

Metaphors of Body and Mind in the History of English

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The present paper will investigate the role of the body in the conceptualization of human mental qualities and emotions, in particular focusing on the heart as a cultural concept in the history of English. The historical data are taken from the Helsinki Corpus and dictionaries (mainly the Oxford English Dictionary, hereafter abbreviated OED) as well as Internet sources.¹ In addition, the romance *The Old English Apollonius of Tyre* was examined.²

In Section 1, I introduce the general framework and perspectives of the present work, namely the cognitive theory of metaphor, and the role of the body in cognitive linguistics. Section 2 discusses two pervasive types of “dualism” which are involved in our conceptions of mental and physical entities and permeate our language; Section 2.1 deals with the dichotomy body as opposed to the mind, or soul, while Section 2.2 discusses the conceptualization of what is seen as the non-body part of human beings. Section 3 presents data and discusses uses of heart metaphors in the history of English; Section 3.1 provides a general introduction, and in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 we look at heart metaphor data from Old English and Middle/Early Modern English respectively. Section 4 sums up and concludes.

1. Metaphors and Emotions in Cognitive Linguistics

In cognitive linguistics it is claimed that language is a product of human beings in interaction, and—crucially—that language is based on human experience.³ Furthermore, the claim that language reflects experience is indeed of great importance in cognitive metaphor theory.⁴ In the cognitive framework, metaphors may be considered direct linguistic instances of pre-existing conceptual “mappings” between concept domains. Thus the cognitive perspective is that far from metaphors

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¹Examples from the Helsinki Corpus will be marked as follows: Old English—OE4 = 1050–1150, Middle English—ME1 = 1150–1250, ME2 = 1250–1350, ME3 = 1350–1420, ME4 = 1420–1500; Early Modern English—E1 = 1500–70, E2 = 1570–1640, E3 = 1640–1710. Examples from the Oxford English Dictionary will be marked OED.

²Goolden. Cf. Section 3.2 below.

³See e.g. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors*; Lakoff; Langacker; Heine; Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*.

⁴See, for example, Bernd Heine’s book, where metaphors are based on bodily functions and body parts.

being (merely) poetic and pretty ornaments in literary language, human beings structure their world metaphorically. In brief, the main claim is that metaphors are an integral part of language, and that thought and language function metaphorically. It is also assumed that metaphors are found in coherent systems via which we conceptualize our experience, a basic part of which is our experience as physical beings, bodies, in space.⁵ Or, as Mark Johnson puts it: “most human concepts are defined and understood only within conceptual frameworks that depend on the nature of human experience in given cultures.”⁶

Cultural models, then, and cultural conceptualizations enable us to share understanding within a culture, founded in common frameworks and categories.⁷ In cognitive studies of how emotion vocabulary is interpreted and used, the superordinate goal is to locate those cognitive models existing in a culture and a language, based on linguistic data, and which represent a folk theory/folk epistemology for emotional and mental activities.⁸ Furthermore, it is a goal to establish the existence of a systematic cognitive/cultural conceptual organization by means of analysing feelings/emotions as expressed linguistically, that is through studying the vocabulary of feelings/emotions.⁹

In recent years a great deal of evidence has been amassed to suggest that the human body is indeed a very important source for language or linguistic expressions. Firstly, as has been shown by numerous authors, terms for body parts frequently become grammatical words (e.g. *back* as preposition in English).¹⁰ Secondly, the body is of course an important source of metaphors, a basis for dealing with cognitive concepts, among these spatial concepts, concepts having to do with personality traits, and so forth. Thus in English and other Germanic languages, as in many other languages, human psychological nature and human emotions are normally referred to by metaphor, including metaphors derived from names for various body parts, for instance in English heart and head metaphors, while other languages have more exotic sources, for instance livers, gall bladders, and so forth. In addition, there are a number of more abstract terms such as *mind* and *soul* which also, as we shall see, are conceptualized as located in body parts.¹¹

In many cultures, the heart plays an important part as a conceived source of emotions and feelings, and it is certainly correctly described as a key ethnopsychological term in these cultures.¹² It has been shown (notably by Susanne Niemeier)

⁵See e.g. Johnson; Lakoff; Gibbs, *Embodiment*.

⁶Johnson, xii. Many cognitive linguists would indeed claim that we think in terms of superordinate metaphor systems, called conceptual metaphor, such as HAPPY IS UP, LOVE IS A JOURNEY, TIME IS MOVEMENT, etc.

⁷See Sharifian, “Cultural Conceptualisations.”

⁸For the concept of folk model see Niemeier, “To Have One’s Heart.”

⁹See Kövecses; Kövecses, Palmer and Dirven.

¹⁰See e.g. Heine and Reh; Heine.

¹¹It should be noted that it may not be possible to specify absolute distinctions between what is concrete and what is metaphor. On the question of literal versus non-literal, cf. inter alia Gibbs, *Poetics* Mühlhäusler; Goddard, “Cross-linguistic research.”

¹²See Goddard, “Hati.”

that in English, a folk model exists that places the heart as the site of emotions.¹³ The present paper, as mentioned above, is also specifically concerned with the heart, and will discuss its role in the history of English and its function as a key term in English-speaking cultures. It will also be shown that the metaphorical meanings related to the heart not only are largely subsequent to and develop from concrete meanings,¹⁴ and that new meanings develop over time, often constituting complex networks of interrelated conceptualizations.¹⁵ We start, however, in Section 2 by looking at the role of the body in conceptualizations of mental states.

2. Dualism in Language: The Body in the Soul and the Soul in the Body

2.1 *Body and Soul*

The body and mind dichotomy, that is dualism, is often looked upon as a phenomenon of so-called Western culture. The idea of bodies and minds/souls being separate entities certainly precedes Greek thinking; however, the chronology of this will not be discussed here; suffice it to acknowledge that the idea of dualism has dominated Western culture for millennia and that this has linguistic consequences and effects. In Cartesian dualism this view is spelled out and refined, the main point being that human beings consist of a Body, the material, and a Soul, the immaterial. Thus there is a route from Plato (and beyond), culminating in Descartes, and our language clearly reflects this very basic idea.

The term *soul* in English today is normally used in a religious or spiritual framework or perspective; otherwise, in general, with respect to psychological and philosophical concepts, we prefer to use the word *mind*. In both cases, in everyday language we definitely conceptualize body and mind or soul as if they are two entities, often one within the other (“the inner human being”).

It should also be noted that the dualism relationship body/mind, or body/soul, seems to have taken different paths in English than in the other Germanic and Indo-European languages. Thus, as has been pointed out by Anna Wierzbicka,¹⁶ English uses the term *mind* very differently than its seeming counterparts are used in the other Germanic languages (as well as in French, Polish, etc.). Differences between English *mind* and the concepts used in many other European languages are discussed in detail in one of Wierzbicka’s books where she compares the soul in Russian (*duša*) (as well as French *âme*, and German *Seele*) to English *mind*.¹⁷ Indeed, as is clearly revealed in everyday English, *mind* over the centuries has evolved into rationality and intellect, replacing *soul*. Consequently, expressions such as *a sharp mind*, *a good mind*,

¹³See Niemeier, “To Have One’s Heart”; Niemeier, “Straight from the Heart.”

¹⁴This would be expected, though see Goddard, “Cross-linguistic Research.”

¹⁵For the purposes of this paper, I will use the term *metaphor* to cover both metonymy and metaphor. For a good discussion of the heart as metaphor and metonymy, see Niemeier “To Have One’s Heart.”

¹⁶See Wierzbicka, *Semantics*; Wierzbicka, *Emotions*; Wierzbicka, *English*; inter alia.

¹⁷Wierzbicka, *Semantics*.

she went abroad to broaden her mind cannot easily be transferred to either Norwegian or German *sjel/Seele* or *sinn/Sinn*, or to the corresponding French terms. The problem, according to Wierzbicka, arises where translators unthinkingly use *mind* where thinkers, notably Descartes and Freud, use *âme* or *Seele*. “Nonetheless, the current mind focuses on thinking and knowing, not feeling, wanting.”¹⁸

2.2 Heart versus Head

Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point

Within the dualistic philosophy and categorization prevalent in our thinking we find embedded yet another dualism. The work or the function of our immaterial selves (i.e. soul/*psyche/mind*) often suggests, in folk epistemology, a dichotomy between the rational and the emotional (*res cogitans* versus *res sentiens*). Obviously cultures do not have to operate with this distinction, but Anglo culture, possibly also European culture in general, does.

What is interesting from a cognitive point of view is the fact that even if the soul (mind or *psyche*) is conceived as abstract, invisible, and immaterial, in our culture we nevertheless locate them squarely in the body, specifically in two different body parts, the head (or brain) and the heart. In this context, the soul (i.e. feelings and rationality) in a sense is hijacked by the body, into those body parts which are highly relevant in our language.

In English, both *head* and *heart* are old words with an extensive history in the language of denoting concrete body parts. Over time, it became common to conceive of the heart as the organ, as it were, or the seat of feelings, while the head is seen as the organ or location of the intellect. Thus the head “contains” our reason and intellect and the heart on the other hand “contains” various feelings and emotion.¹⁹ Consequently these two are, as our language shows, in a certain opposition. Figure 1 shows the dichotomy schematically.

The juxtaposition of the different roles of head and heart is frequently expressed linguistically, both in earlier periods of English and in the modern language.

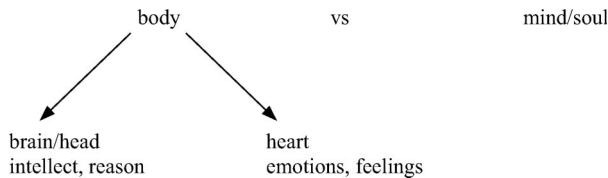


Figure 1 Body and Mind Dualism.

¹⁸Ibid., 45.

¹⁹Arguably, the head is more concretely the location of thinking, etc. than the heart is of emotion; however, for the time being we shall focus on the purely linguistic aspects of this dichotomy.

Examples (1)–(6) provide some evidence of the folk model which juxtaposes heart and head (or brain) in our language. Example (1) is from the Helsinki Corpus, and (2) from the OED, while (3)–(6) are Internet examples. Finally, (7) is a quote from a scholarly paper. This is clear evidence of how pervasive this dualistic conceptualization of our mental functions is.

- (1) we have *Heads* to get Money, and *Hearts* to spend it. (^Aim.^) As to *our Hearts*, I grant'ye, they are as willing Tits as any within Twenty Degrees; but I can have no great opinion of *our Heads* from the Service they have done us hitherto, unless it be that they have brought us from (^London^) hither to (^Litchfield^), made me a Lord, and you my Servant. (E3)
- (2) 1596 SHAKES. Merch. V.III.ii. 64 Tell me where is fancie bred, Or in the *heart*, or in the *head*. (OED)
- (3) Just after Cosway left Paris in October, Jefferson composed this remarkable letter to her *in which his head argued with his heart*. (Internet)
- (4) Balancing the *heart and head* is an old problem. ... For the problem is simply how can warm passion and a cool sense of proportion be forged together ... (Internet)
- (5) *Heart and head* are the constituent parts of character; (Internet)
- (6) was just wondering, if you were in a relationship that YOUR heart was 100% into and LOVED the person without a Doubt, BUT *your BRAIN* disagrees with u ... (Internet)
- (7) In the 1970s and early 1980s cultural anthropologists and like-minded philosophers elaborated the position that since we can't get inside other people's heads and hearts, we must instead work out other people's definitions of emotions.²⁰

The *head* to my knowledge has, however, no documented use as a metaphor of rationality in Old English; in the Helsinki Corpus it is used metaphorically, but exclusively to refer to heads in the sense of persons in power or of high rank (e.g. a chief, *heofodmann*). Indeed, even in the first Early Modern English period (E1) in the Helsinki Corpus, the head still has its chief use as referring to leaders, and very little else in the way of head metaphors. The OED lists the earliest usage of the head as the seat of intellect and rationality from the 1300s. Examples (8)–(12) are from the Helsinki Corpus, and examples (13)–(14) are from the OED.

- (8) & mæst ealle þa castelas & þa *heafodmen* þær on lande him wurdon underþeodde. (O4)
- (9) But Moyses & Aaron whiche were the *hedes* of that people. wherof than be they shadow? (E1)
- (10) all the wit *in my head* could not haue made him a sober answer. (E2)

²⁰Leavitt, 521.

- (11) And when you have the matter thoroughly *in your head*, words will follow, as waters out of a Fountaine, even almost naturally, to expresse your mind in any tongue, which you studie in any right order. (E2)
- (12) (^Jo.^) Give me leave and ile tell thee, and if thou wilt help me a little, it will be the better, for *two heads* are better than one. (E3)
- (13) c. 1374 CHAUCER *Troylus III. 845 (894)* Discrecioun out of *zoure heuid* is gon. (OED)
- (14) c. 1380 WYCLIF *Sel. Wks. III. 134* Monnis hond helpis *his heved*. (OED)

3. Matters of the Heart

3.1 *The Uses of Heart in English*

We now turn to the meaning and use of the term *heart* in English. It seems to be, as mentioned above, quite normal in the languages of the world to locate abstract feelings in internal organs invisible inside the body: compare inter alia the liver in Malay, liver, heart and spleen in Chinese, and the abdomen/heart in Persian.²¹ In English it is a fairly common (mainly unconscious) idea that the heart, though invisible, in one way or another is the seat of our feelings, the source of our emotional responses to other people, or indeed the seat of our essential self (perhaps taking over some of the functions of the soul). Thus the heart is a key emotional term in English. At the same time we have an ordinary view of the physical heart which is invisible, but nevertheless can be heard or felt (which, interestingly, is not the case with the liver which also seems to be a frequent seat of emotions across languages; most of us have no idea where the liver might be).

In discussing the concrete and the abstract, we should note that the completely physical function, heartbeat, may be metaphorical, as in *my heart beats for you*, *the heartbeat of love*, and so forth. Consider also a sentence such as the following, where the concrete and abstract are claimed to interact in the heart: “Love is felt in **the area of the heart**. The physical heart responds to love and this can be measured in the ECG (electrocardiogram) and in HRV (heart rate variability) rhythms.”²²

What does it actually mean to claim that love literally is felt in the heart, or in other words is a physical reaction? To an English-speaking person this represents a highly ordinary insight into our own folk epistemology. From our own experience we know that there are changes in physiological behaviour of hearts (and other organs) which can also be psychological. We all know that our hearts beat hard when we are afraid or in love. In this way metaphor and literalness indeed walk hand in hand, or may do so, and thus it is very easy to see the metonymy in physiological states. Cliff Goddard argues that in many Australian languages body terms for emotions are not really

²¹See Yu; Goddard, “Hati”; Sharifian, “Conceptualizations of *del* Heart-Stomach.”

²²Callander.

metaphors in that there is no other way of expressing these emotions, for example there is no way to say “I feel bad” other than “my *tjuni* (stomach) is bad”.²³

We now turn to the various meanings of heart in the English language. Both in Old English and later stages of English *heart* is of course used concretely about the muscle that pumps blood through our bodies, as well as in various other ways. The first use attested in OED is this concrete use, and indeed it is assumed that the use of metaphorical uses will expand or at least change over time.

Niemeier proposes three main metaphorical meanings of English heart: Heart as a container, Heart as an object of value, and Heart as a metonymy for the person.²⁴ As will become apparent, the present paper will look at the heart from a different angle, focusing instead chiefly on the diachrony of heart metaphors, and the function ascribed to the heart as a seat of emotion in the folk model throughout the history of English. I will also consider the idea that the heart is viewed as an object or a container; indeed, these functions overlap to a considerable extent. Thus, unless otherwise noted, I will be concerned only with the metaphors denoting human emotions and values (for instance, excluding metaphors such as heart being used as the core, centre in a more general sense, e.g. as in *the heart of the matter*).

The point of departure will be modern English. In the modern language, it is possible to delineate the following basic uses as shown in Table 1 (modern usages exemplified in parentheses).

Table 1 The Meanings of Heart

I. THE HEART AS A SEAT OF EMOTIONS
A. LOVE, PASSION; WARM FEELINGS, INTEREST (lose one’s heart to someone, win someone’s heart, a broken heart, hearts that burn for something)
B. SADNESS, JOY (heavy or light heart, it cuts me to the heart)
C. PRIDE, COURAGE, COWARDICE (EXPECTATION, EXCITEMENT) (a proud heart, a swelling heart, hammering heart, his heart stood still, her heart beat excitedly, her heart almost stopped, to lose heart, chicken-hearted, heart of oak)
II. THE HEART AS THE SEAT OF VALUES OF MORALITY AND SPIRITUALITY, ONE’S REAL SELF
A. MORALITY, RELIGION (a pure or unclean heart, devout hearts)
B. GENEROSITY, KINDNESS (a warm heart, a heart of gold, a heart of stone, have a heart!)
C. ONE’S REAL SELF, TRUE NATURE (a man after my own heart, this comes from the heart, all that which my heart desires, a heart-to-heart, at heart)
III. THE HEART AS AN OBJECT
A. CONTAINER (an empty heart, a heart laden with sorrows, a heart flowing over)
B. MOBILE PHYSICAL OBJECT/CAN BE MANIPULATED (the heart is squeezed, is heavy, my heart sank, throw one’s heart away)

²³Goddard, “Cross-Linguistic Research.” While some languages, notably Mbula (Bugenhagen, 75), must use terms that localize emotions in body parts, English also has, of course, a great many terms, often adjectives, describing emotions or intellectual states without referring directly to body parts: *clever, rational, sad, happy*, etc.

²⁴Niemeier, “To Have One’s Heart.” In her paper “Straight from the Heart,” Susanne Niemeier adds a fourth meaning, Heart as a living organism.

As mentioned above, many, perhaps most, of the aspects mentioned in Table 1 I–II overlap with those in III; for instance, when hearts are said to be hot or cold, or heavy or broken, this is of course also a question of the conceptualization HEART AS AN OBJECT, although viewed from a different perspective.

3.2 Old English

In Old English, as already mentioned, *heort* has (perhaps first and foremost) a concrete meaning. Nevertheless, both the OED and the Helsinki Corpus have examples showing that the heart is considered to be some sort of soul, that is the source or the site of moral or spiritual values. Some of the explicitly emotional roles played by the heart have apparently not yet been established; most uses seem to involve spiritual values rather than actual emotions; compare, for instance, the numerous and well-known Old English compounds where *heort* is the compounding base where emotions are restricted to sadness (or its opposite), and many terms denote morality (generosity or its opposite), as in (15).

- (15) *bliðheort* (cf. also *bliðemod*), *ceald-*, *earm-*, *gram-*, *grim-*, *hat-*, *heah-*, *heard-*, *mild-*, *riht-*, *rum-*, *sam-*, *stearc-*, *wulf-heort*

Nevertheless, it is clear that many metaphorical uses of the heart are well established in Old English. The heart is clearly a site of emotion in the sense that it may be happy or sad, as in today's language:

- (16) Beowulf (Z.) 2463 *Heortan sor3e*. (OED)
(17) c. 1050 Byrhtferth's Handboc in Anglia VIII. 317 *Him mæ3 beon þe glædre his heorte*. (OED)

In Old English, however, the heart is obviously conceptualized as a general seat of the mental or intellectual faculties, that is not just emotions and desires, but also of understanding, intellect, and mind. In this respect, then, the use of heart has changed since the Old English period. Thus Goddard notes that it would "hardly be possible, in English, to say that one's *heart* was filled with thoughts, or memories (one's *mind*, perhaps, but not one's heart)."²⁵ Goddard points out that Malay *hati* has this use; compare example (18) below, where the heart is assumed to understand (some translations speak of the heart *getting knowledge*).²⁶

- (18) c. 950 Lindisf. Gosp. John xii. 40 *Ofblindade e3o hiora & onstiðade hiora hearta þæte ne 3eseað mið e3um & ongeattað mið hearta*. (OED)

²⁵Goddard, "Hati," 168.

²⁶Cf. also Section 3.3 below.

Heart metaphors are frequently used in the context of religion and morality. Thus it is with one's heart one worships or loves God (often said to be with one's inner heart), and it is important that one's entire heart is involved in the worship; compare (17)–(19).

- (19) he wurpode God *mid ealre his heortan* (OE4)
 (20) ælc þære manna, þe hine *mid inweardre heortan lufiað* (OE4)
 (21) c. 825 Vesp. Psalter ix 1 Ic ondetto ðe dryhten *in alre heortan minre*. (OED)

The worship and loving located in one's heart is clearly related to the later romantic heart, which may be given away, or removed from the beloved, as well as burn. It should be noted that in *The Old English Apollonius of Tyre*, a romance translated into Old English, the heart does not occur in a love context (though love is a topic); the heart is a metaphor of generosity.

The religious aspect is also a matter of how the heart is presented to God, that is whether it is pure or not. Thus in (22), the heart is described as *clean*, and is interestingly collocated with clean hands; these would seem to be concrete clean hands, but could conceivably be metaphorical hands. We should also note the HEART AS A CONTAINER usage in (23).

- (22) Ac se sacerd sceal don clænlice and carfullice Godes þenunga mid clænum handum and *mid clænre heortan*. (OE4)
 (23) gif heo ne byþ þy hraþor onweg adrifren fram *þære heortan æmtignesse*. (OE4)

3.3 Middle and Early Modern English

For it is a thing that is a meane betweene
 the body and the soule. Wherefore it is likened
 of the Philosophers, to be more liker heauenly thinges
 then earthly thinges.

(E1; from Thomas Vicary: *The anatomie of the bodie of man* publ. orig. 1547)

In the Helsinki Corpus, the use of the heart as a metaphor appears to expand over the centuries in the sense that more contexts are involved. The Helsinki Corpus contains very many concrete uses of hearts, that is descriptions of body parts in physiological texts of various sorts; nevertheless, we find attested most of the metaphorical uses given in Table 1, and which we find familiar today.

It is probably fairly accurate to say that the primary emotions and moral values ascribed to the heart today are love and generosity or kindness. In the following we will look at these categories as well as others, including the prevalent container metaphor. (Needless to say there are frequently overlapping categories.)

We start, however, by noting that the role of the heart as a seat of understanding and thinking. Goddard is correct, of course, when he argues that the role of the heart in this respect is restricted compared to Malayan *hati*; in our modern language it is chiefly the mind that does the thinking. Nevertheless, although it is arguably archaic in today's language, it still exists in Early Modern English, and as (24)–(25) show, it is possible to explicitly link thinking or understanding with the heart.

- (24) When we haue *conceiued a thing in our hearts* and throughlie *vnderstand it*, as wee thinke within our selues, yet we can vtter it in such sort that our brethre ~ may receaue instruction or comfort at our mouths, how great, how long, how earnest meditation are (E2)
- (25) So that *every heart must this thinke*, and every tongue must thus speake (E2)

3.3.1 The emotional heart. The heart denoting love, passion, warm feelings, and interest is a familiar concept in our present-day thinking. Indeed, the heart as a symbol or metaphor of love is a familiar image even to small children. The metaphor has a long history in English, although the idea of the heart as the seat of romantic love (as opposed to religious love), or as an image of romantic love (cf. Valentine hearts) most likely derives from a later date.²⁷ Thus as (26)–(30) suggest, by the fifteenth–sixteenth century, the heart is clearly the organ, as it were, of romantic and other types of love, and romantic love also includes the idea that one might aim one's heart at someone, and that hearts could be on fire.

- (26) On wham þin herte is on iset (M2)
- (27) wolde *your herte* þen love as ye have doon before þys seson? (M4)
- (28) With which newes Sir (^Georges^) *heart was on fire*, till such time as he might speake with her: (E2)
- (29) Christ is the President of marriage, and the holy Ghost is the Fountain of purities and chast loves, and he *joyns the hearts*; (E3)
- (30) At this character, *his old heart, like an extinguish'd brand, most apt to take fire*, felt new sparks of love, and began to kindle; (E3)

Since the beloved is also viewed as a heart (metonymically), one might address her or him with terms such as *dear heart* and *sweet heart*, as indeed one might address any loved person, such as a child: compare (31)–(34). The OED lists the first occurrences of *sweet heart* used in this way from the late 13th century—compare (34); it crops up as a coalesced noun meaning lover or beloved a couple of centuries later, while the verb *to sweetheart* is attested from the late 1700s—compare (35).

²⁷A caveat is needed here: the lack of examples could of course have something to do with what has been documented in writing.

- (31) *Sweet Harte* I haue sent by this bearer fourteen woodcockes and a brace of feascants which came to me by chance very fortunately (E2)
- (32) farwell sweet harte to thy owne selfe:/ thy most louinge Mother (E2)
- (33) Dear heart, I continue very well, at present, thanks bee to God! (E3)
- (34) c. 1290 *St. Kenelm* 140 in *S. Eng. Leg.* 349 Alas..at ich scholde.. a-bide at mi child, *mi swete heorte*, swych cas schal bi-tide. (OED)
- (35) 1798 T. MORTON *Speed the Plough* V. i. (1800) 70 Remember how I used to let thee zit up all night a *sweethearting*. (OED)

In addition to love and passion, the heart, however, has many other emotional meanings, for instance referring to happiness or sadness. It is in this context we find the metaphor of weight, that is happiness is related to the heart being light and unhappiness denoted by heaviness. Examples of sadness and joy are shown in (36)–(39).

- (36) make me evene *veray glade and joyus in my hart* (M2)
- (37) ffor in good faith I have not ben *mery at myn hert* þis sevyennight day ffor dyverse maters the whiche hath ben brokyn to me. (M4)
- (38) Giue strong drinke vnto them that are condemned to die, and Wine to them that haue a *sorrowfull hart*, (E1)
- (39) I knowe them, and I speake it wyth *an heauy herte*, (E1)

To what extent a heavy heart or a broken heart is physiologically changed is debatable; what is not debatable, however, is the accompanying heartbeat when human beings and animals are afraid or very excited. Here physiology and metaphor are truly intertwined, and the latter clearly based on physiological facts. The courage or fear which is located in the heart in the English language is clearly related to the physiological symptoms associated with fear: the hammering heartbeat. While there are examples in the corpus of fear and cowardice being located in the heart (40)–(44), I have not found any references to hearts beating strongly from fear in the older language in the Helsinki Corpus; yet certainly such usage may have existed. However, in (40) the heart's dread is the cause of the body shaking.

- (40) for swa mykel was thaire *dreide in hert* that thai quoke in body. (M4)
- (41) Ne habbeþ now none *herte feinte* (M2)
- (42) Surely Megge a *fainter hearte* than thy fraile father hath, canst you not haue. (E1)
- (43) they *recovered heart*, and lay sore upon the (^Danes^) till night parted them as before (E3)
- (44) God give us *couragious hearts*, and then I beleive they may be ventured. (E3)

3.3.2 *The moral heart.* Very early in the history of English, the heart is seen as a source of religious devotion: compare (19)–(20) above and (45) below. In this usage,

cleanliness and purity are often important features. Purity, or lack thereof, is a concept that plays a role in all religions (cf. Judaism and Islam with strict dietary rules). When the person's soul or true being is seen to be, to some degree, his/her heart, obviously the heart, too, can be clean or corrupted, may be full of garbage, and can be purged, and so forth. In (47) the heart is clearly juxtaposed with the body; both are in need of purging with the teaching of heaven.

- (45) I pray 3w hertyly here masse and oþer servys þat 3e arn bwn to here wyth a *devwt hert*, (M4)
- (46) thare restis *clen of hert*. thare vnclen ere pyned. (M4)
- (47) This thai do that *purgis thaire hertis*. & thaire bodis with the lare of heuen. (M4)
- (48) He or she that looks too curiously upon the beauty of the body, looks too low, and *hath flesh and corruption in his Heart*, and is judg'd sensual and earthly in his Affections and Desires. (E3)

The heart is also the seat of kindness and mercy, as sentences (49)–(52) show. The examples refer to the heart as the source of kindness; this well-known metaphor is plentifully attested, and it also exists in Old English (*mild-heort*, *rum-heort*).

- (49) Hy beþ of *herte meke and milde* (M2)
- (50) was muche reprovred for idolatrie, supersticion, pryde, auarice, crueltie, tyranny, and for *hardenes of herte* (E1)
- (51) your honest behauioir among vs your neyghbours, *your tender and pytifull hart* to the poore of the parysh, doth moue vs to lament your case (E1)
- (52) or if *thy stony heart* will not yeeld it so, saue thy head by denying thy word, and lend it mee: (E2)

As suggested above, the heart often is seen as the person's soul, the essence of the human being, and thus there are cases where the heart is very nearly equated with the person's self, one's true nature, as shown in (53)–(55).²⁸

- (53) And Syr, but if þis mater sum dele come of *her own hert*, she shal not otherwise be labored to for certen. (M4)
- (54) I speake not thys of anye hatryd that I bare unto yow, as God knoweth my harte ... (E1)
- (55) I defie the deuill, worship him? fie vpon him, I hate him *with all my hart*. (E2)

²⁸This is the area where metaphor definitely meets metonymy. For an interesting discussion of the question of metonymy and metaphor in connection with heart metaphors, cf. Niemeier, "To Have One's Heart"; Niemeier, "Straight from the Heart."

3.3.3 *The heart as a physical entity.* Finally, we should consider the heart metaphorically as a physical entity, as shown above in Table 1. As was noted, it is difficult or even impossible to speak about emotions and abstract relations such as reason, intelligence, and so forth without using metaphors. It is a pervasive idea in many cultures not simply that the heart is the “executor” of mental or emotional functions, but indeed that it is some type of a container or, it may be an object that can be manipulated. Compare the conceptual metaphors: THE HEART IS AN OBJECT THAT CAN BE MANIPULATED and THE HEART IS A CONTAINER.

The container metaphor appears to be frequent and significant throughout the history of the English language. The emptiness of the heart described in (23), above, suggests that the container notion was present in Old English. (Note, however, that also brains and heads are perceived as containers: *He filled his head with all sorts of nonsense.*)

As a container, then, the heart may be filled or empty, as the examples in (56)–(62) show. In all these examples, the heart is conceived of as a chamber which may contain feelings and thoughts. As (61) shows, the heart may contain garbage and a variety of impurity, and thus be unfit as an abode for Christ; this of course correlates with the morality heart metaphors (cf. Section 3.3.2). One’s heart may even, as (62) shows, be invaded with thoughts from the outside.

- (56) *In is hertte* him was ful wo. (M2)
- (57) one, of which he was neuer desyrous, that he could not *fynde in his hearte* in this poynte to encline to theyr desyre. (E1)
- (58) So to supper and to bed—with *my heart full of trouble*. (E3)
- (59) I knowe that God alone is *the searcher of the heart*, touching the thinges which *lie hid in secrete*: (E2)
- (60) Whe~ they spake of our peace, *every corner of their hearts*, was filled with joy. (E2)
- (61) And shal we suffer *the chamber of our hearts* and consciences to lie full of vomiting, full of filth, ful of garbidge, knowing that Christ hath said, I, and my Father will come, and dwell with you? (E2)
- (62) On the other side, the old king, who had many wives, and many concubines, wanted not court-flatterers *to insinuate into his heart* a thousand tender thoughts for this young beauty; (E3)

The HEART AS CONTAINER metaphor is pervasive in today’s language as well, as Niemeier shows.²⁹

As an object, the heart may be broken, severed, and it may crack, as in (63)–(65). be light or heavy (66), soft or hard (67). The material from which it is made, obviously changes the metaphorical impact; it may be made of gold or stone, as in (67)–(68), or of oak, as in (69). As an object, the heart may be made to dance or otherwise be moved, and even moved away from someone: compare (70)–(72).

²⁹Niemeier, “To Have One’s Heart”; Niemeier, “Straight from the Heart.”

- (63) *my heart is ready to cracke* with impatience: (E2)
- (64) if you be her Husband, you have almost *broke her heart* in not comming to bed to her last night (E3)
- (65) when the anguish of his soule enforced him to roare *as if his hart had rent in sunder* (E2)
- (66) I knowe them, and I speake it wyth *an heauy herte*, (E1)
- (67) Yf thys wyl not move *your harde and stonye harte* to repentaunce, than thynke of that trayetor Judas (E1)
- (68) Nowe dothe sweete Custance, *my heart of gold*, tell me how; (E1)
- (69) 1691 WOOD Ath. Oxon. II. 221 He was..*a heart of oke*, and a pillar of the Land. (OED)
- (70) how many delicious accents *make a mans heart dance* in the pretty conversation of those dear pledges; (E3)
- (71) And *jolyf herte* so gynneþ *sprynge* (M2)
- (72) that she might, by the example of her young lover, *withdraw her heart*, and rest better contented in his arms. (E3)

All the metaphors of the heart illustrated above are metaphors of feelings or moral values as well as examples of HEART IS A CONTAINER or THE HEART IS AN OBJECT. Thus broken hearts are associated with love or strong feelings such as impatience; the heavy heart refers to sadness, the stony heart denotes unkindness or lack of generosity, love may be found in the heart, and so forth. In other words, in the metaphorical use of heart there is almost always a dual perspective, the spatial and the emotional.

4. Conclusion

In the preceding it has been shown that in what we might somewhat loosely call Western culture, we share certain common conceptualizations, and that these are reflected in our languages. Our focus here has been on the English language, and the concepts therein reflected. Firstly, it has been shown that we conceptualize human beings as if they are two parts, one physical and one mental/spiritual. This may indeed be a very widespread (perhaps almost universal) conceptualization of what it is to be a human being; however, precisely what the nature of especially the mental part is will always vary, over time and from culture to culture. Secondly, it has been shown that emotions and feelings are frequently analysed as if they are body parts, or belong in or are located in body parts. This is clearly a universal tendency simply because it is experientially based; strong emotions such as pain, joy, and so forth are deeply felt inside human beings, although precisely which organ these will be conceptualized as being located in will again differ from language to language, linking these to different cultural models. Thus we have seen that there are culturally based, coherent systems of emotion conceptualizations, as well as metaphor systems, the latter surfacing in linguistic systems.

The main focus of the present paper has been the role of the heart in the English language, and we have seen that the heart plays a role as a physical element as well as a cultural concept. As mentioned above, cultures and languages vary with respect to which body parts function as “sites” of emotions. It is not certain to what extent people in earlier ages are aware of the important physical role of the heart, although certainly in every age people would have noted the changes in some internal body part accompanying emotional states, and indeed observed that the familiar beating stops at the time of someone’s death (not necessarily ascribing this to the heart, but to other internal organs). However, in many cultures the beating, and life itself, is assumed to be located in the heart (thus facilitating the metonymic understanding of the heart being the person). Certainly by the mid sixteenth century, in English society, anatomy includes an understanding of the heart as a primary organ, indeed as the principle of life, as the following shows:

Likewise of the partes that be inwardly; and fyrst
of the Hart, because he is the principal of al other
members, and the beginning of life: he is set in the
middest of the brest seuerally by him selfe, as Lord
and King of al members.
(E1; from Vicary’s *The anatomie of the bodie of man*)

Throughout the history of English, as we have seen, the heart has played an important role as a cultural concept. The importance of the heart is shown first and foremost in the pervasiveness of its occurrence in language as metaphors of emotions and values. The linguistic evidence from the history of English shows that the metaphor system involving the heart has remained relatively stable over the centuries, although naturally there have been a few changes. The main change is perhaps that the heart has lost its sense of being a mind or soul in a wider sense, that is including intellectual capacity, and now merely refers to emotions of various sorts as well as moral values, especially love and kindness. In fact, with respect to values we find that the heart as a metaphor of generosity and kindness has prevailed throughout the centuries with much the same vocabulary as today, while the association of the heart and sexual love and devotion seems to have developed since Old English times, expanding the religious use and moving it into the human arena.

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