

Death by Metaphor

*A study of metaphors and conceptualisations of death in British
and American obituaries*

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Abstract

In accordance with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), this thesis explores the various metaphorical expressions for death found in British and American obituaries from September 2014, and analyses their source domains according to a classification scheme introduced by the researcher Bert Bultinck (1998). It further compares the source domains and their manifestations used in British English and American English to investigate whether death is mapped and conceptualised differently within the two varieties of English. The main findings show that the domain of 'movement' is by far the most frequent source domain used in both varieties, followed by conceptualisations of death through the surviving families' feelings towards the dead. The American obituaries are less varied in terms of both source domain and manifestation, and mainly focus on the two domains mentioned above, while British conceptualisations are more evenly distributed across eight general source domains. In addition, the American metaphors tend to be religiously based, while the British metaphors evaluate death as positive for the dead and negative for the living.

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1 Introduction

My initial, and perhaps traditional, view of metaphors restricted the phenomenon to a creative domain mainly used in poetry and art. Metaphor was a rhetorical device; it was intentionally used to highlight certain attributes of an object or person, or as illustrations of ideas, and not often used in everyday language. I later realised after reading Lakoff & Johnson (1980), that the phenomenon is literally everywhere. It is not only a random helping feature used to explain more diffuse concepts, but could be seen as a large system in which one concept is transferred to another. For example, we conventionally talk about time as if it were money; it is something you *spend*, *earn*, *lose*, or *invest* if you think something is *worth your while* (Ibid: 8).

Metaphors are indeed especially useful, or even necessary, when talking of abstract concepts (just imagine trying to talk about time without using monetary terms!). By using established metaphors, these concepts can be more easily understood; there are even topics that we do not really know how to talk about without using metaphors. It is this latter aspect that is of key relevance when it comes to the language of death. Death is the great mystery to human kind; we do not know what it is like to die, since obviously, no one will ever live to tell. Of course, we have clinical knowledge of the physiological effects of death, such as the malfunction of organs and rigidity of the body, but the psychological aspects has always been mysterious. This uncertainty is reflected in our language concerning death; different cultures, different religions, and different individuals structure the language according to their beliefs, their hopes or their thoughts of what it might be like. By researching metaphors in obituaries, I hope to shed some light on potential differences in how Americans and Britons structure their thoughts and beliefs about death.

1.1 Pilot study

My initial aim with this study was in fact not to focus on metaphors explicitly, but to investigate the diachronic change of words and phrases used to replace the otherwise painful or harsh words of death. These are called euphemisms, and are known to be very context-dependent, both in terms of place and time. The Spanish researcher Eliecer Fernández (2006) studied the various linguistic formations of euphemisms in obituaries of Victorian Ireland, which inspired me to examine both the changes of frequency and formation of this phenomenon found in English obituaries from the 1840s until today.

My inspiration for using a diachronic approach came from a study of gravestone designs in New England and their changes from 1680 to 1820 (Allan & Burrige, 2006: 224). This study revealed that people suddenly ceased to *die*, but in stead *fell asleep*, *went to see their maker* or *crossed the river* (Rawson, 1981: 7). I conducted a short pilot study to test whether the thesis question was feasible, but the results revealed three main issues:

Firstly, none of the digital newspaper archives found could be copied digitally or extracted as machine-readable text for sampling. In practice, this meant that all obituaries had to be manually typed into a text file, and beyond the time and effort such work would require, it would involve a great risk for human errors when typing manually. Secondly, the diachronic approach did not give interesting results. In fact, most of the obituaries in Victorian England resembled the obituaries in recent newspapers with little variation and few euphemisms. And finally, the exclusive focus on euphemisms meant that other interesting findings that contributed to the language of death had to be abandoned: Euphemisms are, by definition, mitigating *replacements* for otherwise coarse words (Enright, 2005). This meant that metaphors, metonymies and other linguistic constructions that replaced the words ‘died’, ‘dead’ or ‘death’ were labelled as euphemisms, while any other additional linguistic death-related expressions were excluded. The original idea was thus abandoned.

What the pilot study did show, in agreement with Fernández’ results, was that the majority of the euphemisms identified were formed as metaphors. In contrast to Fernández’ results, however, the metaphors varied little in terms of wording, and a few variants were generally repeated.

This made me question whether these few variants could be consistent through the English language in general, or if they are specific to British English language and culture only. In order to explore this further, a larger proportion of obituaries from the United Kingdom in general will be studied and compared to an equal amount of obituaries from another English-speaking nation on a different continent. It is thus natural to compare British and American obituaries to determine whether they conceptualise death by use of the same metaphors or not. And if they do not, in what ways do they differ?

1.2 Thesis aims

On the basis of the pilot study and the queries above, this thesis aims to answer the following questions:

- 1 Which metaphorical expressions for death and dying can be found in British and American obituaries, and to which conceptual mappings do these expressions belong?
- 2 Do the American and British obituaries differ in terms of metaphorical expressions and mappings? If so, how do they differ?
- 3 To what extent can the conceptual mappings be called culture-specific or common to both the UK and the USA?

1.3 Outline of thesis

Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 will firstly argue that obituaries are appropriate as material for collecting metaphorical conceptualisations of death. Secondly, it will present the necessary theoretical background with special emphasis on contemporary metaphor theory. Thirdly, it will thoroughly describe previous work on metaphorical¹ conceptualisations of death and their classification schemes, which form the basis for the analysis in chapter 4. The method of collecting data will be outlined in chapter 3, along with a brief discussion of the comparability of the British and American data. This chapter will also outline the framework of classification applied and give an overview of the extracted data. The analysis of the data and comparison of British and American conceptualisations of death will be carried out in chapter 4, while the final chapter will offer a short discussion of the results and analysis, answer the thesis questions, and give suggestions for further research.

¹ The forms ‘metaphoric’ and ‘metaphorical’ are here used synonymously.

2 Theoretical background

This chapter will first discuss the term ‘obituary’ and show examples of previous studies from different academic areas in which obituaries have been used as material of analysis. Secondly, the chapter will outline the most relevant aspects of Lakoff & Johnson’s (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Thirdly, it will outline the different conceptual mappings of death found by Marín-Arrese (1996), Bultinck (1998) and Fernández (2006). Such mappings provide the framework for the analysis of metaphorical expressions in the present thesis.

2.1 Obituaries

The public announcements of death have many terms: ‘obituary’, ‘death -’ or ‘funeral notice’, ‘memorial’ or ‘necrology’. All individual deaths are commonly given some sort of public notice in most parts of the world, but how and where this is announced depend on the circumstances of the death and its social meaning in a particular culture and time. Western cultures often publish such announcements in newspapers, either electronically, in print, or both. Newspapers use the terms differently, even within the same local area, but the announcements have in common that they are all a means to communicate to an audience that someone has died (Williams, 2009).

In published material, the obituaries are usually distinguished according to the author of the notice. There are family-authored texts and edited texts, the latter are written by a journalist or an editor of the newspaper. They are different in terms of structure, length and social status, where the typical edited text follows a template of structure similar to a news report, and can cover up to a whole newspaper page. The edited text usually pays tribute to a person of some social importance and reports cause of death. The family-authored texts are less structured, and they are often shorter due to publishing expenses (Moses & Marelli, 2003: 124–125).

2.1.1 Obituaries as material

Obituaries have frequently been used as material in studies covering various scientific areas, e.g. historical, demographic and linguistic studies. There are many reasons for this. Firstly, the genre has existed for hundreds of years and will probably remain while humans are mortal. Secondly, the texts are genuine and representative since there are

many different authors from diverse backgrounds. And most importantly, they cover a highly sensitive topic that concerns us all, being present on both the physical and psychological levels. Beyond the information of deaths which is important to historical and demographic studies, there is so much more that can be extracted from the texts: “An obituary certainly lists basic details about the life and death of a citizen, but it also does more. An obituary distills, publishes, and thus legitimizes something more abstract than the mere facts” (Hume, 2000: 14). Indeed, obituaries reveal information about language and culture.

An example of a cultural approach is Janice Hume’s (2000) study of obituaries. She sees the potential to extract society’s cultural values through the various highlighted attributes of the deceased in the texts. By collecting more than 8,000 American obituaries from 1818 to 1930 she revealed how the values have changed through major turning points in the nation’s cultural and political history, reflected in the change of highlighted attributes (Hume, 2000).

Moses & Marelli (2003) is an example of a discursive approach to obituaries. They studied the compositional differences between edited and family-authored texts from *The New York Times*, and argue that

the textual arrangements and content of obituaries provide an understanding of how those who compose obituaries regard the death and life of the deceased and more generally, the important cultural elements of dying and living in our society. (Moses & Marelli, 2003: 123)

They conclude that the social construction of death is situated both temporally (date and age) and spatially (place), where time is especially important. In addition, the family-authored texts are naturally more subjective and less specific, using temporal adverbial phrases such as *suddenly* or *after long/short illness*, or other modifying adverbials like *peacefully* or *in his sleep*. This seems to reflect an idealised concept of “the good death” (Ibid: 128–129).

As mentioned in the introduction, studies of euphemisms have also used obituaries as material. In 1988, the Australian researchers Keith Allan and Kate Burridge collected 536 ‘Death’ and ‘In Memoriam’ notices from the Melbourne *Sun* in order to identify euphemisms for ‘death’. The results were significant; the verb *die* occurred only once, in the rest of the obituaries the message was euphemised (Allan & Burridge, 1991: 161). They argue that the high frequency of euphemisms is due to the fact that death is a fear-based taboo. The fear arises from the uncertainties of death; no one knows what will

happen once we die. The only certainty is the subsequent corruption of the body, which indeed does only support the anxiety. Euphemisms are then used as a linguistic shield to distance ourselves from the discomfort of not knowing (Ibid: 153).

Another study of euphemism (as mentioned in the introduction), by Eliecer C. Fernández (2006), was conducted by collecting 228 obituaries digitally from two Irish newspapers from the 1840s, where all euphemisms identified were classified according to their method of formation and corresponding linguistic level (semantic, lexical or morphological). The most frequent level of formation was semantic, as in metaphors, metonyms, hyperboles, circumlocutions etc., of which the bulk was metaphors. The number of metaphorical expressions corresponded to almost three quarters of the euphemistic substitutes found, clearly indicating the importance of metaphors in formation of euphemisms in the context of obituaries. For that reason, Fernández analysed the metaphors according to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which will be outlined in the next section.

From the examples above, we can see that obituaries provide fruitful material for various kinds of studies. When studying the language of death, obituaries are especially interesting because the taboo topic is strictly unavoidable in this context. We can hence extract information on how we talk about death, and subsequently how we understand and interpret the nature of dying through analysis of metaphors. The present thesis will employ Conceptual Metaphor Theory to metaphors found in the contemporary obituaries in order to answer the thesis questions.

2.2 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

From the classical era till late twentieth century, the traditional view of metaphors has roughly been that of a decorative approach. Metaphor had a peripheral role in language, no role in thought, was non-essential in daily communication, but mainly used as poetic decoration to plain language, or as a rhetorical device when ordinary language fell short (Deignan, 2005: 2; Saeed, 2009: 359; Kövecses, 2002: viii). Cognitive linguistics, and Conceptual Metaphor Theory introduced by Lakoff & Johnson (1980), turns this theory on its head and places metaphors initial to language. The theory involves a view of metaphor going beyond that of pointing to similarities between different entities or objects; instead, it is a means to create, structure and organise reality (Fernández, 2006:

106). It is in fact essential to how we structure our thinking and knowledge, and to understand abstract language (Deignan, 2005: 14–15).

“Why do we use expressions metaphorically instead of saying exactly and literally what we mean?” asks philosopher John Searle (1993: 83). Arguing that metaphors are definitely present in contexts beyond poetry and art, his explanation is simple: it is indeed possible to say something literally, but a literal expression will involve loss or change of meaning compared to a metaphorical expression due to different connotations. Hence, metaphorical expressions are used intentionally in everyday contexts to evoke certain meanings beyond literal language. Furthermore, he argues that there are some cases where the literal phrasing may seem inadequate in the contextual situation and metaphor may thus function as a mitigating tool.² Although questioning traditional theories of metaphor, Searle’s explanation only proves a demand for metaphor beyond that of a purely decorative device. Conceptual Metaphor Theory, however, answers the question in quite a different manner: there are certain abstract concepts where literal paraphrase is simply not possible, especially paraphrases that are “exactly and literally what we mean”. These abstract topics are understood largely or entirely through metaphors, and include those very central to our existence, such as birth, love and death (Deignan, 2005: 14). By nature, we relate abstract topics to our social and bodily experiences through metaphorical and figurative language in order to understand them; e.g. as mentioned in the introduction, the abstract topic time is largely understood through the tangible concept of money. In this way we are able to conceptualise the topic, and to structure our knowledge and thoughts about it.

2.2.1 The phenomenon metaphor

In a broad sense, the essence of metaphor is equal in both classical and contemporary theories; it involves understanding one domain of experiences in terms of another domain of experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 5). The main difference between the two approaches is that contemporary theory of metaphor distinguishes between ‘metaphor’ as individual linguistic expressions and ‘metaphor’ as conceptual mappings:

[...] the word “metaphor” has come to be used differently in contemporary metaphor research. It has come to mean “a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system.” The term “metaphorical expression” refers to a linguistic expression (a word, phrase, or

² This is indeed the case of euphemism; e.g., it seems more appropriate to greet a colleague you have not seen for a while with, ‘you have *lost weight*’ instead of stating ‘you have become skinny’.

sentence) that is the surface realization of such a cross-domain mapping (this is what the word “metaphor” referred to in the old theory). (Lakoff, 1993: 203)

To give an illustrating example, let us say that you know someone who has experienced a tough situation in life and is now uncertain what to do next. To cheer your friend up, you tell him something like:

A: Life is a bumpy ride, it has its ups and downs, but you should hold on and enjoy it.

This metaphorical utterance consists of several individual linguistic expressions where life is described in terms of a ride. We can imagine the conversation continues:

B: I regret going down that path. Now I’m lost and don’t know where I’ll end up.

A: Don’t worry, you just have to get through this and move on. You had a good start in life and you will go far before you reach the end of the road.

By looking at these phrases we can see that the *course* of life is not only described, but also understood in terms of a journey. It has a *starting point*, birth, and we learn as we go. During life we experience smaller or larger *impediments*, we can *hit an obstacle* that *hinder* us from continuing *going forward* or we can *get lost*, and sometimes we choose a different *pathway* than we planned. When we die, the journey has reached its *destination*. In this case, ‘life’ is a target domain conceptualised in terms of the source domain ‘journeys’. All these phrases are individual metaphorical linguistic expressions, but together they are manifestations of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY³ (Kövecses, 2002: 4).

2.2.2 Conceptual mappings

As stated above, the target domain ‘life’ is often understood in terms of the source domain ‘journey’, and we can see that there is a system of correspondences between the two domains. Constituent conceptual elements from journeys correspond to constituent elements of life: living persons correspond to travellers; birth and death correspond to starting point and destination; vital choices correspond to pathways; difficulties in life correspond to impediments to travel,

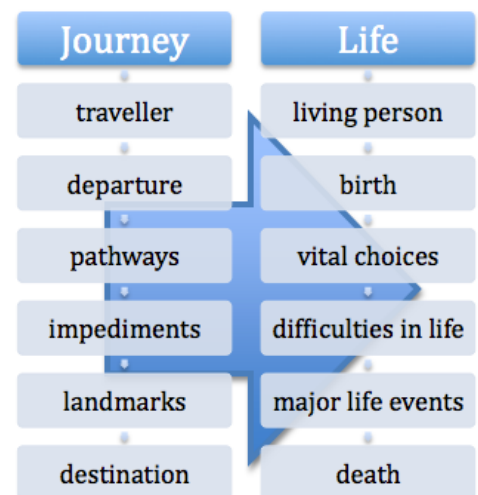


Figure 1: The source domain ‘journey’ is mapped onto the target domain ‘life’

³ Metaphorical mappings are written in small caps in accordance with Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and conventions of contemporary metaphor theory. Unless otherwise stated, italics highlight metaphorical expressions or relevant aspects of a sentence, while new terms are underlined when introduced.

and major life events correspond to landmarks along a journey (Deignan, 2005; Kövecses, 2002; Lakoff, 1993). The correspondences permit us to reason about life by using the knowledge we have about journeys; the ideas and knowledge of the source domain is hence mapped onto the target domain, and could be illustrated as in Figure 1. Our metaphorical mapping can be named LIFE IS A JOURNEY and thus consists of the set of conceptual correspondences listed in Figure 1 (Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Deignan, 2005; Kövecses, 2002; Marín-Arrese, 1996).

Similarly, the domain of journeys can be mapped to other abstract concepts, and Kövecses (2002) gives a list of correspondences between ‘journeys’ and ‘love’ in the mapping LOVE IS A JOURNEY: Lovers are travellers, the relationship is the vehicle, the difficulties experienced are the obstacles encountered etc. Although it may seem that the elements of the target domain may have been there all along and that people came up with the metaphors because of the similarities, Kövecses argues that this is completely wrong:

The domain of love did not have these elements *before it was structured* by the domain of journey. It was the application of the journey domain to the love domain that provided the concept of love with this particular structure or set of elements. In a way, it was the concept of journey that “created” the concept of love. (2002: 7, his highlighting)

‘Journey’ is essential to our understanding of the concepts of life and love. In effect, metaphors “impose” meanings on structures of reality, thereby creating reality in each language and culture. Other languages may thus understand life and love in terms of different domains than journeys.

Notice, however, that even though the conceptual metaphor formula is TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN, the mappings will always have only partial correspondence. A fully corresponding mapping would imply that one conceptual domain is exactly the same as another, which is not the case. Only a part of the source domain is mapped onto the target domain, which highlights and provides structure for certain aspects of the target domain: e.g. the source domain ‘journey’ highlights and focuses on progress and content in target domains ‘life’ and ‘love’ (Kövecses, 2002).

2.2.3 Experience and universality

Which source domains we choose are not random: “The choice of a particular source to go with a particular target is motivated by an experiential basis” (Kövecses, 2005: 6). The conceptual structures are thus formed by our social and bodily experiences. Such

pre-conceptually embodied experiences include our perception, physical mobility and ability to form rich mental images, as well as image schemas:

Image schemas are relatively simple structures that constantly recur in our everyday bodily experience: CONTAINERS, PATHS, LINKS, FORCES, BALANCE, and in various orientations and relations: UP-DOWN, FRONT-BACK, PART-WHOLE, CENTER-PERIPHERY, etc. (Lakoff, 1987: 267)

For example, we metaphorically view good things as ‘up’ and bad things as ‘down’.

These spatial metaphors have several submappings such as HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN or CONSCIOUS IS UP; UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN etc. Both of these, i.e. up and down, are based on physical experience: a sleeping or otherwise unconscious person is physically lying down, and an erect posture signifies a positive emotional state in contrast to a drooping posture (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 14–15). Such “primary” metaphors are learned subconsciously and automatically. This bodily experience is universal to all humans (at least for UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN); hence it can be argued that the metaphor is universal too. Non-universal metaphors, on the other hand, are based on other physical and social experiences, and can be language-specific or culture-specific, or even vary within languages or cultures (Kövecses, 2005: 2–4).

2.3 Metonymy and metaphonymy

Although considered as a clearly distinct phenomenon, metonymy is closely related to metaphor and should be offered some attention. Metonymy is also a conceptual “figure of speech” important in cognitive linguistics. Rather than using a source domain’s elements (e.g. traveller or departure in the journey-metaphor) for a target domain, such as in metaphors, metonymies are lexical expressions in which one entity or thing indicates, or gives mental access to, another entity. We get mental access to a target entity through a vehicle entity if the two belong to the same domain. For example, “We need some *good heads* for the project” is a PART FOR WHOLE-metonymy, where *good heads* is the vehicle entity that directs attention to the target entity *smart-thinking people* (Kövecses, 2002: 144–145). How to distinguish the two phenomena is not always clear-cut, but Lakoff & Johnson characterise their functions as two different kinds of processes:

Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy, on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, that is, it allows us to use one entity to *stand for* another. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 36, their highlighting)

Where metaphor uses two distinct domains and has the typical mapping pattern ‘A IS B’, metonymy remains within one domain and has the pattern ‘A FOR B’, alternatively metaphoric ‘TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN’ versus metonymic ‘VEHICLE ENTITY FOR TARGET ENTITY’.

However, other theorists (e.g. Bultinck, 1998; Goossens, 1995) have argued that such a clear-cut distinction is not possible. Metaphor and metonymy may interact in many forms and can be hard to differentiate. A cover term for this phenomenon is metaphonymy. Two basic types of metaphonymy generally occur:

The *integrated* metaphonymies which include metonymy within metaphor and metaphor within metonymy on the one hand and *cumulative* metaphonymies which include metaphor from metonymy and metonymy from metaphor on the other. (Bultinck, 1998: 20)

The more frequent type is the metaphor from metonymy pattern, where a metaphorical expression is based on a metonym. The expressions may be metonymic or metaphoric depending on context, and “to use them metonymically, [is to refer] to a scene where both the non-linguistic action reading and the linguistic action reading are relevant, and it is that metonymic reading which is the basis for the metaphorical use” (Goossens, 1995: 168). Goossens (1995) and Bultinck (1998) exemplify with the expression “Say something with one’s tongue in one’s cheek”, which has its metonymic basis from a scene where a speaker literally does this action while saying something he does not mean. The tongue in the cheek is intentionally linked up with the speaker’s irony (Bultinck, 1998). Metaphorisation, however, takes place when the expressions are used to describe the action or event when the designated action does not occur (Vanparrys, 1995: 33). So in this case, the metaphor is found in that something is said *as if* having one’s tongue in one’s cheek; the metonymic donor scene is mapped onto the target scene (Bultinck, 1998; Goossens, 1995). As a consequence, the scene of utterance, and sometimes the speaker’s intention, is crucial in order to interpret whether a metaphonymic expression should be considered a metonym or a metaphor.

2.4 Conceptualisations of death

We have already seen that the topics of life and love are hard to explain without using the journey-metaphor, but what about death? Indeed, death can be structured within the domain of journeys too; the phrase “he is *gone*” is not a rare sight. But since death is a topic of great uncertainty and taboo, various domains may be used to try to structure

what we think may have happened when someone has died. Different cultures and subcultures may reveal, either consciously or unconsciously, their beliefs or understandings of death through metaphorical language. A number of researchers using Conceptual Metaphor Theory have studied conceptualisations of death, on the basis of different material; some of the most relevant of these studies will be presented here.

2.4.1 A contrastive study of metaphors in English and Spanish

In a journal article from 1996, the Spanish linguist Marín-Arrese reveals that in different expressions of death there is an underlying coherent conceptual organisation, which is identical in English and Spanish (1996). More specifically, this organisation can be shown through our different domains of physical and social experience and our ability to form rich mental images or spatial image-schemas (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1980 for a more thorough discussion). The expressions in Marín-Arrese's study are categorised according to these experiences as source domains, resulting in two main groups:

1. Physical and socio-cultural domains

- (a) Physiological effects of death, which include the mapping DEATH IS SLEEP and the metonymic principle THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH.
- (b) Personifications, where a wide variety of experiences with non-human entities can be understood in terms of human characteristics and activities (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 33), giving the mapping DEATH IS A PERSON.
- (c) A series of expressions of death are derived from a religious system of beliefs, especially from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which mainly form the basis for DEATH IS ETERNAL LIFE.
- (d) There are a number of expressions which origin are from other socio-cultural beliefs and practices, some related to violence or gambling, others to theatre or business (e.g. "to cash out"), but they all fit the mapping DEATH IS THE FINAL ACT.

2. Spatial domains

- (e) Both life and death can be conceptualised as containers where there is a boundary between the two to cross. Dying is thus to exit one container and enter another: LIFE ON EARTH IS A CONTAINER and DEATH IS A CONTAINER.

- (f) The DEATH IS A JOURNEY-mapping is structured from experiences of a path schema, where dying is conceptualised as a journey from a starting point (source) along a pathway (path) to a destination (goal).
- (g) Similarly, death can be conceptualised as the goal of the process of life, so that life is viewed with a starting point and end point, following the passage of time, through the metaphor DEATH IS THE LAST HOUR or DEATH IS THE END.
- (h) In correspondence with the up-down-schema mentioned in the section 2.2.3, death can be viewed through the experience of someone physically lying down: LIFE IS UP and DEATH IS DOWN.
- (i) Finally, expressions that view death as a disconnection with life are conceptualised through a link schema, a bonding structure between two entities. Life is viewed as the link that connects our being with this world and DEATH IS THE SEVERING from it (Marín-Arrese, 1996).

Marín-Arrese uncovers several similarities in experiential source domains of metaphorical expression between English and Spanish. Her study is interesting because it raises the question whether these metaphors could be universal or not, as they are found across two languages and cultures at least. Her source of material is not listed, however, but likely based on her own introspection and experience.

2.4.2 Bultinck's *Metaphors we die by*

In 1998, the Belgian researcher Bert Bultinck studied death-related expressions to investigate which conceptualisations of death occur in contemporary English language. He collected a corpus of expressions from the English thesaurus *Roget's Thesaurus* from 1988, which was double-checked with a dictionary. His main argument for using a thesaurus is the serious lexicographic work it is based on, which will reflect the state of affairs in a given language in a given point of time (1998: 2). This approach does, however, have a few drawbacks; in Bultinck's case, for instance, it is limited to the lexicographic work up to 1988 only, which excludes a whole decade (1988–1998) of contemporary language. In addition, the organisation of the thesaurus limits the researcher to extract meaning from context: the lemma is organised into what part of speech it belongs to (nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) and not necessarily with

examples of full sentences. As a consequence, the context and some collocations had to be partly constructed by the researcher.

Nevertheless, regardless of method of collecting data, Bultinck (1998) created a thorough and useful classification scheme after analysing the source domains of the conceptualisations he found. He narrowed down his material of 125 expressions into twelve categories according to similar characteristics and did not focus on our embodied pre-conceptual experience unless when necessary. Some categories partly overlap because of nuances and different focus; strictly separated groups may seem an impossible task in any case. The order of the following list is arbitrary in terms of degree of metaphoricity, but the first three groups are those that covered the bulk of expressions in Bultinck's corpus (1998: 23).

1. Physiological effects of death

This group covers mostly expressions with a metonymic basis from the observable bodily changes when death occurs. Bultinck does not call this experience, but rather common folk theory. This folk theory consists of the following factors: (a) decreased body temperature, (b) rigidity of the body, along with (c) malfunctioning of one or more vital organs and the perceptual system, and eventually (d) disintegration of the whole body. The metonymic basis occurs when observable effects of death are mapped onto the larger domain of death. Examples of expressions are:

(2.1) He *resigned his breath*⁴

(2.2) He *closed his eyes*

2. Death as movement

This group covers various expressions where death is conceptualised as movement in general. There are several subgroups, like movement to the grave; movement to unspecified end-point or destination; movement as a journey to an end-point or "afterworld"; or movement as crossing of borders (in this world opposed to the "afterworld"). Examples include:

(2.3) He *passed away*

(2.4) Let us pray for *the departed*

(2.5) He *went* to heaven

⁴ All examples in the following twelve groups are Bultinck's (1998); the italicisations are mine.

3. Death as downward movement

In contrast to the previous group, downward movement is not considered to be a journey, but rather a sudden, dynamic change of position of the dying person, which ends in a motionless state:

(2.6) The brave men who *have fallen* in the struggle will be honoured this afternoon

(2.7) Our member of parliament *dropped* dead at a public meeting

The end-point of this downward movement implies a firm and irreversible contact with a surface, either the floor, the ground or even the bottom of the sea:

(2.8) The patient was *sinking* fast and was not expected to live much longer

This group also implies an earlier stage of death than the previous group, as someone may fall in battle before they go to heaven. The journey or unspecified movement can thus be conceptualised as a consequence of the downward movement.

4. Death as sleep

The well-known acronym *RIP* and its expansion *rest in peace* are examples of death conceptualised as a rest or sleep. This category is related to the first group, as the physiological resemblance between a sleeping person and a dead person is obvious; both may be lying motionless, unconscious with their eyes closed. Examples grouped into this category can thus be metaphoric as well as metonymic. As a matter of fact, Bultinck uses this conceptualisation to argue against Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) rigid and context-independent division between metaphor and metonymy, because they may interact. For example,

(2.9) He *sleeps* his long *sleep*

can either be metonymic or metaphoric, depending on context. To exemplify, it can be uttered next to the deathbed of someone dying in their sleep, which will imply a metonymical interpretation, or it can be uttered after someone have died in a car crash, which will imply a fully metaphorical interpretation (Bultinck, 1998: 42).

5. Death as loss

Although not very varied in different expressions, the conceptualisation of death as loss is common. The dead person corresponds to a valuable possession that is lost. We have the examples

(2.10) He had just *lost* his wife

(2.11) In the past, *the loss* of a baby was almost commonplace

but also expressions where the loss is seen as the result of a theft or robbery:

(2.12) He was *bereaved* of his father

This conceptualisation is related to Lakoff & Johnson's metaphor LIFE IS A VALUABLE POSSESSION (1980), where death is seen as the loss of the valuable possession of life.

6. Death as surrender

This group involves conceptualisations where life, or hope of life, is given up, or it may involve some kind of surrender of one self, life, soul etc. to a generally inexplicit beneficiary:

(2.13) *to surrender one's life*

The source domain of this conceptualisation is usually war. The dying person may correspond to a soldier that has given up the battle against death and thus feels more or less resigned to his fate. Another example is:

(2.14) They were ready *to give up their lives* for their country

This example is similar to (2.13), although death is not the enemy force, but a risky outcome of fighting for a certain cause. Other expressions include:

(2.15) *to succumb* to a disease

(2.16) the doctors *gave him up*

7. Feelings concerning the dead

Some expressions focus on the feelings of the surrounding "survivors" instead of emphasising the role of the deceased. Death is thus conceptualised as grief by – in lack of a non-metaphorical expression – those left behind:

(2.17) the *lamented* Mr. Lovegrove

(2.18) their *regretted* father

It is important that the feelings are indicated as expressions of grief in a more general sense rather than as the individual speaker's feelings. Metaphorisation occurs when the feelings are tightly connected to the experience of death as whole.

8. Death as a light gone out

Bultinck discovered a small group of expressions that conceptualise death as an extinguished light, either as a candle or flame:

(2.19) He *went out*

(2.20) He died *out*

Again, there is a quite clear connection to a life-metaphor: if life is a light, then death is the extinction of the flame or candle.

9. Religion, mythology and “folk stories”: Personifications

Group nine and ten are both based on expressions with various source domains of religion, mythology and related popularised versions. The categorisation of group nine is based on similarities of a “narratological” character of the expressions. There are two subcategories of personifications. The first conceptualises death as a person, angel or messenger from God who is felt to be responsible for the death of the humans:

(2.21) *The Angel of Death*

Or simply capitalised as in a name:

(2.21) *Death* [took him]

The second subcategory conceptualises death as abstract phenomena like spirits, ghosts or souls with human characteristics:

(2.22) *Old Father Time*

Personifications are helpful to grasp the mystery of death; by creating a face or body like in the examples above, the occurrence of death becomes more tangible. Similar portrayals can be seen in works of art where death gets a body (or simply a skull/skeleton), and typically clutches a scythe. Also the concept of a meeting is relevant to this group. If someone met their death/end/fate it implies an encounter of two different persons, even if there is no explicit personification of death.

10. Religion, mythology and “folk stories”: “Stories about death”

Many of the personifications of death are embedded in larger stories. The above example, (2.21) *Angel of Death*, derives first and foremost from Christian theology where angels are divine creatures. Similarly, many expressions from the DEATH IS A MOVEMENT-mapping include destinations of an “afterworld”, heaven or the like. Hence,

these examples overlap between the groups but are categorised according to focus or context when available. Typical examples are:

(2.23) to go to *heaven* (also a journey-metaphor)

(2.24) to meet one's *Maker* (arguably a personification of death)

Other examples conceptualise death as fate:

(2.25) *fatal* casualty

(2.26) The degree of *fatality* of certain diseases is higher than one imagines.

Again, Bultinck uses his findings to question Lakoff's rigid theory, this time against the claim that metaphorical expressions are based on human experience: no humans have experienced heaven, hell or mythical creatures, but they are still used to express experiences of death (Bultinck, 1998: 57).⁵

11. Eschatological expressions

Death is sometimes conceptualised as the end of everything. In a broad sense, all the conceptualisations of death can be eschatological, but this group is narrowed down to expressions that relate to "the last things" (Bultinck, 1998: 58). The expressions indicate cessation or end, not necessary with any specification, but rather as an abstract end-point. Typical expressions contain either *end*, *last* or *stop*:

(2.27) He did not deserve such a cruel *end*.

(2.28) to be at the *last* gasp

(2.29) to *stop* living

Quite a few of the expressions are similar to the other conceptualisations, and are often combined with other source domains. Example (2.27) resembles a journey-metaphor, but is not, because the end-point is not directly linked to a journey. Similarly, example (2.28) resembles expressions in the first group that conceptualise death through physiological effects, because of *gasp*. However, if the adjective *last* is removed, all allusion to death disappears; a breath or gasp in isolation will signify life rather than death. The adjective is thus essential to relate the expression to death. As a final remark, the adjective *last*

⁵ Still, it is worth noting that humans have experienced *actual* beings and *actual* places, and conceptualising the afterlife as a place-not-yet-visited or death as a new kind of being does not necessarily violate Lakoff's (1987) theory of metaphor being based on human experience.

presupposes a sequence of events, which gives the conceptualisation a temporal rather than spatial organisation (cf. the journey-metaphor).

12. Miscellaneous

Isolated items that do not show conceptualisations relevant for the other groups are disregarded from the classification. This group, however, covers all the expressions that do not seem to fit in the other groups, but still have something in common: a feature of emotional distance from the dying person. For example:

(2.30) to kick the bucket

(2.31) to kick up the daisies

(2.32) to turn up one's toes

Neither of the examples can be classified according to a common source domain, but they all have “trivialising” effect of not taking death very seriously.

2.4.3 Victorian conceptualisations

The metaphors that Fernández (2006) found in the Victorian obituaries are also classified according to semantically related characteristics, thus resembling Bultinck's scheme (1998) rather than Marín-Arrese's (1996), but are grouped into mappings rather than general similarities. Naturally, as the different linguistic mechanisms for euphemisms are the focal point in his study and not conceptualisations, Fernández separates conceptual metonymies from conceptual metaphors. In this way, he deviates from Bultinck (1998): the expressions that stress physiological effects of the final moment of death are mapped under the metonymic principle THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH, and the expressions that focus on the feelings of those left alive are mapped THE SENTIMENTAL EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH, and are discussed separately.

In addition to the metonymic concepts, Fernández identifies six metaphorical mappings, presented here in order of frequency:

1 DEATH IS A JOURNEY

DEATH IS A JOURNEY is the largest mapping with 32 % of the metaphors found. The act of dying corresponds to the act of leaving; the destination corresponds to an encounter with God in Heaven; the dying person corresponds to a traveller. In contrast to Bultinck (1998), this mapping also includes certain metaphors with an overlapping religious

domain which otherwise would have been labelled as “stories of death”. This is because the majority of the Victorian metaphors are religious in the first place, and the overlapping metaphors are hence grouped according to their primary domain. As Bultinck also noted, the journey-metaphor is often combined with a religious encounter. Moreover, personifications of death are also included in this group if the journey is seen as a result of an action performed by some external agent or unknown force, e.g.:

(2.33) It has pleased *Providence* to bestow upon him the rewards of his pious life.⁶

(2.34) *be cut away* in the bloom of life

2 DEATH IS A LOSS

This mapping follows the categorisation presented by Bultinck (1998), where death is viewed as the loss of the valuable possession life (see Bultinck’s group 5). In contrast to Bultinck, Fernández includes expressions of feelings from the surviving relatives and friends, such as *regret* and *lament*, granted that they are effects of loss:

(2.35) [...] Blarney, deeply *regretted* by his family and friends.

3 DEATH IS A JOYFUL LIFE

This is another religiously based mapping, in this case focusing on the Christian ideal of a joyful life in Heaven after death. Attributes of what is considered to be a joyful life is mapped onto the domain of death. In this regard, metaphors of hope and consolation raised from this conceptual association are included, e.g.:

(2.35) *better world*

(2.36) *abode of peace*

As a consequence of the positive view of death (or more specifically, life after death), earthly life is often portrayed in negative terms.

4 DEATH IS A REST

Closely connected with sleep, death can be conceptualised as a peaceful rest after earthly existence:

(2.37) *rest* from the labours of a well spent life

The main difference between rest and sleep is the desirability associated with resting. This resembles the group above: death gets positive connotations while life of earth gets

⁶ Fernández’ (2006) examples, my italicisation.

negative. Both sleep and rest are temporary activities associated with being alive, death is therefore additionally viewed as a temporary event.

5 DEATH IS A REWARD

Death is also conceptualised as a liberating reward for those who have lived exemplary lives:

(2.38) *enjoyment of the fruits of a well spent life*

(2.39) *a blissful reward in the world of unending glory*

While DEATH IS LOSS focuses on the negative results of death, the current mapping focuses on the positive results of death. This metaphor is thus also based on the metonym THE EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH. In contrast to DEATH IS LOSS, however, it has a more diametric opposed perspective, since a reward is a positive relief from the negativities in life.

6 DEATH IS THE END

Very similar to Bultinck's eschatological group, this mapping includes expressions that conceptualise death as the end point of life:

(2.40) *last struggling moments of existence*

(2.41) *pay the debt of nature*

Fernández (2006: 123) connects this conceptualisation to the source-path-goal schema, and death is thus conceptualised as the destination of the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, or the end point to LIFE IS PASSAGE OF TIME. Expressions that are based on socio-cultural experience, such as example (2.41), are also included (cf. Marín-Arrese's distinction of DEATH IS THE LAST HOUR and DEATH IS THE FINAL ACT (1996: 48–49), see section 2.4.1).

Overall, Fernández notes a positive value-judgement of death in the Irish Victorian material. The positive and negative value-judgement depends on the nature of source domain (Simon-Vanderbergen, cited in Fernández, 2006; Bultinck, 1998), and four out of six mappings (journey, joyful life, rest and reward) are positive judgements, while the remaining two mappings (end, loss) are negative. The majority of the expressions are thus positive, which reflects the need to mitigate the taboo and the sufferings of the surrounding family and friends.

2.5 Frameworks compared

The contemporary theory of metaphor (including theories of metonymy and metaphonymy) as a cognitive process can be manifested through the multitude of conceptual mappings related to death found by the researchers above. The studies show that different material reveals different examples of conceptualisation. The researchers also have different perspectives on what is considered as source domains, and as a consequence, the metaphors are classified differently. The source domains in Marín-Arrese's (1996) classification are our human experiences, which is either experiences of spatiality or physical and socio-cultural experiences. As regards spatiality as source domain, any related image-schemas are thus secondary domains, from which the various metaphors are grouped (e.g. the characteristics of a container are mapped onto the domain of death through the metaphor DEATH IS A CONTAINER). This can be illustrated as in Figure 2:

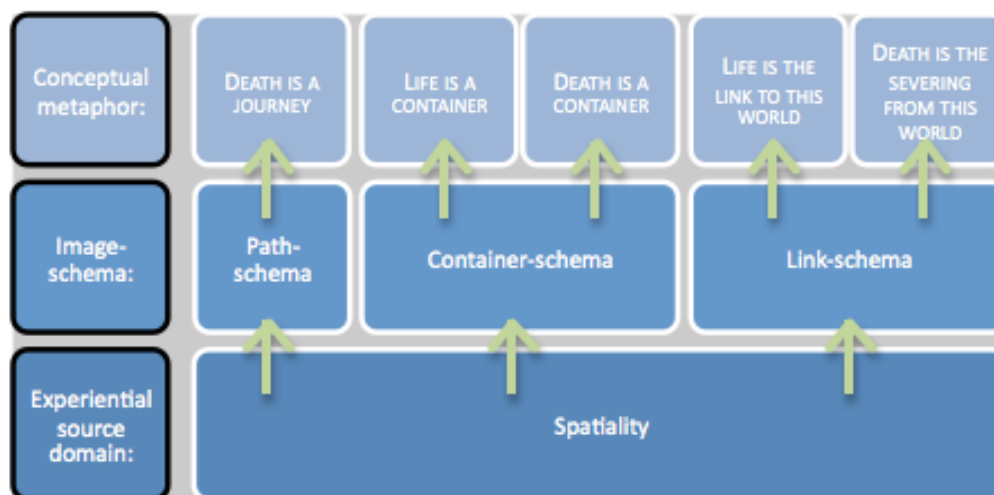


Figure 2: Interpretation of Marín-Arrese's (1996) classification of metaphors through source domain 'spatiality'.

Bultinck (1998) and Fernández (2006) have a different approach, as they mainly classify metaphoric conceptualisations according to domains based on semantic similarities which sometimes include several subgroups and specifications, and/or explanatory experiential basis. Figure 3 is an interpretation of how Bultinck (1998) classifies metaphors according to the general semantic source domain 'movement', which includes two conceptual metaphors and their respective experiential basis/bases:

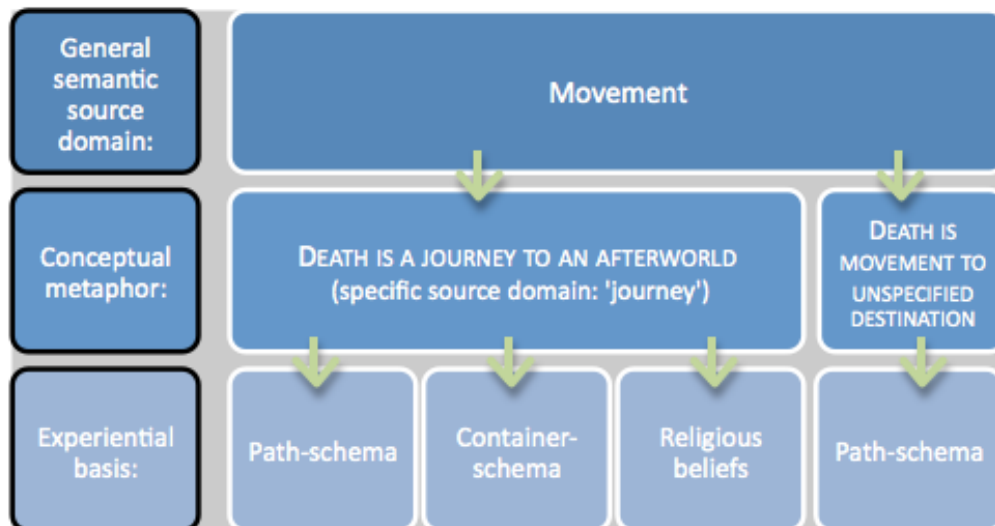


Figure 3: Interpretation of Bultinck's (1998) classification of metaphors through source domain 'movement'

'Movement' is thus a general semantic source domain, which includes the metaphors DEATH IS A JOURNEY TO AN AFTERWORLD and DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED DESTINATION, where the first entails the specific domain 'journey'.

Consequently, what is considered as source domain and experiential basis varies according to the approach of the study and the researcher's perspective. Drawing on insights from the studies outlined above, and Bultinck (1998) and Fernández (2006) in particular, the present study will explore the conceptual metaphors for death found in British and American obituaries and classify them according to their semantically related source domains. Any further explanations with regard to subgroups, experiential domains, as well as instances of metaphonymy and metonymy, will be provided whenever relevant.

3 Method and material

This chapter gives an overview of the empirical data used in this investigation and discusses the sources from which it was collected. It also outlines the method used in the classification of the material, in addition to a general overview of the extracted material in terms of quantity and frequency of metaphors compared to word count.

3.1 Corpus design

Technically, any collection of text can be referred to as a ‘corpus’ (Deignan, 2005: 75). Within corpus linguistics, however, there is a general consensus that the size of a corpus is relatively large, its method of collection is systematic, it contains texts of natural speech or writing within a language or language variety, and that these texts are generally machine-readable and searchable (Deignan, 2005; Matthews, 2007: 83; McEnery & Hardie, 2012). The present study bases itself on data that seem to meet these criteria and can thus be considered to be a corpus study. The corpora collected for this study can be defined as ‘specialised corpora’ in that they consist of texts of a particular type only, namely obituaries (Hunston, 2002: 14).

There are various acknowledged methods of data collection in corpus linguistics, but the present investigation aims for the sample corpus approach. In this approach the researchers seek to collect a corpus that is “*balanced and representative* within a particular *sampling frame* which defines the type of language, the *population*, that we would like to characterise” (McEnery & Hardie, 2012: 8). The sampling frame in the present study is written obituaries published in newspapers September 2014, which also include memorials and death announcements because of unclear and varying definitions of the genre. The principle of balance will be secured by extracting an equal number of 300 texts randomly selected from two websites that collect obituaries from a range of newspapers published across the USA and the UK respectively (see further section 3.2.4). The newspapers vary according to area of publication, size and audience, and are thus arguably representative for each nation in this specific sampling frame. However, as with any corpus, the findings in the present study will only apply to the corpora at hand.

3.2 Sources and collection procedure

3.2.1 Method of collection

600 obituaries were downloaded on the same date in September 2014, of which 300 were from the American website www.legacy.com, and 300 from the British website www.iAnnounce.co.uk, hereafter referred to as the *American corpus* and the *British corpus*, respectively. Ideally, a larger quantity of obituaries should be analysed, in order to make the present study as extensive as possible. However, due to the limitations of time and manual work, a manageable amount of obituaries had to be extracted. The number of British and American obituaries is identical for comparative purposes, and the scope of 300 is to minimally exceed the quantity collected in the study of Fernández (2006) which consists of 228 obituaries.

Each obituary was copied in its entirety from the websites and pasted into two separate Word-documents, one for the American samples and one for the British. Any duplicates were removed, although with the possibility of some being missed due to the nature of manual work. However, when in doubt, individual text strings were searched for within the two Word-documents to reveal any possible matches. Detected duplicates were then replaced. All samples were cleansed from any text that was not part of the original obituary text, e.g. hyperlinks to the respective announcement, and then converted to pure text. After manual analysis of the obituaries, any metaphorical expression related to death was copied and pasted into two FileMaker Pro files, again one for the American corpus and one for the British corpus. Note that all death-related metaphors were included, and not only those related to the persons the obituaries were written for.

3.2.2 Legacy.com

Legacy.com is an American website that collects obituaries and death notices from across the nation:

Legacy.com and its newspaper affiliates publish obituaries for approximately 75 percent of people who die in the U.S. – updated continuously throughout each day – as well as government records of *all* U.S. deaths (Legacy.com, 2014).

The website is thus representative in the sense that it includes a great variety of authors, newspapers and areas of publication. It also collects a small number of obituaries from

Canada, Australia and the UK, but unfortunately not a large enough proportion of British obituaries to justly compare and contrast with the American ones: of the 400 hits for UK obituaries published the last 24 hours, the larger quantum consisted of duplicates and only 10 % were unique. The British obituaries were therefore downloaded from the UK website IAnnounce.co.uk instead. The 300 obituaries extracted from Legacy.com represent the American material.

3.2.3 IAnnounce.co.uk

IAnnounce is a private company, part of the Legacy.com group, which uploads 70,000 family announcements each month from 340 different newspapers throughout the United Kingdom. It offers a personal interactive page for each announcement bought in one of the newspapers, where family and friends can ‘light a candle’ or leave a message of condolence (IAnnounce, 2014), which ensures high activity on the website. It is the largest collection of British obituaries and is therefore considered to be representative for the UK, and most applicable for the present investigation. The obituaries extracted from IAnnounce.co.uk represent the British material.

3.2.4 Comparability

As discussed in section 2.1, the term ‘obituary’ can refer to different types of death notices or memorials. Because of this, the search string is not further specified beyond ‘obituary’ at Legacy.com (no other general option available) and ‘Obituary, Death and Memorials’ at IAnnounce.co.uk. In practice, this means that the corpora consist of simple announcements of recent deaths, greetings from several authors to the same deceased person, as well as memorials of previous deaths. A quick manual scan revealed that all types are present in both corpora. See Appendix (pp. 68–69) for exemplifying screenshots of each website.

Neither of the websites specifies if the obituaries are edited or family-authored, while some texts explicitly include personal greetings and names, which would suggest the latter type. However, as the websites automatically collect obituaries from several newspapers, both text types are presumably represented.

When searching for obituaries published in the last 24 hours, the websites’ databases vary in size. Legacy.com allows a maximum of 1,000 hits when no search filters are added; at IAnnounce.co.uk all newly published obituaries are available (1,700 hits on the day of downloading). In order to provide a random selection, every third

announcement from Legacy.com was extracted, while every fourth was extracted from iAnnounce.co.uk, until the total number of 300 was reached from each website.

The word count of the obituaries varies greatly, both on the individual level and the two nations compared. In general, the American obituaries tend to be much longer than the British. This discrepancy is interesting and will be discussed at a later stage, but for comparative purposes all obituaries are organised within a table in each Word file that displays the number of words and death-related metaphors in order to calculate an average, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Example of initial organisation of obituaries (my underlining)

British obituary no.	Sample	Word count	Death-related metaphor count
3	O'BRIEN KATHLEEN Treasured memories of a dear wife, mam and nana who <u>passed away</u> 1 year ago. So gentle, loving and kind. <u>Rest in peace</u> . Loved and remembered every day. John and the family. xx	35	2

3.3 Classification

After having been identified, each death-related metaphorical expression was exported to the FileMaker Pro-file and numbered according to obituary number. Whenever there is more than one death-related metaphor within an obituary, each instance is given a letter, e.g.:

Sample 3a: Treasured memories of a dear wife, mam and nana who passed away 1 year ago.

Sample 3b: Rest in peace.

Each individual metaphor was identified and counted, also if several instances of the same metaphor occurred within the same sentence. Thus, the example “She passed away just three months after her husband’s passing” contains two instances of metaphorical *pass*.

The classification scheme is based on Bultinck’s (1998) organisation of source domains for death (as presented in section 2.4.2):

- 1) Physiological effects of death
- 2) Death as movement
- 3) Death as downward movement
- 4) Death as sleep
- 5) Death as loss
- 6) Death as surrender

- 7) Feelings concerning the dead (the “survivors” feelings)
- 8) Death as a light gone out
- 9) Religion, mythology and “folk stories”: Personifications
- 10) Religion, mythology and “folk stories”: “Stories about death”
- 11) “Eschatological” expressions (death is the end)
- 12) Miscellaneous

Despite the fact that Fernández’ (2006) work is more similar to the present study in terms of material and which conceptualisations to expect, I found it better to have an extensive classification framework to begin with and then to rather narrow it down later on if necessary. The twelfth group, ‘miscellaneous’, is not expected to include a commonality of humorous expressions like in Bultinck’s corpus (1998: 60–61) due to the gravity of the genre obituary, but will rather be needed for expressions that do not belong in the other groups or would need further discussion.

Due to the possibility for overlapping metaphors and simultaneous activation of mappings, which are categorised differently in the studies of Marín-Arrese (1996), Bultinck (1998) and Fernández (2006), I have added extra tick-boxes in the FileMaker files where any additional domains can be registered, as well as specifications of submappings when necessary. See Appendix (p. 67) for an extract of a record in the FileMaker files.

3.4 Overview of extracted material

The following table presents the quantitative overview of the extracted material in terms of number of metaphorical expressions and words.

Table 2: Frequency of metaphorical expressions based on word count

	UK	USA
Total word count	18,115	52,113
Average number of words per sample	60.4	173.7
Total metaphorical expressions count	326	429
Average number of metaphors per sample	1.09	1.43
Frequency of metaphors per 1,000 words	17.99	8.23

As we can see, the American corpus is more than twice the size of the British corpus in terms of running words, but the normalised frequency of metaphors per 1,000 words reveals that the British texts contain more than twice as many metaphors. Because of this, the quantities will mainly be discussed in terms of a percentage of the total

metaphorical expressions rather than in terms of raw frequencies. In the following chapter we will look into these numbers and their significance in more detail.

4 Analysis

This chapter starts with a general quantitative overview of metaphoric source domains in the British and American corpora, and as we can see in Table 3, there are clear differences in terms of distribution across the domains:

Table 3: Overview of source domains, raw frequencies and percent.

Domain	UK		USA	
	Raw Frequency	Percent	Raw Frequency	Percent
Physiological effects of death	9	2.8 %	0	0.0 %
Death as movement	122	37.4 %	281	65.5 %
Death as downward movement	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Death as sleep/rest	45	13.8 %	9	2.1 %
Death as loss	33	10.1 %	7	1.6 %
Death as surrender	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Feelings concerning the dead	62	19.0 %	84	19.6 %
Death as a light gone out	1	0.3 %	1	0.2 %
Religion, mythology and “folk stories”: Personifications	22	6.7 %	12	2.8 %
Religion, mythology and “folk stories”: “Stories about death”	25	7.7 %	18	4.2 %
Eschatological expressions (death is the end)	6	1.8 %	14	3.3 %
Miscellaneous	1	0.3 %	3	0.7 %
Total	326	100.0 %	429	100.0 %

Due to the comparative nature of the thesis, some quantitative differences will be discussed, but the main focus of the analysis will be the source domains of the extracted metaphors and their conceptual mappings, and is thus qualitative. In nature, the analysis is not extensive or applicable for both language varieties in general, as it is limited to the expressions found in the restricted corpora collected only (see section 3.1). The analysis will nevertheless bring to light potential reasons why British and American obituaries seem to differ in terms of metaphoric conceptualisations of death. Chapter 5 will discuss the major differences in distribution of source domains, but first we will look at the specific domains in more detail and how they manifest as metaphorical expressions in the obituaries.

The analysis of source domains will be presented according to frequency in the two corpora, where highest frequency is first (‘death as movement’) and lowest frequency last (‘physiological effects of death’). Conceptualisations of death as a light

gone out will be treated in the ‘miscellaneous’ category due to its low frequency, while unattested source domains will be discussed in section 4.10, “Other remarks”.

The examples provided will be identified according to sample number (no. + any letter if there is more than more than one expression: (a) = the first expression, (b) = the second expression etc.) and nationality (Am = American, Br = British). Thus, example (Am233c) is the third metaphorical expression found in obituary no. 233 in the American corpus.

4.1 Death as movement

As seen in Table 3, metaphorical expressions where death is conceptualised through the source domain of movement are by far the most prominent in both the American and the British obituaries. A total of 65.5% of the American metaphors belong to this category and 37,4% of the British. The general mapping DEATH IS MOVEMENT is grounded in the experience of the surrounding people not being able to sense the dead person anymore, and that the person has supposedly moved, or has been moved by someone or something (Bultinck, 1998: 31). Two submappings were generally found in both corpora, DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED END-POINT and DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD). Several ways of expressing these submappings were attested in both corpora, as shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Types of expression within the DEATH IS MOVEMENT-mapping

DEATH IS MOVEMENT	UK		USA	
DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED END-POINT				
Passed away/passing	70	57.4 %	136	48.4 %
Fade/slip away	4	3.3 %	0	0.0 %
Preceded in death	0	0.0%	91	32.4 %
DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD)				
Go/leave/depart	15	12.3 %	19	6.8 %
Enter into	0	0.0 %	9	3.2 %
Leave behind	5	4.1 %	23	8.2 %
Bring with him/her	1	0.8 %	0	0.0 %
Separation/distance between dead and living	6	4.9 %	0	0.0 %
Stay/remain	18	14.8 %	3	1.1 %
Miscellaneous	3	2.5 %	0	0.0 %
Total	122	100.0 %	281	100.0 %

4.1.1 DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED END-POINT

The most frequent metaphorical expression overall is *passed away*, which is found in as many as 133 American obituaries and 69 British obituaries. For example:

(4.1) Mike Caruso, age 69, of Pekin, *passed away* Thursday (Am5a)

(4.2) Brian (John) peacefully *passed away* on 6th September (Br15)

The expression refers to movement per se, where *pass* corresponds to 'die'. Any destination is left implicit and unspecified (Bultinck, 1998: 31). This specific metaphorical phrase does in fact date back to the Medieval period (Rawson, 1981: 204), and has remained popular since then: "over the years it is *pass away* which has established itself as the clear favourite" (Gross, 1985: 205).

One reason for its popularity can be the simplicity and lack of explicit religious grounding in the expression. It does not state any divine beliefs; simultaneously, it does not exclude any possibility of an afterlife or afterworld, and can thus be used in both religious and non-religious contexts. It seems to be the adverb *away* which is the main reason for this vagueness. It opens for several interpretations in terms of direction of the movement or manner of movement, and can imply anything from the 'soul' *permanently* disappearing to the whole body to be reincarnated in heaven. Just compare the phrasal verb *to pass out*, 'to lose consciousness', where consciousness is conceptualised as a substance, "soul" or "spirit", *temporarily* leaving the body.

On the other hand, the verb *pass* encapsulates more meaning to it than simply 'to go'. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*) lists twelve categorical senses, e.g. 'to excel', 'to proceed', 'to move forward', 'to get across', 'to be transferred' etc. (*OED*, s.v. 'pass'), many of which seem suitable as source domains of death. *Pass* has also been used as a nominalisation (three instances in the American corpus, one in the British):

(4.3) Goldie cared for her until her *passing* (Am4a)

(4.4) the sad *passing* of their Mother (Br217)

Generally speaking, this metaphor is based on our preconceptual construction of a source–path–goal-schema where motion along a path is focused. However, because of its vagueness, the metaphor may be based on other experiences. The verb *pass* means 'to get across' (*OED*, s.v. 'pass'; Rawson, 1981: 204), which implies a container-schema: dying

corresponds to passing from container ‘life’ to container ‘death’. Moreover, the experiential basis movement or shift from presence to absence (Bultinck, 1998) may also imply a container-schema. In practice, this single metaphorical expression can involve several different submappings of DEATH IS MOVEMENT, depending on interpretation and focus of experiential basis, e.g. DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED DESTINATION, DEATH IS CROSSING BORDERS, DEATH IS EXITING LIFE, DEATH IS ABSENCE etc. This possibility for several interpretations may be appealing because it allows the author to avoid taking a final stand about their understanding of death, leaving this to the reader. Instead of interpreting what the metaphorical expression says about how we use the domain of movement to talk of and understand death, this specific expression rather reflects our uncertainty of what death really involves.

According to Gross (1985: 206), however, the strongest appeal of *pass away*, and by extension *passing* (n), does not come from its vagueness in meaning and experiential basis, but from its intimations of tranquillity. The expression indicates that the person did not die abruptly or in chaos; (s)he has simply faded away in peace and calm, having the quiet ending we all seem to hope for. This ideal of tranquillity can be reflected in Moses & Marelli’s (2003) theory of “the good death” (see section 2.1.1), and in the many combinations of other tranquillising adverbs, such as *peacefully* in example (4.2) above, or *slowly* in the following examples:

(4.5) watching you *slowly slip away* (Br142a)

(4.6) [we] saw him *slowly fade away* (Br95c)

In these two examples, the verbs *slip* or *fade* reinforce the aspect of tranquillity. *Slip* indicates a diminishing feeling of control of something, an object typically sliding out of your hands without intention. It clearly conceptualises movement of the deceased, while at the same time capturing the feeling of loss of contact between the dying and the survivors, as pointed out by Bultinck (1998: 32–33). Similarly, *fade* implies gradual and slow movement from presence to absence, especially of consciousness, or perhaps the “soul” or “spirit”. Other ‘movement’-verbs in combination with *away* are only found in the British corpus and not in the American. The combination *pass* + *away* seems rigidly fixed in the American obituaries; the high frequency does in fact suggest that the metaphorical expression has become a somewhat standard alternative to ‘died’.

The second most frequent expression in the American obituaries is *preceded in death*, which is used when listing family members who died before the deceased:

(4.7) Goldie is *preceded in death* by his parents (Am4b)

Precede means ‘to go/move before in time’ (*OED*, s.v. ‘precede’), and is thus categorised as unspecified movement (cf. movement as more characteristic of journeys, in section 4.1.2). This metaphor is not identified in any of the British obituaries and can therefore be considered to be an American phenomenon, as far as the current corpora are concerned. Predeceased relatives, except spouses, are rarely listed in the British obituaries at all, and whenever this occurs it is signalled by using the adjective *the late*, which will be discussed in section 4.2.

4.1.2 DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD)

In more complex expressions, the movement of the dead person more clearly acquires characteristics of a journey. This source domain can be found in both corpora:

(4.8) friends and relatives gathered to *say goodbye* to her (Br154c)

(4.9) [He] *went home* to be with the Lord (Am250a)

(4.10) [He] *went to meet* his heavenly family (Am83a+b)

The dying person corresponds to the traveller, ‘dying’ corresponds to the act of leaving, while the destination (if included) is generally an encounter with God. Often we can see religious personifications as the causal agent for the departure, as in example (4.9). The British obituaries do not necessarily include any destination with a religious domain, while this is highly frequent in the American ones. If not explicitly stating a religious belief, several words evoke religious connotations in the American texts, such as *heavenly* in example (4.10).

It seems important to American obituary writers to include notions of an afterlife (see also section 4.4). One reason for this may be the comfort of the “survivors” in knowing that their family member or friend will be all right once dead and thus remain somewhat “alive”. In fact, part of this conceptualisation is applying attributes to the dead that are normally assigned to the living (a traveller is a living person); thus, there is comfort in making them “less” dead. A second reason to include a destination may be a wish to mitigate the fear of having a meaningless death (Allan & Burrige, 1991: 159): by giving the dead a “purpose” of dying, in this case they are meeting someone, the

person did not die for no reason. Naturally, cultural importance of religion in matters of death is also influential to why American obituaries include a more religious aspect to destinations of the journey-metaphor.

Another expression that includes a destination is *enter into*:

(4.11) Robert [...] *entered into eternal rest* on Thursday (Am60a)

(4.12) ABRAHAM [...] *entered into rest* September 3 (Am88a)

(4.13) Richard [...] *entered into God's glory*, peacefully on July 4 (Am149a)

Semantically, examples (4.11) and (4.12) include notions of *rest* which would suggest a different categorisation. However, the verb *enter* implies movement, and the preposition *into* implies a container-schema. Death is thus conceptualised as movement or shift from one container (perhaps an active state) into a different container (a permanent motionless state). Example (4.13) reinforces the movement interpretation, as *entered into God's glory* does not signify notions of rest, but again, rather movement to a different (religious) place or state. The expressions are thus included in this mapping and not as sleep (see section 4.3 for further discussion). Furthermore, such expressions are only found in the American corpus, which is arguably due to their religious connotations.

Other journey-expressions focus specifically on the departure, rather than destination or movement in general:

(4.14) After two months of hospice care, *he left this world peacefully* (Am8e)

(4.15) Till memories fail and *life departs* (Br185)

In example (4.14), the focus is the person leaving *this world* specifically, instead of departure per se. In terms of the source–path–goal schema, the source (*this world*) is the focal point, as well as manner of leaving (*peacefully*), rather than path (movement) or goal (destination). In example (4.15), however, it is life that embarks on a journey, rather than the person himself, as is the case in example (4.14). This conceptualisation of life departing seems in fact to be based on a combination of a container-schema and a link-schema: The body (container) contains life (substance), until death *severs* 'life' from container 'body', resulting in life moving to another unspecified container. Thus, this conceptualisation resembles Marín-Arrese's (1996) DEATH IS THE SEVERING. Nevertheless, in this study the expression is included in the DEATH IS A JOURNEY-mapping because of its semantic relation to journeys. *Life departs* may equally well be

explained through a source–path–goal-schema where the initial movement along a path is focused, except that it is *life* which corresponds to the entity ‘traveller’ and not the dead person.

There are also expressions that highlight what the deceased *leave behind* after embarking on the journey:

(4.16) She *leaves a gap* in her family’s hearts (Am223b)

(4.17) He also *leaves a host of loved family and friends* (Am227d)

(4.18) Beautiful memories he *left behind* (Am170d)

This type of expression is present in both corpora, but mainly found in the American, and can be combined with any of the movement-metaphors discussed above. As an alternative, the British corpus includes one instance of what the deceased brought with him/her:

(4.19) part of us *went with you* (Br54d)

These observations reflect an important dissimilarity between the British and American manifestations of the DEATH IS A JOURNEY-mapping. As we can see from the examples above, American expressions mostly contain the lemma *leave*, while the British obituaries emphasise the person’s ability, or lack of ability, to stay in some way (14.8%, see Table 4), as shown in examples (4.20-4.22):

(4.20) We could not make him *stay* (Br95d)

(4.21) Close to my heart you will always *stay*. Loved and remembered everyday (Br27)

(4.22) You will always *remain* in our hearts (Br2b)

‘Not staying’ seems less bad than ‘leaving’ which implies a certain degree of choice. By virtue of the dying person’s role as an agent in the act of leaving, death is mostly conceptualised as volitional in the American corpus. Furthermore, if *go/gone* is used in the British obituaries, the outcome seems to get a positive connotation:

(4.23) *Gone but not forgotten* (Br65c)

(4.24) He is not dead, he has only *gone, into a brighter more wonderful dawn* (Br64i)

Only four instances of *stay* or *remain* are found in the American corpus, including examples (4.25) and (4.26):

(4.25) Her strong will to live and *stay* with us never waivered (Am85b)

(4.26) His *remains* will lie in state on Friday (Am78c)

However, example (4.26) does not qualify, referring not to a desire to remain, but instead to that which is left behind, as in (4.16 – 4.18).

Finally, there are a few expressions in the British corpus focusing on separation, and/or the subsequent distance between the dead and living, though again with positive connotations:

(4.27) Your memory is our keepsake, with which *we'll never part* (Br64n)

(4.28) If memories keep us close, Then *we are never far apart* (Br281a)

This kind of metaphorisation is not found in the American corpus, which instead relies on four variants only within the submapping DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD).

To sum up, the most frequent expression in both the American and British data is *passed away/passing*. Beyond that, the American corpus is less varied than the British and relies mostly on another favourite expression: *preceded in death*. This expression is used to refer to predeceased relatives, and is not found in the British texts, presumably due to the fact that the British authors rarely list dead relatives. In addition, American obituary authors use the lemma *leave* quite frequently, which entails a certain voluntariness of the dead embarking on the journey, while the British focus more on the ability to *stay* or *remain*. Where the British authors vary in terms of expressions with generally positive outcomes of the journey of death, the American authors rely greatly on including a religious destination. Religion and Judeo-Christian beliefs of an afterlife are indeed an important mitigating factor, because it entails that life after death will be better than life on earth.

4.2 Death as feelings concerning the dead

Whenever *preceded in death* is not used, a large quantity of the obituaries uses another metaphorical expression to refer to deaths that have occurred at a previous stage, viz. *the late*.

Table 5: Types of expression related to feelings concerning the dead

FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH	UK		USA	
The late	62	100.0 %	81	96.4 %
Beloved	0	0.0 %	3	3.6 %
Total	62	100.0 %	84	100.0 %

The expression *the late* has 81 occurrences in the American corpus (18.9% of total metaphor count) and 62 occurrences in the British (19% of total metaphor count), where family members or friends of the recently deceased are the referents:

(4.29) Born the daughter of *the late* Rev. John M Sivewright and his *late* wife, Mildred (Am38b+c)

(4.30) *Beloved* wife of *the late* Harvie and *dear* sister and aunt of the family (Br82b)

The late is short for ‘the late lamented’, or ‘the late(ly) regretted’ (Rawson, 1981: 162), which are expressions of grief towards the dead. Death is thus conceptualised as the feeling of grief experienced by the survivors because the expression semantically means ‘recently died’ (*OED*, s.v. ‘late’, 5a).

The conceptualisation is based on the metonymic principle THE EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH similar to the metaphorical expressions related to loss or physiological effects of death (see section 4.6 and 4.8, respectively). While PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH conceptualise death through the perspective of dying person, the current group conceptualise death through the perspective of the survivors. The source domain is the emotions the survivors have towards the deceased after the death. For it to be metaphorical, however, the feelings have to be tightly connected to the experience of death as a whole, following Bultinck’s (1998: 49–50) examples (see section 2.4.2, point 7). Additionally, it has to a generic feeling of grief or a general sense of sorrow shared by a multitude of people, and not the feelings of individuals. This is highly dependent on context and must be interpreted in each case. For instance, notice how *beloved* in example (4.30) is not considered to be a generic feeling as it is assigned to an individual (the predeceased husband of the person in question). The same applies for the subsequent phrase: *dear sister and aunt of the family*, where the respective sibling(s) and niece(s)/nephew(s) show their feelings towards the dead person.

Other examples are more ambiguous:

(4.31) *He is now in heaven with his beloved wife, Alice, who died in 1988*
(Am288b+c)

(4.32) Jean [is] joining her *beloved* husband and daughter in heaven (Am252b)

In these cases, the feelings of love towards the relatives can be assigned to the person in question, but also to a multitude of people. From the co-text, *in heaven with* and *joining in heaven*, we know that the persons are already dead and the feeling *beloved* may thus be expressions for death. To check for any conceptualisation, it is helpful to see if the expressions of feelings can be replaced with either the terms *death*, *died* or *dead*. This is possible in the two examples above, thus example (4.31): ‘he is now in heaven with his (already) *dead* wife’, and example (4.32): ‘joining her (already) *dead* husband and daughter in heaven’. Although we cannot know if this is the meaning intended by the respective authors, it seems reasonable to interpret the expressions of grief as conceptualisations of death, given the fact that their *beloved* are explicitly (though metaphorically) stated to be dead (*in heaven*). For this reason, both examples have been classified as metaphors. To illustrate the opposite, an unambiguous example shows how *beloved* can refer both to individual feelings as well as feelings towards the living (contra the dead):

(4.33) Also *leaving behind her beloved dog*, Maggie Tzu (Am10)

‘Dead’ cannot replace *beloved* in this case; the journey-metaphor *leaving behind* rather demonstrates the opposite, that the dog is very much alive.

Similarly, other emotional expressions that typically demonstrate grief are such that involve survivors *missing* their dead, e.g.:

(4.34) *Will be greatly missed by* six grandchildren, three nephews and two nieces
(Am166i)

(4.35) BELL STEVEN (Chester-le-Street). *Loved and missed*, never forgotten.
Sister Elsie and family, Jeff, Irene and family (Br6)

Again, context as well as interpretation is crucial to whether these expressions are considered metaphors or not. The first example, (4.34), is not considered to be metaphoric as the feeling of grief is assigned to a limited set of individuals signalled by the preposition *by*. The second example, (4.35), however, is ambiguous as the feelings can apply to the individuals listed, but also as more generic feelings towards death.

Moreover, it is not certain if *missed* is an adjectival participle meaning ‘dead’ or a passive verb phrase ‘is missed by’. If we replace *loved and missed* with ‘dead’ it is indeed possible to see that the feelings may have an adjectival function: ‘dead, never forgotten’. This example looks quite similar to a previous one, (4.23) repeated here for convenience, from the journey-mapping, where *gone* also has an adjectival function:

(4.23) “*Gone* but not forgotten” (Br65c)

This example explicitly states movement of the deceased, but as we cannot know for certain if the adjectives in example (4.35) refer to generic feelings, or if they imply death, the expression has been assessed to be too ambiguous to be deemed as metaphorical. This is in contrast to examples (4.31) and (4.32) where the context states within the very same sentence that the persons are already dead. None of the other instances of *loved* and *missed* had an unambiguous metaphorical understanding, and they have thus been discarded.

What we can conclude from these manifestations is that the expression *the late*, considering the high frequency in both corpora, may be a standard metaphorical expression for ‘previously died’ or simply ‘dead’ in both varieties. The latter interpretation is supported by the fact that the term is used for all previous deaths and not necessarily only for those who have died lately. Time is relative, but Rawson (1981: 162–163) found examples where people who died more than two hundred years ago were referred to as *the late*. Moreover, it creates redundancies, as in the following example where *the late* and *loss* refer to the same death:

(4.36) The family of *the late* Sheena McBratney would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for cards, letters and flowers received in their recent sad *loss* (Br74a+b)

Because both corpora have a large quantity of *the late* to describe predeceased relatives, we can presume that the conceptualisation THE FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH is universal to both American English and British English. However, the American corpus includes a few examples of the expression *beloved* to this mapping, which further suggests that there is, albeit not much, room for variation.

4.3 Death as sleep or rest

Death is quite often conceptualised as a sleep or rest after a toilsome life. The acronym *RIP* and its expansion *rest in peace* are manifestations that most are likely to have come across at some point, and both forms are present in the corpora. Metaphors of sleep or rest are expressed in several other ways, but with few of each type of expression, and are therefore lumped together into broader categories, which in this case are mappings.

There are two mappings, DEATH IS SLEEP and DEATH IS REST, in addition to expressions that can relate to both, here referred to as ‘miscellaneous’.

Table 6: Mappings within the ‘death as sleep/rest’-group

Death as sleep/rest	UK		USA	
DEATH IS SLEEP	15	33.3 %	1	11.1 %
DEATH IS REST	29	64.4 %	7	77.8 %
Miscellaneous	1	2.2 %	1	11.1 %
Total	45	100.0 %	9	100.0 %

In contrast to the FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH-mapping, DEATH IS SLEEP and DEATH IS REST have a large set of matching correspondences between the target domain ‘death’ and the source domain of ‘sleep’ or ‘rest’ present in both corpora.

Because of semantic resemblance and physical experiential basis, in addition to the fact that the submappings are often intertwined in the obituaries, the two will be discussed simultaneously.

The initial correspondence is that the dying person is getting *tired* from an exhausting life and is ready for sleep or rest:

(4.37) until she *became tired* (Am85c)

This expression is classified as a metaphor in this study, but it can also be metonymic: the person may in fact be tired of physical or psychological strain, at the same time as the body itself has become ‘worn out’. The moment of death thus corresponds to *falling asleep*:

(4.38) [She] peacefully *fell asleep* in the Lord (Am210a)

(4.39) Treasured memories of my dad and granddad Sam, *fell asleep* 17th September 2013 (Br132)

To be unconscious or asleep usually involves some relief of feeling pain, and death is thus sometimes conceptualised through one of the effects of sleep, as release from the pains of life:

(4.40) *Goodnight* my love [...] He lived his life to the full, *now free of pain. Rest in peace Dad* (Br130b+c+d)

We can also see that family and friends bid the person *goodnight* (cf. *goodbye* in the journey-mapping), and wish them the *peaceful sleep and rest* that they deserve:

(4.41) May he *finally get the peace and rest that he deserves* (Am215d)

(4.42) *Rest in peace* momma... (Am12c)

(4.43) *Sleep peacefully* my lovely Nan (Br231b)

(4.44) *Goodnight*, God bless (Br9)

Burial corresponds to be *laid to rest*:

(4.45) She will thereafter *be laid to rest* (Am85f)

(4.46) Maxine *was laid to rest* at Olinger Crown Hill Cemetery (Am236c)

The place of burial is sometimes referred to as a *resting place* where the dead are either temporarily or permanently *resting*:

(4.47) His *final resting place*, beside his wife, will be in Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery (Am250e)⁷

(4.48) *Resting* at James Summers & Son [...] until the funeral service at the *Chapel of Rest*. (Br262c+d)

Furthermore, the family wish the deceased person to be *fortified* or strengthened from the rest, so that the soul may recover or *repose* in perhaps an afterlife:

(4.49) *Fortified* by the rites of holy mother church (Br218c)

(4.50) Please pray for the *repose* of the soul of Betty Tosh (Br218a)

The experiential basis for DEATH IS SLEEP is quite consistent. The resemblance between a sleeping person and a dead person is obvious; both are unconscious and in a quiet, immobile state. Although there are no conceptualisations of death as downward

⁷ This expression is classified as eschatological because of the temporal adjective *final*, but is here used to exemplify *resting place*. See section 4.7 for discussion.

movement in the corpora, a few expressions of DEATH IS SLEEP are combined with a falling movement, e.g. (4.38) and (4.39). To *fall asleep* normally denotes a transition of being awake to being asleep, but it can metaphorically denote a transition from being alive to being dead. The downward movement is based on the physical experience to lie down in a horizontal position in order to go to sleep, and conversely, the vertical position is prototypically grounded in a state of being awake. Similarly, a motionless horizontal position reflects death, while a vertical position reflects someone alive (Bultinck, 1998: 43). This is also reflected in the up-down-schema (see section 2.2.3 and 2.4.1), where LIFE IS UP and DEATH IS DOWN (Marín-Arrese, 1996).

The experiential grounding for DEATH IS REST is nearly identical to DEATH IS SLEEP. According to Bultinck (1998: 43), however, sleep is more concrete, and calls for a scene of a “death-bed”, while expressions of rest are more connected to general immobility; you rest while sleeping, but resting does not necessary entail sleep. Persons that are conceptualised as being at rest rather than asleep are thus given a higher level of consciousness than those asleep, and are accordingly more “alive”. In addition, both rest and sleep are temporary actions, where a rest is usually quicker than a good night’s sleep, and as Fernández (2006) noted, there is a desirability connected to rest, which gives the conceptualisation a more positive undertone. This can be reflected in the high frequency of DEATH IS REST-expressions compared to DEATH IS SLEEP.

As mentioned above and in section 2.4.2, Bultinck (1998: 41) argues that this mapping is a metaphonymy and can be either metaphoric or metonymic depending on context. This is not something we can easily determine on the basis of the obituaries; we do not know the actual circumstances of the deaths and metonymy is thus difficult to assess. Only a few expressions imply that the persons may have died while asleep:

(4.51) *Slept peacefully away* (Br160a)

Here, the past tense *slept* may imply that the person was already asleep when death occurred, but only because the focus is not the transitional process of *falling asleep* as in example (4.39) above. Again, the interpretation of the adverb *away* is central. It may refer to movement from something (spatial), or function as a temporal ‘forever’ or ‘without end’ (*OED*, ‘away’, s.v. I and II). The spatial sense may indicate a diametric view of ‘life’ and ‘death’ in terms of ‘awake’ and ‘asleep’, while the temporal sense indicates that the person may have been asleep while dying and not woken up, thus continued “sleeping”.

Metaphoricity is no easier task to assess in expressions containing *rest*, because several examples seem to be based on the metonymic principle THE EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH. In terms of physiological effects, the body is no longer at function and can thus be said to be resting. Despite this, we cannot know which meanings are intended, and in the context of being part of a death announcement rather than a description of the death scene, the expressions are considered to be metaphorical rather than metonymic.

As mentioned, the current group includes several correspondences between the domains, and as we can see from the examples above, most of the expression types are present in both corpora, even though the conceptualisation overall is more frequent in the British corpus: the raw frequencies are 45 British instances vs. 9 American instances, while the normalised frequencies per 1,000 words are 2.48 British vs. 0.17 American. Reasons for its relatively high frequency can be the obvious resemblance between a dead person and a sleeping/resting person, on which the metaphor is based, and again, the ideal of tranquillity is met, as sleep and rest are considered states of peace and calm.

4.4 Stories about death

This category is often seen to overlap with the submapping of Death as movement – DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD) – (section 4.1.2) and religious personifications (section 4.5). Bultinck (1998) allows overlapping expressions to be represented in both (or all) their respective groups, but mainly tries to distinguish them in terms of focus: in the journey-mapping, the travel, departure or movement is focused, and in personifications, death is conceptualised as a person with human characteristics. The ‘stories about death’-group, however, consists mainly of such overlapping expressions, but which cannot be understood without its religious context. Thus, the expression “to go to heaven” cannot be understood in a non-religious context (because of *heaven*) and is hence categorised as ‘stories-about-death’ in Bultinck’s study (1998: 56). I find this latter argument faulty, as the verb *to go* can perfectly well be understood as ‘movement’ without its religious context, and we understand that *heaven* implies a destination from the preposition *to*. What kind of destination there is is thus irrelevant for the metaphor to be understood as a journey. Such expressions have for that reason been classified under the source domain ‘movement’ (or specifically, ‘journey’) in this study.

For instance, example (4.9) in section 4.1.2 contains a nominal phrase which contributes to an overlapping metaphor in Bultinck's view (1998):

(4.9) [He] *went* to meet *his heavenly family*

His heavenly family can be interpreted as the family of God (or any other divinity) and hence be categorised as a religious personification he is meeting who is responsible for his death. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as a reunion with his predeceased biological family, where *heavenly* corresponds to the adjective 'dead', and they are not responsible for his death. According to Bultinck (1998), this metaphorical expression would thus have overlapped between three potential groups ('journey', 'personification' and 'stories about death') because of ambiguity. But because of the movement-verb *went*, it has been placed in the journey-category in the present study.

In contrast, there are several other expressions with a religious context or narrative beliefs of death that do not overlap with movement or personifications. These are the expressions that are classified as 'stories-about-death'-metaphors in the present study, whereas the overlapping expressions are not. These non-overlapping expressions focus generally on what happens after life on earth, or contains notions of divinities that are not personifications, but still part of the target domain death. Of the expressions categorised to this group, all fit into a mapping we can call DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE. Table 7 shows the different materialisations of this mapping within the two corpora, but again, because of few instances of each type of expression, the materialisations have been lumped together in broader groups, here according to reference to different experiences in the afterlife:

Table 7: Different experiences in the afterlife

DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE	UK		USA	
Notions of an afterworld (place)	6	24.0 %	8	44.4 %
Reunion in the afterlife	12	48.0 %	6	33.3 %
Divine creatures	4	16.0 %	3	16.7 %
Miscellaneous	3	12.0 %	1	5.6 %
Total	25	100.0 %	18	100.0 %

In contrast to the journey-mapping which also sometimes includes notions of an afterworld, these expressions do not focus on the journey per se or the arrival at the destination. Instead, they focus entirely on the person *being* in an afterworld or living a

second life. Where journey-expressions can be based in a source-path-goal schema, the present group is based on a container schema where death is another container than life:

(4.52) [He] *is now in a better place* (Am27b)

(4.53) *You are in a place of health, life, and wonder now* (Am85e)

(4.54) *Sending you both* all our love and prayers (Br42b)

Examples (4.52) and (4.53) explicitly state that the dead person is in another *place*, and that is a better one than the world of the living. Example (4.54) implies that the dead person is alive in one way or another since it is possible to *send* something to or correspond with them. This is also underlined by the use of the personal pronoun *you*, which suggests direct speech to the dead.

Another commonplace “folk story” of death is that we will be reunited with our deceased family and friends in the afterworld:

(4.55) *Reunited* with her husband, Eddie, in time to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary, September 25 (Am52a)

(4.56) Gordon is *reunited* with his *late* wife Averill (Br93a+b)

(4.57) Honey, I love you *until we are together again* (Am90b)

These expressions can be metaphonymic, as they can either refer to a reunion in an afterworld (metaphoric) or physically in the grave (metonymic). Again, this is not possible to assess on the basis of these examples due to lack of contextual information. The following example, however, implies active participation of the dead (which is not physically possible when dead), and thus calls for a metaphoric interpretation:

(4.58) Let her know how much I loved her and *to wait for me* (Br177b)

Interestingly, the phrase may even imply a second afterworld, as in ‘wait for me in Heaven before you move on to the next world’. However, meanings such as ‘expect my coming soon’ or ‘have patience, I will come eventually’ are also possible, and we do not know which is intended, if any of them.

There is also one example of a reunion which resembles a personification:

(4.59) She *was called to join* her mother, father, [...](Am207b)

The passive construction *was called* involves an unmentioned active participant which summons the dead person to the afterworld, which suggests a personification.

Nevertheless, because it is left implicit the call might as well have come from an internal motivation of the dead person, and the expression is thus included in the current mapping.

Other non-personifications involve God, divinities, or saints, which are not conceptualised as death per se:

(4.60) [She] *wanted to be with “Her Jesus”* and Family in Heaven (Am85d)

(4.61) We hope that *the Angels are singing* and you are celebrating big style (Br134b)

They can also be portrayed as potential helpers of the dead, e.g. when (s)he reaches the gates of heaven, or passing purgatory:

(4.62) *St. Padre Pio intercede* for him (Br65b)

(4.63) *Our Lady of Lourdes please pray* for her (Br218e)

There are also expressions that focus on the belief that some people may turn into a divine creature when they die:

(4.64) Precious in the sight of the LORD is *the death of his saints* (Am38e)

(4.65) *Heaven has gained another angel* (Br256d)

Finally, there are expressions in the British corpus that are based on the belief of the dead being still present, either in the world of the living on a transcendental level, or that they are “trapped” in a “sphere” between the worlds (here classified as ‘miscellaneous’). Their presence can thus be felt or sensed by some people:

(4.66) If I listen carefully in the silence of the night, *I hear his voice* and it comforts me because I know he is all right. (Br64l)

(4.67) Our Dad who was loving and funny, *we feel you very near* (Br42a)

This DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE-mapping resembles Fernández’ (2006) ‘DEATH IS A JOYFUL LIFE’ which is based on the Christian ideal of a joyful life with God in Heaven. Although the category name does not exclude other non-Christian beliefs, it presents death only with positive connotations in implying that it is ‘joyful’. None of the examples in the current corpora has these explicitly positive connotations (perhaps with the exception of example (4.52), and the person who is celebrating big style with the angels (4.61)), thus the criterion for joyfulness seems too defined to name the mapping thereafter.

4.5 Personifications

Bultinck (1998) identifies two kinds of personifications: in the first, death is viewed as a person or human-like figure who is felt to be responsible for the death of humans; in the second, death is viewed as spirits or souls with human characteristics. In the corpora used here, only expressions belonging to the first category are found. There is little variation in the way in which the expressions belonging to personifications are expressed; most of them include God or angels. Interestingly, the attitude towards the divinity varies to a certain degree; while the British expressions are mainly positive, the American ones are neutral. Table 8 shows the frequency of the types of expressions that include a personification of ‘God’ and which attitude they entail, as well as expressions containing ‘angels’ or ‘miscellaneous’ personifications:

Table 8: Types of expressions within personifications

DEATH IS CAUSED BY GOD	UK		USA	
God (positive)	9	40.9 %	1	8.3 %
God (negative)	4	18.2 %	0	0.0 %
God (neutral)	5	22.7 %	8	66.7 %
Angels	3	13.6 %	0	0.0 %
Miscellaneous	1	4.5 %	3	8.3 %
Total	22	100.0 %	12	100.0 %

From all the expressions that refer to a god – *God, Allah, the Lord, the Saviour, Jesus* – we can derive the mapping DEATH IS CAUSED BY GOD.

As mentioned, the British personifications are mostly portrayed positively. God is someone who takes care of the dead, like a parent who comforts and protects his child:

(4.68) Ours is a simple prayer, for *God to keep you in His care* (Br175)

(4.69) *Keep her close beside you God, kiss her and tell her she'll be alright* (Br176b)

The human aspect of a comforting parent is highlighted by giving God bodily functions, as with the use of *arms* (and ability to *whisper*) in the following examples:

(4.70) [God] *put His arms around you* and *whispered* Come to Me (Br64a)

(4.71) *Take her in your arms Lord* (Br161a)

(4.72) *Safe in the arms of Jesus* (Br76b)

This can also be seen in the single American example which shows an explicitly positive attitude to God; i.e. the use of *hands* in (4.73):

(4.73) Bobbie Abig, 99, *took the hands of her beloved Saviour* on Sunday (Am74a)

According to Bultinck (1998), there is a general rule that the active participation of the dying person is absent in meetings between him/her and a personification of death, as in the examples above, e.g. (4.70) *God put his arms around you*. Example (4.73) shows the opposite; the dying person is actively *taking the hands* of the Saviour and thereby accepting death. A few other expressions, however, portray God negatively, as someone who bereaves the dead person of their family:

(4.74) *God broke our hearts* to prove *he only takes the best* (Br45c)

(4.75) *God broke our hearts* to prove to us, *He only takes the best* (Br64e)

There are only four of these expressions in the British corpus (none in the American), but they are all nearly identical. They are related to the conceptualisation DEATH IS LOSS, where God is the cause of the family's loss, or the "thief" who steals the valuable from them, and consequently *breaks their hearts*.

Most of the personifications of death are nevertheless neutral in terms of attitude of the speaker. Many expressions include God calling the dead person towards him:

(4.76) *God called you to Him* (Br133a)

(4.77) David [...] *was called upon to be with our Lord* (Am6a)

Other expressions resemble the wording of either the positive or negative expressions, but have a more neutral attitude:

(4.78) *God has you in His keeping*, we hold you in our hearts (Br64o)

Keeping may be either positive or negative: positive as in 'safe keeping', negative as in 'keeping away from' or 'imprisonment'.

(4.79) It is *Allah that takes* and it is *He that gives* (Am50b)

To take is negative, but *to give* is positive, thus this is a balanced attitude.

(4.80) *The Lord took him home* on Saturday Aug. 30 (Am92a)

Took is mainly negative as in the examples of bereavement, but may also simply imply respect towards a powerful Lord, as in (4.80). In addition, there are positive

connotations to the word *home*. There is also one neutral personification of God which can be considered to be an indirect conceptualisation of death:

(4.81) Cora was *brought into this world by our Heavenly Lord* (Am207a)

This is strictly a metaphor for ‘being born’, but by conceptualising life as ‘this world’ we can indirectly interpret death to be ‘another world’ to which God eventually will bring the deceased.

A few expressions include personifications of Angels. In accordance with Christian beliefs, angels are the messengers of God, and these expressions can thus be grouped under DEATH IS CAUSED BY GOD too.

(4.82) We never got to see him you see, *the angels took him* before we came (Br182e)

(4.83) *The angels came and took you* in your sleep, but it’s only the very special ones that they want to keep (Br244a+b)

Again, the deceased are *taken* by the angels (on behalf of God), which gives negative connotations, while in the second example, (4.83), there is a moderation of the bereavement by portraying the deceased person as *special*.

Finally, there are a few examples that inexplicitly conceptualise death as a person:

(4.84) [...] Shirley, *who was called home* on September 13, 2011 (Am278c)

(4.85) However, *death cannot destroy precious memories*, and he shall live on forever in the hearts of his friends and loved ones (Am233e)

The first example contains a passive verb construction which entails an implicit actor, someone who *calls* the deceased person *home*, and based on the similarities from examples above, e.g. (4.76) and (4.77), a religious personification can indeed be suggested. The second example shows a possible personification of death because *death* has an agent role in this clause; it is given the ability to destroy, rather than simply being the effect of destruction (of the body).

It is interesting to see that in terms of personifications, it is the British corpus that contains most religious referents and not the American corpus which the previous results suggested. However, it is a category with relatively few instances (22 British and 11 American). Moreover, it also contains a few negative expressions which blame God or

his messengers to be the “robber” of their dead family members, although most expressions in the British corpus contain positive or neutral attitudes towards God.

4.6 Death as loss

Related to personifications where the dead are *taken*, death is sometimes conceptualised as loss. In contrast to the previous group, these expressions contain notions of *loss* or *bereavement* which do not explicitly include a personification. DEATH IS LOSS is highly present in the British corpus with 10.1% of all expressions (the fourth largest group), while only 1.6% of the American expressions belong to this mapping. This mapping is manifested in the British corpus only as a loss for family and friends, while the few American expressions vary according to what is considered lost, and consequently who experiences this loss.

Table 9: Manifestations of DEATH IS LOSS grouped according to who experiences the loss

DEATH IS LOSS – to whom?	UK		USA	
Family and friends	32	97.0 %	3	42.9 %
The dead person	0	0.0 %	1	14.3 %
The world	0	0.0 %	2	28.6 %
Miscellaneous	1	3.0 %	1	42.9 %
Total	33	100.0 %	7	100.0 %

As shown in Table 9, all but one of the British expressions within this category express death as loss of a family member or friend, and it is thus the surrounding family and friends who experience the loss:

(4.86) *We lost you* but you’re always in our thoughts and hearts (Br294)

(4.87) A special grandma we can’t *replace* (Br242)

The dead person is viewed as a valuable object which is lost by the family, and in example (4.87), the person is viewed as irreplaceable. A large number of the British expressions are messages of gratitude towards friendly and helpful people that showed support during the families’ grief. In this context, death is more or less always conceptualised as *loss* or *bereavement*:

(4.88) [We] wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to all who sympathised with us on *our recent bereavement* (Br149b)

- (4.89) [They] would like to thank all the family, Friends and neighbours for the cards, Telephone calls and kind words of sympathy received *during their sad loss* (Br300)

In example (4.89), the use of *during* even implies that *loss* is conceptualised as the whole process of someone's death, and not only the death scene specifically. Of the three instances in the American corpus where it is the family and friends who experience the loss, all are found in one single obituary:

- (4.90) The *loss* of his best friend, Bobby Davis, at 15 was an emotional scar that never fully healed and the *loss* of his brother Carlton also reshaped his ideas on death and dying. The family appreciates what those impressionable *losses* did for how he lived (Am166e+f+g)

Strictly speaking, it is the deceased person in this case who experiences loss and not his family, but he did not lose his own life or soul, but that of others.

In a few American obituaries, the feeling of loss can also be extended to include the whole world:

- (4.91) *The world has lost* a very special man (Am217a)
(4.92) *Earth's loss* is Heaven's gain (Am233f)

In another, the perspective is different; the dead person is conceptualised as to having lost a war against disease, which results in death:

- (4.93) [She] *lost* her eight year *battle* with ovarian cancer (Am27a)

This is in fact the only example that has connotations to surrender, because of the wording *losing a battle*, but is not explicitly stated that she *gave in* or *surrendered* as in Bultinck's (1998) examples in section 2.4.2.

There is also one example where there is an institution which experiences a great loss:

- (4.94) *the US Air Force lost* almost 600 airplanes and more than 1500 airmen (Am8a)

The single British expression that has been categorised as 'miscellaneous' focus on the cause of loss rather than the experience of loss:

- (4.95) A beautiful soul tragically *taken* (Br52a)

This example implies a personified entity *taking* a soul, but we do not know who is experiencing this bereavement.

As a final remark, if we were to follow Fernández' (2006) classification of this conceptualisation as based on the metonym THE EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH, the expressions which include *miss* can be related to loss. When losing valuables the effect is often that we miss the object, similar to the feelings of *regret* and *lament*. *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* even defines 'miss' as "Disadvantage or regret caused by loss, absence, or by the deprivation of a person or thing" (s.v. 'miss', 2a, original italicisation). However, these expressions are only metaphoric if the conceptualisation DEATH IS LOSS is granted, and not if the family miss the person because of his/her absence alone. For example, if the phrases "we lost him" and "I miss him already" are uttered next to the deathbed of a person who just died, then *miss* can be interpreted as a metaphor related to 'loss', because the body is still present. However, if the pronoun *him* refers to the person's absent "soul" or consciousness, then the metaphorical understanding falls short. Needless to say, such a context is impossible to establish from the obituaries only, and the instances of *miss* have thus been discarded.

4.7 Eschatological expressions

Although most of the metaphors mentioned so far are eschatological in a broad sense, there are some expressions which more specifically refer to death as the end or 'the last thing'. Death is here conceptualised as an end-point within a spatial boundary, or as the temporal end-point of an event structured in time (Bultinck, 1998). The mapping can be called DEATH IS THE END, and the manifestations have been grouped according to expressions referring to *the end*, or expressions including the temporal adjectives *final/last* or the negated *longer*, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Eschatological expressions of the mapping DEATH IS THE END

DEATH IS THE END	UK		USA	
The end	1	16.7 %	6	42.9 %
Final/last	3	50.0 %	5	35.7 %
No longer	2	33.3 %	1	7.1 %
Miscellaneous	0	0.0 %	2	14.3 %
Total	6	100.0 %	14	100.0 %

Fernández (2006) bases this mapping to the source-path-goal schema, where death can be understood as the end-point of the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY or LIFE IS PASSAGE OF TIME. However, Bultinck (1998) argues that this mapping rather has a temporal perspective, and the expressions with end-points are abstract and not connected to other domains such as movement. This is also mainly seen in the current corpora. The end-point in example (4.96), however, can be seen an implicit destination of a journey:

- (4.96) Her sense of humor continued *to the end* (Am89c)
- (4.97) After 75 years, *his time here on earth came to an end* (Am166b)
- (4.98) Upright and kind *to the end of his days* (Br157c)

The other two examples suggest that the end-points are understood in terms of time, and not only because *time* is explicitly mentioned, but also because the temporal unit *day* is used. Other temporal expressions are those which include the adjective *last* or *final*:

- (4.99) They made him feel so comfortable during and especially in his *last days of life* (Br26)
- (4.100) He fought his battle with cancer until *the very last days* (Am166c)
- (4.101) A special thank you to all who cared for Nancy in so many ways during her *final* illness (Br129b)
- (4.102) He lived his *final* cancer-ridden *days* [...](Am 166h)

Granted that death is conceptualised as the end, some expressions focus on the imminent effect of death, that the person ceases to exist or is *no longer* present:

- (4.103) *No longer* in our life to share but in our hearts you are always there (Br180)
- (4.104) Although, *he is no longer with us* [...](Am8f)

One American expression focuses on completion:

- (4.105) *Your work here is done* (Am12d)

Although the eschatological domain is not frequently represented in the corpora, it is one of few (including ‘movement’ and ‘feelings concerning the dead’) where American expressions are more frequent than the British. In contrast to Bultinck (1998), none of the expressions refer to finality of physiological functions (e.g. “to breathe one’s last”), and only one expression may be understood in terms LIFE IS A JOURNEY-metaphor as in

Fernández (2006), while most of the expressions can be understood as temporal endpoints.

4.8 Physiological effects of death

Given the metonymic relationship between bodily function and being alive, we can describe death metaphorically in terms of bodily malfunction. The mapping PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH is only found in the British corpus, and in the few attested expressions belonging to this domain there is quite a varied set of physiological effects that are expressed, as shown in Table 11:

Table 11: Metaphorical expressions based on physiological effects of death

PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH	UK		USA	
Heart stopped beating	4	44.4 %	0	-
Hands at rest	3	33.3 %	0	-
Still voice	1	11.1 %	0	-
Eyes at rest	1	11.1 %	0	-
Total	9	100.0 %	0	-

The most frequent expression has to do with the malfunctioning of the heart:

(4.106) A golden *heart stopped beating* (Br45a)

Because the mapping is based on a metonymy, it is quite possible that this is the actual death scene of the respective persons. However, the adjective *golden* gives connotations of figurative language, which suggests that the expression is in favour of a metaphorical understanding rather than a metonymic one.

The remaining expressions focus on a PART FOR WHOLE-metonym, where body parts are no longer active or at rest:

(4.107) two shining *eyes at rest* (Br45b)

(4.108) A *voice we love is still* (Br178b)

(4.109) Hard working *hands at rest* (Br64p)

Again, the metonymic relation is obvious, but in the context of obituaries, the metaphorical interpretation of the three examples above is preferred.

4.9 Miscellaneous

Although treated as a separate group in Bultinck (1998), the conceptualisation of death as a light gone out is only found in two obituaries. In addition, neither of the expressions matches the group perfectly, but both imply that the dead persons are conceptualised as *light*:

(4.110) *A light from our Family has gone* (Br178a)

(4.111) Though tears often flow Jeffrey, *you continue to shine brightly* in our lives daily (Am195a)

The British example (4.110) resembles Bultinck's (1998) category the most, but it does not include the particle *out*. This may in fact imply that the person is a light that has 'moved' (as in *gone* in the movement-mapping) rather than being 'extinguished', which is the reason for classifying it as 'miscellaneous'. In the American example, (4.111), *shine brightly* gives connotations to a light, but it may also refer to something that glimmers or reflects light. It also states that the dead person *continues to shine* even if dead, which rather contradicts the mapping DEATH IS A LIGHT GONE OUT.

Another interesting expression which does not really fit any of the categories above is:

(4.112) Services conclude with *committal* (Am14c)

Here, the funeral ceremony ends with a *committal*. According to *The OED* (s.v. 'committal'), this means to 'entrust', 'give in charge', 'consign', 'commend' etc. This expression may thus be metonymic, as in 'to commit the body into the grave/soil/flames', or metaphoric as in 'to consign the dead to God/Mother Earth/higher spirit etc.' Once again, the obituary does not provide this necessary contextual information, but the expression has been included because of its rather figurative connotations.

4.10 Other remarks

In the material studied here there are no metaphors that belong to the mappings DEATH IS DOWNWARD MOVEMENT or DEATH IS SURRENDER (see Table 3). The absence of the first mapping may be motivated by the wish for tranquillity when dying, and therefore any instances where death actually occurred as a fall or downward movement, a more

tranquil metaphor or wording is preferred: Bultinck's (1998) example "The brave men who *have fallen*" (2.6) does not seem to refer to individual deaths, as the obituaries of the current corpora do, and the other example "he *dropped dead*" (2.7) gives connotations to a violent or a humorous understanding. The sincerity and individuality of the genre obituary excludes the likeliness for such metaphors to occur.

The ideal of tranquillity may also account for the absence of expressions relating to surrender, as the source domain of these expressions is generally war. For instance, "to *surrender one's life*" (2.13) gives connotations of a failed fight for survival, instead of a peaceful and quiet death that preserves the dignity of the deceased person.

Another significant finding is the many instances in the British corpus where all explicit allusion to death is completely left out and replaced by an adverb:

(4.113) CHARNOCK *Peacefully* on 6th September 2014 at Royal Preston Hospital (Br101)

(4.114) GALBRAITH *Suddenly but peacefully* at home on Monday 1st September 2014 (Br197)

A total of 56 obituaries in the British corpus omit the verb *died* (or any other metaphorical verb for death), but include adverbs of manner, such as *peacefully* and *suddenly*. The adverbs are metonymic as they are the only reference to death, and we can name the mapping MANNER OF DYING STAND FOR DYING. As we cannot know if this is in fact a case of 'metaphor from metonymy'-metaphtonymy where the expressions have metaphorical function (for all we know, the persons did have a peaceful death), I have decided not to include the mapping in the total count of metaphors. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning, because there is a huge difference between the two corpora. For example, the adverb *peacefully* has 95 instances in the British corpus and 29 instances in the American; the normalised frequency of *peacefully* per 1,000 words is thus 5.2 in the British corpus and 0.6 in the American corpus. However, omission of the verb *died*, or its metaphorical equivalents, is not a feature noted in the American corpus, but as mentioned it happens 56 times in the British.

5 Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Comparison

When looking at the six most frequently used conceptual mappings in the material, which are summed up in Table 12, we can see that the top three are the same in both corpora. There is a disparity, however, after the three most frequent mappings. This chapter will now discuss the similarities and differences between the two corpora and offer some concluding remarks before revisiting the research questions.

Table 12: The six most frequent conceptual mappings

	UK			USA		
1.	DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED END-POINT	74	22.7 %	DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED END-POINT	227	52.9 %
2.	FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH	62	19 %	FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH	84	19.6 %
3.	DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD)	48	14.7 %	DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD)	54	12.6 %
4.	DEATH IS SLEEP/REST	45	13.8 %	DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE	18	4.2 %
5.	DEATH IS LOSS	33	10.1 %	DEATH IS THE END	14	3.3 %
6.	DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE	25	7.7 %	DEATH IS CAUSED BY GOD	12	2.8 %
	Other mappings	39	12 %	Other mappings	20	4.7 %
	Total	326	100 %	Total	429	100 %

As we can see from Table 12, the mappings DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED END-POINT and FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH are the most frequent in both corpora. This is mostly due to the recurrence of the expressions *the late* and *passed away*. *The late* is frequently used for previously deceased people and corresponds to the adjective ‘dead’, while *passed away* corresponds to the verb ‘died’ (as well as the American expression *preceded in death*). Most likely, *passed away* has remained popular because of its vagueness, giving room for many possible interpretations and different experiential bases, which seem to reflect our vague “knowledge” of death. It suggests a

tranquil scenario, and remains versatile in terms of religion; the co-text will give indications to religious interpretations or not. I would argue that the high frequency of these two expressions in both corpora suggests that they have become conventional metaphors for death, and especially *the late*, as the conceptual connection to its literal meaning (feelings concerning the dead) is not necessarily made when the expression is used.⁸

The third most frequent mapping in both corpora is DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD). In contrast to the vagueness of *passed away* this mapping remains quite concrete within the source-path-goal schema, which can partly explain its popularity: Bultinck (1998: 59) briefly mentions that by imposing boundaries on chaotic expressions we can process the incoming information more easily, and a journey will always be limited to its starting-point and end-point, which resemble such boundaries. Moreover, the imposition of boundaries can also explain the container-schema on which the recurring mapping DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE is based, as well as the final boundary in DEATH IS THE END. The imposition of these boundaries on conceptualisations of death seems to assist the language-users in grasping its mystery.

The great difference in distribution of the metaphorical mappings is that the British obituaries show more variation than the American ones. Table 12 shows that the bulk of the American expressions belong to the top three mappings, which constitute 85.1% of all metaphorical expressions. The remaining expressions are distributed more or less evenly between the next three mappings, while the least frequent mappings are represented with less than 2% each. The British corpus, on the other hand, shows a more even distribution across the eight major source domains. In addition, the mappings are represented by a greater variety of expressions in the British corpus, while the American corpus generally includes only a few expressions within each mapping.

Furthermore, it seems that the American authors mostly rely on expressions that are religiously based. Except for FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH, all the American mappings listed in Table 12 have, or can have, religious associations. For the most part, they contain allusions to an afterworld or afterlife, but also more explicit references to deities. In addition, of the many expressions that overlapped between two or more domains, 31 are registered with direct reference to, or connotations of, religious stories of death, but are placed in other groups according to their primary

⁸ For discussion of conventional or potentially 'dead' metaphors, see Deignan (2005) or Lakoff & Johnson (1980)

conceptualisation. As a contrast, the British corpus has twelve such expressions. These points suggest that religion is an important factor for Americans in matters of death. The small range of manifestations enforces the argument that some expressions may have become standard options on which American authors rely.

The British corpus includes a more varied selection of expressions which often reveal positive attitudes towards death, contain fewer religious connotations and maintain the ideal for tranquillity. Both positivity and tranquillity are reflected in the desire for resting, seen in the large mapping DEATH IS REST along with DEATH IS SLEEP, but also in the many instances of the adverb *peacefully* (mentioned in section 4.10). The positive attitudes can also be seen in the journey-metaphors where the focus is the dead person's inability to remain rather than the volitional act of leaving. Furthermore, when death is conceptualised as loss, there is a shift from the dead person, and his/her experiences after death, to how the survivors are negatively affected (in this way, the authors can also avoid mentioning what they believe happens to the deceased). The British obituary authors thus conceptualise death as negative for the family and positive for the dead instead of relying on the mitigating effect of religious beliefs. When religious metaphors are used, however, they are more often explicitly positive ('God as the parent') or negative ('God as the thief') than the neutral American expressions.

Beyond the differences in metaphorical mappings, the two corpora also vary in terms of structure. As mentioned in section 3.2.4 and Table 2, the average American obituary is nearly three times as long as the average British obituary. The shorter British obituaries read as basic announcements, with essential information about the deceased, time of death and any funeral arrangements. The American obituaries typically include a bibliographical sketch of the deceased and list family members who have died prior to the person, as well as the remaining family. This is also reflected in the high frequency of the expression *preceded in death* in the American corpus, which is completely absent in the British obituaries studied here.

By looking back at Moses & Marelli's (2003) distinction between family-authored and edited texts in terms of length according to publishing expenses (see section 2.1.1), we could infer that the British obituaries are likely to have been written by family members while the American obituaries have been written by journalists. This hypothesis is supported by the frequent adverbials of tranquillity in the British corpus and the large variation of expressions, which is typical for family-authored texts (c.f.

Moses & Marelli (2003), section 2.1.1). However, as nearly all the American obituaries are long and several have a personal perspective, it seems unlikely that all of them have been written by journalists.

Another reason for the disparity in terms of length, however, may be that the two nations operate with different publishing expenses; a third reason may be cultural differences regarding what, and how much, information is expected to be included in the obituaries, or there may even be a combination of both. The American website Legacy.com (2010) provides a guide on how to write an obituary, containing a long list of which points to include, such as bibliographical information. The guide also says that it is possible to hire the undertakers or funeral home to write and place the obituary for you. A funeral home is thus more likely to include a personal perspective than journalists, as they write the obituaries on the mourners' behalf. These facts could explain why the American texts are so similarly structured with little variation of metaphorical expressions and mappings, and, conversely, why the British texts are less similarly structured and include greater variation. It is thus reasonable to conclude that the norm on how obituaries are written in the USA, to which both funeral agencies and families conform, is different than the UK norm in terms of structure and content.

5.2 Revisiting the research questions

The aim of this study was to examine the language of death and how British and American English conceptualise human mortality with the help of other conceptual elements. We can safely conclude that death is indeed conceptualised through metaphors, based on the great frequency of expressions found in both corpora.

Americans and Britons share the same main source domains and mappings for death (except for *PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH*, which is only found in a few British expressions), but their manifestations differ both in terms of frequency and types of expression. With reference to the analysis and the discussion above, let us now revisit the research questions:

- 1) Which metaphorical expressions for death and dying can be found in British and American obituaries, and to which conceptual mappings do these expressions seem to belong?

A vast number of different metaphorical expressions can be found in both corpora, and the analysis shows that they mainly belong to the mappings DEATH IS MOVEMENT (including both submappings DEATH IS MOVEMENT TO UNSPECIFIED END-POINT and DEATH IS A JOURNEY (TO AN AFTERWORLD)), FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH, DEATH IS SLEEP or DEATH IS REST, DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE, DEATH IS CAUSED BY GOD, DEATH IS LOSS and DEATH IS THE END.

- 2) Do the American and British obituaries differ in terms of metaphorical expressions and mappings? If so, how do they differ?

Yes, the American expressions are less varied in terms of manifestations and they generally belong to the mappings DEATH IS MOVEMENT, FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH, DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE or GOD IS DEATH. It is also clear that religion is an important aspect of the expressions. The British obituaries are more varied, both in terms of mappings and manifestations; they contain fewer religiously based expressions, and focus more on the positivity and desirability of a tranquil death. In addition, the expressions are more or less evenly distributed among the eight main mappings, presented in order of frequency: DEATH IS MOVEMENT, FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH, DEATH IS SLEEP/DEATH IS REST, DEATH IS LOSS, DEATH IS AN AFTERLIFE, DEATH IS CAUSED BY GOD, PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF DEATH STAND FOR DEATH, DEATH IS THE END.

- 3) To what extent can the conceptual mappings be called culture-specific or common to both the USA and the UK?

The metaphorical expressions *passed away* and *the late*, and their respective mappings DEATH IS MOVEMENT and FEELINGS CONCERNING THE DEAD STAND FOR DEATH are frequently represented in both corpora and can hence be called common to both varieties. There is only one source domain and mapping which is represented in the British corpus and not the American (PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS STAND FOR DEATH), which suggests that this may be culture-specific, while the others are not. Nevertheless, the differences in frequency of certain mappings between the language varieties, except in the two most frequent, tell us that variety and expressions of tranquillity are more common in British English than American English, and that conventional expressions and religion are more common in American English than British English.

5.3 Suggestions for further studies

An extended report of all conceptualisations of death in contemporary English was not the aim for this study, and obviously, the concluding remarks will only be valid for the limited material collected within the specific time frame and limitations of an MA-thesis. For a more general conclusion, extensive research is necessary, which should be based on more material, both in terms of word count and an expanded time frame of collection.

In an extensive study, it would also be interesting to further explore my argument that a select few metaphorical expressions have emerged as standard, conventional forms, as they are repeatedly used in the obituaries, and to see if this hypothesis can be applied to other genres or discourses as well, especially for undertakers or funeral homes.

Alternatively, I would suggest narrowing down the sample frame, and greater selectivity with respect to genre. As the present study looked at notices loosely labelled as 'obituary', further research may for example include announcements of recent deaths exclusively, and not memorials. In addition, it is possible to be more restrictive in terms of size of the obituaries, but also of authors, where this kind of information is provided: for example, to study either family-authored texts or edited journalist written obituaries only, or even compare and contrast the two. It is also interesting to see which metaphorical choices the editor would make, if any, when writing about deaths of well-known persons mourned by a multitude of people.

Finally, the study may of course be extended to other cultures and varieties of English, such as Australian, South African, Irish etc., or even cross-linguistic comparisons, to see which, if any, conceptualisations of death in obituaries are universal. While writing this thesis, I have become aware of the many similarities, but also a few differences between conceptualisations of death in English and my first language, Norwegian, which would be very interesting to explore further.

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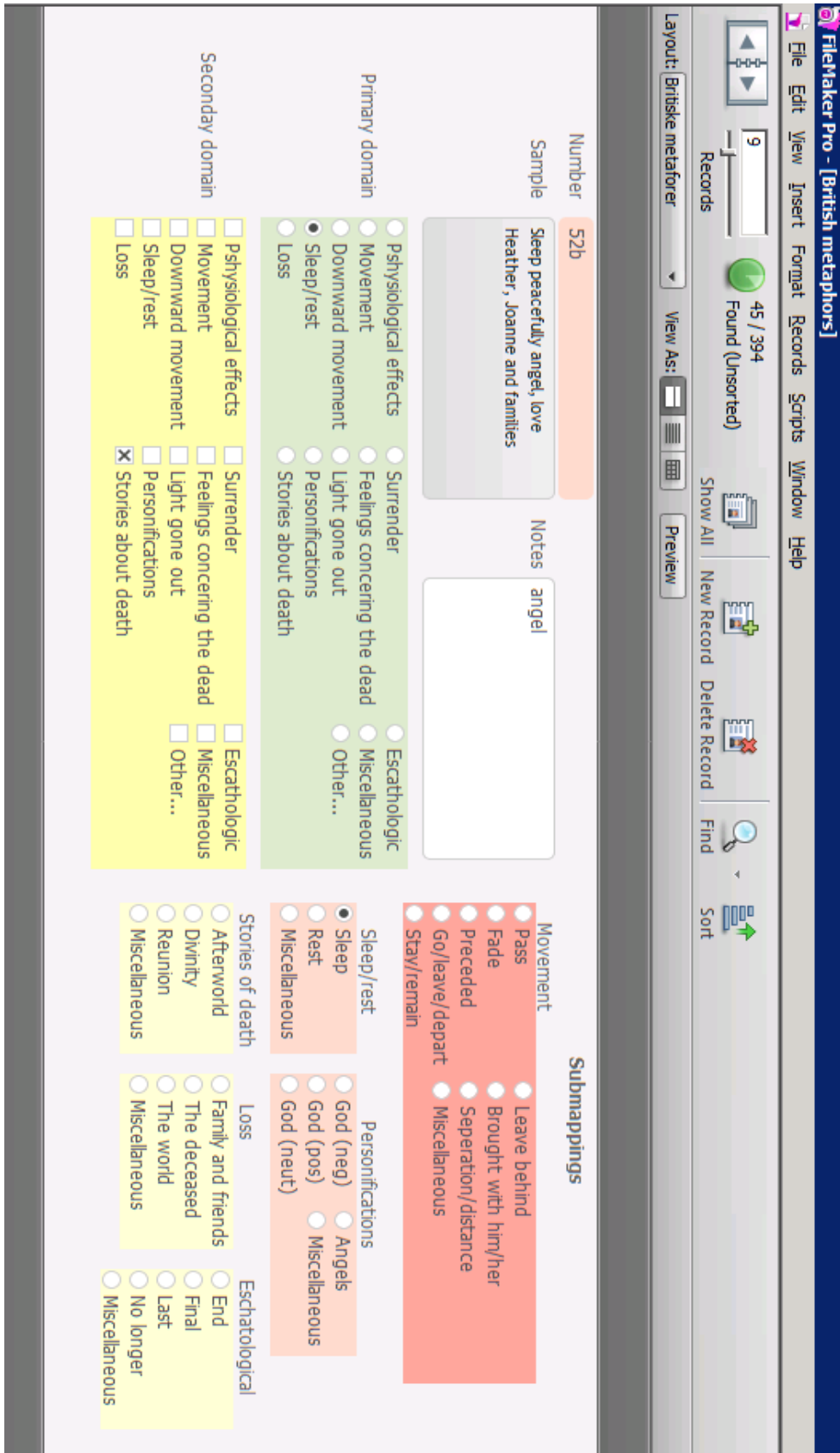
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Appendix

1. Screenshot of FileMaker Pro file



3. Screenshot of www.legacy.com

(from October 2014, illustrates the layout and appearance of the website)

[Charlotte May \(Baumgart\) Langerud](#)

Charlotte Mary (Baumgart) Langerud, age 84, of Beach, North Dakota, passed away on Friday July 16, 2010, at St. Benedicts Health Center in Dickinson, North Dakota. A Memorial...

[Read Obituary](#) | [Visit Guest Book](#)

Published online on September 19, 2014 courtesy of DUNNIGAN-DIX FUNERAL HOME - CANDO.

[Myra Lenore \(Beall\) Francis-Banes](#)



After her brave battle with lung cancer, Myra Lenore Banes, 72, went home to be with the Lord Jesus October 9, 2014. Myra, eldest of seven siblings, was born in Springfield, Ohio...

[Read Obituary](#) | [Visit Guest Book](#)

Published online on October 10, 2014 courtesy of Dignity Memorial.

[Margaret Josephine \(Brown\) Hodgdon](#)

Margaret Josephine (Brown) Hodgdon, 84 of Craftsbury, Vermont passed away at her home on October 4, 2014 following a brave battle with lung cancer. She was born in Greensboro,...

[Read Obituary](#) | [Visit Guest Book](#)

Published online on October 6, 2014 courtesy of Curtis-Britch-Converse-Rushford Funeral Home, Inc.

[FRANCES \(CAMPO\) BILITI \(Memoriam\)](#)

In memory of FRANCES (CAMPO) BILITI.

[Read Memoriam](#) | [Visit Guest Book](#)

Published on www.macombdaily.com from October 17 to October 23, 2014

[Eileen \(Clark\) Egg!](#)

Eileen (Clark) Egg! (100) was born July 1, 1913 to Albert & Mary (Cookson) Clark at Clyde, ND. When she was 3-years-old, her parents moved to a farm at Cando, ND, and she...

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Published online on September 17, 2014 courtesy of DUNNIGAN-DIX FUNERAL HOME -