

# Audiovisual Metaphors of Depression in Moving Images

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# 1. Audiovisual Metaphors. Introducing Remarks

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- **conceptual metaphors** and **conceptual mappings** are realized in different semiotic systems, e.g.:
  - in **language**  
(cf. Lakoff 1987, Johnson 1987, Kövecses 2002, and others)
  - in **visual** and **audiovisual media**  
(cf. Forceville 1996, 2005, Fahlenbrach 2010, Kappelhoff/Müller 2011, Coëgnarts/Kravanja 2012)

# Audiovisual Metaphors

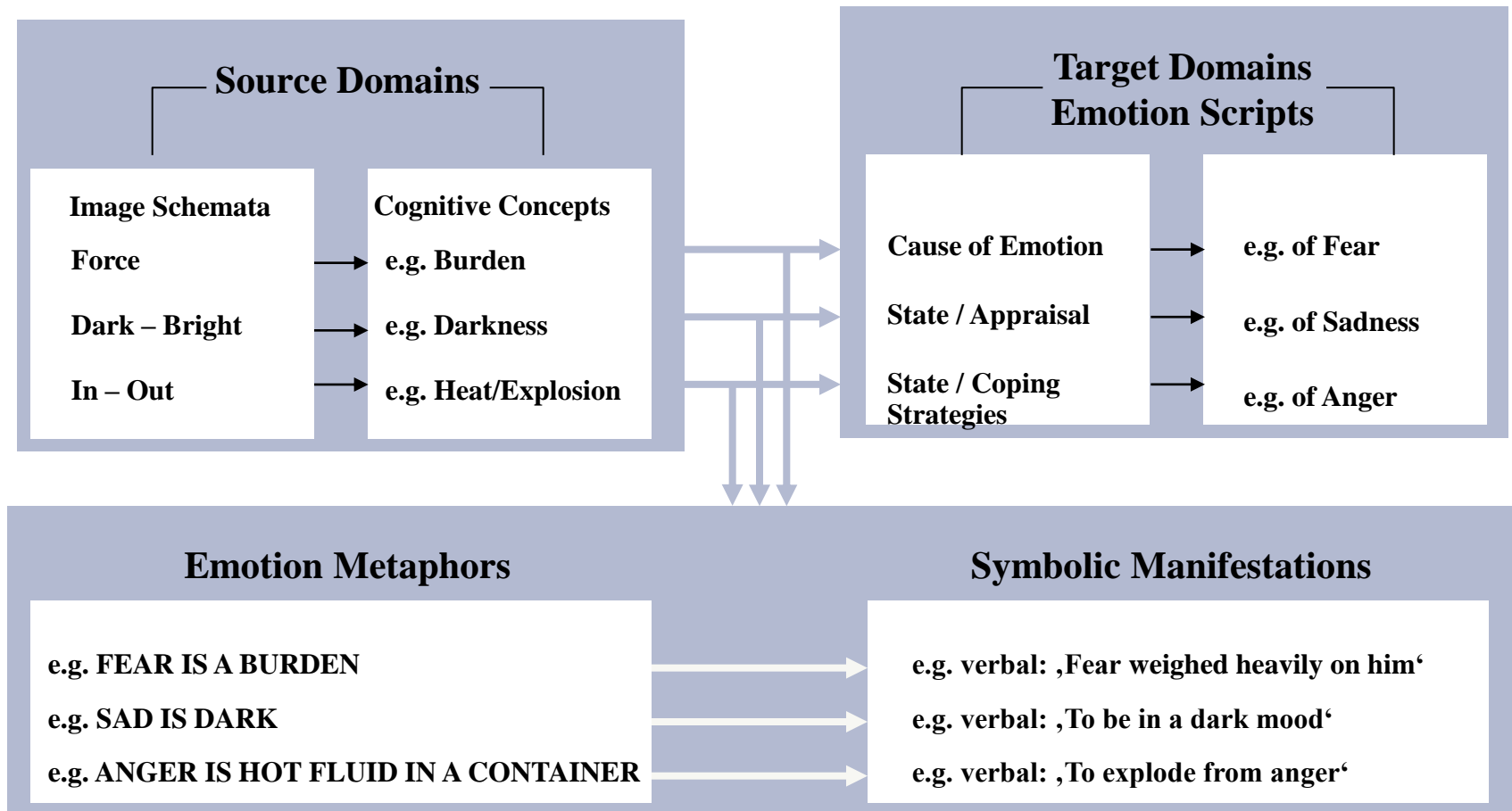
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- *Audiovisual metaphors* are elements of cinematic style that transfer cultural meanings in conceptually based metaphoric gestalts.
- Moving images create **audiovisual metaphors**
  - a) as **original mappings** between **image schemata in vision** and **sound** as **source domains** and **abstract concepts in narration** as **target domains**
  - b) and by referring in filmmaking to **conceptual metaphors** that are already anchored in our mind as **cognitive concepts**

(Fahlenbrach 2010: *Audiovisual Metaphors. On the Embodied and Affective Aesthetics in Film and Television* (translated title, orig.in German), 2014: "Metaphoric Narratives. Paradigm Scenarios and Metaphors of Shame in Entertainment Films.")

# Emotion Metaphors

## Emotions as *Target Domain*



# Emotion Metaphors in Audiovisual Media

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- **Audiovisual emotion metaphors:**
  - help viewers to label feelings of characters
  - Intensify emotions in the screen
  - Offer cues evaluate cues by interpreting the ‚invisible‘ aspects of the emotional state

## 2. Metaphors of Depression – Audiovisual Metaphors of Depression



**Depression** is a ubiquitous experience, including:

- physical pain
- intensive negative feelings and moods
- cognitively: pessimistic attitude towards self & world

(cf. Matthew Ratcliff 2013, „Depression and the Phenomenology of Free Will“.)

# Conceptual Metaphors of Depression

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“Depression is a condition that is **almost unimaginable** to anyone who has not known it. A sequence of metaphors (...) is the **only way** to talk about the experience”.

Andrew Solomon (2001). *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression*.  
New York, p. 29.

# Trans-Cultural Metaphors of Depression

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- DEPRESSION IS LACK OF VITALITY
- DEPRESSION IS DARK
- DEPRESSION IS HEAVY
- DEPRESSION IS DOWN
- DEPRESSION IS LACK OF CONTROL

(cf. Sonya Pritzker 2003: “Role of Metaphor in Culture, Consciousness, and Medicine: A preliminary inquiry into the metaphors of depression in Chinese and Western medical and common languages”, 2007: “Thinking hearts, feeling brains: Metaphor, culture, and the self in Chinese narratives of depression”)



# Metaphors of Depression in Informative Animation Videos

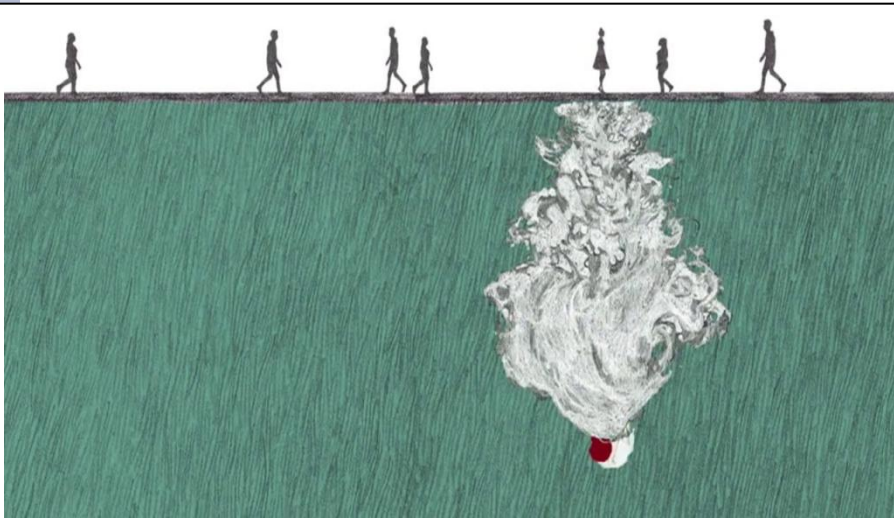


Illustration by Sylvie Reuter (2012)

# Informative Animation Videos on Depression. Example (1)



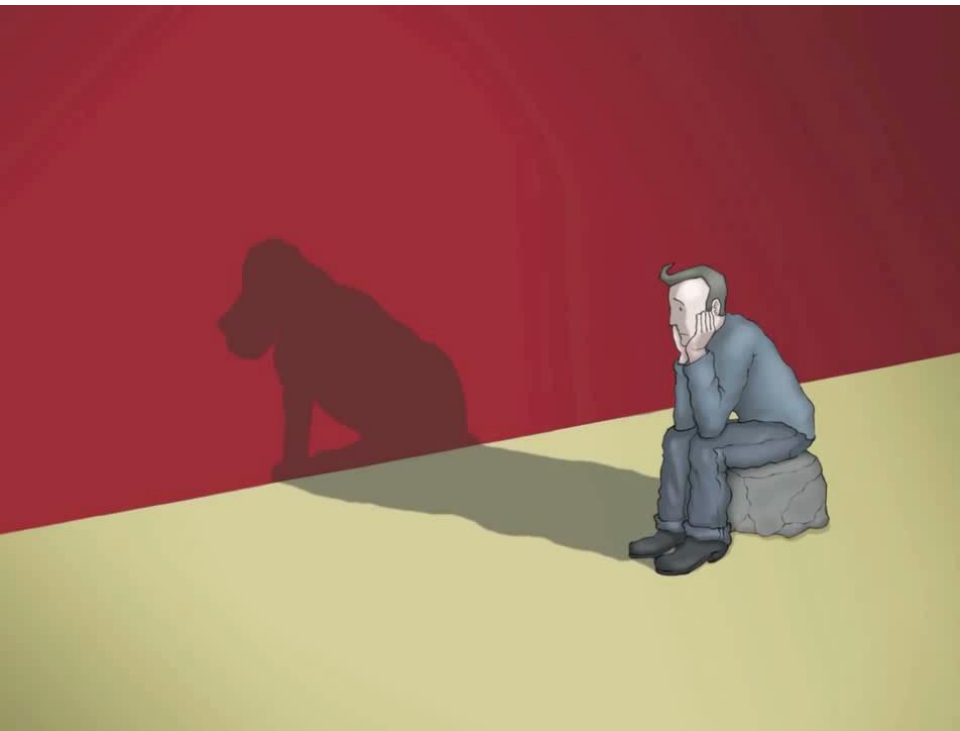
# Informative Animation Videos on Depression. Example (2)



“Depression”, by Eileen Hai Hing Kwan.

# Informative Animation Videos on Depression. Example (3)

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State of Depression



Coping with Depression

“I had a Black Dog”, by Matthew Johnstone for *World Health Organisation*, [www.matthewjohnstone.com.au](http://www.matthewjohnstone.com.au)

# Audiovisual Metaphors of Depression in Informative Animation Videos (1)

<b>Metaphors of Depression identified in Psychology and CMT</b>	<b>Audiovisual Metaphors of Depression performed in Animation Videos</b>
<b>DEPRESSION IS DARK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DEPRESSION IS A DARK SPACE</b></li> <li>• <b>DEPRESSION IS A DARK TOWN</b></li> <li>• <b>DEPRESSION IS A DARK ANIMAL</b></li> <li>• <b>DEPRESSION IS A DARK SHADOW</b></li> </ul>
<b>DEPRESSION IS HEAVY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DEPRESSION IS A HEAVY FORCE</b></li> <li>• <b>DEPRESSION IS A HEAVY ANIMAL</b></li> </ul>
<b>DEPRESSION IS DOWN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DEPRESSION IS FALLING DOWN</b></li> <li>• <b>DEPRESSION IS SHRINKING</b></li> </ul>
<b>DEPRESSION IS LACK OF CONTROL</b>	<b>DEPRESSION IS LACK OF MOVEMENT</b>
<b>DEPRESSION IS LACK OF VITALITY</b>	<b>DEPRESSION IS SLOW MOVEMENT</b>

# Audiovisual Metaphors of Depression in Informative Animation Videos (2)

## Further audiovisual metaphors of depression:

<b>DEPRESSION</b>	<b>IS A PATH</b>
	<b>IS HUGE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IS A HUGE ANIMAL</li><li>• IS A HUGE SPACE</li><li>• A DEPRESSED PERSON IS SMALL</li></ul>
	<b>IS A NATURAL FORCE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RAIN</li><li>• STORM</li><li>• AN OBSTACLE</li></ul>
	<b>IS SILENCE</b>
	<b>A DEPRESSED PERSON IS A DIVIDED SELF</b>

# Audiovisual Metaphors of Coping with Depression in Informative Animation Videos:

<b>COPING DEPRESSION</b>	<b>IS COPING WITH ANIMAL IS GETTING ANIMAL EXHAUSTED IS LEASHING ANIMAL</b>
	<b>IS SHOWING ANIMAL IS DOCUMENTING ANIMAL</b>
	<b>IS HUGGING ANIMAL IS LOVING ANIMAL</b>
	<b>IS RISING BODY SIZE</b>
	<b>IS ACQUIRING BODY BALANCE</b>
	<b>IS PROTECTING BODY</b>

# **Audiovisual Metaphors of Depression in Movies**

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# Opener of *Melancholia*

(Lars von Trier, DK/S/F/D 2011)

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- DEPRESSION IS LACK OF VITALITY
- DEPRESSION IS LACK OF MOVEMENT
- DEPRESSION IS SILENCE
- DEPRESSION IS A FALLING ANIMAL

# *Melancholia*



- DEPRESSION IS PARALYZED MOVEMENT
- DEPRESSION IS HEAVY
- DEPRESSION IS A PATH

# *Melancholia*



- DEPRESSION IS A DARK SPACE
- DEPRESSION IS A FALLING ANIMAL

# *Melancholia*



- DEPRESSION IS LACK OF CONTROL
- DEPRESSION IS RESTRAINED MOVEMENT
- DEPRESSION IS A DARK SPACE
- DEPRESSION IS A PATH

# *Melancholia*



- DEPRESSION IS LACK OF CONTROL
- DEPRESSION IS BEING TRANSPORTED
- DEPRESSION IS SLOW MOVEMENT

# Audiovisual Metaphors of Depression in Movies: *Melancholia*

## DEPRESSION

IS LACK OF VITALITY

IS SLOW MOVEMENT

IS LACK OF CONTROL - IS LACK OF CONTROL OVER MOVEMENT:

IS LACK OF MOVEMENT

IS PARALYZED MOVEMENT

IS RESTRAINED MOVEMENT

IS BEING TRANSPORTED

IS A FALLING ANIMAL

IS A DARK SPACE

IS HEAVY

IS SILENCE

# Audiovisual Metaphors of Depression in Movies: *Melancholia*

## DEPRESSION

IS LACK OF VITALITY

IS SLOW MOVEMENT

IS LACK OF CONTROL - IS LACK OF CONTROL OVER MOVEMENT:

IS LACK OF MOVEMENT

IS PARALYZED MOVEMENT

IS RESTRAINED MOVEMENT

IS BEING TRANSPORTED (Movement)

IS A FALLING ANIMAL (Movement)

IS A DARK SPACE

IS HEAVY

IS SILENCE

# Conclusion

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## **(1) audiovisual metaphors of depression observed in the study**

- a. refer to established conceptual metaphors of depression
- b. create specific metaphors by the use of vision and sound

## **(2) multiple mappings in audiovisual media:**

- Shots and scenes can include several conceptual mappings
- They audio-visually manifest **different image schemata** that are projected to the same **‘target’** in the narrative / topic.



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