

The Metaphorical Conceptualization of Love in American Sitcoms

1. Introduction

Emotion concepts, and notably ROMANTIC LOVE, has received relatively wide scholarly attention within the constantly evolving field of cognitive sciences, particularly within metaphor research. Despite the wide scale of investigations carried out concerned with the metaphorical conceptualization of ROMANTIC LOVE, the examination of the concept in television programs, especially American situational comedies, is not that frequent of an occurrence. Within the field of cognitive linguistics, Zoltán Kövecses' studies presented in his 1988 work *The Language of Love: The Semantics of Passion in Conversational English*, further referenced in *Metaphor and Emotion* (2000) is the most current research available on the conceptualization of LOVE in conventional American English, leaving a considerable gap in our understanding of the concept. While Kövecses' work is based on data derived from interviews, this paper examines expressions of LOVE emerging from natural discourse within the context of American situational comedies, specifically within the series *How I Met Your Mother*. Airing from 2005 to 2014, the show offers metaphorical conceptualizations within a contemporary context.

How I Met Your Mother was one of the most well-known situational comedies during its airing, maintaining significant popularity even after its final episode. Having been available on both cable television and streaming services, it has been able to sustain a core audience from teenagers to adults in most countries of the world. All seasons were watched by above 8 million people on average, the series finale standing at an all-time high with 13.13 million viewers. Due to a large audience across a wide range in age, the show emerged into a pop-cultural phenomenon with scenes, theories, and other elements of it still being referenced and discussed on social media to this day. Given the show's focus on relationships, particularly romantic ones, among a group of friends living in the United States' most prominent melting pot, the concepts presented within it are more than likely to reflect broad ideas within American society, which may also influence the language use of people from different cultural backgrounds.

Based on the research gap concerning the conceptualization of ROMANTIC LOVE in a more contemporary setting, a number of questions emerged that I aim to answer in my paper:

1. What conceptual metaphors do the two main male characters, Ted Mosby and Barney Stinson use to describe LOVE as an emotion?
2. What conceptual metaphors do Ted and Barney use to describe romantic relationships?
3. What conceptual metaphors do Ted and Barney use to describe the individuals in a romantic relationship, especially women?

4. Out of the already existing love models (for the American models of LOVE see e.g. Kövecses 1988, 2000; for a more traditional model of LOVE see e.g. Szelid 2007, 2022), are any of them applicable to either Ted or Barney's conceptualizations?

In light of the aforementioned questions, I have developed the following hypotheses based on the findings of prior literature for my research.

1. I hypothesize that there are significant differences in the ways Ted and Barney conceptualize ROMANTIC LOVE and its related concepts (primarily LUST) due to the diversions in their experiences, lifestyles, occupations, personality traits, and worldviews.
2. I hypothesize that the metaphorical conceptualizations of Ted reflect a more traditional idea of ROMANTIC LOVE, which focuses on the relationship of the lovers, while Barney adopts a more modern and individualistic perspective that highlights passion, i.e., the concept of LUST as well as the profitability of a romantic relationship.
3. I hypothesize that Barney primarily uses negative source domains to conceptualize women, in contrast to Ted, which conceptual disparity can be attributed to their differing occupations and lifestyles.

During my research, I applied a quantitatively driven mixed-methods approach to analyze the conceptual metaphors and their meanings. The employed methodology is grounded in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), as it provides an effective way to systematically analyze the underlying cognitive processes and conceptual patterns of a concept using a significant amount of data. According to Kövecses, "in the cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain." Usually, the more concrete conceptual domain is what we draw a metaphorical expression from in order to understand a more abstract conceptual domain. Moreover, these domains also have special names. As he puts it, "the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expression to understand another conceptual metaphor is called SOURCE DOMAIN, while the conceptual domain that is understood this way is the TARGET DOMAIN." The correspondences between the two domains are what we call mappings, and what will be an integral part of the analysis process.

In the absence of official scripts, I turned to the transcripts of the episodes that can be found on online websites. The majority of the data collection happened by watching the television show itself, but for the sake of efficiency, as I had to return to the episodes multiple times during the research. Additionally, I relied on two websites: primarily, I used <https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/>, but occasionally supplemented this data from

<https://transcripts.foreverdreaming.org/> if a line was absent or faulty on the first website. I collected data from all 208 episodes of the series across nine seasons, compiling a comprehensive database of probable metaphorical linguistic expressions.

Following the compilation of my database, the next step was to identify the metaphorical expressions of LOVE and the BELOVED WOMAN. For this process, I applied the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) designed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007). The MIP consists of four steps that are necessary to be taken in order to make this distinguish literal expressions from metaphorical ones:

1. Read the entire text-discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text discourse.
3. (There are three possible outcomes):
 - (a) For each lexical unit, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning).
 - (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.
 - (c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current-contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.
4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical (p. 3).

Following these steps, I was able to identify the metaphorical expressions related to the concept of ROMANTIC LOVE (to what, for the sake of simplicity, I am going to refer as LOVE in the remaining of the paper) in the database and thus organize them into further categories based on their source domains. I compiled a comprehensive list of metaphorical expressions uttered by Ted and Barney that I sorted into categories, after which I was able to draw up the mappings for each metaphor, as will be presented in section 3 of my paper.

Following a general introduction that provides a basic framework for my research, I continue with placing it within context and presenting the most notable literary works concerned with the study of ROMANTIC LOVE within the field of cognitive linguistics, especially that with a focus on American society and culture (section 2). Next, I present the conceptual metaphors identified in the two studied male characters' (Ted's and Barney's) utterances according to their frequency in the database, and provide a detailed analysis of the most prominent metaphors (those with the highest percentage within the overall data for each

character; section 3) In the last segment of the paper I draw my conclusions regarding the metaphorical conceptualizations of ROMANTIC LOVE in the analyzed television series (section 4) while suggesting questions I deem as possible subject of further research that may be carried out later in the future.

2. Literature review

Throughout the past decades there have been a great importance given to the efficient communication of the basic concepts, theories, models, and methods of metaphor research within the field of cognitive linguistics to those included who previously have not held knowledge in them (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Kövecses 2010). Both books provide the reader with all information necessary to understand the very core of metaphors, starting with the introduction of fundamental ideas such as conceptual domains, mappings, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, or the Metaphor Identification Process (Pragglejaz Group 2007). In my paper as well, the familiarity with these basic ideas means the faster and easier understanding of more complex topics that will come up later on.

While mastering one's knowledge using these books is absolutely needed and not to be omitted, it is also important to expand our horizons towards advanced level models and theories. That includes two models, that of the "ideal" and "typical", of romantic love (Kövecses 1988 and 2000). Ideal and typical model simultaneously co-exist interculturally within American society, one of the main differences between them rooting from the intensity of love that people experience. While ideal love is both intense and passionate, that cannot be said about the typical version. Another difference stems from the metaphors by what they are predominantly defined: in the ideal model, the core metaphor is LOVE IS UNITY (OF COMPLEMENTARY PARTS), which suggests the lovers' "imperfect" state of existence on their own until the moment they become whole in the relationship they share with each another. Other aspects of the ideal model have been observed, including its morality-based conception (Szelid 2007). This is a view of LOVE reflecting traditional values and beliefs, while on the contrary, we have the more modern, individualistic approach. The typical model perceives the emotion of LOVE with the use of the DESTRUCTIVE FORCE metaphor, a powerful force that is beyond the control of the people involved, and which suppresses the rational, moral self. The typical model gives space for a relatively modern view of a LOVE RELATIONSHIP emerging, that of as ECONOMIC EXCHANGE WHICH, among other things, should be beneficial for both parties. In this view, the lovers of the relationship are already whole on their own, but not as complete as they should be; the process of becoming stronger is achieved by the exchange.

Furthermore, for the sake of complete understanding, the introduction of complex metaphor systems is also essential, most especially in the case of the EVENT STRUCTURE (Lakoff 1993) and the GREAT CHAIN OF BEINGS system (Lakoff and Turner 1989). I am going to expand on these metaphors in the following sections of my paper.

Another aspect that requires further discussion is concerned with the methodology of the analysis process. Research that centers around the concept of ROMANTIC LOVE is in great proportion has been carried out through interviews (Kövecses 1988) or surveys. The medium of movies can be considered a conventional choice for research, as oftentimes one conceptual metaphor is at the core of entire films with the plot, characters, and additional elements built around that metaphor. However, barely anyone has taken up the challenge to examine the entirety of a situational comedy program consisting of multiple seasons, 20+ episodes each, and it appears to be a gap in our research. In my paper, I intend to fill in at least a part of this gap.

3. Analysis

3.1. Ted Mosby, the idealistic romantic

In this section of my analysis, I am going to present the information that I have gathered while analyzing the metaphorical expressions uttered by the show's narrator and central character, Ted Mosby. Before starting the analysis, I find it essential to describe the character's personality and worldview as well, in order to provide an appropriate and exhaustive investigation of the data.

3.1.1. Description of Ted Mosby's character

Ted Mosby, while is considered only one of the six main characters of *How I Met Your Mother*, also operates as the narrator and the central focus figure of the show. The series' opening scene happens in 2030, with Ted sitting his children down and getting into a detailed retelling of the story of how he met their mother and the love of his life. The moment he starts the story with is twenty-five years prior to the opening scene, in which his best friend since college decides to ask his girlfriend's hand in marriage. This turning point of events makes Ted question himself whether he is ready to settle down as well, or not. From the first scene on, during the entire course of the show, we get retrospective commentary through his narration about the events that take place. The reason why this is important is that these personal observations from the future provide insight into Ted's mind: we are continually ascertained about his feelings towards situations and characters that we do not learn from the scenes happening in the past,

only from his present narrative. Based on these two different ways of storytelling techniques, we eventually become able to form a whole, detailed picture of Ted's character, which I intend to capture more thoroughly through the employed metaphors, in the following parts of this section.

According to many utterances of Ted himself, we get to know him as a person who searches for true love in every woman he starts a romantic relationship with, but despite his efforts put into each of these relationships, he never truly finds what he is looking for. He is often shown to be imagining himself in movie-like scenarios: "It was like something from an old movie where the sailor sees the girl across the crowded dance floor, turns to his buddy and says, 'See that girl? I'm gonna marry her someday.'" (Season 1 Episode 1: Pilot); "Okay, I wasn't going to say it in front of the guys, but back then I really thought that's how it worked. You put yourself and a girl you like in some romantic setting. The stars line up, and shazam!" (Season 1 Episode 12: The Wedding). In another scene, we see him declare his willingness to start a new relationship with a woman while an almost word-for-word copy of the same event happens behind him on a movie screen, further deepening the possible preconception the audience is prone to develop, which is that he is a rather head-in-the-clouds, hopeless romantic who has a tendency to overromanticize situations involving a romantic partner. More than that, he tends to go great lengths to prove his devotion and admiration for a potential love interest, such as arranging a two-minutes-long date for a woman he pursues, but who does not have much time for romantic endeavors due to her hectic work schedule (Season 3 Episode 13: Ten Sessions); or being willing to give a pause on his current architecture project and fake a large part of his personality to charm a woman whose ideals are polar opposite of his (Season 6 Episode 5: Architect of Destruction). Despite Ted initially imagining lengthy futures with the women he gets romantically involved with, these relationships end up being failed, unsuccessful. Ted, however, does not seem to learn from his mistakes in these romances thus ending up in the cycle of having short, unsatisfying relationships with women who are simply not good matches for him due to their differences and Ted's inability to recognize the repetition of red flags and warning signs.

As the series goes on, we continue to be provided with either new or developed characteristics of Ted, such as his affection for old poetry and literature, architecture, quality beverages, historical figures and events, independent artistic movies, and trivia facts—all what is perceived as pretentious by his friends. His oftentimes childlike naiveness, and over-idealization of relationships that are otherwise far from the best are two of the fundamental personality traits of his character that also provide basic understanding of his varying

metaphorical conceptualizations of love as an emotion, love as a relationship between two individuals, the participants of a love relationship, and women in general.

3.1.2. Metaphors used by Ted Mosby

3.1.2.1. LOVE IS A JOURNEY

In Ted's case, the metaphor that consists of the largest number of examples (47) take JOURNEY as its source domain. This metaphor does not deal with the emotion of LOVE but rather the relationship between lovers. One of the most culturally embedded conceptualizations, it predominantly relies on an adventure the lovers take together purposefully.

According to Kövecses, "Films may be structured in their entirety in terms of conceptual metaphors. [...] Several movies depict a person's life as a journey of some kind." Based on this observation and the additional knowledge that it is not only LIFE but also LOVE that is understood by the concept of JOURNEY, I come to a partial conclusion that in the case of Ted, it is both his entire life and his nine-seasons-long quest for love that is conceptualized as a journey. The premise of *How I Met Your Mother* merely based on the title is getting to know the story of how a man met the mother of his children. Furthermore, we get introduced to Ted's character in the pilot episode just as he is hit with the realization that he is ready to take off to look for "the One," the woman he wants to marry.

However, that is a different conceptualization that takes journey as its source domain, and on which I must elaborate on. It involves the concept of moral strength that Ted must be in possession of, as he continues to fail every and each of his romantic relationships—here, he goes on the journey alone until he meets a woman he can continue the journey with. Eventually, however, he must endure the pain that comes with the end of the relationship (a dead-end street in the journey of his life), but nevertheless, he does not stop his quest, and repeats the same cycle until in the finale season he meets his future wife, Tracy. As we can see in [47], Ted looks back at the eight years that he spent desperately looking for the right person: "It was at times a *long, difficult road*. But I'm glad it was long and difficult, because if I hadn't gone through hell to get there, the lesson might not have been as clear."

A few mappings within the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, based on the utterances of Ted, include:

Source: JOURNEY

Target: LOVE

the road (that the travelers go on)	→ events in the relationship
a step	→ a decision in the relationship
a hump	→ a difficulty experienced in the relationship
a rocky start	→ the difficult beginning of the relationship
(a traveler's) baggage	→ (a lover's) previous bad experiences

So, when Ted talks about what a “long, difficult road” it has been, we could interpret it in a more abstract way. This would be, that the road does not refer to the events in a romantic relationship but rather the events in Ted’s life, which interpretation entails the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor as a larger, more general framework within what the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor exists as well—life is a longer, more complicated journey with shorter adventures, romantic relationships.

3.1.2.2. The EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor system

I have observed that the conceptual metaphor with the second most metaphorical expressions in it is not a specific, stand-alone metaphor but rather a complex system containing several, closely related submetaphors. This is the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor system, which, as it will be visible in my analysis, shares specific concepts with the previous LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, thus I intend to highlight these connections and overlapping ideas in the two seemingly different metaphors. Before I get into the analysis, however, I would like to provide a basic understanding of the metaphor itself.

As Lakoff characterizes it, events in general, including changes of states, actions, activities, et cetera, are understood metaphorically in terms of physical movement, physical force, and physical space. Lakoff differentiates between a number of submetaphors that create a logically cohesive system: STATES ARE LOCATIONS, CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS, CAUSES ARE FORCES, PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS, DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPEDIMENTS TO MOTION, and others. In the following, we will be able to see how these concepts are intertwined with the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor and why it is essential to analyze them in the consideration of the other.

3.1.2.2.1. STATES ARE LOCATIONS

In the basic understanding, states of any kind, including that of emotional, are understood as physical locations or bounded regions in space, thus making a person “*be in an emotional state.*” We can also safely say that events generally involve a change from one state to another by the entity or object concerned. The one metaphorical expression concerning ROMANTIC LOVE that

belongs in this subcategory is “being *in love* with someone,” which has been observed in the database 16 times.

3.1.2.2.2. CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS

As we will see in the next examples, people *fall* in love with, and *fall* for each other, which expressions indicate accidental, non-purposeful change of motion that the person has no control over. Sometimes, the emotional change’s intensity is showcased in the sentence as well, such as it is in [64], which example belongs to two conceptual metaphors: EVENT STRUCTURE – CHANGES ARE MOVEMENTS, and LOVE IS MADNESS/INSANITY. In this case, for instance, the presence of the adjective “madly” indicates the absolute loss of control over the movement.

In the Appendices, more examples of the subcategories in the event-structure metaphor are available, including ACTION IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION and DIFFICULTIES ARE IMPEDIMENTS.

3.1.2.3. LOVE IS A (HIDDEN) OBJECT

The last metaphor I analyze by Ted has, surprisingly enough, surface-level and contextual ties to the previously examined conceptual metaphors. What does that mean? Essentially, it means that we can draw up an independent model of LOVE based on the metaphorical expressions uttered by Ted in a way that the created “system” would be logically comprehensive due to its overlapping connections.

For this to happen, let us look at some of the examples from the database. In [.] , “I forgot what it feels like to *chase* the real *thing*, but I think I’m ready again.” the emotion of LOVE is conceptualized as an object that is hidden from the person’s sight; thus he needs to make the decision to go look for it. This same idea is present in the following instances:

No.	Expression	Amb.
[46]	I’ll never <i>find</i> love.	
[47]	When am I gonna <i>find</i> something real?	

In both instances, once again, LOVE is an object that requires the person to take action and look for it. This is, moreover, also possible while the person is actively on a journey, that is, if he is currently single but we understand his life as a journey as well.

3.2. Barney Stinson, the womanizer

The second character whose metaphorical conceptualization of LOVE I was interested in analyzing is Barney Stinson. However, before I get to the examination of his utterances, I find it essential to give an introduction to his personality and worldview, similarly to Ted, in order to provide a framework within which these conceptual metaphors are able to function as fundamental parts of his character.

3.2.1. Description of Barney Stinson's character

In the case of Barney, it is not an exaggeration to say that he is almost the complete opposite of Ted when it comes to his attitude towards the question of love and romantic relationships. Since Ted operates as the narrator of the story, we cannot follow Barney's inner turmoil through commentary as we do with Ted. However, what information the viewers would otherwise miss in the absence of Barney's narration, we obtain through his often lengthy descriptions, twisted and turned stories, and visual aids in the form of flashbacks. Still, these recounts do not provide insight into Barney's emotional processes as they mostly focus on what had happened in those scenarios instead of what he had felt during them. Moreover, he often turns out to be an unreliable narrator for his own stories that he retells, as he, according to a psychologist in the show, is a pathological liar (Season 7 Episode 6: Mystery vs. History). A few instances of his instinctual distortion of events include him putting the blame on someone else for his own actions without prompting (Season 7 Episode 6: Mystery vs. History); him creating a completely fictional, made-up, and impossible scenario to avoid giving the real answer how he lost a tie that he was supposed to be wearing due to a bet he lost (Season 7 Episode 9: Disaster Averted); or most evidently his self-written book, *The Playbook*, in which he details all the different lies he uses to seduce women (first mentioned in Season 5 Episode 8: *The Playbook*, but regularly brought up and referenced throughout the rest of the show).

Before I begin to analyze the data that I have collected, I find it important to reflect on other aspects of Barney's character. During the entirety of the series, the audience, alongside Barney's own friends, is left in the dark regarding his occupation. We are made aware of his wealth based on his luxurious lifestyle, his often disparaging comments about cheaper items or the people who buy them, and his obsession with wearing certain pieces of clothing, such as a good suit or an elegant tie, because he believes these will make someone look successful. On the other hand, the exact designation of his job is not revealed until the last season (Season 9 Episode 15: *Unpause*), when Barney unveils his meticulous, years-long plan: which is, to take revenge against his boss who stole his girlfriend years ago by being an informer to the FBI at

the company he has been working at. Before this, however, we only get glimpses into his workplace, but we quickly learn that it greatly influences the way he views love and relationships. His co-workers are shown to be distasteful and often degrading towards women, suggesting that having a fiancé does not mean that a man should not cheat on her (Season 1 Episode 17: Life Among the Gorillas), with which sentiment Barney agrees. He is also a regular visitor of strip clubs and even winds up a relationship with a dancer later on in the series.

As the show goes on, however, Barney's character begins to develop, especially when he reveals that he believes he has fallen in love with his friend, Robin. At first, he is terrified of these possible new feelings as he has never felt them previously and has no idea how to behave around Robin. She, not knowing what causes her friend's strange behavior (which manifests in overtly kind gestures that are unlike anything he has done before), sets Barney up with a waitress at the end of their dinner. Despite his feelings, Barney continues to chase after other women, saying: "Bimbos make me happy. Bimbos make me feel alive. Bimbos make me want to pretend to be a better man. This whole thing with Robin was just a fling, but at the end of the day, my heart belongs to bimbos." (Season 4 Episode 1: Do I Know You?). The audience sees him struggling with his feelings while simultaneously sleeping with meaningless one-night-stands who, according to another character, Lily, are just part of his defense mechanism. It all gets to the point that he proudly announces sleeping with two-hundred (Season 4 Episode 22: Right Place, Right Time), and later on two-hundred eighty-three women (Season 6 Episode 22: The Perfect Cocktail). This behavior of chasing women continues after Barney and Robin eventually break up following a months-long relationship, and after Barney and Robin's divorce following a three-year-long marriage. At the end of the show, we still see him getting into the same circle, saying that if a successful and long-lasting relationship did not happen with Robin, then it will not happen with anyone else. The thing that eventually puts an end to this behavior is the birth of his not-planned daughter, after which event we do not see him mention a woman anymore.

In the following, I am going to present my findings about the conceptual metaphors related to Barney's character that I believe reflect his attitude towards women and are connected to the lifestyle he follows. Some of the expressions below, while are told by Barney, are shown to be uttered by other characters played by the same actor, Neil Patrick Harris. These all happen to exist within the context of the previously mentioned fictional stories that Barney creates during the show. To not cause any misunderstanding, I am going to mark these instances with (*) to differentiate them from those that are clearly said by Barney.

3.2.2. Metaphors used by Barney Stinson

3.2.2.1. LOVE IS A SPORT

During the analysis process, I have observed that the most frequent conceptualization of the emotion of LOVE by Barney is as some type of sport. While the overall data adds up to 64 instances of such metaphorical expressions in this category, it can be conveniently divided into [number of] subcategories based on the type of sport the expression references. Interestingly enough, the admiration of sports is a constant characteristic that follows Barney's development through the series. He is often seen discussing the most recent basketball and football matches; he and the friend group annually watches the Super Bowl in the television (Season 2 Episode 14: Monday Night Football)—he even finds a way to see it in the stadium, live (Season 5 Episode 15: Rabbit or Duck); and he develops a gambling addiction and bets on every aspect of a match possible. One of his favorite movies is *Field of Dreams*, a film about ghost baseball players, and he gets emotional when talking about certain scenes from it (Season 2 Episode 4: Ted Mosby: Architect); a number of his maneuvers in the Playbook include sports to some capacity, such as changing his appearance to imitate that of a famous sportsman (Episode); and he considers the baseball pitcher Jim Abbott a “hero” (Season 4 Episode 22: Right Place, Right Time). On the other hand, we also see him criticizing and diminishing Robin's favorite sport, hockey, countless times; and he is implied to be amateurish in majority of the sports mentioned in the show. In basketball (Season 6 Episode 2: Cleaning House) due to the absence of a backboard in his mother's yard during his childhood and not having the opportunity to train efficiently (Season 6 Episode 19: Legendaddy); he is also not seen exercising in any way when the group decides to visit a gym regularly (Season 3 Episode 10: The Yips).

Based on these personal experiences of Barney and the general knowledge that sports are deeply embedded in American culture to the point that LOVE is also understood by the concept of it, I was interested in seeing whether the metaphorical expressions present in the database would reflect on this connection.

3.2.2.1.1. LOVE IS AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Out of all the 45 utterances by Barney consisting of metaphors that conceptualize LOVE as a SPORT, 13 of them take American football as their source domain. (However, this number is certainly not one that could be precisely given or even tried to be counted at all, considering the fact that out of these instances, the most prominent is his self-written book, the Playbook, introduced in the fifth season of the show. This is essentially a visual metaphor; thus it is not

possible to assign a number to it that would tell us how many times it has appeared during the show. For this reason, I only counted the verbal utterances, not the visual instances of when the book is visible on the screen.)

The Playbook consists of all the different woman-seducing techniques that Barney personally comes up with. The techniques are called *plays*, which in American football is the sequence where the offensive team tries to score with the ball. The title of the book itself derives from the book used by football players for the collection of these techniques and strategies. Barney's techniques if successful, similarly to the plays in football, end in *scoring*, or in other words, sleeping with a woman.

Source: AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Target: LOVE

the players

→ the man and the woman

a play

→ a seduce attempt

the steps of the play

→ the

the playbook

→ the collection of seducing techniques

3.2.2.1.2. LOVE IS BASEBALL

The second most referenced sport by Barney throughout the show is baseball with nine instances. While Barney conceptualizes LOVE by this sport less, to be exact, he is also shown great enthusiasm towards it by discussing it in conversations, and considering certain players as notable figures. The most socially embedded metaphorical expression is hitting a base, where the bases of a baseball field correspond to certain stages of dating before it gets to sexual intercourse. Barney never specifies which base is what according to him, so we can rely on the most universally used definitions: first base is kissing, second base is touching above waist, third base is any type of bodily stimulation above waist, and fourth base (often referred to as home base) is sexual intercourse. To take a unique example, in [21] Barney recounts what happened with him and Ted's mother years ago. The expression *to stretch a single into a double* refers to the action in baseball when someone successfully advances from first base to second base with aggressive running. In Barney's case, when he says that he got thrown out by Ted's mother during this action, he essentially says that his attempt at touching above waist was denied and completely shut down.

3.2.2.1.3. LOVE IS BASKETBALL

In this subcategory, I collected the metaphorical expressions exclusive to the sport of BASKETBALL, while those that would otherwise be ambiguous (as in, they do not have a contextually specified sport that they take as source domain) can be found later in my analysis, under the “Other SPORT metaphors” subheading.

In [22], Barney takes up the challenge of finding out which previous sexual partner of his is currently ruining his life by following him everywhere and warning any potential woman to stay away from him. This happens by using a large whiteboard that was previously used by Ted and Marshall to track their college basketball team’s performance, and collecting the 64 women who have suffered due to Barney’s lies the most, essentially turning it into a tournament similar to that of the basketball teams. In the case of [23], we can observe a completely revolutionary seducing technique, “The Naked Man”, being compared to an audience-favorite basketball move, the slam dunk. The similarity between the two seemingly different phrases is their spectacularity in nature, and the certainty that they will lead the subject of the action to success.

3.2.2.1.4. LOVE IS BOXING

While its objectively violent nature is often correlated with the difficulties and painful events experienced in love (especially when it ends), Barney’s metaphors predominantly highlight the competitiveness of the boxers instead of the behaviors during a box match.

Both metaphors originate from an initially unserious bet between Barney and Ted, according to which whoever succeeds at sleeping with two women at once wins a metaphorical belt identical to that in boxing. This imagined belt, however, actually comes to exist when Barney purchases one for the occasion. The episode (Season 3 Episode 3: Third Wheel) greatly focuses on the eagerness both Ted and Barney feel to achieve this milestone, similarly to the competitors during a box match.

3.2.2.1.5. Other SPORT metaphors

In this subcategory, the most frequently uttered lexical expression was “having a shot” and “scoring” with a romantic partner. While these are not exclusive to the sport of basketball, we can suggest that they are mainly related to that, as in having an opportunity to send the ball into the basket is the same as having an opportunity to get together with a romantic partner, and scoring equates to successfully sleeping with them.

LOVE RELATIONSHIP IS ECONOMIC EXCHANGE

In nine instances from the database can we see the presence of metaphorical expressions that derive from the LOVE (RELATIONSHIP) IS AN ECONOMIC EXCHANGE conceptual metaphor. These utterances reflect the modern, typical model of love that has emerged within society in the last decades. According to this conceptualization, the people in a relationship both gain something from the other, they have to invest time and energy in order for it to work. In the case of Barney, however, we can see more unique metaphors as well:

No.	Expression	Amb.
[46]	There goes one of my <i>investments</i> now.	
[47]	Of course, not all <i>investments</i> pay <i>dividends</i> .	
[48]	That one's going to <i>reward shareholders</i> soon.	
[49]	I foresee aggressive <i>growth</i> in my future.	
[50]	Probably gonna <i>cost</i> me some dates but it's okay.	
[51]	That's right, Barney Stinson is back on the <i>market</i> .	
[52]	It's <i>market research</i> . You see, my legendary <i>success rate</i> 83% doesn't happen by accident. Every single play I run on women has been meticulously <i>field-tested</i> . By weeding out the bad plays in smaller <i>markets</i> like Cleveland.	
[53]	I'm thinking, 'Maybe I can get her behind a dumpster and <i>interview</i> her again.'	
[54]	So Krirsten's more <i>invested in</i> the relationship than her fella is.	

For example, he refers to women he supports in a local gym as his investments who, after a certain while, will be profitable for him, the shareholder. In other cases, he field-tests the different techniques he uses to seduce to woman in cities that are far away from New York, in the name of it being market-research. Here, the women living in Cleveland mean the market where he intends to examine the success of his techniques before he is ready to use them in his hometown.

3.2.2.2. The GREAT CHAIN OF BEINGS metaphor

According to Kövecses, the system that I am going to discuss in the following “accounts for how objects, or things, in the world are conceptualized metaphorically.” [Most of] my findings draw ANIMAL as a source domain in the conceptualization, which had been made possible by

humans attributing human behaviors and characteristics to animals first, then reapplying those same behaviors and characteristics to humans. Furthermore, we not only conceptualize human behavior as animal behavior, but people as animals, too. These metaphors, overwhelmingly, happen to capture the negative characteristics of humans by attributing the negative characteristics of animals to them.

During my research, one of Barney's most frequent conceptualizations of people was as animals, either as predators (lion, cougar etc.), preys (deer), livestock animals (chick, lamb etc.), pets (dog, kitten etc.), and other wild animals (fish, manatee etc.). There was, however, another intriguing case in my database, in which dating or pursuing an attractive woman, according to Barney, equals to humans hunting or domesticating animals or fishing.

3.2.2.2.1. PEOPLE ARE PREDATORY ANIMALS

In ten instances from the whole of the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphor did Barney attribute the behaviors of predatory animals to humans. These were the following:

Expression	
• You gotta mark your <i>territory</i>. • Sounds like she could be a <i>cougar</i>. • See, you can identify a <i>cougar</i> by a few key characteristics. Start with the hair: The <i>cougar</i> keeps up with current hairstyles as a form of <i>camouflage</i>. The prey may not realize that he's engaged a <i>cougar</i> until he's already being <i>dragged</i>, helpless, back to her <i>lair</i>. Now, the blouse. The cougar displays maximum cleavage possible to <i>captivate</i> her prey. See the <i>claws</i>? Long and sharp, to ward off <i>rival females</i> or open alimony checks. • Who do you rather have grading your papers—a <i>savage, man-eating jungle cat</i>, or a purring, satisfied kitty? • I promise you, after tonight, that <i>cougar</i> will be my pet, and I its master. • Go get 'em, <i>tiger</i>. • Remember the old Barney? He's a <i>lion, the king of the jungle, stalking</i> whatever <i>prey</i> he chose, <i>going in for the kill</i>. Now look at me. Declawed. Neutered. What was once my jungle is now my zoo. And I am forced to	

mate with the same old *lioness* again and again and again, while families pay to watch.

- Hey, *tiger*.
- Come on, dude, your mom is a *cougar*.
- For Barney here picked up a girl outside his *territory*. (*)
- The Agreement of 2004 quite clearly did define Fifth Avenue to be our (*)
hunting grounds' dividing line.

As visible above, the most frequent example of PEOPLE ARE PREDATORY ANIMALS is the conceptualization of an attractive, older woman as a cougar. Described as ambush predators, cougars capture their prey by utilizing the element of surprise, such as luring or other strategies with which their prey remain unaware of their fate. When using the AN ATTRACTIVE, OLDER WOMAN IS A COUGAR metaphor, Barney reflects on the woman's behavior towards usually younger men. In one of the utterances, we can see Barney switching the word cougar out to "savage, man-eating jungle cat," that further reflects on how he attributes the cougar's hunting behavior to the woman's dating habits. The mappings of this conceptual metaphor are the following:

Source: COUGAR

Target: ATTRACTIVE, OLDER WOMAN

the cougar's camouflage

→ the woman's hair

the cougar's lair

→ the woman's home

the cougar dragging the prey to her lair

→ the woman taking the younger man home

the cougar's long, sharp claws

→ the woman's manicured nails

rival females

→ other women

We can observe the word *territory* in 2 of the utterances presented above. In both instances, *territory* refers to a man's personal place: either his own home, or the part of the city where he lives. Marking one's *territory* is basic animal behavior in order to scare off rival animals from that area. In Barney's case, the same phrase is uttered as an advice to Ted, finding it important to show other people that his apartment belongs to only him. In the second example, we meet one of Barney's exaggerated stories again, where he talks about sleeping with a woman who was, according to a council made up by fictional Barneys, outside his *territory*. In a non-metaphorical sense, the woman lived in a different part of town where Barney was not allowed

to “hunt,” or in other words, look for a partner to sleep with. The conceptual metaphor here is A MAN IS A PREDATORY ANIMAL, and the mappings for the two utterances are:

Source: PREDATORY ANIMAL

Target: MAN

the animal’s territory

→ the man’s home

the animal marking its territory

→ the man showing that his home belongs to him only

the animal’s territory

→ the part of town the man lives in

hunting ground

→ each man’s respective area where they are allowed to look for partners

the animal hunting

→ the man looking for a partner

We can see another complex, detailed metaphor when Barney mourns his freedom after getting into a relationship with a woman. Describing himself as a lion and the king of the jungle suggests his dominance over his partners and rival men, implying that there was no one more successful than him. He was allowed to “stalk whatever prey he chose,” in which expression stalking, a hunting behavior of animals, means the slow but purposeful seducing of a prey, that is a woman. After the lion successfully stalked his prey, he “went in for the kill”: he slept with the woman. As the metaphor is further constructed, however, the lion is captured and displayed in a zoo for the visitors’ entertainment, forced to mate with the same lioness. Here, Barney gets into a relationship with a woman, and as in a morally adequate relationship, he does not sleep with other women. Another interesting aspect of this metaphor is the relationship itself being conceptualized as a zoo, a form of captivity; and his friends, who will likely make fun of him due to his situation, as the families who visit the place for entertainment. All in all, the mappings of this specific and unique metaphor are the following:

Source: LION

Target: MAN

the lion stalking his prey

→ the man seducing the woman

the prey

→ the woman he sleeps with

the lion going in for the kill

→ the man sleeping with the woman

the jungle

→ the area where the man is looking for partners

the zoo	→ the relationship
the lion being declawed and neutered	→ the man being in a relationship
the families who pay to watch	→ the man's friends enjoying his dissatisfying relationship
the lion mating with the lioness	→ the man having sex with the woman
the lioness	→ the woman he is in a relationship with

In the last two remaining examples a man is being conceptualized as a tiger. While this is a common metaphor used in everyday conversations in American society, it showcases how men are predominantly ascribed with characteristics, behaviors, and habits that are specific to predatory big cats. These attributes are more often than not related to men's sexual behavior.

We can draw the conclusion that based on these metaphors, men are more often described as animals than women, as it is a reflection of the woman-chasing, independent lifestyle that men more likely tend to live. However, in the cases when women are being compared to predators, they either refer to attractive, older women who enjoy the company of younger men (cougar), or to a woman who is associated with a man when they are actively in a romantic relationship (lioness).

3.2.2.2.2. PEOPLE ARE PREY ANIMALS

This category operates in a complementary relation to the previous one, as a prey exist in close relation to its predator that eventually hunts it down. However, as I mentioned before, there have been utterances where while people are referred to as prey animals, the other person in the exchange is not a predatory animal, but a hunting or fishing man. Here, we can not only observe the PEOPLE ARE PREY ANIMALS conceptual metaphor, but the LOVE IS HUNTING, LOVE IS FISHING, and PEOPLE IN A RELATIONSHIP ARE CAPTIVE ANIMALS ones as well.

3.2.2.2.3. SEEKING A ROMANTIC PARTNER IS HUNTING

I decided to create this subcategory and mention it within the discussion of the PEOPLE ARE PREY ANIMALS metaphor is because it serves as an independent example of how, according to Barney, women are seen as helpless, defenseless animals who are good for the pleasure of the man, while also drawing a difference between seeking the advantages these women could provide for an animal and for a human. While I exclusively talk about the concept of LOVE, it is important to note that based on the characteristics that I have mentioned previously, in the case of Barney it is not necessarily the emotion of LOVE that he conceptualizes this way, but rather

SEXUAL ATTRACTION or LUST, since he does not seek romantic relationships for a good part of the show. I would also like to note that in a number of cases, the type of animal being hunted is not specified within the dialogue, thus I had no further information to base my analysis on. For this reason, some of the examples will be listed under the category of SEEKING A ROMANTIC PARTNER IS FISHING, and marked with (*).

The occurrences below, however, without the chance of ambiguity belong to the SEEKING A ROMANTIC PARTNER IS HUNTING conceptual metaphor:

Expression

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look, I didn't get <i>shot down</i>. • You don't bring a date to a wedding. That's like bringing a <i>deer carcass</i> on a <i>hunting trip</i>. • It is like being a <i>hunter</i> and having the <i>deer</i> walk up, tie itself to the hood of your car, and beg to be mounted. • Tomorrow, the cougar <i>hunt</i> begins. • It was an amazing <i>safari</i>. • The Agreement of 2004 quite clearly did define Fifth Avenue to be our <i>hunting grounds</i>' dividing line. |
|--|

3.2.2.2.4. SEEKING A ROMANTIC PARTNER IS FISHING

During my research, I have encountered a number of expressions where Barney refers to the women he intends to sleep with as fish that men catch for their own gain. Further down, I will give an explanation for my decision regarding the composition of this category, but let us see the instances that contribute to it first:

Expression

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the 24 similarities between girls and <i>fish</i> is that they're both attracted to shiny objects. • He can put his platinum card on a <i>fishing line</i> and <i>reel in</i> 10 chicks hotter than you. • So you now have two <i>on the line</i>? • It's Ted's <i>bait</i>. |
|--|

(*)

- A true gentleman invents a pretense to *lure* an honorable lady into his (*) apartment.
- But then I found the perfect *bait*. (*)

Three of the expressions, as visible above, were not specified enough for me to be able to decide whether they belong to the HAUNTING or the FISHING metaphor. Technically, their ambiguity makes it possible for them to be part of both conceptual metaphors, so in these cases I had to depend on everyday language usage. Most of the time, when we talk about luring some kind of animal with the use of bait, we really mean a type of fish while we are fishing; it is particularly less common to use these words in the context of hunting for a wild animal, especially if the predator that captures it is a human person, and not a more powerful animal. For this reason, I chose to put the last three examples under the FISHING metaphor.

To provide another reason why I decided to put the previously mentioned examples into the fishing metaphor's category, I would like to widen the context of within which they exist in the episode (Season 5 Episode 16: Hooked). As the title may already suggest, the episode revolves around the concept of a metaphorical hook with which fish are being caught. This is indeed the case: The following utterances all mention the "hook," and in every case it is said based on the general understanding that "being hooked by something" is being fascinated by something, and a person "being on/off the hook" is either existing in the constant state of fascination by something that is more likely dangerous (like the hook is for the fish), or realizing that the current situation is likely to end unpleasantly and eventually ending it. While these examples are not pieces of dialogue belonging to Barney, they are essential to put the previous three into context.

Expression	
• It got me <i>off her hook</i>. • Yeah, I think my high school boyfriend, Scooter, is still sort of <i>on the hook</i> for me. • Oh, you're still <i>on the hook</i>. • We've all been <i>on people's hooks</i>, and we've all kept someone <i>on a hook</i>.	

As we can see, one example draws a direct comparison between women and fish based on their proneness to get physically close to shiny objects when they see them: In the case of fish it

could be either the prey's shiny exterior that they intend to capture, or the hook that they are being caught with. On the other hand, to say that all girls have a preference for shiny objects, such as jewelry, is an over-generalization that Barney falls victim of. That is, however, not out-of-character for him to do so, as he is regularly shown to be nonchalant towards the women he gets into contact with, to the point that their only worth seems to be giving Barney pleasure. The second example is directly tied to this idea as well: To put something shiny (such as a platinum card, in what platinum is commonly known as a shiny metal often used for the creation of jewelry) on a "fishing line" and to "reel in" more physically attractive women is a metaphorical way of saying that purchasing fancy, luxurious jewelry for a woman—or making it visible for the outside world that a man has great amount of money that makes it possible to afford such items—is a positive attribute which evidently works in favor of the man. In another instance, a (fishing) line is once again used.

Source: FISHING

Target: SEEKING A ROMANTIC PARTNER

the fish

→ the woman being sought

the fisherman

→ the man seeking a partner

the fishing line

→ [...]

to throw the fishing line in

→ [...]

to reel [a fish] in

→ to successfully seduce a woman

to lure a fish

→ to attract a woman

the bait

→ something that is attractive for the woman

being on the hook

→ being fascinated by something

3.2.2.2.5. PEOPLE IN A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP ARE CAPTIVE ANIMALS

Another important distinction I had to make during the analysis was between single individuals and people in relationships being conceptualized. As I have observed prior to this section, in the majority of the data Barney was discussing single individuals: men as predatory animals, hunters, or fishermen, while women as prey animals (and in one rare example as a predator). Here, however, I collected all the utterances where he talks about people in relationships while relating them to animals.

Expression

- After 9 years in *captivity*, that is the single greatest lesson I can teach you about surviving in the *wild*.
- See, that *cage* represents your commitment.

In the presented two utterances we can clearly observe that the people who partake in the relationship are both closed into a cage that they are not able to open unless the romantic relationship is finished. Committed people are in captivity, similarly to any animal that is caught and punished into a cage, and when the relationship ends, the person has to “survive in the wild,” or to simplify, navigate a lifestyle where they are not committed to anyone. The mappings of these are the following:

Source: CAPTIVE ANIMALS

Target: PEOPLE IN A RELATIONSHIP

the cage

→ commitment

being captive

→ being in a relationship

surviving in the wild

→ navigating the single lifestyle

3.2.2.2.6. PEOPLE ARE LIVESTOCK ANIMALS

One of the largest chunk the database that I had to work with was all the instances in which Barney refers to women (whether he intends to date them or not) as livestock animals. In everyday conversation, we can mention quite a few animals that belong to this category and whose characteristics and behavior we have a tendency to attribute to almost exclusively women, such as lambs, cows, chickens, and other farmyard animals.

Interestingly enough, Barney has such an utterance 51 times during the show, all comparing women to chicks. These exist within a narrow spectrum, most of the time giving the woman another adjective to describe her appearance or behavior. As chick is the baby of a hen, Barney uses the term for the sole reason of referring to young and therefore beautiful but defenseless, naïve, oftentimes clueless women.

Another intriguing aspect that is worth further discussion is related to edibility. LUST and SEXUAL DESIRE are regularly conceptualized as hunger, in which context the person desired equates the food which the other person is hungry for. Furthermore, the meat of a young animal is generally preferred over that of an older animal due to its tenderness and freshness, so to regard a woman with the word “chick” or any young livestock animal without a doubt has its

positive connotation (in spite of whether the aforementioned adjective preceding the animal is well-intentioned or not).

3.2.2.2.7. PEOPLE ARE PET ANIMALS

The last specific category that I am going to present is the collection of utterances where Barney takes domesticated, pet animals as his source to refer to women.

Expression
• Who do you rather have grading your papers—a savage, man-eating jungle cat, or a <i>purring, satisfied</i> kitty? • I promise you, after tonight, that cougar will be my <i>pet</i>, and I its <i>master</i>. • Put a bell around my neck and scratch my belly, kids, for I am just a <i>docile housecat</i> now. • They seem hot, but take each one of them individually? <i>Sled dogs</i>. • <i>Alpha dog</i> is right where he belongs; on top. • What kind of dirtbag doesn't stand by his best friends, but instead sides with some self-righteous <i>bitch</i> with a pointless cause and a megaphone? • The <i>bitch</i> is hiding something. • Then what we're saying is she's a crazy stalker <i>bitch</i> who pulled that fire alarm and you should run screaming.

As it has been the case so far, we can also observe that the animal characteristics connotated to women are almost without exception negative. The most frequent source domain is that of a DOG, which animal is common element of everyday conversation due to its many traits that humans can behave similarly to. Despite the many positive attributes, Barney refers to women as dogs based on their negative traits only. Four times as a bitch, prevalent word used to degrade women because of their complaining that can be similar to a dog's whining, or their tendency to start an argument that resembles the dog's aggressive behavior. The women he is talking about to his friends are shown to be ugly as sled dogs, once again concentrating on the animals' negative characteristic. In the last example of mentioning dogs, Barney refers to himself as an alpha dog to pride around with his dominance in the field of seducing women. While in this case the man is the dog, it is based on a positively perceived behavior: that is, the man's ability

to provide the best for a woman without any other man proving to be a rival to him, evidentially becoming the greatest among the pack.

The remaining three examples show Barney's conceptualization of women as types of cats, where, unlike in the previous segment, it is the characteristics being focused on that are rather positive in the eyes of men. The behavior that is mentioned twice is the woman's obedience to the man who she is interacting with. Closely related to this is the question of domestication, in which scenario the man operates as the master of the cat that was previously wild and bad-behaving, in need of control and taming.

3.2.2.2.8. Other ANIMAL metaphors

Last but not least, there were utterances in which Barney referred to women as types of animals that have not been previously discussed and contextually do not belong to any prior category. I collected these examples here.

Expression
• [A woman in her 60s or 70s] is a <i>turtle</i>. • See, all this time, I thought you needed a wingman to <i>fly</i>, but the truth is, you've got your own <i>wings</i> now. Since you and Robin split, you've been <i>gestating</i>. Growing in your <i>cocoon</i>. And last night you burst out of that <i>cocoon</i> like a <i>butterfly</i>. • Sure, today you see Iris as a <i>manatee</i>. • Ever since you got pregnant, you're just a big fat <i>manatee</i>. • A pregnant woman who's become a <i>manatee</i> can become a mermaid again through one simple act. [What's that?] Breast-feeding. • This is purely academic. It's like <i>birdwatching</i>.

Going in the order of these expressions, the conceptual metaphors are the following: AN OLD, UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN IS A TURTLE, in which the woman's age and undesirable appearance are in connection with the turtle's slowness and physical attributes that are considered ugly, such as having wrinkles and spots. A RECENTLY SINGLE PERSON IS A BUTTERFLY highlights several aspects of the source domain: the period of time during what the complete metamorphosis happens and a fully developed butterfly is ready to take off on its wings equates to the post-breakup stage in a person's life in which he gets over his partner; the cocoon is the familiar

place, most likely the man's home, where he isolated himself until he gets better; and the ability of a butterfly to fly is a man being ready to date again.

The next three examples are all connected to one of Barney's many theories he fabricates during the course of the show which all create a system he almost religiously follows, as he believes that these are fundamental truths of life. As explained by him, mermaids came to exist when sailors lost on the sea, in absence of female company began having hallucinations that the rather ugly and relatively undesirable sea creatures, manatees, were beautiful mermaids. To compare women to manatees, Barney once again highlights the fact that they are not pretty enough for the male gaze. There is a twist, however: That even such unattractive women become desirable for men as time passes, and that every woman has a "mermaid-clock" regardless of who they are.

4. Conclusion

As we reach the end of the paper after a lengthy analysis process, I must establish the most significant similarities and differences between the findings of Ted and Barney's respective metaphorical conceptualizations.

The utterances belonging to Ted predominantly deal with the concept of a ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP and much less with LOVE as an emotion. While a certain amount of the metaphors do take the emotion of LOVE as its target domain, it is less present in the database—in fact, it happened to be such little number of data that I could not showcase it in the main examination on its own, only as part of more complex metaphorical systems. Romantic relationships, thus, take up the majority of conceptualizations, but what is even more important that these reflect the traditional American model, characterized by the LOVE IS A UNITY (OF COMPLEMENTARY PARTS) metaphor at its core. Despite the fact that it is not the most prevalent metaphor, it is present among the most frequently used ones. On the contrary, when conceptualizing LOVE RELATIONSHIPS, Barney predominantly uses the LOVE IS ECONOMIC EXCHANGE metaphor, and while it does not appear as many times as Ted's most frequent, LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor in the corpus, it nevertheless takes the number one spot in Barney's own database. As it is stated by Kövecses, at its center the modern, typical model uses the love is an economic exchange metaphor. Based on these conclusions my hypothesis, according to which Ted's metaphorical conceptualizations lean towards the traditional, ideal model while Barney's the opposite, more modern and typical, is proven to be true.

I also examined and came to the conclusion that the metaphors Ted and Barney use to conceptualize women are vastly different. Ted considers his partner someone (or rather,

something) he is constantly looking for or chases after and what takes great effort from his side to get to, thus as a (HIDDEN) OBJECT/TREASURE. On the other hand, Barney heavily relies on the GREAT CHAIN OF BEINGS system, notably on the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphor. He most commonly refers to women as LIVESTOCK ANIMALS, while men are either PREDATORY ANIMALS or HUNTERS in his understanding. The metaphors used for women predominantly draw from the negative characteristics attributed to animals. The second hypothesis is true.

Last but not least, I claimed that factors such as societal background, occupation, behavioral patterns, lifestyle, and worldview all influence Ted and Barney's conceptualizations of romantic love and its related concepts, and that because of the differences between these factors, the conceptual metaphors will not only reflect them but be significantly different from another. The third hypothesis, as we can conclude based on the information that I gathered from the most frequent conceptualizations, is also right.

Despite the scale of my research and the amount of data I covered during my analysis, there is still space for further contributions to be made and ground to be covered in the field of cognitive linguistics. For instance, have there been a change regarding the metaphorical conceptualization of ROMANTIC LOVE, LOVE RELATIONSHIPS, and PEOPLE IN A LOVE RELATIONSHIP in more recent American sitcoms? It would also be intriguing to examine how aspects such as the setting of the television show (both in time and space), and the diversity or racial composition of the main characters would influence the outcome.

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