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Gender And The 'People Are Animals' Metaphor in Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own

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Abstract

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* [1] is a well-established and acknowledged feminist work, where she used her own imagery to draw attention to the social, economic, and political inequality between men and women, as well as to women's repression and subordination in a patriarchal society. The present paper aims to study and analyse the conceptual metaphors found on this work that are related to animals. It shows the author's use of these resources to transmit how she perceived the social superiority of men over women at the time. For this aim, a corpus of such metaphors was manually compiled and analysed within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson [2], Kövecses 2006, [3]). This corpus shows how the People are Animals metaphor is used with images of fish, cats, dogs, and rats, among other animals to economically and effectively portray an image of women as dependent, inferior, submissive, but also suppressed and sensitive to their unfair situation. Ultimately, the exhaustive analysis of all the metaphors shows how Woolf used such images as a subversive element to portray her own view on male dominance.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphors, People are Animals metaphor, Virginia Woolf, feminist literature, cognitive linguistics.*

Introduction

A Room of One's Own, written by Virginia Woolf [1], is a highly respected modernist, feminist work. As a modernist writer and feminist, Woolf believed that gender is socially built from birth, and that gender inequality is reinforced within the family institution even before we become aware of the patriarchal society we have been born into. Virginia Woolf's contribution to literature was, at that time, underestimated and unrecognised. *A Room of One's Own* was originally a series of lectures which Woolf gave at the female colleges of Newnham and Girton at Cambridge, in 1928, focused on the social, economic and political barriers which women writers have encountered through the ages. The negative image of patriarchy is present throughout her work.

In this line, this paper aims to study and analyse the conceptual animal metaphors found on Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One´s Own* that are related to those images of men and women, to see how the author used these resources to transmit her perspective of women at the time as unfairly submitted beings, having to see their freedom cut by a man-dominated society. In order to pursue this goal, these images have been manually compiled, and subsequently analysed within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics [4,5,2,6,7]. Therefore, they have been codified as so-called *conceptual metaphors*. As is seen in sections below, these conceptual metaphors are related to animals, more specifically, to the people are *animals* metaphor, and the images used are fish, cats, dog and rats, among others.

This work is organized as follows: first, section 2 gives a brief account of the theoretical underpinnings of this paper. Second, section 3 provides the state of the art. Then, section 4 shows the methodology followed, and section 5 presents the corpus of analy-

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sis. Then, section 6 is the main one, since it constitutes the analysis of the data presented in the corpus. Finally, in section 7 some conclusions are drawn in the light of the data analysed, which show how gender inequalities were represented by the writer by means of metaphors. Thus, Woolf's work portrays them by means of animal images, which she uses as a subversive element against male dominance – attacking patriarchy by representing patriarchy.

Theoretical Framework

This section provides an account of the main works that provide the theoretical framework in which the present study is based, that is, metaphorical images within cognitive linguistics. According to Lakoff and Johnson [4], the concept of figurative language and critical analysis changed in the last decades of the past century. It could be said that it is a more linguistic perspective than literary, and that the conceptual metaphor could be considered the reconciliation point between linguistics and literature. Many authors have focused on the study of metaphors [2, 4, 8-10]. In this sense, Cognitive Linguistics gives great importance to meaning and defends the nature of language as another system of the cognitive system, as opposed to twentieth century linguists, more focused on syntax, especially the Generative Grammarians, for whom a grammar is explanatorily adequate, as it provides "a principled basis, independent of any particular language, for the selection of the descriptively adequate grammar of each language" [11]. On the other hand, [12], following [5], one of the main founders of cognitive grammar, points at different layers of categorization of meaning. The way we categorize entities exhibits different levels of generality. That is, different levels of genericity can be distinguished regarding our categorization of entities. According to [12], in cognitive semantics three different levels of categorization have been distinguished. They are shown in below:

- **Superordinate level.**
- **Basic or generic level.**
- **Subordinate level.**

By virtue of the principle of class inclusion, the superordinate class includes all items on the basic and subordinate levels. Likewise, the generic level comprises all items found in the subordinate level [12]. This derives from the basic conception of meaning as equal to conceptualization as proposed by [5], which [9] applied to metaphor and metonymy, the two linguistic resources of the mind that use language as the conceptual phenomenon it is. Cognitive linguistics is the study of how people use language; how they conceptualise, understand and later on respond to the sentences and words they are presented with. In this field of study, language is considered a mental phenomenon where much of what people here and say is processed and dealt with in particular extensive mental patterns [13].

Within the field of cognitive linguistics there are different subjects of study, and one topic which is the focus of much linguistic research is that of conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphors are based on the notion that people describe certain conceptual domains by means of properties and ideas which are connected to other conceptual domains [4]. [4,8] found out that people not only use metaphors in order to describe a similarity between two ideas, but also that the entire conceptual domain behind the idea conceptualising another conceptual domain is transferred onto the new domain. Thus, the connection between the two domains is so strong that thinking of one without the other may be difficult. In this sense, [4] argue that, for instance, *argument* and *war* are so closely connected that not thinking of *argument* in terms of *war* could possibly result in people not recognising the action performed as "arguing". They found that many often quite abstract conceptual domains such as *argument, time* and *people* are described using terms connected to conceptual domains of another nature, and subsequently they formulated many examples and listed multiple ordinary phrases which illustrate the very extensive, and sometimes subconscious, use of conceptual metaphors.

Another important element of this theory is the adoption of The *Great Chain of Being* concept. According to Lakoff and Turner (1989), the categorization of man with respect to other entities of the world can be understood in terms of *this superordinate level metaphor*, which places the different types of beings on a scale of superiority, where man is in the highest hierarchy, as seen below:

Humans> animals> plants> objects> natural things.

This hierarchy becomes a metaphor system when things on a particular level are conceptualized as things on another level. From this, the *people* are *animals*' metaphor is derived, where lower-level entities (animals) function as source domains for higher-level ones (i.e. people). In fact, by means of this metaphor we are able to understand human attributes in terms of corresponding animal attributes, as in *He is a fox, Mary is a snake, or Peter is a whale*. In these sentences, a culturally attributed behavioural feature of *foxes* (i.e. guile), *snakes* (i.e. malice), and *whales* (i.e. weight) is used to describe people.

A metaphor is a correspondence or a set of correspondences between two domains [4,8,9]. These domains receive the name of Source Domain and Target Domain. The Target Domain, which is constituted by the immediate subject matter, and the Source Domain, in which important metaphorical reasoning takes place and that provides the source concepts used in that reasoning. Metaphorical language has literal meaning in the Source Domain.

The conceptual structure of the source domain helps us understand and talk about the meta domain, which defines the notion (category of components) pertinent from the application point of view, along with their relationships. The source domain is generally more specific than the target domain, which tends to show a higher degree of abstraction. A paradigmatic example are emotions. To express emotions linguistically, it is very common to resort to figurative language [10]. Thus, for instance in the orientational metaphor love is a journey, the source domain, that is, the journey, is more specific in nature than the target domain, that is, love, and therefore, the first one lends its conceptual structure to the second. In examples such as: We are not going anywhere with this relation-

ship, the travellers correspond to the lovers, the journey to the love relationship that links these participants, and the destination, to the objectives of any relationship. The following figure represents the main correspondences that are activated when analysing such metaphor:

Love Is a Journey JOURNEY (source domain) LOVE (target domain).

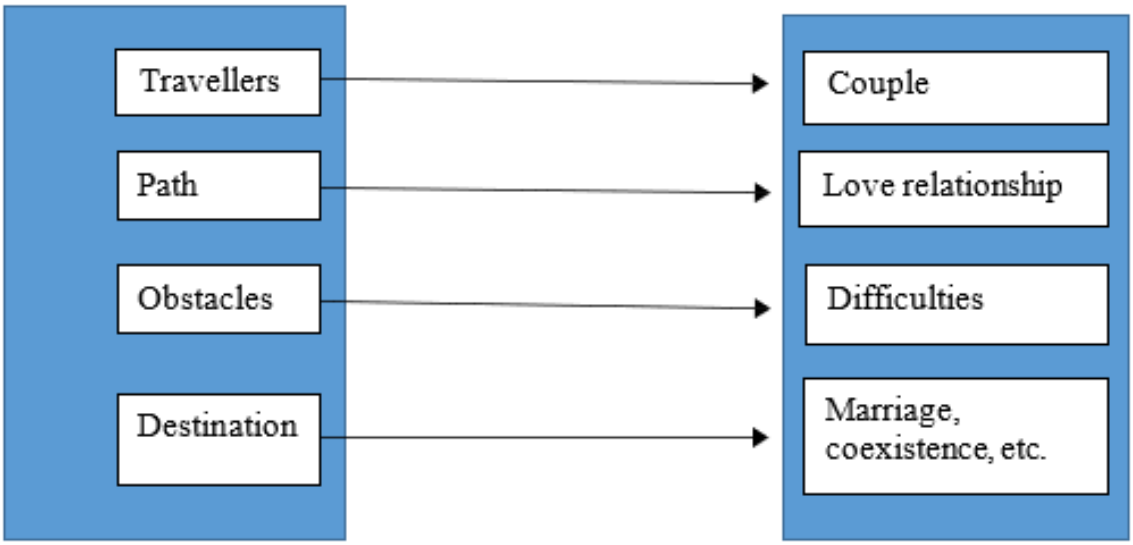


Figure 1

As regards metaphor types, the classification of metaphors can be done, according to Ruiz de Mendoza (1997), by taking into account two perspectives: the formal characteristics of the metaphorical process and the nature of the domains. If we look at the second criterion proposed by [14], that of the nature of the domains involved in the metaphorical projection, we find [4] classification. [4] distinguished three types of conceptual metaphors, outlined below:

a. **Structural metaphors.**

b. **Orientational metaphors.**

c. **Ontological metaphors.**

As regards (a), Structural metaphors are those in which one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. The conceptual metaphor an *argument is war* belongs to this group. The source domain, *war*, which has a concrete nature, lends its structure to the target domain, *discussion*, which presents a greater degree of abstraction.

Regarding (b), Orientational metaphors are based on spatial orientation. The metaphors *happy is up* and *sad is down*, make sense thanks to the *up-down* orientation scheme. Therefore, euphoric states are conceptualized as ascending orientations, while depressive states are interpreted in terms of descending orientation.

As for (c), Ontological metaphors are based on *The Great Chain of Being*. Coming back to this concept, The Great Chain of Being, according to [2], it is a cultural model that makes explicit the relationship between humans and other lower forms of existence. In this sense, [15] points at the fact that the *Great Chain of Being*, as a model of perception and organization of reality, deeply rooted in the European tradition, is the basis of semantic change and cognitive mechanisms, such as zoosemy (type of animal metaphor based on evaluative changes in meaning, especially pejoration). [15] states that this concept was already existent in ancient Greece, and is present nowadays in semantic investigations of language:

This scheme is, therefore, culturally determined (i.e., is a distinctly western, Christian, and patriarchal concept), and was reinforced in the Renaissance period. Given that Woold was well acquainted with that period, it might be an idea of "order" that a writer like Woolf, subscribed to, either purposedly or not. That is, we do not know whether she was simply using it as a metaphorical mechanism, or in fact as an ideology she wanted to criticize. What is certain is that, as framework of analysis, this model serves as an explanatory bases for our purposes. This remains unknown, and goes beyond our purposes here, where this model is just considered as the basis of the ontological metaphor *People are animals*. Some everyday language expressions where this metaphor is applied are seen below:

a. Barking *dogs* seldom bite

b. Kate is a *whale*

c. Mary is a *snake*

In (a) we have a common proverb where many qualities the man has, like annoyance, threat and so on are obtained from the attributes culturally assigned to dogs. In (b) the attribute "weight" of whales (source domain), is used to describe a heavy person. [14] claimed that metaphors based on the *Great Chain of Being* are invariably cases of one-correspondence metaphor. Therefore, in this sort of metaphor a singular aspect of the source domain is singled out and mapped onto the target domain. So, in (c) the malice, typically associated to snakes, is used to describe Mary's behaviour. If we join the *generic is specific* metaphor, we will be able to understand human traits in terms of animal ones. This allows for the creation of metaphorical schemas about different animals. With this theory in mind, we focus on the animal metaphors found in *A Room of One's Own* [1], in order to analyze them and see how they are used as a subtle mechanism to portray male dominance and (unfair) superiority over women.

State of the Art

In the past decades, many studies have been done about the *people and animals*' metaphor. For example, [16] made use of its cognitive dimension for a comparative analysis of dog proverbs in English and Spanish. She examined 40 common proverbs, finding that their meanings were diverse, but focused on depravity, disagreeableness, and stupidity. [17] analysed the *people are animals*' metaphor from the perspective of different social areas. Additionally, [18] carried out two different studies on how an animal metaphor can affect anyone in the form of insult or as an expression of love. They examined contextual factors in metaphor use, finding that the offensiveness of animal metaphors varies with the tone of their expression and the gender and in-group/out-group status of their targets. [19] focused on an analysis of zoomorphic metaphors, as expressions containing nouns referring to humans, from a cognitive linguistics approach. She focused on the semantic motivations involved in their use.

As for relevant works that have analysed conceptual metaphors from a Gender perspective, [20] addressed animal imagery which reflects women's roles in our society. She concluded that, no matter which kind of animal it is, it always represented women as inferior and subordinate to men. [21] also focused on how animal metaphors are used in social media to attack women and to mock at their (eating) disorders.

The above-mentioned works deal with conceptual metaphors and gender, and examine what effect metaphor use has on women. However, very few works have studied Woolf's metaphors. [22] was one of the first authors to analyse them. He looked at the way Woolf deployed her metaphors, at how they were used deliberately to disturb the reader's unquestioned assumptions, implicating him or her in Woolf's exploration of the complex relation between language, phenomenal reality and thought. More recently, [23] highlights parallelisms and differences between Woolf 's philosophy of sight and that of Emerson, in order to advance in the understanding of Woolf 's epistemology and, collaterally, to offer new perspectives on her work *To the Lighthouse*.

As for the work under analysis here, *A Room of One's Own*, [24] has analyzed the Fish-Cat Metaphor, and [25] has focused on the Manx cat conceptual metaphor, both from a literary point of view. As for [24], he suggests that the fish is both used as a metaphor of women being constantly interrupted as well as an interrupted and therefore disruptive thought, becoming "Woolf's most extensive "metaphor of interruption" that undergirds the subtext of A Room" (2014, 30). Regarding [25], she studies how Woolf uses the image of cats to represent women occupying a subordinate position in hierarchical structure of a masculine-ruled society. She argues that the Manx cat represents, allegorically, the exclusion of women from the systems of education and the history of literature. Woolf chooses to depict cats as subjects in their own right, victimized by humans. What is interesting in her work is that she points to an analogy between the Darwinian view of evolution, where animals are considered to be inferior to humans, in the same way as women were considered as biologically (besides socially) inferior to men. This is also comparable to the *Great Chain of Being*, adopted by cognitive linguistics, but whose origins can be found in the ancient Greek civilization, and which has been extensively studied in different contexts and areas of knowledge. Coming back to this idea, this concept can be traced back all the way to Aristotle, and it eventually developed into an important part of the western medieval and later renaissance world views. [26], for example, has recently argued that far right-wing ideologies that have grown in both Europe and the USA are based on the Strict Father morality, which is, in turn, grounded in the ancient concept of the *Great Chain of Being*. He argues that the application of such morality in politics and politically-biased media leads to the emergence of language of oppression, with the *Other being* stigmatised just for being the *Other*. This could be also applied in this case, with women being that *Other*.

Despite these interesting works, there are no investigations yet about the *people are animals*' metaphors in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* [1] from a Cognitive linguistics perspective, and neither are their studies who have focused on such metaphors from a gender perspective. Thus, this work aims at contributing to the existing literature, by shredding some light onto the use of cognitive metaphors as a way to transmit gender ideas and a perspective of male dominance in an economic, subtle and effective way.

[1] The theoretical bases of the concept of the Great Chain of Being were developed in Antiquity by such ancient philosophers as Plato and Aristotle (cf. Nisbet 1982: 35), and it is worth mentioning that the GCB has not merely survived into our times but – more importantly – elements of its mechanism are reflected in various evolutionary theories and, recently, also in semantic investigations of natural languages.

Methodology

In order to comply with the aims of this study, that is, to identify and analyse the *people are animals*' metaphors in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, first, all the metaphors found have been compiled in a corpus. The corpus was manually tagged and analysed so as to obtain a deeper understanding of the connection between men and the patriarchal images expressed through such metaphors. All these metaphors were analysed on two levels: conceptual and linguistic. The Conceptual Level in Cognitive Linguistics is represented by the use of capital letters and takes the form "A IS B", and, the Linguistic Level is constituted by all the expressions or examples which belong to a given conceptual metaphor. The aim was to obtain a full analysis of patriarchal images through such metaphors to support the hypothesis of Gender Studies, that is, male predominance over female, placing women under dependency and submission.

Corpus

The corpus used here has been extracted from a manual compilation of conceptual metaphors from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. Out of all these, we decided to delimit our scope of research so as to provide this piece of research with more accuracy and more detailed explanatory and descriptive power. Thus, for the purposes of this piece of work we have selected those conceptual metaphors where animals are protagonists, that is, those where we find the *people are animals*' metaphor, and where this metaphor is intentionally used to portray a specifically negative image of patriarchy. These metaphors, all of them of ontological kind, are provided in the table below:

Table 1: *WOMEN* are *ANIMALS* metaphors in Woolf's A Room of One's Own [1].

	Type	Sample	Page	Image schema
1	WOMEN ARE FISH	*…how insignificant this thought of mine looked; the sort of fish that a good fisherman…*	5	SOURCE TARGET Fish⟶ small, little brain, being fished
2.1	WOMEN ARE CATS	*… as I watched the Manx cat pause in the middle of the lawn as if it too questioned the universe…"*	10	SOURCE TARGET Cat ⟶ unusual, tailless
2.2		*…and had to explain my laughter by pointing at the Manx cat, who did look…*	12	SOURCE TARGET Cat ⟶ Subversion, disobedience
3.1	WOMEN ARE RATS	*… of the artist should be measured, as I have seen a dairy company measure the effect of ordinary milk and Grade A milk upon the body of the rat.*	44	SOURCE TARGET Rat⟶ Locked up, furtive, timid, small, malnourished, small, discouraged
3.2		*They set two rats in cages side by side, and of the two one was furtive, timid and small, and the other was glossy, bold and big.*		
4.1	WOMEN ARE DOGs	*…said that a woman acting put him in mind of a dog dancing.*	46	SOURCE TARGET Dog ⟶ training, submission
4.2		*…a woman's composing is like a dog's walking on…*		
5	WOMEN ARE BATS	*Women live like Bats or Owls, labor like Beasts, and die like Worms…*	52	SOURCE TARGET Bat⟶ nocturnal
6	WOMEN ARE OWLS	*Women live like Bats or Owls, labor like Beasts, and die like Worms…*	52	SOURCE TARGET Owl⟶ nocturnal
7	WOMEN ARE WORMS	*Women live like Bats or Owls, labor like Beasts, and die like Worms…*	52	SOURCE TARGET Worm⟶ parasitical, insignificant, despicable

[2] For more information on the Great Chain of Being concept, see the *Encyclopedia of the History of Ideas*; This historical background of the concept is directly linked up with what Lackoff and Johnson (1980) later on conceptualized as a cultural model that underlies all ontological metaphors.

Analysis

After the animal metaphors extraction from *A Room of One's Own*, all of them are analysed in this section. As can be seen in table 1 above, there are seven uses of the *people are animals*' metaphor, where Woolf depicts women as certain animals throughout the book, with the intention of transmitting a certain message. These animals are, respectively: fish, cats, rats, dogs, bats, owls, and worms. In this section we go through each of these metaphorical instances.

Regarding the first metaphor found in table 1, *women are fish*, the narrator lies on the river bank, walking on the grass, thinking and trying to create an idea. This idea or thoughts are compared to "little fish", as the ontological metaphor shows: "…how insignificant this thought of mine looked; the sort of fish that a good fisherman…". When the narrator is formulating the idea, a security guard enforces a rule whereby women are not allowed to walk on the grass. The woman accepts the rule and therefore, she loses the 'little fish'. So, what Woolf wants to emphasise with this ontological metaphor is that a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.

As for this first metaphor, *women are fish*, [27] have carried out an interesting analysis of the nature of mental imagery in metaphoric thought as proposed by the theory of metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics [8], by focusing on the field of marine biology. They show that image metaphors and behaviour-based metaphors have generally been regarded as two different types of resemblance metaphor, while they consider thus to be just a matter of degree of dynamicity of mental images. Image metaphors are motionless mental images. For example, the name seahorse is given to this animal because it emulates a horse; seahorse is an image motivated by the shape of another animal, its source image. On the other hand, *milkfish* is motivated by the colour, and *sea lettuce* is motivated both by the shape and by the colour. On the other hand, behaviour or function-based metaphors can be formed by virtue of dynamic or static mental images. For example, *seewasp* is the name given to an aquatic animal that reminds us of wasps, because of what it does, so it is a dynamic image, while *hawkfish* is behavioural-based metaphor, deriving from a motionless mental image. In this case, we can say that the image in which the fish resemblance metaphors are used are both dynamic (being easily trapped, caught) and non-dynamic (being small, insignificant). Fish are usually portrait as vulnerable. The activity of fishing involved in this metaphor is also deeply connected to the cultural idea of trying to get wisdom, and it has been a recurrent theme in literature. Just to mention two, Henry Thoreau once wrote, "Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after." Also, Hemingway, in *The Old Man and the Sea*, depicts fishing as an encounter with manhood and humanity. Therefore, in this metaphor Woolf achieves two aims: to show male dominance over women, and to show women as the price men want to achieve: wisdom, true essence, courage.

The second metaphor we find is *women are cats*. Among the many animals that appear in the work of Virginia Woolf, cats stand out as "*the Manx cat*" in *A Room of One's Own*. As for the context of the sentences in 2.1. and in 2.2., the narrator is in a party at university, when she gets distracted by an unusual cat. The cat in question lacks a tail, and the sight of it suddenly seems to change the atmosphere of the party. To discover what had changed, the narrator had to go back in past to an imaginary, similar party before the war, as in the first appearance of the Manx cat: "… as I watched the Manx cat pause in the middle of the lawn as if it too questioned the universe…". The Manx cat characteristically lacking a tail therefore alludes to something very specific. As [25] points out, its "truncated" appearance indicates a sense of lack, and at times an elusive loss which the post-war society had to deal with. For Woolf, the Great War was a watershed of her time, forever separating the past from the present. In addition to providing a reference to the loss experienced by the Great War, the cat operates as a zoo metaphor, such as in the second appearance: "… and had to explain my laughter by pointing at the Manx cat, who did look…", where it is linked to the idea of female subversion and disobedience. Therefore, the Manx cat is a metaphor of the elimination of women from the systems of education and the history of literature, but in the novel under analysis here cats are also depicted as subjects in their own right, victimized by humans. In line with a negative view of women through the use of cat's images, [28] point out, in an interesting analysis of animal metaphors and the representation of women in proverbs in Kenya, that women were perceived like evil and were compared to animals such as dogs, horses, cats etc. They defend that women are not only locally undervalued or discriminated, but they are universally underestimated, as proposed by [29]: "Almost every proverb that touches on women contains a severe negation of the value of women in society". Going further, if we connect this metaphor to the great chain of being, following [30], some common propositions that occur in schemas for animals are as the one given in below:

a. Pigs ⟶dirty, messy, and rude.

b. Lions ⟶ courageous and noble.

c. Dogs ⟶ loyal, dependable and dependent.

d. Cats ⟶ fickle and independent.

e. Wolves ⟶ cruel and murderous.

f. Gorillas ⟶ aggressive and violent.

As we see in (d), the image of cats has similarities with what Woolf seems to transmit.

As regards the third metaphor, the image of rats, Woolf uses this ontological metaphor to compare both men and women to rats in the context of food. In both sentences, "… of the artist should be measured, as I have seen a dairy company measure the effect of ordinary milk and Grade A milk upon the body of the rat" and "They set two rats in cages side by side, and of the two one was furtive, timid and small, and the other was glossy, bold and big." Woolf shows the fact that if you do not feed yourself with food, you do not do anything good. Thus, these are the facts of the "rats" cited above, the "small rats" are weak women who are only fed by prunes and custard, and, the "big rats" are obviously men, who are well fed, which means that they are superior and also capable of doing any-

thing, or even of creating whatever they propose to. According to the *Great Chain*, rats are given the attributes of dirt and of disgust. The negative image involved is absolutely explicit with this metaphor.

As we can see in table 1, Woolf uses the images of dogs twice throughout her work. In this respect, as can be seen in (6.c), the propositions in the Great Chain metaphor for dogs are the features of loyalty and dependence. In the case of the novel under study here, putting the two similes she uses into context, Woolf seems to emulate with such image's other famous authors' resources, such as Samuel Johnson or Nick Greene. The latter said that a woman acting put him in mind of a dog dancing, and Samuel Johnson repeated this sentence two hundred years later with regards to women preaching. Woolf, also, puts in the mouth of the French composer Germaine Tailleferre the following statement: "a woman's composing is like a dog's walking on…". This metaphor is used in the context of the sublime action of musical composition, which already makes a gender statement. It evokes, though, achievement by means of submission and training: the feat of standing up is achieved in a dog through certain training and instruction that, through practice, has the result of the animal being able to show a new number that defies natural law. Therefore, having analysed these images it can be interpreted that Woolf wanted to portray the idea that women have always faced negative attitudes in jobs that were traditionally dominated by men.

As for metaphor five, it is a powerful passage which Virginia Woolf picks out by which to characterise Cavendish herself in *A Room of One's Own*. Margaret Cavendish was an English aristocrat who fought for the recognition of women. Thus, the conceptual metaphor of women are bats means that at that time, women were servants of their husbands during the day and, if they wanted to write fiction, they had to do it at night. Here is the clear characteristic of bats, which are alive during the night.

In six the same conceptual metaphor appeared again. The same expression also compares women to *owls*. In this case, an *owl* is characterised to be meticulous when doing itself up during the day hours. Thus, Woolf tries to compare a woman routine to an owl's routine, that is to say, the target domain *owl* gives its meaning and its attributes to the source domain *woman*. Also, in popular culture, owls are also given the features of wisdom.

Finally, Woolf uses the conceptual metaphor *women are worms* within the same statement. As Margaret Cavendish fought for women recognition, Woolf also tried, by giving it the derogatory sense and using this conceptual metaphor on how women feel at that time. Therefore, *worms* are conceived in the Great Chain as parasitic, disgusting, frightening. If we taking the derogatory term of *worm* related to women in which Woolf uses it in the work, we can say that women are portrayed as being in the worst level in the chain of being. With this conceptual metaphor, Woolf shows how a woman ended up her life, horribly depending economically and socially of men. This last sentence is very powerful, in the sense that it contains the contrast of how women live (hiding in the dark their wisdom and abilities) and die (as parasites, depending on their men). It is also interesting the mentioning of beasts. The term *beasts* include all animals in one, but this specific use of the word has the feature of exploitation. Thus, we believe that with this term she also denounces how women's labour is exploited and devaluated in the cruellest ways.

Discussion, Conclusions, And Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this study show that this important work from Virginia Woolf also reflects many forms of the conceptual people are animals' metaphor. After going through all the *animal* metaphors used by Woolf to represent women, we can say that analysing such a literary work was an efficient way to observe how the cognitive mechanisms of the metaphors involved work. We have seen that they are structured to convey meanings and emotions in an economic and cognitive way. The images used, which, whether purposedly or not, are all part of the propositional schemas of the Great Chain of being –and therefore convey the idea of women as inferior to men, because they are equated to beasts–, are often poetically structured. Why fish, cats, rats, dogs, bats, owls, and worms? Even if these source images together do not represent all animals or, conversely, any one kind of animal, we could think of the possibility of some typology implied. Besides the fact that they are all represented as "lowly" in comparison to "men", because of the features that are culturally assigned to each of them, they share some common traits: they are all small animals, not considered dangerous, but, on the contrary, vulnerable against men. It is also interesting to see that, besides their similarities, they are all diverse, like women. They are water animals (fish), earth animals (cats, rats, dogs, worms), and air animals (bats, owls). In general, these metaphors are used in expressions that are parts of everyday language, which is what makes us understand these images in a more direct way. This complies with [4] claim that metaphors are used frequently, because people's conceptual system is structured in a metaphorical way.

Virginia Woolf is an author known for writing works and essays concerning feminism, and the work analysed here reflects several different conceptual metaphors which show her writing from a gender perspective. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf purposefully deploys a series of metaphors that appear to subscribe to a patriarchal, hierarchical representation of "beings" in order to expose that hierarchy as unjust. By each of the images she uses, and that have been analysed in the previous section, we can clearly see the fallacious hierarchy she tries to denounce, and its traditional application to women.

In order to do so, the generic domain ANIMAL was described by means of various conceptual domains; the source concept WOMAN is reflected the most in her work with the *women are animals*' metaphor. The metaphors she uses indicate that women are depicted in the most derogatory terms of animals, as other gender studies on women in metaphors show [31,28]. The use of animal metaphors in the expressions of many languages of the world is pervasive. Such use of metaphors is not merely a poetic device, but also language mechanisms which convey specific messages in everyday

communication. Through the mapping of the source and target domains, the attributes loaded in the source domain are transferred onto the target, thus "allowing the target categories to be apprehended in novel and often revealing ways" [18].

Research has shown that animal metaphors are often used to connote negative meanings in many cultures. This is because of the higher order form relegated to human beings compared to that of animals, as reflected in the Great Chain of Being (GCB) [9]. Nevertheless, positive meanings are also associated with animals, such as lion and bull, which conceptualize courage and strength [20].

The aim of this work was to explore how images of patriarchy can be seen throughout Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* [1]. As has been illustrated in the main body of this work, Virginia Woolf possessed a unique talent for presenting her readers with a judgement of the contemporary society of the era. Woolf used her own particular "reverse psychology" and conceptual metaphors to draw attention to the social, economic, and political inequality of women and their repression and subordination in a patriarchal society. By representing patriarchy as superior and desirable and portraying the insecurities of female characters such as the narrator, Woolf highlighted the unjustness of a patriarchal world which considers women less privileged than men.

In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf made use of conceptual animal metaphors to refer to the necessity for women writers to be financially independent and enjoy their own uninterrupted space in order to write fiction. Although women's rights movements have ensured that social, economic and political conditions for women have improved, patriarchal society continues to struggle with the concept of gender equality; women are often still judged by appearance rather than merit and the male ego continues to flourish.

In the same way in which Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* reconstructed the history of female exclusion from the world of literature by analysing the material conditions that reproduce inequality, the history of animals could be written by looking into all the differences constructed between animals and women. For many of the Modernists, Darwin's theory of evolution provided a starting point for a literary re-evaluation of the place of animals in the human world, in which they are no longer regarded as subordinate to humans. In her essay, Woolf hoped that one day we will live in a world in which patriarchy will no longer be fiction.

Finally, it remains as an interesting mystery for future research the critical analysis of *The Great Chain of Being model*, and Lakoff and Johnson's formulation of it. The question that remains is*: Does Woolf actually (or maybe inadvertently?) subscribe to this western hierarchy/order of thinking in her use of animal metaphors? Or is she playing, in her animal metaphors, on a traditional patriarchal hierarchy (a quite literally patriarchal one, since God the Father is always placed at the top in the "Great Chain") to expose that hierarchy as a power structure deployed and dominated by men?* If Woolf is trying to make something like the point we have just italicized, that point is currently only getting expressed at a tacit level, and deserves to be brought to the surface.

All in all, the originality of this work lies in the linguistic approach to a traditionally considered a literary issue, metaphorical resources. Also, this is the first work that has focused on all the animal metaphors found in Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, providing with an exhaustive analysis of each of them, and concluding that all these metaphors are both a literary and (especially) a cognitive linguistic resource to effectively transmit the reader the writer's ideas on women's suppression in a male dominated society.

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Conflict of Interest

No Conflict of Interest.

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