



Original Research

Metaphor as a Tool for Shaping Artistic Reality in the Works of Oksana Zabuzhko and Virginia Woolf

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Abstract: This study explores the role of metaphor in shaping subjective worldviews in the works of Oksana Zabuzhko and Virginia Woolf, focusing on how metaphors influence artistic world-building and reader interaction. The research employs structural and semantic analysis, cognitive linguistics, and comparative studies to identify key metaphorical models in both authors' works. The findings reveal that Woolf uses metaphor to express fragmented consciousness, psychological states, and time, while Zabuzhko's metaphors address national identity, feminist discourse, and social criticism. Woolf's metaphors primarily serve expressive-emotional and cognitive functions, whereas Zabuzhko's often carry ideological and polemical weight. The study underscores metaphor as a vital tool in constructing artistic reality and enhancing reader engagement. It also highlights the importance of further research into the cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and its role in text comprehension. The study's practical value lies in its potential to deepen the understanding of literary texts, improve literary analysis methods, and enhance the interpretation of metaphor in teaching literature and cultural studies.

Keywords: *Cognitive Model, Stylistic Device, Literary Discourse, Feminist Analysis, National Identity, Modernism*

Introduction

Metaphor is not only a stylistic device but also a fundamental mechanism for creating artistic reality in literature. Through metaphorical structures, writers conveyed deep meanings, recreated the inner world of characters, and modeled a special picture of the world. In the works of Oksana Zabuzhko and Virginia Woolf, metaphor was the main tool for building a narrative that revealed philosophical, social, and gender aspects of reality. The analysis of the metaphorical thinking of the authors traced the peculiarities of the poetics and determined the nature of the artistic world.

This study compares two literary contexts by choosing Oksana Zabuzhko and Virginia Woolf based on culture and literature. In English-speaking culture, Woolf uses stream of consciousness to explore her characters' inner lives. Zabuzhko produces symbolic images that express historical and cultural traumas by focusing on Ukrainian national identity, feminism,

and cultural self-awareness. This comparison shows that metaphor is a universal technique for literary representation of complicated social and psychological events.

Metaphor may help you understand abstract and complex ideas and create beautiful imagery. In Woolf and Zabuzhko's works, it provides new ways to interpret texts, helping to understand characters' personal transformations and interactions with the world. Metaphors help authors portray characters' emotions and build artistic worlds that allow readers to explore their psychological, philosophical, and cultural surroundings. Metaphor helps analyze conceptual and emotional components of writing, making it a powerful tool for literary analysis.

A careful investigation of metaphors' significance in artistic reality made the research relevant. Modern literary studies have focused on metaphor's cognitive and cultural components, but its role in modeling reality in literary texts needs greater study. The study was also relevant since metaphor in literature reflects complex social, historical, and psychological processes.

Metaphorical structures connect individual and social experience, the past and present, reality and artistic interpretation in Zabuzhko's works. Woolf used metaphors to examine individuals' emotions and psychological states, making her writings universal and relevant to different generations. Thus, Zabuzhko and Woolf studied metaphor practically, as well as theoretically. It examined how metaphorical structures shape creative reality and transmit complicated ideas and emotions. This stressed the necessity of examining metaphor in literature, especially in contemporary literary studies, which increasingly foreground interdisciplinary approaches and cognitive, cultural, and artistic factors. Scholars have examined the writers' works from many angles. Dark (2023) examined how scientific, mathematical, and religious influences shaped Woolf's writing, including the use of semantic anomalies, images of light and luminescence to express pantheistic ideas, and Homeric similes to integrate spiritual and metaphysical aspects of human experience. Tincu (2023) examined "The Mark on the Wall" in light of Carl Gustav Jung's psychological theories, particularly the Self archetype. To understand the psychological, ontological, and social dimensions of the Self archetype, the study examined symbols and literary tropes such as the inner monologue and stream of consciousness. Leteo (2021) examined Virginia Woolf and Emilio Cecchi to determine how prose might communicate poetic effects. This study analyzed how both writers, utilizing different languages and circumstances, moved from traditional poetry and prose poetry to experimental approaches to create poetic effects. Cousin and Ross (2022) questioned whether Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse's* metaphorical wave-particle duality is related to quantum science. Given Woolf's historical and philosophical proximity to quantum theory, the study examined whether conceptual parallels between the novel and quantum physics are enough to draw such linkages.

Hart (2024) examined metaphor in literature and its significance in establishing artistic reality, expressing difficult concepts, and affecting reader perception using literary examples

and theoretical approaches. İnan and Eser (2024) compared Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *Huzur* with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, examining post-war societal and individual impacts. Both novels, from different cultures, use metaphors to describe post-war environment and modernity. A study of animal metaphors in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* by Trejling (2025) reveals how literature uses metaphor to portray the unknown and "animal." Modernist writings show that metaphor, being spectral, constantly leaves meaning open to interpretation.

Karasov and Levchenko (2023) examined how Oksana Zabuzhko and Halyna Pahutyak verbalize and metaphorize anger in their writing. The study examined cognitive linguistics-based anger metaphorization models using a sub-corpus of General Regionally Annotated Corpus of Ukrainian (GRAC-16) and Corpus Query Language (CQL) queries to extract linguistic content. In 2024, C. Olive examined whether art, particularly literature, can teach. The study praised the neo-cognitivist approach, suggesting that literature helps expand global knowledge. The study used philosophical and psychological research to explain how reading literature influences the mind, countering Peter Lamarck's criticism of neo-cognitivists' empty metaphors.

Yuan and Sun (2023) used CiteSpace to assess metaphor research. The study examined trends, regional distribution, influential authors, conceptual metaphor, cognitive metaphor, brain mechanisms, and discourse metaphor. Wang and Sun (2024) examined metaphor comprehension mechanisms, emphasizing theoretical approaches, empirical research, and interdisciplinary trends in cognitive linguistics, psychology, and neuroscience. They suggested improving theoretical models and methodology. Aliyeva (2021) theoretically analyzed frame and conceptual metaphor in phraseological components. The study showed that metaphorical properties of phraseological units are common across languages and emphasize crucial phrase traits and qualities for comprehension and interpretation. Kövecses (2021) compared Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory to the extended theory. The extended theory adds context and analyses metaphors on four levels: image schemes, domains, frames, and mental spaces, expanding their importance in thinking and language.

Although the role of metaphor in literature has been studied extensively, there are still questions that require additional analysis. It has not yet been sufficiently investigated how Zabuzhko and Woolf's metaphors structure the narrative levels of their works. It is also necessary to expand the analysis of intertextual relations that form the metaphorical space of their prose. The study aimed to determine the role of metaphor as a tool for shaping artistic reality in the works of Oksana Zabuzhko and Virginia Woolf, to trace its functions and features in the narrative structure of their works.

Materials and Methods

The research materials include scientific works on cognitive linguistics, rhetoric and literary studies, as well as sources containing classifications of metaphors. The analysis is based on the

texts of researchers who systematize metaphorical models and their functions in literary discourse. Studies by Veale et al. (2022), Csábi (2023), and Wood (2017), which describe various aspects of metaphor as a linguistic phenomenon, were emphasized. To create the classification, the data from modern research in the field of cognitive linguistics and literary stylistics, as well as the author's comparison based on the sources of Sadova (2024), Denys (2024), Humar (2021) were used as a theoretical basis for comparing and systematizing metaphorical models in the context of modern literary research. The research materials also included the works of fiction by Virginia Woolf, in particular the novels *To the Lighthouse* (Woolf 1998b), *Mrs. Dalloway* (Woolf 2007), *Orlando: A Biography* (Woolf 1992a), and *The Waves* (Woolf 1992b). Works by Oksana Zabuzhko, namely *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* (Zabuzhko 2020), *Girls* (Zabuzhko 2017), *Fieldwork in Ukrainian Sex* (Zabuzhko 2021) and *I, Milena* (Zabuzhko 2017) were covered as well. The choice of these works is due to the richness of their poetics with metaphorical images that are central to the structure of the text and the formation of the semantic space. In addition, the authors' essays were incorporated, in particular, *A Room of One's Own and, Three Guineas* (Woolf 1998a) and *Philosophy and Cultural Consciousness of the Nation* (Zabuzhko 2009).

The research employed structural, cognitive, and comparative analysis to systematize metaphorical models. Structural analysis identified and described literary metaphors' formal features. Metaphorical transfers were identified using the cognitive technique. Comparative analysis was used to compare metaphor classifications by different academics. Comparative analysis was utilized to identify metaphor classification criteria and construct tables. Data was used to create a metaphor typology based on structural organization, functional load, and semantic properties. Cluster analysis was used to identify metaphorical construction groupings and organize them in tables.

To detect metaphorical peculiarities in Virginia Woolf and Oksana Zabuzhko's works, qualitative research approaches were applied. Cognitive discourse analysis was used to examine how metaphorical structures reflect the writers' worldview and socio-cultural processes. This method was paired with interpretive analysis to reveal the text's semantic levels and organizing processes. Metaphorical constructs' regularities, involvement in artistic image creation, and stylistic function were examined through structural and semantic analysis. Hermeneutical examination included context and sociocultural aspects that influenced the author's writing style. The analysis involved identifying pertinent texts, classifying metaphors, and interpreting them using a generic stylistic analysis. This revealed metaphor trends, their importance in uncovering feminist themes, and how the authors conceptualized time, location, and memory in their literary texts.

Structural analysis was utilized to identify and systematize metaphorical understanding groups for comparison. This identified the primary metaphorical models, their functions, and how to use them to disclose characters' inner lives. The categorization method was used to group the results by metaphor function, use of natural images, time passage, feminist

issues, the inner-outer boundary, social pressure, and symbolic connection between a person and space to create the table. It generalized and compared writers' metaphorical methods. The study also employed the interpretive technique to interpret metaphors in art.

Results and Discussion

Theoretical Foundations of the Study of Metaphor in Literature

To produce multivalent artistic imagery, enlarge a text's semantic range, and deepen its interpretation, metaphor is a vital literary method. It transfers properties from one phenomenon or item to another based on similarity, analogy, or association (Veale et al. 2022). This linguistic and stylistic process exposed hidden substance and established new meanings. Classical rhetoric defines metaphor as a trope that replaces one phrase with a more metaphorical or symbolic one that captures a phenomenon's essence (Csábi 2023). Metaphor enriches communication by "transferring meaning by simile" (Wood 2017), according to Aristotle. Linguistic and literary research show that metaphor is both aesthetic and cognitive, helping to conceptualize novel concepts and phenomena.

This study examined metaphors in Virginia Woolf and Oksana Zabuzhko's works, chosen for their creative contributions and beneficial dialogue. Woolf's modernist metaphorical practices—fluid consciousness, fragmented subjectivity, and the search for feminine creative agency—influence other feminist writers' art and philosophy. Zabuzhko's post-Soviet feminist literature adapts modernist strategies to national pain, collective memory, and cultural self-definition. It was possible to examine how Woolf's metaphorical innovations relate to Zabuzhko's inquiry of embodied identity and historical experience by choosing only two works by each author. This intertextual connection shows that modernist metaphor continues to impact post-Soviet feminist literature's conceptual tools for gender, nationhood, and inner consciousness.

To the Lighthouse and *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf were used to analyze how metaphors are used to express the heroines' psychological transformations, including their struggles for self-identification and social and cultural constraints. Metaphors that show complicated emotions deepen characters' images and help us comprehend how their awareness interacts with the world. The sea metaphor in *To the Lighthouse* symbolizes not just the unpredictability of emotions but also time, which is continuously changing, expressing the fragility of female identity under social pressure.

In *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* and *I, Milena*, Oksana Zabuzhko uses metaphors to explore national identity and collective memory. Zabuzhko links her characters' storylines to national processes with imagery of historical pain and societal realities. The ground, throbbing and absorbing memories, symbolizes territorial space and national memory, which shapes national consciousness. Literary metaphor creates creative truth, as well as style. It helps readers understand complex social, psychological, and philosophical issues by giving

abstract or difficult-to-express notions concrete form. Metaphor shapes Virginia Woolf and Oksana Zabuzhko's characters' subjective worldviews, reflecting their inner experiences, cultural circumstances, and social restraints.

Virginia Woolf uses metaphor to show her characters' psychological state and the distance between their inner and outside lives. In *To the Lighthouse*, waves moving over the sea's surface symbolize the characters' emotional instability, time's infinity, and human feelings' transience. Waves as "soft folds on the water" symbolize the characters' uncertainty and human existence's perpetual change and uncertainty. Oksana Zabuzhko's metaphors depict Ukrainian identity through national and cultural memory. The novel *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* uses the earth to symbolize national memory and previous traumas. In one episode, the soil, which "pulsates" and "absorbs memories," becomes a living entity that preserves people's past. This metaphorical image of the land as a carrier of collective memory connects the reader to the past through artistic meditation.

In Woolf and Zabuzhko's works, metaphor reflects the characters' inner world and actively influences their relationship with the world, creating a multi-layered artistic reality. Woolf combines inner and outside metaphors. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, light and air symbolize the main character's constant mood swings. The metaphor-filled prose becomes nearly transparent, allowing the reader to sense these psychological changes and experiences through "air" and "light," which appear almost physical. Meanwhile, Zabuzhko's metaphors address social and national issues. In *I, Milena*, "voice" symbolizes self-expression and independence from social constraints. "Her voice, sweet and painful, broke through her inner fear"—this metaphor portrays the heroine's inner turmoil and her fight for voice in a society that silences her. The authors use metaphors to create distinct artistic worlds that combine the characters' inner and outer experiences, letting us grasp their psychological and social developments. Metaphor in Woolf and Zabuzhko's texts is more than aesthetic imagery; it helps readers grasp culture, history, and social issues. It connects the protagonists' personal experiences to national memory, feminism, and social limits.

In modern cognitive linguistics, metaphor is regarded not only as an element of poetic language but also as a universal mechanism of human thinking that structures the perception of the world. It is the basis for the formation of categories and concepts, helping a person comprehend abstract concepts through more concrete and understandable images. Therefore, metaphor in literary discourse is central to creating a complex artistic reality, acting as a means of a deeper understanding of the text. In addition, metaphor is a tool for expressing an individual author's style. It is used to convey the author's vision of reality and to form a unique system of images and meanings that provides a unique stylistic originality. The use of metaphor can also influence the reader's emotional state, creating a certain mood and evoking associative connections. Metaphor as an artistic device has a wide variety of forms and functions, which makes it one of the most effective tools in language and literature. There

are many kinds and types of metaphors, each of which reflects a unique approach to conveying images, emotions, and ideas. The classification of metaphors is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Classification of Metaphors in Literary Studies

<i>Classification Criterion</i>	<i>Type of Metaphor</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>
By degree of use	Conventional (erased, linguistic)	Commonly used, lost its original imagery, often used in various functional styles
	Individual (author's, creative)	Created by an individual author, expresses a unique worldview, and may contain contextual neologisms.
By structure	Two-member	Contains the source domain and target domain, both parts of the comparison are clearly defined
	Single member	Only the source domain is verbalized, the target domain remains implicit and must be reconstructed by the reader.
By the ratio of the objects compared	Abstract → Concrete	An abstract concept is conveyed through a concrete image
	Concrete → Abstract	A concrete concept is transferred to the abstract level.
	Animate → Inanimate	Traits of living things are transferred to inanimate objects.
	Inanimate → Animate	Inanimate objects gain characteristics of living things
By prevalence in the language	General language	Frequency, used in different contexts and language styles, has a stable meaning.
	Contextual	Belongs to a specific context, is understood only within a specific utterance
By focusing on the similarity	Structure	Emphasizes the similarity of shape between the source and target domain
	Functional	Highlights the similarity of functions between the source and target domains

Source: Compiled by the Authors Based on Sadova (2024), Denys (2024), and Humar (2021)

Table 1 distinguishes metaphors by commonness, structure, object connection, language prevalence, and similarity orientation. The degree of commonness distinguishes conventional metaphors that lack original imagery from creative and author-style metaphors. Two-part metaphors define both domains, while one-part metaphors leave the target domain implicit. Four types of meaning transfer exist across subjects: abstract to concrete, concrete to abstract, animate to inanimate, and inanimate to animate. Metaphor prevalence varies between generic language metaphors, which function in different styles, and contextual

metaphors, whose meaning is disclosed in a specific phrase. The final criterion, Similarity, distinguished structural metaphors based on formal resemblance from functional metaphors that emphasize shared behaviors or goals.

A work's language, style, and composition create a reader's conceptual model of artistic reality. The author's vision of reality is expressed through a sophisticated system of signs, symbols, and images. Metaphor offers the text ambiguity, adding meaning and deepening understanding. Metaphor creates creative imagery and gives language symbolic depth by transferring object attributes to another. It defines a work's conceptual borders, artistic space, time, and characters' psychological states. A writer can explain events and give them a philosophical, mythical, or generalized meaning with metaphor. Metaphor reimagines familiar objects to shape artistic reality (Hu 2023). This technique gives a literary work a unique perspective on objective reality, creating fresh ideas and interpretations. This is especially true in writings where metaphor dominates the imagery and compositional structure.

Metaphor also models abstract concepts with pictures (Beknazarova et al. 2021). Metaphor can simplify and visualize difficult concepts like time, death, love, and memory. This gives creative reality a symbolic dimension, opening to many interpretations. Metaphor also adds to the production of a certain emotional tone and atmosphere of a work. It conveys moods and emotions and recreates characters' and the author's psychological states. Metaphor can express internal conflict, create tension, or make the text sound harmonious. Metaphor also helps structure narratives. It can unite a work's semantic system. Author uses metaphors and imagery to arrange the content and maintain internal integrity.

A closer examination of the metaphorical structures in Woolf and Zabuzhko shows that their role extends far beyond descriptive imagery: metaphor functions as a cognitive and epistemic mechanism that shapes cultural understanding. In Woolf's modernist prose, metaphors of water, light, and dissolution challenge linear, patriarchal modes of reasoning by modeling alternative forms of consciousness grounded in affect, relationality, and fluid subjectivity. They do not simply represent inner experience but reorganize how readers conceptualize perception and identity.

In Zabuzhko's post-Soviet context, metaphors of land, body, and voice operate as tools for connecting individual memory to collective trauma and national history. These images construct a form of situated feminist knowledge, demonstrating that understanding is rooted in embodied experience shaped by colonial legacies and gendered silencing. The metaphors do not merely symbolize these themes; they actively model how cultural memory is processed and transmitted. Together, these metaphorical systems demonstrate that metaphor is a crucial means of cultural cognition and feminist epistemology. By showing how metaphors structure emotional, historical, and gendered meanings, the analysis moves beyond synthesis and highlights the transformative power of metaphor in shaping readers' engagement with social and cultural realities.

Metaphor is one of the means of expressiveness that gives speech not only imagery but also deep emotional, aesthetic, and semantic content. Due to its nature, it can influence the reader or listener on several levels simultaneously, including the level of feelings, aesthetic perception, and conceptual understanding of the text. Its use goes far beyond ordinary linguistic expression, as it forms a multilayered structure of meanings that encourages deeper analysis and interpretation. The functions of metaphor are shown in more detail in Table 2.

Table 2: Functions of Metaphor

<i>Function</i>	<i>Description</i>
Cognitive	Helps to learn and conceptualize new concepts and helps to explain complex or abstract phenomena through familiar images
Emotionally expressive	Evokes an emotional reaction in the reader or listener and enhances the expressiveness of speech
Nominal	Used to create new terms or concepts, especially in science, technology, philosophy
Evaluation	Expresses a positive or negative assessment of objects, phenomena, or events through associative meanings
Pragmatic	Influences the behavior of the addressee and shapes the attitude to the information being expressed
Poetic	Used in artistic style to create imagery and aesthetic effect
Identification	Helps to correlate the unknown with the known, to establish connections between different concepts
Interpretive	Presents the phenomenon from a different perspective, expands the possibilities of interpretation
Structure	Organizes text, ensuring coherence and integrity of presentation
Mnemonic	Simplifies information acquisition by creating vivid associative images

Source: Compiled by the Authors Based on Hong and Rossi (2021), Muzaffarova et al. (2022)

Metaphor can convey strong emotions, magnify them, and set the text's tone. Due to concept linkages, metaphors can cause pain, joy, anxiety, elation, or nostalgia. This impact depends on intuitive picture perception in literary discourse. Creative speech metaphors often inspire emotional responses by evoking personal experience and cultural norms. Metaphor's artistic function provides unique images that offer literature expression, personality, and stylistic perfection. Metaphor enhances discourse and produces an artistic perspective. It beautifies a text by creating multivalent visuals with tactile and symbolic significance. Metaphors create powerful emotional and visual effects by using unexpected or semantically rich similarities. Metaphors conceptualize and structure information, making their semantic load the most important. Metaphors explain invisible processes with physical images. Cognitive linguistics generates knowledge and categorizes reality via metaphor. Metaphors help language convey information, shift interpretation, widen phenomenon

understanding, and create new semantic structures. Metaphor creates new meanings and concepts by connecting semantic domains.

Metaphor occupies a central position in the author's discourse, as it articulates key elements of the writer's inner world and contributes to the formation of a distinctive artistic worldview. Some metaphorical pictures are complex and diversified because the author's cultural, social, philosophical, and psychological experience influences their decision. Metaphors allow the author to develop a unique semiotic system in which the recipient recognizes both literal and implicit meanings that stress the author's worldview. Metaphor also shapes author–reader intellectual engagement. It communicates and helps readers understand the text. Metaphor's multi-level formulations give it a deeper meaning that changes with context. It simplifies complicated concepts into understandable imagery, deepening the author's worldview and philosophy.

Modernism as a literary movement has significantly changed the approach to the use of metaphor, expanding its functionality and semantic potential. In the works of modernists, metaphor is not only a means of artistic imagery but also a mechanism for deep conceptual understanding of reality, which contributes to the creation of new forms of aesthetic perception. In contrast to traditional literature, modernist metaphor acquires a multilayered meaning, often combining the rational and the irrational, the real and the imaginary, reflecting the gap between the inner and outer worlds of the characters. One of the key features of the modernist metaphor is its complex structure, which implies a rejection of straightforwardness and obviousness. It is often based on unexpected, even paradoxical juxtapositions that stimulate active comprehension of the text by the recipient. In this context, the modernist metaphor takes on the role of a kind of intellectual challenge that encourages the reader to engage in interpretive activity. In modernist works, metaphor is not only an artistic element but also a philosophical expression, exploring existential questions of existence, identity, and consciousness.

Furthermore, modernist metaphor often serves to destroy traditional conceptions of reality by introducing elements of abstraction, fragmentation, and associativity. This is due to the desire of modernists to convey a subjective reality that is unstable, changeable, and often chaotic. In this context, metaphor ceases to be just a means of artistic representation and becomes a way of constructing a new reality that unfolds in the reader's mind. It exceeds the traditional logical structures and creates a space of ambiguity, in which each element of the text acquires new possible interpretations.

Metaphors in the Works of Virginia Woolf and Oksana Zabuzhko

Virginia Woolf's literary work is marked by a deep insight into the inner world of the characters, which is manifested, in particular, using metaphor as a key artistic device. In the novels and short stories, metaphor becomes a way of reflecting the internal psychological

state of the characters, their thoughts, memories, and feelings. Thanks to this, the author creates a multilayered picture of consciousness, in which reality and subjective experiences are intertwined into a single artistic whole.

Woolf's metaphorical technique is notable for conveying internal emotional changes through environmental phenomena. The novel *To the Lighthouse* uses waves, the sea, and weather to depict human consciousness and feelings. "The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it" (Woolf 1998b, 124) describes the main characters' thoughts. This metaphor shows the passage of time and the character's inner state, when the outside and interior worlds blend. In *Mrs. Dalloway* (Woolf 2007), Woolf utilizes light and air analogies to depict Clarissa Dalloway's confusion: "She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She cut everything with a knife while watching from outside" (Woolf 1998b, 150). The knife metaphor symbolizes the paradox of life, the divide between inner and outside experience.

Woolf employs metaphors to communicate time and memory. Waves symbolize the characters' thoughts and emotions in *The Waves*: "The waves broke and spread their waters swiftly over the shore. They gathered and fell, throwing the spray back with their energy" (Woolf 1992b, 53). This shows how outward natural phenomena reflect characters' psychological condition, suggesting inner immersion. Woolf's novels' spatial metaphors deserve special attention. Doors, windows, and corridors symbolize reality and consciousness for the author. *Orlando: A Biography* uses analogies to show the protagonist's transformation: "He stretched himself. He rose. He stood nude before us, and when the trumpets rang forth Truth! Truth! Truth!, we had to admit he was a woman" (Woolf 1992a, 207). Symbolically, shifting light symbolizes a metaphysical rebirth.

Virginia Woolf's metaphors illuminate feminist themes, making her texts complex. Novels use metaphor to show women's inner states, and social and cultural barriers to self-realization. In *A Room of One's Own and, Three Guineas*, Woolf's room metaphor is a renowned feminist trope. The room represents a woman's freedom, independence, and creativity: "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf 1998a, 34). This metaphor emphasizes women's economic and intellectual freedom in a society that has historically constrained their progress. Woolf employs water analogies to describe women's experiences in *Mrs. Dalloway* (Woolf 2007) and *To the Lighthouse*. *To the Lighthouse's* waves symbolize women's fluidity and social subordination: "The waves paused, gathered themselves together, and broke upon the shore" (Woolf 1998b, 85–86). This shows the characters' changing self-image and conflict between social norms and wants.

Woolf often employs the mirror metaphor to highlight how patriarchal culture affects women. *Orlando: A Biography* uses the mirror to understand transformation and social roles: "He stretched himself. He rose. He stood nude before us, and when the trumpets rang forth Truth! Truth! Truth!, we had to admit he was a woman" (Woolf 1992a, 47) This moment stresses gender fluidity and shows how society shapes women's bodies and self-image.

Metaphor in Woolf's works is both artistic and critical of patriarchal culture. Metaphor enables artistic investigation of feminist concepts, as the author used symbols to build a complex discourse about women and self-determination.

Oksana Zabuzhko's metaphors shape Ukrainian identity by expressing cultural codes and creating a symbolic space of national memory. Multilayered images show historical continuity, cultural self-identification, and Ukrainians' global subjectivity battle in art. Zabuzhko uses the soil metaphor to represent the nation's spiritual, historical, and cultural base. Novels and poems depict the land as a living creature, a bearer of communal memory, and part of Ukrainian culture. *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* states, "It was his land, his strong love, stronger than death, stronger than anything else, that pulsed through the night like an invisible light" (Zabuzhko 2020, 204). This depicts the earth as a living thing that breathes and carries the people's memory. These images show how the hero's identity is tied to the land and his "strong as death" passion for it. This simile shows that this sentiment is unbreakable and surpasses all others. Oksana Zabuzhko's metaphors emphasize the work's feminist and patriotic themes. The author uses a sophisticated system of symbols and associations to show the complexity of a woman's inner world and the connection between her experiences and the Ukrainian people's historical struggles.

Oksana Zabuzhko employed metaphors to describe the protagonist's inner world, self-realization, and social estrangement in *I, Milena* (Zabuzhko 2017). Milena's voice symbolizes originality, inner power, and battle with the outside world. For instance, "the sweetly painful richness of her voice pressed stubbornly upwards" describes Milena's voice as trying to break through limits but being resisted. This metaphor shows how the heroine's yearning to be heard conflicts with society's gender norms. The voice becomes a sign of freedom, but also of vulnerability, as it frightens and intrigues others around, who are not ready to recognize the true character of Milena.

The screen symbolizes false hopes, salvation, and identity loss. In the quotation "The way it envelops you, chained to a place, with a kind of tickling warmth, like a bubble bath, and you soften, grow and expand" (Zabuzhko 2017, 208) the screen is depicted as a tempting but misleading area that delivers temporary pleasure, but at the same time deprives the heroine of self-control. Modern media and public attention can hide a person's genuine identity, as this metaphor shows. In addition, Zabuzhko uses analogies to describe the existential vacuum in which Milena was. Milena laid face up and listened in awe as her existence slowly drifted about her in space ("thick, caramel-like continuity"). The heroine's existence is viscous and unmanageable, symbolizing her helplessness. This metaphor portrays a sense of alienation not just from the surroundings but also from personality, which is a significant element in the description of Milena's inner world.

For *Girls*, Zabuzhko (2017) uses psychological and symbolic analogies to examine the characters' inner lives. In the quote: "everything was ridiculous and insignificant, like shed fluff, and she was emerging from it new, dark and powerful, like a thunderstorm: the size of

a whole world at once” (Zabuzhko 2017: 310), a “dark and powerful thunderstorm” symbolizes Darka’s transformation. This metaphor captures the intensity of growing up and discovering inner strength. The storm symbolizes the heroine’s emotional journey and a new chapter in her life, finding inner power. Zabuzhko’s unique approach combined psychology and symbolism to create multidimensional art. Darka’s inner experience is full of psychological strain, symbolizing both personal growth and the universal experience of a woman striving to find herself in a world that often imposes others’ duties and expectations.

The quote “The creation of a language suitable for philosophical reflection is like the synthesis of diamonds: each full-fledged abstract concept should have many facets, reflecting the whole history of the ascent of thought to the subject” (Zabuzhko 2009, 21) emphasizes that the creation of a philosophical language is a complex process that can be compared to the formation of a diamond. Each concept, similar to a diamond, has to “sparkle with many facets,” reflecting different aspects of reality and the historical experience of its formation. This means that the language should be multifaceted to cover philosophical, cultural, and historical contexts. In Zabuzhko’s work, this principle is realized through powerful metaphorical images, such as “land,” “museum” or “road,” which reflect the historical and spiritual experience of Ukraine. For instance, the land in the novels is not just a geographical space, but a symbol that ripples with facets of memory, love, and the struggle for self-determination. Each of these images, similar to a diamond, reflects different aspects of the national experience: pain, hope, loss, and victory.

Thus, metaphor in the works of Oksana Zabuzhko is not only an artistic device but also a substantial element for revealing deep feminist and national themes. Through the symbolism of the body, voice, silence, land, and water, the writer creates a complex network of associations that allows the reader not only to feel the personal and historical drama but also to realize the need to determine these problems in the contemporary Ukrainian context.

Metaphorical Style Comparative Analysis: Virginia Woolf and Oksana Zabuzhko

A closer synthesis of the analyzed passages shows that metaphor in both Woolf and Zabuzhko operates not merely at the level of stylistic ornamentation but as an ideological and affective framework shaping readers’ perception of gender, history, and subjectivity. The metaphorical textures of their prose activate broader cultural logics: in Woolf, fluid imagery articulates resistance to patriarchal rationality and constructs an epistemology grounded in emotional permeability and relational consciousness; in Zabuzhko, metaphors of land, body, and voice encode postcolonial trauma, and model how collective memory is internalized as affective knowledge. These metaphorical structures thus illuminate how each author conceptualizes power, identity, and agency, enabling readers to apprehend social realities not through abstract categories but through embodied, emotionally charged cognitive schemata. Integrating these insights demonstrates that the metaphors examined here function

simultaneously as narrative mechanisms and as cultural models through which ideological tensions—between oppression and autonomy, silence and expression, memory and erasure—are negotiated within the literary text.

Metaphor is a key tool in both Virginia Woolf’s and Oksana Zabuzhko’s works, used to explore the characters’ inner experiences and emotional states. In *To the Lighthouse* (Woolf 1998b), metaphors of light and sea convey the internal states of Mrs. Ramsey and Lily Briscoe, reflecting their anxiety and uncertainty. For example, “the sea would swing, a soft fringe of fire” symbolizes their emotional turbulence. Woolf’s metaphors create a fluid, multi-layered portrayal of consciousness and mood. Zabuzhko (2021) uses metaphors to explore psychological depth in *Fieldwork in Ukrainian Sex*. The metaphor of the female soul as a labyrinth emphasizes the repetitiveness of experience and the difficulty of escaping sociocultural conditions: “You seem to be walking in the same circles as your grandmothers and mothers.”

Both authors use metaphors to reflect emotional states through the surrounding environment. Woolf employs elements like water, light, and air, while Zabuzhko uses bodily and historical metaphors to express the tension between the individual and society. In *The Waves* (1992b), Woolf’s metaphor of waves conveys the cyclical nature of existence, symbolizing the continuous flow of time: “Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death!” In contrast, Zabuzhko’s metaphors, such as the land and body, are deeply tied to national identity and historical memory, shaping a unique artistic reality. A comparison of the use of metaphor as a means of shaping artistic reality by both authors is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Use of Metaphor in the Works of Virginia Woolf and Oksana Zabuzhko

Criteria	Virginia Woolf	Oksana Zabuzhko
Function of metaphor	Reflection of the inner world of characters, their thoughts, memories, emotions	Formation of Ukrainian identity, construction of a symbolic space of national memory
Natural images	Frequent use of sea waves, weather, and light to express the emotional instability of the characters	Images of land as a carrier of national memory and Ukrainian mentality
Capturing the passage of time	Waves symbolizing the change of thoughts and feelings (<i>The Waves</i>)	A sense of historical continuity through the metaphor of living earth (<i>Museum of Abandoned Secrets</i>)
Feminist issues	A room as a symbol of female independence (<i>A Room of One’s Own and, Three Guineas</i>), waves as a metaphor for female identity (<i>To the Lighthouse</i>)	The voice is a symbol of a woman’s self-realization and the struggle for self-expression (<i>I, Milena</i>), and the screen is an allegory of illusory freedom

The boundary between the inner and outer world	Doors, windows, and corridors as metaphors for the transition between consciousness and reality (<i>Orlando: A Biography</i>)	The screen is a symbol of loss of identity, forming the boundary between reality and illusion.
A metaphor for social pressure	The mirror is a symbol of patriarchal control over female corporeality (<i>Orlando: A Biography</i>)	The image of silence and suppressed voice is a way of reflecting societal restrictions on women
Symbolic connection of a person with space	Dissolving the characters in natural phenomena, which emphasizes their changing identity	Intertwining personal experience with the historical memory of the people through the symbolism of the land

The differences in the use of metaphors by Oksana Zabuzhko and Virginia Woolf are determined by their cultural contexts, literary styles, and focus on different aspects of social and individual research. Zabuzhko works in the context of Ukrainian culture, where social norms are often linked to historical traumas, the colonial history, and the struggle for national identity. The metaphors often have national overtones, such as comparing women's fate to that of Ukraine. Woolf, on the other hand, works in the context of early twentieth-century British society, where the emphasis is on class differences and women's intellectual freedom. Virginia Woolf is known for stream-of-consciousness fiction, where metaphors are often intertwined with the internal monologues of the characters, creating a complex, multi-layered text. Zabuzhko's metaphors are often more direct and emotionally charged, used to create vivid images that instantly convey the ideas. Zabuzhko often uses metaphors related to historical events to show how the history influences the present. Woolf, although referring to history, prioritizes individual experience and psychological aspects.

Virginia Woolf and Oksana Zabuzhko, separated by time and space, use metaphor to examine complicated social issues, particularly, gender and national identity. In *Mrs. Dalloway* (2007) and *To the Lighthouse* (1998b), Woolf highlights the social changes in Britain caused by World War I, class and gender transitions, and feminist movements. Her metaphors, especially those involving light and the water, capture characters' psychological problems as they fight to break free from social norms and express themselves. In *A Room of One's Own and, Three Guineas* (Woolf 1998a), a room symbolizes female creativity and independence, demonstrating the material and social requirements for feminist liberty. Woolf's metaphors explore feminist principles and women's rights, balancing personal ambition with social equality.

After the Soviet Union, Ukraine struggled for independence, and to overcome its communist past. Zabuzhko's work emerged then. In novels like *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* (2020) and *I, Milena* (Zabuzhko 2017), metaphors explore national identity, historical memory, and self-awareness. Earth, museum, and path symbolize personal and social trauma

from Soviet occupation and postcolonial legacies. In *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* (Zabuzhko 2020), earth symbolizes love, suffering, and hope, as well as the connection between individuals and their past histories, which shape national identity. Zabuzhko's metaphors illuminate women's societal restrictions and promote national self-awareness through cultural and political freedom.

Woolf's metaphors describe women's psychological moods and desires against patriarchal restraints, while Zabuzhko's depict national social traumas. Both authors use metaphor to explore social, political, and cultural issues. Woolf emphasizes female self-realization, while Zabuzhko's metaphors emphasize national trauma and historical memory necessary for cultural and political identity. Both writers use metaphor to explore feminism, human rights, and national integrity, enriching their storylines. The study used normal linguistic research methodologies, but textual analysis required a deeper and more extensive engagement with major subjects including communal memory, feminism, and literary representations of consciousness. The way metaphors in Virginia Woolf and Oksana Zabuzhko's works reflect the characters' particular experiences and construct larger cultural and societal contexts needs further examination. Both authors use metaphors that depict communal traumas and historical processes that shape a nation's culture. Metaphors in collective memory show how literature reproduces historical, social, and cultural aspects that shape modern identity.

Metaphor should be used to study these authors' feminist issues. The investigation demonstrates that images of the body, voice, space, and land are potent symbols of feminist rights and equality, and have emotional and psychological value. This helps relate literary writings to real sociocultural processes, especially postcolonial pain, historical injustices, and social change. Metaphor is part of literary reality and reflects both human experience and bigger cultural phenomena, therefore its meaning must be assessed in the context of genuine social and political changes, notably in gender, national, and cultural identities. These themes will help us understand metaphor's aesthetic values and its ability to represent current social challenges including women's rights, national self-identification, and cultural memory.

Zabuzhko uses metaphors to emphasize collective and national experience, with images like land, a museum, or a road symbolizing historical memory, self-determination, and a spiritual connection to the native land. In *Museum of Abandoned Secrets* (Zabuzhko 2020), the land symbolizes national identity, pulsating with love, pain, and hope. These metaphors are direct, emotionally intense, and politically charged, emphasizing the importance of historical consciousness and collective memory. In contrast, Woolf uses metaphors to explore individual experiences and inner worlds. In *Mrs. Dalloway* (Woolf 2007) and *To the Lighthouse* (Woolf 1998b), metaphors are woven into the stream of consciousness, conveying psychological states and emotions. For instance, in *To the Lighthouse*, the lighthouse symbolizes inner aspirations, memories, and the passage of time. Woolf's metaphors are more abstract and universal, focusing on human nature rather than specific historical contexts.

Gereliouk (2023) and Zurenko (2024) analyze Zabuzhko's gender metaphors and historical background, making them important to this study. While Gereliouk studies female identity and gender, Zhurenko studies Zabuzhko's critique of societal norms and alternative narratives. Both studies stress the importance of metaphors in conveying important ideas, especially historical, spiritual, and cultural ones. These ideas complement each other, showing Zabuzhko's depth and contribution to Ukrainian discourse.

Comparison with Levchenko and Karasov (2021) shows that while both studies analyze Zabuzhko's metaphors, their techniques differ. Automated metaphor identification using corpus tools and mathematical methods by Levchenko and Karasov yields objective and accurate findings for metaphor models like "opinion." In contrast, this qualitative study interprets metaphorical imagery in the context of national identity, historical memory, and cultural experience. Levchenko and Karasov's work studies metaphors using language models and automated approaches, but their study examines their philosophical and cultural importance to better comprehend their function in national consciousness. Together, they reveal distinct aspects of Zabuzhko's work.

This study investigates how Oksana Zabuzhko and Virginia Woolf use metaphor to express national identity, historical memory, and psychological emotions. Spivey's (2023) study examines how metaphors reflect complex social, historical, and psychological processes in literature. Both studies emphasize that metaphor is not just a stylistic device but also a crucial tool for understanding and interpreting the world. Spivey's research focusses on how metaphors shape artistic reality and convey complex ideas, while this study shows how metaphors affect reader perception and deepen literary understanding.

Alexander (2021) examined Woolf's writing for subject-object relationship and its philosophical and affective features. Alexander investigates how Woolf replaces subject-object closeness with impersonality, which emphasizes objects' autonomy and function in creating a common world accessible to others. Metaphor's function in molding Woolf's characters' inner lives is examined in this study. In contrast, this research uses metaphors to connect individual and collective experience, the past and the present, and cultural and social themes.

Recent years have seen considerable research into metaphor as a literary device in real social concerns and instructional applications. Karpov et al. (2023) examine how metaphors can convey social justice in literature and the social sciences. Metaphors simplify complicated societal issues like injustice, racism, and discrimination, they say. This study also provides ways to use metaphors in literary texts to teach pupils about social issues. Wang (2022) examines metaphor as a teaching tool that integrates cognitive and emotional learning. The author examined how metaphors in texts help readers understand moral difficulties and social issues. Metaphors enhance students' emotional awareness and connection to the topic. Metaphor in literature instruction helps pupils think critically and understand social concerns like gender equality and environmental difficulties, according to this study.

Gibbs and Rasse (2022) investigated metaphorical thinking in the perception of literary characters and the relationship between the reader and the character. The study demonstrated that metaphorical structures in the works of Zabuzhko and Woolf not only contribute to the understanding of characters but also serve to expand the boundaries of artistic reality, immersing the reader in alternative conceptual spaces. In this aspect, the results of the study confirm the idea of a deep connection between metaphorical thinking and aesthetic perception of the text. The Biliteracy Metaphor Analysis (BMA) methodology proposed by Kaasby and Hornberger (2022) was used to analyze the use of metaphors in a bilingual context. Although this study was aimed at analyzing the processes of interpretation in the educational environment, the patterns it revealed confirm the importance of individual and sociocultural experience in the perception of metaphors. The study has demonstrated that in the works of Zabuzhko and Woolf, metaphors can be used for conceptual transitions that transform the approach of the experience of the reader within the artistic reality.

Comparison with previous studies has confirmed the versatility of metaphor as a literary and cognitive phenomenon. The study complemented the existing theoretical approaches by showing that metaphor is not only a means of cognition of reality, but also an active mechanism of its creation within a literary text.

Conclusion

The study examined how metaphor shapes Oksana Zabuzhko and Virginia Woolf's art. Metaphor in literature was examined as a cognitive and aesthetic phenomenon in the study. Metaphor offers artistic expression and structures the author's worldview, creating multi-level semantic constructions, according to the study. Studying Zabuzhko and Woolf's metaphorical speech quirks, it was found that Zabuzhko's works are dominated by metaphors about historical memory, national identity, and corporeality, while Woolf uses metaphor to immerse the reader in time, internal struggles, and identity. A comparative investigation showed that both authors use metaphor to explain complicated existential and societal issues. The study found that metaphor shapes artistic reality, ensures text consistency, and creates a unique environment. Zabuzhko's metaphors are polemical, while Woolf's are for introspection. Thus, metaphor is both stylistic and literary.

The study stressed that Zabuzhko and Woolf use metaphors to explain complicated thoughts and feelings that cannot be articulated directly. Metaphors connect individual and social experience, the past and present, and reality and artistic interpretation for Zabuzhko. They depict Ukraine's history, self-determination, and spiritual connection to its homeland. Woolf's metaphors, weaved throughout the stream of consciousness, expand the characters' inner worlds, emotions, and psychological states, making the works universal and relevant to different generations. The study expanded our understanding of metaphor in literature and its value as a vehicle for representing complex social, historical, and psychological processes.

This study's concentration on particular authors' works limits its metaphorical examination over a wider spectrum of texts. The study did not consider the cultural and historical context in which these works were received in different literary traditions, which could illuminate their metaphors. Expanding the investigation to incorporate more of both writers' works would allow for a more complete metaphorical language analysis. Using corpus linguistics to uncover metaphor usage patterns throughout their works could improve the study's conclusions. Comparing metaphor with postmodern narrative methods is another intriguing study topic. This might help explain metaphor in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature.

This study uses systematic and modern scholarly methods, although it has drawbacks. Metaphorical analysis is helpful for literary works, but it does not account for all factors that could affect metaphor interpretation. The study may miss sociocultural changes in metaphor interpretation between cultures or metaphors' changing meanings. While metaphor is important, the study may have benefited from including symbolism and allegory, which help create artistic realism. The article analyses important narrative levels; however, it understates their connection with compositional structure and plot progression. Metaphor alone may not determine the creative effect; thus it should be considered in a broader textual context. While the methodological approach yields useful metaphor insights, a more deliberate and integrated approach using other literary tools could enhance the research. This suggests future study that could critically evaluate metaphor and the current technique.

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Informed Consent

The authors declare that informed consent was not required as there were no human participants involved.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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