

ON THE CONCEPT OF DEPRESSION IN AMERICAN ENGLISH: A COGNITIVE APPROACH*

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ABSTRACT

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) give metaphor and metonymy an important role in conceptualization and in linguistic meaning. Lakoff (1985) claims that psychological states or processes like the emotions are conceptualized primarily via metaphor and metonymy, which he demonstrates convincingly in his study of the linguistic expressions of the concept of *anger* in American English. In the following essay, a characterization of the concept of *depression* in American English is attempted along the following lines: first, the relevant metaphors are isolated and briefly analysed, then the metonymies motivating them are discussed, and finally an approximate formal cognitive model of the concept is proposed on the basis of these data.

1. INTRODUCTION. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) suggested that psychological states or processes such as emotions or reasoning processes are usually conceptualized metaphorically in terms of some other more basic and immediate cognitive experiences such as spatial relationships (*orientational metaphors, ibid: 14-22*), or basic concepts such as *object, substance* or *human beings (ontological and personification metaphors, ibid: 25-35)*. These experiences are also often understood by means of metonymy (part for whole, instrument for agent; see *ibid: 35-41*), which often cooperates with metaphor in this conceptualization process.

Lakoff (1985) includes metaphorical and metonymic cognitive processes in a

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general theory of what he calls Idealized Cognitive Models, or ICMs. He suggests that there are four basic types of ICMs: metaphorical, metonymic, propositional and image-schematic. Cognitive categories are the result of the interaction of these ICMs, and they differ from 'classical', model-theoretic categories, precisely in this respect. Many categories are *prototypes* (Rosch 1981) and complex categories are usually networks of concepts, namely 'radial' categories. Radial categories consist of a central category, a prototype, which is systematically related to a number of peripheral categories. These peripheral categories are variations on the prototype.

In the following study I will provide further arguments for the view that emotions are understood via metaphor and metonymy, by studying in detail a large number of linguistic expressions that denote the concept of *depression*. It will be shown that this concept is a radial category structured around a prototype, just like the concept of *anger*, which was investigated along the same lines by Lakoff & Kövecses in Lakoff (1985).

2. METAPHORS FOR DEPRESSION. I will carry out this survey of the depression metaphors in two steps: first, I shall present the basic perceptual metaphors that constitute the concept, and then I will analyse briefly its *structural metaphors* (for structural metaphors, see Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 61-69).

2.1. *Perceptual metaphors.* As posited by Lakoff & Johnson (Ch. 4), a large part of our conceptual structure is partly based upon the metaphorical elaboration of spatial concepts such as *up-down*, *front-back*, etc..., which emerge directly in our experience; this metaphorical elaboration is called *orientational metaphor*. Our conceptual structure is also largely based on the concepts of *object*, *person*, *entity*, *substance*, which are also concepts directly emerging in our daily experience; in this case, we have *ontological* metaphors.

I suggest that orientational and ontological metaphors should be included in a broader class of basic metaphors, that of *perceptual metaphors*. The notions of object, substance and spatial position (*up*, *down*, etc...) are among the most basic data of our perceptual experience, hence of our perceptual development. But there are other data in our perceptual experience that can also be the basis for metaphorical conceptualization. The distinction of different degrees of temperature is normally seized upon by most languages as a means of structuring metaphorically other less direct experiences. Restricting myself to English, I find that the heat scale built into its lexicon is used to partially organize a large number of other concepts. These are just a few examples:¹

- *Taste*: This curry is too *hot*.
- *Emotions*: Keep *cool* (calmness)/ The film made my blood run *cold* (fear).
- *Emotions in social relations*: She gave me the *cold shoulder* ('treated me indifferently')/ I was given a *warm* welcome ('an affectionate welcome')/ They just gave me *lukewarm* support ('not very strong support').
- *Interest, relevance*: This is *hot* news ('very interesting news').

- *Closeness* (in children's games): 'You are getting *warm!*' ('close to').
- *Sex*: She's a *cold* woman.
- *International relationships*: *Cold* war.

In the field of *light perception* we can also find the basis for some other perceptual metaphors. Again, the following are just a few examples:

- *Emotions*: Don't look on the *dark* side of things (depression)/ She had a *beam* of delight on her face (happiness).
- *Health*: She *glowed* with good health.
- *Social relations*: You are so clever and *brilliant* that my poor efforts are put into the *dark*.
- *Public communication*: The news saw the *light* last week.
- *Understanding*: That's a *clear* remark ('a remark easy to understand')/ These facts shed new *light* on the matter / I only *dimly* understood what you said.
- *Mental capacity, intelligence*: I did it according to my *lights* / Einstein was one of the leading *lights* of our age / She is really *dim* ('dull').
- *Degrees of difference in color, meanings and ideas*: A *light*-colored dress / A *dark*-colored tie./ That word has many *shades* of meaning.

The following are some examples from *other perceptual areas*:

- *Physical handling*: I cannot *grasp* your theory (understanding)
- *Touch*: A slight *touch* of frost ('amount of')/ A *touch* of irony ('degree of')/ I haven't *touched* whisky for two days (ingestion of food or drink) / He's a bit *touched* (mental balance).

Of the above metaphors, the major metaphor used to structure the concept of depression in English is the *orientational metaphor* **happy is up; unhappy is down** (Lakoff & Johnson: 15). There are some other minor perceptual metaphors that help structure aspects of our concept of depression. These are the *light perception metaphor* **happiness is light; unhappiness is absence of light**, and the *heat perception metaphor* **happiness is heat; unhappiness is absence of heat**.

2.2. Major orientational metaphor: **happy is up; unhappy is down**

Experiential basis. Lakoff & Johnson propose this physical experiential basis: "Drooping posture typically goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state" (p. 15). Actually, referring to someone's drooping posture may metonymically entail denoting his/her depression: *He walked with his head hung down*. The **unhappy is down** metaphor is based on this metonymy (see 4.1 below).

Examples:

Their behavior beat me *down* / John is terribly *depressed* / Mike brought me *down* with his ironical remarks / I am in *low* spirits / I have

sagging spirits today / Mary is *down* in the dumps / John is really *down* / He's really *prostrate* / Smith is a bit *crestfallen* / Mary was a bit cast *down* at the news of her uncle's accident / My spirits *sank* when I heard the story / They were all *downhearted* after they were told they had lost their jobs / She has been a bit *droopy* lately / I *am at the end of my rope* (according to all the native speakers I have asked the 'rope' is viewed as vertically oriented, and the 'the end' refers to the lower end) / I have touched *bottom* / That will *lie heavy* on Mary / I feel *overwhelmed*.

The *aspects* of depression highlighted by this metaphor are *intensity* and *existence*, as well as *cause* and *damage* to the person affected by the depression. It can cover every degree in intensity above zero. Weak intensity is represented in *She's a bit droopy*, or in *Smith's a bit crestfallen*. Medium intensity appears in the largest number of expressions: *I'm in low spirits*, *They are downhearted*, or *I feel low*. Strong intensity is reflected in such expression as *I've touched bottom*, or *I'm in the pits*. *Coming into existence* and *cause* are simultaneously reflected in the same expressions in cases like *She brought me down*, *That lowered my spirits*, etc... (The last two examples are paraphrasable as 'She (her behaviour, attitude, etc...) was the cause for me to start being down (and remain so)' and 'That (event, object, etc...) was the cause for my spirits to start being lowered (and remain so)', respectively. Mere existence is denoted in most other examples. The damage to the person concerned is less visible, but still present in *She's prostrate*, *I touched bottom*, *Their behavior beat me down*, and in the expressions where the **burden** metaphor is also present (see 2.10).

As we stated above, the **unhappy ~ down²** metaphor is the central metaphor for depression. This centrality is shown by the fact of it being the metaphor illustrated by the largest number of linguistic expressions, and by the fact of it being implicit in a number of other important metaphors. Many of the above examples contain at the same time other structural or ontological metaphors which will be examined later.

2.3. *The light perception metaphor: light is happiness; dark is unhappiness.* Here are some examples of the depression part of the metaphor:

Her *glum* manner is the worst thing about her / That cast a *shade* upon our illusions / The news cast a *gloom* over the village / These are *black* tidings / I feel *under a cloud* / This is a *murky* outlook. Nothing seems to be going to come out OK / He is in a *dark* mood / Despair has *overclouded* his face / His *somber* demeanor made us all silent.

Experiential basis. It appears that in most cultures light, on the basis of physical experience, is viewed as a positive phenomenon, and absence of light, as a negative one. Therefore, it is not surprising that depression should be understood metaphorically as absence of light, i.e. as darkness. This is a general experiential basis for the metaphor. For a more specific basis of it, see 4.1.

The *aspects* of depression highlighted in the metaphor are *coming into existence* and *existence* of depression, and *cause* of the depression. The ‘coming into existence’ and the ‘cause’ aspect are usually reflected in the same expression, e.g.: That cast a *gloom* over the village (‘That was the cause for the people in the village to start feeling depressed’). The ‘mere existence’ aspect is conveyed by most expressions: He is *gloomy*, He is in a *dark mood*, etc...

2.4. *The heat perception metaphor: happy is warm; unhappy is cold.*

Examples:

Her remarks threw *cold water* on the party / What he did *chilled* my heart / That put a *dampener* on my spirits / Mike is a real *wet blanket* / She gave me an *icy look* / Those are really *bleak* prospects (i.e. ‘cold and cheerless prospects’ / Nothing could *dampen* his spirits / That has *frozen* my heart / We all came out in *drenched* spirits.

Experiential basis. Being cold (because of damp or any other cause) is usually disadvantageous, even dangerous, from a physical point of view. This explains why depression, a ‘negative’ emotion, is usually conceptualized via metaphor as cold or as cold through damp. A more specific basis for the metaphor can be found, however, in one of the physiological effects metonymies (see 4.1).

An *aspect* of the concept of depression highlighted by this metaphor is the *change of state* aspect. Thus most of the above examples presuppose a previous (usually immediately preceding) state of happiness, which is (often abruptly) terminated and changed into the opposite state. When we say *That threw cold water on my spirits*, or *He put a dampener on us all*, we are implying a previous state of relative happiness, which is suddenly shattered by an unpleasant event, action, or behavior. An aspect obviously implicit in the former is *coming into existence*. The *cause* of the depression is usually also denoted in this metaphor. Most of the examples contain a reference to the cause for getting ‘cold’: *Her attitude dampened my spirits*, *She gave me an icy look*, etc...

2.5. *Structural metaphors.* The metaphors that follow are in most cases elaborations of ontological (i.e. entity and personification) metaphors, which are also used to structure aspects of other concepts besides the concept of depression. Some of them, however, are strictly structural metaphors in the sense that they map the structural dimensions of physical or cultural *experiential gestalts* (see Lakoff & Johnson, chapter 15), which tend to be rather sharply delineated in our experience, onto concepts that are less clearly delineated. For example, some of the dimensions of the concept of a journey, that is, the departure, the intermediate, and the arrival points, are mapped onto the concept of life in the **life ~ journey** metaphor (see 2.15). In addition, this experiential gestalt is used to structure metaphorically lots of other concepts as well as life: *arguments* can be journeys,

love is a journey (Kövecses, forthcoming), a *narration* is a journey, etc... and *depression* can be a journey (2.15).

2.6. **Emotions are substances within the person.** This metaphor is based on the *emergent concept* (Lakoff & Johnson: 50) that we have of our bodies as containers. It is a special case of the metaphor **emotions ~ substances**.

Examples:

Emotions are substances: *A little love* is always necessary in every task / *Too much anger* may become uncontrollable / *A measure of earnestness* should be helpful / She has *too much pride* to bear being slighted.

Depression is a substance inside the person container: She was *filled with sorrow* / Public dejection has *reached an all-time high* / She *cried her heart out* when I told her / Johnny was *sorrowful* (for *cry one's heart out*, see 2.16).

The *source concept* is that of a container filled with a substance of various kinds, which tends to rise in level, and thus exert pressure against the inner walls of the container. This pressure may eventually become destructive.

The *target concept* is that of a person in a state of depression, whose intensity tends to become greater, and eventually be harmful to him / her.

The aspects of depression highlighted by the metaphor are thus *intensity*, usually a very high degree of it (*I am filled with sorrow*), *force* exerted by depression on the person affected, *harm* or *damage* to that person, and loss of self-control. All of these aspects are often present in the same expression:

She *broke up/down* after a while. She couldn't pretend to feel indifferent any longer / She *came apart at the seams* / John *burst out crying* / Mr Perkins *came to pieces* with so much suffering.

The next two sections focus on the conceptualization of emotions or their causes as *forces* of various sorts; in the case of depression, the relevant forces are *violent forces* and *natural forces*.

2.7. The cause of depression is a violent force:

That event *crushed* him / That was a *heartwrenching* scene / *Dashed hopes* are sometimes the cause of drunkenness / Loss of a loved one is a terrible *blow* / Bad luck *pushed him over the brink* / He was *hit* by the bad news / This will *destroy* me / I am *downtrodden*. This is too much / She is really *heartstricken* / Mike is *grief-stricken* / They *bumped me out* (Slang) / He was badly *cut up* by the news of his son's divorce / That really *cut to the quick* / He *beat* Fred down.

These examples show how expressions that literally denote the exertion of a violent physical force (*crush, wrench, dash, blow, push, hit, destroy, tread* (upon something or someone), *strike, bum, cut, beat*) are used metaphorically to denote the process of getting depressed. Here, the violent force is mapped onto the *cause* of the depression. As a violent physical force exerted against a person is usually painful for the latter, depression is metaphorically understood as *physical pain*, caused by a violent physical force. In addition to cause, other issues the metaphor addresses are *intensity* (most of the expressions point to a *high degree*), as well as the *inevitability* of depression, that is, the *control* depression gains over the person affected, and the consequent *loss of selfcontrol* on the part of the latter. An aspect strongly emphasized is that of the *harm* to the depressed person. Together with cause, it is one of the aspects most forcefully thrown into relief by the metaphor.

2.8. Depression is a natural force. This metaphor sees a complete state of depression as a natural force that comes over the person, sweeps it away, moves it around, etc... Depression is represented here as an uncontrollable external force. This metaphor is different from the one that treats the *cause* of depression as a violent force, which is usually controlled by a human agent (see the examples in 2.7). As can be judged from the examples below, the *aspects* highlighted are the *inevitability* of depression in many cases, and the resulting *passivity* on the part of the person concerned.

Examples:

Waves of depression recurrently came over her / If his dejection *set in* it would really be harming at this stage / *The flood* of emotion was too much for her, and she started sobbing.

The next two sections are devoted to metaphors whose common feature is that of viewing depression as a cause of physical unease or as a kind of physical unease. Physical unease is often the result of *nuisances* of several kinds: *burdens* placed on a person, insects flying around, etc... It can also be the effect of *poor health and lack of strength*. Of course, physical unease can also be a consequence of a violent force exerted on a person, but I have already dealt with this metaphor.

2.9. Happiness is health; depression is illness. We shall deal first with physical unease as brought about by poor health and weakness. In this metaphor, depression is seen as a state in which the person is weak, lacks vigor and is therefore ill. Happiness is viewed as the opposite state.

She had a *fit* of depression / Johnny is soul-*sick* / Mary is heart-*sick* / She *pined away* with sorrow / His *heartsore* friends said their last goodbye to Albert / My *heartache* is hard to overcome / There are no *remedies* for his depression / She was really *hipped* (Slang, originated in 'hypocondria') / Time *heals* all sorrows.

This metaphor points to the *existence* of depression and to the *harm* to the person concerned.

2.10. Depression is a nuisance. Depression is a burden.

The nuisance metaphor. This is a minor metaphor for depression, although it is a widespread one in the general field of the emotions. It views negative emotions as physical nuisances, without a specification of what kind of nuisances are involved:

Come on, *shake it off* / *Throw off* your troubles!

The burden metaphor:

The theft *lay heavy* on his conscience / He looked as if *carrying the whole world's problems on his shoulders* / The *grieffladen* crowd walked to the graveyard / The *sorrow-burdened* man could hardly speak / A *heavy-hearted* Johnny opened the door and led the way to his father's coffin / Johny *staggered* under his pain / I'll have to *take up the cross* / This is really hard to *bear* / I feel *overwhelmed* with pain / The *woe-laden* widow did not even talk / That was an *oppressive* thought, and my mind was on the verge of *sinking* under it / She *labored under* affliction.

This metaphor often points to the *cause* of the depression (*The theft lay heavy...*, carrying *the whole world's problems...*), and to the *existence* aspect of depression, now conceptualized as a burden. But the two aspects most clearly brought out are that of the *force* depression exerts upon the person affected, and that of the *harm* depression does to that person.

The next four metaphors are ontological and personification metaphors that picture depression as a *living being* in general, and more specifically, as a *wild animal* and as an *enemy*.

2.11. Depression is a living organism.

His unhappiness is *growing* / That will only make her depression *stronger* / That's only a *weak* depression / The girl's heartsickness is just starting to *develop* / Our depression is *dying* / After some time, your dejection will gradually *fade* away / I have to *kill off* the *roots* of her unhappiness / He *drowned* his sorrows in drink (in this example, depression is further conceptualized as a living being inside the person) / That gave *birth* to his sorrows / She kept *brooding* over her sorrows for days on end ('to brood' literally means 'to sit on eggs and hatch them') / Whatever you say will just *nourish* his feelings of unhappiness / Your behavior is just *fostering* her unhappiness / Don't *nurture* our pain / This is just *food* for her depression.

In this metaphor, a number of experimentally known aspects of living organisms, such as birth, development, death, etc..., are likened to 'similar' aspects of an emotional process like depression (inception or coming into existence, increase in intensity, reduction in intensity, etc...). These correspondences are presented in tabular form in 3 below. They yield the aspects of the concept of depression highlighted by the metaphor: cause, existence, coming into existence, various degrees in intensity, and attempts at controlling depression.

2.12. **Depression is a captive beast inside the person.** This is of course, a special case of the general metaphor **emotions are captive beasts inside the person:**

His feelings of misery *got out of hand* / You'll be *devoured* by your cares / John *lost his grip* on his feelings of depression, and started crying / She tried to *hold back* her tears, but she couldn't / She *let go* of her feelings and broke out crying.

The underlined expressions call up vividly the image of a wild animal which is hard to control. It is a 'captive' beast inside the person, since the person constantly struggles to prevent it from 'showing' outside. The metaphor, therefore, focuses on the *loss of control* aspect and on a high intensity of feeling. It usually also highlights the depressed person's *attempts to regain his/her emotional balance* before losing control, at times successfully (as in *He managed to keep a grip on himself*), at times unsuccessfully (as in *His sense of misery got out of hand*, or *He lost his grip...*). Occasionally, it focuses on the harm to the person affected (*devour*).

2.13. **Depression is an enemy or opponent:**

Depression has *attacked* her again / He was *seized* yesterday by a violent depression / Sorrow has *gotten hold* of him / Mary's depression is *gaining ground* / John *won a battle* over his depression / You must *struggle* against your depression / He was *downtrodden* by his depression / Her woes have *bowed her down* / Depression *overcame* him / You must *fight* your depression / She succeeded in *driving* her depression *out* of herself / Mike has *given in* to his low spirits / Don't *surrender* to dejection.

The **enemy** metaphor is based upon a more general metaphor, namely, **keeping control over one's emotions is war**, where depression is viewed as the attacking or aggressive opponent, the depressed person is viewed as the defending opponent, and the depressed person's emotional balance is understood as the territory to conquer. The aspects the metaphor addresses are thus *coming into existence of depression (attack)*, *(gradual) increase in the intensity of depression (gain ground)*, *attempts at selfcontrol* by the person affected, at times successfully (*fight, win a battle*), at times unsuccessfully (*give in, surrender*), and *loss of control (be overcome by depression, depression got hold...)*.

The metaphors coming next all use a spatial concept such as ‘bounded space’ (**emotions are bounded spaces**) or experiences whose conceptualization involves a spatial concept, in this case movement along spatiotemporal coordinates (**life is a journey**).

2.14 **Depression is a bounded space.** This is the application to depression of the general conceptual metaphor **emotions are bounded spaces**. In most of the examples, depression is viewed as a container:

The bottom dropped out of the day for John when he read his grades and he got depressed / I'm in the pits / I fell into a deep depression / She has touched bottom / How far is she going to sink? / Mary was bathed in tears / I cannot get out of my depression / John will bob up sooner or later one of these days / She emerged from her depression only a few weeks later / Eleanor was plunged into grief by the news / I'm lost in grief / John sank into black despair / Mary is down in the dumps (according to two native informants, the vivid image evoked by this example is that of a flat surface at the foot of a steep slope).

Some of the examples above, namely, *get into / out of depression*, could also be taken as exponents of a metaphorical conceptualization of depression as a *bounded surface*, rather than as a container. Here is another example:

What is the boundary between happiness and depression?

The metaphor focuses on the *intensity* of depression. Containers usually have a depth scale: the deeper the container, then, the stronger the depression. The examples point to a *high degree* in intensity. And this usually correlates with a *loss of control* over one's feelings.

2.15. **Life is a journey.** This is also a very general metaphor that is present in a handful of examples:

He came to grief / He tried to get around his depression, but failed / John has finally gotten over his low spirits / He is at the worst stage in his depression / Mary is working her way through a serious depression / How did he get on after his depression?

Life is often viewed metaphorically as a journey in Western civilization. Therefore, most relevant events, including negative ones like depressions, are viewed as stages or parts of the journey. Depression is often viewed as an *obstacle* along the way (*get around, get over, work one's way through, etc...*). In these cases, the metaphor focuses on the *attempts at control* aspect and the *relief* aspect. It also allows us to treat life events as stage-like processes, thus yielding a special case of

the metaphor, **depression is a journey** (*the worst stage in her depression*), which is reflected in the stage-like character of the prototype (see 6.1).

2.16. **The heart is the seat of the emotions.** This metaphor is intimately connected with one of the physiological effects of depression (4.1) and is one of the most widespread metaphors in Western civilization. It is not only used to denote depression, but also to denote other emotions (love, happiness, pride, interest, enthusiasm, etc...). The linguistic expressions using the metaphor often also contain some of the other metaphors that I have already reviewed, and it is these metaphors that determine the aspects of the concept that are highlighted by the expressions underlined within the examples below. The reason for touching upon the **heart** metaphor here is that it is needed for a full account of the metaphorical meaning of these expressions.

Examples:

Violent force: He was *heart-stricken* / I was broken-*hearted* when she left me. **Substance in container** (the heart is further conceptualized as a container here): Her *heart* was filled with sorrow / She cried her *heart* out. **Illness:** She is really *heartsick* / Your *heart-ache* has just one remedy: forget all about it. **Depression ~ down:** Mary is *downhearted*/ My *heart* sank when you told me about it. **Burden:** They had very heavy *hearts* as they went to the funeral / She feels really heavy-*hearted*.

An interesting expression is *cry one's heart out*. Here the heart, as a metaphorical seat of depression, is also seen metonymically as depression itself (*place for thing located*), which is brought 'out' by 'crying'.

2.17. **The heart is the seat of energy.** This metaphor is a natural consequence of the folk theory of anatomy and physiology, for which the heart is the center of life, and consequently, of energy and vitality. Some linguistic expressions for depression seem to be based both on this aspect of the conceptualization of the heart, and on the metonymy where loss of energy stands for depression (see 4.1):

This was *disheartening* news (and its opposite: This was *heartening* news) / The team had won no games and it *lost heart* (and its opposite: We *took heart* when we won the football pools).

If the heart is viewed as the center of energy, 'losing heart' entails losing energy, which, by the metonymy just mentioned above, means 'being depressed'.³

2.18. **Depression is a slow burning flame.** This metaphor might have been included with the **force** metaphors, but apart from using a force as a source domain, it has little in common with them. It reflects a weak, neither violent nor

sudden, flame, which nevertheless keeps burning an object slowly until it consumes it completely:

This pain is *consuming* her / Such a deep depression is slowly *burning*
up his energy.

The consumed object or substance is evidently the person's mind or mental, even physical, energy. The metaphor points to a **gradual increase in the intensity of depression**.

3. ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMIC CORRESPONDENCES. The source concepts of the structural metaphors reviewed thus far map some of their structural aspects onto the target concept, i.e. depression. These mapping correspondences are of two kinds: 1) Ontological correspondences, which specify the entities and the predicates that are mapped onto the target concept; 2) epistemic correspondences, which specify the parts of our knowledge of the source concept that are mapped onto our knowledge of the target concept (Lakoff 1985).

For the sake of brevity, I have not spelled out in detail the correspondences operating in each of the metaphors reviewed above. As an illustration of what they might be like, the ontological and epistemic correspondences in **depression ~ living organism** are spelled out below, together with the ontological correspondences in **depression ~ enemy**.

Ontological correspondences

— **Depression ~ living organism:** The living organism is depression.

— **Depression ~ enemy:**

The attacking opponent is depression

The defending opponent is the depressed person

The territory to conquer is the depressed person's emotional balance

Epistemic correspondences (the parenthesized items refer to some of the examples presented above for each metaphor)

Depression ~ living organism:

Birth (the roots of depression) is Cause of depression

Birth (the roots of depression) is Coming into Existence and Existence of depression

Nurture (*nurture, brood over, foster*) is Cause of depression

Nourishment (*nourish, food*) is Cause of depression

Growth and development (*grow, get stronger*) is Increase in the intensity of depression

Strength and weakness (*strong, weak*) is High or Low Intensity of depression.

Death (*die, fade away*) is Zero Intensity of depression

Being killed (*kill off*) is Zero Intensity of depression

Being killed (*drown in drink*) is an Attempt at Controlling Depression

4. METONYMIES. The two fundamental sets of metonymies in operation in

this concept are those based upon the folk theory of the physiological effects of depression, on the one hand, and those based upon the folk theory of the behavioral effects of depression, on the other hand. Let us introduce first the *folk theory of the physiological effects of depression*:

The physiological effects of depression are: reduced heart function, reduced body heat, loss of energy and consequent weakness, tear shedding, and interference with accurate perception.

As depression increases, its physiological effects increase.

There is a limit beyond which the physiological effects of depression impair normal functioning.

Given the general metonymic principle.

The physiological effects of an emotion stand for the emotion, the folk theory presented above yields a system of metonymies for depression:⁴

Reduced heart function:

Mary looks *downhearted* / I felt *heavy-hearted* after the news / My *heart sank* when I heard it / His *heart failed* him when he was told the truth.

This metonymy is the basis for the **heart** ~ **seat of emotions** metaphor, and underlies the use of the heart concept in other metaphorical expressions, such as *break one's heart*.

Reduced body heat:

That has *dampened* our spirits / She threw *cold water* on the meeting / That has *chilled* my heart / She gave me an *icy* look / The party was a *frost*.

The metonymy is the basis for the **unhappy** ~ **cold** metaphor.

Reduced body heat often causes **paleness of the face**:

She gave me a *wan* smile! He turned *pale* after reading the news. They had evidently depressed him.

Loss of energy and consequent weakness:

Finding that out has *knocked* me *down* / She's *lifeless* with so much suffering / It's *crushed* me / That has *unmanned* him / He has *lost heart* / She was *unnerved* after her daughter's flight with a foreigner.

This metonymy underlies the **depression** ~ **illness** metaphor and it is one of the bases for the **violent force** and the **opponent** metaphors; the metonymy

motivates the epistemic correspondence of physical weakness to a state of depression in all these metaphors (defeat by an enemy at war weakens you, a violent force exerted upon you weakens you, an illness consumes your energies, etc...)

Tear shedding:

She started *sobbing* when she broke down / Mike then *burst into tears* /
Her eyes were *filled with tears* / She's *crying her eyes out*.

This metonymy partly motivates the **depression ~ substance in a container** metaphor; the metaphor seizes on the fact that tears may be viewed as substances in a container, and maps this feature onto depression. Another feature the metaphor incorporates from the metonymy is the 'expansive' character of tears, whose amount usually increases constantly to the point they can no longer be hidden. This feature is paralleled by the 'explosive' character the depression-substance displays in the metaphor: it will burst out unless an appropriate outlet is provided for it. Compare *She burst out crying* (metonymy and metaphor) with *She came apart at the seams* (metaphor).

Interference with accurate perception (when the emotion has become very intense):

She cried herself *blind* / I was so depressed and beaten down that I *did not even hear* what they were saying to me / She had just lost her son. How could I expect her even to *notice me*?

As far as I can tell, there is no rich metaphor based on this metonymy. Minor metaphors such as **depression ~ blindness** (*She cried herself blind*) might be thought of, but besides being 'ad hoc' constructs, they would be of practically no relevance to the understanding of depression. In any case, the metonymy coincides with such metaphors as **substance in container, violent force, beast inside the person, or bounded space**, in focusing on the (*high*) *intensity* and the *loss of control* aspects of the concept.

The *folk theory of the behavioral effects of depression* posits that such effects are:

A drooping posture (of head, shoulders, trunk, or all three), drooping jaw, drooping facial muscles around the eyes and mouth, eyes looking down with no brightness in them, crying and vocal lamentation, unsociability, rejection of food, and general indifference.

As the intensity of depression increases, some of its behavioral effects increase.

There is a limit beyond which an increase in any of these behavioral effects impairs normal functioning.

This folk theory thus yields a system of metonymies for depression, on the basis of the general metonymic principle enunciated above:

Drooping posture:

He dropped his head sadly / He is a bit crestfallen / He hung down his head / He walked with drooping shoulders. He was terribly depressed / For days after that misfortune, she walked with a stoop.

This metonymy is a partial basis for the **depression** ~ **down** metaphor, and for the **burden** metaphor. But the experiential basis of the **down** metaphor is richer, as stated in 2.2. above. This is probably also the case with the experiential basis of the **burden** metaphor: not only does it arise metonymically from the behavioral effects of depression; it also arises from our experience of carrying heavy loads or of seeing other people or animals carrying them.

Drooping jaw:

Mary is down in the mouth (and notice British English jawfallen (now old-fashioned), and chapfallen or chopfallen).

Drooping facial muscles around the eyes and the mouth:

Mary had a long face.

This metonymy also underlies the **down** metaphor, since the human face is longest vertically, and an adjective like *long* is here interpreted to refer to verticality.

Visual behavior

— **Eyes looking down:**

She kept looking down all the time. She was really gloomy / Her eyes were downcast. She was quite sad.

— **Lack of brightness (when looking):**

His eyes no longer glowed as they had before / There has been no shine in her eyes since she lost her husband.

The tendency to turn the eyes downwards is at the core of the **down** metaphor. And the lack of brightness effect motivates (as a part of a more general experiential basis—see 2.3 above) the **dark** metaphor.

Crying and vocal lamentation. A depressed person often utters sounds of lament of varying degrees of pitch and loudness:

She cried with the news / John kept *sobbing* audibly as he heard the story / He *snivelled* in an attempt to impress us / Mary started *screaming* when she discovered her lost husband / Mary was *wailing* for her lost child / John *howled* in pain when he saw his two children lying dead on the ground / It was a moving *whine* of grief / She just kept *moaning* by the coffin / John *yelled* in despair: this time his luck had been really bad.

Cry and *sob* were used earlier as illustrations of the tear shedding physiological effect; now we are concerned only with the *vocal* aspect of the meaning of these expressions.

This behavioral effects metonymy also underlies the **depression ~ substance in container** metaphor: when you are extremely unhappy, you may lose control, and this is often manifested by 'getting it off your chest' in the form of crying and verbal lamentation.

Rejection of food:

She has been *off her feed* since she slipt up with Pert / The news crushed him. He *ate no food* that evening.

This metonymy seems to be a partial basis for the **depression ~ illness** metaphor, since lack of food is a frequent cause of disease.

Unsociability:

She *keeps quiet* all the time, so depressed she is / Mary is so depressed she has *stopped going to parties* / John turned a bit *morose* with financial distress / He has become *sullen* after his academic failure / John just *sulked* around for weeks after Mary picked up with another boy / She made a *ghastly smile*.

General indifference:

Nothing could draw his attention in his low days / For weeks after his failure, he just sat at his desk with a *bored* look on his face / It was surprising that such an outgoing person as John should have such a *flat conversation*. He must have been depressed / That evening, she looked *dull* and *unlively*.

The last two metonymies do not seem to motivate any one particular metaphor, but they are coherent with at least one of them: **depression ~ illness**. In actual experience, unsociability and indifference can be the result of illness, among

other possible effects. And the metonymies coincide with many metaphors in pointing to a high degree of depression.

The metonymies based on a drooping posture of head, shoulders, trunk, on a drooping jaw, on drooping facial muscles, and on eyes looking down, make up the largest group of the behavioral effects metonymies. Moreover, these behavioral effects are the most *salient* ones from a perceptual standpoint. Most of the other metonymies based on the physiological or behavioral effects of depression can also be easily incorporated into the mental image of a person in a drooping posture and with droopy facial features. If you cry and shed tears, you don't usually do it in an erect posture; unsociability is itself often expressed in a drooping posture (as though trying not to see or be seen by other people); it is difficult to perceive events taking place around us if we are hanging down our head and shoulders, and finally, loss of strength and energy is often also manifested in a drooping posture. All of these facts explain why it is that the **down** metaphor, based on the drooping posture metonymies, is the central metaphor in our understanding of depression.

4.2. *Other metonymies.* There are a number of minor metonymies for depression, which are not based on the physiological or behavioral effects of depression. Two of them use non-metaphorical and non-emotional concepts to denote depression. Thus, in *I feel really bad about not being able to help* (= 'I feel depressed, sad... etc., about not being able to help'), *bad*, a predicate denoting negative states or qualities in general, stands metonymically for predicates, such as *depressed* or *sad*, that denote the specific negative state *depression*. And in *Johnny looked mournful, He had a sepulchral countenance* or *He had a funeral behavior*, a ritual (the funeral) stands metonymically for the emotional behavior conventionally associated with it (being or looking depressed).

The rest of these minor metonymies arise when an emotional concept, itself often structured by means of metaphor and metonymy, stands for the concept of depression, on the basis of their close association in experience. In some cases, the association is that of a whole to a part, like in the special use of *bad* described above. This is what happens in the use of *moody*, in *Johnny is a bit moody today* (i.e., *depressed, sad*), where *moody*, a general concept indicating fitful changes of state of mind, stands for *depressed*, which is just one of those changes.

In some other cases, the metonymy at work seems to be the reverse one: a part (*being worried*) stands for the whole (*being depressed*), in expressions like *I'm in great anxiety about her health* or *He'll worry himself to death. We should cheer him up*. Usually, being worried is a part of being depressed, but not vice versa, as is shown by the oddity of this sentence:

?She was depressed about not getting paid, but she didn't feel worried at all about it

vis-à-vis the naturalness of this one:

She was worried about not getting paid, but she didn't feel depressed at all about it.

(? means 'doubtfully acceptable'; in both sentences, *it* is co-referential with *not getting paid*).

Finally, in a number of other cases, the metonymic link is provided simply by a close relationship in experience between depression and another emotion. Lack of hope, often a cause of depression, usually stands for it: *Mike was filled with despair. I tried to cheer him up*. Emotional relief is closely connected in experience to a preceding state of depression, so that an *unconsoleable* person is often understood metonymically as a *depressed* person. And happiness is so closely connected conceptually and experientially with depression that, merely by negating *happy*-type predicates (*joyless*, *unblissful*, *uncheerful*), we denote depression. This process is carried to the extreme in *unhappy*, which, according to my informants, does not denote any longer any idea of happiness, but merely one of depression.⁵

5. APPARENT NON-METAPHORICAL AND NON-METONYMIC EXPRESSIONS.

The vocabulary of depression contains some expressions where the concept of depression seems to be understood in its own terms, rather than in terms of another concept. Yet most of these expressions are metaphorical or metonymic in origin. This is the case with *sad*, from Anglo-Saxon *saed* (= 'sated' and 'weary'), where the historical metaphors were **person** ~ **container for the emotions** and **depression** ~ **substance**. Or with *dismal*, from Old French *dis mal* ('evil day'), which is metonymic in origin (cause for effect, since an evil day is a usual cause of depression). Or with *grief*, *grieve*, *grave*, all ultimately originated in or related to Latin *gravare* ('to burden'), where **depression** ~ **burden** is the historical metaphor.

Of course, the metaphors and metonymies are no longer alive in these expressions. However, even in these cases and in others where there is no known metaphorical origin (such as *woe* or *sorrow*), their meaning can only be understood nowadays by reference to the prototypical conceptual model of depression (6.1), which is constructed on the basis of the metaphors and metonymies examined in 2 through 4 above. Moreover, most of these non-metaphorical expressions enter linguistic expressions where some of the depression metaphors are at work: *sorrowful* (**substance in container**), *grief-laden*, *sorrow-burdened* (**burden**), etc..⁶

6. A TENTATIVE COGNITIVE MODEL OF DEPRESSION IN AMERICAN ENGLISH. As has been pointed out in the course of this study, each metaphor and metonymy focuses on one or on several aspects of the general concept of depression they jointly characterize. In this section, I will attempt first to devise a prototypical scenario (Lakoff 1985), pulling together the central aspects of the concept, as characterized by these metaphors and metonymies. Then I shall describe briefly some non-prototypical cases. These and the prototype constitute

the cognitive model of depression in American English. Finally, and very briefly, I shall attempt to show what the relationship is between the metaphors and metonymies and how they converge to characterize the prototype.

6.1. *The Prototype Scenario*. Following the procedure set up by Lakoff (1985), I will first lay out in detail the *ontology* on depression.

The ontology of depression

'Ontology' here refers to the set of *entities*, *predicates* and *quantitative scales*, whose interrelationships make up the cognitive model of depression.

Aspects of the person (viewed as entities in the prototype)

V: Victim of Depression
S: Self (the person affected by depression)
D: Depression
R: Relief

Circumstances affecting the person (viewed as entities)

DF: Depressing Fact
AL: (Other) Aspects of Life (of the person affected)
PE: Physiological Effects of Depression
BE: Behavioral Effects of Depression

Predicates

E: Exist
F: Exert Force On
CL: Control
Th: Think
H: Harmful
GInc: Gradual Increase
GDC: Gradual Decrease
C: Cause
O: Occur
Int: Interest

Scales of Intensity

I(D): Intensity of Depression
I(Int(AL)): Intensity of Interest in Other Aspects of Life (of the person affected by depression).

I(PE): Intensity of Physiological Effects

I(BE): Intensity of Behavioral Effects

End Points

Z: Zero

L: Limits

Now I shall describe the various stages of the prototype scenario in approximate formal notation followed by an informal statement of the events taking place at each stage. Additional information is provided in bracketed sentences.

The prototype scenario

Constraints

V = S: The Victim (of Depression) is Self

C(D) = DF: The Cause of Depression is the Depressing Fact

Stage 1: The Depressing Fact

— O(DF): A Depressing Fact occurs. (This depressing fact can either be a depressing event or a series of them, or a depressing state of affairs. I have subsumed both possibilities under the category Depressing Fact. In any case, the prototype does not define precisely the exact kind of DF it requires.⁷)

Examples:

His foolish behavior really lowered my spirits / *So many misfortunes* knocked him down / *The rain* depressed us (because we had hoped to be able to have a football match outdoors) / *His wild behavior* was a grief to his mother.

Stage 2: Depression

— E(D): Depression Exists

— GInc(I(D)) **so that** I(D) = I(Int(S,AL)): The Intensity of depression gradually increases until it equals the intensity of S's interest in the aspects of his life affected by the Depressing Fact.

— PE(S): S experiences at least some of the physiological effects of depression.

— BE(S): S displays at least some of the behavioral effects of depression.

— F(D,V) **so that** CL(D,V): Depression exerts force on its victim in an attempt to control him/her.

Examples:

After failing his exams, John *fell into a depression*. *He had put a lot of work into them* (The intensity of depression equals S's interest in AL) / He came out of the examination-room *pale-faced, head hung down*: he had failed (PE and BE are shown) / That *gave me a wrench* / That *hit me hard* / *I was almost seized* by a fit of depression (In these three examples, D exerts force on and tries to control S).

Stage 3: Attempts to control depression

F(S,D) **so that** CL(S,D) **and not** (E(PE and BE)): S exerts force on his/her depression in order to control it and prevent PE and BE from showing. S is not viewed now as a (passive) victim, as in the last formula in Stage 2; now he or she is regarded as an active person. (Giving in to depression and showing it by losing control over one's body and behavior is not socially advantageous. Besides, it may be (physically or mentally) damaging to S. Therefore, S must control his depression to prevent its effects from showing openly.)

Examples:

He *tried to hold back his tears* / She *tried to keep cool* / Luckily, he's *taking it easy*, but this was a terrible blow.

Stage 4: Loss of control

- I(D) > L: The intensity of depression goes over the limit.
- CL(D,S): Depression takes control of S.
- H(S): There is harm to S.
- I(PE) = L: S displays the physiological effects of depression in their extreme form.
- I(BE) = L: S displays the behavioral effects of depression in their extreme form.

Examples:

She's a *wretched* woman (A very high intensity of depression) / Mike feels *crushed* / John is *in the pits* / Elizabeth has *touched bottom* (These three examples depict a state of depression whose intensity goes over the limit) / John was *prostrate* (Extreme PE and BE; harm to S) / John *burst into tears* / John was *drowned in tears* (in both examples, extreme PE and BE) / John was *overcome by sorrow* (Depression controls S).

Stage 5: Relief

- GDc(D): There is a gradual decrease of depression. (This process has

variable duration, but it is always within the limits of 'normal' depression; a deviation from normal duration would be *brooding* —see 6.2.)

— NOT (C(DF,D)): (The above process continues until) the Depressing Fact is no longer the cause of depression.

— I(D) = Z: The intensity of depression then drops to zero.

— NOT(E(D)): Depression ceases to exist.

Examples:

Johnny then *started to feel better*. He had been depressed for a while (Gradual decrease of depression) / She was *finally able to remember her dead husband without breaking down* (The DF is no longer a cause of depression) / Johnny finally *felt relieved* / Mike finally *pulled himself together* after weeks of prostration (The intensity of depression is at zero and ceases to exist).

All these examples picture relief as a process taking place over time spans of variable length.

6.2. *The Non-Prototypical Cases*. In order to keep this study within article length, I shall present only five cases, selected from the array of twenty-two linguistically encoded non-prototypical concepts of depression that I was able to identify (Barcelona 1985a). Each arises from minimal variations upon a prototypical stage; these variations are stated in approximate formal notation, which is preceded by a brief informal description of the case.

Contagious depression. The DF is another depressed person's behavior. A new element is introduced, Sb ('Somebody else').

In Stage 1. $D(Sb) = DF$

Example: He's a real *wet blanket*

Consciously exaggerated depression. S is really affected by a DF, but for some reason, he/she pretends to be more affected than is really the case.

In Stage 2. $I(D) < I(Int(AL,S))$: The intensity of depression does not reach the intensity of S's interest in the aspects of his life concerned.

Example: She *snivels* all the time. Don't pay too much attention to her.

Recurrent depression. The whole cycle, from Stage 2 to Stage 5, is repeated over and over again at regular or irregular intervals.

Example: She used to have *frequent fits of depression* after her husband died.

Controlled depression. After the attempts to control depression in Stage 3, S manages to keep its physiological and behavioral effects below the limit point, and thus remains in control. There are, thus, no stages 4 and 5.

In Stage 4: $I(PE) \text{ and } I(BE) < L$
 $CL(S,D)$

Example: In a supreme effort, she *managed to pull herself together* right before the meeting.

Brooding. S is responsible for the fact that depression does not go away so that the intensity of depression remains above zero and depression lasts a long time.

Stage 5 becomes a 'brooding' stage instead of being a relief stage:

$C(S(E(D)))$

$I(D) > Z$

$NOT(GDc(D))$

Example: She sat there *brooding on whether life was worth living*.

6.3. *Metaphors, metonymies and the prototype scenario.* A few examples of the way the metaphors and metonymies for depression converge on the ontology and the prototype described above may be helpful to understand why they were constructed with the features they display.

As for the ontology, GInc is motivated by **slow burning fire** (*That is slowly consuming her energy*), **journey** (*She is at the worst stage in her depression*), **down** (*I have touched bottom*), **enemy** (*His depression is gaining ground*), and **living organism** (*His depression is getting stronger and stronger*). D evolves from **burden**, **substance-in-person**, **living organism**, **enemy**, and **natural force**. V comes from **enemy** (*Sorrow has gotten hold of him*), **violent force** (*That was a terrible blow*) and **beast inside the person** (*You'll be devoured by your cares*). PE and BE are at the basis of the corresponding metonymies. Some non-prototypes, like *hopeless depression* (not presented above) arise from the *negated hope* and *negated consolation* metonymies (see 4.2), as examples like *Mike is unconsolable/hopeless* show.

Turning now to the prototype scenario, the mere fact of its being a stage-like process reflects the structure of the metaphorical concepts on the basis of which it is constructed: these concepts likewise contain in their meaning a stage-like process (**journey**, **living organism** (birth, development, death), (**rising**)**substance in a container**). The centrality of the **down** metaphor is reflected in every stage of the prototype as can be seen by looking back at the examples of the latter in 6.1.

7. **CONCLUSIONS.** The main conclusions from this study concern the psychological reality of the model presented in it, the role of convention in this model, and the cross-categorical character of many metaphors, metonymies, and aspects of the prototype.

7.1. *Psychological reality.* It is difficult to establish how much psychological reality there is to this cognitive model of depression, which was constructed on the

basis of linguistic expressions. Arriving at safe conclusions here would require previous careful and exhaustive psychological experimentation. However, whatever the real cognitive model turns out to be like, it is evident that depression is, at least partially conceptualized via metaphor and metonymy. Before writing this paper, I analysed all the expressions under the entry *dejection* in *Rogert's University Thesaurus* (Mawson, C.O.S. (ed), 1981), together with other expressions gathered from the other thesauruses and dictionaries listed in the Bibliography (McArthur (1981), Rodale (1978), Urdang & Laroche (1978), and the Webster thesaurus (1976) and dictionary (1978)). I also analysed the examples provided by native informants in the two questionnaires I submitted to them. Most of these expressions were either metaphorical or metonymic in character.

7.2. *The Role of Convention.* Convention is highly relevant to the use of certain metaphors and metonymies, rather than others, to conceptualize depression. For example, a metaphor that might be based upon the **drooping posture** metonymy is **a depressed person is a person with a hump**. I tested the expressions *That gave him the hump* and *He had the hump* with some American speakers. I asked them whether the expressions meant something like *That made him depressed* and *He was depressed*, respectively. None of them agreed on these meanings (on the other hand, they did not even use or were familiar with the expressions). Yet, according to a well-known dictionary (Webster's 1978) the expressions denote a fit of melancholy in British slang, which reminds us that conventional usage is subject to variation in this area, too. Convention is equally relevant to the use of certain linguistic expressions of a metaphor, rather than other eligible expressions of the same metaphor. **Depression** ~ **dark** might motivate the use of the expression shadow(y) (cf. *gloomy*, *somber*) to denote depression. However, this expression seldom, if ever, reflects the metaphor. It is used, instead, as an exponent of the mapping of the concept of darkness, in the form of (passing) shadows, onto the concept of an unsubstantial idea or purpose (as in *He's running after a shadow*). The **noun dark**, unlike the **adjective dark**, is not used of depression, but of ignorance: *I'm in the dark (about it)*.

This is in agreement with the view of *motivation* in cognition and in language structure put forth by Lakoff (1985). The metonymic use of the behavioral and physiological effects of depression, together with other physical and cultural parameters 'motivates' (i.e. 'makes understandable in a coherent way') why it is that we use certain metaphors, and not others, to conceptualize depression. However, there is no necessity, not even a probabilistic necessity, for this to be so in every case, as the above examples have shown. Ultimately, it is convention, itself often the result of a long historical process, that determines which cognitive models (which metaphors and metonymies in this case) will be used, which aspects of them will be considered, and which linguistic expressions will be used to reflect them.

7.3. *Metaphors and Prototypes Across Categories.* There are quite a few metaphors that depression shares with other concepts. Restricting the discussion to the field of the emotions, the following example may be illustrative:

The body is a container for the emotions

— *Love*: I am *filled with love*.

— *Depression*: Come on, *throw off your troubles*.

— *Anger*: She was *brimming with rage*.

— *Pride*: She was *overflowing with pride*.

(The Anger example was borrowed from Lakoff (1985) and the Pride example was borrowed from Kövecses c.)

But metaphorical models are not the only cognitive aspects that are often shared by groups of different concepts. These may also include some parts of the structure of their prototypes. The Anger prototype, as uncovered by Lakoff and Kövecses (in Lakoff (1985)) on the basis of linguistic data, is quite similar to the one I have suggested here for depression. In both prototypes, the emotion constantly increases its intensity until it reaches a degree where the person affected can no longer keep control of his/her own reactions. Another emotion whose prototype would probably be similar, too, is Fear (*He was overcome by fear*). A study of most other 'negative' attitudes, emotions, or habit-forming behaviors (such as smoking, drinking, etc...), would also discover similar prototypes for them: Lust (*Lust has enslaved him*), Ambition (*His ambition is now uncontrollable*), Selfishness (*Her selfishness has devoured her*), Laziness (*I can't help it -I'm so lazy*), Alcohol or Tobacco consumption, or Drug Addiction (*I can't help smoking a cigarette / having a drink / taking pot from time to time*).

The cross-categorical character of many conceptual metaphors (and probably of many conceptual metonymies—a drooping posture may be a metonymy not only for depression, but also for physical weakness) and of metaphor-based prototypes suggests the convenience of more general studies than this one, focused only on one concept. Richer insights into the cognitive structure of language could be gained if, when studying a potentially metaphoric-metonymic semantic area, the investigator attempted to discover the common or most general metaphors and metonymies across the whole area.⁸

Notes

1. Many of the expressions in this article were borrowed from a standard dictionary or a thesaurus (see Bibliography), notably *Roget's University Thesaurus* (Mawson, C.O.S., ed. (1981)). The expressions gathered from the thesauruses were inserted in constructed sentences. The complete set of such sentences was then presented to three college-educated

American speakers, who judged their present-day currency and acceptability in the intended senses. A short questionnaire was then answered by a group of eighteen college-educated American native speakers; the questionnaire dealt with the use of some of the expressions from the thesaurus. Finally, a longer questionnaire was answered by a smaller number—six—of educated informants who offered some more judgments on the examples. In both questionnaires, and in the interviews, the informants were asked to provide more examples of expressions containing the metaphors and metonymies for depression that are studied below.

2. Metaphors will be abbreviatedly referred to by means of the symbol ~ placed between the two concepts related through them (**depression ~ down**), or simply by means of the term for the source concept in the metaphorical relation (e.g. “the **down** metaphor...”).
3. Actually the metaphoric-metonymic inferential chain is a little more complex than this. It also involves viewing metaphorical energy or strength as a substance entity, and having the heart (the place) stand metonymically for energy (the thing located).
4. Many of the examples illustrating the metonymy are, in fact, instances of the metaphors based upon this metonymy, because it is difficult to find many examples with conventional ways of referring to depression that illustrate the metonymy directly. However, in some cases I have included expressions which refer literally to some of the above mentioned physiological effects; and, by providing an adequate context, I have shown how they are often used metonymically as denotations of depression. This is the case of *His heart failed him* or *He turned pale* below.
5. In *kill-joy* or *spoil-sport*, expressions where depression is denoted by means of two predicates for happiness (*joy* and *sport*, the latter in its general sense of ‘fun, amusement’), the happiness concept is negated metaphorically. In *kill-joy*, happiness is viewed as a **living being** (which is killed), and in *spoil-sport* it is viewed as an **object** (which can be spoiled (i.e. made useless or unsatisfactory)).
6. The etymologies were borrowed from Webster’s (1978), and later verified in Little (1944).

An interesting case is the use of *blue* for depression (*She looks blue*, *John has the blues*). As far as I know, there is no historical explanation of this usage of the expression that takes into account the role of metaphorical extension from its original physical meaning. However, present-day speakers seem to use one of the metaphors described earlier—**depression ~ dark**—as the basis for this usage of the expression. In the first questionnaire, to the question “Do you usually connect mentally *blue* with *dark* (= ‘absence of light’) in *He’s blue today*, *He looks blue?*, 15 out of the 18 subjects answered positively. The reason for this connection may be that blue is viewed as a heavy, dark color, rather than as a light one.

7. There are a number of non-prototypical cases which differ from the prototype, precisely in that they require a specific kind of DF, rather than any kind of it, as in the prototype. There are corresponding linguistic expressions that, in an adequate context, encode these non-prototypical variants: *Agent-caused depression* (*John is a kill-joy*), *Mourning* ((DF: the death of a dear person) *The old woman still mourns her husband*), *Remorse* ((DF: S’s inadequate behavior) *She regrets bitterly what she did*), etc...
8. In Barcelona 1985b, there is a brief survey of some of the metaphors shared by the concepts of Anger, Depression, Pride, Respect, and Romantic Love.

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Note: I have used the first draft of Lakoff 1985. I have not been able to get the definitive version yet. This is why I have not quoted from the original. The latter remark applies to Kövecses a, b, c, which, together with Rosch (1981), were made available to me in typescript form by George Lakoff; despite my efforts, I have not been able as yet to find out whether they have already been published.