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## All You Need Is LOVE

Applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory to The Beatles' Song Lyrics

A Comparative Study

Author: Simon Christensson

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Supervisor: Dr Vasiliki Simaki

Centre for Languages and Literature

Lund University

## Abstract

This essay analyses conceptual metaphors in the Beatles' song lyrics and observes how Lennon and McCartney's use of metaphorical concepts evolved in the 1960's. The study has an empirical and qualitative approach with quantitative elements, and employs the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Three specific RQs are studied in this thesis: (a) how the metaphors in Lennon and McCartney's lyrics became more diverse in later songs, (b) what differences and similarities there are in their use of metaphorical concepts, and (c) if metaphors of LOVE became less prominent between 1968-1970. Other studies within Cognitive Linguistics have employed CMT in their analyses of song lyrics previously, but the comparative aspects of this thesis have seemingly not been performed by any researcher hitherto. This essay thus provides new information about the Beatles' lyrics and how they developed, which can be useful for future studies on metaphorical concepts in music within the field of Cognitive Linguistics.

The data have been extracted from a newly constructed corpus, consisting of lyrics from 103 songs by the Beatles from the early and late stage of their career. The comparative analysis between the composers is based on a collection of target domains from 36 of McCartney's songs, and 44 of Lennon's, within the time period 1962-1964 and 1968-1970. A total amount of 475 target domains have been found within these time periods, out of which 236 have been identified in McCartney's songs, and 239 in Lennon's. The discoveries demonstrate that the main differences illustrating the polarization between the composers can be found in the less frequent metaphors, but also in metaphors of LOVE and TIME in the Beatles' later songs. Furthermore, LOVE was still the most common concept in their lyrics between 1968 and 1970, and the instances of love metaphors also represent the main similarities between the composers' use of metaphorical concepts, accompanied by metaphors of THE MIND. The findings signify that, by examining metaphorical concepts in the group's lyrics, it is possible to validate the shifts that occurred in each composer's writing techniques between early and later songs by applying CMT, and that the writers' utilization of LOVE metaphors may have been a contributing factor to their prominence.

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## 1. Introduction

Metaphors are prevalent in poetic language – and they are (and have always been) frequently occurring in poetry and song lyrics in particular. In the field of Cognitive Linguistics and Semantics, the study of metaphors is an expansive research area, and there are several methods for analysing metaphors in the English language. One of these methods is the *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (CMT), which facilitates the identification and classification of metaphors. Yet, the basis of CMT also comprises the idea, that metaphors are not only a tool for writing in a poetic and artistic style, but they are deeply entrenched in human language and nature (Kövecses, 2020; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). In recent years, several researchers have incorporated the idea of conceptual metaphors (CMs) in their studies of song lyrics in particular (e.g., Climent & Coll-Florit, 2021; Harpela, 2015; Smaragdi, 2012), but to the best of my knowledge, only two have extensively analysed CMs in the lyrics of the Beatles.

In his seminar paper, Dominik Doeppert (2015) employs the framework of CMT when analysing metaphors in the Beatles' lyrics, and discusses how the composers' use of culturally accepted metaphorical concepts helped realize the success they experienced. However, although Doeppert's work seems to be an aptly structured account of CMs in the Beatles' lyrics, and includes contrasting discussions of those concepts, there are certain areas where his analysis could be considered insufficient to some degree; the comparative analysis between the composers also appears to have been neglected in general. Furthermore, Doeppert's work includes several minor errors, and some more critical; for instance, he states that the Beatles "started out in [the] Seventies" (2015, p. 22), which, I would presume, is rather an unfortunate mishap, but such errors would result in the study being less credible.

Jila Hamrah (2010) provides a comprehensive and chronological exploration of metaphors in the Beatles' lyrics between 1962 and 1970. Yet, her thesis does not include the comparative analysis between the composers either – Hamrah also states that the aim of her research is "to determine metaphors and other linguistic imagery in [the] Beatles' lyrics", and that she "did not evaluate the metaphors in term of their authors." (2010, p. 101).

This essay is the result of an almost twenty-year-old passion for the music of The Beatles, combined with a nearly as long-going fascination for the English language – in recent years, the study of *meaning* has been an inspiration in particular. Several of the Beatles'

compositions have often received an epithet of *banality* (e.g. Reising, 2006; and The Melody Makers, ctd. in Petridis, 2020). However, what many regard as the reason to their continuing popularity is the diversity in both music and lyrics during the years they were composing and playing together. This thesis focuses on analysing metaphors in the Beatles' lyrics, in order to discover if the composers' use of metaphorical concepts, too, evolved during their time as a group. In particular, the primary target of the analysis is metaphors of love, as they seem to be more frequent than expected prior to collecting the data. Also, during the exploration of the vast ocean of metaphorical concepts, several questions arose when docking at the adjacent inlet of metaphors.

The principal question this essay will provide an answer to is the following: Is it possible to verify the evolution of metaphorical expressions in the Beatles' lyrics through the application of CMT? To be able to answer this satisfyingly, three more specific RQs are addressed in the analysis.

*RQ1. Do the metaphorical concepts used in Lennon and McCartney's lyrics become more polarized towards the end of their time as a group, as they did both as people and songwriters? And how did their use of metaphors develop from early to later songs?*

*RQ2. What are the most noticeable similarities and differences between the composers' use of metaphorical concepts in early and later songs?*

*RQ3. Do metaphors of LOVE become less prominent in their later lyrics?*

This essay will show that the divergences in the composers' writing styles and personalities are also reflected in their use of metaphors and CMs (RQ1). In correspondence with the predisposition, that the lyrics in the composers' later songs seem to become more complex and thematically varied, the metaphors being used seemingly follow suit. The consistency of metaphors relating to LOVE, moreover, is evidently also one of the most representative of the similarities between the composers' use of metaphors (RQ2). Yet, the composers' tendency of including metaphors of LOVE does not decline as much as expected toward the end of their career (RQ3). Evidently, the analyses of RQ1-3 also provide evidence for the claim that it is possible to verify the evolution of metaphorical expressions in the Beatles' lyrics through the application of CMT.

The data for this study have been collected from, and processed through, a manually compiled corpus of lyrics from 103 songs, wherein I have identified CMs in the composers' lyrics, and whence I have gathered the results for the analysis in Section 5. The methodology and data collection process are described in more detail in Section 3.

This thesis is organized as follows. In Section 2, the CMT framework is introduced and previous studies on conceptual metaphors in song lyrics are presented. Section 3 describes the methodology (3.1) and the material (3.2) of this essay. Section 4 demonstrates some of the metaphorical concepts most frequently occurring in the Beatles' lyrics. In Section 5, the results retrieved from the data are discussed, followed by an account of the problems confronted during the collection and analysis of the material. The thesis is concluded in Section 6.

## **2. Background**

In this section, I demonstrate various basic aspects of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Section 2.1 and subsections provide an introduction to the fundamental qualities of CMT, followed by Section 2.2, where previous studies of CMT in song lyrics are presented.

### **2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)**

Metaphors are usually regarded as merely an attribute to language, and they are often treated as simply an imaginative way to vary our language (in poetry in particular). Yet, metaphors are seemingly more intricate and interesting than what that description would suggest. As Lakoff and Johnson (2003) state, metaphors are not only an attribute to language, but are in fact a fundamental part of the way we think, speak and act. One way of showing that metaphors are an intrinsic part of our use of language is by converting them into metaphorical concepts, which can be achieved by using Conceptual Metaphor Theory: This method is useful for classifying different metaphors, and accentuates their qualities within speech, thought and action (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The book *Metaphors We Live By*, published in 1980, was the first literary publication, in which CMT was extensively elaborated on. Lakoff and Johnson's work has motivated many linguists since then, and researchers of various fields within Cognitive Linguistics have often used their studies as core reference.

### 2.1.1 Conceptual Metaphor Spotting

According to Sullivan (2019), most of the written and spoken language is metaphorical in nature, and conceptual metaphors occur almost everywhere. Moreover, people typically consider one thing in terms of another, but discourse forms of conceptual metaphors also seem to depend partly on culture and subculture (Kövecses, 2015; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Several researchers have also stated that the way we form meaning in metaphors is fundamentally reliant on context, and is based on two perspectives – the person *comprehending* a metaphor, and a person *producing* a metaphor (Kövecses, 2015; Stern, 2000). This view on how metaphors emerge has evolved during the 2000's, and, in the field of Cognitive Linguistics, it is currently understood that other types of context also have an essential role in the development of metaphors; i.e., the “connection between metaphorical aspects of our cognitive activities and the varied set of contextual factors...influence the emergence of metaphors” (Kövecses, 2020, p. 11). Continuing with the topic of association, people often refer to words associated with war when describing arguments in the English language.

#### *Example 1*

- (a) “Your claims are *indefensible*.”
- (b) “I *demolished* his argument.”
- (c) “He *shot down* all of my arguments.” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 4).

The basis of CMT involves transferring metaphors into two conceptual domains<sup>1</sup> – *target* domain (TD) and *source* domain (SD) – which make it possible to understand one domain in terms of another (Kövecses, 2002/2020). The conventional model for a conceptual metaphor is TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN (X is Y), as is exemplified below. The target domain is the conceptual domain, which can be understood through metaphor: In Example 1, the concept ARGUMENT is the target domain. The source domain accounts for the practical information, from which we derive metaphorical expressions (Sullivan, 2019), and through which we try to understand the target domain: In the examples above, *demolished*; *shot down*; and *indefensible* all formulate the source domain WAR. In his studies on *the scope of metaphor*, Kövecses (2000) also clarifies that a source domain (e.g. WAR) can apply to several target domains (as in LOVE IS WAR etc.), but some SDs are more limited than others.

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<sup>1</sup> N.B. that there are other terms (e.g. frames, scenes, image schemas etc.) used by different researchers. For consistency, this essay mainly employs the term *domains*.

Nevertheless, the TD and SD in Example 1a-c formulate the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR.

Although the sentences in Example 1 show how we talk about arguments in terms of war, it is also imperative to point out that one can win or lose an argument (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) – “We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent. We attack his positions and defend our own. We gain and lose ground. We plan and use strategies.” (p. 4). By taking these examples into consideration, it seems that metaphors are not only an attribute to the written or spoken language, but it indicates that we also *think* in metaphors; i.e., the way a person perceives his/her surroundings, and acts within a society, could be considered an effect of linguistic concepts within the language. For example, as people of the English-speaking world tend to conceptualize an argument in terms of war, the thought process of arguing is often affected by hostility; which Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue, could in reality obstruct people from reaching an understanding. Considering the suggestion that we speak, write, and think in metaphors consistently, one could conclude that metaphors, influenced by our culture, also influence our actions within society.

### 2.1.2. Systematicity and Coherence

From what the sentences in Example 1a-c demonstrate, the method of conceptualizing argument and arguing is systematic. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) state, that “since metaphorical expressions in our language are tied to metaphorical concepts in a systematic way, we can use metaphorical linguistic expressions to study the nature of metaphorical concepts...” (p. 7). Consequently, numerous words and sentences in our everyday language, which one might think are simply *normal* lexical or syntactic entities, are actually metaphorical in nature, and tend to infuse the general conceptual system of our language (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Moreover, it is important to differentiate linguistic metaphors from conceptual metaphors. Deignan (2005) provides the description, that “linguistic metaphors *realize* conceptual metaphors” (p. 14); e.g. the CM ARGUMENT IS WAR is *realized* by linguistic metaphors in sentences like “I *demolished* his argument”.

Another example of a common CM with structural qualities is LOVE IS A PATIENT.

#### *Example 2*

- (a) “The marriage is *dead*—it can’t be *revived*.”



(b) ...We're getting *back on our feet*.

(c) ...It's a *tired* affair."

(Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 49).

These examples show the structure of one of the conceptual categories related to the TD LOVE, and seem to indicate that CMs are classified by "general categories" rather than "concrete images" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 45). Yet, the structure of the concept LOVE is seemingly not "clearly delineated" (2003, p. 110), and obtains its edifice only through metaphor. Other conventional types of CMs related to love are LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE and LOVE IS MADNESS, which are discussed in Section 4.1 and 5.1, with the application of Beatles lyrics. Although structural metaphors seem rather straightforward, certain types of metaphors can occasionally be difficult to notice.

### 2.1.3 Hidden Metaphors

As was demonstrated in the two previous sections, the method of conceptualizing metaphorical expressions and actions is systematic in nature. However, the systematicity of the more straightforward metaphors also hides other aspects of the concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The term *conduit metaphor* was first coined by the linguist Michael Reddy, who states that the way we talk about language tends to be of a rather complex nature (1993). Consider, for instance, the following sentences:

#### *Example 3*

(a) "I *gave* you that idea."

(b) "Try to *pack* more thought *into* fewer words."

(c) "When you *have* a good idea, try to *capture* it immediately *in* words."

(Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 11).

The examples above suggest that certain aspects of how the English language is used, particularly expressions related to ideas, words and communication, can be conceptualized as metaphors consisting of three parts; Lakoff and Johnson explain this in a very clear way: "The speaker puts ideas (objects) into words (containers) and sends them (along a conduit) to a hearer who takes the idea/objects out of the word/containers." (2003, p. 10). Additionally, Reddy (1993) also discusses the influence culture has on the way metaphorical expressions are conceptualized, and that there is a preferred framework in the way speakers of English

perceive and talk about communication. In Section 4.3 of this essay, the conduit metaphor is further discussed, with the application of Beatles lyrics.

#### 2.1.4 Metaphors of Orientation

So far, this paper has demonstrated how structural metaphors can be analysed. Another type of metaphorical concepts is spatial metaphors; these metaphors also emphasize the notion that concepts that are generally common in the English language also seem to be frequent in English song lyrics. Spatial metaphors differ from structural metaphors, in the sense that they do not “structure one concept in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 14). Instead, spatial metaphors have a way of organizing an entire “system of concepts with respect to one another” (p. 14). One example of this system is up-down orientational metaphors. Similar to the structural metaphors, as they were described in Section 2.1.2 above, CMs of orientation are also deeply rooted in the English language.

##### *Example 4*

- (a) “I’m feeling *up* today.
- (b) ...My spirits *rose*.
- (c) ...I *fell into* a depression.”

(Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, pp. 14-15).

According to Lakoff and Johnson, orientational metaphors reflect both physicality and the culture they inhabit (2003). Moreover, spatial metaphors are essential for analysing the everyday concepts in the English language, and with their qualities of systematicity and coherence, they account for a substantial amount of concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The metaphorical expressions in Example 4a-c represent the concepts HAPPY IS UP and SAD IS DOWN, which, in turn, suggest the “physical basis” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 15) of feeling happy or sad; i.e., a “[d]rooping posture typically goes along with sadness and depression, erect posture with a positive emotional state.” (p. 15). In Section 4.4 below, orientational metaphors are further discussed with the application of Beatles lyrics.

#### 2.1.5 Ontological Metaphors

The final category of CMs being presented in this essay is, what Lakoff and Johnson call, *ontological metaphors*. This group of metaphors treats the “experience of physical objects and substances” (2003, p. 25). The qualities of ontological metaphorical concepts vary between

the different types of metaphors, but they generally comprise the way we conceptualize “events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances” (p. 25). One common CM with ontological qualities is THE MIND IS A CONTAINER, which is demonstrated in the next three examples.

*Example 5*

- (a) He seems very *open*-minded.
- (b) I will *keep* that *in* mind.
- (c) “[M]ake sure I don’t completely *lose my marbles*” (Sullivan, 2019, p. 139).

As can be observed in these examples, the concept THOUGHTS ARE SUBSTANCES/PHYSICAL OBJECTS coherently seems to follow linguistic expressions of the mind as a container; i.e., objects (thoughts) are conceptually placed in a container (the mind). Furthermore, the CONTAINER domain is a “preconceptual structure”, which “emerge[s] from our recurrent experiences of the world” (Kövecses, 2020, p. 9); this is also true for SOURCE-PATH-GOAL concepts, such as the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY (exemplified in Example 15c below). The CONTAINER domain, moreover, can also be considered “the most basic distinction between IN and OUT” (Lakoff, 1987, p. 271). Additionally, Sullivan (2019) also states that, because of the fact that “idioms have fixed meanings”, such as in (c) above, people seemingly tend to excuse certain “source-domain oddities” (pp. 138-139). Other ontological metaphors typically treat our *visual* experience of certain events, activities, etc.; these are represented in metaphorical expressions like “The ship is *coming into* view” and “He’s *out of* sight now” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 30), which construct the CM VISUAL FIELDS ARE CONTAINERS.

Having presented this introduction to the basics of CMT, the next segment introduces other researchers, who have utilized this method for studying metaphors in song lyrics previously.

## **2. 2. CMT Applied to Song Lyrics**

Today, CMT is a common framework when analysing metaphors in song lyrics. One example of such studies is Janne Harpela’s master’s thesis from 2015, where he analyses the song lyrics of Kylie Minogue through the scope of CMT. Harpela (2015) particularly studies Minogue’s use of love metaphors, and accounts for the artist’s way of creating new “figurative language and...metaphorical linguistic expressions” (p. 113). In his work, Harpela

provides a detailed account of numerous aspects of conceptualizing linguistic expressions relating to love, and his findings will also be taken into consideration in this essay, when analysing metaphors of love in the Beatles' lyrics.

One dissertation that analyses conceptual metaphors in lyrics was written by Marianna Smaragdi in 2012, called *Fire, poison, and black tears: Metaphors of Emotion in Rebétiko*. In her work, Smaragdi analyses metaphors and metaphorical concepts in contemporary Greek folk music, and examines the *metaphoricity* and high concentration of emotion in the rebétiko lyrics. Fundamentally, she concludes that, “the combination of an emotional and metaphorical language, closely connected to human experience, may have contributed to the popularity of the genre throughout the Greek-speaking world” (p. 187). Smaragdi's thesis on the consequence of culture in metaphors emphasises what seems to have become a popular research area within the field of semantics, which would be an interesting aspect to include in future research.

As recent as March this year (2021), Salvador Climent and Marta Coll-Florit published a study where they examine the frequency of love metaphors in American pop songs between 1946 and 2016; the study focuses specifically on Billboard hits. The findings in Climent and Coll-Florit's study most applicable to *this* thesis seem to be that certain conceptual metaphors of LOVE show considerable regularity in different time periods. For example, they discover that many of the conventional love metaphors started appearing in hit-songs between 1946 and the late 1950's; and from the late 1960's until the 1990's, the data reveal the instigation of variation between “conventional and novel metaphors” (2021, p. 13). Yet, a couple of the concepts I detected in the Beatles' lyrics seem to have become more prominent in hit-songs in the 1970's; this seems to be an interesting finding, which is exemplified in Section 5.1 below.

There seems to be a couple of main points that can be concluded from these sources: Firstly, due to the high concentration of metaphors (particularly of emotion) in popular music genres of the 1900's, and the fact that these genres principally targeted a mainstream audience, it appears that metaphorical concepts within the lyrics were also conventional in the language being used (this notion was also introduced in Section 2.1.4 above). Secondly, concepts of LOVE seem to have been particularly popular in lyrics throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although the CMs developed over the decades. The increase of new love metaphors in American hit-

songs from the 1970's and onwards also appears to be reflected in other artists' methods of conceptualizing love – a point that Harpela's thesis also provides evidence for.

### **3. Methodology & Data Description**

In this section, the methodology of this study and the data collection process and evaluation are presented. Section 3.1 provides a concise account of the methodology I have employed, and Section 3.2 provides a detailed description of the data.

#### **3.1 Methodology**

The aim of this essay is to study CMs in the Beatles' lyrics. To address that purpose, I have followed an empirical and qualitative methodology, with quantitative elements based on data from a specialized corpus of Beatles lyrics, manually compiled specifically for the purposes of this essay. The process of collecting the material has involved several phases, which are described in the next section. The methods I have employed, however, have been specific for each phase: When collecting the lyrics and listing the songs, I did so systematically in chronological order to make the process reasonably structured. Dividing the lyrics between the composers required additional research of alternate resources outside of the linguistic discipline (e.g. MacDonald, 2008). The method of identifying the CMs involved detailed analysis of each linguistic expression in each song; i.e., first the metaphorical expressions were distinguished from the literal expressions; the former were concurrently classified according to CMT – these processes were revised continuously, and every word and every phrase in the corpus was evaluated as comprising a metaphorical concept or not, in accordance with CMT. Having identified the CMs, the numeric data were compiled in separate tables, wherein I could detect tendencies of each composer's use of metaphors. Hence, the data have been collected, processed and analysed, and also evaluated consistently in order to confirm that the lyrics were correct (which was not always the case) and that all CMs had been appropriately classified.

#### **3.2 Data Description**

At the beginning of the data collection process, I had to decide on two time periods, representing the early and later Beatles songs for the comparative analysis, and catalogue all the songs chronologically (see Appendix 1). Although parts of the band were shaped earlier

than 1962, this essay focuses on the time period between 1962-1970. The time periods being analysed in Section 5 have been limited to early (1962-1964) and later (1968-1970) songs, in order to make a distinctive division between said early and later songs. The relative analyses, moreover, only include lyrics by Lennon and McCartney, since Harrison only wrote one song between 1962 and 1964. Since (almost) all songs composed by Lennon or McCartney were credited *Lennon/McCartney*, I was also required to uncover who actually wrote the lyrics, in order to divide the titles between the composers. I was able to collect the majority of this information much thanks to Ian MacDonald and his book *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (3<sup>rd</sup> rev. ed., 2008), which is widely recognized as one of the most authoritative criticisms of the Beatles' compositions.

Next, I collected the material (lyrics) from the Beatles' official web page<sup>2</sup>. During this process, I transferred all the complete song lyrics to a text document with a search-function, whereby I could search for target words within the corpus; this process, too, was conducted in chronological order. Initially, I considered transferring the lyrics to the corpus program Sketch Engine<sup>3</sup>, but due to its limitations<sup>4</sup>, and the fact that the lyrics are copyrighted, I decided on using .docx-files to store the data. Evidently, it proved both easier and more efficient for the purposes of this study, to collect the data manually and to create an entirely new corpus of the Beatles' song lyrics in a text document. With all the material being collected, I could then commence finding the metaphors within the lyrics. Again, all the songs were processed individually several times, in order to identify the metaphors and target domains in accordance with CMT. When this process was completed, I could count all the identified target domains, and hence obtain the numerical data and analyse the results. After the analysis of target domains, it became evident that I was also required to specifically analyse the instances of LOVE in more detail, as this was the concept most ubiquitous in both early and later songs, contrary to my hypothesis. The majority of this process is represented in Appendix 2<sup>5</sup>. Certain examples from the song lyrics are also presented when being discussed within the body of the essay.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thebeatles.com/explore-songs>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sketchengine.eu>

<sup>4</sup> See Section 5.2

<sup>5</sup> Due to copyrighted material, Appendix 2 will not be publicly available.

Due to copyrighted material, all the song lyrics can be found in their entirety at the web page, provided by Hal Leonard (2009). However, one issue, which became evident throughout the data collection, was that there were, on numerous occasions, minor mistakes in the lyrics provided by Leonard. Beneficially, I can recite all the Beatles' lyrics from memory, which made it possible to detect the errors and avert any unwanted miss-representations of the lyrics in relation to the original recordings. I have also listened through all the songs being analysed meticulously during the course of this project, in order to certify that the lyrics were correct.

To retrieve the material for this study, 15,791 words, divided into approximately 3000 lines of text, have been manually analysed; these comprise a total amount of 103 songs. The data being used to support the discussion in Section 5 are based on target domains identified within 36 of McCartney's songs, and 44 of Lennon's (since this is a comparative study, lyrics that were co-written are not included in the analysis), and are aimed to represent the amount of CMs in their lyrics between 1962-1964 and 1968-1970. I.e., the complete corpus consists of lyrics from 103 songs, but only 80 have been used in the comparative analysis between the composers. The descriptive statistics of the data collection is represented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Data Collection, 1962-1964 and 1968-1970*

Composer	Words	TDs	Songs
McCartney	5581	236	36
Lennon	6849	239	44
<i>Total</i>	12,430	475	80

A total amount of 475 target domains have been found within these two time periods (excluding collaborative lyrics), out of which, 236 have been identified in McCartney's songs, and 239 in Lennon's. In the time period 1962-1964, I identified 71 target domains in McCartney's songs, and 134 in Lennon's; between 1968-1970, the numbers were 165 and 105 respectively. With the percentages and statistics presented in Section 5.1, I have been able to identify tendencies of the composers' use of metaphors and how they developed over the years.

## 4. Conceptual Metaphors in the Beatles' Song Lyrics

This section presents an assortment of the most common metaphorical concepts in the Beatles' lyrics between 1962 and 1970, and reflects the demonstration of CMs in Section 2.1.1-5. The first subsection includes examples of LOVE metaphors.

### 4.1. How to unfold your love

Early Beatles song lyrics could be regarded as quite typical for a pop group in the sixties: The majority of their texts include concepts of LOVE, essentially. The structural metaphors within the lyrics, in particular, are frequently associated with love; the following lines from *This Boy* (1963) presents an example of this.

#### *Example 6*

- (a) "That boy *took* my love *away* [...]"
- (b) Oh, and this boy could be *happy* just to love you"

Both (a) and (b) are examples representing structural metaphors (introduced in Section 2.1 above) with the target domain LOVE. The first line suggests that love is something valuable, something you want to have in your possession. Hence, the conceptual metaphor of sentence (a) is LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE. Sentence (b) indicates the happiness of being in love brings the implied singer (boy), constructing the metaphorical concept LOVE IS HAPPINESS. Another instance of the CM in (a) can be found in *Can't Buy Me Love* (1963).

#### *Example 7*

- "Cause I don't care too much for money;  
Money can't *buy* me love."

In this example, the metaphorical concept LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE also applies. However, in the English language, the concept MONEY is usually talked about as something valuable, as in sentences like *I have no money to spare*, or *You're spending too much money*. Yet, in Example 7, one could conclude that, to the implied singer, LOVE is above MONEY in the hierarchy of valuable possessions. Thus, the expression *Money can't buy me love* putatively gives, at least the metaphorical concept of LOVE, hierarchical qualities in relation to MONEY. Evidently, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE is also the most



frequent love metaphor in all Beatles lyrics (demonstrated in Section 5.1), and appears to be one of the most frequent concepts of LOVE in popular music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Climent & Coll-Florit, 2021).

#### 4.2. Floating down the stream of time

Other structural metaphors that are common in the Beatles' lyrics relate to the concept TIME. Linguistic expressions associated with time are also extensively metaphorical in the English language; consider, for example, phrases like *wasting time*; *running out of time*; *no time to spare*: They all indicate that time is something valuable, and the well-known proverb *Time is money* emphasizes this, as the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY applies to several metaphorical expressions (such as *wasting time* etc.).

Likewise, another common metaphorical concept is TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. Lakoff and Johnson show, moreover, that *time* in the English language is an example where other researchers previously have indicated that there are issues of coherence in our “everyday metaphorical expressions” (2003, p. 41). These issues mainly involve aspects of the past and future. However, the alleged incoherence does seemingly not occur; in short, regarding metaphorical concepts such as TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT, Lakoff and Johnson disprove the incoherence, by showing that “there are various ways in which something can move” (p. 45).

The following examples illustrate some of the time metaphors observable in the Beatles' lyrics.

##### *Example 8*

- (a) “Well, there's *gonna be* a time when I'm *gonna change* your mind”  
I'll Get You (1963).

Sentence (a) shows that the concept FUTURE is ahead in time; more specifically, it is a state in the time ahead, when the implied singer will *change* someone's mind. The sentence thus forms the metaphorical concepts THE FUTURE IS AHEAD and THE MIND IS A PHYSICAL STRUCTURE; they also include the presupposed concepts TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT and IDEAS ARE OBJECTS.

- (b) “She will never make me jealous,

*Gives* me all her time, as well as lovin',  
Don't ask me why"

She's a Woman (1964).

This is a clear example of the concept TIME IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE, indicated by the source domain *Gives*.

(c) "Now she's *hit* the *big time* in the USA"

Honey Pie (1968).

Here, TIME is a metonymy, associated with the metaphorical concept STATUS IS SIZE – compare, for instance, with a sentence like *He's just a small time criminal*. Moreover, the word *hit* indicates that the way of achieving fame is a manual motion, which would adhere to the conceptual metaphor SUCCESS IS A TARGET. On a side note, status is commonly conceptualized in coherence with orientational up-down metaphors and the future in the English language – i.e. HIGH STATUS IS UP and THE FUTURE IS UP (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003).

#### **4.3. Leaving the note that she hoped would say more**

As the word conduit (synonymous with canal and channel) implies, conduit metaphors are metaphorical concepts, which indicate the sense of movement or transfer certain types of linguistic expressions infer; as mentioned in Section 2.1.3, these metaphors are frequently used when conceptualizing WORDS, IDEAS, and COMMUNICATION primarily. One example of this can be collected from the song *Tell Me Why* (1964).

##### *Example 9*

"If it's something that I've said or done,  
*Tell* me what, and I'll apologize"

Section 2.1.3 displayed how communication can be conceptualized within the English language, and the structure that was introduced can be utilized to analyse the metaphorical concepts in Example 9. Here, *something that I've said or done* can be regarded as the IDEA, which is put into a container WORDS, that the implied singer wishes the speaker to send through a conduit, in order for the singer to receive the IDEA from the container. This action,

as can be understood from the lyric, would also result in an apology, thus also suggesting a causality of COMMUNICATION in form of an EFFECT.

Another example of a conduit metaphor can be collected from the lyrics of *She's Leaving Home* (1967).

*Example 10*

“Wednesday morning at five o’clock, as the day begins  
Silently closing her bedroom door,  
Leaving the note that she hoped would *say* more”

Again, the concept COMMUNICATION has the system of a conduit: The IDEA is put into a container (words), transmitted via the conduit (note), to then be construed by the reader. Furthermore, the theme of the song itself describes the event of a daughter leaving home, which seemingly upsets the parents. The message in the letter causes the mother to “break down” (see Example 13b below), which, considering other instances of conduit metaphors in the Beatles’ lyrics, suggests that COMMUNICATION often is followed by an EFFECT.

#### **4.4 Lift up your hearts**

In Section 2.1.4, orientational metaphorical concepts were introduced. In general, the way the English language reflects spatial up-down metaphors is through the conceptual metaphor GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN, as in the following examples.

*Example 11*

(a) “Going to work, don’t wanna go, feeling *low down*”  
Good Morning, Good Morning (1967).

(b) “Lift *up* your hearts and sing me a song”  
Your Mother Should Know (1967).

(c) “The sun is *up*, the sky is blue  
It’s beautiful, and so are you”  
Dear Prudence (1968).

Additionally, (c) also conceptualizes the visual experience of the sun being *up*, and could also be considered an example of the cultural influence on metaphors, and the way we perceive and talk about the world. However, the following sentence is a different example from a Beatles song, co-written by Lennon and McCartney (MacDonald, 2008), which also accounts for the composers' habit of word play.

*Example 12*

“You're holding me *down*[...], filling me *up* with your rules”

Getting Better (1967).

This example confirms the conceptual metaphor BAD IS DOWN, but *up* could not be considered something good in this case. The way to analyse Example 12 is to conclude that *up* is not the important part of the concept, but *rules* is; i.e., it is not the action of filling up that is negative, but the fact that the implied singer is filled up with *rules*. In contrast, to prove the consistency of metaphorical linguistic expressions involving *fill up*, consider for instance the sentence *It filled me up with joy*. As aforesaid, the action is not in itself negative or positive, but what the container is filled up *with* is. In order to analyse the example from *Getting Better* further, it needs to be examined as an ontological metaphor.

#### 4.5 I'll go out of my mind

*You're filling me up with your rules* is an illustrating example of ontological metaphors, which were introduced in Section 2.1.5. In the sentence from Example 12, THE MIND is a container, whereas RULES is a substance, which fills up the container. Other types of ontological metaphors can be collected from several Beatles songs between 1962 and 1970.

*Example 13*

(a) “You know, if you *break* my heart I'll go”

I'll Be Back (1964).

(b) “She *breaks down* and cries to her husband”

She's Leaving Home (1967).

In the line from *I'll Be Back*, the heart is given certain qualities, namely, that it is something fragile, with the possibility of breaking. Consequently, the ontological CM in this example

can be identified as THE HEART IS A BRITTLE OBJECT. In the second example (b), THE MIND is the target domain. Yet, the literal sense of something *breaking down* often refers to different types of machinery, which suggests that the mental experience in sentence (b) differs from (a), and constructs the metaphorical concept THE MIND IS A MACHINE – This concept can be detected in several metaphorical expressions; e.g. “Now you’re *in gear*” (Good Morning Good Morning, 1967), “She came along to *turn on* everyone” (Sexy Sadie, 1968).

Additionally, the phrase *break down* could also provide an example of the coherent structure of conceptual metaphors. In a literal sense, breaking *down* is something usually attributed to machinery, but breaking *up* implies something completely different. Hence, metaphorical expressions associated with THE MIND as a machine can only use the phrase break down, and not break up. This has to do with the fact that the metaphorical expressions of a concept, in this case MACHINE, that structure the concept MIND, have to include words and phrases associated with MACHINE to make sense in the English language.

On a side note, the concept MIND can seemingly be a difficult category to analyse due to its vagueness, but one prevailing pattern includes the notion that there is a “dichotomy between the emotions and the intellect” (Allan, 2008, p. 31); e.g., the mind is often associated with intellect, and the heart with emotion; although the division is not always viable to maintain (Allan, 2008).

## **5. Results and Discussion**

This essay has, to this point, introduced some of the basic aspects of CMT, and provided examples from the Beatles’ lyrics where various types of metaphors can be identified. In this section, results from the data are presented and discussed, followed by a description of some of the issues encountered during the process of collecting the material.

### **5.1 Comparative Analysis**

Here, the first comparative aspects of this thesis are discussed. The purpose of this section is to present the material for answering the questions stated in the introduction, and examine the results from the data collection. The data, as described in Section 3.2, have been collected from 36 of McCartney’s songs, and 44 from Lennon’s. The number of songs also proved to be

relatively balanced, considering the total amount of target domains identified in each composer’s lyrics (236 versus 239).

As has been stated throughout this paper, love songs were abundant in the early years of the Beatles’ career, akin to the conceptual metaphors of LOVE within the lyrics. Table 2 (below) shows the frequency of the five conceptual target domains most ubiquitous in their song lyrics between 1962 and 1964. Within this time period, a total amount of 205 target domains were identified – 71 in McCartney’s songs, and 134 in Lennon’s. Songs that were co-written have been excluded from all calculations in this section, as well as any repetitions of metaphorical expressions in each song.

**Table 2**

*Target Domains, Frequency 1962-1964*

Target Domain	McCartney	Lennon	Total
LOVE	33.8% (24)	19.4% (26)	24.4%
EMOTION	4.2% (3)	16.4% (22)	12.2%
TIME	15.5% (11)	9.0% (12)	11.2%
LIFE	9.9% (7)	5.2% (7)	6.8%
THE MIND	4.2% (3)	6.0% (8)	5.4%

*Note.* The raw numbers within parenthesis refer to the number of instances each target domain was detected in each composer’s lyrics.

In the early time period, as can be concluded from these numbers, metaphorical concepts with the target domain LOVE were exceedingly more frequent in McCartney’s lyrics. Yet, the percentages also show that conceptual metaphors of LOVE were the most common in both composers’ lyrics combined (by a substantial margin), with 24.4% of all target domains identified in the data collection, compared to the second most frequent, EMOTION (12.2%), which was disproportionately represented in Lennon’s lyrics. This would arguably also resonate with the overall, often considered juvenile, lyrics in the Beatles’ earliest songs, which incorporate typical themes such as love, emotion, disappointment, loneliness, and so on. Metaphors of love, nevertheless, varied considerably regarding the type of metaphorical

concepts they were conveying within the lyrics by each composer. Throughout the Beatles songs, one can find structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, conduit metaphors, similes, metonymies, etc. – all embodying different concepts of LOVE. Furthermore, divided by the 50 love metaphors identified in their lyrics between 1962 and 1964, the three most frequently occurring CMs with the target domain LOVE were LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE, LOVE IS HAPPINESS and the spatial metaphor LOVE IS A CONTAINER. These concepts also seem to be conventional in pop song lyrics in general (Climent & Coll-Florit, 2021).

**Table 3**

*Conceptual Metaphors of Love, Frequency 1962-1964*

Conceptual Metaphor	McCartney	Lennon	Total
LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE	41.7% (10)	38.5% (10)	40%
LOVE IS HAPPINESS	8.3% (2)	15.4% (4)	12%
LOVE IS A CONTAINER	8.3% (2)	11.5% (3)	10%

*Note.* The raw numbers within parenthesis refer to the number of instances each CM was detected in each composer’s lyrics.

The following examples show one of each of these three metaphorical concepts from the Beatles’ songs between 1962 and 1964.

*Example 14*

- (a) “Til we’re together,  
 Keep all my love forever.”

P.S. I Love You, 1962.  
 (McCartney)

In this example of a structural metaphor, the implied singer wishes the receiver of his message to keep his love (for safekeeping), until they meet again, suggesting that LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE.

- (b) “Closer, let me whisper in your ear,  
 Say the words you long to hear –

I'm *in* love with you.”

Do You Want to Know a Secret, 1963.  
 (Lennon)

The third line in (b) is an example of a common orientational metaphor, with the concept LOVE IS A CONTAINER, indicated by the source domain *in*.

(c) “Oh, and this boy could be *happy* just to love you.”

This Boy, 1964.  
 (Lennon)

This is a different metaphor from *This Boy* (see Example 6), which is considerably straightforward to unravel – The source domain *happy* indicates the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS HAPPINESS.

With the results presented in Table 2 and 3, and the examples 14a-c in mind, Table 4 shows the frequency of the five conceptual target domains most ubiquitous between 1968 and 1970. Within this time period, a total amount of 270 target domains were identified – 165 in McCartney’s songs, and 105 in Lennon’s.

**Table 4**

*Target Domains, Frequency 1968-1970*

Target Domain	McCartney	Lennon	Total
LOVE	15.8% (26)	15.2% (16)	15.6%
THE MIND	10.3% (17)	14.3% (15)	11.9%
LIFE	15.2% (25)	3.8% (4)	10.7%
TIME	6.7% (11)	0% (0)	4.1%
EMOTION	4.2% (7)	2.9% (3)	3.7%

As these numbers show, metaphors of LOVE were still the most frequently occurring in the composers’ later songs, as they represent 15.6% of all identified target domains. However,



two observations worth mentioning in particular is that, firstly, there seems to be no major difference in percentages between Lennon and McCartney's use of love metaphors; secondly, the general tendency of using love metaphors was greatly reduced toward the end of the group's career. Hence, although metaphors of LOVE were still common in the composers' later work, the general idea, that their songs became more thematically varied, could be supported by the variation of metaphorical concepts within their lyrics. Moreover, the most frequently occurring CM of LOVE in the Beatles' later songs was still LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE (16.7% of all 42 love metaphors identified), but followed by LOVE IS A JOURNEY (14.3%, only used by McCartney) and LOVE IS MADNESS (11.9%). These numbers are represented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Conceptual Metaphors of Love, Frequency 1968-1970*

Conceptual Metaphor	McCartney	Lennon	Total
LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE	15.4% (4)	18.8% (3)	16.7%
LOVE IS A JOURNEY	23.1% (6)	0% (0)	14.3%
LOVE IS MADNESS	7.7% (2)	18.8% (3)	11.9%

Although LOVE IS A JOURNEY is the second most frequent in total (14.3%), it cannot be considered representative of both composers' use of metaphorical concepts. As the values in the table show, Lennon did not include a single instance of aforesaid concept in his lyrics. Contrastingly, LOVE IS A JOURNEY represented 11.5% of Lennon's love metaphors between 1962 and 1964. Although one could liberally conjecture why this concept saw such a decline in Lennon's lyrics, it would seem, however, that he rarely employed a CM of LOVE more than three times between 1968 and 1970 (see Table 5 and Example 15d), and that his lyrics consisted of a higher concentration of sexually oriented topics, which did not directly relate to the concept LOVE (e.g. Example 15e). Evidently, it would seem that LOVE IS A JOURNEY was not conceptually relevant to Lennon between 1968 and 1970, which could be analysed

extensively<sup>6</sup>; yet, as is demonstrated in the source domains of his love metaphors in later lyrics, Lennon typically conceptualized love as an OBJECT or MADNESS.

On the other hand, both LOVE and other CMs in McCartney's later lyrics seem to comprise ways of living, and to portray life through different metaphorical concepts (e.g. LIFE, DREAMS, NATURE). However, LOVE IS A JOURNEY could positively be understood to be an indication of the polarization (RQ1) between the composers, as well as the differences in their way of conceptualizing love (RQ2). The following examples show instances of the three conceptual metaphors in Table 5, and two additional (d-e).

*Example 15*

(a) "Oh, Honey Pie, you are driving me *frantic*"

Honey Pie, 1968.

(McCartney)

This is an example of the conventional CM LOVE IS MADNESS. Furthermore, *Honey Pie* constructs the conceptual metaphor THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS APPETIZING FOOD, which is also exemplified by Kövecses (2003).

(b) "But do you, don't you, *want* me to love you?"

Helter Skelter, 1968.

(McCartney)

Here, the source domain *want* introduces the concept LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE.

(c) "The wild and windy night, that the rain washed away,

Has left a pool of tears, crying for the day.

Why leave me standing here, let me know *the way*."

The Long and Winding Road, 1969-70.

(McCartney)

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<sup>6</sup> It is widely known that Lennon's relationship with Yoko Ono affected both him and the Beatles profoundly: "Lennon's passion for Ono had shaken him to the core... Sexually addicted to her, he was helplessly dependent" (MacDonald, 2008, p. 343).

In this excerpt, the love metaphor is located in the third line. The sentence from the first line in the song, *The long and winding road, that leads to your door*, combined with the source domain *the way* above, indicates that the implied singer desires someone to lead him back to love, or to the love of a specific person; this would suggest the concept LOVE IS A JOURNEY.

(d) “*Limitless, undying love,*

Which *shines* around me *like a million suns*”

Across the Universe, 1968.

(Lennon)

Considering the first two words in (d), love could be conceptualized as LOVE IS AN IMMORTAL ENTITY. However, the simile *shines...like a million suns* suggests that love also is materialized as a celestial body, or plural bodies. Consequently, the implied singer (me) is the centre of the universe, around which the celestial bodies (love) circulate. Harpela (2015) also acknowledges this type of structural metaphors as the metaphorical concept LOVE IS AN ASTRONOMICAL OBJECT/PHENOMENON; this CM was unique to Lennon’s later lyrics, and his most frequently used concept of love between 1968 and 1970 (18.8%), alongside LOVE IS MADNESS and LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE.

(e) “I *want* you,

I want you so bad,

It’s driving me *mad*, it’s driving me mad.”

I Want You (She’s So Heavy), 1969.

(Lennon)

Although the metaphors in (e) may look like CMs of LOVE (compare Example 15a-b), the source domain *want* introduces the metaphorical concept THE OBJECT OF LUST IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE. Furthermore, the third line also includes LUST IS MADNESS, indicated by the source domain *mad*. However, combining these two metaphors would result in the idea, that the concept of these three lines together is SEX IS A DRUG; the implied singer’s need/desire is causing him to suffer from withdrawal, making him *mad*.

The selection of CMs in Example 14 (a-c) and 15 (a-d) is proposed to represent the variety of love metaphors found in the Beatles’ early and later songs. The complexity of metaphorical

concepts in their lyrics seems to develop to some degree over the years. However, McCartney’s use of love metaphors appears to be less varied in style, as he tends to use structural metaphors that are rather common in the English language (as in Example 14a and 15a-c above); while Lennon’s linguistic expressions seem to portray rather interesting, and not as conventional, ways of conceptualizing love (as in Example 15d above).

In addition to the data in Table 2-5, the following (6a-c) demonstrate how the word *love* is represented in the composers’ lyrics; Table 6a shows the relation between the word *love* and the target domain LOVE, according to their type:token ratio (TTR)<sup>7</sup>. By measuring the TTR, it is possible to identify the “lexical variation, or vocabulary richness” (McArthur et al., 2018) in the composers’ use of particular words and metaphors<sup>8</sup>. Here, I have employed TTR as a measuring technique to count the number of unique occurrences of *love* in McCartney’s and Lennon’s lyrics, in both the early and late time period, to see how many times the word was used to describe the concept LOVE. Tables 6b-c represent the TTR of the number of times *love* was used in metaphorical/non-metaphorical expressions; e.g., the latter include phrases like *I love you* and succinct phrases not directly related to a metaphorical expression in the text. Between 1962-1964, *love* appeared on 68 unique instances (in 34 songs), and between 1968-1970 only on 25 instances (in 46 songs).

**Table 6a**

*TTR of the Word Love (type) in Relation to the Target Domain LOVE (token)*

Time Period	McCartney	Lennon	Total
1962-1964	1.54	1.19	1.36
1968-1970	0.50	0.75	0.60

<sup>7</sup> Essentially, the TTR is “calculated by dividing the total number of different words in a text (the types) by the total number of words (the tokens)” (McArthur et al., 2018) – a TTR of 1.00 equals 100%.

<sup>8</sup> N.B. that I have only applied this measuring technique to the word *love* and the concept LOVE in Table 6a-c; hence, the numbers do not represent the TTR of love in relation to other lexical entities in the data collection.

**Table 6b**

*TTR of the Unique Instances of the Word Love 1962-1964*

	McCartney	Lennon
Metaphorical	0.59 (22/37)	0.55 (17/31)
Non-metaphorical	0.41 (15/37)	0.45 (14/31)

**Table 6c**

*TTR of the Unique Instances of the Word Love 1968-1970*

	McCartney	Lennon
Metaphorical	0.69 (9/13)	0.75 (9/12)
Non-metaphorical	0.31 (4/13)	0.25 (3/12)

As it appears, the word love was used considerably less frequently to define LOVE in the composers' lyrics between 1968 and 1970; i.e., Table 6a shows that the TTR was substantially higher in early (1.36) versus later songs (0.60), which would also illustrate quite clearly that the manner in which Lennon and (especially) McCartney conceptualized love in their lyrics evolved over the years. Furthermore, Tables 6b-c show that the TTR of the metaphorical occurrences of *love* was higher in both composers' later lyrics – The TTR of *love* used metaphorically was altogether 0.57 (early songs) versus 0.72 (later songs). Hence, the word *love* was more infrequent in later songs (TTR 0.54 versus 2.0), similar to the concept LOVE (see Table 4), but was more frequently used in metaphorical expressions.

Table 7 illustrates the amount of unique target domains identified in each composer's lyrics between 1962 and 1964, according to their TTR<sup>9</sup>. Within this time period, a total amount of 45 unique target domains were identified, out of 205 in total.

<sup>9</sup> In Tables 7-8, the types represent the amount of unique target domains, and the tokens represent the total amount of target domains.

**Table 7***Unique Target Domains, TTR 1962-1964*

Composer	Tokens	Types	TTR
McCartney	71	18	0.25
Lennon	134	27	0.20
<i>Total</i>	205	45	0.22

Contrary to what one would have predicted from the numbers in Table 2, McCartney's use of different metaphorical concepts in the early songs seems to be more varied than Lennon's; the presumption being that, because of McCartney's extensive use of metaphors of LOVE, the target domains in Lennon's metaphorical expressions would indicate superior variation. Yet, this is seemingly not the case.

In contrast, Table 8 shows the number of unique target domains identified between 1968 and 1970. Within this time period, a total amount of 98 unique target domains were identified, out of 270 in total.

**Table 8***Unique Target Domains, TTR 1968-1970*

Composer	Tokens	Types	TTR
McCartney	165	53	0.32
Lennon	105	45	0.43
<i>Total</i>	270	98	0.36

Here, the ratios indicate that the composers' tendency of employing different metaphorical concepts shifted from their early compositions (compare Table 7). As could be understood from the values in Table 8, Lennon's use of metaphors became more diverse, as the amount of unique TDs he employed (TTR 0.43) shows superior variability in relation to McCartney (TTR 0.32). The numbers also demonstrate that the composers' tendency of employing

different metaphorical concepts generally increased between 1968 and 1970 (TTR 0.36 compared to 0.22).

However, some of the most interesting discoveries can be collected from the more infrequent metaphors, which could also be considered additional material for RQ1. For example, one of the target domains unique to Lennon's later lyrics was the concept DEATH (4.8% out of 105 target domains); these metaphors can be found mainly in the lyrics of *Yer Blues*, *Happiness Is a Warm Gun* and *Julia*. Other target domains unique to Lennon were IDEAS (1.9%), SUCCESS (1.9%), and PEACE (1.0%). Target domains that were unique to McCartney's later songs were DREAMS (2.4%), THE FUTURE, FAITH, and HOPE (1.2% respectively). But even more remarkable was that one of the target domains unique to McCartney's later lyrics was TIME (see Table 4), which, contrastingly, was the third most frequently used by Lennon between 1962 and 1964 (see Table 2). This discovery could arguably be another illustrating example of the differences (RQ2) and the polarization (RQ1) between the composers' use of metaphorical concepts.

It would seem that the numbers shown in Table 2-8 indicate that McCartney's and Lennon's lyrics did not only change stylistically from early to later songs, but the way they employed metaphors and metaphorical concepts also evolved over the years; though several similarities between the composers seem to have been constant until the end, too. As the data show, metaphors of LOVE were (by far) the most common in both early and later songs, as they represented 19.4% of all metaphorical concepts identified between 1962-1964 and 1968-1970 combined, followed by the second most frequent, THE MIND (8.7%). Moreover, both McCartney's and Lennon's lyrics consisted of metaphorical concepts relating to THE MIND more frequently in later songs, which would adhere to the premise, that the compositions generally became more diverse, as many of the composers' later songs involved more spiritually inspired themes, although the themes per se were rather different between the composers.

In addition, the conventional concepts LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE<sup>10</sup>, LOVE IS A JOURNEY, and the *new*<sup>11</sup> concept LOVE IS A GAME, seem to have become considerably more

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<sup>10</sup> Referred to as LOVE IS A VALUABLE ASSET in Climent and Coll-Florit (2021).

<sup>11</sup> Climent and Coll-Florit (2021) divide CMs into two categories – *novel* and *conventional*.

frequent in American hit-songs in the 1970's (Climent & Coll-Florit, 2021). In light of this, Table 9 shows the TTR of these CMs found in the Beatles' lyrics.

**Table 9**

*Love Metaphors, TTR (forecasting)*

Conceptual Metaphor	TTR 1962-1964	TTR 1968-1970
LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE	0.40	0.17
LOVE IS A JOURNEY	0.08	0.14
LOVE IS A GAME	0.06	0.07

In McCartney's lyrics alone, the TTR of LOVE IS A JOURNEY between 1968 and 1970 is 0.23 (token 26, type 6), which is the highest number of his CMs of LOVE within that time period. To the best of my knowledge, the numbers could hypothetically indicate that, as a prominent part of the *British Invasion*<sup>12</sup> in the 1960's, the composers might have been a more contributing factor in influencing subsequent songwriters of pop music in the USA than have been verified in linguistic research previously – a proposition that would be interesting to investigate further in future explorations. Although this suggestion seems difficult to validate through quantitative data, it might be worth probing with the tools of CMT.

## 5.2 Problems and Limitations

As mentioned in Section 3, I considered transferring the song lyrics to the corpus program Sketch Engine, which could be a useful method for compiling the data and searching for target words within the lyrics. However, by employing this method, I was required to copy-paste all the lyrics into the corpus-program, in order to then search for target words (such as *love* and *time*) to find the metaphors within the text. Consequently, there was a considerably large possibility of overlooking some of the most relevant metaphors, due to the complexity of certain metaphorical concepts. However, as the reader presumably realizes, the procedure of collecting and processing the data manually would become a more arduous and time-consuming endeavour.

<sup>12</sup> The British Invasion was a "musical movement of the mid-1960's composed of British rock-n-roll ("beat") groups, whose popularity spread rapidly to the United States" (Robbins, 2021).



As is often the case when collecting data for any study, there is the possibility of some information being missed in the process, and specifically for this study, that some metaphors have been overlooked. This would become a potential issue when answering the comparative aspects of the RQs presented in the introduction. In order to prevent this from affecting the results, I have (as was mentioned in Section 3), processed and evaluated all the data several times. Limiting some of the discussions to a reduced set of metaphors should also decrease the possibilities for any undesirable omissions and incorrect representation of the data. Additionally, it would also have been possible to use inter-rater or intra-rater reliability analysis as a part of the data set, and to include inferential statistics (such as Chi-square analysis of frequencies) in addition to the descriptive statistics used and reported.

Lastly, one obstacle, that would frequently introduce itself when analysing the Beatles' lyrics, is the fact that the composers' habit of word play is a very common feature throughout their career. MacDonald (2008) says, for example, that "Lennon's love of word games and louche sexual euphemisms", as well as "his running battle with those with a taste for over-interpretation" (p. 312) was constant throughout his life, and that "[o]bscurity was his sanctuary from the condescension of intellectuals..." (p. 313). However, by analysing the Beatles' lyrics by employing CMT, many of the instances of nonsensical or otherwise difficult lyrics can be circumvented, as the theory is concerned with conceptual metaphors, rather than linguistic expressions used metaphorically (Kövecses, 2020). Thus, the analysis in this thesis has not been a matter of interpretation of literal meaning, but a demonstrating examination of concepts and cognitive assessments thereof.

## **6. Concluding Remarks**

In this essay, I have explored metaphors in the Beatles' song lyrics through the application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, in order to examine how the composers' use of metaphorical concepts evolved. When it comes to RQ1, the polarization between Lennon and McCartney's use of metaphors seems to have been validated to some extent. Most importantly, the data show that metaphors of TIME shifted from early to later songs between the composers, as no instances of time related metaphorical expressions could be identified in Lennon's lyrics between 1968 and 1970. Furthermore, Lennon's use of metaphors of EMOTION was reduced from 16.4% of the identified target domains in early songs, to 2.9% in his later songs.

How the composers conceptualized love in their lyrics also partially shifted between the time periods; most noticeable was that, in early songs, the different conceptual metaphors were located rather evenly between the composers, whereas in later songs, a substantial amount of both love metaphors and concepts were unique to each composer. One of the examples presented was that the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY was unique to McCartney's lyrics between 1968 and 1970. Another example was metaphors related to DEATH in Lennon's later lyrics, which were exclusive to his songs. By studying metaphorical concepts in the composers' lyrics, it may be concluded that the presupposed differences in their writing styles were convincingly reflected in their use of metaphorical concepts. Also, regarding RQ2, the number of unique target domains within each composer's lyrics showed that McCartney's use of different metaphorical expressions was generally more diverse between 1962 and 1964, whereas Lennon's showed superior variation between 1968 and 1970.

Continuing with RQ2, the results in Section 5 also demonstrated the similarities between Lennon and McCartney's use of conceptual metaphors. The findings showed that metaphors related to THE MIND became more prominent in both composers' later songs, as they represented 11.9% of all identified target domains between 1968 and 1970, compared to 5.4% between 1962 and 1964. The percentages of target domains in Table 4 also showed that both composers' tendency of using love metaphors was almost identical in later songs, but Table 5 indicated that the conceptual metaphors of LOVE were rather different between them. Also, their use of the word *love* evolved considerably over the years, which was demonstrated in Tables 6a-c. One may also conclude that the composers' use of metaphorical concepts reflected their overall implementation of new themes and ideas (compared to early songs); yet, the similarities in their tendency of using love metaphors seem to suggest that, in spite of the differences, the songs by both Lennon and McCartney were still primarily infused with love between 1968 and 1970.

Regarding RQ3, my hypothesis was that love metaphors would be less prominent in the Beatles' later songs prior to conducting this essay. The data support this claim to some extent. However, LOVE was still the target domain identified most times in Lennon and McCartney's lyrics combined and individually, both within each separate time period and in general; i.e., metaphors of LOVE became less prominent, but were still the metaphors most frequently used. Furthermore, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE was the most

common in both time periods. Considering the data shown in Table 9, and contiguous reflections, it would seem that the only inference one may draw concerning the consequence of the last discovery is that aforesaid CM may in fact be one of the most common in pop song lyrics, too. Several factors would have to be considered, however, in order to corroborate what this contributes to the study of metaphors in song lyrics in general, such as cultural influence, the time period (1960's), the gender of the composers, and so on. But LOVE certainly seems to have been, if not all, at least the majority of what a pop group needed to be successful in the 1960's.

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To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study that followed a methodology that combined a qualitative analysis with quantitative elements and compared CMs between Lennon and McCartney's lyrics. Consequently, the idea to conduct further research on the subject seems very intriguing. For example, it would be interesting to include a discussion on the cultural and contextual aspects of CMT in the Beatles lyrics; and to make an in-depth analysis of all the songs the group composed, including George Harrison's lyrics; and to also incorporate other aspects of metaphors. There seems to be an abundance of possibilities within the field of semantics, especially since recent research appears to have instigated an inspiring curiosity in the study of metaphors in popular music.

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- Magical Mystery Tour* [LP]. UK: Capitol; EMI; Parlophone (1967).
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- Please, Please Me* [A-single]. UK: Parlophone (1963).
- She's a Woman* [B-single]. UK: Parlophone (1964).
- She Loves You* [A-single]. UK: Parlophone (1963).
- Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* [LP]. UK: Parlophone (1967).
- The Beatles* [LP]. UK: Apple Records (1968).

*This Boy* [B-single]. UK: Parlophone (1963).

*With The Beatles* [LP]. UK: Parlophone (1963).

## Appendix 1

### Beatles Songs Listed Chronologically by Text Composer

In this appendix, all the songs that the group recorded between 1962-1964 and 1968-1970 are listed chronologically. Titles that are crossed-out were either not written by any of the band members of interest here, or did not have any relevant metaphors to be examined – mainly because the lyrics did not include a sufficient amount of sentences – for instance, the song *Revolution 9* (1968) is a sound collage, not consisting of any written lyrics.

Titles in round brackets ( ) indicate that the songs were written in collaboration, but the composer, under which the (*Song Title*) can be found, wrote the lyrics. Titles in double round brackets (( )) indicate that it is not confirmed that the composer, under which the ((*Song Title*)) can be found, wrote the lyrics – these songs have not been included in the comparative analysis in this essay, and are not included in the calculations of the data. Furthermore, the years, under which each song is listed, refer to the year the song was recorded, not published.

#### 1962

<u>Lennon/McCartney</u>	<u>McCartney</u>	<u>Lennon</u>	<u>Harrison</u>
Love Me Do	(Love Me Do)		
P.S I Love You	(P.S. I Love You)		
Please Please Me		(Please Please Me)	
Ask Me Why		(Ask Me Why)	

#### 1963

There's a Place		(There's a Place)	
I Saw Her Standing There	(I Saw...)		
<del>A Taste of Honey</del>			
Do You Want to Know a Secret		(Do You Want to Know a Secret)	
Misery			
Hold Me Tight	((Hold Me Tight))		
<del>Anna (Go to Him)</del>			
<del>Boys</del>			
<del>Chains</del>			
<del>Baby It's You</del>			
<del>Twist and Shout</del>			

From Me To You  
Thank You Girl

She Loves You  
I'll Get You

~~You Really Got A Hold On Me~~  
~~Money (That's What I Want)~~

~~Devil In Her Heart~~

~~Till There Was You~~  
~~Please Mr Postman~~

It Won't Be Long  
~~Roll Over Beethoven~~

(It Won't Be Long)

All My Loving  
I Wanna Be Your Man

(All My Loving)

Little Child  
All I've Got To Do

(All I've Got To Do)

Not a Second Time

(Not a Second Time)

Don't Bother Me

I Want To Hold Your Hand  
This Boy

(This Boy)

## 1964

Can't Buy Me Love  
You Can't Do That

(Can't Buy Me Love)

(You Can't Do That)

And I Love Her  
I Should Have Known Better

(And I Love Her)

(I Should Have Known Better)

Tell Me Why

(Tell Me Why)

If I Fell

(If I Fell)

I'm Happy Just To Dance With You

(I'm Happy...)

~~Long Tall Sally~~

I Call Your Name  
A Hard Day's Night

(I Call Your Name)  
(A Hard Day's Night)

~~Matchbox~~

I'll Cry Instead

(I'll Cry Instead)

I'll Be Back

(I'll Be Back)

Any Time At All

(Any Time At All)

Things We Said Today

(Things We Said Today)

When I Get Home

(When I Get Home)

Baby's In Black

I'm a Loser

(I'm A Loser)

~~Mr Moonlight~~

Every Little Thing

(Every Little Thing)

I Don't Want To Spoil The Party

What You're Doing

(What You're Doing)

No Reply

(No Reply)

Eight Days A Week

(Eight Days A Week)

She's A Woman

(She's A Woman)

I Feel Fine

(I Feel Fine)

~~Kansas City/Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey~~

I'll Follow The Sun

(I'll Follow The Sun)

~~Everybody's Trying To Be My Baby~~

Rock And Roll Music  
Words Of Love  
Honey Don't (Starkey)

## 1968

Lady Madonna	(Lady Madonna)		Inner Light
Across The Universe		(Across The Universe)	
Hey Bulldog		(Hey Bulldog)	
Revolution (1)		(Revolution (1))	
<del>Don't Pass Me By</del> {Starkey}			
<del>Revolution 9</del>			
Blackbird	(Blackbird)		
Everybody's Got Something To Hide...		(Everybody's Got Something To Hide...)	
Good Night		(Good Night)	
Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da	(Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da)		
Cry Baby Cry		(Cry Baby Cry)	
Helter Skelter	(Helter Skelter)		
Sexy Sadie		(Sexy Sadie)	
			While My Guitar Gently Weeps
Hey Jude	(Hey Jude)		
Mother Nature's Son	(Mother Nature's Son)		
Yer Blues		(Yer Blues)	
Rocky Raccoon	(Rocky Raccoon)		
<del>Wild Honey Pie</del>			
Back In The USSR	(Back In The USSR)		
Dear Prudence		(Dear Prudence)	
Glass Onion		(Glass Onion)	
I Will	(I Will)		
Birthday	((Birthday))		
Happiness Is A Warm Gun		(Happiness Is A Warm Gun)	Piggies
Honey Pie	(Honey Pie)		
Martha My Dear	(Martha My Dear)		Savoy Truffle
I'm So Tired		(I'm So Tired)	Long Long Long
The Continuing Story Of Bungalow Bill			
	Why Don't We Do It In The Road?		
Julia		(Julia)	
<b>1969</b>			
Dig A Pony		(Dig A Pony)	
I've Got A Feeling			
Don't Let Me Down		(Don't Let Me Down)	
Get Back	(Get Back)		
Two Of Us	(Two Of Us)		
<del>Maggie Mae (trad. arr.)</del>			
<del>Dig It</del>			
Let It Be	(Let It Be)		For You Blue



The Long And Winding Road (The Long...[1969-70])  
~~The One After 909~~ (written in 1957)

I Want You (She's So Heavy)  
The Ballad Of John And Yoko

(I Want You (She's So Heavy))  
(The Ballad Of John And Yoko)

Old Brown Shoe  
Something

Oh! Darling  
~~Octopus's Garden~~ (Starkey)

(Oh! Darling)

(You Never Give Me Your Money)

Her Majesty

(Her Majesty)

(Golden Slumbers/Carry The Weight)

Here Comes The Sun

Maxwell's Silver Hammer

(Maxwell's Silver Hammer)

Come Together

(Come Together)

The End

(The End)

Sun King/Mean Mr Mustard

(Sun King/Mean Mr Mustard)

Polythene Pam

(Polythene Pam)

(She Came In Through The Bathroom Window)

Because

(Because)

I Me Mine