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The metaphorical conceptualization of sadness in the Anglo-Saxon elegies

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to explore the predominant metaphorical conceptualization of sadness in three Old English elegiac monologues whose main themes are the pain and solitude of exile and separation. Taking as a starting point the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and briefly reviewing the experimental evidence that supports the experiential grounding of our conceptualization of sadness, as well as our own previous research on the Old English expressions for emotional distress, we analyze the use of sadness metaphors in the elegies *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer* and *The Wife's Lament*. This analysis clearly shows that in the Old English period, as in present day English, sadness was largely expressed in metaphorical terms. Cold, darkness and physical discomfort were recurrent source domains in its depiction, which suggests a long-term trend in the metaphorical conceptualization of sadness, whose cognitive reality is empirically supported by experimental research.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, elegiac poetry, sadness expressions, Old English

1 Introduction

As is well known, one of the main tenets of the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) is the conceptual nature of metaphor. Metaphor is no longer considered only a rhetorical device but a cognitive mechanism by which we conceptualize and understand the world. Through mappings that take the form SOURCE DOMAIN IS TARGET DOMAIN and that are argued to arise from recurring patterns of embodied experience[1] we are able to reason and talk about one domain of experience (the target domain) in terms of another (the source

1 Embodied experience must be understood here as our embodied interactions with the environment, which is at once physical, social and cultural.

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domain) which is usually more concrete (Lakoff 2014). Thus, for example, emotions (target domain) are frequently conceptualized in terms of both bodily sensations and environmental factors as reflected by the pervasive use in everyday language of metaphorical expressions that rely on bodily states, touch, weight, temperature, color, light, or weather related terms to describe emotional states (see Kövecses 2000 and Goatly's Metalude for further discussion).

Since the groundbreaking publication of *Metaphors we live by* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), a large number of studies have investigated the metaphorical conceptualization of emotions and their experiential basis. Most of those studies have adopted a synchronic approach aimed at disentangling the way people understand and express their emotions by means of a systematic analysis of lexicographically-attested lexicalized metaphors or the development of language-based models of emotion conceptualization (Barcelona 1986, 1995, 2000; Kövecses 1986, 1988, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2007; Goatly 2007[2]; Tissari 2008, 2010; Stefanowitsch 2004, 2006; among others).

In the particular case of sadness, research has shown that its conceptualization also resorts to metaphors and metonymies (see Table 1) drawn from bodily states and behavioral reactions, such as slumped posture (mainly reflected by SADNESS IS LOW), reduced body temperature, physiological responses to lack of sunlight, physical weakness, discomfort, pain, tears and a sad countenance (Barcelona 1986; Kövecses 2000). Those metaphors coexist with others grounded in more general experiences and cultural values such as the association between sadness and natural forces or bad weather conditions– mainly cold, gloom, storms, clouds, rain and shadows– (Kövecses 2000; Cervel and Sandra 1997; Metalude database). The link between sadness and darkness that the cross-cultural negative connotations of darkness seem to support (Grady et al. 1997; Barcelona 2000) is also frequently instantiated. Finally, the web of metaphors that are drawn on to ground our understanding of sadness also includes its conceptualization as a living organism, an opponent, or a social superior (Kövecses 2000).

Many of these metaphorical patterns are in line with people's reports on their subjective experience of sadness, which include the sensation of having a lump in the throat, muscle tension, weak limbs, low felt temperature (Scherer et al. 1986; Scherer and Wallbott 1994), tiredness, listlessness, slowing of the mind and body, downward body posture and a forwards bending

2 See Goatly's Metalude database for a systematic lexicographic approach to emotion metaphors.

Table 1: Metaphoric and Metonymic expressions for sadness in Modern English.

	Metaphor			Metonymy	
Source	**Metaphor**	**Examples**	**Source**	**Metonymy**	**Examples**
Slumped posture	SADNESS IS DOWN	"*He is feeling down these days*"	Slumped posture	EFFECT OF EMOTION FOR EMOTION	"*His head drooped in sorrow*"
Reduced body temperature Bad weather impact on mood	SADNESS IS COLD SADNESS IS DARK	"*Her death chilled his soul*"	Reduced body temperature	EFFECT OF EMOTION FOR EMOTION	"*He felt chilled with sadness*"
Weakness and loss of energy	SADNESS IS ILLNESS	"*He finally recovered from his sorrow*"	Weakness	EFFECT OF EMOTION FOR EMOTION	"*My body weakened with sadness*"
Drooping posture, physical discomfort	SADNESS IS A BURDEN OR A PHYSICAL NUISANCE	"*A heavy sadness fell upon him*"	Face countenance	EFFECT OF EMOTION FOR EMOTION	"*He had a sad-eyed smile*"

of the head (Carroll 2000).[3] Although these reports do not provide direct evidence of a connection between body sensations and physiological responses, the way people describe sadness shows consistent enough patterns to suggest that our conceptualization of this emotion is largely based on our embodied experience (Castaño & Verdaguer 2018).

In fact, beyond language, the psychological reality of such metaphorical associations has been corroborated by a large number of studies, some of which have proven that even without any external percept to interpret cognitively, just by the electrical stimulation of the mesencephalon, sadness can be induced (Damasio 2003). Research has also shown that less invasive bodily manipulations such as subtle changes in body posture play a mediating role in emotion recognition, affective state induction and emotional information processing and interpretation —including the comprehension of emotional language— (Aronoff et al. 1992; Schouwstra and Hoogstraten 1995; Coulson 2004). In the case of temperature, there is also evidence that feelings of social connection and loneliness can be induced by manipulating physical

3 The physiological origin of experienced body sensations is still questioned by those who hold a social view of emotions as culturally grounded patterns of feelings and behaviors followed in certain social contexts (Rimé and Giovanni 1986; Philippot & Rimé 1997).

warmth or coldness (Ijzerman and Semin 2009) and that physical and social warmth display overlapping neural mechanisms with the activation of the left VS and left middle insul when both signs of physical warm or social connection are detected (Tristen and Eisenberger 2013).

The association of brightness and darkness with emotional valence has also been proved by several studies. Stabler and his associates (1971, 1972), for example, found that when children are asked to guess the content of a box or the source of tape-recorded positive and negative self-statements, they tend to associate good objects and positive self-statements with white containers whereas negative objects and self-statements are associated with black containers. Likewise, it has also been shown that font color (black or white) influences subjects' accuracy and response time during valence judgements. Subjects are more accurate and faster at categorizing a word as positive or negative if its font color is consistent with prevalent metaphors —i.e. GOOD IS WHITE; BAD IS BLACK— (Meier et al. 2004; Gary and Clore 2009). As regards the specific association between brightness/darkness and emotions, Zentner´s research (2001) on the emotional meaning of bright and dark colors showed that "even very young children (3-to 4-year-old children) detect relationships between the perceptually unrelated phenomena of colors and emotions" (p. 394), since children usually match bright chromatic stimuli with happy emotional expressions (e.g. a smiling face) and dark colors with sad emotional expressions. In the same vein, it has also been shown that judgments of facial brightness are biased in metaphorically consistent ways, given that people judge schematic and realistic smiling faces as perceptually lighter than frowning faces (Hyunjin et al. 2012). This is not surprising considering that light and darkness are physiologically related to happiness and sadness, as shown by seasonal affective disorders (Rifkin 1987; Stefanowitsch 2006) where the decrease of serotonin induced by lack of light is associated with sadness and depression. In short, these results suggest that bodily states, or at least our subjective experience of them, and other more general experiences such as those related to temperature and luminosity are a crucial component of the way we think about emotions.

2 Sadness related vocabulary in the Old English period

Although there is a great amount of research on metaphor from a synchronic point of view, it has not been until relatively recently that metaphor historical and cultural variation has been systematically analyzed (Allan 2006, 2010; Deignan 2003; Díaz Vera 2011, 2014; Gevaert 2002; Györi 1998; Kövecses 2005,

2007; Mischler 2013; Trim 2007, 2010, 2014). These studies have made clear that in addition to embodied experience, cultural factors play an important role in metaphorical conceptualization (Yu 1995; Matsuki 1995; Antonio and Soriano 2004) and that in different cultures and periods differences in the preference for source domains or in the salience of the extant metaphoric conceptualizations may arise. Well known examples are *anger* and *love*. Dirk and Groendelaers (1995) have shown that cultural beliefs about the human body, such as the Four Humor Theory, have influenced the instantiation of metaphorical expressions that profile the liquid property of anger or the heat of love.

Despite diachronic variation, remarkable correspondences exist in the type of conceptual metaphors that have been used to speak about emotions throughout the history of the English language (Trim 2011). Thus, for example, the use of HAPPY IS UP, pervasive in Modern English, is also well attested in Old English. In the case of emotional suffering, the Mapping Metaphor categorization system, by the University of Glasgow (Mapping Metaphor with the Historical Thesaurus database), shows that in the Old English period, as in Modern English, emotional distress was tightly connected to physical sensations such as pain, taste or smell as well as to the notions of weight, cold and darkness (see Table 2).

Table 2: Categories with which the Mapping Metaphor category 2D06 'Emotional suffering' has a strong or weak metaphorical connection in the Old English data.

Strong	Weak
1B29: Cause of death	1J11: Softness
1B30: Killing	1J14: Liquid
1E05: Insects and other invertebrates	1N07 Transference
1I01: Physical sensation	
1I10: Taste	
1I11: Smell	
1J03: Weight, heat and cold	
1J04: Solidity and density	
1J33: Darkness	
1J34: Color	
1J38: Bad condition	
1K03: Destruction	
1L04: Shape	

A systematic manual search for discerning such metaphorical connections has provided further evidence that the Old English vocabulary for sadness used to

rely on metaphors and metonymies that took physical discomfort, body-posture, temperature and gloom as source domains, as illustrated in Table 3.[4]

Table 3: Old English expressions for sadness.

SOURCE DOMAIN	Example
PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT	*Sēoc, modseōcness, morgenseōc, sār, trega, sargian*
TEMPERATURE	*frēorig, frēorigmōd, wintercearig*
BURDEN	*byrþen, swær, sorgbyrðen, hefigian*
DROOPING POSTURE	*hnipian, drēosan*, hēanmōd
DARKNESS	*deorc, genip, sweorc, drysmian*

Sadness was conceptualized as an illness or unpleasant physical condition, shown by polysemous words with both a concrete and a metaphoric meaning: *seoc* 'sick, ill' and 'sad' and the related compounds *modseōcness, morgenseōc; sār* 'sickness' and 'sadness'; *trega* 'pain' and 'grief'; or *sargian* 'wound' and 'grief'. Likewise, sadness, in Old English as in Modern English, could also be conceptualized as a burden, as the words *byrþen* 'burden, anxiety', *swær* 'heavy, sad', *sorgbyrðen* 'load of sorrow, burden of sorrow' or *hefigian* 'to make heavy, oppress, to grieve' reflect. In the same way, sadness was also associated with drooping posture, thus, for example, the verb *hnipian* 'to bow the head' was metonymically used to denote sadness and the verb drēosan 'to sink of spirit' and the compound *hēanmōd* 'low mood, sadness', helped the connection SADNESS IS LOW. Finally, the correlation between darkness and sadness is present in the words *deorc* 'dark, sad, gloomy, miserable', *genip* 'darkness affliction' or *drysmian* 'to become dark, to be made sad, to mourn'. On this basis, it can be argued that contemporary English metaphors for sadness can be traced back to Old English.

The lexical study of isolated words, however, does not show how those words fit in context nor how their meaning potential is shaped by and linked with other concurrent concepts and textual genres. That is why in what follows we provide an illustration of the metaphorical conceptualization of sadness in context, that is, the mappings between the target and some of the various source domains are exemplified by referring to three Old English poems, *The Wife's Lament*, *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*,

4 Data taken from the Thesaurus of Old English (Roberts et al. 2000); the online edition of the *Bosworth- Toller Anglo-Saxon dictionary* (Bosworth & Toller 1882); *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Clark Hall 1916) and The *Dictionary of Old English A to F* (DOE 2008).

where the expression of emotional distress can be extensively found. Given that these Old English texts stand out for their exploration of personal emotion in a period of English literature when heroic or religious poems are predominant, we believe this corpus, although admittedly limited, can be taken as representative.

3 An illustration in context: Sadness and loneliness in three Old English elegies

The emergence of the Cognitive Theory of Metaphor has led to a new way of approaching the study of metaphor in literary texts that highlights the relationship between creative and conventional uses of metaphor. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, most metaphors in literature, despite the novelty and originality of their linguistic realizations, stem from conventional conceptual metaphors that also ground everyday metaphorical language (Lakoff and Turner 1989). This approach to the analysis of metaphorical expressions allows the search for metaphorical patterns and novel combinations that spread not only across languages but also across texts and literary genres (Elena and Steen 2010).[5] Moreover, from this point of view the exploration of literary metaphors also becomes a means to understand the conceptualization of the world that underlies a text. In this context, Old English texts are now analyzed in an attempt to understand how the Anglo-Saxons conceptualized their inner world, mental states and functions as well as the influence that these mental models had on their literary production (Harbus 2007; Richardson and Steen 2002). In this respect, the so called elegiac poems, through the *Wrǽcca's* words, provide a suitable context to explore how emotions were conceptualized and linguistically described in Old English as well as to identify consistent metaphorical patterns across texts.

The Seafarer, *The Wanderer* and *The Wife's Lament*, found in the Exeter book, are prototypical examples of this type of poems. They share a similar tone of lament associated with particular themes such as exile, loss of loved ones or the ephemeral nature of earthly joys (Klinck 2001). In *The Seafarer* an old sailor recalls the hardships and difficulties he endured travelling over the ocean in winter. *The Wanderer* conveys the laments of a solitary man who wanders the paths of exile across the cold sea while he remembers his past happiness in the

5 The link between literary metaphors and metaphors in everyday language does not exclude completely novel metaphors which do not fit in conventional patterns.

service of his lord. *The Wife's Lament* is also an expression of sorrow at the woman's exile and her longing for her husband. In a broader sense, previous analysis of the Old English poetic corpus has evidenced that the mind 'mod' was the seat of both rationality and emotion (Lockett 2015) and that it was often metaphorically conceptualized as a CONTAINER or as AN ENTITY WANDERING IN A MARITIME CONTEXT, an image that suggests the transmutation of mental activity into physical sea journeying (Harbus 2012) and that emphasizes the symbolic power of physical spaces to represent mental states. In fact, in the particular cases of the *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*, Harbus has pointed out that "a recognizable feature of these lament poems is their metaphoric construction of mental anguish in terms of the physical reality of the maritime world" (2012: 39).

In this light, the ubiquitous description of the British landscape in Old English poetry gains a new dimension which emphasizes that the representation of the natural world that the Old English poems offer is not an end in itself. The use of nature-related terms both literally and metaphorically provides the landscape with a symbolic dimension that reflects the speaker's state of mind. This claim is also supported by Wehlau (1998), who has stated that in the Old English elegies the elegiac landscape often functions not only as an exterior symbol of the passing of time but as a representation of the interior mental world. Beyond the symbolic value that the description of the environment that surrounds the *Wræcca* may have, evidence also suggests that the Anglo-Saxons had a wide stock of words to express the somatic and psychological effects of distress (Nicholson 1995) and that they relied on somatic metaphors to convey this emotion (Harbus 2007).

Taking *The Seafarer, The Wanderer* and *The Wife's Lament* as a testbed, we provide here an analysis of the metaphorical construction of sadness as reflected by the symbolic use of the landscape and the presence of somatic metaphors to express psychological pain. Since the same topics recur across the poems, they will be treated conjointly rather than in a text by text discussion.

Coldness and darkness are constant ingredients in the description of the external world that these three poems offer. If, as stated above, elegiac landscapes can be understood as a projection of the speaker´s emotions, then realistic depictions of cold, ice, frost and darkness could be interpreted as a metaphorical way of describing the grief and loneliness that the speaker feels. In such expressions of mental distress, coldness and darkness seem to work in conformity with the metaphors EMOTIONAL STATES ARE LOCATIONS and UNDESIRED EMOTIONS ARE UNDESIRED LOCATIONS or HARMFUL LOCATIONS, which justifies the contrastive depiction that these three elegies make of the hall, on the one hand, and the cold seascape and the dark cave, on the other.

The hall appears as a bright physical space filled with joy, as the compounds *goldsele* 'gold hall' and *seledrēam* 'hall-joys' show, whereas the wintry sea and the cold and dark cave are described as places of loneliness and sadness.

The analysis of darkness and cold-related terms in those descriptions shows a gradation that ranges from more literal to metaphorical senses. In *The Wife's Lament*, for example, 'dales are dark with hills up above', *sindon dena dimme, duna uphea* [The Wife's Lament 30]; in the darkness of the earth is the wanderer's lord buried, *goldwine minne hrusan heolstre biwrah* [The Wanderer 22–23]; and 'the shadows of night darkened', *nap nihtscua* [The Seafarer 31], the seafarer's path on the sea. In these contexts, darkness could be argued to provide a literal description of a place that is dusky, with very little light or none at all. However, juxtaposed with distress and misery the absence of light can be taken as a symbolic evocation of an atmosphere or state of wretchedness and sorrow:

(1) *Eald is þes eorðsele; eal ic eom oflongad.*
Sindon dena dimme, duna uphea,
bitre burgtunas brerum beweaxne,
wic wynna leas. [The Wife's Lament 29–32]

Old is this earth-cave, I am worn out with yearning. The valleys are dark, the hills are high, oppressive fortified enclosures overgrown with briars, a dwelling place deprived of joy.

It is also *on uhtan* 'the last part of night just before dawn' when the narrator of *The Wife's Lament* walks alone under the oak tree whereas she thinks of the lovers who lie in bed (2) and the wanderer bewails his sorrow in solitude (3). This makes the darkness of night a crucial component of the feeling of loneliness experienced in the elegies. The connection between darkness and loneliness is also present in the *Wife's Lament*, where the compound *uhtceare* 'sorrow before dawn' is used to describe the wife's feelings since her lord departed (4).

(2) *Frynd sind on eorþan,*
leofe lifgende leger weardiað,
þonne ic on uhtan ana gonge
under actreo geond þas eorðscrafu.
þær ic sittan mot sumorlangne dæg, [The Wife's Lament 33–37]

Dear lovers in this world lie in their beds, while I alone in the small hours of the morning walk under the oak-tree through these earthy caves, where I must sit the length of summer days.

(3) "*Oft ic sceolde ana uhtna gehwylce*
mine ceare cwiþan; [The Wanderer 8–9].

Frequently I had to lament alone each of my cares at the crack of dawn.

(4) *Hæfde ic uhtceare*
hwær min leodfruma londes wære. [The Wife's Lament 7–8]

I had anxiety in the small hours of the morning (wondering) where my lord might be on land.

Cold-related expressions are also juxtaposed with misery and grief. Thus, the seafarer, wretched and sorrowful, endures iciness, snow, frost and hail; and bereft of friendly kinsmen, hung about with icicles, he dwells on the ice-cold sea (5) with his feet fettered by the cold and bound by frost in cold clasps (6), whereas the man who does not know grim sorrow at heart and has the joys of life dwells in the city far from a terrible winter cold sea journey (7). In this particular manifestation of sadness, coldness is experientially connected to physical separation. Temperature and interpersonal closeness are conflated and mapped onto the concept of loneliness (Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Ritchie 2013), a metaphorical link that is subsumed under AFFECTION IS WARMTH and RELATIONSHIP IS PROXIMITY.

(5) *hu ic earmcearig iscealdne sæ*
Winter wunade wræccan lastum,
winemægum bidroren,
bihongen hrimgicelum; hægl scurum fleag. [The Seafarer 14–17]

How I wretched spent winters on the ice-cold sea on the path of exile, deprived of dear kinsmen, hung about with icicles; hail flew in showers.

(6) *Calde geþrungen*
wæron mine fet, forste gebunden, [The Seafarer 8–9]

My feet were oppressed by the cold, bound by frost.

(7) *Forþon him gelyfeð lyt, se þe ah lifes wyn*,
gebiden in burgum, bealosiþa hwon,
wlonc ond wingal, hu ic werig oft
in brimlade bidan sceolde. [The Seafarer 27–30]

Accordingly little knows about it the one who has stayed with the joys of life in the cities, safe from terrible experiences, proud and elated with wine, how I weary had often to stay on the sea-path.

Likewise, the wanderer, sorry-hearted, forced to move along the ice-cold sea over the path of exile (8) and sad at the lack of a hall, travels over frozen waves looking for a meadhall where he can find consolation and delight (9). He also feels anew the pain at the loss of his dear ones on the icy sea (10). Moreover, the winter landscape is also the setting in which the *anhaga* awakens after dreaming of his former life in the mead-hall, establishing a contrast between the happy, warm mead-hall and the cold, bleak place where he is now. In this respect, coldness also seems to evoke a metaphorical association with the domain of sadness.

(8) "*Oft him anhaga are gebideð,*
metudes miltse, þeah þe he modcearig
geond lagulade longe sceolde
hreran mid hondum hrimcealde sæ,
wadan wræclastas:" [The Wanderer 1–5]

Often the solitary man awaits the mercy of God, although he sad at heart has to stir by hand the icy cold sea along the ocean path to go along the exile's path.

(9) *Ic hean þonan*
wod wintercearig ofer waþema gebind,
sohte seledreorig sinces bryttan,
hwær ic feor oþþer neah findan meahte
þone þe in meoduhealle mine wisse,
oþþe mec freondleasne frefran wolde,
wēman mid wynnum. [The Wanderer 23–29].

I wretched waded from there sad as winter over a body of waves, sad at the loss of a hall I sought a treasure's dispenser where I far or near might find one who in the mead-hall knew my people or would comfort a friendless man, me, entice with joy.

(10) *Ðonne onwæcneð eft wineleas guma,*
gesihð him biforan fealwe wegas,
baþian brimfuglas, brædan feþra,
hreosan hrim ond snaw hagle gemenged. [TheWanderer 45–48]

Then the friendless man wakes up and sees in front of him tawny waves, the sea-birds bathing, stretching out their wings, while frost and snow and hail fall all together.

That darkness and cold mediate the conceptualization of sadness becomes even more evident when terms related to these concepts are used with reference to emotions and symbolism gives way to metaphor. Then the notion of literal lack of light or cold recedes and an abstract, epistemic sense appears. So, in *The Wanderer* the speaker wonders why his spirit does not *darken* when he ponders the whole life of men throughout the world (11) and 'carefully considers thoroughly this dark life', "*ond þis deorce lif deope geondþenceð*", a life without the happiness of the feast, the bright cup and the splendor of the lord.

(11) *Forþon ic geþencan ne mæg geond þas woruld*
forhwan modsefa min ne gesweorce
þonne ic eorla lif eal geondþence, [The Wanderer 58–60]

Therefore I cannot consider why in this world my spirit does not grow dark, when I ponder the lives of all warriors.

As for the conceptualization of loneliness in terms of cold, poetic terms such as *ferðloca freorig* 'frozen feelings or spirit' (12) and *wintercearig* 'miserably sad' (13) are used to describe the wretched state of the lonely wanderer, for whom sorrow is a cruel permanent companion.

(12) *Wat se þe cunnað*
hu sliþen bið sorg to geferan
þam þe him lyt hafað leofra geholena.
Warað hine wræclast, nalæs wunden gold,
ferðloca freorig, nalæs foldan blæd; [The Wanderer 29–33]

The one who has few real friends knows how cruel is grief as a companion, the path of exile occupies his attention, and never twisted gold, a cold breast, and never the richness of the world.

(13) *Ic hean þonan*
wod wintercearig ofer waþema gebind, [The Wanderer 23–24].

I wretched waded from there sad as winter over a body of waves.

Temperature concepts also ground the depiction of the seafarer's sorrowful and isolated life in the sea. A chilled atmosphere accompanies his lament for the loss of community, a depiction that contrasts with the warm image of a life in heaven, with the joys of the lord, which indeed are *hatran* 'hotter' for the seafarer than his dead earthly life (14).

(14) *forþon me hatran sind*
dryhtnes dreamas þonne þis deade lif,
læne on londe. [The Seafarer 64–66]

Therefore, the joys of the Lord are hotter to me than this dead temporary life on land.

Even though in these three poems sadness is mainly mapped onto the domains of temperature and darkness (as demonstrated above), instances of sadness as illness or physical pain are also found in the texts. In this case, the conceptualization of sadness relates to BAD EMOTION IS DISCOMFORT OR PAIN, which in turn derives from EMOTION IS SENSE IMPRESSION (Goatly 2007). In the *Wife's Lament*, for example, the lover is weary in spirit, sick at heart (15) while the Wanderer's soul is wounded and sore (16) and the Seafarer suffers from breostceare, 'care at heart' (17).

(15) *þæt min freond siteð*,
under stanhliþe, storme behrimed,
wine werigmod wætre beflowen, [The Wife's Lament 47–49]

That my friend sits, under a rocky cliff, frozen by a storm, weary in spirit surrounded by water.

(16) *Þonne beoð þy hefigran heortan benne*, [The Wanderer 49]

Therefore, the wounds of the heart are heavier...

(17) *Bitre breostceare gebiden hæbbe*, [The Seafarer 4]

I have endured care in the breast.

In short, the commingling of emotional expressions that shape the emotional dynamics of these three elegiac poems gives proof of a pervasive connection between emotional and physical properties visible through realistic descriptions of wintry weather and gloom, symbolically connected with personal sorrow, as well as through the use of metaphors of cold, darkness and physical uneasiness, as in *wintercearig* 'winter-sorrowful'; *modsefa min ne gesweorce* 'my spirit does not darken', and *bitre breostceare* 'care at heart', to mention but a few.

4 Discussion and conclusions

The emotional texture that *The Wanderer, The Seafarer* and *The Wife's Lament* evoke points to a conceptualization of sadness and loneliness articulated in terms

of external world properties, namely cold temperature, darkness and physical pain. The same unpleasant physical conditions populate the Old English vocabulary for mental anguish, which suggests that the attributes that define the environment that surrounds the Wræcca are not casually selected but, quite the opposite, reflect a deeply rooted and persisting conceptualization of sadness.

Experimental research has supported this claim by providing evidence that the metaphorical conceptualization of sadness in terms of concrete experiences is not only a stylistic device found in literary works but a way of thinking about this emotion that is reflected in the general Old English and Modern English vocabulary. Temperature, for example, is able to induce feelings of social connection and loneliness, while brightness and darkness bias valence judgments and body posture mediates emotion recognition and emotional information processing and interpretation (see Section 1).

All in all, literary analysis can be fruitfully complemented by a cognitive approach, which sheds light on human conceptual structures and on the associations of metaphoric expressions. When texts are considered beyond their immediate literary significance, they can be seen as reflections of human cognitive processing (Harbus 2012). As this study has shown, the human emotions expressed in metaphorical terms in the poems analyzed here have an experiential basis. The strong link between emotions and embodied experience, confirmed by experimental research, has been present in language and in literature by means of metaphoric mappings since the earliest documented periods of the history of English. Metaphor is thus not only a literary or linguistic phenomenon, but as Yeshayahu (1992) notes "it is a much more widespread conceptual process which should be examined from a broader interdisciplinary perspective." We believe, consequently, that studies which focus on the interrelationship of human biology, cognition, language and literature can raise new research questions and lines of inquiry in literary studies.

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