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Journal of Translation
ISSN 1558-7282 (online)
https://siljot.org

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Journal of Translation 8 (1), 2012: 9–24.
https://doi.org/10.54395/JOT-JCKXC

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Metaphor and Methodology for Cross-Cultural Investigation of Hebrew Emotions

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Abstract

Feeling down or in a tight spot? How do we know what someone means when they tell us how they feel? How could we go further and explain how emotions are understood across cultures? This article looks at three approaches—the use of physiology, of key words, and of metaphors. This is followed by a demonstration of the insights from the metaphorical approach as applied to Anglo emotions.

Applying this metaphorical approach to biblical Hebrew (where there is no access to native speakers) is much more difficult than to a living language. However, application of the Cognitive Linguistics of George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Raymond Gibbs, John Taylor and others allows the construction of a methodology to give evidence for what emotions the Hebrew authors felt. This methodology is applied to Hebrew descriptions of distress to show how such emotions are conceptualised. The article also explains how this methodology can be applied more widely, to evaluate others' claims about how the ancient Israelites thought and felt.

Finally, some implications are given in the areas of Hebrew exegesis, cultural anthropology, and for the translation of "emotional" texts.

1. Investigating Feelings

1.1. Introduction

The focus of this article is on exploring ways to investigate Hebrew emotions many years after the Hebrew texts in the Bible were written. However, there is a more general question to ask first. How do we ever know what someone means when they tell us how they feel? This is a question that may be more difficult to answer than we think at first, since our emotions both depend upon—and are inseparable from—the cultures in which we live.[1]

This article considers different ways of studying the meaning of emotion, first looking at three approaches (physiological, lexical and metaphorical), then showing some implications from applying the metaphorical approach to emotion metaphors in English. Second, it considers the difficulties in applying this approach to emotion metaphors in Hebrew and offers a methodology to avoid over-imaginative conclusions. Finally, it looks at the results and some implications for exegesis, cultural anthropology and translation.

Before moving on to the different approaches for studying emotions, consider three case studies of emotion that highlight some of the cultural components. First, look at the image shown in figure 1. How do you think this person feels?

[1] For examples, see Kitayama and Markus (1994), and Wierzbicka (1999).



Figure 1: Cultural depiction of emotion.

What makes us think this person is angry? We see a particular position of the eyebrows and the mouth. The face is flushed. But also there is smoke coming from this person's ears. Why does that make us think he is *angry*? A significant part of the reason is that most English speakers share the cultural understanding that anger is like a heated fluid in a container, giving rise to expressions such as *seething, venting, exploding* or *keeping a lid on anger*, and to pictures of cartoon characters with steam coming from their ears.[2]

Second, moving from pictures to texts, in example 1, what emotion do you think the person in this description is feeling?

(1) A typical verbal description:

> It started last Christmas. I was feeling a little down because my kids were not with us. But then I heard that my employer couldn't afford for me to work anymore at the office, and that's when the nosedive started. It was like I had fallen off a precipice. I had started out feeling low, but now I felt like I was spiralling out of control, and there was nothing I could do to get back up again. I was down in the pits for weeks. It's been a slow crawl since then—sometimes I feel like I'm making progress but then I just slip back down again.

Most English speakers would probably agree that this person is *depressed*. But what makes us think this? The word itself is never used, and yet the words evoking a downward descent (*nosedive, fallen, spiralling, in the pits*) fit what we might call a *prototypical* description of depression. When we look at a text like this, we can also ask what would be understood if we translated it literally into another language? Would the feeling of *spiralling down* also make them think of depression? Do they even have a concept equivalent to depression?

Finally, to show the relevance to translation, consider a couple of biblical texts. Psalm 4:4[5][3] is translated in the New International Version (NIV) as "In your anger do not sin."[4] This verse can cause problems for preachers as they seek to explain how it is possible to experience anger (an emotion prototypically considered *bad* in English-speaking cultures) while still not sinning. However, it could also be that the Hebrew concept, translated by "anger," is not the same as the English one. Specifically, it may not be prototypically valued as bad. Similar things happen in languages of Papua New Guinea, where words we translate best as anger are prototypically seen as positive, denoting emotional involvement and activity to right a wrong. Preachers have further headaches when they come to verses like Lamentations 4:11, which the NIV translates as "The LORD has given full vent to his wrath; he has poured out his fierce anger." By attributing anger to God, our immediate cultural interpretation is that God is doing something bad—because of the way we prototypically understand this emotion. We get around this by using words like *wrath*, as well as anger, and by trying to explain how God has a right to be angry—a right that we do not

[2] For a more complete study of the metaphorical conceptualisation of anger in English, see Lakoff and Kövecses (1987:195–221). A similar study of the conceptualisation of anger in the Hebrew Bible is given in Kotzé (2004).
[3] Numbers in square brackets indicates the verse reference in the Hebrew Bible.
[4] The Hebrew is more literally rendered, "Tremble, and do not sin," which the New English Translation (NET) Bible and Today's English Version (TEV) explicate as, "Tremble with fear and do not sin."

have. However, note that the Hebrew literally says, "Yahweh has completed his heat, poured out the burning of his nose." Perhaps the Hebrew metaphors of *burning noses* and *heat* can actually be metaphors of legitimate emotional involvement in a way that anger, in English, cannot.

These three examples have shown how emotions are communicated through facial expressions and visual cues such as steaming ears, through physical schemas such as the descent language used for depression in English, and through specific words like anger, which carry a wealth of prototypical associations. In all these situations we have also seen that culture plays an important part in determining meaning—in the cultural understanding of anger as hot fluid; the cultural conceptualisation of entering depression as downward movement; and in the cultural evaluation of the word anger as a "bad" emotion. As a result, there are several challenges when trying to investigate and compare emotions across cultures. The following sections look at three approaches in more detail.

1.2. The physiological approach

The first approach is physiological, and says that actually emotions are the same across all cultures, irrespective of the words used to talk about them. The physiological approach says that since we are all animals made up of the same collections of chemicals, we respond in the same physiological ways to certain stimuli. This might be with a quickened heart rate, raised blood pressure, or certain facial expressions. As Ekman argues, "The same facial expressions are associated with the same emotions regardless of culture or language" (Ekman 1980:137). The basic emotions he suggests are sadness, happiness, anger, fear, disgust and surprise. A methodology for cross-cultural investigation of emotions based on this approach would involve looking at the physiological responses of people in different cultures to certain stimuli, and checking that they do indeed exhibit the expected universal behaviour. For the ancient culture that gave rise to the Hebrew Bible, Kruger has used the work of Ekman and others to look for textual clues to facial expressions of emotion (Kruger 2005a:651–663).

However, there is a fundamental problem with Ekman's work, in that the words he uses to describe these basic emotions are all in English, yet many languages have a different set of words for the feelings their speakers' experience, which do not map neatly onto the English words. Does this mean that they have facial expressions for these emotions, but do not talk about them? Or are the words people use to talk about their emotions actually significant for the emotional experiences they undergo and the way they understand those experiences? These challenges have led to the second approach.

1.3. The lexical approach

Perhaps the words people use to talk about emotions are indeed important for the feelings that are salient in their cultures, so that we need a lexical approach that looks at these words (like anger, depression, angst or *schadenfreude*) in order to investigate those emotions adequately. As Lutz has pointed out,

> Academic psychology has taken English emotion words and reified what are essentially American ethnopsychological concepts.... While it has been considered of great importance to ascertain whether some non-Western people 'feel guilt,' the question does not arise as to whether Americans experience the New Guinea Highlanders' emotion of *popokl* 'outrage over the failure of others to recognise one's claims.' (Lutz 1985:38)

One way to describe the prototypical meanings of emotion words in an approach like this is by trying to use a simpler *metalanguage* that has more claim to represent universal concepts, as has been developed by Anna Wierzbicka (1997) and Cliff Goddard (1998). The intention is that, although words for individual feelings have very culture-specific meanings, these meanings can be paraphrased using a much smaller set of words which do have equivalents in all languages. By translating these paraphrases from one language to another it is then possible to give a meaningful cross-linguistic comparison of emotions. Wierzbicka uses her metalanguage to produce a prototype description for anger, as in example 2, below:

(2) Metalanguage description:

- X was angry (with Y)

- X felt something because X thought something
  - Sometimes a person thinks about someone:
  - 'This person did something bad
  - I don't want this person to do things like this
  - I want to do something because of this'
  - When this person thinks this, this person feels something bad
- X felt something like this
- Because X thought something like this (Wierzbicka 1999:88)

We can see that this prototypical description captures the negative cultural evaluation of anger in Anglo cultures in the line "this person feels something bad," highlighting the cultural undesirability of having this emotion. In other cultures, this evaluation may not be part of the prototypical script.

This approach can be very helpful for making cross-cultural comparisons where you have access to native speaker intuition. A methodology would involve creating prototypical paraphrases for emotion words in different languages and looking for similarities and differences.[5] Often native speaker intuition is needed to confirm elements of the definition as, for example, in English to confirm that anger is an undesirable emotion whereas concern is not (Wierzbicka 1999:86). The lack of access to native speaker intuition makes it difficult to apply this methodology to ancient Hebrew texts. More fundamentally, the description of someone suffering depression given in the introduction showed that it is very possible to talk about being in a particular emotional state without using a word that names it, so that this approach that uses prototypical definitions of lexical items can miss whole areas of the cultural meaning of emotions. For example, Wierzbicka's definition of anger does not capture any of the prototypical feelings of anger *building up* and potentially leading to an *explosive outburst*.

1.4. The metaphorical approach

A third possible alternative is the metaphorical approach, which looks more widely at the kind of language we use to talk about our emotional states, not just the key words. This is the approach adopted in the rest of this article.

Do you recall the words used to describe the subject's feelings in example 1? These words describe the subject's declining emotions:

> I was feeling a little down…that's when the nosedive started…It was like I had fallen off a precipice…I had started out feeling low…I felt like I was spiralling out of control…there was nothing I could do to get back up again…I was down in the pits for weeks…It's been a slow crawl…I feel like I'm making progress…I just slip back down again.

Each of these phrases is a realisation of what is termed a *conceptual metaphor* in the Cognitive Linguistic literature, an understanding of one domain (here, the domain of feelings) by use of another domain (here, the physical domain of up and down movement). This conceptual metaphor could be described as BEING DEPRESSED IS BEING DOWN. The classic work on such conceptual metaphors is *Metaphors We Live By* (Lakoff and Johnson 2003); more recent treatments, with a particular focus on emotion, can be found in works by Zoltán Kövecses (2000, 2005, 2006).

In a conceptual metaphor, the source domain is usually more basic and physical than the target domain, so that people can use their embodied understanding of the source domain to speak of and reason about a target domain that is more difficult to conceptualise. In the case of BEING DEPRESSED IS BEING DOWN, people understand what it means to be up or down because of their perceptual experiences in relation to gravity since infancy, which together build an abstract *image schema* related to verticality. Mark Johnson writes:

> The VERTICALITY schema…emerges from our tendency to employ an UP-DOWN orientation in picking out meaningful structures of our experience. We grasp this structure of verticality repeatedly in

[5] Examples of research using this methodology can be found in Harkins and Wierzbicka (2001).

> thousands of perceptions and activities we experience every day, such as perceiving a tree, our felt sense of standing upright, the activity of climbing stairs, forming a mental image of a flagpole, measuring our children's heights, and experiencing the level of water rising in the bathtub. The VERTICALITY schema is the abstract structure of these verticality experiences, images and perceptions. (Johnson 1987:xiv)

The conceptual metaphor BEING DEPRESSED IS BEING DOWN is a way of describing the *mappings* from the abstract structure of the VERTICALITY image schema onto experiences of depression. These mappings include mapping someone who *is down* to the depressed person—mapping movement down and up to entering and leaving depression, and mapping depth downwards to the intensity of depression. Thus references to *falling off a precipice* and ending up *in the pits* can easily be understood as an experience of entering serious depression, because of the difference in vertical height. More generally, conceptual metaphors often map structural elements—including the participants, parts, stages, causes, and purposes of image schemas or basic physical experiences—onto more abstract domains. For instance, in the depression example, the cause of downward movement is the force of gravity, an impersonal force that is hard to resist or control. The conceptual metaphor maps this onto depression to give an understanding that entering depression is caused by an impersonal force, and is something hard to resist or control.

The conceptual metaphor also includes *entailments*, by which we use spatial movement or other elements of the source domain to reason about emotions. For example, we reason that the speed and manner of movement are the speed and manner of entering or leaving depression. That means, since downward motion is easy and involuntary, entering depression is easy and involuntary. By contrast, upward motion requires effort, and so does leaving depression, as seen in verbs like *crawling* and *slipping back*, which were used in example 1. This conceptual metaphor—and the entailments in particular—help people to problematise and reason about their experiences of depression.[6] A person who conceptualises their emotional experience as having *crashed down into a pit* does not expect that this experience will end quickly and easily, without any effort. By problematising the situation this way they reason from the physical domain that it will take time and effort for things to change.

Psycholinguistic experiments have shown that people do indeed use inferences from the source domain to draw inferences in the emotional target domain. For example, in one experiment subjects reasoned that when someone *blows their stack,* the cause is internal and the result is violent and unintentional, the same inferences that are drawn when thinking about sealed containers exploding (Gibbs 1999:148–151).

Thinking cross-linguistically, how do the schemas different cultures use to conceptualise their emotional experiences affect the way they reason about those experiences? For example, does a Hebrew psalmist who sees himself in a pit also reason that it will take time and effort to crawl out? This question will be revisited in sections 2 and 3.

For another example in English, consider the way people conceptualise *stress*. This is not a classic emotion but certainly includes feelings as well as physiological, psychological and social elements. The word "stress" itself evokes a schema of forces acting against each other, as Selye noted when he first coined the biological use of the term, arguing that "in the biological sense stress is the interaction between damage and defence, just as in physics tension or pressure represent the interplay between a force and the resistance offered to it" (Selye 1950:1383–1392). By problematising this medical situation as stress, attention was directed to solutions that supplemented suboptimal natural defensive measures, as well as dealing with the "attacking" force directly, forcing a paradigm shift in medicine.

Over the years since Selye's introduction of the term, a pervasive, well-elaborated cultural model for stress has developed, which evokes "a diffuse and invisible 'force', somehow mediating between individuals (and their mental and physical state), and the social environment in which they live and work" (Helman 1994:314). For example, when Helman analysed the conceptual metaphors used by American patients with psychosomatic disorders, he found stress conceptualised as forces in various different ways: as a heavy weight pressing down on individuals, a wire becoming tense under the application of force, a force causing

[6] Michael Reddy's seminal work (1979) on the conduit metaphor for communication shows the impact of conceptual metaphors on how people problematise situations, focusing on the problematisation of communication difficulties.

internal chaos, a force causing fragmentation (in phrases like *going to pieces*), a machine malfunctioning, a depletion of vital liquid, an inner explosion, or an interpersonal force (Helman 1994:315–316).

In almost all of these conceptual metaphors, an object experiencing physical force is mapped onto the person experiencing stress. As with sadness, the physical domain is used to give a scale to the psychophysical domain, so that greater forces are mapped onto experiences of more severe stress. Entailments are also evident from the physical domain. For example, material that is placed under stress can normally experience a certain degree of force and still return to its original state. However, there is a point at which the force becomes too great and the material is irreparably damaged. This entailment is used in ordinary stress discourse to reason about emotional experiences. For example, as someone becomes increasingly *wound up, tense,* or *stressed*, they worry that they will *snap, crack*, be *pushed to the limit*, or *break down.* The conceptual metaphor helps people make sense of, and reason about, emotional experiences which increase in intensity and, if unmitigated, lead to serious consequences.

These examples of *sadness* and *stress* show how English speakers can use conceptual metaphors based on physical schemas (VERTICALITY and FORCE) to problematise and reason about their emotional experiences. They also suggest avenues for comparing emotional experiences across cultures by looking at the linguistic metaphors that are used to describe emotional experience in those cultures and identifying the conceptual metaphors that they reflect. These conceptual metaphors can then be compared across cultures to identify similarities and differences, looking at the details of the domains used (including the prototypical expressions of those domains), the mappings across those domains, and the entailments that are used, as in the research by Kövecses and others.[7] For Old Testament translation it would be useful to carry out such research for both the emotions in the receptor language and the Hebrew emotions that pervade the Psalms, so that cultural similarities can be identified and potential cultural misunderstandings can be avoided. However, there are several challenges when trying to carry out this kind of investigation using ancient Hebrew texts.

2. Challenges to Investigating Hebrew Emotion Metaphors

There are two major challenges to investigating conceptual metaphors for Classical Hebrew emotions.[8] First, how is it possible to identify what emotion a given metaphorical expression relates to? For example, in English we feel happy to identify *spiralling down* with the emotions of sadness or depression, but with what should we identify the psalmist's complaint of waters *coming up to his neck?* Is there a specific emotion this phrase relates to?

Second, how do we know whether a linguistic example really does evoke a physical domain, which is then available for reasoning? For example, for many English speakers the use of *seethe* in relation to anger does still evoke a boiling, bubbling liquid (and thus is relevant for the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS A HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER), even though it is rarely used this way in contemporary corpora. Given the comparatively tiny corpus of Classical Hebrew, how is it possible to decide whether an emotion word like *tsar*, potentially evoking 'something wrapped and held fast in a cloth', would indeed have evoked this domain for the original users, or whether it would have lost all physical connotations?

2.1. Establishing the emotional domain under investigation

One approach to the first challenge is to choose a wide enough emotional domain to ensure that linguistic metaphors are not being analysed as describing the "wrong" emotion. For example, we cannot take any linguistic metaphors in the Psalms that reference vertical movement and use them to assert that being down is the dominant metaphor for depression in the Hebrew Bible.[9] However, it would be fair to use such verses to show that the VERTICALITY schema is a significant domain used by the Hebrew writers to understand negative emotional experiences.

[7] See, for example, Kövecses (2005)*;* McMullen and Conway (2002), Taylor and Mbense (1998).
[8] The challenges and solutions presented here are a summary of the methodological section in King (2012).
[9] Compare with Paul Kruger (2005:187–192).

For the emotions in the Psalms, further help can be gained from form-criticism, which classifies Psalms according to their contents, literary form and use within a worship setting. There is general agreement on a category of Psalms (variously called "laments" and "thanksgivings" (Gunkel 1967), "songs of prayer" (Kraus 1988), or "psalms of disorientation and reorientation" (Brueggemann 1995:3–32) that have a very similar literary structure and presumably fulfilled a similar function for the worshipping community. Each of these Psalms includes a "description of distress" (whether in the present or the past), and these descriptions at least can be assumed to reference somewhat similar situations (perhaps illness, battle or trial) and emotions. This domain of distress gives one way of describing the emotional domain to which many of the metaphors in the Psalms relate.

2.2. Justifying conceptual metaphors

The second challenge is how to justify that a word or phrase really does reflect a significant conceptual metaphor, evoking another more physical domain. In the discipline of Biblical Studies, the issue has been hotly debated over the past century of whether a more basic physical sense is of any relevance for the meaning of a Hebrew root used in another domain. James Barr has been the most forceful proponent of the view that such physical senses have little or no relevance (1961:161–205). Well-known examples include whether being faithful has a link to the idea of firmness because of the shared root Hebrew letters (Barr 1961:161–205), or whether the common word used for sin (חטא) basically means 'to miss the mark' since it is also used in that context (Barr 1993:3–14). Although Cognitive Linguists have at times been guilty of asserting conceptual metaphors with little more than isolated examples, the Cognitive Linguistic literature does provide some guidelines by suggesting at least five different kinds of evidence that could be used to show that a given word or phrase does indeed reflect a significant conceptual metaphor.[10] These five types of evidence are discussed in the following points.

2.2.1 Generalisations over polysemy

First, the number of different words or phrases that can be used in both domains of a conceptual metaphor measures the degree of "elaboration" of the metaphor in the linguistic system. A conceptual metaphor that is elaborated by many different linguistic examples is likely to be more significant in the minds of speakers. For example, the use of *spiralling, plummeting, nose-diving, crashing* and *falling* both in the domain of downward movement and to talk about entering depression shows that BEING DEPRESSED IS BEING DOWN is a significant conceptual metaphor in English, elaborated by many different words. The reasoning here is that if a conceptual metaphor is really operating in people's minds and being used to reason about situations in another domain, it will be reflected in a creative mix of different linguistic expressions. This kind of evidence is called a generalisation over polysemy. That is, there are several polysemous words or phrases that have meanings in both of two domains. In Hebrew, this can be seen in the number of verbs for surrounding, encircling or blocking that are also used to describe situations of distress: אפף 'surround'; סבב 'go round'; נקף 'encircle'; and צרר 'wrap/hold'. This suggests the significance of the conceptual metaphor BEING IN DISTRESS IS BEING CONSTRAINED. By contrast, only the root ירד 'go down' is used for geographical downward movement, suggesting the conceptual metaphor BEING IN DISTRESS IS BEING DOWN is less significant in Hebrew than in English.

2.2.2 Generalisations over inference patterns

Second, generalisations over inference patterns suggest that "inferential structure" is being mapped from one domain to another, and thus the source domain is being used for problematising and reasoning about the target domain. For example, the use of words like *plummet* and *fall* for entering depression alongside *climbing* and *crawling* for returning to normality show that embodied knowledge about movement in relation to gravity (going down is easy, going up is difficult) is being used to draw conclusions about the emotional experience of depression. In Hebrew, by contrast, there is a generalised inference that if someone

[10] These evidences are derived from Lakoff (1993:205), Lakoff and Johnson (1999:81–89), and Taylor (2002:493–501).

is in a tight spot (in a cistern, or surrounded by water), the main solution is to be lifted out by someone else. There is no evidence of a potential inference that people can get out of their distress by their own efforts.

2.2.3 Conventional and novel realisations

Third, Cognitive Linguistics suggests that active conceptual metaphors will be realised in both conventional expressions and in more novel, creative uses of language as speakers imaginatively expand on the metaphor. Taylor writes that "if we find a metaphor can be creatively elaborated, by bringing in various aspects from the source domain, we can be confident that the source domain is active in the expression's use" (Taylor 2002:500–501). Further, psycholinguistic tests have shown that creative writers still usually draw upon the same basic conceptual metaphors as in conventional discourse, although they may elaborate or challenge them (Gibbs 1994:252–264). Thus, the variety of conventional and novel realisations of a conceptual metaphor in a corpus shows the degree to which it is entrenched and active in people's thinking. For example, in English, *falling off a precipice* is a much more creative expression than the conventional language of *feeling down*, but both reflect the same conceptual metaphor. For Hebrew, narrative texts provide the most conventional literature, but the Psalms and Lamentations also contain a very conventional set of stock images, echoed in hymns from Qumran. On the other hand, Job and prophetic literature contain much more innovative use of language and imagery (Alter 1985:189–190). Therefore, if linguistic realisations of a conceptual metaphor are found at all levels from narrative through to Joban innovation, there is good evidence that it is significant for reasoning about emotional experience.

On the other hand, if it only occurs in one domain it is far less likely to be significant. For example, the conceptualisation of emotional distress as being constrained occurs in conventional prose such as the description of Jacob when he encountered Esau (Genesis 32:7), וַיֵּצֶר לוֹ 'it was wrapped to him', through Psalms, like Psalm 116:3 אֲפָפוּנִי חֶבְלֵי־מָוֶת 'death's cords were all around me', to Job's complaint that God had built a wall across his path (Job 19:8). The way this metaphor pervades different kinds of literature shows its significance.

2.2.4 Larger scale metaphorical systems

A fourth strand of evidence comes from the coherence of a conceptual metaphor with larger scale metaphorical systems. If a conceptual metaphor is actually relevant for thinking and reasoning, it is likely to fit with other more schematic (higher-level) metaphorical conceptualisations (Taylor 2002:493–497). As an English example, the conceptualisation of depression as moving to different locations on a vertical scale coheres with the larger scale, more schematic, conceptual metaphor that EMOTIONS ARE LOCATIONS: someone can be *in love* or *enter a state of shock*. In the Hebrew corpus, the conceptual metaphor that EXPERIENCING DISTRESS IS TASTING BITTER FOOD is realised in several linguistic expressions, and coheres with a higher-level metaphorical system in the Hebrew corpus, that EXPERIENCING LIFE IS DIGESTING FOOD AND DRINK, where people can *eat idleness*, *drink scoffing*, or *eat sour grapes*, as ways of conceptualising the consequences of life choices and experiences.

2.2.5 Non-verbal realisations

Fifth, significant conceptual metaphors are often also realised non-verbally. For example, in English, depression is characterised not just by language that describes downward movement, but also by a downward posture of the body. Looking at the Hebrew corpus, any clues to non-verbal behaviour have to be taken from references in the text itself, or from other sources, including pictures and external texts. An example of such a non-verbal realisation for the conceptual metaphor that EXPERIENCING DISTRESS IS TASTING BITTER FOOD is found in the Passover practice of eating bitter herbs to explicitly remember the distress experienced in Egyptian slavery, attested from at least the time of the compilation of the Haggadah, in the period 200–500 A.D.

Although the focus here has been on conceptual metaphors for feelings of distress in Hebrew, these five types of evidence can also be used to substantiate other claims about reasoning from physical to more abstract domains. For example, they could be used to gather evidence for the claimed conceptualisation that BEING FAITHFUL IS BEING FIRM. Indeed, John Sawyer's defence of this conceptualisation against James Barr

is based on the number of different roots exhibiting this link—an example of a generalisation over polysemy (Sawyer 1967:45).

3. Hebrew Metaphors for Distress

Using these types of evidence to look at potential linguistic metaphors for distress in the Psalms, Lamentations, Job and the thanksgiving hymns from Qumran, five significant conceptual metaphors stand out. These relate to the image schemas and source domains of VERTICALITY, CONSTRAINT, FORCE, VISION (specifically DARKNESS), and TASTE. Table 1 shows the frequencies of these (and other) domains and schemas out of 489 tokens of distress metaphors taken from first person singular descriptions in this corpus.

Table 1: Source domains for conceptualising *distress* in Classical Hebrew first person texts.

Source Domain/ Image Schema	Number of Tokens
FORCE	207
CONSTRAINT	129
VERTICALITY	81
DARKNESS	48
TASTE	36
SOURCE-PATH-GOAL	34
NEAR-FAR	16
BALANCE	0

Each of these domains leads to slightly different entailments and inferences as they are used to conceptualise distressing experiences. The sections below explore some of these entailments and inferences, and also how the Hebrew uses of these source domains and image schemas exhibits similarities and differences to other cultures.

3.1. Distress and the VERTICALITY schema

Although the evidence suggests that the VERTICALITY schema is less significant in Hebrew than in English for conceptualising emotional distress, it nevertheless does occur several times, and is worth considering first. There are two different scales used—a geographical scale using position at various vertical points in the cosmos, and a postural scale, using different positions of the body. On both scales there is reasoning based on the conceptual metaphor BEING IN DISTRESS IS BEING DOWN. The most prototypical image of being down that is used is that of being somewhere on a geographical descent towards Sheol (the lowest place in the Hebrew conceptual universe), whether in the deep, in the mighty waters under the solid ground, or drawing near to Sheol itself. A good example occurs in Psalm 88:3 6[4–7], from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV): "My soul is full of troubles and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the pit.… You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep." Here the psalmist uses the entailment that greater depth maps to more serious distress, explicitly mentioning the depth of his location twice in verse 6 to strengthen his plea to his God. This conceptual metaphor for understanding distress is not restricted to ancient Hebrew texts. In the Akkadian text *Ludlul bel nemeqi* (from around 1000 B.C.) the author notes, "When happy, people talk of going up to heaven, when in distress, they talk of going down to the underworld" (Lambert 1960:40–41). This suggests that the conceptual metaphor occurred in conventional language more widely across the ancient Near East.

On the postural scale, there are descriptions of bowed hearts or bodies clinging to the dust, again using the scalability of bodily posture to evoke more seriously distressing situations. That is, the lower the body, the more serious the distress is.

A big difference from the Anglo-conceptual metaphor for depression is seen in the entailments regarding causation. In English, the verbs used typically evoke an unintended downward trajectory through a fluid: *falling*, *sinking*, *plummeting*, *spiralling* or *nose-diving*, so that causation is an external, impersonal force that is hard to resist. In Hebrew, by contrast, there are no verbs that evoke an unimpeded, unintentional

downward trajectory used in this corpus. Prototypically, it is God who has put the person in a certain place on the vertical scale. Causation is almost always attributed to other intentional agents, whether God or the psalmist's enemies. Similar differences can be seen in the way this metaphor constrains inferences about the results of the distressing situation. In English-speaking cultures, a person sees a solution in trying to *climb out* of depression. In the Hebrew conceptualisation of distress, the only results possible are that the person will remain in distress, or that God will *lift* them out. A wide variety of verbs are used to describe this action of God pulling, drawing or raising a person from their distress, again showing the active use of this source domain for reasoning about situations of distress.

3.2. Distress and the FORCE schema

The most commonly occurring schema used in the Hebrew metaphors for distress was that of an external force impacting the sufferer. These included the forces of wind and water, of wild animals, of human opponents, of heat, of heavy weights and other non-specific forces that grip or crush the petitioner. Job 30 (NRSV) is full of examples illustrating these different forces:

> Terrors are turned upon me, my honour is pursued as by the wind…days of affliction have taken hold of me…with violence he seizes my garment, he grasps me by the collar of my tunic, he has cast me into the mire and I have become as dust and ashes.…You have turned cruel to me, with the might of your hand you persecute me, you lift me up on the wind, you make me ride on it, and you toss me about in the roar of the storm.

Forces are exerted either by God, the natural forces at his command, or more abstractly by "days of affliction" and "terror."

Again, the use of a FORCE schema has similarities in other texts from the ancient Near East, as in this Akkadian incantation against headache:

> It snaps off the [ha]nd like a thread in a tempest,
>
> It destroys the shoulder like an embankment,
>
> It slits open the breast like a (flimsy) basket,
>
> It staves in the ribs like an old boat,
>
> It gets a grip on the colon as if it were intestines,
>
> It flattens the tall like a reed,
>
> It slaughters the great one like an ox. (Foster 2005:974–975)

Here, the headache is conceptualised as an opponent violently attacking the sufferer. Akkadian texts typically view illnesses in this way, and often personalised as demonic opponents. In non-poetic texts, the Akkadian Diagnostic Handbook for treating illness also describes illnesses as demons gripping, seizing, or striking the sufferer, and the point of the handbook is to identify which deity's hand is touching them. Akkadian and Hebrew texts also both have common conventional expressions for emotional states that evoke forceful interaction, such as having a "broken heart". Given that the heart in Hebrew is the locus for thinking, feeling and deciding[11]—whereas in English it is prototypically just associated with feeling—the forceful "breaking" of the heart evokes a more comprehensive psychological fragmentation in Hebrew than in English.

Looking at inferences from the force domain, in our embodied experience we know that every experience of force involves interaction. So, when we conceptualise distress through the FORCE schema we infer that there is interaction, which we use to explain causation. In English, many of the forces used to conceptualise emotion are internal, often the emotions themselves may be like fluid getting hot and exerting a pressurised force on us (as in anger). In Akkadian, the forces causing distress are usually personalised illnesses or gods and demons exerting their power on the sufferer, so that "only the physical separation of perpetrator and victim could guarantee long-term healing" (Farber 2007:137–145). In Hebrew, the forces again have

[11] A good summary of the role of the "heart" is available in North (1993).

external causation, but conceptualised as lions, opponents, breakers, or God controlling the natural elements. Usually these are forces deliberately directed by personal, intentional agents, whether human or divine. By conceptualising distress as a force, the petitioner is constrained to infer that there must be something (or usually someone) interacting with him or her, directing them to try to resolve the conflict with the one exerting the force.

The Hebrew conceptual metaphor that makes use of the FORCE schema is very well elaborated in the linguistic system, with many different verbs and phrases. This wide variety allows speakers to explore different perspectives on their experiences, some focusing on a violent physical force (striking, storming, tearing with teeth, pushing violently), others on the petitioner's resultant state (breaking, crushing, melting, ripping apart), or on the trajectory of the force (coming, throwing, driving, leading, lifting). These various perspectives enable sufferers to highlight different aspects of their distress, such as the perceived cause and strength of the distress or of the feelings it has aroused. Further, these roots evoke different manners of forceful interaction, whether violent, sudden, prolonged, intense, destructive, personal or impersonal, enabling sufferers to give nuanced perspectives on their own circumstances.

Kövecses has postulated that EMOTIONS ARE FORCES is a master metaphor that encompasses almost all the conceptual metaphors for emotions in English (Kövecses 2000:61). The Hebrew data shows that forces are also very significant for the conceptualisation of psychophysical conditions in classical Hebraic culture, albeit with different agents wielding those forces.

3.3. Distress and the CONSTRAINT schema

The CONSTRAINT schema has some similarities to the FORCE schema above, but is so significant in the Hebrew conceptualisation of distress that it is considered separately. Through this schema, petitioners conceptualise themselves as a person or object that is surrounded or blocked by another entity and thus held in place. A wide variety of images instantiate this schema in the Hebrew corpus, including walls, nets, traps, pits, prison, surrounding waters, siege, as well as there being a variety of more abstract uses of the language of surrounding. This variety demonstrates the significance of this schema for thinking about distress. Some examples from the Psalms include:

> Psalm 4:1[2]: Give me room in my constraint.[12]
>
> Psalm 18: The ropes of death encircled me…the ropes of Sheol surrounded me.…In my constraint I called to Yahweh.… He brought me out into a wide place.… You gave me a wide place for my steps.
>
> Psalm 22: Constraint is near.… Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls surround me.… For dogs are all around me, evildoers encircle me.

The examples from Psalms 4 and 18 show a common entailment of the metaphor—that if distress is constraint then spaciousness is relief from distress.[13] Further, this is essentially a static image. The main scale of intensity associated with this schema is the length of time the petitioner remains constrained, with increased time in one location leading to increased danger from hunters, enemies, water, or starvation. Psychologically, this schema conceptualises distress as a place of threat of impending disaster. Causes are still external (hiding any personal responsibility for distress), and usually attributed to God or other humans, but there are also several examples here of more abstract external agents surrounding the sufferer, including poison and hardship (Lamentations 3:5), darkness (1 QH 13:33), agony and pain (1 QH 13:34), or evils (Psalm 40:12[13]).

Based on the evidences for conceptual metaphor in section 2.2, the variety of verbs and images instantiating this schema and its use throughout conventional and creative expressions suggest that inferences from the CONSTRAINT schema may have been more significant for problematising distress for speakers of Classical Hebrew than inferences from the VERTICALITY schema were.

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[12] These three translations are the author's own; the examples are often obscured in English translations, as in the NIV: "Give me relief from my distress."

[13] A wider-ranging study is given in Sawyer (1968:20–34).

3.4. Distress and DARKNESS

Another set of linguistic metaphors relate the experience of distress to that of being in darkness, whether through the eyes themselves being dark or weak, or being in a dark place. A good example is found in Lamentations 3:2, "He has driven and brought me into darkness without any light." As well as night-time darkness, many languages across the world (including English, Finnish and Japanese) have a word that describes dark weather but can also be used to describe an emotional condition. In English, the word "gloomy" prototypically refers to the darkness of clouded skies or a deep forest, but also to a negative emotion. Hebrew also has expressions like this using the root קדר (although never in narrative texts), which can refer both to the sky and to emotional conditions,[14] as in Job 30:28, "I walk gloomily, with no heat." This gives further evidence of the widespread conceptual link across different cultures between abnormally dark weather and negative emotions.

Darkness in Hebrew is also associated with the netherworld of Sheol, with wickedness and with captivity, so that links to these domains may be active when a distressed person talks of being in darkness. The prototypical netherworld associations evoked when darkness is used in distress discourse conceptualise the distress as much more serious than when darkness is used in English distress metaphors.

A further contrast with English is found when looking at the entailments from the domain of darkness. In the Hebrew corpus there is no evidence that darkness was conceived as something scalable, as it is in English where we understand darkness as relating to varying degrees of light. In English, the scalability of darkness can be used to express intensity of emotion, so that someone can be a *bit* gloomy, or *very* gloomy. In Hebrew, by contrast, darkness is conceived almost as an entity itself, so this domain is not used to express varying intensity of distress. Aspects of the source domain that are used include the inability to see in the dark being mapped onto the inability to act purposefully in distress, and the provision of light mapping onto relief from distress and the ability to act freely again.

Although there are several different words and phrases in poetic texts that use the source domain of darkness to conceptualise distress, there are no clear examples in the narrative portions of the Hebrew Bible, suggesting this is not as conventionalised a source domain for negative emotional situations as CONSTRAINT, FORCE or BAD TASTE.

3.5. Distress and BAD TASTE

Finally, the source domain of taste provides conceptual resources for understanding and reasoning about distress. This is particularly worthy of mention because of the relatively common use of the root מרר (traditionally translated 'be bitter') in biblical narrative to describe a person's emotional state. In 1 Samuel 1:10, for example, Hannah is described as having a מָרַת נָפֶשׁ 'bitter soul.' This root is used along with other words and phrases describing bad taste in descriptions of distress in the Psalms and Job.

Although מרר is traditionally translated 'bitterness', it should not be equated with the scientific definition of "bitter" in English. The two major taste roots in Hebrew, מתק 'be sweet' and מרר 'be bitter' are more closely linked to evaluation as 'be good/healthy' and 'be bad/toxic' than to the chemical composition of the substances that have these tastes, as seen for example in Exodus 15:23–25, where the waters at Marah are changed from bitter/toxic to become sweet/potable. Thus, when this source domain is used in distress discourse the conceptual metaphor is that BEING IN DISTRESS IS INGESTING TOXIC SUBSTANCES.

In the physiological source domain, food that is eaten becomes part of the body (with consequences for good or for ill) and is not available to be tasted again. In the target domain, these entailments are used to conceptualise how life events or situations that one partakes in have consequences for good or ill. Thus in some passages we read of "eating" tears (Psalm 42:3[4]) as a way of conceptualising the experience of crying, in other passages drinking wine that makes the sufferers reel (Psalm 60:3[5]) is a way of conceptualising the causal chain between events and the on-going distress they cause.

[14] See King (2012) for a fuller argument for this interpretation.

This conceptual metaphor is very productive, although not as common as the others, elaborated in several different ways and exploiting a variety of entailments as well as the inferences related to action and consequence. The person offering toxic food (usually God) is mapped onto the cause of the suffering. The frequency or duration of eating is mapped onto the frequency or duration of the distressing experiences. The amount of toxic food, offered or ingested maps onto the intensity of the distress experience. The way these different aspects of the source domain are brought into descriptions of distress shows how active the source domain is in the minds of the speakers, and suggests that some of this conceptual structure from the source domain may be accessible even when people use the conventional expression מַר־לִי 'toxic to-me' in situations of emotional distress.

4. Conclusions and Implications

Having looked at these metaphorical conceptualisations for distress in Biblical Hebrew, what are the implications for Bible translators? First, in the area of exegesis, investigating conceptual metaphors gives us a fuller understanding of biblical texts. By finding out the entailments of a conceptual metaphor across a variety of texts, we can make a more informed hypothesis about the entailments for an individual image that instantiates the metaphor, such as inferences regarding causes, purposes, participants or results. With better understanding of the various domains and inferences that are accessible through a given expression, there is more chance of making a translation that guides readers or listeners to similar inferences. For example, without studying the wider conceptual metaphor we may read a text like Job 10:1, אֲדַבְּרָה בְּמַר נַפְשִׁי 'I will speak in the bitterness of my soul', and assume that Job is speaking in resentment, as this is the normal understanding of bitterness in English. However, by studying the way the source domain of taste is used in Hebrew emotion metaphors, it is more likely Job is talking about the effects of suffering bad experiences (conceptualised as eating bad food) which are harming Job's very insides and driving him to react. Thus, his drive to go on speaking comes from what he has suffered and the desire to do something about it, rather than his frustration and resentment towards God.

Second, in the area of cultural anthropology, we have seen that there are elements of both universality and variation in the ways emotions are conceptualised across cultures. For example, many cultures use FORCE as one of the major source domains for conceptualising emotions, including Anglo and Hebrew cultures, where this is the most common schema used. This source domain seems to be particularly helpful for people in understanding and problematising their physiological and psychological experiences. Our emotional responses are seen as things that are caused, that happen to us, rather than things we do. However, in Hebrew, forces are generally external whereas in Anglo cultures they are internal, leading to different inferences. English speakers are guided to look to themselves to overcome the forces in emotional problems (*keeping a lid on them*, *keeping them on a leash*, or *taming them*, for example), whereas the Hebrew conceptualisations (at least in this corpus) direct speakers to look outside themselves, primarily to God, to remove the external forces.

There are further possible areas of variation when a similar conceptual metaphor is found in different languages. A conceptual metaphor may be more frequent in one language than another, it may be more deeply entrenched (occurring throughout different types of language use), it may be more elaborated (drawing in more aspects of the source domain in different expressions) or it may have different cultural prototypes. For example, the conceptual metaphor BEING IN DISTRESS IS BEING DOWN, is found in both Hebrew and English, but it is more frequent in English, more deeply entrenched, more elaborated (consider all the different words elaborating manner of downward movement), and has different prototypes. The conceptualisation of a deathly netherworld as the prototypical place for "being down" is absent from English, but when used in Hebrew evokes a more dangerous and life-threatening situation than just being "in the pits," as in English. Conversely, the metaphor BEING IN DISTRESS IS BEING CONSTRAINED, is more deeply entrenched and more elaborated in Hebrew than in English.

Third, when it comes to translating such texts, understanding the conceptual metaphors can help communicate the intended meaning more clearly, and avoid miscommunication. Where Hebrew and the receptor language share the same conceptual metaphor, maintaining the conceptual metaphor in translation helps texts to remain both vivid and coherent. For example, some Papua New Guinean languages share the

metaphor of distress as constraint, although English does not. For them it is both clearer and more natural to translate Psalm 4:1[2] as "give me room in my constraint" than finding equivalents for the more general *relief* and *distress* to translate the NIV's "give me relief in my distress." Keeping this imagery also maintains links with all the other times in the Psalms that distress is understood as constraint, such as the repetition of surrounding imagery in Psalm 22, enabling the receptor audience to still have access to the conceptual world of the original communication. Where conceptual metaphors are not shared between source and receptor languages, investigating these metaphors in both languages helps to predict the kind of misunderstandings that readers or hearers might develop when they encounter the text. Methods to deal with these misunderstandings will depend on the translation philosophy being used. For example, the NET Bible chooses to translate Psalm 42:5[6] as "Why are you depressed?" using receptor language emotional terms in the text but allowing access to the Hebrew, "Why are you bowed down?" in the footnote.

In conclusion, this research has shown how an investigation of conceptual metaphors used in emotional discourse can help understand how people thought about their emotional experiences, including the way they problematised them, inferring causes, purposes and results of their situations. This is a fruitful avenue to complement other lexical approaches to the meanings of emotions. It is also a research method that can be applied in a non-speculative way to ancient texts through the use of concepts like elaboration, entrenchment and generalised inferences.

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