

The representation of women in teenage and women's magazines: recurring metaphors in English

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ABSTRACT

The pages of teenage and women's magazines are rife with metaphors presenting women in the guise of edible substances (*honey, pie, tart, peach*), animals (*chick, vixen, kitten*), babies (*baby, babe*), parts of the body (*arm*), members of the aristocracy (*queen, princess*) and supernatural creatures (*angel, goddess, siren*). Although at first sight these terms may be taken as compliments, an analysis of the assumptions that inform the use of such linguistic products reveals that, more often than not, these metaphors convey sexist beliefs about the role of women.

Key words: metaphor, sexism, teenage and women's magazines.

La representación de las mujeres en las revistas de adolescentes y femeninas: metáforas recurrentes en inglés

RESUMEN:

En las páginas de las revistas de adolescentes y femeninas abundan las metáforas que representan a las mujeres como sustancias comestibles (miel, pastel, tarta, melocotón), animales (pollito, zorra, gatita), bebés (bebé, bebido), partes del cuerpo (brazo), miembros de la aristocracia (reina, princesa) y criaturas sobrenaturales (ángel, diosa, sirena). Aunque a primera vista estos términos pueden parecer cumplidos, el análisis de las suposiciones que motivan el uso de tales productos lingüísticos revela que, con más frecuencia de la que pueda parecer, estas metáforas implican creencias sexistas sobre el rol de las mujeres.

Palabras clave: metáfora, sexismo, revistas de adolescentes y femeninas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The representation of women in the written media has received a great deal of attention and critics have analysed different strategies used for the acculturation of women in the press (Tuchman 1979, Gough-Yates 2003, Machin 2005). From explicit cartoons portraying women as chatterboxes (Talbot 2003) to transitivity choices underlying the assumption that the role of women is one of subservience (Vetterling-Braggin 1981, Calvo 1998) through more sophisticated techniques of colour associations (Calvo 1998), discourse strategies (Peirce 1990, Talbot 1995, Stoll 1998) and metaphorical identifications (Mills 1995, Alabarta 2005), gender discrimination in the press comes clad in many different cloaks.

This paper looks at a particular device employed by teenage and women's magazines in the representation of women, namely, the use of linguistic metaphors.¹ Flicking through the pages of these publications one encounters a host of repeated metaphors presenting women in the guise of foods (*honey, pie, tart, cookie*), animals (*chick, vixen, kitten*), babies (*baby, babe*), parts of the body (*arm*), members of the aristocracy (*queen, princess*) and supernatural creatures (*angel, goddess, siren*). Bearing in mind the social force of metaphor in our understanding of the world and of ourselves (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1999, Gibbs 1999) as well as the important role language plays as a channel through which ideas and beliefs are transmitted and perpetuated (Sperber 1996, Saville-Troike 2003), the present study attempts to offer a preliminary exploration of how negative images of women are transmitted and perpetuated by teenage and women's magazines through linguistic metaphors.

Without entering into the numerous and sometimes even conflicting views on metaphor, the paper centres on metaphor as a mechanism enabling the language user to talk about one thing in terms of another and on its potential to clothe or disguise the message in order to unveil the true assumptions that inform the use of such linguistic products.

2. THE COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL FORCE OF METAPHOR

Classical theorists since Aristotle have viewed metaphor as a special use of language, a deviance from what is literal, usually in the pursuit of an aesthetic purpose (cf Ortony 1993, Gibbs 1994, Lakoff & Johnson 1999). Metaphor was regarded as a figure of speech or rhetorical artefact in which a word or phrase literally denoting one idea is used in place of another which is different, therefore, calling forth a likeness between entities which are essentially different. The traditional theory of metaphor holds that metaphor involves a transfer of meaning,

¹ The magazines used are *CosmoGirl*, *Cosmopolitan*, *In Touch*, *Marie Claire*, *New, Nineteen*, *Star*, *Top of the Pop*, *Us*, *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue*, in paper and electronic versions. In several cases, other magazines which are not exclusively directed to women are used to illustrate the metaphorical networks (*Entertainment Weekly*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The New Yorker*, *Time* and *USA Today*).

an identification of elements that belong to different realms of experience. Metaphor is seen as consisting of the tenor (or subject to which attributes are ascribed), the vehicle (the subject from which the attributes are derived), the tension (the dissimilarities between the tenor and the vehicle) and the ground (the point of similarity between the tenor and the vehicle).²

In the traditional view, then, metaphor is a mere linguistic device used for the figurative embellishment of otherwise straightforward language. However, establishing a clear-cut distinction between what is literal and figurative is not only difficult but also futile due to the ubiquity of figurative language in our daily discourse.³ In fact, there seems to be a metaphorical substrate underlying everyday talk and many abstract concepts tend to be understood in terms of more concrete, bodily experience (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1999, Johnson 1987, Grady & Johnson 2002). Hence, common metaphorical expressions that we use to talk about life and death such as *we are at the crossroads*, *it's high time you chose your path in life* or *he has left this world* are not simply deviant uses of literal language, but seem to reflect people's experiences of moving from one place to another throughout their lives, of starting at a certain point, changing directions, reaching a destination or departing from a place. Such metaphors seem to reflect a mental schema whereby people make sense of the abstract concepts of life and death by resorting to their more concrete experiences with journeys.

As a matter of fact, as cognitive linguists argue, many of the metaphors we use in language are a reflection of our conceptual structure; that is to say, our speech is rife with metaphors because our mind is truly metaphorical in nature (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff & Turner 1989, Gibbs 1994, Kövecses 2002). Thus, cognitive linguists consider the creation of metaphors as one aspect of the more general human tendency to categorize experience, and suggest that the roots of the metaphors we use daily lie in our sensory experience, that is to say, in our relationship with the physical world.

Thus, as opposed to the traditional view of metaphor as a deviant device restricted to language, cognitive linguists claim that metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason. Seen in this light, metaphor is defined as a systematic set of correspondences or mappings between two conceptual domains of experience where one of the domains (called the source) enables us to structure, understand and make sense of another experiential domain (called the target) (Lakoff & Turner 1989, Lakoff & Johnson 1999, Barcelona 2003, Dirven & Pörings 2002).

Therefore, because metaphor is essentially a cognitive mechanism, a pivotal distinction is made between conceptual and linguistic metaphors. The former belong to the level of thought and constitute a small group of mental schemas whereby the human mind understands abstract concepts in terms of more concrete

² As is well known, this terminology was first introduced by Richards (1936) and has been widely accepted and used by Ortony (1993), Murphy (1996) or Giora (1997, 1999).

³ This is a very sketchy and over-simplified account of the pervasiveness of figurative language in everyday life, but it can be fleshed out in the literature cited at the end of this essay.

bodily experiences by establishing ontological correspondences across conceptual domains; the latter, on the other hand, are the surface manifestation in language of conceptual metaphors. So, the aforementioned expressions *to be at the crossroads*, *to choose your path in life* or *to leave this world* are linguistic metaphors or concrete manifestations of the broader mental schema or conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which helps us to reason and talk about life and death in terms of journeys (Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

However, considering metaphor an exclusively mental phenomenon stemming from first-hand experience would be rather simplistic because, given that metaphor manifests itself in language, and language is the product of a society, it seems logical that cultural mechanisms should be a determining factor for the entrenchment of many metaphoric themes (Deignan 2003, Maalej 2004, Kövecses 2005). After all, languages differ in significant ways from one another, as do the metaphorical expressions used by different speech communities. This is obvious when comparing different languages, as well as when comparing varieties of the same language (*cf* Emanatian 1995, Fernández & Jiménez 2003, Talebinejad & Dastjerdi 2005). For example, in Spanish, a person can be seen as *queso* (cheese), if considered attractive. In British English, however, such figurative usage does not apply whereas in American English there is a whole repertoire of types of cheese such as *cheeseball*, *velveeta* or *fromage* which are used to refer to unattractive females (Eble 1996).

In fact, some metaphors not only have a cognitive basis, but also are culturally motivated, that is, they reflect the attitudes and beliefs held by a particular community and, therefore, may vary from culture to culture, in time and space (Deignan 2003, MacArthur 2005). This cultural dimension of metaphor makes them suitable vehicles for the transmission and perpetuation of social beliefs. Indeed, as has often been noticed, most metaphors are not neutral in their evaluative stance (Nunberg, Sag & Watson 1994, Moon 1998), but are charged with an ideological or attitudinal component (Fernando 1996) which reflects a bias on the part of a speech community towards other groups of peoples, mores, situations and events. The attitudes conveyed by means of metaphors originate in what is known as general or universal knowledge, in other words, conventional views attached to the cultural values held by a community (Deignan 2003, Maalej 2004, Talebinejad & Dastejerdi 2005). This communal voice condensed by metaphors is frequently used by speakers as arguments of authority to validate or sanction particular forms of behaviour (Drew & Holt 1998, Moon 1998).

Metaphor, indeed, seems to fulfil a clearly social function not only in reflecting the cultural views of a particular community but also as a cognitive mechanism that allows the language user to talk about one domain of experience in terms of a completely different one (Low 1988, Kittay 1989). Obviously, since metaphor operates with two domains simultaneously, the overlapping of such domains in the transfer from a source to a target will inevitably hide certain aspects of the source domain (*cf* Lakoff & Johnson 1980). In this regard, Low (1988: 27) affirms that in the metaphorical mapping of one domain onto another there is "a price" to be paid: "the price is that the fact that a vehicle highlights one aspect of the topic also implies that it plays down, or hides, others" (1988: 27) and he continues to say that

this hiding mechanism inherent in the very functioning of metaphor is essential “where what is hidden is unpleasant [.....] or personally disadvantageous to the speaker” (1998: 27). Hence, because the entailments may very well be only partially understood, these may be covert means of maintaining values which are damaging to a particular social group (MacArthur 2005).

As a corollary, any analysis about the relationship motivating metaphorical identifications of women with foods (*tart, pie*), animals (*bitch, chick*), parts of the body (*arm*), babies (*baby, babe*), members of the aristocracy (*queen, princess*) or supernatural creatures (*angel, goddess, vamp*) should be carried out cautiously because, frequently, such correspondences may hide important considerations about the way human beings understand women and their role in society.

3. THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING

Before turning to some of the most common metaphorical identifications of women found in teenage and women's magazines, it will be useful to discuss a folk cognitive model referred to as “The Great Chain of Being” (Lovejoy 1936, Tillyard 1959, Lakoff & Turner 1989) because of its influence and repercussion in our understanding of the universe and of human beings. Briefly put, the major premise of The Great Chain of Being is that every existing thing in the universe has its place in a divinely planned hierarchical order which is pictured as a vertical chain where different entity types occupy their corresponding places on the basis of their properties and behaviour.⁴ That is, the more complex the being, the higher it stands. So at the bottom stand natural physical things such as the four elements defined by their structural and functional properties and behaviour. Higher up are complex objects characterized by their structural and functional properties and behaviour. Then come plants, with their biological functions and attributes. Then, animals, which are defined by their instinctual characteristics and behaviour. Afterwards, human beings, who possess higher order attributes and behaviour and, finally, celestial creatures, with their supernatural traits and behaviour. Within each level there are sub-levels defined by different degrees of complexity and power in relation to each other (i.e. within the animal realm the lion is above the rabbit, which, in turn, is above the worm). This hierarchical organization, then, presupposes that the natural order of the cosmos is that higher forms of existence dominate lower forms of existence.

The Great Chain of Being metaphor accommodates two types of conceptual mappings which enable us to see the chain as a top-down hierarchy in which higher-level attributes and behaviour are conceptualized in terms of lower-level attributes and behaviour as well as a bottom-up hierarchy in which lower-level attributes and

⁴ The theory set forth here blends the so-called basic and extended versions distinguished by Lakoff and Turner (1989), according to whom the basic Chain of Being is concerned with the relation of human beings to lower forms of existence whereas the extended version focuses on the relationship between human beings, God, society and the universe.

behaviour are understood in terms of higher-level attributes and behaviour. Hence, adopting a top-down approach, human beings can be understood via the instinctual and functional attributes and behaviour of animals, plants and lower substances (e.g. he is a *pig*, she is a *rose*, she is a *gem*) or, on the contrary, from a bottom-up perspective, people can be conceptualized through the divine qualities of supernatural creatures (e.g.: he is an *angel*, she is a *goddess*, he is a *demon*).

The cultural framework provided by The Great Chain of Being should be born in mind for the present analysis, for, in general terms, when people are equated with animals, plants or other substances, not only are instinctual and functional qualities or behaviour being highlighted, but because humans are conceptualized in the guise of lower forms of existence, the identification is likely to convey a negative evaluation. On the contrary, when people are identified with supernatural creatures, apart from stressing divine qualities and behaviour, the shift upwards in the chain tends to endow the metaphorical identification with positive connotations (Lakoff & Turner 1989: 170-80).

Interestingly, as this paper will try to show, in teenage and women's magazines, females tend to be seen as lower forms of existence, such as animals or foods, with the possible negative import attached to them, and only in very few cases are women conceptualized in the guise of supernatural creatures, and even in these cases, as will be seen, the shift upwards in the chain may not necessarily convey positive evaluations.

4. WOMEN AS DESSERTS

The association of women and food is as old as the hills. Biological functions such as breastfeeding, traditional views confining women to the domestic sphere and folk beliefs of the type *The way to a man's heart is through his stomach* or *A woman's place is barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen* seem to support this view. Hence, it is not surprising to find in English female magazines a great many linguistic expressions establishing such a connection. *Honey, tart, sweetie* or *cookie* are but a few examples commonly found in these sort of publications.

Common desserts employed in these magazines include *pie, tart* and *pudding*. Along with the connotations of sweetness, all these foodstuffs share certain characteristics, namely, they belong to the field of confectionery, are usually eaten as desserts and tend to be decorated in some way (e.g. with fruits, jelly, creams). In fact, the visual component of this type of cakes soon brings home to us images of desserts just adorned to be exposed in a window shop to make our mouths water. This common experience of walking by a cake shop and being drawn by the visual beauty of those neatly arranged cakes is implicitly transmitted in their metaphoric usage in these publications and, as the following examples show, both *tart* and *pie* are applied to attractive women.

- (1) She is a cutie **pie** (*Cosmo Girl*, Aug. 2003, p. 3)
- (2) Wasn't Jenny Guidroz the town **tart** in high school? (*Vanity Fair*, Jan. 2004, p. 78)

Although also falling into the category of desserts, puddings present a different consistency, since they usually have a soft, spongy texture, making them more vulnerable to pressure. It is precisely this soft consistency that motivates its metaphoric usage, for the term is applied to fat women. Here, the visual element of the pudding, that is, its shaky appearance, certainly runs parallel to the flab of a woman. Thus, a plump Greek woman is referred to as *Greek pudding* (*New Yorker*, April 13, 1998, p. 40).⁵

Also having a sweet taste, cookies and candies resemble the aforementioned desserts and, therefore, trigger similar associations (i.e. sweetness, softness, attraction), which explains their figurative use to refer to beautiful women, as shown in extracts (3) and (4). Moreover, as already stated, both cookies and candies tend to be decorated to make them more appetizing. Such use of creams, toppings and syrups clearly contributes to enhancing the outward appearance of these sweets, making them visually more appealing. Curiously, teenage and women's magazines often resort to the image of cookies and candies in those articles dealing with fashion, which leads one to establish a parallelism between icings and creams with clothes and make-up in that their main function is to embellish the physical appearance of cakes and women respectively, as seen in examples (5) and (6).

- (3) Am I lonely? Upset? Confused? Yes. But I'm a tough **cookie** (*Vanity Fair*, Sept. 2005, front page).
- (4) Goldie Hawn [...] clever **cookie** (*Vanity Fair*, Jan. 1997, p. 118).
- (5) Hey, **cookie**, Cape Cod called! —it wants you (and all these pretty classic items) to come for a visit! (*CosmoGirl*, March 2005, p. 20).
- (6) **Candy** Girl Romantic pinks and pretty frills for a sweetness-as-light look (*Cosmopolitan*, June 2002, p. 3).

However, what distinguishes cookies and candies from the previous sweets is that the former are not usually big enough to be considered as a proper dessert, but rather would probably be classified as snacks. Therefore, even though the senses of sweetness and attraction remain, the type of food selected in this case also has important implications, since snacks are usually small foodstuffs eaten between main meals in order to satiate one's appetite. This idea of not being a proper meal is important in the conceptualization of women as edible substances, for the idea of availability goes hand in hand with unimportance. So, in the following extracts women are presented as *candy* on the grounds of their physical appearance, but also based on considerations of time and unimportance. In other words, because the relationship with these women is neither serious nor intended to last for a long period of time, sweet snacks are chosen to convey the idea of sexual attraction and scarcity of time.

⁵ I am indebted to Hines (1999b) for this example.

Besides, it is interesting to notice how in these magazines not only are women reduced to sweets, but they also are disembodied through the metonymic use of *arm* to stand for the whole person. Certainly, the part of the anatomy selected to represent women has important considerations for, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 36) point out, the main function of synecdoche is “not just to see a part stand for the whole person but rather to pick up a particular characteristic of the person”. Interestingly, women are not thought of as *heads*, *hands* or *brains*, because these body parts would suggest leadership, skill and intelligence. On the contrary, women are conceived of as *arms*, presumably because of the image of couples holding hands and grabbing each other arms.

- (7) Matthew Perry may have dated the likes of Julia Roberts in the past but, these days, he's opting for more anonymous **arm candy**. The 32-year-old actor has been dating make-up artist Andi O'Reilly (*Cosmopolitan*, June 2002, p. 75).
- (8) Did you know? Back when she was growing up in West Virginia, *Alias* star and current Ben Affleck **arm candy** Jennifer Garner had more sax appeal than sex appeal: She was a self-proclaimed geek who played saxophone in her high school's marching band. (*Cosmopolitan*, May 2005, p. 288).

In like manner ingredients commonly used in the elaboration of sweets are prone to become metaphors used to identify women in these magazines. Take, for instance, the description of actress Goldie Hawn as *puff pastry* (*Vanity Fair*, Jan. 1997, p. 118), Liv Tyler in terms of *art-house pastry du jour* (*USA Today*, quoted in *The New Yorker*, July 15, 1996, p. 84)⁶ or *honey* in the following excerpts:

- (9) Remember, sexy isn't necessarily skimpy? it's about making the best of what you've got in clothes you feel good wearing. Work it, **honey!** (*CosmoGirl*, Sep. 2003, p. 77).
- (10) Okay, so exactly how do you become one of those women who know that they're sex goddesses? **Honey**, it's simple: Just moving, talking and thinking in a slightly more erotically charged way. (http://magazines.ivillage.com/redbook/sex/turn/articles/0,,284443_566492,00.html 4/11/05).

Together with the attributes discussed above, the use of such ingredients is likely to correspond with the youth of these women. As a matter of fact, it is interesting to note how the desirability of a woman is seen from a culinary point of view. That is, when she is young (i.e. not sexually mature) she is presented as *pastry* or *honey* which will eventually become a *cookie*, *tart* or any other type of cake (i.e. sexually mature).

Perhaps, the first thing that draws our attention after having a look at the different edible substances with which women are identified has to do with the choice of foods. Indeed, there seems to be a clear tendency to portray women in the

⁶ I am indebted to Hines (1999b) for these examples.

guise of sweets, ruling out other foodstuffs such as meat, fish or vegetables (Adams 1990, Hines 1999b, Baider & Gesuato 2003). From a nutritional standpoint, sweets are not essential in our diets; on the contrary, they can be done without. Hence, one of the main underlying assumptions of the WOMAN AS DESSERT⁷ metaphor might be unimportance. Along with this, desserts are frequently decorated with creams, toppings, frostings or icing to make them more attractive, just as women use make-up to improve their outward appearance, which explains their use in fashion articles.⁸

Another important aspect of the ideological underpinning of the WOMAN AS DESSERT metaphor is the fact that most terms belonging to this group present women as juicy desserts made to be cut and shared (Hines 1999b, Baider & Gesuato 2003). Thus, by presenting women as a separate or detached portion, as a fragment of anything, they are being deprived of their uniqueness, because, after all, a piece of cake is exactly the same as another piece of cake (Hines 1999b). This distinction between mass and count nouns might well hint at the idea of availability and promiscuity. Indeed, a portion of something is always easier to grab and, at the same time, it is not filling enough, that is, one might be willing to have another serving (especially noticeable in the case of snacks). As a matter of fact, the very words *pie*, *piece*, *tart* and *cake* carry the suggestions of promiscuity, availability and easiness. Common idiomatic expressions which spring to one's mind are *a piece of cake*, *easy as pie* or *to have a finger in the pie*.⁹

Therefore, although associations with sweetness, softness, delicacy and beauty might mislead the reading public to take these food metaphors as terms of endearment or even compliments, an analysis of the assumptions that inform the use of such linguistic products reveals that in many instances food camouflages sexual desire. In fact, casting women in the guise of foodstuffs enables the language user to present females as objects of lust. As has been seen, the usage of food metaphors in female magazines tends to be linked to sexual desirability. This coalescence of sex and food, which nicely corresponds with G. Lakoff's (1987) metaphors THE OBJECT OF LUST IS FOOD and LUST IS HUNGER, certainly proves very effective to obfuscate the main idea condensed in such metaphoric identifications, namely, that women are sexual objects. This is so mainly because of the favourable associations these metaphoric instantiations trigger. Indeed, the metaphor WOMEN ARE DESSERTS falls into what Chamizo and Sánchez (2000) call "pleasant

⁷ Hines (1999: 47) traces the evolution of the WOMAN AS DESSERT metaphor: "It begins harmlessly enough with the ubiquitous metaphor PEOPLE ARE OBJECTS, an example of which is the special case that George Lakoff, Jane Espenson, and Alan Schwartz have called PEOPLE ARE BUILDINGS, as in *Eyes are windows to the soul* (1991:192). This ungendered metaphor collides (and colludes) with the cultural stereotype "women are sweet" (as in the nursery rhyme "What are little girls made of?/ Sugar and spice and everything nice...") and with another common metaphor, ACHIEVING A DESIRED OBJECT IS GETTING SOMETHING TO EAT (as in *She tasted victory*), yielding WOMEN ARE SWEET OBJECTS (in this case, DESSERTS)."

⁸ Actually, another word for *make up* is *frosting* and *to tart up* is *to dress up* (Hines 1999b).

⁹ Interestingly, the dessert metaphor can also be applied to men (e.g. *He's a piece of cake*, with the idea of "easy to deal with", "not really terrible" or "unimportant") but in a very restricted way and generally without any sexual connotations.

spheres”, which include the metaphors TO COPULATE IS TO EAT, TO COPULATE IS TO PLAY and TO COPULATE IS TO TRAVEL. As a shielded form of discourse (Keith & Burrige 1991), all the aforementioned metaphors disguise the issue of sex. However, what distinguishes them from other common euphemistic metaphors of the type TO COPULATE IS TO WAGE WAR, TO HUNT, TO TRADE, etc. is the pleasant target domains that they activate. Travelling, playing and eating are enjoyable activities themselves and, thus, constitute an effective mechanism to clothe potentially face-threatening issues. Certainly, metaphoric instantiations such as *shoot, nail, bang, go fishing* or *do business*, although euphemistic in nature, trigger less favourable associations than, say, *to have a piece of cake* or *a bit of jam* for whereas the former may suggest physical violence, killing and economic interests, only are the latter an enjoyable experience for the senses.

The success of the WOMAN AS DESSERT metaphor is well attested not only in its widespread usage and acceptance, but also in the metaphorical network created by such a metaphor. In fact, as has been seen, the metaphorical identification of women with sweets has not stopped in the conceptualisation of women in the form of *tarts* or *cookies*, but the field of confectionery has become a rich source to present young women as ingredients (*pastry, honey*) that will produce *tarts, pies* or even *delicacies*, when the woman is beautiful and sexually mature; snacks (*candies, cookies*), when the woman is attractive but the relationship with her is neither long nor serious; *puddings*, if the woman is plump, and, as seen in (11) and (12), who become *ovens with buns* when pregnant and whose beauty can be *sniffed* and *taken from the oven*.¹⁰

- (11) Does Nicole Kidman **have a “bun in the oven”**? That is the question being raised everywhere. It wouldn't be all that surprising, since she recently wed country singing star Keith Urban (www.starmagazine.com 1/22/2007).
- (12) From MTV **tartlet** to art-house **pastry** du jour. No wonder the adoring critics who **droolingly** dub her “luminous” are so eager to **gobble** Liv Tyler up. You can almost **sniff** a **just-from-the-oven** freshness about her as she strides into the room (*USA Today*, quoted in *The New Yorker*, July 15, 1996. p. 84).

5. WOMEN AS ANIMALS

One of the most common sets of linguistic metaphors in English applies the characteristics of animals to women and their activities (*cf* Nilsen 1994, 1996, Nesi 1995). The straightforward transfer of a name from an animal to a woman includes *kitten* (a young girl), *cow* (a mean nasty or fat woman) or *vixen* (an ill-tempered woman). All these animal images roughly correspond to the three main categories with which women are identified in teenage and women's magazines, namely, pets, farm and wild animals.

¹⁰ This coherent elaboration of metaphorical thinking can be seen in daily expressions used to talk about pregnancy. So, when a woman is pregnant she is conceived of as *having a bun in the oven* or *joining the Pudding Club* in British and American English respectively.

5.1. WOMEN AS PETS

Being kept for pleasure rather than utility and living under the same roof as their owners, pets enjoy a privileged position within the animal world. Indeed, pets are not conceived of as beasts of burden, nor are they killed for their meat or skin; on the contrary, pets are taken for a walk, caressed and fed. This protective attitude towards pets finds its way into language, for the very word *pet* is used as a term of endearment.

A clear case of prototypical pet is the dog. Also known as “man’s best friend”, dogs have a reputation for being faithful, noble and reliable. Yet, none of these qualities are transferred in the metaphorical identification of women with a dog’s female counterpart, since *bitch* is, in all probability, one of the most common terms of opprobrium for a woman (Hughes 1991). In spite of its original sense of *lewd*, in current usage *bitch* is understood as *nasty* or *snappy* (Baker 1981), condensing, then, the senses of malicious, spiteful and bossy. This term of abuse, nevertheless, appears in teenage and women’s magazines in articles encouraging women to be assertive.

- (13) Be **bitchy**. Some secret **bitching** with mates about you-know-who can help! (*CosmoGirl*, Sep. 2003, p. 90).
- (14) Men Accuse Women of Not Being Witty—Just **Bitchy** (*Cosmopolitan*, Oct. 2001).
- (15) Be a **bitch**. You’re smarter than that phony who’s playing mind games with you. Fight back by calling her out on it. (http://magazines.ivillage.com/cosmopolitan/sex/astrologer/spc/0,,284393_294235,00.html 4/29/05).

Determination in a woman, thus, is presented as a negative trait, being linguistically channelled through the pejorative *bitch*. Likewise, other qualities such as success, independence and economic status, highly esteemed in a man, turn into burdens in the case of women judging from the following examples in which powerful women are labelled as *bitches*.

- (16) Confessions of the **Bitch** and Famous. The inside stories of celebrity bad girls, including Pink, Shirley Manson and Catya Sassoon. (*Cosmopolitan*, June 2002, p. 3).
- (17) **Bitches** we love (*Cosmopolitan*, March 2004, p. 72).

Interestingly, reversing the submissive role traditionally assigned to females takes on the form of an animal in these publications, as though setting powerful women apart from the human group. In fact, animal metaphors clearly mark the dichotomy animal/human and are frequently employed to encode aggressive behaviour (Lakoff & Turner 1989, Kövecses 2002). Seen in this light, then, powerful women are presented as creatures to be feared, presupposing the inappropriateness of such power.

Similar considerations are seen at work with the metaphoric *cat*. Unlike dogs, in folk understanding cats are well-known for being sly, independent and even

treacherous, characteristics that are not valued in a woman. *Cat*, indeed, denotes a malicious woman and its usage in the press tends to be linked to powerful females, as (18) referring to a successful woman shows. On other occasions, however, the baby cat *kitten* is used in the press, but this time its metaphorical usage has nothing to do with power, but rather with sexual desirability.¹¹ Here the age factor seems to play an important role for crediting the animal term with favourable overtones.¹² After all, baby animals pose a lesser threat to man due to their lack of experience and can be easily domesticated. Furthermore, small size also seems to be a positive quality for endowing the animal term with positive connotations (Hines 1999a, Halupka-Rešetar 2003, Baider & Gesuato 2005). Together with this, the typical image of kittens playing with balls of wool as well as the entertaining function most pets have are captured in its figurative usage because, when applied to a woman, *kitten* implies playfulness and skittishness, reducing women to the category of sexual playthings.

(18) Cool **cat** Liz nabs herself some timeless chic (*CosmoGirl*, Sep. 2003, p. 20).

(19) Which **kitty** is the biggest slave to fashion? (*Top of the Pop*, Jan. 2004, p. 40).

(20) This season's staple strand style for all sex **kittens**: coooooomphy roots, pushed up and pinned, with a ruffled texture that you'd get after a night in bed. (*Cosmopolitan*, Feb. 2005, p. 212).

5.2. WOMEN AS FARMYARD ANIMALS

Animals are bred for utility, sport, pleasure or research, and farm animals, no doubt, fall into the first category. Unlike pets, whose main function is to entertain and provide company, livestock animals exist to be exploited and eaten. They render service to man, either by helping him in farm labour or by producing foods (e.g. milk, eggs, meat). These two characteristics yield the factors of servitude and edibility, factors which will be central to the metaphoric identifications of women with farm animals (*cf* Wierbizcka 1996, Martsa 1999, 2003, Brennan 2005).

Within the farmyard ambience, names of fowl are a rich source for metaphors, the most frequent ones being chickens and hens (Baker 1981, Hines 1999a, Cruz & Tejedor 2006).¹³ The consideration of size, once again, is relevant here too, for these animals are small, with the resulting protective attitude attached to them. Besides,

¹¹ See Kövecses' (2002) SEXUALLY ATTRACTIVE WOMEN ARE KITTENS.

¹² In fact, youth is perhaps one of the most desirable qualities in a woman. Whereas getting older gives man respect, status and wisdom; ageing is not only unacceptable for a woman, but it is also a cause of derision. Several animal metaphors bear witness to society's views on old women. Compare, for example, *old nag* in relation to *filly*, *old crow* or *old bat* in relation to *bird*, *chicken* as opposed to *hen* and even the adjective *cattish* as compared to *kittenish* (Nilsen 1994).

¹³ Baker's (1981) survey of bird terms for women rendered the following species: chick, chicken, hen, canary, quail, pigeon, dove, parakeet and hummingbird. None of the terms listed were birds associated with intelligence or nobility (as are the owl, the hawk or the eagle); neither were they standards of beauty (as is the case of the pheasant, the peacock or the swam), predators, aggressive or independent.

judging these birds on the basis of appearance, one soon discovers that neither the chicken nor the hen are paradigms of beauty or intelligence, but, by contrast, tend to stand out for their dopey behaviour. Lack of intellect, apparently, underlies the metaphorical identification of women with hens and chickens; a hypothesis that might be corroborated by the wide repertoire of language forms encoding stupid behaviour through bird names. Suffice it to consider, for instance, *turkey*, *dodo*, *bird brain* or *for the birds*.

Another important aspect to consider has to do with the living conditions of these animals. When one thinks of the way chickens and hens are kept, associations with a tiny space packed with a crowd of animals squashed together, just being fed for future consumption and deprived of movement to speed the process of gaining weight are easily established. Such living conditions make these animals practically undistinguishable and it is this trait of lack of individuality which might prompt its figurative usage, as inferred from these extracts.

- (21) 12 Things Every *Cosmo* Girl's Gotta Ditch From Her Life. These bad little habits, phobias, and self-sabotaging moves could be holding back a fabulous **chick** like you. (*Cosmopolitan*, Feb. 2005, p. 173).
- (22) Happy **chicks** know when to hang and when to hibernate (*Cosmopolitan*, April 2005, p. 188).
- (23) One Naughty Night Won't Ruin Your Rep Even the most discerning **chick** might wake up thinking, *I can't believe I made out with our office intern*. (*Cosmopolitan*, April 2005, p. 136).

In the light of some articles, one might venture to say that there seems to be a strong sexual component beneath the metaphoric *chick*. Indeed, *chick* is applied to an adolescent or young woman, as opposed to *hen*, which tends to be reserved for older women. The link between *chicks* and sexual desire can be explained in terms of youth and size, like in the previous case of *kitten/cat*, but, perhaps, such a connection can be better assessed in terms of edibility.

As already seen, edibility is one of the many linguistic strategies used on talking about sex and was one of the main assumptions vertebrating the WOMAN AS DESSERT metaphor. Chickens and farmyard animals in general are mainly reared for consumption. Certainly, animals are an important source of nourishment. In so far as they are food, then, the figurative use of *chicken* may hide sexual appetite or desirability, which might certainly explain the presence of this animal word in the excerpts below, most of which deal with sexual matters.

- (24) What a difference a year makes! Trashy street kids TLC have dumped the baggy togs and developed into sexy **chicks**. (*Nineteen*, Feb. 1995, p. 57).
- (25) Be his sexy spring **chicken** (*Cosmopolitan*, March 2005, p. 237).
- (26) Secret Sex Fears All Guys Have. **Chicks** aren't the only ones who panic pre-eded. See what dudes stress about. (*Cosmopolitan*, Feb. 2005, p. 74).

By the same token, edibility appears to play an important role in the categorisation of women as *hens*. *Hen* denotes an older female chicken and, therefore, is applied to middle-aged and old women. However, unlike the term *chick*, *hen* does not hold any hint of physical beauty, but, by contrast, suggests an older animal whose flesh is not tender enough to be eaten and, hence, whose main function is to lay eggs, that is, to provide food or generate chickens. Thus, despite the fact that both a chicken and a hen are consumed as food, the former constitutes a main course and is highly esteemed for its tenderness, whereas the latter tends to be reserved for dishes of lower consistency such as broth or soup, which leads to the conflation of food with sexual desire. That is, because middle-aged women are less sexually desirable, they are conceptualised in the form of *hens*, which reminds one that the traditional party held to celebrate one's last moments as a single woman is called in British English a *hen party*. Here the concept of marriage goes hand in hand with sexual availability. Marriage puts upon women the signal that they are not sexually available. Therefore, in the transition from adolescence to womanhood, a female moves from *chick* to *hen*, as shown in the following excerpts:

- (27) When to marry is a huge decision in most women's lives, these days, many sexy **single Cosmo chicks** are putting off getting hitched until their mid to late 20s and even 30s" (*Cosmopolitan*, April 2005, p. 183).
- (28) Enjoy your last moments as a **single chick** with a wild **hen party** (*In Touch*, May 2002).

The metaphoric *chick* has caught on in the press to such an extent that it has generated a whole network of spin-offs. So, a film produced for girls is no longer a girl movie, but a *chick flick*, an actress performing in a girl movie becomes a *chick flick chick*, material to produce a film for women turns into *chick flick fodder*, the lyrics of songs dealing with women's concerns are viewed as *chick antics*, parties for women turn into *chick fetes* and literature devoted to women is labelled as *chick lit*.

- (29) **Chick-flick alert:** This month, Goodwin stars in *Mona Lisa Smile*-think *Dead Poets Society* with short pleated skirts- (*Vanity Fair*, Jan. 2004, p. 75).
- (30) In this sassy look at 2004's biggest? and busiest? celebs, experts name Lindsay Lohan as Hollywood Hottie, Renée Zellweger as **Chick Flick Chick** and Jude Law the reigning Role Hog (six flicks in all!). (*Us*, Dec. 20, 2004, p. 106).
- (31) Her as-yet-unfinished debut, *P.S. I Love You*, follows Holly, a woman whose boyfriend dies of a brain tumor but leaves her one letter for each month of the year after his death. Sounds like **chick-flick fodder?** and Ahern's agent told Reuters she expects a movie deal to be done this month. (*Time*, Jan. 20, 2003, p. 60).
- (32) Courtney Love, America's Sweetheart. She's known for her **rock-chick antics**, but it's time to check out her melodic rock. (*Cosmopolitan*, March 2004, p. 50).

- (33) Lots of dishing at this **chick fete** ...hang with the girls more. (*Cosmopolitan*, Feb. 2005, p. 186).
- (34) There's a secret about **chick lit**, that diary-style fiction genre (spawned by *Bridget Jones's Diary*) featuring quirky, feisty protagonists on a mission to land their dream life, or at least shoe. (http://love.ivillage.com/snd/0,,doyenne_rvq3,00.html,4/11/05).

5.3. WOMEN AS WILD ANIMALS

Unlike pets and farmyard animals, which largely depend on man for their survival, wild animals enjoy complete freedom. They are not subject to man's control, nor do they need him for food, shelter or protection. On the contrary, wild animals are independent, able to survive on their own and very often pose a threat to man.

As has been seen, the set of animal images used for women usually present them as small and helpless animals, in need of care and protection, and whose main function is to provide entertainment and food. The conceptualisation of women as wild animals, however, does not adjust to this pattern. In fact, instead of cats, dogs, chicks or hens, wild animals turn the tables, for no longer are they the lovable animals that provide company or can be exploited for man's advantage, but are menacing, that is, dangerous.

The fox is a prototypical example of wild animal. Foxes are not the small, indefensible animals totally reliant on man's aid. Indeed, not only are foxes of a considerable size, but they are also predators, a trait which does not seem to fit into the previous animal images analysed in which women were presented as domesticated or tamed animals. Besides, foxes stand out for their artfulness and smartness, as old sayings bear witness to (e.g. *as cunning as a fox* or *as sly as a fox*). In fact, as Baker (1981) has noticed, foxes are the only animals used metaphorically for women which are paradigms of intelligence. Nevertheless, the figurative usage of the animal term when applied to women does not reflect any hint of intellectual capacity, but, on the contrary, sexual innuendoes are seen at work. Such a reversal might respond to the fact that all animals are lower forms of existence and, therefore, man has complete control over them.

More often than not under the figurative use of *fox* in teenage and women's magazines there lurks a strong sexual component.¹⁴ Extract (35) equates young attractive celebrities who love partying with *foxes* whereas in the other three *fox* clearly lays a stress on being sexually attractive. Moreover, *fox* and the adjective *foxy* seem to hint at hunting. It is as though women dressed up and made themselves up in order to chase men, which might create the illusion of the woman as the hunter and the man as the prey.

¹⁴ Phonetic considerations might also play an important role in the figurative use of *fox* with the sense of sexually *attractive*. In this regard, Leach (1964: 27) states that "it needs only a slight vowel shift in *fox* to produce the obscene *flux*."

- (35) It's been a massive year for those feisty **foxes**. (*Top of the Pop*, Jan. 2004, p. 40).
- (36) Operation makeover. Think he sees you as one of the lads? Get your **foxiest** friend to make you over for the day. (*CosmoGirl*, Oct. 2003, p. 82).
- (37) Bin all your back-of-the-drawer pants and feel secretly **foxy** every day of the week. (*CosmoGirl*, Oct. 2003, p. 82).
- (38) Eva Mendes's 2 **foxy** 2 flirty tresses. (*Cosmopolitan*, Feb. 2005, p. 215).

In like manner, the female counterpart *vixen* is also loaded with negative associations, being defined as an ill-tempered or quarrelsome woman.

Aggressiveness seems to be the main characteristic for the encoding of this animal metaphor judging from the examples below dealing with successful business women. Once more, women with power are presented as menacing animals, as a threat to man, hinting at the idea of intrusion in the male field of business.

- (39) My night with New York's dating **vixens**. (*Cosmopolitan*, Nov. 2001, p. 109).
- (40) Victorian **Vixen** (.....) Sarah Jessica Parker in this funky twist on romantic style (*Cosmopolitan*, March 2005, p. 160).

On other occasions, *vixen* carries the idea of the predator waiting for its prey. Relationships are often conceptualised in terms of hunting and, as seen, most animal terms metaphorically portray the man in the role of the hunter, whereas the woman assumes the passive role of the prey. In the encoding of animal metaphors, it appears that the event and its participants are almost always presented as the agent that performs whereas the female adopts the role of recipient, patient, senser or marginal agent (Halliday 1985). The transitivity analysis of many metaphorical expressions likening animals with women present the latter as the one to be tamed, domesticated or hunted and, as is well attested, in the different networks of euphemisms that conceal sexual intercourse in terms of hunting, riding, fighting, etc. the woman is traditionally the passive one (*cf* Chamizo & Sánchez 2000). Nonetheless, when the roles are reversed, that is, the woman takes on the active role of the hunter, she is portrayed as a menacing animal, as though implying the inappropriateness of such power, as seen in the following extracts in which women take the reins as far as relationships are concerned.

- (41) Gabrielle (Eva Longoria) may not need the extra attention, but it pays to be prepared for a visit from her hot young gardener/lover. Nothing says "cradle-rob-**vixen**" like leopard and lace. (*Star*, Nov. 29, 2004, p. 76).
- (42) No wonder this blonde **vixen** is a repeat divorcee! What spouse could possibly stand the heat that Edie (Nicollette Sheridan) is cookin' up in this sizzling negligee? (*Star*, Nov. 29, 2004, p. 77).

In order to better assess the implications conveyed under the WOMAN AS ANIMAL metaphor, it is necessary to return to the Great Chain of Being so that the

dichotomy animal/human can be used as a springboard in the unveiling of the assumptions that inform the use of animal metaphors. Humans are above animals in the Great Chain of Being and what distinguishes them from beasts is the rational capacity. Seeing people as animals, thus, attributes the former with the instinctual or bestial qualities of the latter.

In fact, animal metaphors bring to the fore instinctual behaviour by means of the application of the DIVIDED SELF metaphor (*cf* Lakoff & Johnson 1999, Kövecses 2005), which conceptualizes people as consisting of a rational part (the subject) and an emotional bodily part (the self).¹⁵ Such a metaphoric theme presupposes that what distinguishes man from other species is his rational capacity, in other words, his ability to control his behaviour. According to this belief, then, there is an animal inside each person and civilized people are expected to restrain their animal instincts, letting their rational side rule over them. The metaphors ANGER IS ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR (Nayak & Gibbs 1990), PASSIONS ARE BEASTS INSIDE US (Kövecses 1988), CONTROL OF AN UNPREDICTABLE/UNDESIRABLE FORCE IS A RIDER'S CONTROL OF A HORSE (MacArthur 2005) or A LUSTFUL PERSON IS AN ANIMAL (Lakoff 1987) conceptualise extreme behaviour and, therefore, lack of control, by resorting to a common scenario: the animal kingdom.

The notion of control appears to underlie the metaphorical identification of women with animals. Whether in the form of pets (*cat, bitch*), farm (*hen, chicken*) or wild animals (*fox, vixen*), women are portrayed as in dire need of subjugation (Brennan 2005). This need for control ultimately implies the idea of domesticity and servitude, since animals are either tamed, domesticated or hunted.

Furthermore, as has been noticed, images of women in the guise of animals frequently convey sexual innuendoes. Obviously, because animal metaphors usually highlight our most primary needs, they become suitable vehicles to encompass sexual behaviour. In fact, the metaphors A LUSTFUL PERSON IS AN ANIMAL (Lakoff 1987) and PASSIONS ARE BEASTS INSIDE US (Kövecses 1988) represent the inability to refrain sexual urge by drawing from the animal domain. Along with this, the fact that most animals with which women are identified can be hunted (wild animals), eaten (livestock) or played with (pets) might hint at the metaphors SEX IS HUNTING, SEX IS EATING and SEX IS PLAYING respectively (*cf* Chamizo & Sánchez 2000) in which hunting, food and games are conflated with sexual desire.

Teenage and women's magazines seem to show a clear preference for small animals in the representation of women. Size, indeed, appears to be a key component in the choice of the animal name and small animals by far outnumber big ones. Moreover, from the extracts analysed, it might be inferred that the names of small animals are more likely to be endowed with positive evaluations than that of big ones. In fact, as Hines' (1999a, 1999b) works on English metaphors about women bear witness, one of the most common conceptualisations of desired women

¹⁵ In fact, following related analyses in Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco (2002) we can say that the animal metaphor is a case of metaphoric chaining by enrichment of the DIVIDED SELF metaphor. The behavioural aspects of the self are seen as the corresponding instinctual aspects of an animal.

takes the form of small animals. The so-called DESIRED WOMAN AS SMALL ANIMAL metaphor establishes a connection between animals that are small or young and attractive women.

Given that the female is usually of a smaller stature than the male, the choice of small animal names might well be based on physical grounds. Yet, another plausible and less explicit interpretation hidden in such a correspondence could point to an attitude of minimizing women (Baker 1981, Hughes 1991). Actually, the connection of women with what is minor, insignificant and diminutive is relevant here, being at the core of most metaphorical terms for women, as shown in the analysis of the WOMAN AS DESSERT metaphor in which women were seen as fragments, portions and slices, but not as a whole, and also in the animal realm with the use of diminutives like *kitty*, together with *pet* and offspring names.

Generally, hand in hand with size goes weakness. Most of the animals with which women are identified in these magazines are not paragons of strength, as noticed by the heavy representation of animal names in the group of pets and livestock as opposed to the scarcity in the wild category. Interestingly, weakness in an animal is usually regarded as a favourable trait for crediting the animal name with favourable connotations. Obviously, the smaller size and lesser strength of the animal give man a decided advantage in the successful application of physical force.

Finally, and also intertwined with size and weakness is age. In general terms, when women are conceptualised as animals, the names of offspring are preferred (e.g. *chick*, *kitten*). Such is the case of pets and to a lesser extent farm animals, where the size and youth of the animal play a determinant role in the encoding of the metaphor, implying immaturity (the lack of age involves inexperience), helplessness (unlike other animals, pets and farmyard animals need to be looked after by human beings) and either domesticity, in the case of pets (the whole life of pets spins around the house), and servitude, in the case of farm animals (reared to be eaten or serve man). That youth is an important factor in the encoding of animal metaphors can be attested in the connotative shift of several animal pairs in the transition from childhood to adulthood. As has been seen, *kitten/cat* and *chicken/hen* are such of those pairs in which the offspring carries positive evaluations whereas the more mature animal is loaded with negative ones.

6. WOMEN AS BABIES

The portrayal of women as babies is another semantic device frequently employed by teenage and women's magazines in the representation of females. Experiences with babies may certainly prompt favourable associations in the encoding of the metaphor. Generally, babies awaken in us feelings of tenderness and protection and, therefore, the metaphor might be established on the grounds of affection. However, when examining the actual usage in female publications, certain sexual nuances seem to be conveyed on the basis of such a metaphorical identification.

The first thing that draws our attention when examining the metaphorical identification of women as babies is that, unlike in the previous cases analysed

where women descended in the hierarchy of the Great Chain of Being to become foods and animals, for the first time females are put on the same level as human beings. Yet, although in the human group, women are still presented as inferiors, for they are not mature human beings, but babies.

Certainly, babies are adults-to-be, that is, they are young small beings that require full-time attention. Babies are defenceless and need to be protected because they are unable to do anything on their own, which might explain the metaphorical use of *baby* in those articles encouraging women to take the initiative as regards finding a job, working out or buying new clothes, as shown in the extracts below:

- (43) Work it **baby!** Make your Saturday job work for you (*CosmoGirl*, Oct. 2003, p. 82).
- (44) Work it **Baby!** Look fab in the office with our 166 fashion finds (*Cosmopolitan*, Feb. 2002, p. 108).
- (45) Shagadelic, **Baby!** Score in these psychedelic underthings. (*Cosmopolitan*, Feb. 2005, p. 13).

On most occasions, however, *baby* and *babe* are used in a playful way. Obviously, babies and games tend to go hand in hand because people usually play with babies. This playful element has led some authors to include the metaphoric *baby* and *babe* within the WOMAN AS PLAYTHING metaphor (cf Baker 1981). Seen from this perspective, both *baby* and *babe* might be an abbreviated form for “baby (doll)”. Dolls, in turn, activate associations of entertainment and pastime, as opposed to more serious issues, and, at the same time, suggest physical beauty. This conflation of sexual attraction and entertainment might hint at the metaphor SEX IS PLAYING (cf Chamizo & Sánchez 2000), as seen in the excerpts below.

- (46) It's not complicated, but oh, **baby**, it is potent. You see, when you feel foxy, you exude passion, electricity, va-va-va-voomness, major **babehood**? you get the point. (http://magazines.ivillage.com/redbook/sex/turn/articles/0,,284443_566492,00.html 4/11/05).
- (47) if you really want to be his sex-rated boudoir **babe**, read on for some sure-fire ways to fuel his lust-for good! (*Cosmopolitan*, March 2004, p. 117).
- (48) Who's that **babe** in the bedroom? Why, it's you, of course! (http://magazines.ivillage.com/redbook/sex/turn/articles/0,,284443_566492,00.html 4/11/05).

7. WOMEN AS ARISTOCRATS

When dealing with the metaphoric identifications of women with aristocrats (e.g. *queen*, *princess*), the first thing to bear in mind is the cultural framework provided by the Great Chain of Being. Indeed, as opposed to the previous metaphors analysed where women descended in the hierarchy of the chain to become animals, foods or

babies, the WOMAN AS ARISTOCRAT metaphor places the woman above the level of the ordinary man to move on to the realms of the royalty.

In order to better assess the metaphor under discussion some historical background needs to be recalled. Throughout history one of the most common systems of government was the monarchy. The sovereign concentrated all the power and wealth and his subjects had to comply with his orders. Besides, it was frequently believed that the king's power stemmed from God. Although having fewer prerogatives than the king, the queen also occupied a privileged place within society. Commoners had to show courtesy to the queen and obey her orders and wishes. The high status of the queen together with the feudal relationship of vassalage are somehow retained in its metaphoric usage, for *queen* applies to any woman who stands out for her achievements in a particular field:

- (49) Craft **queen** (*Cosmo Girl*, April, 2004, p. 7).
- (50) The **queen** of the night (*Cosmopolitan*, Dec. 2003, front page).
- (51) Alesha's in a relationship now, but in her heyday she was the flirting **queen** (*Cosmopolitan*, March 2002, p. 364).
- (52) The karaoke **queen** (*Cosmo Girl*, Aug. 2003, p. 141).

In most cases, however, female magazines seem to exploit the notion of proficiency encapsulated by the figurative *queen* in the sexual arena, as seen in the following extracts in which women are provided with sexual tricks to satisfy their partners:

- (53) Be **Queen** of the Mattress (http://magazines.ivillage.com/cosmopolitan/men/menu/articles/0,,426365_530106-5,00.html 5/11/2005).
- (54) **queen** of pleasure (*Cosmopolitan*, <http://quiz.ivillage.com/cosmopolitan/tests/sexsurvey.htm>, 10/12/2005).
- (55) Take note and you'll become his sex **queen** (*Cosmopolitan*, May 2002, p. 3).
- (56) **Queen** of his erotic dreams (*Top of the Pop*, 2004).

One step below the queen are princesses. As members of the royalty, the metaphoric *princess* bears striking similarities to *queen* in the sense that both are placed higher than the layman in the Great Chain of Being. Therefore, the attributes outlined for *queen* equally apply in this case. Higher status, power and dominance are highlighted in these examples presenting successful women.

- (57) Britney may have been pop's No. 1 **princess** in the past, but we'd say the shoe is now firmly on her rival's foot (*New*, Aug. 2, 2004, p. 30).
- (58) Picky **princess**. Wow, you make Pink look like a pushover! Independent and self-assured, you know exactly what you're looking for in a guy (*CosmoGirl*, April, 2004, p. 97).

8. WOMEN AS SUPERNATURAL CREATURES

From heavenly creatures watching over man's life to diabolical beings lurking to engulf mortals, images of women as supernatural beings are part and parcel of teenage and women's magazines. Witches, sirens, harpies, goddesses and angels intervene in human affairs. Sometimes, they use their powers to help men on their way; on most occasions, however, their powers are directed against them. In fact, the repertoire of metaphors designating supernatural women in female magazines reveals an extreme dichotomy of praise and abuse (Hughes 1991). At one extreme, one encounters terms belonging to the language of worship and salvation (e.g. *angel, goddess*) whereas on the opposite end are malignant creatures with devilish associations (*siren, vampire, dark angel*).

Within the field of spiritual creatures, goddesses rank the highest in the Great Chain of Being. Placed at the top, they are the embodiment of perfection and power and as such paragons to be imitated. Goddesses, indeed, are to be adored, which accounts for their figurative usage in those articles presenting successful women as models to be followed.

(59) Gwen Stefani. A Rock **Goddess** With Major Issues (*Rolling Stone*, Jan 27, 2005, front page).

(60) Ms. Stewart navigates legal, financial and cultural hurdles to re-establish herself as America's homemaking **goddess**. (*The Dallas Morning News*, Sat. March 5, 2005, front page).

However, as has been seen, power and women do not usually go hand-in-hand and the metaphor under discussion is no exception. In fact, on most occasions, *goddess* appears in the collocation *sex goddess*, the sense of power being downplayed by the idea of physical beauty and sexual expertise.

(61) Cheat's guide to being a beach **goddess** (*Cosmopolitan*, June 2002, p. 89).

(62) Okay, so exactly how do you become one of those women who know that they're **sex goddesses**? (*Cosmopolitan*, http://magazines.ivillage.com/redbook/sex/turn/articles/0,,284443_566492,00.html 11 Apr. 2005).

(63) 10 Ways to Unleash Your Inner **Sex goddess** (<http://love.ivillage.com/lnssex/sex-technique/0,,9nqs,00.html> 5/21/05).

Beneath goddesses stand angels. Also within the field of celestial creatures, angels usually stand out for their loveliness, caring attitude and graciousness. Besides, angels are supposed to be asexual and pure; elements that might account for its figurative sense when applied to caring and nice women.

(64) Success seemed heaven-sent, but this **angel** had to earn her wings. (*Entertainment Weekly*, Special Collector Issue, Fall 2000, p. 14).

(65) Be an **angel** (*CosmoGirl*, May 2001).

At the other extreme of the scale are malignant supernatural creatures such as sirens, termagants, dark angels and vampires. Although most people would associate sirens with beautiful women half human half fish, the truth is that these mythological creatures lured mariners to destruction by their singing. This tempting quality has been retained in its figurative usage and, in the light of these examples, *siren* conveys the idea of powerful sexual attraction.

- (66) Sarcastic sleuth Velma, played by sardonic **siren** Janeane Garofalo. (*Entertainment Weekly*, Oct. 27, 2000, p. 14).
- (67) Soap **Siren**. Longoria's role on *The Young and the Restless* took her to the 2001 Daytime Emmy Awards. (*Marie Claire*, April 2005, p. 78).
- (68) Backstage with Britney. International sex **siren** (*Cosmopolitan*, Feb. 2002, p. 45).
- (69) Aren't you the kama sutra **siren**? (http://magazines.ivillage.com/cosmopolitan/sen/no/articles/0,,544153_633458,00.html 5/1/05).

Another evil creature used in the identification of women is the vampire. The original belief had it that vampires were reanimated corpses that sought nourishment and did harm by sucking people's blood. This idea of thirst for blood is somehow retained in female magazines when *vampire* is metaphorically applied to a woman who indulges herself on food.

- (70) Veggie **vamp**: I eat pretty healthfully. Most of the time, I follow a vegan diet, but my weakness is cheese. (*Cosmopolitan*, April, 2004, p. 24).
- (71) Don't become a fast food **vamp** (*In Touch*, Feb. 2001).

Sometimes, the metaphorical *vampire* is tinged with clear sexual connotations. Interestingly, such usage appears in descriptions of powerful successful women, somehow suggesting that they achieve their goals by sexual means. Indeed, it seems likely that the associations of vampires with people who exploit others for their advantage motivates the metaphor. Besides, as so often happens in language, power does not seem to collocate with women, which explains the activation of sex along with the idea of taking advantage of others in order to justify the power of these women.

- (72) A **vampy** sex symbol (<http://www.style.com/vogue/feature/072103/index.html> 4/11/05).

Finally we will refer to the dark angel. The antagonists of good angels, dark angels were said to be the allies of Satan, who rebelled against God. Such rebellious qualities of these creatures seem to match with their metaphorical usage when applied to females that are well-known for their unruly behaviour, as seen below:

- (73) Dark **Angel**. Christina Ricci is going through another rebellious stage (<http://www.style.com/vogue/feature/061102/index.html> 4/11/05).

- (74) Naomi Campbell [.....] the **dark angel**'s latest scandal (<http://www.style.com/vogue/feature/061109/index.html> 4/11/05).

9. CONCLUSION

Female magazines help women make sense of their collective experiences by providing models for women to follow. Flicking through the pages of these publications, one encounters a host of repeated topics providing women with instructions on how to dress, look, talk, act, eat, etc., creating homogeneity in the female group and, therefore, leaving little room for individuality (Curri 1999, Kim et al. 2004). In fact, the media dictate who women are, for instead of portraying real women, the media construct socially accepted notions of what women should be like. In other words, these magazines do not mirror women's concerns, interests or even women themselves, but rather, borrowing Gitlin's metaphor (2003: 29), they become fun-house mirrors distorting reality. Unattainable canons of beauty bordering on emaciation, advertisements of unaffordable fashion, articles dealing with trivial issues that simply reinforce the stereotypical vision of the sexes and an illusion of freedom of choice which does not surpass the freedom to choose between brands of eye-liners or products to combat cellulite are the staple of these publications.

In any event, the deleterious models created by the media are not limited to the presentation of unattainable standards of beauty and wealth by means of photographs but transcend the solely visual to enter into the domains of language (Gauntlett 2002, Gough-Yates 2003). Indeed, many of the negative images that we find in women's magazines are conveyed through linguistic means. As has been seen throughout the pages of the present article, metaphoric identifications of women abound in teenage and women's magazines, and one frequently comes across images of women construed as foods, animals, parts of the body, babies, supernatural creatures and members of the nobility.

The choice of metaphor as a vehicle to transmit stereotyped images of womanhood proves very effective due to the way metaphor works. In talking about one thing in terms of another, metaphor has the power to disguise the message, and, obviously, this is especially convenient when what is hidden is of a negative nature (Low 1998). Together with this, the use of these sexist metaphors in everyday language has become so pervasive that their original intent may no longer be discerned. Hence, these metaphors are posited as truth and accepted at face value.

The success of these metaphors is well attested not only in their widespread usage and acceptance but also in the metaphorical networks created by such metaphors. Hence, the domestic *chick* not only has become interchangeable with *girl*, but it has generated a whole network of spin-offs. So, a film produced for girls is no longer a girl movie, but a *chick flick*, an actress performing in a girl movie becomes a *chick flick chick*, material to produce a film for women turns into *chick flick fodder*, the lyrics of songs dealing with women's concerns are *chick antics*, parties for women turn into *chick fetes* and literature devoted to women is labelled as *chick lit*. In like manner, the metaphorical identification of women with sweets

has not ceased in the conceptualisation of women in the form of *tarts* or *cookies*, but the field of confectionary has enlarged to present young women as ingredients (*pastry* or *sugar*) that will produce *tarts* or even *delicacies*, when the woman is beauty and sexually mature, snacks (*cookies*, *candies*) when the relationship with the woman is neither serious nor intended to last for a long time, *puddings* if the woman is plump, *ovens with buns*, when pregnant, and whose beauty can be *sniffed* and taken *from the oven*.

Paradoxically, as this study has tried to elucidate, the dissemination of sexist metaphors is very often carried out by means of teenage and women's magazines. Obviously, because these magazines claim to be the advocates of women's rights, teenage girls and women are likely to be influenced by the authorial voice condensed in such publications. Thus, through linguistic socialisation females may incorporate these metaphors into their daily discourse and, as time goes by, without being aware, these negative images of women become internalised (Peirce 1990, Curri 1999, Eckert 2003).

The internalisation of these sexist metaphors may certainly take a toll on females for, however indirectly, these metaphors instil long-lasting values in women which will affect the way they see themselves in regard to their peers and society in general. In fact, when analysing the underlying assumptions that inform the use of such linguistic products, one soon realises that far from being terms of endearment, these metaphors deprive women of their uniqueness while reducing them to sexual objects that must cultivate their outward appearance in order to attract men (i.e. *foods*), that must be docile and submissive (i.e. *animals*), whose main role is to comply with man's sexual desire (i.e. *parts of the anatomy*), that need constant attention and care because they are childish and immature (i.e. *babies*), whose power is not natural and might have fatal consequences (i.e. *malignant supernatural creatures*) and, judging from the examples analysed, that only in very few cases are paragons of virtue, goodness, intelligence, beauty and power (i.e. *supernatural beings* and *members of the nobility*).

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