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FROM *UNBEHELOD* TO *NAKED AS A JAYBIRD* – EXPRESSING *NAKEDNESS* IN ENGLISH

In this paper we shall discuss the semantics of the lexical items which have been employed with reference to nakedness. The theoretical framework adopted in this article is that of cognitive linguistics, whose emergence in the second half of the 20th century gave a new impetus to semantic research. In particular, we shall discuss the words which denoted nakedness in the past, but which fell into oblivion (e.g. *unbehelod*, *nscrýdd*), we shall also focus on the similes (e.g. *as naked as a jaybird*, *naked as a robin*, *naked as a worm*, *naked as a needle*) as well as the phrases and idioms (e.g. *mother naked*, *belly naked*, *in the buff*, *in stag*, *in the altogether*, *in the nude*, *in one's birthday suit*, *in a state of nature*, *in the raw*) which pertain to the conceptual category *NAKEDNESS*. Furthermore, we attempt to answer the following research questions: (1) What processes are the most productive in terms of creating new synonyms of *nakedness*? (2) How many metaphorical schemas can be formulated on the basis of the analysis? (3) How many and which conceptual domains play a crucial role in the rise of the new lexical items whose senses are connected with the conceptual category *NAKEDNESS*?

Keywords: *nakedness*, *taboo*, *euphemism*, *cognitive approach*, *metaphor*

1. Introduction

Both *nakedness* and *nudity* induce a host of extreme reactions as they are exciting for some and upsetting for others. In spite of the fact that nakedness accompanies us from the very beginning of our existence, over time it has acquired a number of various, frequently contradictory, features. The objective ascribed to the paper is to focus on selected elements of the conceptual category *NAKEDNESS* and to account for the role of various mechanisms, such as zoosemy or foodsemy, in the changes of their meaning. We also aim to investigate which of these mechanisms are the most productive in terms of creating new synonyms

of *nakedness*. In what follows, we shall pay meticulous attention to the words, phrases, similes and idioms which in the history of English have been employed as synonyms for *naked/nakedness*. We also decided to ignore the borrowings, although a few of them are going to be mentioned in the division of all the discussed words. All examples come from various lexicographic works and online dictionaries of synonyms.¹ By and large, we pay meticulous attention to the lexical items which are included in the macrostructure of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter the *OED*).

Moreover, we will attempt to divide the quantum of these expressions into several subgroups in search of their common features. The theoretical framework adopted in this paper is based on selected elements of cognitive linguistics, such as conceptual categories and cognitive domains. But, above all, we shall focus on the role of metaphors in the rise of the synonyms of *nakedness*.

2. Taboo language

The term *taboo* is of Tongan descent, and it was Captain Cook who introduced the word into English in 1777. When recounting his third and – at the same time – last voyage to the Pacific Ocean, the explorer employed the word in question to allude to prohibited things. He expressed his sheer amazement at the fact that the natives avoided doing a number of things because they regarded them as taboo (see the *OED*). In fact, taboo describes either sacred or execrable things, such as the names of the gods and demons on the one hand and subjects connoted with sexuality (for example, nakedness) on the other. Historically speaking, we may observe a kind of shift from religious to secular topics, hence currently the term is employed rather unrestrictedly with reference to any social activities that are to be avoided. Different types of taboo may be found in the vast majority – if not all – cultures and societies (see Hughes 2006: 462).

From the linguistic viewpoint, taboo is entrenched in word magic. To be more precise, it is embedded in the belief that there are particular forces and entities that must not be named. Depending on the period and/or culture, various things and ideas have been perceived as taboo, for example, quite the reverse to what might be anticipated, in the Middle Ages people were allowed to use such names of God which now would be perceived as blasphemies; moreover, the so-called four-letter words were so natural and widespread that they were used freely, not only in literature but also in medicine. Moreover, fatness which is currently perceived as a sin against health, nature and society, used to be the object of desire in Victorian times (see Hughes 2006: 463). Interestingly

¹ See, for example, *Oxford Thesaurus. An A-Z Dictionary of Synonyms, The Synonym Finder*; Morton's *The Lover Tongue, A Dictionary of Similes, Dictionary of Proverbs*, <http://www.thesaurus.com/browse/naked>, <https://www.powerthesaurus.org/naked>, <http://thesaurus.yourdictionary.com/naked>.

enough, we may observe that in the course of time different subjects have been regarded as taboo. At first, lexical items connected with the conceptual macrocategory RELIGION seem to have been the most ‘dangerous’ ones, then the interest was focused on the conceptual macrocategory SEXUALITY and currently it is the conceptual category RACE that is avoided in some contexts. Nowadays, in a world dominated by political correctness people may not dare to raise certain topics associated with sexuality or race for fear of being punished or regarded as ill-mannered. In spite of that, one can hardly speak about absolute taboos, which are scarce and impractical. As a matter of fact, people arrived at the solution to the problem of taboo by coming up with euphemisms instead of employing ‘taboo’ words.

It is worth mentioning that there are also a handful of taboos connected with nakedness. One of them may be found in Borneo, where figures of a naked female and male are placed opposite each other on the footpaths leading to farms in order to protect them from evil forces. Any trespasser who lifts his hand against these manikins will be tormented by recurring sickness and fever (see Webster 1942: 350). In turn, a ritual that is very cruel and humiliating – from the point of view of Europeans – takes place in some parts of Brazil. To allow a woman to be marriageable, the Uaupes confine an adolescent girl in a house for one month, feeding her only bread and water, after which she is brought out naked and scourged by her relatives and family’s friends. If she survives, the flagellation is repeated four times. At the end of the ritual, she is supposed to lick the sticks immersed in pots with meat and fat. Once the girl has gone through the ordeal, she is allowed to get married (see Webster 1942: 90-91). Moreover, the inhabitants of the country of Loango give credence to the belief that drought and famine are the consequence of men trading with young girls. If any of the parties is found guilty, then they are not only fined but also forced to dance naked in public. The onlookers throw heated gravel and shards of glass at them (see Webster 1942: 148). In turn, the Pomo Indians, settled in California, got rid of their possessions when a member of the family, even a new-born baby, departed this life. They burned everything that had ever been touched by the deceased. Thus, they began their new life – as naked as when they had been born (see Webster 1942: 183).

Having taken into consideration various taboos connected with nakedness, we can perceive how deeply it has been associated with fear, cruelty, shame, punishment and – also – with the beginning of new life. Depending on the period and place it might scare off uninvited guests or be an inextricable part of pain and shame. It may be treated as a punishment for a transgression against the norms of social coexistence, but – on the other hand – it may be connected with a new beginning. There are not many things in the world that both attract and repel at the same time, as nakedness does.

3. The nature of euphemisms

The existence of taboo has forced language users, or – to be more precise – speech communities, to invent some ways of talking about forbidden topics without using certain words. As a result, irrespective of time and place, people have been coining various words and expressions whose main aim is to describe disgusting, offensive, vulgar, straightforward or sacred issues using other words, very frequently in a mild way. Allan and Burridge (1991: 11) define *euphemisms* in the following words: “A euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one’s own face or, through giving offense, that of the audience, or of some third party.” Undoubtedly, nowadays if we want to make pleasant conversation we need to adhere to a few rules, one of which is simply to avoid words which might disturb social intercourse. All in all, some words, especially ones connected with such conceptual categories as COPULATION, EXCRETION, FATNESS, DISEASE OR POVERTY, may cause confusion and embarrass one of the interlocutors, if not both (see Hughes 2006: 151).

Euphemisms are embedded in politeness, political correctness and taboo. They are also entrenched in word magic, namely a profound and long-standing belief that there is a mystical connection between words and things. This superstition makes some people believe that by means of words we can bring upon ourselves misfortune or even death. Nevertheless, absolute taboos are scarce, controversial and ineffective, because – especially nowadays – one can hardly prevent language users from uttering expletives. People resort to various ways of softening the offensive language they may be tempted to use; suffice it to say that sometimes they employ abbreviation or deformation in order to sound neither violent nor extreme. Take, the encoded JWH, standing for the name of God. From the historical viewpoint, this is the enduring way of generating euphemisms in English. Circa 1600 English was inundated with a host of apostrophized lexical items, such as *zounds* for ‘God’s wounds’ or *’s blood* for ‘God’s blood’, which are also known as *minced oaths*. Nevertheless, we can take it for granted that it is metaphor that plays a significant role in originating new euphemisms. Still, we prefer indirect language and instead of *having sex* we *make love, do it, sleep with, make out* or *have it away*. Similarly, sometimes we prefer to say that someone *passed away, departed, breathed his last, went to the happy-hunting grounds, paid the debt of nature* or *went to his reward* rather than died (see Hughes 2006: 151-152).

To all appearances, both the omnipresence and metaphorical nature of euphemisms establish the nucleus of this mechanism, which is vital to communicate. Indisputably, we want to be perceived as being politically correct, thus – in some situations – we prefer to make use of figurative substitutes of offensive words (see Duda 2011: 8-9).

Aside from its basic function of veiling repulsive topics, Chamizo Dominguez and Sánchez Benito (2005: 8) provide us with four minor functions of euphemisms. These are as follows:

- 1) the politeness or respect function,
- 2) the dignifying function,
- 3) the function of attenuating a painful evocation,
- 4) the function of naming the taboo object.

We need to bear in mind, however, that these functions are at work only to a varied degree. They hinge on the social context of an interlocutor and his/her level of tactfulness. Suffice it to say that we may *go to the toilet*, *move our bowels*, *urinate*, *defecate*, *pee*, *take a leak* or *go to the john*, and in all these cases we allude to the same concept. Despite the fact that all these phrases refer to the same activity, it is the language user that decides which version to choose in a given context.

4. Methodology

Broadly speaking, the apparatus adopted for our analysis is based on selected elements of the cognitive approach. To begin with, the notion of ‘conceptual category’ is understood in this paper as embodied in humans’ conceptual systems, which “grow out of bodily experience and make sense in terms of it; moreover, the core of our conceptual systems is directly grounded in perception, body movement, and experience of a physical and social character” (Lakoff 1987: xiv). The prime objective of the scrutiny that follows is to focus on the lexical items whose meaning is connected with the conceptual category NAKEDNESS, which – in turn – is a constituent of the widely comprehended language of intimacy.

We shall also employ the notion of ‘domains’, labelled by Langacker (1987) and Lakoff (1987) as a ‘frame’, ‘scene’ or ‘schema’. A domain may be defined as “a coherent area of conceptualization relative to which semantic units may be characterized” (Langacker 1987: 488). In other words, the meaning of one semantic concept may only be interpreted and understood in the relation to other concepts. Thus, for example, to grasp the meaning of *wing* we need to know what a bird is. In a nutshell, the semantics of *bird*, *old age* and *death* can only be accounted for by means of the domain of the LIFE CYCLE (see Taylor 1992: 84), whereas the meaning of the similes *naked as a robin*, *naked as a jaybird*, *naked as a cuckoo* can be explicated by means of the domain of BIRDS. It should be stressed that very often we need to refer to more than one conceptual domain in order to understand a given word, for instance, the sense of *apricot* is connected with the domain of FOOD or the domain of PLANTS.

Additionally, to define the notion of conceptual domains we need to refer to attributive elements/values. For example, the rise of the human-specific sense of the pet name *pumpkin* must be pictured in terms of activation of the conceptual element EPICENE presupposed for the attributive path of the domain of SEX. In turn, the notion of ‘entrenchment’ is understood by Ungerer and Schmid (2006: 119) as “the degree to which the formation and activation of a cognitive unit is routinized and automated.”

5. The role of metaphor

Research in figurative language is one of the most basic elements of Cognitive Linguistics. Let us now, after Lakoff and Johnson (1999), Lakoff (1993), Kövecses (2002) and Geeraerts (2010), encapsulate the fundamental principles of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (hereafter CMT). Above all, metaphor is perceived as a property of thought rather than language. It is a cognitive instrument which enables us to fathom abstract concepts. Nevertheless, a significant part of humans' conceptual system is grounded in perception, thus it is not metaphorical. In a nutshell, metaphors recounting abstract concepts make use of our experience of concrete things (see Kudła 2016: 69).

From a CMT angle, metaphors manifest a number of common characteristic features. By means of a metaphor we can conceptualize one concept in terms of another one, and this process may be represented as a pattern <X IS (LIKE) Y>. Take, for instance, the sentence *Tom has spent all day trying to fix his car* which may be formulated as <TIME IS MONEY>. However, such mappings are never random and they occur only when there is some similarity between the concepts they represent, or the source and target domains. Nevertheless, it is an oversimplification to say that a metaphor itself is a sufficient condition for a mapping to take place, because – at least in theory – anything may be collated with anything. We need to bear in mind that metaphorical mapping is partial, which means that “there is no source domain which would cover all aspects of a given target domain” (Kudła 2016: 70-71). In short, some aspects are highlighted, whereas other are hidden (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 46-48). Consider the notion of IDEA that requires a host of metaphors, to enumerate only a couple (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 46-48):

<IDEAS ARE FOOD>

I just can't swallow that claim.

That theory smells fishy.

<IDEAS ARE PLANTS>

The idea grew in her mind.

These beliefs are deep-rooted.

6. Classification

All of the words, phrases, idiomatic expressions and similes whose meanings are associated with the conceptual category NAKEDNESS may be subdivided into smaller units. We may distinguish eight major groups:

1. The first and – at the same time – one of the largest groups consists of one *naked*-phrase, two idioms and eight similes which are the outcome of the application of the mechanism of zoosemy, which is defined by Rayevska (1979: 165) in the following words: [it is] “nicknaming from animals which means that names of animals are often used to denote human qualities.”

2. The second set comprises two *naked*-phrases, three idioms, two similes and one borrowing which are associated with the conceptual category BODY PARTS.
3. The third lot contains one idiom and five similes in which nakedness is connected with the conceptual macrocategory INANIMATE OBJECTS.
4. The fourth group consists of three similes that represent the mechanism of foodsemy, which may be understood as a metaphorical use of food terms to denote characteristic features of people.
5. The fifth one, in turn, includes one *naked*-phrase and two similes which represent the mechanism of plantosemy, namely a figurative use of plant-terms to denote some features of people.
6. The sixth and the smallest category contains only one *naked*-phrase being part of the conceptual category KINSHIP TERMS.
7. The seventh set comprises three similes in which nakedness is compared to the elements.
8. The last and the most comprehensive group, labelled as varia, consists of seven simple words or derivatives, one *naked*-phrase, five idioms, three similes and one borrowing.

Tableau 1. The division of lexical items whose senses are connected with the conceptual category NAKEDNESS

	simple words/ derivatives	-naked phrases	idioms	similes	borrowings
zoosemy		<i>buck-naked</i> (19 th century)	<i>in the buff</i> (17 th century) <i>in stag</i> (17 th century)	<i>naked as a worm</i> (15 th century) <i>naked as a frog</i> (17 th century) <i>naked and bare as a shorn sheep</i> (17 th century) <i>naked as a cuckoo</i> (17 th century) <i>naked as apes</i> (18 th century) <i>naked as a robin</i> (19 th century) <i>naked as a gorpín/gorlin</i> (19 th century) <i>naked as a jaybird</i> (20 th century)	

Tableau 1. – continued

	simple words/ derivatives	-naked phrases	idioms	similes	borrowings
body parts		<i>belly-naked</i> (16 th century) <i>bollock-naked</i> (20 th century)	<i>air one's pores</i> (?) <i>silked to the bone</i> (?) <i>wear (nothing but) a smile</i> (20 th century)	<i>naked as one's nail</i> (16 th century) <i>naked as an Indian's back</i> (?)	<i>in cuerpo</i> (17 th century)
inanimate objects			<i>put on nothing but the radio</i> (20 th century)	<i>naked as a needle</i> (14 th century) <i>naked as a corowne withe out stones</i> (14 th century) <i>naked as a stone</i> (14 th century) <i>naked as a gravestone</i> (?)	
foodsemy				<i>naked as a Norfolk dumpling</i> (18 th /19 th century) <i>naked as a peeled apple</i> (19 th century) <i>naked as an egg</i> (?)	
plantosemy				<i>naked as a peeled apple</i> (19 th century) <i>naked as a flower</i> (19 th /20 th century)	
kinship terms		<i>mother-naked</i> (15 th century)			

	simple words/ derivatives	-naked phrases	idioms	similes	borrow- ings
the elements				<i>naked as the vulgar air</i> (17 th century) <i>like winter-earth, naked</i> (17 th century) <i>naked as the sea</i> (19 th century)	
varia	<i>unscrȳdd</i> (Old English) <i>unbehelod</i> (Old English) <i>unwry</i> (Old English) <i>nacod</i> → <i>naked</i> (Old English) <i>bær</i> → <i>bare</i> (Old English) <i>strip</i> (13 th century)	<i>stark-naked</i> (13 th century)	<i>birthday suit</i> (18 th century) <i>in the altogether</i> (19 th century) <i>in a state of nature</i> (19 th century) <i>in the nude</i> (?) <i>in the raw</i> (20 th century)	<i>naked as a fakir</i> (19 th /20 th century) <i>naked as they were born</i> (?) <i>naked as the graces</i> (?)	<i>au naturel</i> (20 th century)

7. Analysis

We shall commence our discussion with an analysis of a handful of lexical items whose senses were associated with the conceptual category NAKEDNESS in Anglo-Saxon times. Historically speaking, all these words, namely *unscrȳdd*, *unbehelod*, *unwry*, *nacod* and *bær* were the very first documented terms used in the sense ‘naked/nakedness’. In fact, the former three of the words failed to withstand the test of time, whereas the latter two have managed to persist, though in altered versions.

Let us now take a closer look at the word *unscrȳdd*, which used to be employed in the sense ‘unclothed’ (*A Thesaurus of Old English*). By the same token, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* defines the verb *unscrȳdan* in the following way: ‘to put off (about clothes), undress, strip, deprive of’. The lexical item in question is a derivative coined as a result of joining the negating prefix *un-* to the verb *scrȳdan* ‘to clothe’. This Old English word, in turn, stems from the Indo-European *skreu* ‘to cut’. The relation between the lexical items

scrydan and *skreu* is patently based on the fact that clothes are cut from fabric (see Morton 2003: 27-28). Hence, we may speak here about the connection with the conceptual macrocategory CLOTHES.

The history of the second derivative, namely *unbehelod*, also dates back to Anglo-Saxon times. This time, however, we can pinpoint the source in which it was used for the first time, as the word emerged in the Old English translation of the Old Testament. To be precise, the term refers to Noah who after indulging himself with too much wine fell asleep naked – or rather *unbehelod* – in his tent. Following *A Thesaurus of Old English*, the word was used in the sense ‘uncovered, naked’. Etymologically speaking, it originates from the Old English *behelian* ‘to conceal’ (*A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*), which comes from the Old English verb *helan* with the same meaning (see *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*). It is fitting to add that the prefix *be-* functioned at that time as an intensifier, as in the example of such words as *begrudge* or *befall* (see Morton 2003: 27-28). All in all, there are no traces left after these two words either in the *OED* or in the other lexicographic works that have been consulted (see, among others, *An Analytic Dictionary of English Etymology* and *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*).

The historically primary sense of the third and – simultaneously – the last Old English term denoting nakedness which faded away, that is *unwry*, referred to ‘unveiling or exposing to sight by the removal of a covering’ (the *OED*). In the first half of the 13th century the word acquired the human-specific sense defined as ‘to uncover (oneself); to make naked’, but even this sense thread failed to survive and disappeared two centuries later (see the *OED*). The sense ‘uncovered’ is also attested by *A Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, which may be seen by means of the following quotation: “Whanne every racke and every cloudy skye ls voyde clene, so hire face uncouth the Schalle schewe in open and fully be unwry.” Historically speaking, the lexical item *unwry* comes from Old English *onwréon*, *unwréon* ‘to uncover (someone’s body, a part of the body), uncover oneself, take off one’s clothes’ (*A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*). In cognitive terms, the semantics of the analysed word is associated with the conceptual category CLOTHES.

Nacod and *bær* are, for a change, two simple words which have managed to survive until today, although in altered versions: *nacod* turned into *naked* and *bær* transformed into *bare*. At the outset, both words were employed as exact synonyms, although in the course of time their meanings were restricted and nowadays *bare* frequently applies to things, whereas *naked* refers to human beings, with a few exceptions to this general rule, for example, *bare naked* and *the bare truth*. Interestingly enough, one may observe a marked tendency concerning the use of the lexical item *naked* which is frequently attached to an adjective to form an ‘augmented’ nakedness (see Morton 2003: 28-29).

It is fitting to add that *bare* is a cognate of Polish *bosy* ‘barefoot’. In this case we need to discuss Verner’s law, according to which such Indo-European sounds as *p*, *t* and *k* altered into *f*, *th* or *d*, and *h* in Germanic languages on condition

that the accent fell on the root syllable of the Sanskrit cognate. If, however, the accent fell on another syllable, the Germanic equivalents became *b*, *d* and *g*. Note that *a* and *r* underwent the same process.² In short, in some cases non-initial voiceless fricatives became voiced, for example Pol. *bosy* and En. *bare*, in which *r* arose from *z* (see Mańczak 1999: 128). Historically speaking, *bare* ‘uncovered, naked, unclothed’ originates from Germanic languages (compare, e.g. Du. *baar*, Ger. *bar*) (see *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*). Likewise, *naked* ‘nude, not fully clothed’ also has its roots in Germanic languages (compare, e.g. Du. *naakt*, Ger. *nackt*). Interestingly, some of the metaphorical senses appeared in Anglo-Saxon times, for instance *naked sword* or *naked word* (see *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*).

It is worth noting that apart from *unscrydd*, *unbehelod*, *nacod* and *bær* there were some more adjectives describing nakedness in Old English, namely *æwæde* ‘striped of clothes’ and *ungegearwod* ‘not dressed’ (*Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*), but one can hardly find any more information about them in the lexicographic works. According to *A Thesaurus of Old English*, there were also degrees of nakedness. The category in question is subdivided into three subcategories, that is: adjectives employed in the sense ‘bare’ (*æwædego*, *bær*, *nacod*, *unbehelod* and *unscrydd*), one adjective used in the sense ‘half-naked’ (*healfnacod*) and two adjectives employed in the sense ‘stark-naked’ (*eallnacod* and *limnacod*).

As time goes by, the English lexicon has constantly been enlarged with a host of new lexical items denoting nakedness. But it was not until the 13th century that nakedness started to advert to violence. This shift in meaning should be attributed to the emergence of the word *strip* whose ambiguous meaning, namely ‘to unclothe’ on the one hand and ‘to plunder’ (OE *bestripan*) on the other, reflects the above-mentioned tendency to link sex with vehemence and brutality. Etymologically speaking, *strip* ‘to denude’ goes back to the prehistoric Germanic *straupjan* (see *Word Origins* and the *OED*). Note that even the 20th century derivative *stripper* ‘a performer of strip-tease’ is to some extent associated with a kind of infringement, with a fragmentary sense of *plunder* understood here as visual assault (see Morton 2003: 30). In terms of the cognitively-couched model of analysis employed here, we may say that – apart from the connection with the conceptual category CLOTHES – the meaning of the simple word *strip* is also linked to the conceptual category VIOLENCE.

Undoubtedly, terms from the realm of animals constitute one of the most comprehensive sources of the language of intimacy (22%). This is because people are inclined to believe that animals are endowed with various features which might be attributed to people. Therefore, in what follows, we aim to show the connection between the conceptual categories NAKEDNESS and ANIMALS on the basis of several idioms and similes. Moreover, we shall trace the motivations behind the operation of the process of zoosemy.

² See <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Verners-law>.

And so, with the advent of the 17th century a number of phrases denoting nakedness emerged. The first one to be scrutinized is *in the buff* connected with the lexical item *buffalo*, but not the buffalo which first comes to the reader's mind. Quite the contrary, it is not the American bison but rather a European wild ox and *buff* is a shortened name for this animal. The word started to refer to a special kind of leather produced from the animal's hide (see *Word Origins*). Soon, Western Europeans noticed the similarity between the fuzzy texture and the colour of this leather with their own skin, hence the word was used as a synonym for bare skin (1602 "I go in stag, in buff". → 1969 "The girls call themselves the Groupies and claim they recorded their song in the buff".) (the *OED*). In terms of the cognitive framework employed in this analysis, we may say that the transfer from the conceptual macrocategory ANIMALS to the conceptual category NAKEDNESS may have been conditioned by the presence of such conceptual elements as FUZZY and FLESH-COLOURED that play a significant role in the construal of the sense 'naked/nakedness', and hence provide the bridge for the shift within the attributive paths of the domain of TEXTURE and the domain of COLOUR, respectively. The existence of this byword for lack of clothes in contemporary English is confirmed by a number of lexicographic works. The idiom is labelled as both an informal and humorous way of expressing nakedness (see, among others, *DEOD*).

Similarly, the idiom *in stag* also surfaced in the dawn of the 17th century (1602 "No, come my little Cub, doe not scorne mee because I goe in Stag, in Buffe, heer's veluet too.") (the *OED*). The *OED* defines the noun *stag* as the male of a deer in its sexual prime, therefore if a man is *in stag* it implies not only nudity, but even – more perversely – bold nakedness. All in all, the noun *stag* seems to have been very prolific in terms of coining other sexual idioms, to mention only one phrase, *to wear the stag's crest* which alludes to men whose wives were unfaithful. Viewed from the cognitive angle, we may speak here of highlighting of the attributive element MALE specifiable for the attributive path of the domain of SEX. Another conceptual domain that is cognitively central to the construal of the sense of the idiom is the domain of CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOUR for which the conceptual element BOLD is activated. Those two conceptual elements, that is MALE and BOLD, provide the conceptual bridge for the shift from the animal-specific sense of the noun to the figurative sense 'naked/nakedness', because both the simple word *stag* and the idiom *in the stag* refer to bold males.

The only *-naked* phase whose sense is connected with the conceptual macrocategory ANIMALS, that is *buck-naked*, was attested in the 19th century. It is worth noting that it underwent the process of alteration, as initially instead of *buck* the noun *butt* was presumably used. In a nutshell, such a shift in pronunciation is a widespread phenomenon frequently referred to as taboo deformation. For example, the 18th century profane *damn* triggered off the emergence of the polite form *dang* (see Morton 2003: 29), and – in a similar manner – *buck-naked* is the more polite version of *butt-naked*. In fact, *Word and Phrase Origins* provides us

with several similar terms conveying the same meaning, that is *buck ass-naked*, *buck born-naked* and *stark buck-naked*. Extralinguistically, it is the colour of buckskin leather that was the inspiration for coining the phrase (“He stood there buck naked, scratching his belly.”) (*DASCE*), thus we may surmise that it is the domain of COLOUR that formed the conceptual bridge between the colour of the animal’s (buck’s) leather and the colour of a human being’s skin. Cognitively speaking, we may postulate that the human-specific sense of the phrase may be rendered in terms of an entrenchment link to the domain of SEX and the domain of COLOUR for which such conceptual values as EPICENE and FLESH-COLOURED are clearly foregrounded.

Let us now move on to a handful of similes in which nakedness is compared to an animal. This set includes the following comparisons: *naked as a cuckoo*, *naked as a robin*, *naked as a jaybird*, *naked as a gorpín/gorlin*, *naked and bare as a shorn sheep*, *naked as apes*, *naked as a frog* and *naked as a worm*. Firstly, we shall deal with those similes in which nakedness is compared to that of a bird. And so, the oldest simile in this lot, that is ***naked as a cuckoo*** comes from the 17th century. It should be stressed that to account for the origin of the simile in question we need to know its full version. As given in *Dictionary of Proverbs*, *as naked as a cuckoo in Christmas* alludes to the condition of cuckoos whose feathers are reportedly plucked off during winter, thus, unfeathered birds seem to be naked.

Along similar lines, we may hazard a guess that the idioms ***as naked as a robin*** (1879-81 “G. W’y yo’ bin as naked as a robin.”) (the *OED*) and ***as naked as a jaybird*** (“I came straight out of the shower, naked as a jaybird.”) (*The Free Dictionary*) also advert to clothedness like that of an animal. The former term was first recorded in the midst of the 19th century and it probably initiated the rise of the latter simile which – in turn – appeared in the middle of the 20th century. In the course of the semantic development of *jaybird*, the word was shortened to *jay* only. The element *bird* is a remnant from the period when it was employed in the sense ‘chick’, thus we may assume that the simile is usually employed with reference to children. When hatched, the offspring of the jay is featherless, hence the comparison to nakedness (see *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms*). In turn, according to *Endangered Phrases*, the jaybird might have been singled out for its nudity, because ‘jay’ was a 19th-century lexical item referring to a country bumpkin. The source elucidates further that bumpkins (and birds) were vulnerable to the wiles of others. All in all, from the cognitive viewpoint, we can speak here of highlighting of the conceptual element YOUNG presupposed for the domain of AGE.

The last simile in this group, namely ***naked as a gorpín/gorlin*** extended the English lexicon in the second half of the 19th century. Historically speaking, the Scottish word *gorlin* appeared in the 18th century and may be defined either in the animal-specific sense as ‘an unfledged bird, a nestling’ or in a human-specific sense ‘a very young person’ (see the *OED*). Both senses triggered the emergence of the 19th century simile *as naked as a gorlin* (1878 “As neakkt as

a gorlin.”) (the *OED*). In terms of a cognitively-couched model of analysis we may postulate that the human-specific sense of the simile may be rendered in terms of an entrenchment link to the domain of AGE for which the conceptual element YOUNG is clearly brought to the fore. All the indications are that the analysed similes are – by and large – applied with reference to children. When used to refer to adults, they might carry jocular overtones, as it is rare to compare an adult man to a small bird. In all these cases human nakedness is collated with featherless birds. At this point, we may postulate a valid generalization that the semantic history of all four similes discussed above, that is *naked as a cuckoo*, *naked as a robin*, *naked as a jaybird* and *naked as a gorpin/gorlin*, may be said to constitute various lexical realizations of the metaphorical extension that may come under the label <NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A FEATHERLESS (YOUNG) BIRD>.

Apart from the bird-related similes, one may also encounter several phrases in which nakedness is associated with mammals (*naked as a shorn sheep* and *naked as apes*), amphibians (*naked as a frog*) or worms (*naked as a worm*). To begin with mammals, *naked and bare as a shorne sheep* came forth in the middle of the 17th century (1654 “As naked and bare as a shorne Sheep, as we say in our English Proverbe.”) (the *OED*). In this case nakedness is compared to that of a shorn sheep, namely the animals denuded of their wool. Furthermore, to enhance the nakedness, apart from the word *naked*, the adjective *bare* with nearly the same meaning is used in the comparison. In this case, the process of conceptual mapping has its starting point in the animal kingdom, or – more precisely – the realm of mammals (conceptual sphere MAMMALS), giving rise to the conceptual metaphor <A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A MAMMAL WITHOUT ITS FUR>.

The other simile, namely *naked as apes*, was uttered by Voltaire in the 18th century (see *A Dictionary of Similes*). In his *Philosophical Dictionary*, the author ponders over nudity; he raises the question of why nakedness is so offensive if the world is abounding with various works of art presenting naked statues or naked people depicted on paintings even in churches. Voltaire compares human beings to their cousins, namely apes, which do not cover their bodies:

[...] the Mahometans still possess saints who are mad, and who go about naked as apes. It is very possible that crazy people have existed, who thought that it was more proper to present ourselves before the Deity in the state in which He has formed us, than under any disguise of our own invention. It is possible that these persons exposed themselves out of pure devotion. There are so few well-made people of either sex, that nudity may have inspired chastity, or rather disgust, instead of augmenting desire.

(see <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/v/voltaire/dictionary/chapter342.html>)

Simply, in this case it is not the hairlessness of an animal that a naked human being is compared to, but rather the simile is based on the fact that animals do not wear clothes, they do not have any outer garment, they show their bodies in

a state of nature. Therefore, this synonym of *nakedness* may be said to constitute a figurative scheme formulated in the following way <A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE AN ANIMAL WITH ITS EXPOSED BODY>.

Equating a human's nakedness with that of a frog might be quite unexpected. Nevertheless, the 17th century simile *naked as a frog* proves that it was once employed (see *A Dictionary of Similes*). In this rare comparison, nakedness is yet again compared to the animal's flesh deprived of any hair. The nakedness seems to be intensified here by the fact that frog's flesh is not only lacking in hair or fur, but also by the fact that it seems to be slippery and sticky. The last simile which is connected with the conceptual macrocategory ANIMALS is *naked as a worm* which surfaced in Late Middle English, or – to be more exact – it dates back to the second half of the 15th century (1467 “The Lorde Schalys was slayne at Synt Mary Overeyes, and laye there dyspoyly nakyd as a worme.”) (the *OED*). From the cognitive viewpoint, the conceptualization of nakedness in terms of adverting to hairless animals (frogs and worms) finds its reflection in the metaphorical scheme <A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A HAIRLESS ANIMAL>.

Another prolific source of vocabulary associated with the conceptual category NAKEDNESS has been created by making use of the body parts. On the whole, all of the words and expressions which are included in this group are subdivided into four sets: *-naked* phrases (*belly-naked*, *bollock-naked*), idioms (*wear (nothing but) a smile*, *air one's pores*, *silked to the bone*), similes (*naked as one's nail*, *naked as an Indian's back*) and one borrowing (*in cuerpo*).

The phrase *belly-naked* was first recorded in the 16th century (1525 “Upstert the wench... And ran to hir maistrys all baly naked.”) (the *OED*), whereas *bollock-naked* is a relatively recent coinage as it was first documented as late as in the middle of the 20th century (1950 “He's stark bollock.”) (the *OED*). This vulgar phrase resembles the phrase *stark naked*, as both imply that a person – especially a man – is undressed, so that the intimate parts of his body³ can be easily seen. According to *Word and Phrase Origins*, the compound also functions in the shortened form *ball naked*. In this case, within the cognitive framework adopted here, the human-specific sense of *bollock-naked* may be accounted for in terms of activation of the conceptual elements MALE and ADULT presupposed for the attributive paths of the domain of SEX and the domain of AGE, respectively. In turn, in the case of the former phrase, we may hazard a conjecture that this part of the human's body is most frequently exposed and seen uncovered, thus is often associated with nakedness and seduction. Over and above that, the semantics of both phrases is associated with the conceptual category BODY PARTS, and we may say that the human-specific semantics of *belly-naked* and *bollock-naked* is the result of the application of the mechanism of metonymy based on the <ONE NAKED PART OF THE BODY FOR THE WHOLE NAKED BODY> contiguity.

³ According to the *OED*, the historically primary sense of *bollocks* may be defined as ‘the testicles’.

Moreover, one may come across three idioms, namely *air one's pores* ("I'm fixing to air my pores and take a shower.") (*DASCE*), *silked/laid to the bone* ("I was all silked to the bone, getting ready for a shower, when the phone rings.") (*The Free Dictionary*) and *wear (nothing but) a smile* ("This doll came on stage and within ten minutes she was wearing nothing but a smile.") (*The Free Dictionary*) and two similes, that is *naked as one's nail* and *naked as an Indian's back*, which are used to talk about nakedness. Regrettably, given that the vast majority of the consulted lexicographic works fail to provide any information concerning the above-mentioned idioms, we must confine our analysis to basic information concerning selected examples. As the provenance of the similes *naked as an Indian's back*, *air one's pores*, *silked/laid to the bone* and *wear (nothing but) a smile* is obscure, we may only have an inkling that some of them might be used humorously (e.g. *air one's pores*) and another might be female-specific (*wear (nothing but) a smile*). In fact, it is only the simile *naked as one's nail* that is mentioned in the *OED*. Its origins should be sought in the 16th century (1559 "We...Were led in prysoners *naked as my nayle*." (the *OED*) and we can hazard a guess that comparing nakedness to the nail results from the fact that the fingernail is one of the very few places on our body that is completely hairless. In cognitive terms, the sense discussed here seems to fit into the pattern of the conceptual metaphor that may be formulated as <A HAIRLESS PART OF THE BODY FOR THE WHOLE NAKED BODY>. Furthermore, the human-specific sense of the simile enables us to speak of an entrenchment link to the conceptual category BODY PARTS. At the same time, we are also dealing here with an entrenchment link to the domain of TEXTURE, for which the conceptual element SMOOTH is activated.

Having scoured a number of lexicographic works we fail to encounter even a hint concerning the etymology of similes which result from the process of the metaphorical shift from the macrocategory INANIMATE OBJECTS to the conceptual category NAKEDNESS. We can only surmise that the 14th century simile *naked as a crowne withe out stones* may be human-specific or object-specific. Commonly, we associate crowns with golden objects adorned with various ornaments, hence a crown lacking in stones seems to be naked. Likewise, we can only make a conjecture that comparing nakedness to a gravestone in *naked as a gravestone* might be associated with the fact that tombstones, especially the oldest ones, are simple, humble and unadorned. It is likely that the etymology of *naked as a stone* ("He stod as nakyd as a ston.") (*Dictionary of Proverbs*) and *naked as a needle* ("She was naked as a nedel.") (*Dictionary of Proverbs*) is very much similar to the provenance of the former two similes. In fact, austere and unembellished objects, such as needles or stones are in a way naked, hence the association with nudity. The brief analysis carried out in the foregoing reveals that a naked person may be conceptually perceived as an unadorned object. Therefore, one of the metaphorical schemas that may be formulated here is <A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE AN UNADORNED OBJECT>.

In the history of the English language, the examples in which nakedness has been compared either to food-terms or plant-terms are few and far between. In

a nutshell, both processes describe the mechanisms in which human beings are perceived in terms of foodstuffs or plant-terms. All told, there are four lexical items included in these two groups, with one lexical item being – simultaneously – a food- and a plant-term. First, we shall tackle the development of the simile *naked as a Norfolk dumpling* which is an example of the process of foodsemy. The roots of the comparison in question should be searched for in cooking recipes, as the historically primary sense of a Norfolk dumpling is directly linked to the conceptual category FOOD. The *OED* defines this specific kind of dumpling as a plain dumpling which is cooked from bread dough. Cognitively speaking, the attributive values SIMPLE, UNDECORATED and BARE presupposed for the attributive path of the domain of CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES form the bridge between the historically primary sense of the food-term *Norfolk dumpling* and the comparison *naked as a Norfolk dumpling*. The schema that may be postulated here is formulated as <A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A SIMPLE FOODSTUFF>.

In turn, the 19th century comparison *as naked as a peeled apple* (1860 “A friend had a watch given him with a loose silver case. You know them,—the cases that you hang on your thumb, while the real watch, lies in your hand as naked as a peeled apple.”) (the *OED*) is an example of the process of plantosemy and – at the same time – foodsemy. Here, the nakedness of a person is compared to a peeled fruit. To be more precise, the apple’s peel is treated as an outfit, a garment, and a peeled fruit is deprived of its clothes, hence it becomes naked. As a result, the comparison *as naked as a peeled apple* will be seen as an instance of the metaphor <A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A PEELED FRUIT>.

A Dictionary of Similes provides us with a sprinkling of similes connected with the conceptual category NAKEDNESS which originate from literature. Given that artists make use of *artistic license* sometimes one can hardly account for the motivation that lies behind the creation of some similes. Firstly, the simile *naked as the vulgar air* comes from the 17th century. The simile comes from Shakespeare’s *King John*: “I’d play incessantly upon these jades, Even till unfenced desolation Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.”⁴ However, in this context the epithet *vulgar* is used in the sense ‘common’. Comparing nakedness to air hinges on the fact that one can hardly encounter anything as bare as air; it is so naked that it cannot be seen. The process of personification is at work here, because air cannot be dressed or undressed (naked), like a human being. Another simile, *like winter-earth, naked* comes from the 17th century poem *Written in Juice of Lemon*.⁵ In this case, nakedness is collated with winter-earth, namely an empty and bare land deprived of flora. In this case, the adjective *naked* is put at the end of the comparison, thus we may say that we are dealing here with inversion. The third simile “[The country is] *naked as the sea*” comes from

⁴ The simile appeared in Shakespeare’s *King John*. See *The New Oxford Shakespeare* (2016: 1157).

⁵ See <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/written-juice-lemon>.

the 19th century when it was uttered by Jules Sandeau.⁶ Here, it is not a human being but a country that is compared to the sea. In all the cases discussed in this paragraph we can observe a strong connection between the conceptual category NAKEDNESS and the conceptual category THE ELEMENTS. This association allows us to formulate the metaphorical scheme <NAKEDNESS OF A HUMAN BEING/OBJECT/CONCEPT IS LIKE NAKEDNESS OF THE ELEMENTS> which may pertain to human beings, objects, concepts or ideas.

At the very dawn of the 15th century the first kinship term denoting nakedness, that is *mother naked* employed in the sense ‘stark naked’, surfaced in the English lexico-semantic system. The phrase directly alludes to the day a human being is being born, hence he/she is as naked as at birth (c 1400 “Sayþ, y bidde hem be boun, bishopes & oþer, To morow or mydday *modur nakyd* alle.” → 1872 “Mother-naked sits Theseus.”) (the *OED*). Similarly to *mother naked*, the term *birthday suit* adverts to the nakedness of birth, namely the day we wore nothing. Following *Word and Phrase Origins*, the phrase was first recorded in 1771, but – in all likelihood – it might have appeared earlier. To be more precise, following *DEOD*, the roots of the phrase go back to a certain Winifred Jenkins who told Mrs. Mary Jones how she and a housemaid had been taken aback by Sir George Coon while they ‘bathed in our birth-day soot’. Moreover, Merriam-Webster Dictionary quotes ‘The Pennsylvania Gazette’ from June 1752 where the phrase was used:

The obliging Bride, to remove all incumbrances, stripp’d to her Buff, and two Women held a sheet between her and the Clergyman, while he performed his Office; but she having forgot her Cap at undressing, in the midst of the Ceremony it came into her Mind, and she pull’d that off too, and flung it on the Bed, and was married to her Spouse (if not in a Wedding Suit) in her Birth Day Suit.⁷

The phrase seems to be very popular, because most recent examples of its use come from 2018 and may be found in *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2018 “Luna’s rocking her llama diaper under this birthday suit!”). Variations of the period included such compounds as *birthday attire*, *birthday clothes*, *birthday finery* and *birthday gear*. In cognitive terms, both phrases are well entrenched examples of the metaphor <A NAKED ADULT HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A NAKED CHILD AT BIRTH>.

In turn, the 16th century brought one more phrase employed synonymously to nakedness, *stark naked* ‘completely naked’ (the *OED*). It should be stressed that the phrase derives from *start-naked*, the lexical item *start* being now an archaic noun referring to a tail. Cognitively speaking, the sense of the phrase was associated with the conceptual category BODY PARTS. Thus, the literal sense of *start-naked* would seem to be so naked that people could see your tail, or –

⁶ See *A Dictionary of Similes*.

⁷ See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/words-about-nudity/birthday-suit>.

less politely – your ass (1225 “(Roy. MS.), & he het hatterliche strupen hire steortnaket [Bodl. MS. steort naket].” → 1892 “Start-naked: stark naked. He is a start-naked villain.”) (the *OED*). Following *Word and Phrase Origins*, someone *stark naked* is literally ‘naked even to the rump’, so we may say that the word *stark* functions here as an amplifier. The shift in pronunciation from *start* to *stark* results from the fact that the former lexical item started to decline in use, hence the emergence of the altered version of the phrase. Curiously enough, the words *start* and *stark* are not related, thus the words were replaced as a result of a mistake. (see Morton 2003: 28-29).

In the rise of new lexical items denoting nakedness we may observe an enduring tendency to extend the notion of nakedness either by means of joining quasi-redundant adjectives, such as *buck* (as in *buck-naked*) or *stark* (as in *stark naked*), or by coining similes involving needles, worms, robins, hairless parts of the body or animals, which might be associated with nakedness. In fact, seldom is nakedness itself a bare fact, it rather seems to provoke some response, either emotional or moral. Take, for example, a female accidentally glimpsed through a window. In the vast majority of cases, she will be reported as *stark naked* rather than *naked*, even if there is no denotative dissimilarity between these two notions. Similarly, a child on a beach will provoke passers-by to say that he is naked but rather they may compare him to a jaybird. There is a considerable difference between the two examples provided above in that a child’s nakedness is not a violation of any rules, it should not be associated with anything harmful or inappropriate, it has transcended rather than transgressed social taboo. Moreover, the innocent jaybird insinuates that a child’s nudity – just like the nakedness or – to be more precise – featherless or furless states of animals is by no means sinful; on the contrary, it should be regarded as natural (see Morton 2003: 29).

In Queen Victoria’s lifetime, the idiom *in the altogether* emerged as a synonym for ‘nakedness’ (1894 “I have sat for the ‘altogether’ to several other people.” → 1947 “Should I get a kick out of just seeing a girl in the altogether?”) (the *OED*). In all likelihood, initially it described naked models posing for artists. The idiom is likely to have developed from the use of *altogether* employed in the sense ‘entirely’, as in the sentence “She was altogether naked” (see Morton 2003: 34). Note that the application of the word *altogether* is a prime example of Reverse English, because its euphemistic meaning which may be defined as ‘without clothes’ is almost completely opposite its formal definition, which may be found in dictionaries: ‘completely, with everything included’ (see *DEOD*).

And last but not least, in the advent of the 20th century the idiom *in the raw* appeared. Initially, the simple word *raw* was employed with reference to somebody or something whose skin is removed, so that the flesh is exhibited. The lexical item may also be used about the flesh side of a human’s skin. Hence, the lexical item started to denote naked and – frequently – sleeping people (1931 “He puts her in the ‘Vanities’ and lets her walk around raw.” → 1974 “She didn’t own any nightgowns. She slept raw.”) (the *OED*). A few years later

the word started to be used in the phrase *in the raw*, which may be defined as either ‘the exposed flesh’ or ‘naked’ (1934 “In the raw, in one’s natural or crude state; hence, in one’s or its true nature or character; in naked truth; as, to present life in the raw.”) (see the *OED*).

8. Conclusions

The analysis proposed in the foregoing proves that the notion of *NAKEDNESS* may be associated with almost everything, starting from the realm of animals, through objects ending with the elements. We may even come across a few borrowings, especially from French, in this group. Naturally, it is not an easy task to gather all lexical items employed in the sense ‘naked’, thus we had to choose the most representative examples. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon has not been fully examined and it needs further research, for example in terms of the influence of such factors as sound symbolism or ellipsis on the lexical items denoting nakedness.

However, our analysis enables us to say that nakedness can be associated with almost everything that exists. It turns out that there is no such concept on earth that could not be unclothed or uncovered: birds may be bereft of feathers, mammals of their fur, whereas objects may be unadorned. This allows us to formulate a number of metaphorical schemas which may be presented in the following way:

<A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A FEATHERLESS (YOUNG) BIRD>

naked as a cuckoo

naked as a robin

naked as a jaybird

naked as a gorpin/gorlin

<A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A MAMMAL WITHOUT ITS FUR >

naked and bare as a shorn sheep

<A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE AN ANIMAL WITH ITS EXPOSED BODY>

naked as apes

<A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A HAIRLESS ANIMAL>

naked as a frog

naked as a worm

<ONE NAKED PART OF THE BODY FOR THE WHOLE NAKED BODY>

belly-naked

bollock-naked

<A HAIRLESS PART OF THE BODY FOR THE WHOLE NAKED BODY>
naked as one's nail

<A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE AN UNADORNED OBJECT>
naked as a crowne with the out stones
naked as a gravestone
naked as a stone
naked as a needle

<A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A SIMPLE FOODSTUFF>
naked as a Norfolk dumpling

<A NAKED HUMAN BEING IS LIKE A PEELED FRUIT>
naked as a peeled apple

<NAKEDNESS OF A HUMAN BEING/OBJECT/CONCEPT IS LIKE NAKEDNESS
 OF THE ELEMENTS>
naked as the vulgar air
like winter-earth, naked
naked as the sea

Note that the majority of metaphors involve fairly rich mappings between their respective source and target domains. The first four mappings may be seen as examples of the cognitive mechanism known as zoosemy, which is – at the same time – the most productive one in creating new synonyms of *nakedness*. In turn, the next two mappings are instances of the *pars pro toto* mechanism in which the name of a part of an object (in this case – a part of the human body) represents its entirety. Body parts-based lexical items constitute the second largest group of terms whose senses are associated with the conceptual category NAKEDNESS. The seventh mapping adverts to the process of reification, namely the process in which a human being is compared to an inanimate object, whereas the eighth and ninth metaphorical mappings may be regarded as examples of two cognitive mechanisms, that is foodsemy and plantosemy, respectively. The last mapping alludes to the elements; all the examples included in this set are extracted from various literary works and result from the so-called *artistic license* which allows an artist to coin any text in the name of art.

Apart from metaphorical mappings, let us also stress the importance of the conceptual dimensions which played a prominent role in the figurative shift from the conceptual macrocategory ANIMALS to the conceptual category NAKEDNESS. Among the most frequently employed domains we may enumerate the following ones: the domain of TEXTURE (see the semantic development of *in the buff*, *naked as one's nail*), the domain of COLOUR (*in the buff*, *buck-naked*), the domain of CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOUR (*in stag*), the domain of AGE (we may distinguish two groups here, namely the similes addressed

to a young human being, e.g. *naked as a robin*, *naked as a jaybird* and *naked as a gorpin/gorlin* and phrases which refer to an adult human being, e.g. *bollock-naked*), and the domain of CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES (*naked as a Norfolk dumpling*).

As far as the common features of the discussed lexical items are concerned, we may say that the picture that emerges from all the above instances is a very inconsistent one, because nakedness is full of contradictions. On the one hand it may be simple and innocent, on the other bold and sinful. Nakedness of children does not trigger any inappropriate associations; therefore it is frequently collated with unfledged small birds. Quite the contrary, when it comes to adults their naked bodies may evoke a wide range of various connotations. Thus, the senses of the vocabulary connected with this kind of nakedness may even be linked to such conceptual categories as VIOLENCE, DEMIMONDE and CRIME. All in all, nakedness is an inseparable part of our existence and its perception seems to depend on the contexts in which it occurs.

List of Abbreviations

DASCE – NTC's Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions

DEOD – A Dictionary of Euphemisms and Other Doubletalk

Du. – Dutch

En. – English

Ger. – German

OE – Old English

Pol. – Polish

the OED – the Oxford English Dictionary

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