

THE CONTAINER OF MY SOUL WAS SEVERED FROM MY SHELL:
Metaphors of Death in Contemporary Finnish Metal Lyrics

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**THE CONTAINER OF MY SOUL WAS SEVERED FROM MY SHELL:
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Raskaasta rockista ja metallista on tullut tänä päivänä Suomessa ainoana maana maailmassa valtavirtamusiikkia. Metallimusiikin saama suosio on tapahtunut niin nopeasti, että akateeminen maailma on vasta hiljattain havahtunut tutkimaan itse musiikkia ja ilmiötä, ja niissäkin harvoissa tapauksissa tutkimus on yleensä keskittynyt musiikin ääripäiden viittauksista ja mahdollisista yhteyksistä satanismiin tai väkivaltaiseen käytökseen. Englanninkielistä ns. ei-saatanallista metallimusiikkia on tutkittu Suomessa erittäin vähän ja tutkimuksen tarkoituksena olikin omalta osaltaan olla täyttämässä tätä tyhjiötä.

Koska suurin yhteinen tekijä metallimusiikin sanoituksissa on kuolema, päädyttiin tässä tutkimuksessa tutkimaan kuoleman metaforia ja niiden käyttöä suomalaisten bändien englanninkielisissä sanoituksissa. Tutkimusaineistona käytettiin kahdeksan suomalaisten metallibändien esittämien kappaleiden lyriikoita. Kappaleet ovat äänitetty vuosina 2005 – 2008, joten tutkimusta voidaan pitää ajankohtaisena katsauksena sanoitusten nykytilaan. Lyriikan sisältämiä metaforia tutkittiin Goatlyn (1998) määritelmään ja luokitteluun nojaten.

Tulokset osoittivat, että vaikkakin kuolemaa käsitellään sanoituksissa hyvin monenlaisien metaforien avulla, voidaan niistä suuri osa jäljittää olevan jatkeita hyvin pienestä määrästä yleisiä perusmetaforia elämästä ja kuolemasta. Näitä olivat muun muassa *olotilan muutos paikan muutoksena* ja *elinikä yhtenä kalenterivuotena*. Tämän lisäksi havaittiin, että suurin osa teksteistä löytyneistä metaforista sisälsi vain metaforana käytetyn vertaavan termin ilman implisiittistä vertauksen kohdetta tai auki selitetyjä analogioita. Tätä termiä käytettiin yleensä korvaamaan kuolema-sanaa. Lisätutkimuskohteet ovat miltei rajattomat tällä hyvin tuoreella tutkimusalueella.

Asiasanat: death, metaphors, metal music, song lyrics

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1 INTRODUCTION

Within the last ten years metal music has become very popular in Finland. It has risen from the cellars of obscurity to the lists of most sold albums and even to the attention and praise of our president Tarja Halonen. Idols contests and Eurovision song contests have been won with metal music and this has also led Finland to the attention of the rest of the world. Combined with the great amount of internationally acknowledged metal bands and large events – including the acclaimed Finnish Metal Event and Tuska Open Air Festival – Finland has become to be considered by many to be the metal capital of the world. This has all happened within a very short period of time and it has only recently been noted also in the academic world. Whatever reservations one may have concerning the music itself, with its enormous and ever increasing popularity there is no question that metal has rightfully earned this attention.

The music itself can be studied – cut down into notes, chords, rhythms and tempos and then analyzed – but a more convenient field of research within the phenomenon are the lyrics. In metal music the lyrics also hold an essential role to the listener and they are studied, quoted and even lived intensively by fans around the world. Various themes are discussed within the lyrics, but one topic rises above all others: *death*. Death seems to be an unending source of inspiration as it is approached and explored in a number of ways within the lines and verses of these songs; and to avoid repetition of the term itself, on many occasions it is spoken with metaphors. I believe that these metaphors are also a key factor in the creation the lyrical atmosphere in many of the songs of this genre.

In this study I have taken under examination the metaphors of death in the contemporary Finnish metal music performed in English. I wanted to study Finnish bands in particular since metal lyrics have not yet received substantial amount of academic interest worldwide, and this is especially true in the case of English song lyrics made in Finland. As my data, I chose eight song lyrics from eight different bands, from albums released within the last five years, with the common factor that they all include metaphors linking to death.

This study will proceed in the following order. First I will look into the popularity of metal music in Finland with sales figures and other important events, after this I will move into presenting other studies that have been conducted on metal music and eventually also find a motivation for this particular study. Near the end of the chapter I will then look more closely into the concept of metaphor, and also its popularity within our Western culture. In the third chapter I will first explain how I gathered my data and then present my research questions and the methods used in order to answer them. In the fourth chapter I will introduce my result and they will be divided into two subchapters, one for each research question. In the final chapter I will then present my conclusions and suggest possible further research.

2 METAL AND METAPHORS

In this chapter I will first discuss the origins of metal music and its popularity all over the world and especially in Finland. I will give some specific details on albums sold in Finland and explain the most common language used in metal music. Then I will discuss previous studies on metal music and also why it should arouse academic interest. After this I will take a closer look on metaphors and their definition by Andrew Goatly (1997: 8), which I will be using in my research.

2.1 Metal in Finland

Before I go in more detail into metal music in Finland, I will first have to look into what is meant with the term metal music. Heavy metal – which is also usually referred to only as *metal* – is a subcategory of rock music that developed in the late 1960s in England and the United States. Black Sabbath is most commonly named as first heavy metal band and the roots of their music – along with all metal music – came from blues with the characterization of it being louder, faster and more inventive with its low tuned guitar and massive almost threatening sound (Christe 2004: 23,30). Other most popular pioneers of

genre were Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple (ibid: 32). With inventions such as electrified double guitars, metal music has since then evolved to the various forms it exists today (for more information, see Christe 2004).

Rock music, and especially metal, has bloomed during the last ten years in Finland and grown very popular. A heavy metal band called Lordi was voted as the Finnish candidate for the Eurovision Song Contest in 2006, and became the first Finnish band or artist ever to win the song contest. In 2007 Ari Koivunen was the first person in Finland to win the Idols singing contest singing only heavy metal songs, and has since released two albums of heavy metal that have both sold more than 15,000 copies in Finland, earning a gold record for sales in Finland (IFPI 2008). Ten years ago this would have been impossible and it can even be said that Finland has become the only country in the world where heavy metal is considered to apart of the mainstream of music (Kuusniemi 2008).

In the year 2008 the three most sold foreign albums in Finland were all from the category of hard rock or metal (IFPI 2008). The albums were Death Magnetic by Metallica with the sale of almost 80,000 copies, Black Ice by AC/DC with the sale of 40,000 copies and Chinese Democracy by Guns N' Roses with the sale of 32,000 copies (ibid.). For comparison, the latest Madonna album Hard Candy sold in Finland 22,000 copies earning sixth place on the charts (ibid.). Metallica sold almost four times more albums, and AC/DC almost twice as much albums than Madonna which goes to show just how popular hard rock and metal are in Finland.

In 2008 on the list of most sold Finnish albums in Finland there were seven albums in the top 40 that can be labelled as hard rock or metal: Sturm und Drang, Children Of Bodom, The Rasmus, Ari Koivunen, Teräsbetoni, Nightwish and Stam1na (IFPI 2008). In 2007 on the TOP 3 list of most sold Finnish albums in Finland there were two albums from the category of metal: Dark Passion Play by Nightwish and Fuel for the Fire by Ari Koivunen both with the sales of more than 70,000 copies (ibid.).

The majority of the metal sold in Finland – including both foreign and Finnish bands – is performed in English. Of the seven best-selling metal bands in Finland only two (Teräsbetoni and Stam1na) sing in Finnish and all the others in English. For this reason it can be argued that a definite majority of all metal music listened to in Finland is

sung in English. The lyrics in the metal genre are also considered to be important for the listeners and fans, and they are usually printed on the booklets of the albums.

Now that I have shown that metal music has in fact become very popular in Finland, I will proceed into explaining why it should also arouse academic interest and in addition refer to other theses on metal music.

2.2 Previous studies on lyrics in metal music

In this subchapter I will look into some other studies conducted on metal music and on the lyrics in particular. Within the 21st century the academic world has also noticed the growing popularity of metal music in Finland, and during the last years there have been several theses on the subject. However, many of these studies have concentrated on the most extreme forms of metal such as *death metal* or *black metal*. Death metal has been studied mostly because its tendency towards violence in its lyrics and its connection to violent behaviour adolescents (for more information, see Purcell 2003), and black metal on the basis of the Satanism presented in it (for more information about black metal, see Moynihan and Söderlind 1998).

There have also been at least two theses written on black metal in the English Department of the University of Jyväskylä by Harju (2001) and Sourander (2007). Harju (2001) studied the articulation of femininity in black metal lyrics by looking into the lyrics of one of the most famous bands in the genre, Cradle of Filth from England. Sourander (2007), on the other hand, studied the pronominal relationships in black metal lyrics by looking into four different bands – two from Norway, one from Finland and one from the United States of America. Sourander (2007) found out that there was a clear hostile pronominal relationship between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and Harju (2001) that femininity is not articulated in a radically different form from the more common patriarchal discourses; however, neither of these results bear much fruit to the contents of this study.

In addition to the previously mentioned, Laaksonen-Määttäälä has studied ‘the poetic features in the lyrics of some Finnish rock-groups’ in 1993, Oksanen ‘man and

death in Finnish hard rock' in 2002, Vuorimäki 'the manifestation of love in the lyrics of John Lennon and Paul McCartney' in 1990 and Christenson and Roberts 'rock & roll as popular music in the lives of adolescents' in 1998. I will not go further into the results of these studies and their findings since I do not find them to be relevant enough to the contents of this particular study.

So, although the academic world has increasingly begun to research hard rock and metal music, there is still much to be researched and studied. According to my knowledge, in Finland there are studies on rock music and rock lyrics and, on the other hand, on black metal, but there remains a clear vacuum in the study of metal music that is not black metal or, in other words, the lyrics of non-satanic metal music.

Therefore, the motivation for this study does not only come from the notion that there is very little research done on Finnish – and especially non-satanic – metal lyrics, but also from the fact that in metal lyrics there usually is present a rebellion against comparative hierarchies, beliefs and customs. As Harju (2001: 5) state in his thesis, this alone creates a need for academic interest in the subject. I also believe this research subject to be important because metal music has become quite popular in Finland, yet there is only little research done on what is being sung in the songs. I feel there is a large gap in this area, since a great deal of poems and books have been analyzed, but song lyrics have been left quite unnoticed. It is rock songs – and not poems or books – that are being played to us daily on the radio. And it is from rock songs many young people learn their vocabulary, expressions and even possible attitudes toward the world. With my research I hope to shed light on this uncharted territory of metal lyrics and gain an understanding of the ways that one of the most popular themes of the genre – death – is represented in them.

Now that I have looked into previous studies in this genre and given motivation for it, I will proceed to into metaphors since they will be in a very important position in my research.

2.3 Metaphors

In this subchapter I will define the concept of metaphor that I will be using in this study and also explain briefly how common metaphors operate in the society.

Before I go into more detail about metaphors I will first define what I mean when speaking of metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5) provide a rough definition about the essence of a metaphor that it is ‘understanding and experiencing one kind of a thing in terms of another’. For example the metaphorical expression *time is money* suggests that there is a certain analogy between *time* and *money*; in our culture time is considered a valuable commodity like money and can thus share similar terms and qualities with it, such as being *lost*, *spent* or *given*. Although the previously mentioned definition is correct, I did not find it to be a sufficient and exact definition for the purposes of my study, and that it would leave too much room for interpretation. Goatly provides another definition for metaphor:

Metaphor occurs when a unit of discourse is used to refer unconventionally to an object, process or concept, or colligates in an unconventional way. And when this unconventional act of reference or colligation is understood on the basis of similarity, matching or analogy involving the conventional referent or colligates of the unit and the actual unconventional referent or colligates. (Goatly 1997: 8)

Despite that this definition also leaves some room for interpretation, I found it to be a better and more thorough definition that I could use in analyzing my data to always check whether the findings I had made in the data would fit the definition.

Although the definition used by Goatly includes the word *unconventional* there is very little unconventionality in the use of the metaphor. It is commonly thought that metaphor is only a tool used in poetic language, but as Lakoff and Turner (1989: xi) describe, it is the same tool that we all use in our everyday language. In fact metaphor is a tool so ordinary that we use it unconsciously and automatically, and hardly even notice it, since it is an integral part of our ordinary everyday thought and language (ibid.). The reason behind this lies not only in the fact that they are economic to use – instead of having to explain something with several sentences and metaphor can usually sum up our thought in a single phrase – but because they are in fact irreplaceable: they allow us to “understand our selves and our world in ways that no other modes of thought can” (ibid.).

As a good example of this, Lakoff and Turner (1989: 1-2) present a very common basic conceptual metaphor in western culture know as *death is departure*. Instead of saying someone has died, it is very common to say that someone is *gone* or that he has *left this world* or that he has *passed on* (ibid.). Speaking of people that are dying, it is common to speak of *being at Death's door*, *leaving this world* or *soon gone* (ibid.). Speaking of dead people we refer to them as *the departed* (ibid.). These are all expressions of the same metaphor where death is given similar analogy with that of a departure.

The *death is departure* is not the only metaphor for death, and other common metaphors include *death is the end of life's journey*, *death is night*, *human death is the death of a plant* and *death is going to a final destination* (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 8). The *death is departure* is also connected to a larger very common metaphor family where *birth is arrival*, *life is being present here* and *death is departure* (ibid: 1).

In our Western culture other things besides death are extremely common to be spoken of, written and even thought with a set of basic conceptual metaphors. These metaphors include for example *argument is war* (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 4-5), *purposes are destinations*, *life is a journey* and *people are plants* (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 3).

The similarity with all these metaphors is that they are so common in our Western culture that, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 3), we often fail to notice them as metaphors at all because of their mundane nature. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 6) go on to explain that the reason for this is that human thought processes are largely metaphorical, and that metaphor is in fact a primary tool for understanding our world and ourselves. According to Lakoff and Turner (1989: 2), this comes from the notion that life and death are such all-encompassing matters that there can be no single conceptual metaphor that will enable us to comprehend them.

Because of the fact that metaphors reside in thought instead of only in words, and that we know unconsciously and automatically many basic metaphors for understanding life, the writer does not have to state in detail and explain the metaphors s/he uses, but can rely on the reader to know them by virtue of knowing the basic conceptual metaphor

(Lakoff and Turner 1989: 2). As I will show later in my research, this also applies to the song lyrics and the metaphors the authors have used in them.

Another reason for the popularity of metaphors in poetry and lyrics is the notion that a metaphor always highlights certain aspects and it suppresses others. However as Goatly (1997: 2-3) points out, all linguistic classifications construct a selective perception and ignoring of aspects of the world, so in this manner metaphor is not an exception. This allows the writer to focus on a subject from the point of view he or she wants to highlight neglecting those not in favour of the writer. For example, when speaking of death the author may wish to concentrate on the peacefulness and beauty of the event, and leave out the possible pains and fears often connected to the event by using the right metaphor. This feature is also very common in song lyrics studied in this thesis.

I will go into more details about metaphors and their connection to this study in the methods section of the next chapter, but now that I have briefly introduced their concept, I will advance to describe the data that I have used in my research and the methods I have used to analyze the material.

3 DATA & ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will explain and motivate how I gathered the data for my research and explain some of the choices I have made with the data. After this I will clarify my research questions and then go into detail about the methods with which the data was analyzed.

3.1 Gathering the data

Before I began my research it was clear that there would be many ways to gather the data for my thesis. One possibility would be to use a random sample of songs from the genre that I was interested in. After exploring the possibilities of using this method of data gathering I soon found there to be various difficult choices to be made. A difficult

question was what would be the criteria for a song to be accepted as a possible candidate for the group of songs I would randomly choose from. Would it be enough that the song is made by a Finnish metal band – which would be perhaps the ideal case – however, the problem with this was that many songs that fit this category do not have their lyrics available. A possibility would be only to choose songs that have their lyrics available. What database should I use to define the possible bands? Would I only choose songs that are recorded and released via a record company?

It soon became clear that there would be many choices and that they would all bias the randomness of my sample. And even if I were able to overcome all the previously mentioned issues, there would be no guarantee that the songs I selected by this method would contain any metaphors. After reflecting on the idea I soon realized that the best choice would be to select the songs using certain criteria. This way I could also make sure all the songs I chose would have at least some metaphors in them.

After deciding to use a non-random sample the next question I had to answer was the number of songs I would include in my research. One alternative would have been to choose only one song and study the metaphors in it in great detail. However, I did not want to choose this approach since I did not want to focus too much on a single song, and also felt that no single song would be versatile enough to give a good idea on the metaphors used by Finnish metal bands. For these reasons I thought that to give a better view of the metaphors in metal lyrics it would be best to choose multiple songs.

The last question to answer was the number of songs that would be sufficient for the purpose of my research. The more songs I chose, the more profound conception on the matter I would get, but, on the other hand, it would make the research of a single song less in-depth. With this in mind I made my first plan that was to find ten songs from ten different bands, but after going through a great deal of material I realized that eight songs would be more than sufficient for the purpose of this study. This amount of song lyrics would still give a good sample of the metaphors used in contemporary Finnish metal, and I could still do a more thorough analysis on them.

One thing that I bore in mind during the gathering of the data was that I wanted to make this study as contemporary as possible. I wanted to study the lyrics present in metal music today instead of those written five, ten or more years ago. In the end the songs

were taken from albums that were released between 2005 and 2008, which I considered comparative enough.

Finally, the data gathering was finished (see Appendix 1. for a complete list of the lyrics) and I felt that I had succeeded in my goal for finding contemporary metal lyrics that give a fair sample of the lyrics of the genre and include a good deal of metaphors in them. I was now ready to move on to the next phase of my research which would be to take a closer look on the methods I would use in the analysis.

3.2 Research questions and methods of analysis

The research questions I wished to answer with my research were:

1. What kinds of metaphors of *death* are used in the English lyrics written by native Finnish metal bands?
2. How are these metaphors used?

I intentionally left the research questions broad instead of narrowing them down too much, since my goal concerning this study was to gain a broader understanding about the uses of metaphors of death in the lyrics. Since with this research I hope to cover new ground in the field of metal lyrics, I did not want to exclude possible interesting result due to too narrow research questions.

I approached the first question by looking at the metaphors of death in the data in order to gain an understanding of the variety of the metaphors used in the lyrics. According to Lakoff and Turner (1989: 15), a very large number of metaphorical expressions for life and death throughout Western poetry are instances of a very small number of basic conceptual metaphors through which we comprehend life and death, and I hoped to find out whether this can be applied in metal lyrics as well. I looked at the metaphors of death in the data and if they could be traced back as an extension of some of the most common basic conceptual metaphors in our Western world.

My hypothesis concerning the first research question was that there will be a great deal of versatile metaphors of death in the data, but also that the majority of them can be traced back to a small number of basic conceptual metaphors of death and also life. This hypothesis was based on my personal experiences as a listener of metal music and on my knowledge concerning the use of metaphors.

In order to further explore the use of metaphors, Goatly (1997: 8) distinguishes three terms that can be used to examine the metaphor: *the Topic*, *the Vehicle* and *the Grounds*. In a metaphor the actual unconventional referent is referred to as the Topic, the conventional referent of the unit referred to as the Vehicle and the similarities and/or analogies involved are referred as the Grounds (ibid.). These terms are best understood with the following example provided by Goatly (ibid.): “Life is a box of chocolates: you never know what you’re going to get.” In the previous sentence the concept of *life* is the Topic, the concept of *a box of chocolates* the Vehicle and the explanation exposing the analogy between the two *you never know what you’re going to get* the Grounds.

I approached the second research question from the point of view of the occurrences of the Topic, Vehicle and Grounds terms and whether some kind of rule can be applied to how common they are expressed in the data. In order to answer my second research question I looked into the use and the absence of these previously mentioned terms. Before the analysis I did not have a hypothesis concerning the second research question.

According to Goatly (1997: 21), it is not always clear whether something is metaphorical or not – it can for example only be a sub categorization (for more information, see ibid: 21-22) – and analyzing texts examining metaphors usually requires some interpretation. I understand that someone may wish to argue some of the choices I have made examining my data, since the metaphor exists in the readers mind, and what is metaphorical for one reader may not be metaphorical for another. With this in mind my aim was to be consistent and in the following chapter I present the results as I have interpreted them. The purpose of this study was never to find every single metaphor of death – or something that can be counted as one – within these eight song lyrics, but instead to gain a general understanding of their use in this context and find the most commonly used metaphors.

Once I had cleared the methods that I would use to attack the data and the research questions I hoped to answer, I was ready to begin the analysis.

4 RESULTS

In this chapter I will show the findings of my study. First I will present the basic conceptual metaphors and their extended metaphors that I found in the lyrics and after this I will present my findings concerning the Topic, Vehicle and Grounds terms.

4.1 Basic conceptual metaphors

In my research I found there to be four major basic conceptual metaphors under which a great deal of the metaphors in my data could be labelled. These four basic conceptual metaphors were *change of state is change of location*, *lifetime is a day*, *lifetime is a year* and *death is the end of something*. These four basic conceptual metaphors with their extended metaphors and examples of them in the data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The basic conceptual metaphors found in the lyrics with their extended metaphors and examples of their use. (Continues on the next page)

Basic conceptual metaphor	Extended metaphor	Examples
Change of state is change of location	death is the end of the road (death is reaching a destination)	“I have come to the end of my line, With these final steps I take back my freedom” [2] “Eventually all paths will lead to the cemetery” [5] “your path here is done” [6] “And a place in heaven” [3]
	death is departure	“Wept, grieved, departed” [4] “The moment to pass away” [4] “I may be gone in the flesh” [2]

	<p>death is a journey</p> <p>death is going home</p>	<p>“Come and take me away from this pain” [8]</p> <p>“The enlightenment you’ll have, Shall guide you to the end, Of this narrow path filled with thorns. Travel through it without no fear.” [4]</p> <p>“Take the road less traveled by” [3]</p> <p>“And leads my way to the stars” [2]</p> <p>“The wolves, my love, will come, Taking us home where dust once was a man” [3]</p>
Lifetime is a day	<p>death is night</p> <p>death is darkness</p> <p>death is rest</p>	<p>“When the last rays of light, Set behind these shores, Night wraps me in its blanket” [2]</p> <p>“the shadows are growing long” [5]</p> <p>“Now the lights have been shut down” [4]</p> <p>“My old friend, will you lay me back to rest” [8]</p>
Lifetime is a year	<p>death is winter</p>	<p>“autumn is here” [5]</p> <p>“the winter’s impending” [5]</p> <p>“Towards the dark womb of winter” [8]</p> <p>“Into the arms of winter frost” [8]</p> <p>“Beautiful fall, kill the light of summer” [8]</p> <p>“Hold me down, Down on this frozen ground” [1]</p>
People are plants	<p>human death is the death of a plant</p>	<p>“We are but falling leaves in the air, hovering down” [5]</p>
Death is the end of	<p>death is the end of words</p>	<p>“Our words no more</p>

something	<p>death is the end of movement</p> <p>death is the end of breathing</p> <p>death is the end of pain</p>	<p>spoken” [7] “All is said” [4]</p> <p>“Time keeps running and running, Outstripping the dead tired ones” [2] “I have come to the end of my line” [2]</p> <p>“The final breath” [6] “And take my last breath” [7]</p> <p>“take me away from this pain” [8] “Through the fear and the ache” [2]</p>
Other	<p>death is something that causes death</p> <p>death is human (human qualities and features)</p> <p>death is an animal</p> <p>death is downward movement</p>	<p>“7 days to the poison, And a place in heaven” [3] “7 days to the wolves” [3]</p> <p>“Where death walks the earth” [1] “The depths are calling, Dark waters whisper” [6] “But you will lead me to hope” [8] “My old friend” [8]</p> <p>“The wolves, my love, will come” [3] “Bare message, my raven To gods I long to see” [7]</p> <p>“I’m ready to fall” [7] “Sink in cold womb” [6]</p>

The most common basic conceptual metaphor in the data was the *change of state is change of location* metaphor. The extended metaphors of the previously mentioned included *death is the end of the road* (“Eventually all paths will lead to the cemetery” from song [5]), *death is departure* (“The moment to pass away” [4]), *death is a journey* (“And leads my way to the stars” [2]) and *death is going home* (“Taking us home where dust once was a man” [3]).

A second very common basic conceptual metaphor was the *lifetime is a day* metaphor. The extended metaphors of this included *death is night* (“the shadows are growing long” [5]), *death is darkness* (“now the lights have been shut down” [4]) and *death is rest* (“my old friend, will you lay me back to rest” [8]).

A third very common basic conceptual metaphor was the *lifetime is a year* metaphor. The extended metaphor in this case was *death is winter* (“Into the arms of winter frost” [8]). This metaphor is also connected to the basic conceptual metaphor of *people are plants* and its extended metaphor *human death is the death of a plant* (“we are but falling leaves” [5]) through the circle of life where winter represents a deathlike state for plants.

The fourth basic conceptual metaphor was a larger category where death presented the end of something. The extended metaphors included *death is the end of words* (“Our words no more spoken” [7]), *death is the end of movement* (“I have come to the end of my line” [2]), *death is the end of breathing* (“And take my last breath” [7]) and *death is the end of pain* (“take me away from this pain” [8]).

In addition to these previously mentioned four basic conceptual metaphors, some of the other metaphors of death included *death is human* where death possesses human features such as the ability to walk (“Where death walks the earth” [1]) or be one’s friend (“My old friend” [8]), *death is an animal* where an animal usually associated with death is used as a metaphor for death (“The wolves, my love, will come” [3], “Bare message, my raven, To gods I long to see” [7]) and *death is something that causes death* where such as poison (“7 days to the poison, And a place in heaven” [3]) or beasts (“7 days to the wolves” [3]). Downward movement is also used as a metaphor for death (“I’m ready to fall” [7], “Sink in cold womb” [6]).

I also found that several extended metaphors of death were used within the same song and that in each song there were metaphors from at least two different basic conceptual metaphors. These metaphors were mixed and used together and sometimes a metaphor could be traced back to belong to several basic conceptual metaphors.

4.2 Topic, Vehicle and Grounds terms

Looking at the Topic, Vehicle and Grounds terms I found that in the majority of the songs and the metaphors only the Vehicle term could be found. For example in the line *I have come to the end of my line* [2] the phrase *end of my line* is the Vehicle term in the metaphor *death is the end of the road* that refers to the absent Topic term of *death*. Similarly in the following lines *7 days to the poison, And a place in heaven* [3], *The depths are calling* [6] and *Towards the dark womb of winter* [8] the Vehicle terms are *a place in heaven, The depths* and *dark womb of winter* respectively and they all share the absent Topic term of *death*.

However, among the lyrics there were a small number of instances where the Topic terms were also present in the text. In the song *We Are But Falling Leaves* [5] in the line *[t]hink of your lifetime as one day* both the Vehicle term *one day* and the Topic term *your lifetime* were present. Similar occurrences within the same song were also found in the lines *[t]hink of existence as a flame, and death as rain, [t]hink of your lifetime as one year* and *[w]e are but falling leaves*, where the Topic terms were *existence, death, your lifetime* and *[w]e* and the Vehicle terms *flame, rain, one year* and *falling leaves* respectively. Also in the song *The Messenger* [7] in the lines *[l]et this lake be my graveside, [a]nd woods the golden hall* the Topic terms were *my graveside* and *the golden hall* with corresponding Vehicle terms *this lake* and *woods*; while both of these Topic terms also constitute as Vehicle terms for the once again absent Topic term *death*.

In only one of the songs – and in two instances – the Grounds term could be found within the lyrics. In the lines *[w]e are but falling leaves in the air, hovering down, [u]naware we are spinning around* [5] the phrase *falling leaves in the air* is the Vehicle term that refers to the topic term *[w]e*, where the analogy is explained further with the Grounds term *[u]naware we are spinning around*. The second instance is a slightly altered version of the first example: *[w]e are but falling leaves in the air, hovering down, [u]naware we will hit the ground* [5] where the Topic term is *[w]e*, the Vehicle *falling leaves in the air* and the Grounds the phrase *[u]naware we will hit the ground*.

Now that I have presented the results of my study, the last step is to summarize them and draw possible conclusions.

5 CONCLUSION

In my study I set out to research the metaphors of death in contemporary Finnish metal music and attacked the subject through two research questions: *what kinds of metaphors of death are used in the English lyrics written by native Finnish metal bands* and *how are these metaphors used*. I explored the metaphors through the concept of basic conceptual metaphors and found out that despite the great variety of metaphors concerning death in the data, the majority of them could be labeled as extended metaphors of a limited number of basic conceptual metaphors. I also found out that usually more than one basic conceptual metaphor with its extensions was used within context of the same song. I believe this to be the result of the author's intentions to avoid repetition and using different metaphors the text becomes more vivid.

In order to answer the second research question, I explored the terms of Topic, Vehicle and Grounds and found out that in the majority of the cases only the Vehicle term was present in the lyrics. The reason behind this I believe is that the Vehicle term is used to *replace* the Topic term – which was usually *death* in this case – and therefore there is no reason for them both to appear in the text. In a few cases both the Vehicle and the Topic term were present in the text when the writer wished to emphasize that s/he is now using a metaphor. In these cases the Topic term was something different than *death*. The Grounds term was found in only two instances where I believe the writer felt the need to explain the analogy. The reason why the Grounds term does not appear more often is because these kinds of metaphors do not *need* to be explained in order to grasp the metaphor because of our unconscious and automatic understanding of the many basic metaphors for life. Therefore instead of explaining the metaphor open, the connection is left for the reader to make in his or her own head.

I believe I managed to expand the field of studies on metal music to a new direction with my research, but also acknowledge that this study only scratched the surface of this broad field of research hopefully given more attention through this example. There were many aspects left uncovered even within these eight songs, not to mention the entire field. However, I feel that this research correlates in harmony with other studies conducted within the field and operates as a justified addition in their open

dialogue. That being said, I do not feel that my study is without shortcomings. Especially, I do not know if the exploration of the terms of Topic, Vehicle and Grounds was the best choice to use in this study, since in the majority of the cases only the Vehicle term was found. This approach gave information about how the metaphors are used, but perhaps another approach could have provided a better tool for their examination. Otherwise I, however, feel that I succeeded in the goals that I set out for this study.

Looking at the data it can be said that death appears to be a very common source of inspiration for those who write lyrics in metal music and therefore a fertile ground for further academic interest. Possible further studies could include research on a random sample of lyrics to find out whether there are more metaphors or direct references to death and what kinds of metaphors appear in metal lyrics altogether and which of the Topic, Vehicle and Grounds terms are usually present. Also the connection between death and birth that seemed to be present in many of the lyrics could be studied further.

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Appendix 1 – Lyrics for eight songs from eight Finnish metal bands

All the lyrics are taken directly from the album cover booklets in their original form and possible spelling mistakes have not been corrected.

[1] Before The Dawn: Deadsong (*Deadlight*, 2007)

The container of my soul was severed from my shell
At birth I was stigmatized by fires of hell
The hollow space inside is growing still
It's going for the kill
Beneath the bloodred sky the song was born
The sky was bleeding when I sang her the deadsong

By my burning cradle the lullaby of death
Was sung by dark angels
The daughters of flame

She slept under my wing, a cold embrace
Death's loyal servant now filled with pain
Forever haunted by her angelic face

By my burning cradle the lullaby of death
Was sung by dark angels
The daughters of flame

These chains
Hold me down
Down on this frozen ground
In this world
Where death walks the earth
The sign of reaper
Given in birth

[2] Insomnium: Last Statement (*Above the Weeping World, 2006*)

I have come to the end of my line
With these final steps I take back my freedom
Unchain the shackles that never could hold my mind

Time keeps running and running
Outstripping the dead tired ones
The hours will run out from us all
And in the end no one differs from the other

Only the blue sky and the green grass
Go on forever in this world
Where seconds feel like eternity
And years pass in blink of an eye

When the last rays of light
Set behind these shores
Night wraps me in its blanket
And leads my way to the stars

Through the fear and the ache
Pass the storm and the rain
I have made peace with the world
I am born again

I may be gone in the flesh
But my love will stay here
I am always with you in spirit
So just stay strong

No one wins tonight
No one gets a closure
No one walks away victorious

But don't forget me
Don't you forget me
Burn a candle for me when you can

[3] Nightwish: 7 Days To The Wolves (*Dark Passion Play*, 2007)

The wolves, my love, will come
Taking us home where dust once was a man

Is there Life before a Death?
Do we long too much and never let in?

Howl
7 days to the wolves
Where will we be when they come
7 days to the poison
And a place in heaven
Time drawing near as they come to take us

This is my church of choice
Love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice

For the rest, I have to say to you
I will dream like the God
And suffer like all the dead children

Howl
7 days to the wolves
Where will we be when they come
7 days to the poison
And a place in heaven
Time drawing near as they come to take us

This is
Where heroes
And cowards
Part ways

Light the fire, feast
Chase the ghost, give in
Take the road less traveled by
Leave the city of fools
Turn every poet loose

Heroes, cowards, no more

[4] Obscurant: 170603 (memoir) (*First Degree Suicide, 2005*)

Now the lights can be shut down,
In here behind the closed doors.
All is said, all is shown,
Only memories remain...

Wept, grieved, departed,
Always remembered.
Laugh away,
The one how have seen the world.

The enlightenment you'll have,
Shall guide you to the end,
Of this narrow path filled with thorns.
Travel through it without no fear.

King of your own life.
King for a moment.
The moment of clarity.
The moment to pass away.

Now the lights have been shut down,
And the doors are locked.
The thread of life is in half.
Only memories remain...

[5] Sentenced: We Are But Falling Leaves (*The Funeral Album, 2005*)

Think of your lifetime as one day
 It's fading away, the shadows are growing long
 Think of existence as a flame, and death as rain
 Storm clouds there right along

At life's eve our flames will cease
 Eternally, unavoidably
 Eventually all paths will lead to the cemetery

We are but falling leaves in the air, hovering down
 Unaware we are spinning around
 Scattered fragments of time, like blinks of an eye
 We are
 That's all we are

Think of your lifetime as one year
 Look, autumn is here
 Getting colder... the winter's impending
 Your conclusion's drawing near - certain, austere
 Yes, only the circle's unending

At life's eve our flames will cease
 Eternally, unavoidably
 Eventually, all paths will lead to the cemetery
 To the prior deceased

We are but falling leaves in the air, hovering down
 Unaware we will hit the ground
 Scattered fragments of time, like blinks of an eye
 We are

Just when we realize that we are alive
 We die

[6] Shade Empire: Whisper from the Depths (Zero Nexus, 2008)

The depths are calling
Dark waters whisper, tempting to fall beneath
Where no light shimmers

Beneath the surface
Those sunken eyes stare at to the sky
The broken star shines brighter
Than the others now it's time.
The final breath, cold water, fills the tired lungs.
Dark veil embraces, your path here is done

Sink in cold womb
You are at the gates of your destiny
Drive away sickness
Drive away death

Beneath the surface
The final breath

The depths are calling
Dark waters whisper, tempting to fall beneath
Where no light shimmers

Sink in cold womb
You are at the gates of your destiny
Forget yourself and find greater connection
Drive away sickness
Drive away death

Beneath the surface
The final breath

[7] Silentium: The Messenger (*Amortean, 2008*)

Oh black raven, my raven
What have You foreseen
Dark tidings and woe
Rich pickings for death

Let the gods wipe my tears
With this falling rain
Let this lake be my graveside
And woods the golden hall
Our braves long since fallen
With the tides of the war
Our words no more spoken
I'm ready to fall

Bare message, my raven
To gods I long to see
Blackbird of the chosen
Bare this prayer for me
Oh black raven, my raven
Bare message for me
Come closer the foe
And take my last breath

Blackbird of the chosen
Bare this prayer for me

[8] Swallow the Sun: Too Cold For Tears (*Hope*, 2007)

Sweet fall, come and take me away from this pain
Towards the dark womb of winter
Beautiful fall, kill the light of summer
And bless us with your shades

Sweet fall, chase the sun away

And lay down the veil of leaves
Beautiful fall, come and take me away from this pain
Towards the dark womb of November

"To them you are the bringer of grief
But you will lead me to hope
Into the arms of winter frost
Will you release me
And silence all those fears
I wait for your arrival
And soon it will be too cold for the tears"

The great clouds, I welcome your shields
My old friend, will you lay me back to rest
I've been suffering so long without you
Come and take me away from this pain