of Mr. Hurst, the Iron-monger, at her Chamber-Window, he said to her God Damn you for a	Bitch	, if you don't light up Candles, and let them remain, I will pull your House down, and set it on Fire; and then took a
7	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1680-1719 • Wit... break my Windows. Upon which, one Charter, a Corporal in the Major's Company, said God damn you for an old	Bitch	; and struck the Candle out of her Hand with a great Stick, and then struck her upon the left Arm in such a violent r
8	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1720-1760 • Wit... to work at the deceased Mr. Blandy's; and being there one Day, she heard Elizabeth Binfield say Damn the black	Bitch	, meaning the Prisoner at the Bar I hope I shall see her walk up a Lader and swing. Being asked by the King's Cour
9	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1720-1760 • Wit... Banks was next call'd and sworn, who said, That she heard Elizabeth Binfield, the Cook Maid, say I hope the black	Bitch	will walk up a Ladder and swing. Being asked by the King's Council when, and where the Words where spoke, she
10	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1720-1760 • Wit... ou go Holborn Way, says he.</s></s>We answer'd, Yes. Why then, says he, I'll tell ye what; -- There's an old Blind	Bitch	that sells fine Flanders Lace just by Holborn-Bridge; her Daughter is as blind as herself; and if ye call there, you ma
11	<input type="checkbox"/> ⓘ 1720-1760 • Wit... luence over her, by helping her to Goods two or three times before, yet I know her to be a stingey hard-mouth'd old	Bitch	, and I shan't get above Ten Guineas out of her. Margaret Murphy deposd the same, and Katharine Stetham corrob

Bitch – according to the *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760*

simple **bitch** • 1,022

9.1 per million tokens • 0.00091%



KWIC

 Details

Left context

KWIC

Right context

41	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... will clear up of its own accord eventually.</s></s>But it's very infectious, and you can't give the vaccine to pregnant	bitches	'</s></s>Joanna came through from the dispensary to join them.</s></s>She was walking now with a stick and as sh
42	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... e put the telephone through to Helen.</s></s>Now a message has come in, about that pyometra you did.</s></s>The	bitch	has collapsed.</s></s>It sounds like a heart attack, and the owners are terribly worried.</s></s>They want you right
43	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... it.</s></s>I know it will be a bit expensive, but Chrissie comes first in our lives!</s></s>'Well, I know just the dog -	bitch	, I should say.</s></s>Six months old, spayed - I did the operation myself - and in need of a loving home.</s></s>He
44	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... e the Hobdens?'</s></s>'No, of course not.</s></s>'But' no question of payment' - that's hard to believe.</s></s>'The	bitch	is mine,' he said shortly.</s></s>'I've just taken her over from a friend who is going abroad.</s></s>'She's only been v
45	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... </s></s>He jerked his head back, blood on his mouth, stared down at her in fury for a second, then said tightly, 'You little	bitch	!</s></s>I may not be able to make you admit you want me, but I can certainly make your body admit it, and I damn
46	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... d as though he had struck her.</s></s>Then she hurled unthinkingly, 'Tony would have given me love!</s></s>'You	bitch	...!' he said in a shaking voice.</s></s>'You bloody bitch!</s></s>And suddenly he dragged her struggling against hi
47	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... nthinkingly, 'Tony would have given me love!</s></s>'You bitch...!' he said in a shaking voice.</s></s>'You bloody	bitch	!</s></s>And suddenly he dragged her struggling against him, and clamped her there while his hard mouth sought a
48	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... him carefully.</s></s>I didn't say that...</s></s>His eyes flared with rage.</s></s>'No, you didn't have to, you little	bitch	; I could see it from the minute we arrived!</s></s>Now come to bed!</s></s>And he strode to her, grabbing her wr
49	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... f participation </s></s>It was all right providing he wasn't ignored and abandoned.</s></s>It was all the fault of that	bitch	they'd brought in.</s></s>How could they expect him to perform with someone like that?</s></s>It was all her fault.
50	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... He was, of course, totally capable of dealing with the situation.</s></s>If they wanted him to sing with that ugly old	bitch	, then sing he would.</s></s>But he would have to try and be a little more compliant, throw a little more charm arou
51	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... it's important to you.</s></s>'I'll do anything I can to help.</s></s>He eyed her speculatively across the room, stupid	bitch	, then decided he ought to be careful.</s></s>'Sorry, Ingrid.</s></s>You see how all this has upset me.</s></s>Aschn
52	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... </s></s>Laughing at things or sitting together round the table and my dad making jokes and...</s></s>Why is life such a	bitch	?</s></s>Why does it lay these things on you?</s></s>Why does it pull your heart two ways?</s></s>And why do fe
53	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... they are speaking over a loud-hailer.</s></s>Harvey spotted me on the rim of his audience.</s></s>'You old son of a	bitch	, he said in a relaxed idle way, and he leaned forward and grabbed my arm to be sure I wasn't an hallucination.</s></s>
54	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written miscell... owned dogs; Omega Extra - a cross shaped concentrated food for working and sporting dogs, breeding and lactating	bitches	; and Omega Puppy, a high nutrient food for weaning puppies from their mother and for their early months.</s></s>I
55	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... an most people thought possible.</s></s>She had always referred to her as 'the old bat', or occasionally as 'that hard	bitch	'</s></s>Mr and Mrs Wilson had been very sympathetic.</s></s>Maisie had moved out of her parents' house and co
56	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... </s></s>'I didn't recognize you without the dog!' some of them said.</s></s>'You're the chap with the Staffordshire terrier	bitch	, aren't you?</s></s>How are the pups?</s></s>Some, with clearer memories, had long, detailed questions to ask.</s></s>
57	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... y laid it on the table.</s></s>'All I got was 'aeroplanes' and 'today,' Finlayson said.</s></s>'What the devil is the old	bitch	up to?</s></s>She says we shot her daughter,' Blunt said.</s></s>Finlayson held his breath, and then let it out in a r
58	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... ime.</s></s>'Don't I, major?</s></s>'I'd dearly like to know what were supposed to be achieving, that's all,' Lambert	bitched	</s></s>'They're all over us in the air, and we can't stop them on the ground.</s></s>'We're just going through the m
59	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... </s></s>'I do, I do!</s></s>She hurried out.</s></s>Mary waited and watched her</s></s>running down the road.</s></s>'	Bitch	,' she said aloud.</s></s>'Black bitch.'</s></s>She found herself crying.</s></s>'Black bloody bitch.'</s></s>Rosière
60	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Written books a... t.</s></s>Mary waited and watched her</s></s>running down the road.</s></s>'Bitch,' she said aloud.</s></s>'Black	bitch	,'</s></s>She found herself crying.</s></s>'Black bloody bitch.'</s></s>Rosières turned out to be a big old field, alre

Bitch – according to the *British National Corpus* (1)

Slut⁹

- (1) An untidy, dirty, or slovenly woman; a woman who is habitually careless, lazy, or negligent with regard to appearance, household cleanliness, etc.; a slattern. Also rarely applied to a man. Now somewhat dated.
- (2) Chiefly *derogatory*. A sexually promiscuous or lascivious woman; a female prostitute; (in earlier use also) a vulgar, impudent, or disreputable woman. In recent use also occasionally applied to a man.
- (3) In neutral or positive use: a woman, a girl. Also *colloquial* as a familiar form of address.
- Etymology
 - Origin unknown, from Middle English *slutte*

⁹ *OED* s.v. *slut*, n.

CONCORDANCE

Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760

simple **slut** • 5

3.68 per million tokens • 0.00037%

Details

Left context

KWIC

Right context

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	1640-1679 • Dra... nd that will make it a rich and fortunate Bed indeed; And then Sir Olyver would thanke me too.</s></s>What a bold	slut	it is, well then the rest of the particulars here of Laces , and Frienges, Loopes, and Buttons, makes the sum of all an
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1640-1679 • Mis... yr Ladies gain . That you have gain'd Julietta is no news, I would advise you Sir to marry her, you may meet with a	slut	, and that's worse then a whore , but she hath vow'd chastity for the future.</s></s>I can assure that to be true, that sl
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	1680-1719 • Did... ought you would fain be kist, I puld her by the arm, and in troth she e'n fell upon me, this was all and does this bold	slut	report that I love her? hang her impudence, ile kick her next time, ile see how she likes that kind of Love.</s></s>Ti
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	1680-1719 • Did... what was that you said to the Widdow, these stories John could not be raised of themselves.</s></s>What gossiping	slut	troubles thee with these fooleries, they do't to make difference.</s></s>Pray tell me truth of this also, and then I shal
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	1720-1760 • Dra... u tell me for what, first?</s></s>No; I'll have you rejoyce beforehand; sing and dance.</s></s>Was there ever such a	Slut	?</s></s>You are cur'd, Sir.</s></s>Cur'd!</s></s>Ay, there's a Doctor come to see you, that will cure you of all you

Slut according to the Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760

simple **slut** • 99
0.88 per million tokens • 0.000088%

Details

Left context KWIC Right context

	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... ur face!</s></s>And when he still didn't say anything she went up to him and shouted into his face, 'You think I'm a	slut	and a common thief!</s></s>You can't see past your own stupid blind prejudice!</s></s>You think you know every!
2	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... the road?</s></s>Garvey planned it with him then.</s></s>In every second town we reach, he finds some villain or	slut	to act up in the crowd.</s></s>He hardly needs to do it now, though.</s></s>So much miracle-madness.</s></s>Peop
3	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... 'Yeah,' said Karen.</s></s>'I wouldn't have minded making one myself tonight, with Mallachy.'</s></s>'You little	slut	!' said Jessica.</s></s>The girls were late at breakfast, but Mrs Roberts did not mind.</s></s>They found her sitting
4	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... gle her and saw her head off with the breadknife and put her bit by bit down the rubbish disposal, serves the fucking	slut	right, the sloppy slag trollop.</s></s>Mark is staring at some blond God.</s></s>The God stares back.</s></s>Babur
5	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... his asshole and it was the strangest sensation he's ever had.</s></s>He liked it, but let's face it, Laura Smolensky's a	slut	.</s></s>'I gotta go to the bathroom,' the kid says.</s></s>The noise startles a duck into the air.</s></s>No time to ai
6	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... /s></s>Leave this house on the instant!</s></s>Never return!</s></s>You are dismissed, do you hear, you ungrateful	slut	.</s></s>Dismissed without a character, what is more.</s></s>Get out!</s></s>Out, I say!</s></s>Theda stood appa
7	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... 'ill' he ejaculated angrily.</s></s>'What do you take me for?</s></s>Do you think I would use you like any common	slut	?</s></s>Theda could not look at him, but she said in a subdued tone, 'It is what your godmother called me.</s></s>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... ey were both screaming, Cathy and Gary both, and he got me by the throat.</s></s>He was shaking me calling me a	slut	and a whore and saying they weren't his kids everything, I don't know, I couldn't breathe - he were choking me -'</s></s>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... ears.</s></s>'Your mother - that precious Maman you speak about with such reverence - was nothing but a common	slut	.</s></s>She was already pregnant when Hugh met her.</s></s>She was living as au pair with the Drummonds - sucl
10	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... ed to stay where I wasn't wanted.</s></s>But that's what your mother did, of course.</s></s>She was just a common	slut	, making trouble, just like you - chasing other women's men.</s></s>Her tone seethed with poison.</s></s>'I've hear
11	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... re all fools?</s></s>Héloïse de Rochefort's voice was hoarse - cracked.</s></s>'She was your mistress.</s></s>Your	slut	.'</s></s>Gaston shook his head.</s></s>'You were wrong, my poor Héloïse.</s></s>Isabelle was guiltless.</s></s>'I
12	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... >Thankless creature!</s></s>For years have I housed and fed you, and this is how you repay me!</s></s>Traitorous	slut	!'</s></s>The vicious epithets struck Isabel's ears like blows.</s></s>She stared stoically at the tapestry wall-hangin
13	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... low, watching her over the rim of the tankard.</s></s>She started to turn away.</s></s>'I didn't say you could move,	slut	.'</s></s>Isabel froze.</s></s>'What's your name?' he asked, casually tossing back the rest of the ale.</s></s>He held
14	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... arled de Raimés, his face pale and sweating.</s></s>'Just bind it somehow so I can get on my feet and deal with that	slut	.'</s></s>'Leave her to us, my lord,' growled a voice in Isabel's ear.</s></s>'We'll take a slice out of her own sweet fl
15	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... : mouth opened and shut twice before she said, 'Mother never did.'</s></s>'Mother did, and at me.</s></s>She was a	slut	.</s></s>That's how you came about, because she chased me.</s></s>'Well, I'm going to see that you don't do the san
16	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... d teeth, saying, 'You think you've won, don't you?</s></s>But I've told her what you were when you were her age: a	slut	.</s></s>And I've told her how she came about.</s></s>The poker wavered in her hand.</s></s>She told herself not
17	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... lse.</s></s>This chap Eddie, for example.</s></s>She might have had other irons in the fire as well.</s></s>Bit of a	slut	, if you ask me.</s></s>'Don't let Barney hear you say that,' Melissa murmured with a faint smile.</s></s>She put dc
18	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... posed to have sexual intercourse six months either side of the birth of the child.</s></s>She would be considered a	slut	if she did, and since it is almost unheard of for a Ugandan man to do without sex for a year, her husband would usua
19	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... g about her - something you might remember.</s></s>You described her to me.</s></s>That was her.</s></s>Little	slut	, all puppy fat and innocence.</s></s>You should have heard the way she talked.</s></s>'I tell you, she even shocked
20	<input type="checkbox"/>  Written books a... ey were both screaming, Cathy and Gary both, and he got me by the throat.</s></s>He was shaking me calling me a	slut	and a whore and saying they weren't his kids - everything, I don't know, I couldn't breathe - he were choking me -'</s></s>

Linguistic Reclamation

- Process of using a previously pejorative term in a positive context
- 3 perspectives
 - Term inseparable from pejoration -> reclamation is opposed
 - Term separable from pejoration -> reclamation is supported
 - Term inseparable from pejoration -> reclamation is supported
- Case Study: SlutWalk¹⁰

¹⁰ Gaucher et al. 2015: 121-130

Conclusions

- Many processes contributing to semantic change; new processes arising out of semantic change
- Multiple reasons for pejoration
 - Prejudice
 - Taboo
 - Contaminating Concept
- Schulz's hypothesis may need to be adapted

Literature

Brontsema, Robin. 2004. "A Queer Revolution: Reconceptualizing the Debate Over Linguistic Reclamation.". *Colorado Research in Linguistics* 17. doi: 10.25810/dky3-zq57.

Gaucher, Danielle, Brianna Hunt and Lisa Sinclair. 2015. "Can pejorative terms ever lead to positive social consequences? The case of SlutWalk". *Language Sciences* 52: 121-130.

Geraerts, Dirk, ed. 2006. *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*. 1st, revised ed. de Gruyter: Berlin.

Kieltyka, Robert. 2005. "Zoosemic terms denoting female human beings: Semantic derogation of women revisited". *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 41: 167-186.

Kieltyka, Robert; Kleparski, Grzegorz A. 2005. "The Ups and Downs of the Great Chain of Being: the Case of Canine Zoosemy in the History of English". *Skase Journal of Theoretical Linguistics* 02.1: 22-41.

Kleparski, Grzegorz A. 1990. *Semantic Change in English: A Study of Evaluative Developments in the Domain of HUMANS*. Lublin: The Catholic University of Lublin Printing House.

Kochman-Haladyj, Boena. 2007. "Low wenches and slatternly queans: on derogation of women terms". *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego* 47: 206-228.

Ringrose, Jessica and Emma Renold. 2012. "Slut-shaming, girl power and 'sexualisation': thinking through the politics of the international SlutWalks with teen girls". *Gender and Education* 24.3: 333-343.

Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2020. *The dynamics of the linguistic system : usage, conventionalization, and entrenchment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1-12.

Schulz, Muriel. 1975. "The semantic derogation of women". *Language and Sex: Dominance and Difference*. 64-75

BNC = The British National Corpus, version 3 (BNC XML Edition). 2007. Distributed by Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. <<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>> (accessed February 26, 2023).

CED = A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760. 2006. Compiled under the supervision of Merja Kytö (Uppsala University) and Jonathan Culpeper (Lancaster University). <https://app.sketchengine.eu/#dashboard?corpname=preloaded%2Fenglish_dialog_ues> (accessed February 26, 2023).

MED = The Middle English Compendium. 2000-. Ed. Frances McSparran, et al. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library. <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/>> (accessed March 2, 2023).

OED = The Oxford English Dictionary. 2000-. Ed. John A. Simpson. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (accessed May 23, 2023).