Spinster -In-depth and unbiased

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0. Abstract

An integral part of the oppression of females within a patriarchal society is the continuous hindering of any voluntary decisions they may want to make in their own lives. One of the most significant choices a person can make is whether to get married or not. In a male-dominated society, females are expected to be married to a male by a certain age. Those who do not comply are vilified any number of ways, including to be referred to as a ***spinster***. The expression ***spinster*** connotes that such women are unworthy, undesirable, and unendurable, while at the same time evoking images of them as being lonely, unfulfilled, and ashamed of themselves.

In this paper it will be shown how females are subjugated from the liberty, moral, cultural, social, educational, sexual, reproductive, legal, religious, leisure, labour, political, economic, and ownership perspectives, and how these promote the established order of heterosexual marriage. Taking for granted that women should be married to men by a given age is rooted in the gender binary, heteronormativity, the "marriage ideal," and male hegemony, all of which make ***spinster*** such an unfairly vilifying and marginalizing expression. Dictionaries are considered to be authoritative sources of information, and the lexicographers preparing them have the responsibility to provide bias-free and inclusive content. In doing so, anyone looking up this word would be made aware of the bias and exclusion incorporated into ***spinster***.

Nevertheless, the regular general English dictionaries by and large continue to promote and defend traditions and beliefs which encourage myriad manifestations of oppression, including sexism, misogyny, heterosexism, and heteronormativity. In order to demonstrate that this is also the case with the expression ***spinster***, the treatment that twelve popular and trusted dictionaries provide for this expression will be scrutinised. Finally, these will be contrasted with a bias-free and inclusive article (entry) for ***spinster***, in which users are provided with insight into how inequality, othering, and victimisation work through language, instead of continuing to legitimise biased expression. Please note that this paper is based on my doctoral dissertation: Kaplan (2020).

1. The established order of heterosexual marriage, an introduction

Taking for granted that women should all be married by a given age is rooted in the gender binary, heteronormativity, the "marriage ideal," and male hegemony, all of which make ***spinster*** such an unfairly vilifying and marginalizing expression. Lahad (2017:52) states:

> "*it is my contention that single women above a certain age are faced with a triple discrimination, based on their age, gender, and single status*."

It follows, then, that if a woman were to be Black (or otherwise "not white") then it would be a quadruple discrimination. It could be a quintuple discrimination if she were also to be a "foreigner," and so on.

As will be seen by the closer examination of the word ***spinster***, the *patriarchal heteronormative*[1] "marriage ideal" is not only increasingly onerous for unattached women as they age, but can even serve to burden unmarried females their entire lives.

[1] The *Oxford Living Dictionaries online* provides this definition for ***heteronormative***: "*Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation*." Permalink: https://web.archive.org/web/20200212145436/https://www.lexico.com/definition/heteronormative

Ingraham and Saunders (2016:1) share this on the ***heterosexual imaginary***:

> *"can be defined as the ways of thinking that conceal how heterosexuality structures gender and closes off any critical analysis of heterosexuality as an institution."*

This makes being heterosexual "automatic," "normal," a part of "their god's plan" and the *established order*, none of which should ever be questioned or even given another thought. Most people also believe, uncritically, that females are born to get married and to have and raise children. It's as simple and natural as breathing is for almost everybody: "the air is there, and we take it so that we can live." Even if a woman *does* conform to the *patriarchal* "assumption" of getting married in order to *avoid* being a ***spinster***, an *old maid*, or a *crazy cat lady*, she can nevertheless look forward to linguistic subjugation.

To name just one example, a wife is often referred to "humorously" as the ***old ball and chain***, as if it were *they* who negate freedom. "Jocular" or not, the message is there. Another oppressive aspect of this expression is that if a wife questions anything at all, reasonable as it may be to do so, she runs the risk of being labelled[2] as a ***shrew***, *vixen, henpecker, fishwife, hellcat, dragon, gorgon,* or *she-devil*, among many others. Not strangely, in a *patriarchal* society there is a dearth of analogous expressions for males, which is particularly ironic since it is they who usually deny liberty.

At the time of this writing, the first example sentence the *Oxford Living Dictionaries* online provides for ***shrew***, to cite just one example out of all these vilifying words, packs a wallop:

"*hold your nagging tongue, you miserable old shrew*!"

- **So, a wife must be controlled** ("*hold your*"),
- **what she says is not only of no interest but even bothersome** ("*nagging tongue*"),
- **she is denigrated and insulted** ("*you miserable*" **and** "*old*" **in the tiresome sense, or just plain "old"**),
- **and finally, the key insulting epithet, "*shrew*", is cast her way to drive the point home.**

Ingraham (2009) refers to a ***white wedding*** as one where "everything" is white, including the bride and theme, as the "*McBride*" model. She goes on to provide several fundamental arguments in her demonstration of how *white weddings* are one of the most influential rituals employed in the fostering, maintenance, and furtherance of institutionalised heterosexual systems and in the enforcement of normative heterosexuality (***with my additional comments in bold and italic, between parentheses).***

- *White weddings* are glorified and sold as the biggest day of a woman's life (***So, without such a day a woman is incomplete, especially a "spinster").***
- Such weddings are "must haves," and promote the illusion that happiness and well-being will follow (***So, without such a wedding there will only be misery and loneliness, especially for "spinsters***").
- They are a frequent fodder employed by the film and television industries to attract viewers (***And to keep these weddings in mind; in this society we must vicariously experience the weddings of celebrities as a part of our "shared[3]" cultural values, ideals to which "those spinsters" are resisting).***

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[2] A case of ***stereotype threat***, which according to Steele and Aronson (1995:797): *"is being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group."*

[3] In many cases the word *imposed* might be more suitable.

- She notes that most television shows, including soap operas, prime-time situation comedies, and "reality TV," had at least one wedding in their episodes over the years, often the "season finale." Plus, innumerable wedding blogs and virtual weddings are amongst the massive wedding content on the internet. (***Which those lonely, bored, and unhappy "spinsters" miss out on***).
- All this is a part of the *wedding-industrial and ideological complexes*, which commodify weddings, and create the demand and market for these *white weddings*. (***Thus, being a "spinster" is subversive and bad for the economy. Such spectacles also demonstrate that the "haves" in society have white weddings, while the "have nots" can't have them).***
- These images and fantasies help maintain the *capitalist patriarchal social order*, by telling us what our values are. The established power structure is maintained by informing us (its passive recipients) what is "normal," "good," and "moral." (***Thus, if we don't buy into this whole heteronormative/white wedding ideology, the same way "spinsters" apparently don't, we are "abnormal," "bad," and "amoral." The media knows what messages to send in order to maintain and enforce the established order).***
- These *wedding-ideological complex* messages naturalise the *social construct* of weddings. Even girls too young to marry already know that their wedding day will be the happiest of her life, and in order to have this, everything must be perfect. (***To be sure, this will involve a lot of shopping (attire, jewellery, venue, food, flowers, etc.); no love needed).***

The wedding tradition within *capitalistic patriarchy* thus goes unchallenged, and woe be any woman, above all a ***spinster***, who dares defy the *established order*.

2. The subjugation of females – from the liberty, moral, cultural, social, educational, sexual, reproductive, legal, religious, leisure, labour, political, economic, and ownership perspectives

> **patriarchy** *n* An ideology and societal structure in which males have most or all of the power, at the expense of females and nature. Females are subjugated from the liberty, moral, cultural, social, educational, sexual, reproductive, legal, religious, leisure, labour, political, economic, and ownership perspectives. In a patriarchal society females and animals are objectified and commodified, with the concomitant lack of regard for their needs and well-being. The institutionalised system of male dominance over females is embodied in *patriarchy*.[4]

Here is a closer look at how *patriarchy* subjugates females from each of these standpoints, with an emphasis on culture, linguistics, and many aspects relevant to marriage:

2.1 ***liberty -*** There is not much liberty for those subjugated in so many regards. By and large, people who are born as females remain the "property" of their father until the latter "gives her away" in marriage. There is the expectation, therefore the *requirement,* for "all girls" to look forward to marriage, in what might be called the "*marriage ideal*[5]." The behaviour of most females is regulated throughout their lives (contrast this with the anything goes ***boys will be boys***[6] mindset), their bodies may be commodified for prostitution or pornography[7], and a majority is forced to live a marriage-centred life, irrespective of their marital status. As children they are

[4] Kaplan (2020:12)
[5] *"Marriage fairy tale"* might be a more accurate term.
[6] Kaplan (2020:93-104)
[7] There are other manners in which the bodies of females are commodified, including "*womb renting*."

trained to see marriage and married life as the ultimate fulfilment for all females[8], and in the greater part of marriages their conduct is regulated by male-centred societal and cultural *traditions* that are patriarchally determined.

2.2 *moral* - To most men, a woman is moral only if she has her "*commodity*" intact, or does precisely what her "owner" (husband, father, pimp, etc.) demands. Grose (1785) defined ***commodity*** so: "*a woman's commodity; the private parts of a modest woman, and the public parts of a prostitute*." Although the term *commodity* is no longer synonymous with the vagina, the outer genitals, and the anus, under the jackboot of patriarchy women's genitals (and the rest if their bodies) are anyway commodified in many ways.

2.3 *cultural* - In a *patriarchal society* it is mostly only males that make noteworthy cultural contributions; well, at least the *patriarchs* make it seem so. Statues and other monuments in big cities, the portraits hanging on "the walls of power" (courthouses, government offices, large corporations, military headquarters, etc.), and the like, are practically all of "great" men.

2.4 *social* - Women are often disparagingly referred to as "*the weaker sex*," and not just physical, but also mental feebleness is connoted by this pitiful epithet. Another linguistic example is to refer to women as "*lovely ladies*," which shifts the focus from the intellectual to the superficial, complete with a dose of belittlement. This latter expression is heard too often[9] in social events, such as galas. Many older men feel the need to secure a *trophy wife*[10], which is as belittling to the "trophy" as it is pathetic for the "winner" who gets (*gets* as in *purchases*) said "trophy."

2.5 *educational* - Many females have reduced opportunities to study, for any number of reasons, including rearing of children (whether married at the time or not), tending to another family member (such as a terminally-ill relative), or because they have been beaten down intellectually so much that they "already know" that they will fail. And, the women who do decide to pursue an education are often faced with needless obstacles such as a "***chilly climate***." Since a ***chilly climate*** incorporates numerous aspects of *patriarchal oppression*, here is a definition of the term:

> **chilly climate** *n*
>
> **Meaning**:
>
> [within the academic world in general, and within specific academic settings in particular] Unfair and/or intimidatory treatment of females that leads them to be less likely to excel at their studies, to pursue their long-term academic aspirations, to secure promotions and grants, and in general to feel welcome in such surroundings.
>
> **Insight into the bias**:
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> A *chilly climate* may entail any number of discriminatory and/or hostile actions, resulting, for instance, in females obtaining lower grades for work of equivalent or better quality than that of males, receiving less encouragement and recognition, getting less favourable peer reviews, feeling inhibited towards making the positive contributions they are capable of, or being sexually harassed or assaulted.

[8] Their raison d'être even, as censured by Bokek-Cohen (2016) in "*Marry a camel, a mouse or a parakeet! The first guy who passes you on the street*!"

[9] Even once is too often, but many "*masters" of ceremonies* get to feel a bit more "manly" when trivialising women so. And, they get a cheap laugh at the expense of all females.

[10] *Trophy wife* is indeed a demeaning term, but, *trophy husband* has been gaining use, helping to replace the less specific *toy boy*, so it's depreciating for both sexes, which is "kind of fair," considering how abusive the language of patriarchy tends to be.

Towards a heightened inclusive awareness:

The analytical framework that intersectionality provides helps to better understand the aggravated toxic effects a *chilly climate* may have on females that belong to "minority" groups, who are economically poor, not heteronormative, have physical differences, and so on, since multiple mechanisms of oppression intersect.[11]

How many of these uncalled-for complications and problems point towards a *chilly climate* being a metaphor for several aspects of a female's life within a *patriarchal* society in general?

2.6 ***sexual*** **-** Without the demand created by males, there would be no female prostitution nor sexual trafficking[12]. Besides this, many, if not most, men consider their wives or any woman they are having sex with to be their property, to do with as they wish. Within a *patriarchal* culture, "it is the *man's* prerogative to enjoy sex." "Getting his way" is all that matters to most males; women's *consent*, sexual desires, and their needs in general, are usually held to be inconsequential, if at all considered. In a male-controlled society, men can have as many women as they want and be *studs, charmers, smooth operators, skirt chasers*, or *even lady-killers* (and on an on), but a woman who is even *suspected* of "getting around" is a *slut, whore, tramp, hussy, harlot, hooker, tart, floozy, femme-fatale, fallen woman, trollop*, or *vamp* (and *this* list really goes on and on). Many men want to "marry a *virgin*," regardless of any premarital sex they themselves may have had, including with "virgins" which they by their own standards have "despoiled."

And where is the bodily integrity and safety of females when sexual harassment and abuse and rape are always in the air? Idiotic and unwanted lewd comments, obscene jokes, unwelcome contact, and the like can and do make each day an ordeal for countless females. How many ***catcalls***[13] carry an implied threat that at any time such a male (or group of men) can "prove" to her what a *real* man is (or men, depending on the scenario), *against* her will? In their "defence," *catcalls* help such males prove to themselves and others that they are "real men[14]." Every time a female smiles, laughs, giggles, winks, or responds favourably to these comments, whistles, grunts, gestures, or shouts, is just further encouragement for this and other abusive behaviour to be perpetrated against *all* females. Many women simply don't know better, unfortunately, since they live in *patriarchal* cultures where such conduct is understood to be "innate[15]" for males, and besides, there is regrettably no shortage of females that may feebly rationalise, "who doesn't like a compliment?"

In an atrocious instance of gang rape and murder, Heise (2018) recounts an incident at a boarding school in Kenya in 1991, where 71 teenage females were raped by their male classmates, along with 19 other who died, as the males attacked the females when the latter refused to participate in a protest strike. A report on the front page of the *Kenya Times* referred to this as a "*common occurrence sanctioned by the principal and his staff*," and they quoted the deputy principal as stating: "*The boys never meant any harm against the girls. They just wanted to rape*[16]." Heise

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[11] Kaplan (2020:236)

[12] *New World Encyclopedia* - Prostitution. Permalink: https://web.archive.org/web/20181012185204/http:/www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Prostitution#Human_trafficking_and_sexual_slavery. It is also worth noting that although there are also women who pay for sex, and men who pay for male prostitutes, most prostitution consists of males exploiting females, and most pornography is directed towards the fantasies and viewing preferences of males. (Dworkin, 1997)

[13] A ***catcall*** is already a manifestation of sexual violence, even if no physical contact is made.

[14] As an integral part in the ***policing of masculinity***. (Kaplan, 2020:152-167)

[15] Within the social construction of the male gender.

[16] Therefore, as far as he is concerned, "just" raping must **not** be a bad thing, right? Especially if they "meant no harm." There is much more on this sort of behaviour, and what fosters it, in Kaplan (2020:127-141).

goes on to point out that there are still countries where "the family honour is preserved" and "all is forgiven" so long as the rapist marries his victim[17]. She also states that in many countries, a raped woman is considered to be "ruined," and often shunned by her community and family, including her husband (if married, of course).

Then there are the women who are victims of the "nicer sounding" *female circumcision*. Euphemisms aside, Utz-Billing and Kentenich (2008) have this to say about ***female genital mutilation***, which they define as "*non-therapeutic, partial or complete removal or injury of each of the external female genitals*."

- They state that around 130 million women in about 30 countries have to contend with genital mutilation ranging from prickling and piercing all the way through the complete excision of the clitoris, the labial minora, and labia majora.
- The purported "justifications" for this mutilation include the maintenance of the *patriarchal* family system, a "guarantee" of the faithfulness of these women to their *husbands*, and the "protection" of these women from disgrace or suspicion.
- They cite numerous attendant health problems, including bleeding, infection, sepsis, shock, higher susceptibility to HIV infections, delivery complications, and perinatal death.

Forced genital mutilation is yet another manifestation of how women are denied freedom from physical harm, or to even have the liberty to make a medical decision for themselves.

Marital rape and other gendered violence continue to victimise and oppress women, despite a greater awareness of these problems (Venkatesh and Randall, 2018).

2.7 *reproductive* - How often do people mindlessly say "*he* gave her a child?," as if men did all the work involved in gestation, childbirth, and rearing[18]? As if males were the only ones that matter when it comes to reproduction? And implying that that is what all women live for, for a *man* to *give* her a child, to fulfil her as a wife and female?

In most cultures male children are preferred, to the extent that female foeticide is often committed. Shah, Gyawali, and Aro (2018) point out that this problem has become even worse. Females are not only being killed at birth, but also even before then on account of screening for the sex of the foetus, and preferentially "keeping males." They go on to state that this fosters the continuing oppression of women through gender discrimination, exacerbates female health problems in general, perturb specific families, and harm social networks as a whole. In cases were the parents allow the "less worthy" baby girl to live, she will likely get lesser quality health care (Heise, 2018).

Females are often regarded as little more than vessels for men's offspring (successors). Patriarchs make sure that there are no "bastards," since they want to ensure that *their* heirs are legitimate. Meyer (2015) points out that during the Neolithic Period[19], through the observation of breeding animals, humans first became aware of males being needed to produce offspring. She also highlights the following:

- The recognition of paternity lead to *patrilineal succession* replacing *matrilineal succession*.

[17] Especially when the "dishonoured family's perspective" "factors in" the "anything but a ***spinster***" ideology.
[18] Pretty ironic, considering reality, but fully aligned with a male-centred culture.
[19] ***Neolithic period***: https://web.archive.org/web/20190203135341/https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/anthropology-and-archaeology/human-evolution/neolithic-period

- Later it became imperative for men to pass on their property exclusively to their own children, reducing women to being merely *objects* of marriage, instead of reciprocating participants.
- As the "husbandry" of land and animals grew, so did the desire for land ownership, which then led ultimately to "homelands" and sovereignty.
- This new order was based on, and enforced through *violence*, which was absent from our hunter-and-gathering days.
- Violent subjugation became a way of life, as would be manifested by those who have power over others:
    - *violence the patriarch wields over his family*
    - *violence that men wield over women*
    - *adults over children*
    - *slaveowners over slaves*
    - *the rancher over animals*
    - *the ruler over his subjects*

A woman who has someone else's embryo implanted in her uterus, with the intention to be carried to term, is often called a *gestational carrier*. Note how that does not even sound like a human being is involved. More like a vessel. Dehumanisation is a fundamental part of commodifying people or parts of them, and this is a fitting example. As commodifying and unflattering as "*womb renting*" sounds, being a "*gestational carrier*" is even worse.

2.8 *legal* - There are still many countries where it is legal for men to force their wives to have sex with them (Venkatesh and Randall, 2018). Even when rape is considered as illegal, when a woman is raped, be it by her husband, a family member, a known person, or a complete stranger, it is extremely hard to prosecute the perpetrator, with many *rape myths*[20] that "justify" the forced sexual contact or intercourse, such as "all women secretly want to get raped" (so the rapist is actually fulfilling his victim's "fantasy"), "we were drunk" (so it's the *alcohol's* fault), "the filthy *bitch* is lying" (dehumanising and vilifying), and so on. Not to mention a legal system in place to protect the rapist (Venkatesh and Randall, 2018).

2.9 *religious* - The menstrual cycle is one of many natural human processes. Only females can undergo these complex physiological changes, which occur on a more or less monthly basis, between menarche and menopause. Menstruation is an indispensable part of keeping the endometrium[21] prepared for the implantation of a fertilised egg. During pregnancy (and usually also during lactation) menstrual flow is absent, but in the meantime a nonpregnant uterus is kept healthy and ready for the carrying of a foetus (or foetuses) through the discharge of blood and tissues through the vagina.

Escaja (2018) has a lot to say about the relationship between menstruation and the oppression, subjugation, and disparagement of women. This is facilitated mainly through language and religion, both of which are social and cultural constructions. On account of menstruation, women are unfairly regarded by most cultures as inferior and impure. This then leads to females incorporating within themselves feelings of subordination, filth, fear, shame, and a lack of sexual agency.

[20] *Rape lies* is a more accurate term. (Kaplan, 2020: 127-141)
[21] The *endometrium* is the mucous membrane lining the uterus.

The frequent references in the Old Testament[22] to the impurity of women on account of their menstruation meant that they were excluded from officiating religious rituals (where power resides), along with having to atone for their impurity to "Yahweh." Escaja (2018) goes on to highlight that the Vedas (Hindu sacred texts), Torah (Hebrew scriptures), and Koran (sacred text of Islam) all have similar "women are impure on account of menstruation" ideologies, which results in barring them from participation in religious rituals during their periodic discharge. This spilled over to females being kept from occupying positions of authority, which therefore belonged to the men. These men also determined that the supreme ruler would be a "masculine god." This is quite a contrast with the ancient polytheistic rituals, where women were allowed to be priests and "otherwise officiate," and where menarche was celebrated.

Nowadays, in our "religiously *and* scientifically *and* socially *enlightened* times," women are still forced to hide their menstruation. They have to hide the blood, they have to hide the "menstrual supplies,[23]" and they must, above all, remain silent about the whole thing, where men and "open society" are concerned[24]. All this repression leads to feelings of guilt, sin, and shame, and to the hindering of their sexual agency.

There are a few slang terms for menstruating, including ***to be on the rag***[25]. These can be offensive, especially when a male uses them to ridicule or trivialise. In former times, one of the more common methods to deal with and hide the blood was to literally use a *rag*[26]. The rag had to be hidden until needed, used extremely inconspicuously, and it had to be washed when no one was around, etc. Another option was to wear black long skirts and "wipe as needed." Or, when there was nothing else around and "Aunt Flo[27]" made a "surprise visit[28]," some other black textile, even a scarf, would have to be used in an "improvised" manner. All with no shortage of embarrassment, guilt, and shame. Even in our "modern times," when and where women can not afford disposable sanitary towels, rags may still be used. The concomitant shame and embarrassment can lead to missing school or work, among many other drawbacks.

Anyway, back to religion and power: it was certainly convenient[29] to exclude women from positions of authority on account of a *natural process that only females had*. The males had the power, and therefore the influence and supremacy. The men made the decisions, and they unilaterally determined that the "natural" order of things would be males on top, and females on the bottom. And, in order to keep them there, women would be demonised as sinners, vilified as impure, and treated like subordinates and criminals.

2.10 *leisure* - How can a female have leisure time if she has to do most or all the work around the dwelling? "*A woman's place is the home*."[30] In many homes females are always under the threat of violence, be it physical (including rape), and/or psychological (Heise (2018). In such a scenario, how could there be even a single calm moment for females? There is more on ***domestic violence*** in Kaplan (2020:142-151).

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[22] A part of the Christian Bible.
[23] Such as sanitary napkins/towels.
[24] Except where commercials and other forms of advertising are concerned, that is.
[25] The "rag" being a disposable sanitary napkin/towel, etc.
[26] A bit further in this chapter, under ***ownership***, Solanas (1965) shares her thoughts on another type of *rag*, a ***dishrag***.
[27] *Flo* is short for Florence, and in this case for "Flow." This is jocular term that is neither exclusive nor othering.
[28] Meaning that a period began unexpectedly.
[29] Convenient for the ***patriarchs***, that is.
[30] Such an old, tired, hackneyed, pathetic, subjugating, and stereotyping cliché. Is mindlessly repeating and believing this really the best that countless people can do?

Sandfield and Percy (2003) describe the "gendered division of emotional labour in marriage," where:

- Females are held accountable for a failed or a successful marriage. For example, if a marriage fails it was because the wife was unable to resolve the problems that led to that.
- Women are responsible for the nurturing of all family relationships: with the husband, children, and extended family.

To this we add working wives and mothers, of course. This all takes a whole lot of time and energy. *Leisure*? Never mind that!

2.11 *labour* - The work done at home is generally not paid, and its crucial role in continuing society (and quite ironically *patriarchy*, for that matter) is constantly downplayed. Women often get less remuneration for the same or better "regular" labour as males, and are still excluded from many fields of work. And even if they "break in," the disdain and *othering* is still there, and many males make sure the females "pay" for their intrusion. Then there is the "gendered division of emotional labour in marriage" just mentioned under ***leisure***. In a perverse manner, the sexual trafficking mentioned under ***sexual*** can also count as labour.

There are also countless women who work under extremely harsh conditions in large factories, such as ***maquiladoras***[31]. At a typical maquiladora women can work ten to twelve hour shifts, getting paid around 39 cents (0.39 US dollars[32]) an hour (Lozano-Reich, 2018). Lozano-Reich (2018) includes a quote from an anonymous former worker at a maquiladora, where even femicide is apparently part of the life (and death) of an unbearable job:

> "*The maquiladoras view women as expendable and will fire women at any time. Many women are told that they are fired and must leave on the spot. This leaves the woman with no choice but to walk home alone before the buses come. For example, one woman, for no reason, was given a shift change so that she had to leave work without the protection of her family. She disappeared that same afternoon, and her body was discovered twenty-four hours later. Another woman showed up four minutes late to work and she was locked out. She never made it home*."

So, women work as little more than indentured servants in maquiladoras, where they are relentlessly exploited by being forced to work excessive hours, have inadequate rest periods, are often sexually harassed or raped, and as a whole live miserably. Their constant exploitation, reduced lifespans, always being in overcrowded and unsafe conditions, and their treatment as mere chattel mirrors the "life" milking cows or egg-laying chickens "enjoy." Commodification, including that of humans, is an indispensable part of capitalism, and capitalism is an integral component of patriarchy.

2.12 *political* - It's mostly men in power, and the few women with political clout usually anyway say and do what a man would in her position. If a female political leader is just as obsessed with power, conquering, killing, and exploiting, what difference is she making in relation to her male counterparts? None whatsoever!

2.13 *economic* - In many marriages, it is the man's money that dictates things, with the rest being decided unilaterally (by the husband). As mentioned, a long time ago patrilineal succession

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[31] According to *Wiktionary*: "*An assembly plant in Mexico owned by a company from the United States or another foreign country, using cheap local labour and imported components, and which then exports its products to the company's country of origin; also (by extension) similar factories in other countries*." Permalink: https://web.archive.org/web/20190202184641/https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/maquiladora

[32] This is a 2016 estimate (Lozano-Reich, 2018).

replaced matrilineal succession. Please also see ***labour***, just above, and ***ownership***, next. As is clearly seen, there are aspects of each and all of these manifestations of the control men exert over women that overlap, since they are all related.

2.14 *ownership -* As soon as males discovered that they play a part in species propagation, patrilineal succession and the like came into existence (Meyer, 2015). As mentioned in ***reproductive***, *patrilineal succession* replaced *matrilineal succession*. In addition, what can a wife "own" if she herself is regarded as property? To this we can add the domestic ***labour*** described above. Such work is not only unpaid, but *expected*[33], and usually unappreciated.

Countless wives continue to be victims of gendered violence and marital rape, still legal in many countries, so husbands literally *own* their wives, period, since even their own bodies don't belong to them. The historical subordination of women in the social, economic, and political domains is intimately tied to this sexual violence (Venkatesh and Randall, 2018).

Those born as females are considered as belonging to their fathers, who then transfer ownership to the woman's husband in marriage, preferably[34] as "virgins." As if this commodification weren't enough, in many countries there are also dowries or bride-prices[35] (Venkatesh and Randall, 2018).

The "label" of this commodity (specifically the woman's last name) usually changes from the father to the husband upon marriage. Many women still go by their husband's *full* name. Valerie Solanas[36] humorously sums up the name/ownership bit from the radical feminist perspective in the following excerpt from a play she wrote in 1965. This work has various titles, one of which is ***From the Cradle to the Boat***[37].

> *There are two characters in the passage, which starts on the next page, following the definition of* ***critical reality awareness****:*
>
> **critical reality awareness (CRA)** *n*
> **Meaning**:
> A synergistic amalgam of sociolinguistic and sociocultural tools, especially ***critical discourse analysis*** and ***intersectionality***, that enables the dissection of pretty much any set of linguistic, social, cultural, and behavioural variables as a part of the deep exploration into how the established order oppresses and others, and into the suffering of the victims.
>
> **Insight into fighting bias and exclusion**:
> Through CRA, the quotidian realities of those that are subjugated and tormented are better understood, as is also the perspective *of non-oppressing* members of "dominant" groups who are willing to struggle for a more egalitarian society.

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[33] For that matter, *indispensable* for the continuation of the species.
[34] Or *obligatorily*, depending on the case.
[35] Presumably necessary to "sweeten the deal."
[36] Valerie Jean Solanas (1936-1988) was a writer and egalitarian who wrote scathing indictments on patriarchy and what it leads to, including gendering and oppression, and how males have made the world the mess that it is.
[37] *From the Cradle to the Boat* is a metaphor for a female being a man's property from birth (*cradle*), to then become another man's property in marriage and society. Females are "in the *boat*," and if they know what's good for them, they better not "rock the boat." The author, Valerie Solanas, gave this play four titles, enabling those presenting it to have four choices, depending on the audience. The other three titles are: *Up Your Ass, The Big Suck,* and *Up from the Slime*. Solanas has a whole lot more to say about patriarchy and society in this play, and the following permalink has it in its entirety. Please note that this is ***not*** for all audiences:
https://web.archive.org/web/20190131150958/https://solanasupyourass.wordpress.com/

Towards a heightened inclusive awareness:
Within a CRA framework, for instance, it is clear to see how countless Indigenous Peoples (*Native Americans* and *First Nations*, among others, in the USA and Canada) might have painful additional secretions of gastric acid paired with agonising thoughts when hearing "good Americans" cheerfully wishing each other a "*happy Thanksgiving*." To them, and to informed and fair-minded people, the national glorification paired with a silence about the genocidal conquest is a bit much. When the continuing oppression of Indigenous Peoples is factored in, it is way too much. That such an "innocuous and well-meaning" expression can evoke such images and physiological reactions is a fitting example of how language, society, culture, thinking, and even physiology are inextricably intertwined.[38]

2.14.1 *An except from From the Cradle to the Boat*, featuring *Bongi* (*an active agent* in her life) and "*Arthur*" (*merely a passive object* in her marriage)

The players are **Bongi**, who is a street hustler dishing out what might be called ***critical reality awareness (CRA)*** commentary, and **"Arthur"**, who is "just a wife." ***(With my further CRA observations in parentheses).***

Bongi: Hey, *Dishrag*[39]. ***(Bongi already "has her number.")***

Arthur: If you're calling me, my name happens to be Mrs. Arthur Hazlatt. ***("Arthur" is not only her husband's property; she can only understand her own existence as that of being owned by him).***

Bongi: Arthur!? That's an odd name for a woman. ***(Solanas has identified the link between assuming the husband's name and a wife being chattel).***

Arthur: That's not my name; it's my husband's. ***(She reaffirms her own status as property).***

Bongi: Well, now I know what to call *him*; what'll I call *you*? I think I'll stick to Dishrag; it's as appropriate as Arthur. ***(Solanas is exposing the link between assuming the husband's name and a wife being chattel).***

Arthur: You're not gonna call me anything, because I'm not gonna stick around to be called. I don't want anything to do with you. ***(If Arthur were to acknowledge her status as mere property, it would shatter her entire existence. She staunchly holds fast to the collaborative role she plays within the established patriarchal order).***
"ARTHUR starts to walk away, but BONGI grabs her arm." ***(Bongi nonetheless wants to help open Arthur's eyes).***

Bongi: You're not going anywhere, Dishrag; you're gonna stay right here and fight. ***(Bongi wants Arthur to stand up for herself, as a person and as a woman. Bongi wants her to free herself from her shackles).***[40]

Arthur: Are you crazy? Why? ***(Patriarchy, heteronormativity, the heterosexual imaginary, and the marriage ideal are too hard to fight against; Arthur is hanging on for dear life!)***

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[38] Kaplan 2020:22
[39] A *dishrag* is same as a *dishcloth*.
[40] As mentioned, per Fairclough (1989), "*consciousness is the first step towards emancipation*."

Bongi: What's a Dishrag for? To wipe things up with, right? Well, that's what I want to do with you – wipe the street up with you. I want to help you fulfill yourself as a dishrag. ***(Solanas is illustrating the link between assuming the husband's name and a wife being chattel. She is equipping the wife (in this case "Arthur") with the information needed to make an informed decision, and even possibly taking control of her life, by confronting her with her own reality. If Bongi can help Arthur become aware of the fetters that imprison her, perhaps Arthur can decide whether to break them).***[41]

2.15 A sad state of affairs

The liberty, moral, cultural, social, educational, sexual, reproductive, legal, religious, leisure, labour, political, economic, and ownership perspectives. That's quite a list! This chapter has shown that it is no easy task to be a female in a patriarchal society. The absolutely unfair established order of males over females is maintained in many ways, not the least of which is linguistic oppression. Few words foster, preserve, and further patriarchy more than ***spinster***.

3. The articles (entries) that twelve popular dictionaries have for the expression *spinster*, each dissected from the bias and exclusion perspectives

A person could reasonably expect a dictionary to define words and phrases without adding bias or exclusion. At the very least they should identify any othering and oppression incorporated into the usage of any expression that is looked up. To what extent are the most widely utilised dictionaries doing this? The following is an exacting analysis of the treatment that a dozen commonly accessed and trusted dictionaries provide for the expression ***spinster***, in which it is evidenced how these lexicons mischaracterise, and therefore legitimise, othering and oppressive usage.

3.1 and 3.2 The *Oxford Living Dictionaries online* as seen on their website on 12 February 2020,[42] has the following definition in their *British & World English* dictionary:

> *"An unmarried woman, typically an older woman beyond the usual age for marriage"*

Notes: the lemma (expression) is identified as a noun, and they also provide a detailed usage note. Their *US English* definition and usage note are identical to their *British & World English* ones. Here is the *usage note*:

> "*The development of the word spinster is a good example of the way in which a word acquires strong connotations to the extent that it can no longer be used in a neutral sense. From the 17th century the word was appended to names as the official legal description of an unmarried woman: Elizabeth Harris of London, Spinster. This type of use survives today in some legal and religious contexts. In modern everyday English, however, spinster cannot be used to mean simply 'unmarried woman'; it is now always a derogatory term, referring or alluding to a stereotype of an older woman who is unmarried, childless, prissy, and repressed*."

Analysis of this definition:

This definition takes a whole lot for granted:

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[41] If you liked this, you would love Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto*, published in 1968. There is a permalink in the references.
[42] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212134836/https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/spinster

- The ***heterosexual imaginary***, within which being heterosexual is "automatic," "normal," and a part of the *patriarchal established order*. As mentioned earlier in this section, the *heterosexual imaginary* should never be questioned, apparently even by lexicographers.
- ***Heteronormativity***, including that females are meant to get married to males.
- That a woman should be married, as opposed to making her own lifestyle choices.
- And, that she should be married "before it's too late," by which time she is deemed less desirable, to have reduced possibilities for bearing children, and so on.

Analysis of the usage note*, with my comments in bold and italic*:

- "*The development of the word spinster is a good example of the way in which a word acquires strong connotations to the extent that it can no longer be used in a neutral sense."* ***They start off nicely, with the sort of insight a usage note should provide.***
- *"From the 17th century the word was appended to names as the official legal description of an unmarried woman: Elizabeth Harris of London, Spinster. This type of use survives today in some legal and religious contexts."* ***They go on to provide an appropriate illustration.***
- *"In modern everyday English, however, spinster cannot be used to mean simply 'unmarried woman'; it is now always a derogatory term, referring or alluding to a stereotype of an older woman who is unmarried, childless, prissy, and repressed*." ***They correctly state that it is currently an insulting and stereotyping term. However, they listed the typecasting adjectives entirely from the patriarchal perspective: unmarried (in contraposition to what she "ought" to be), childless (she is an "unfulfilled" woman), prissy and repressed (so being a "spinster" is <u>her</u> fault). Beyond this, Oxford makes no reference to how "spinsters" are othered from the patriarchal "females must be heterosexual and marry men by a certain age" viewpoint. So, they are right that it is an offensive term, but they explain it in a manner that makes out the victim to be the culprit. Even in their "broadminded" usage note, Oxford failed to notice that labelling a woman ("was <u>appended</u> to <u>names</u> as the <u>official legal description</u>") as a <u>spinster</u> was analogous to forcing a woman to wear a scarlet letter. Each represented a violation of "established marriage canons:" one for a lack of fidelity, the other for a woman not getting married by the time she was expected to be.***

In all, a very *patriarchal* treatment of the term. There was no mention of the concept of *patriarchy*, women being *objects* (as juxtaposed to reciprocating partners) of marriage, "***spinsters***" being *othered* for "not doing their part for the economy" nor "providing men their legitimate heirs," etc. Oxford provides definitions for ***heteronormative***, ***heterosexual***, and ***patriarchal***, but they did not, would not, or perhaps could not make the connections necessary to provide an inclusive definition. They even wasted the opportunity to do so in their *usage note*.

And, since many (if not a preponderance) of users don't read usage notes, especially if they use a dictionary as a quick reference to consult and get back to what they were doing, the derogatory character of the terms is not even made aware to anyone consulting the *Oxford Living Dictionaries online*.

3.3 Next is the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* as seen on their website on 12 February 2020[43]:

[43] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212135218/https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/spinster

"a woman who is not married, especially a woman who is no longer young and seems unlikely ever to marry"

Notes: it is indicated that it is a noun, and *old-fashioned*.

Analysis of the definition:

This ***Cambridge*** definition is very similar to the ***Oxford*** one:

Table 3.3: Comparison of *spinster*, for:	
Oxford	***Cambridge***
"An unmarried woman"	*"a woman who is not married"*
"typically an older woman"	*"especially a woman who is no longer young"*
"beyond the usual age for marriage" ***(There is still a glimmer of hope that some man may anyway take her).***	*"and seems unlikely ever to marry"* ***(She may as well give up!)***

There is no need to rehash the additional commentary on the definition. They both had essentially the same thing to say, and they both mentioned nothing about the *othering*, their *patriarchal* definition for the expression, the marriage "requirement," and so on.

3.4 The online version of the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* offers three senses[44]:

"an unmarried woman of gentle family"

"an unmarried woman and especially one past the common age for marrying"

"a woman who seems unlikely to marry"

Notes: the headword is identified as a noun, and the first sense is identified as *archaic*.

Analysis of the definitions:

- *"an unmarried woman of gentle family"* ***And then, of course, there's the rest of us, the "masses," being othered.***
- *"an unmarried woman and especially one past the common age for marrying"* ***Essentially the same as Oxford.***
- *"a woman who seems unlikely to marry"* ***Somewhere between the slim Oxford hopes and the "why bother going on living" Cambridge perspective.***

Since they labelled the first sense as *archaic*, they get a pass on that one. For the other two, please see the comments on ***Oxford*** and ***Cambridge***.

[44] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212140752/https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spinster

3.5 and 3.6 The online version of the *Macmillan Dictionary* has this definition[45]:

> *"an insulting word for a woman who is not married and is past the age when women usually get married"*

Notes: the entry is identified as a noun, and *old-fashioned*. The definition for their *American English* dictionary is identical.

Analysis of the definition:

This is the first dictionary in this group to give even a hint at the offensiveness of this term in their definition. However, despite noting that the word is *insulting*, they anyway provide a male-centred definition, and offer no insight into the reason it is offensive.

3.7 The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* provides one applicable sense for this word[46]:

> *"A woman, especially an older one, who has not married."*

Notes: the entry is identified as a noun and noted as *often offensive*.

Analysis of the definition:

The definition parallels the others, and likewise there is no insight into how it is *often offensive*.

3.8 The *Chambers Dictionary* offer this[47]:

> *"a woman, especially one who is middle-aged or older, who has never been married."*

Note: identified as a noun.

The only difference in this definition in relation to the others is that Chambers more specifically identifies the age group being *othered.*

3.9 The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* has this[48]:

> *"an unmarried woman, usually one who is no longer young and seems unlikely to marry"*

Notes: the entry is identified as a noun, and *old-fashioned*.

Analysis of the definition:

Almost identical to the ***Cambridge*** definition.

3.10 The *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* chimes in with two senses[49]:

> *"a woman still unmarried beyond the usual age of marrying.*
> *" a woman who has never married"*

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[45] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212141627/https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/spinster
[46] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212141913/https://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=spinster&submit.x=0&submit.y=0
[47] *Chambers* does not provide specific links to their articles, therefore no links, permanent or otherwise can be given.
[48] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212142604/https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/spinster
[49] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212142752/https://www.dictionary.com/browse/spinster

Notes: the entry is identified as a noun. The first sense is noted to be *disparaging and offensive*, and they mention that the second is used in "*chiefly law*" settings.

They add a *usage note*:

> *"The meaning "a woman beyond the usual marriageable age" is used with disparaging intent and perceived as insulting. It implies negative qualities such as being fussy or undesirable."*

Analysis of the definitions:

Sense one is almost identical to ***Oxford***.

The definition for *sense two* is biased from the "marriage is a given" perspective, as mentioned earlier.

The usage note correctly identifies the *disparaging intent****, but the wording of*** "*perceived as insulting*" ***makes it sound like a woman may be "interpreting" it as offensive. No. It <u>is</u> offensive, period. No one is being forced to use this word, so if they employ it they will likely offend.*** *"It implies negative qualities such as being fussy or undesirable"* ***again makes it seem like the woman is at fault, from the man's view. For "****fussy****" please see the earlier comments on "shrew." "****Undesirable****" makes is sound like the only factor men use to "choose" a woman is "looks;" but then, it usually is.***

3.11 The *COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary* offers this[50]:

> *"A spinster is a woman who has never been married; used especially when talking about an old or middle-aged woman"*

Notes: the entry is identified as a noun, and *old-fashioned*.
Analysis of the definition:

Basically identical to that of the Chambers Dictionary.

3.12 The *Collins English Dictionary* provides two applicable senses for this word[51]:

> *"an unmarried woman regarded as being beyond the age of marriage"*
> *"a woman who has never married"*

Notes: it is indicated that it is a noun. The second sense has the following note: *"Law (in legal documents)"*

Analysis of sense one:

Pretty much the same as the others.

Analysis of sense two:

Identical to that provided by *Random House*, except that *Collins* provides no usage note pointing out that the term is offensive.

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[50] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212143120/https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/spinster
[51] https://web.archive.org/web/20200212143120/https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/spinster

3.13 Twelve notably similar articles

In all, there were twelve dictionaries, and twelve analyses of the articles they each provided when ***spinster*** was entered into the search box on their respective websites. The similarity of the definitions provided is remarkable. Since the wording is by and large the same for all twelve lexicons, the bias and exclusion is also pretty much equivalent amongst them.

Only four of the twelve dictionaries included words such as *insulting* or *offensive* in their definitions, and none of them gave even the remotest clue to the hefty *patriarchal* othering and bias against women embedded into this expression.

Let's contrast these treatments with this inclusive and bias-free article:

4. A bias-free and inclusive lexicographical treatment for *spinster*

spinster *n*

Inclusive alternatives to this biased expression: *single woman, single, singleton, unattached woman, woman.*

Meaning:
A disparaging and denigrating expression to refer to a female who has never been married, particularly if above an "expected" (and therefore required) age.

Insight into the bias:
The expression connotes that such females are unworthy, undesirable, and unendurable, while evoking images of them as being lonely, unfulfilled, and ashamed of themselves. Taking for granted that women should all be married to a man by a given age is rooted in the gender binary, the heterosexual imaginary, the "marriage ideal," male hegemony, and in patriarchal heteronormativity.

Towards a heightened inclusive awareness:
Although *unmarried woman* is preferable to *spinster*, it still gives the impression that women ought to be married as opposed to making their own lifestyle choices. And, while *single* and *unattached* also have a bit of a "why isn't she with someone else" feel to them, there is much less associated stigma. Simply using *woman* should work in almost any context.

Other deprecated expressions to avoid: *old maid, cat lady, crazy cat lady*.

5. *Spinster* – conclusions

Most girls watch television programming, films, and internet videos from an early age, so fantasised and glorified *white weddings* are already shaping their thoughts and behaviour practically from infancy[52]. They are being indoctrinated by these heteronormative and "wedding wishing" messages well before they understand what's going on[53], as mothers may be feeding them while watching TV (including wedding "programming"), the "family watches the *boob tube*[54] together[55]", or there is a "fun day out" for all the young girls, and a "marriage movie" is "spontaneously" on the agenda, etc.

The messages are clear: a wedding means glamour, being the centre of attention, extravagant clothing and food, a diamond ring, and a storybook start to a fairy-tale married life. These can be contrasted with the conjured images of loneliness, unhappiness, and a life unfulfilled that being a ***spinster*** entails. All this is instilled into our thoughts through language, culture, and society. How, for instance could a female be born wanting a marriage ritual, a wedding gown, and a diamond ring?

Patriarchal cultures and societies keep women subjugated, oppressed, exploited, and victimised from the liberty, moral, cultural, social, educational, sexual, reproductive, legal, religious, leisure, labour, political, economic, and ownership perspectives, as detailed in this paper, with many illustrations of how this pertains directly to marriage. As was plainly seen, characteristics of each and all of these manifestations were interrelated, since everything is connected. *Heteronormativity*, the *heterosexual imaginary*, and the "marriage ideal" leading to a "*McBride*" *white wedding*[56] epitomise the urging of females along the beaten *patriarchal* path.

The *McBride* "archetype" also evokes images of the utterly soulless institutions of mass production, mass exploitation, mass sales, mass consumption, and mass waste many associate with the McDonalds "fast-food" entity that has sold well over one hundred billion beef-based burgers[57] among other fast-food staples, such as fried potatoes and soft drinks.

A "*McWedding*" serves as a fitting metaphor not just for the "fantasies of *patriarchy*," but also for a society and culture where everything is disposable. For many *McBrides*, the only thing that matters is to be a "queen" (or maybe "princess;" perhaps a "superstar" or "celeb") for a day, with no regard as to what happens before or after. This, plus the often harsh realities of matrimony can and does drive many females into not marrying. For these and other reasons, getting married or not should anyway be each female's choice, so why *label* and *other* them as ***spinsters*** if they prefer not to?

As shown through an exacting analysis of a dozen popular and trusted general English dictionaries, there was not a single instance in which even the remotest clue to the hefty *patriarchal* vilification and oppression of women embedded into the expression ***spinster*** was provided to anyone looking up this word. In this manner, users are kept in the dark.

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[52] From before birth even, in cases where the mother is already counting on a *white wedding*.
[53] Indoctrination works best when started as early in life as possible. (Brucker, 2015)
[54] ***boob tube*** is slang for *television*, since *boobs* (people without discernment nor imagination) often gape at it. That, or TV deprives people of discernment and imagination. Or it is a vicious circle of both. In any case, TV serves as an excellent medium for indoctrination and propaganda of all types.
[55] Which these days counts as "family *quality* time."
[56] How about at "Disneyland," with "Mickey Mouse" officiating?
[57] https://web.archive.org/web/20190131204217/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald's

Therefore, in the case of ***spinster***, these dictionaries performed the following dubious tasks:

- **For learners of the language:** indoctrination; women *must* be married by a given age, or they are unhappy, unfulfilled, undesirable, unbearable, etc.
- **For native speakers:** reinforcement of these myths.
- **For all dictionary users:** the propagation of bias and exclusion against women through the continued norm of this patriarchal "condition." In this manner, even those who care enough about all people to express themselves inclusively, would look up this expression and get an insidious dose of *patriarchal propaganda*, to then be further propagated unaware of the harmful consequences.

The treatment offered by the bias-free and inclusive usage dictionary for ***spinster*** goes beyond an accurate and unbiased definition. As a part of its socially-responsible and culturally-relevant lexicographical content, it also provides insight into the othering and oppression, by offering an accurate picture of its real-life use, along with the attendant consequences.

6. Final thoughts

Exclusive or biased expression promotes stereotyping, bullying, abuse, inequality, othering, exclusion, dehumanisation, and victimisation. Language plays a key part in the fostering, preservation, and furtherance of power, privilege, subjugation, and exploitation, and in this paper one of many biased expressions has been explored. Liberating females from the patriarchal yoke of ***spinster*** mentality is a part of freeing us all from the social and cultural mindsets that block the efforts of those working towards promoting a more egalitarian society.

Linguistic othering and oppression can only be change from the *inside*. Getting unbiased and inclusive definitions helps enhance understanding and awareness, which then fosters not speaking or writing in a biased and exclusive manner. Not using this othering and oppressive language promotes not thinking in such terms, which in turn translates into not acting this way. As more and more people express themselves in an unbiased and inclusive manner, others are inspired to do so as well. In doing so, we all, especially females, non-whites, "non-gender conforming," non-heterosexuals, "foreigners," and so on, all benefit through living in a safer, more inviting, hopefully even nurturing environment, where respect, tolerance, and consideration are the foundation of all interactions.

Males, as a socially constructed group, should finally start acting towards others with respect, consideration, responsibility, and fairness. Especially those who choose to get married.

Females, as a socially constructed group, ought to demand being agents in their lives, as opposed to passive objects. This goes especially for those who choose to get married.

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