

# METAPHORS OF DEATH IN THE LYRICS OF SENTENCED

Bachelor's thesis  
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<p>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</p> <p>Metallimusiikki on jo vuosikausia kuulunut Suomen musiikkikentällä valtavirran musiikkiin ja sillä on vakiintunutta kuuntelijakuntaa ympäri maailman. Suuresta suosiostaan huolimatta metallimusiikki ei ole kuitenkaan onnistunut herättämään akateemisen maailman kiinnostusta ja metallimusiikin tutkimuskenttä on vieläkin kovin vajavainen, keskittyen lähinnä metallimusiikin ääripäiden, kuten väkivallan, ilmenemiseen. Tässä kandidaatin tutkielmassa tutkin suomalaisen metalliyhtye Sentencedin sanoituksia ja millaisia kuolemaa kuvaavia metaforia sanoituksissa käytetään. Sentenced oli aikanaan omalta osaltaan tuomassa Suomeen vahvaa metallimusiikin alakulttuuria ja sen sanoituksissa kuolema on toistuva aihe. Koska Sentenced käsittelee monen muun metalliyhtyeen tavoin sanoituksissaan kuolemaa, kuoleman metaforat valikoitui varsin ilmeisenä tutkimuskohteeksi sitoen yhteen metallimusiikin tutkimuksen ja kirjallisuusanalyysin.</p> <p>Käytän tutkimukseni analyysin pohjana sekä teoreettisena viitekehyksenä George Lakoffin ja Mark Turnerin (1989) tutkimusta metaforista ja niiden ymmärtämisestä. Identifioin aineistostani kuoleman metaforia ja tutkin kuinka löydökseni sopivat heidän luomiinsa metaforakategorioihin. Jaottelen työssäni löytämäni metaforat kategorioittain valitsemieni esimerkkimetaforien samankaltaisuuksien mukaan. Tutkimusaineistoni koostuu Sentencedin vuosien 2000 ja 2005 välillä julkaistujen albumien kappaleiden sanoituksista, joista yhdessätoista oli kuolemaa kuvaavia metaforia. Tämä tutkimus yhdistää metallimusiikin sanoituksien tutkimisen sekä kirjallisuusanalyysin ja täydentää tutkimuskenttää niin metaforien tutkimuksessa kuin lyriikkatutkimuksessakin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessani havaitsin näiden metaforien pääsääntöisesti sopivan Lakoffin ja Turnerin (1989) metaforakategorioihin <i>elinikä on päivä, elinikä on vuosi, ihmiset ovat kasveja, kuolema on mennä viimeiseen päämäärään</i> sekä <i>kuolema on elämän matkan loppu</i>. Aineistostani löytyi myös metaforia, joista oli havaittavissa elementtejä useammasta kategoriasta, kuten <i>elämä on liekki</i>.</p>	
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Metal music has become one of the mainstream genres in Finland, and even though physical copies of records do not sell as well as they used to do before the popularisation of the internet, metal music albums are still selling rather well. For example, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry's (IFPI) official album list (2018) in 2015, *Endless Forms Most Beautiful*, album by the Finnish metal band Nightwish, was the second most sold album in Finland with nearly 44 000 copies sold, whereas Adele's 25 album was the most sold album of the year with over 47 000 copies sold.

In 2006, Finland witnessed a rapid increase of interest in metal music, when Finland won the Eurovision song contest for the first time. The band representing Finland was Lordi, a heavy metal band, which performed dressed as monsters. With their unusual appearance and music, Lordi won the contest with the highest score by the time, and this started a significant increase of interest in metal music in Finland, a phenomenon which became known as "hevibuumi" in the Finnish media. The next year, 2007, Ari Koivunen won the Finnish version of *Idols* by singing mainly metal music. His debut album *Fuel for the Fire* was the third most sold album in Finland in 2007 with around 70 000 copies (IFPI, 2018). According to Nikula (2002), metal music genre is the most exported popular music genre in Finland.

Even though metal music has become a more popular music genre over the years, it still has not attracted substantial interest in the field of linguistics, and particularly in linguistic literary analysis. Linguistic studies on songs are focused on the lyrics of the song and what can be interpreted and understood from the lyrics, leaving out the musical factors that might add other interpretational features into the songs. Moreover, previous studies on lyrics have focused on other genres such as pop and rock music (see Lahtinen & Lehtimäki, 2006; Lahtinen & Lehtimäki, 2007).

In this study, I will examine the lyrics of the Finnish metal band Sentenced and how they use metaphorical language to discuss death. The focus of this research is to scrutinise the lyrics and see what kind of metaphors of death there are and how these metaphors can be categorised. The data consists of lyrics of Sentenced and the metaphors that I found from the lyrics. Death is a frequent topic in the band's lyrics and therefore death was chosen to be the theme that I will study in the metaphorical language that I found. This research aims to fill a gap between research on metal music and linguistic literature analysis and combine these two and produce insightful analysis of

metaphors of death in the lyrics of one metal music band, Sentenced.

This thesis is divided into five main sections, where in the first section I introduce Finnish metal music scene, previous studies conducted on metal music lyrics, and introduce my background theory and define metaphor (Chapter 2). Next, I will discuss my research questions, present my data and explain my data collection and analysis method (Chapter 3). I will then proceed to the third section where I present the analysis of my data (Chapter 4). In the last section (Chapter 5), I will discuss my findings and conclude my research.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

In this chapter, I will introduce the popularity of the metal music scene in Finland, and the variety of studies that has been previously conducted on song lyrics, and furthermore, discuss why this field has a need for more studies. I will also define metaphor and introduce my background theory on metaphors.

### **2.1 Metal music in Finland**

Metal music is a subgenre in rock music that started developing in 1960's. Early pioneers in heavy metal music were bands such as Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, and Deep Purple with their golden era during 1970's and 1980's. Rapidly from the 1980's onward, metal music developed a significant number of new subgenres, such as black metal, gothic metal, death metal, and thrash metal, as it became increasingly difficult to categorise different types of metal music into same, relatively small categories (Oksanen, 2003).

In the 1980's, metal music made its way to Finland with world widely popular bands, such as thrash metal bands Metallica and Slayer. Thrash metal and speed metal were significant subgenres of metal music bringing the metal music scene in Finland, inspiring first Finnish metal bands, such as Stone that can be titled as one of the pioneer bands in Finnish metal music, as they were the first Finnish speed metal band that released an album (Nikula, 2002). In the 1990's, Finnish metal music

had its breakthrough in Finland and later on abroad, and numerous Finnish metal bands became popular and stabilized a strong metal scene in the Finnish music industry. According to Nikula (2003: 13), the slow start of the metal scene in Finland was influenced by the country's small music markets. Until the 1990's, Finnish record labels were still mostly focused on marketing their bands only in Finland, leaving worldwide markets completely unnoticed, as metal music was such a small and unpopular genre that it was not believed to be a commercial success and worth promoting abroad. This distrust was due to the relatively small markets of metal music world widely, as the biggest names in the metal genre, such as Metallica and Slayer were still considered big only in their own genre.

Metal music with all of its subgenres is becoming more popular worldwide, and today in Finland, it can be considered as a mainstream music genre alongside rock and pop music, as metal music albums reach Finnish top charts as frequently as any other mainstream genre (IFPI, 2018). From International Federation of the Phonographic Industry's lists, one can see that rock and metal music are represented especially well in sold physical album lists, even though the amount of sold copies of albums has significantly decreased over the years. For example, the Finnish metal band Nightwish has released eight studio albums that all have sold worth gold album in Finland. Moreover, six out of eight of their studio albums have sold double platinum, with *Dark Passion Play*, released in 2007, being the most sold album by over 126 000 copies sold only in Finland, being still to this day the most sold metal album in Finland (IFPI, 2018). There are also several music festivals in Finland that focus entirely on metal music, such as Tuska Open Air Festival and Nummirock, which are popular and gather people together from all around the country and from abroad every year. Several Finnish bands are also known worldwide such as Nightwish, Children of Bodom, and HIM, and they have strong fan bases around the globe. They all represent different subgenres of metal and perform their music in English.

Despite the popularity of metal music, the study of metal music is still scarce and therefore I feel there is a significant need for more research. Finnish rock lyrics have been studied previously, artists such as Leevi & the Leavings (see Lahtinen, 2006), but metal genre and English lyrics of Finnish bands are still quite an uncommon topic, even though significant number of the most popular Finnish metal bands have their lyrics in English. In metal music, there are similar themes

in the song lyrics with other popular music genres, such as love and politics, but the most typical theme in metal music is death. For this reason, I have chosen to study how death is approached in metal music with metaphorical language.

As stated, the band in focus in this study is the Finnish metal band, Sentenced, and how death is represented in their lyrics through metaphors. During their career, 1989-2005, Sentenced was a popular metal band in Finland, and a common theme occurring in their music is death, and suicide is as well discussed in their lyrics frequently. Most of the lyrics of Sentenced, and therefore the data of this study, is written by the Sentenced guitarist Sami Lopakka. In Sentenced's biography *Täältä Pohjoiseen – Sentencedin tarina* (Riekkö, 2014), Lopakka stated that lyrics became a very important part of the music, and death was a natural topic to write about, even though death and especially suicide has always been portrayed with a hint of sarcasm and self-irony. Lopakka has stated that he seeks to discuss the topics in a straightforward manner through his lyrics and aesthetics of the lyrics needs to come straight from the words (Riekkö, 2014). Yet, Sentenced lyrics are also filled with subtle hints and metaphors of death that do not discuss death straightforwardly.

## **2.2 Previous studies on lyrics**

There have been some studies on lyrics, but only few in metal genre. Many of the previous studies on metal music lyrics done in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are about black metal and death metal and focus on the violent language and Satanism (see Moynihan & Söderlind, 2003), whereas this study is a literature study focusing on metaphors and how the lyrics use metaphors to describe death.

I found two bachelor's theses that studied lyrics of Finnish metal bands with methods of literary analysis. Kolehmainen (2010) has studied biblical allusions in Finnish metal band Sonata Arctica's lyrics using Carmela Perri's four categories of allusions and Leikola (2009) used George Lakoff and Mark Turner's (1989) study of metaphors to analyse eight songs from different Finnish metal bands and categorising what kind of metaphors are used for death. Kolehmainen (2010) discovered in her thesis that there are several biblical allusions in Sonata Arctica's lyrics, but these seemed to be used for practical reasons and not to reveal any religious stance from the band. In sum, the bible is referenced because of its cultural influence and effect. Leikola (2009) discovered that most of

the metaphors of death could be categorised into subcategories of few basic conceptual metaphors, such as *Change of state is change of location*, *Lifetime is a day* and *Death is the end of something*, and that within same songs, there were many metaphors that could be categorised into different basic conceptual metaphor categories. Leikola's bachelor's thesis is similar to what I study on my thesis; however, I focus on one band whereas Leikola has studied eight contemporary Finnish metal bands.

Besides these thesis's, previous studies on the lyrics of Finnish music has mainly focused on Finnish rock bands that have their lyrics in Finnish. Oksanen (2003) studied the portrayal of men and death in the lyrics of Finnish hard rock bands Kotiteollisuus, Mana Mana, Lyijykomppania, Timo Rautiainen ja Trio Niskalaukaus and Viikate who all perform their music in Finnish. He gathered together some frequent themes of the songs that were present in those songs that portrayed men and death. These themes were for example feelings of insecurity and being lost in a sense that the man feels that there is no natural place for him in the society.

Lahtinen (2006) studied the Finnish rock band Leevi & the Leavings and their singer-songwriter Gösta Sundqvist. The band is disguised behind pseudonyms and the lyrics are grotesque realism and rock poetry that is performed in a form of a story, which creates more distance between the artists and the lyrics, and the story behind the lyrics. According to Lahtinen (2006: 171), this theatrical form of performing music gives the listener a constant reminder that the lyrics are a form of a story, even though Sundqvist has admitted that some of the lyrics are based on his own experiences and real people. The lyrics use grotesque realism to portray tragicomic life stories of the protagonist or narrator of the lyrics that are in some ways relatable to Finnish people.

Considering the popularity of metal music, it can be seen as rather surprising that the academic world and the field of linguistics have not yet seen the potential in studying metal music lyrics. Oksanen (2003) and Lahtinen (2006) found in their studies that Finnish rock lyrics can be relatable to Finnish people, and I believe this identification to the stories of the songs can be seen also in Finnish metal lyrics who sing in English.

## 2.3 Metaphors

The definition of metaphor that I have chosen to use in my research comes from George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980). They define metaphor roughly as “understanding and experiencing one kind of a thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 5). If we say, “*to live a quiet life was the summit of his ambition*” the word ‘summit’ here refers to a person’s life aspirations and not to an actual part of a mountain (Montgomery et al., 2013: 125). If we scrutinise an example metaphor ‘*Death is a departure*’, we can avoid saying explicitly that someone has died and refer to it as, for instance, ‘is gone’ or ‘has passed away’. This way any alterations of the word ‘death’ can be replaced with a metaphor and the sentence still conveys the same message or idea more implicitly.

According to Montgomery et al. (2013), metaphors consist of three important parts: topic, vehicle, and ground. In a metaphor, the vehicle is the word or phrase in a sentence that cannot be taken literally in the certain context and the topic is the meaning that is implied or referred to by the vehicle. The ground can be found by recognising what the vehicle and the topic have in common and how they are connected. For example, in the previous example “*to live a quiet life was the summit of his ambition*” the vehicle is “the summit”, as ambitions are not mountains and therefore do not have summits, so it cannot be taken literally. The topic and the implied meaning is a main goal or something important, and the ground is what these have in common, that is something to achieve. This way we can understand this metaphor as “*to live a quiet life was his main goal*”.

The primary theoretical framework of this thesis is based on George Lakoff and Mark Turner’s (1989) studies on metaphors. In their study, Lakoff and Turner (1989) have combined literary analysis and cognitive science to study metaphors both in poetry and everyday language, and how people understand metaphorical language. For example, how we can understand that by saying, “he is gone” in a certain context, we mean that someone has died and not that they have simply changed location. Lakoff and Turner explain how to understand metaphors and provide several example metaphors with excerpts from poems and common phrases, focusing on metaphors of life, death, and time.

I chose to use Lakoff and Turner's (1989) study as the main theoretical source of my thesis because it provides relevant examples for my study and as my data is lyrics and not poetry, more diverse approach on metaphors was appropriate choice for a theoretical source for this research. I have chosen five categories for metaphors of death that Lakoff and Turner's (1989) introduce in their research: *A lifetime is a year*, *A lifetime is a day*, *People are plants*, *Death is going to a final destination*, and *Death is the end of life's journey*. I will explain the meanings of these metaphors in the analysis (see Chapter 4).

### **3 DATA AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS**

In this section, I will briefly introduce my research questions and data, how I chose the lyrics for the analysis, and the method of analysis I used in the analysis.

#### **3.1 Research questions**

I have two research questions that I will answer in my thesis:

1. What kind of metaphors of death are used in the lyrics of Sentenced?
2. How can these metaphors be categorised?

The first question seeks to find out the different metaphors of death that are used in the lyrics and how they differ from each other or what similarities they might have. With the second question, I want to examine how the different metaphors can be categorized according to Lakoff and Turner's (1989) theory of metaphors and how well they fit into these categories.

#### **3.2 The data**

The data consists of 11 songs from three different Sentenced albums that were published between years 2000-2005, and the metaphors of death they include. These albums are *Crimson* (2000), *The Cold White Light* (2002) and *The Funeral Album* (2005). I have chosen to exclude songs prior to

year 2000, because the amount of data would have grown too big. More importantly, the last three albums Sentenced published show a good variety of issues the band discussed in their lyrics throughout their career. The lyrics are from Sentenced's official homepage and album booklets so that there would not be any possible mishearings in the data.

The 11 songs were selected in the following way: first, I went through all of the Sentenced's lyrics and selected those songs that discuss death and left out the ones that deal with other topics. Then I studied what kind of language the lyrics have and selected the ones that include at least some metaphors of death. Some of the lyrics discuss death but I did not include them in the analysis, as they are not strictly metaphors in the sense that I have defined metaphors (see Chapter 2.1), but rather straightforward statements of death wishes and the like. After this process of elimination, 11 songs from the three albums remain that include metaphors of death.

### **3.3 Method of analysis**

The data has been analysed using George Lakoff and Mark Turner's (1989) categorization for metaphors of death. Lakoff and Turner identified the topic, the vehicle and the ground of an example metaphor and this way interpreted what the metaphor was meant to imply. This was the basic idea of the metaphor analysis and I followed this procedure in my research. I studied my data and looked into what different kinds of metaphors of death the lyrics had, were there any similarities between them and were categorization possible by their similarities. I chose five basic conceptual metaphors of death for my research that I used as categories: *Lifetime is a year*, *Lifetime is a day*, *People are plants*, *Death is going to a final destination*, and *Death is the end of life's journey* (Lakoff and Turner, 1989). These metaphors of death, as other metaphors too, have their extended metaphors, such as *death is a departure*, *death is a journey*, *death of a plant is death of a human*, *death is sleep*, *death is rest*, and *death is the end of pain*. Beside these five basic conceptual metaphors and their extended metaphors, I used other categories and created a new one when I found metaphors of death that did not fit in these categories but were still possible to categorise in some way and were still worth mentioning due to their significance in the lyrics.

## 4 ANALYSING THE LYRICS

In the following analysis, I present the categories of metaphors of death that I identified from the data. Altogether, there are five main categories that I illustrate with example metaphors. In addition, I will present other metaphors that were connected to the main categories and provide examples of these.

### 4.1 A lifetime is a year

The first category is a basic concept metaphor *A lifetime is a year*. Lakoff and Turner (1989: 18) explains the metaphor as, "... springtime is youth, summer is maturity, autumn is old age, and winter is death". If we think lifetime as a year, it is easy to understand the metaphor when we compare it to the nature, and how it changes over the year. Life is born in the spring, when the nature starts to blossom, summer is the time of our life with sun shine and warmth, autumn is dying as the leaves fall from trees, and winter is the death as it is cold and dark.

Sentenced has used this metaphor quite explicitly in their song "We Are but Falling Leaves". "Think your lifetime as one year / Look autumn is here / getting colder... / the winter's impending". In this example, we understand the metaphor if we compare a year and a lifetime; autumn as growing old and sick, falling temperature as slowly dying and the upcoming winter as death. "The winter's impending" part can be compared to death; winter is as unavoidable as death. Leikola (2009) used "We Are but Falling Leaves" song in his analysis and he used the same category for this metaphor.

Another example of this category is not as straightforward. In the song "No One There", there is an excerpt: "The desperation and the snow / The feeling of finally coming back home / The melancholy and the hole / in the soil so hard and cold". Here the idea of death is constructed from more implicit hints than in the previous example where the comparison of lifetime and a year was rather explicit. The desperation and the melancholy are feelings that one can associate with impending death. The snow and the hard and cold soil refer to winter that can be understood as death.

## 4.2 A lifetime is a day

In the next category, *A lifetime is a day*, we can use a similar interpretation as to *A lifetime is a year* (Chapter 4.1). The start of life is the morning, and our lives progress as the day passes; evening is dying, and the night is death. Lakoff and Turner (1989: 6) divides the metaphor into five stages of day and life: dawn as birth, noon as maturity, twilight as old age, the moment of death as sunset, and death as night.

The song “We Are but Falling Leaves” provides another quite straightforward example: “Think your lifetime as one day / It’s fading away, the shadows are growing long”. Here we can compare a lifetime to a day, and following Lakoff and Turner’s (1989) division, we understand that growing shadows refer to setting sun, and therefore dying or impending death. This finding correlates with Leikola’s (2009) findings as he used the same example and categorised this into *A lifetime is a day* category.

There is another example of this metaphor in the same song: “At life’s eve our flames will cease”. This metaphor combines another metaphor that Lakoff and Turner (1989) introduce: *Life is a flame*. Lakoff and Turner (1989: 86–87) argues that these metaphors are related to one another: considering life, at first, we are not alive, on the second stage, we are alive, and on the last stage, we are dead. Similarly, candle is not lit at first, then it is, and on the third stage, the candle goes out. The lyrics combine these two metaphors, and this excerpt can be understood so that “life’s eve” is the moment before death, and “our flames will cease” is the moment of death.

Another example of *Life is a flame* metaphor in the same song is “Think your existence as a flame, death as a rain / Storm clouds there right along”. This excerpt compares life to flame the same way as Lakoff and Turner (1989). “Storm clouds there right along” is a metaphor for the impending death, as the storm clouds bring the rain that in the previous part has been described as death.

## 4.3 People are plants

The third category, *People are plants*, compares the life of a human to one of a plant, and this way death of a plant is a death of a human. Lakoff and Turner (1989: 6 & 13) introduce two

subcategories for this basic conceptual metaphor: *People are leaves* and *People are crop*. The life cycle of a leaf is comparable to one of a human; bud is youth, full leaf is maturity, and withered leaf is old age of a human. Wheat, on the other hand, is a plant that needs to be harvested, and in metaphorical language harvesting crop is comparable to human's death. Just as wheat, that is a crop that grows ripe and is then ready for reaping, we can understand that as people are grown and mature, they are ready to die.

In the lyrics of *Sentenced*, we can find examples for both of these subcategories. The song "We Are but Falling Leaves" provides another example: "We are but falling leaves in the air, hovering down". Trees drop their leaves after the tree has drained the leaves dry, so the falling leaves can be considered dead. For this metaphor, we need to slightly expand the life cycle of a leaf to mean that leaves that are falling are not dead yet, but still dying and when they reach the ground, they are dead. Comparing people to falling leaves, this excerpt presents the idea that people are no more than leaves waiting to hit the ground, which represents death. This can be interpreted in a way that death is inevitable for us and all we can do is to wait for death to come, as we cannot escape from it. Another possible interpretation is that life is like hovering with the wind, in a way that life is unpredictable and may last long yet still the inevitable destination is the ground, that is death. This example was also presented in Leikola (2009) in the same category.

In the song "My Slowing Heart", we can see another kind of example for *People are plants*. "My crop is ready for the Reaping" is an example of *People are crop* in a way that the "my crop" can be understood as the body of a human and "the Reaping" as death, thus we can interpret that the narrator, after having lived their life and seen it all, is ready to die.

#### **4.4 Death is going to a final destination**

For the fourth category, *Death is going to a final destination*, there is again example from the song "We Are but Falling Leaves". "Eventually all the paths will lead to the cemetery" is quite an explicit statement of people's mortality and how all life will eventually come to an end. Death is inevitable for people, and in this metaphor, life or life path has been replaced with "the paths", and death has been replaced with "the cemetery". In this way, we can interpret the metaphor in a way that eventually all lives will end to death. "The cemetery" as a final destination implies grave

in earth and being buried after death, and not just a place to visit. “Eventually all the paths will lead to the cemetery” could also be seen as an intertextual reference to a common saying “all roads lead to Rome”. Here “roads” have been replaced with life paths and the city with the cemetery, but the same idea is still behind that no matter where life takes us, we all will eventually end up in one specific place.

Another example of this category can be found in the song “Lower the Flags”: “Lower the flags / A good man has passed / He has reached the last of frontiers”. A flag lowered to half mast is a common custom honouring someone who has died and frontiers are boundaries or borders between two things. Here, the first two lines describe in a rather straightforward manner that someone has died. In the last line, the lyrics present an idea of line between life and death and that the person the lyrics are discussing has passed this line from life to death. The word “reached” implies that this “last of frontiers” is something people head for in a way that death is something we all are going towards to in our lives.

#### **4.5 Death is the end of life’s journey**

The fifth category, *Death is the end of life’s journey*, is derived from the metaphor *Life is a journey*, which can be understood in a way that being born is the start of life’s journey, living is the progress of this journey, and the end of the journey is death. The song “No One There” has an example “The feeling I have come to the end of my road”. Here we can interpret that the narrator feels that their death is drawing near in a sense that life has lost its meaning and the narrator is considering suicide. For this interpretation to make sense, it is helpful to look at the preceding lyrics:

“The axe, the bottle and the rope / The feeling there really is no more hope / The thought of the great unknown / And facing it all alone / The dark, the silent and the cold / The feeling I have come to the end of my road / Yes, these are the things I spend / my remaining moments with”.

The axe, the bottle, the rope, and the feeling of hopelessness can be interpreted as indication of suicide, as these are common tools and mindset for committing suicide. “Facing it all alone” can be considered as another hint of dying alone, as “it” can be seen to refer to “the great unknown”, which is a common metaphor for death. “Yes, these are the things I spend / my remaining moments with” is another indication that the narrator seems to be aware of death that is impending, and that he knows how limited the time is before death.

In the song “No One There” we have another example “The feeling of finally coming back home”. This is an example with similar idea between *Death is the end of life’s journey* and *Life is a flame*, as we can understand life’s journey the same way as candle that is lit. First not being alive before we are born, on the second stage being alive after we are born, and then again on the last stage not being alive after we have died. With this life cycle idea in mind, we can consider “finally coming back home” being a metaphor for returning from life’s journey into nothingness that is before and after life. If we understand this excerpt as a metaphor of death, the word “finally” implies that this impending death is anticipated and relieving just like returning home from a long journey. If we keep this idea of comparing coming home after a long journey to dying after life’s journey comes to an end, we see that there is another category this example can be divided into: *Death is going home*. This category was my own creation and as this was not the only occurrence of the home being death theme, I felt that this was significant and needed a subcategory of its own. The combination of *Death is the end of life’s journey* and *Death is going home* can also be seen in the song “Aika multaa muistot [Everything is Nothing]” where we have an excerpt:

“For my name is sorrow and I’m friend of misery / I deprived myself of love for eternal agony / And I don’t even dare to try – I know I can only lose / Between this life I live and nothing I have to choose / Take me home / To the one I belong”.

In this example, the melancholic and discouraged description of life reveals the narrator’s attitude towards life, and we can interpret that the narrator has chosen “nothing”, that can be understood as death or suicide, over living. Here, “Take me home” can be seen as a wish to die and that the narrator feels that death is the only option in his position. There is a similar sense of longing and relieving as in the previous example with the word “finally”, and a sense of returning to something one has waited for.

*Death is the end of life’s journey* has two other examples which combine also other metaphors. The song “Lower the Flags” has a metaphor “Your journey’s over, night descends”. This example combines *A lifetime is a day* and *Death is the end of life’s journey* metaphors. Here we can interpret that “your journey” is a journey of life that has come to an end and therefore indicates death. “Night descends” also implies that death is upon, as in *A lifetime is a day* metaphors death is the night.

The second example of combining this category with another one is in the song “End of the Road”: “Here we are, now lay the burden down / We’re coming to the end of our road”. The latter part is

obviously in *Death is the end of life's journey* category as it is very similar with the previous examples, but the first part represents the metaphor *Life is a burden*. According to Lakoff and Turner (1989, 25), this metaphor is coherent with *Life is a journey* if we comprehend it through the metaphor *Difficulties are burdens*; life's difficulties can be compared to physical burden on a journey, and if we think of life as one constant difficulty, then we can see the whole life as a burden. Looking at how the lyrics continue, we can see that letting go of this burden of life is implied to be comforting and welcome:

“Here we are, now lay the burden down / We're coming to the end of our road / Sorrowful yet glorious somehow / To be humming this one last ode / So calm and still...it wasn't all that bad or was it now? / Fulfilled... it doesn't only hurt to end it now / The funeral”.

This excerpt can be understood as being relieved from or letting go of the burden of life and dying. The imperative form of the verb “lay” and the first person plural pronoun indicate that death does not have to be lonesome and forceful but a welcoming and comforting end. This example gives death a sense of relief and comfort after carrying the burden of life through the long journey of life. “Sorrowful yet glorious somehow / To be humming this one last ode” can be interpret as the final moments before death and how death is at the same time something to wait for and yet still to feel wistful of.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The main aim in this thesis was to study the metaphors of death in the lyrics of Sentenced and answer my two research questions: “What kind of metaphors of death are used in the lyrics of Sentenced?” and “How can these metaphors be categorised?” The questions turned out to be rather difficult to answer straightforwardly as there were such a diverse set of metaphors of death. Besides the main categories *A lifetime is a year*, *A lifetime is a day*, *People are plants*, *Death is going to a final destination* and *Death is the end of life's journey* I found two other categories *Life is a flame* and *Life is a burden* and created one new category *Death is going home*. These last three categories had only examples that were combinations with the main categories.

The analysis demonstrates clearly that there are numerous metaphorical expressions for death in the lyrics of Sentenced. Most of the examples that I presented discuss death from a neutral point of view but there is a sense of finding death welcoming and relieving without encouraging suicide. Altogether many of the examples have a sense of accepting death as the end of a life cycle and it is only natural and inevitable for people.

What I found in my analysis is that categorising the metaphors from the data was not as straightforward as I had presumed. Overall, I was able to identify 27 metaphors from the selected lyrics, yet there were several occasions where the categories overlapped and the metaphor had two or three categories that it could be applied into. *A lifetime is a year*, *People are plants* and *Death is going to a final destination* had all only two examples and there were no combinations in the examples. *Death is the end of life's journey* seemed to be the most frequent of the categories but surprisingly this was only due to the combinations; this category had only one example that was solely in this category and the four other metaphors were combinations of *Death is the end of life's journey* and other categories. *A lifetime is a day* category was also rather few in numbers as there was only one example metaphor that could be placed only in this category and two other examples that combined with *Life is a flame* metaphor. There were also metaphors that needed more surrounding lyrics as the metaphors or interpretations did not make sense without the broader view and the mindset that the other lyrics gave for that metaphor. Some of the categories were also used in Leikola's (2009) thesis and for this reason and the similarity of the topics, some of the findings were the same.

These metaphors of death that I presented in my research can be analysed through Lakoff and Turner's (1989) research and some of them were rather similar to what they had presented as examples. Lakoff and Turner (1989) initially used these categories to analyse poems and everyday language and with this analysis, rather surprisingly, these categories proved to be applicable also in metal music lyrics. Thus, these categories seem to be applicable in other literary genres than what they were initially used for.

This study adds to the linguistic study on lyrics (see also Leikola 2009) but focusing on one band has its limits and this study on metaphors of death does not provide results that could be generalized to the entire metal music genre and its lyrics. The scarce amount of studies on metal music lyrics is already a reason in itself to study the field more. The popularity of metal music proves that there

is increasing interest on the topic, and metal music needs to be considered as a relevant field of study also in linguistics (also Leikola 2009), and not just in musicology. Linguistic study on lyrics can give the lyrics more prominent place both in music and in linguistics and they are not only seen as subordinates or servants for the music or inferior to poetry but more as an entity and a valuable genre of literary.

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