GOOD GRIEF: A CORPUS-DRIVEN ANALYSIS OF

CONCEPTUAL GRIEF METAPHORS IN ONLINE

DISCOURSE

By

SARAH CAMSUZOU

Bachelor of Arts in English

California Polytechnic State University

San Luis Obispo, California

2014

GOOD GRIEF: A CORPUS-DRIVEN ANALYSIS OF

CONCEPTUAL GRIEF METAPHORS IN ONLINE

DISCOURSE

Thesis Approved:

Dr. Nancy J. Caplow

Thesis Adviser

Dr. Sara Loss

Dr. Carol Moder

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank my committee members for their unflagging guidance and support throughout this journey. I would also like to thank the TESLing department at large for the community they provided. I would also like send some acknowledgements to my family members for their support and patience when listening to me ramble on about my research. I would also like to thank William Shakespeare for writing *Hamlet* so many years ago, providing me a source of comfort when my own words wouldn't come.

Name: SARAH CAMSUZOU

Date of Degree: DECEMBER, 2021

Title of Study: GOOD GRIEF: A CORPUS-DRIVEN ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTUAL GRIEF METAPHORS IN ONLINE DISCOURSE

Major Field: ENGLISH

Abstract: This thesis examines grief metaphors in online discourse over time to investigate how grievers perceive the grief experience, and to explore the extent to which time influences variation in usage. Grief metaphors have enjoyed little attention in related literature, and prior research on conceptual metaphors has not attended the possibility that time may trigger variation in metaphor usage. This thesis addresses this theoretical gap by investigating the influence time may or may not have on grief conceptual metaphors by asking the following questions: How do early grievers use grief metaphors versus late grievers? How does an individual's metaphor use change when recounting their early grief versus their late grief? How does individual metaphor usage change with the passage of time? Drawing from conceptual metaphor theory, blending theory, and corpus linguistics, this thesis examined narratives written by grievers in an online support group. Using a corpus-driven approach, this thesis examines the metaphors used by the bereaved when writing about their grief experiences, paying particular attention to the extent that time influences variation in usage. The findings suggest that early grievers perceive their grief as removing their agency, whereas late grievers perceive grief as returning their agency. Similarly, grievers that discussed their early and late grief perceive agency as being returned over time. Finally, grievers who wrote about their grief at two different points in their grief experience similarly perceive early grief as stealing their agency and late grief as returning it. This thesis concludes that early grief is perceived differently from late grief in regards to agency, and that time does seem to trigger variation in metaphor usage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter   Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Death comes for us all; even at our birth—even at our birth, death does but stand aside a little.

And every day he looks towards us and muses somewhat to himself whether that day or the next

he will draw nigh."

Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*

This thesis examines grief metaphors in online discourse to determine the extent to which time

influences variation in usage. Just as death inevitably comes for us all, so must its companion

grief. Grief has, in the last few decades, been understood in Western society to progress in five

stages, as introduced in Kübler-Ross's (1969) *On death and dying*: denial, anger, bargaining,

depression, and acceptance (referred to as DABDA). However, this popular model of grief has

recently been largely rejected for misrepresenting the grief experience (Moules et al., 2004, p.

99). Although grief is a universal experience, the experience itself is not: grief does not progress

in orderly, clearly-defined stages; furthermore, as Moules and colleagues (2004, p. 102) note,

grief is enduring, transformative (in that both grief and the griever change across time), and

does not disappear after the final stage of acceptance. Kübler-Ross's (1969) model has received considerable criticism in the subsequent decades as unhelpful to grievers at best and harmful at worst (Stroebe et al., 2017, pp. 459-460): the bereaved may feel they are grieving "wrong" if their experiences do not match the five-stage process, and may face judgement from friends and acquaintances for not progressing along the prescribed timetable (Moules et al., 2004, p. 100). Despite the rejection of the stage model in clinical circles, Western society continues to understand grief as manifesting in five clearly-defined stages. There is a need, therefore, for a better understanding of grief that more accurately reflects how the bereaved perceive and experience grief. This thesis, then, contributes to this understanding by investigating how the bereaved conceptualize their grief through metaphor over time when discussing the loss of a parent.

Metaphors are commonly used by the bereaved when conceptualizing their grief experiences (Moules et al., 2004, p. 105). Examining such metaphors can reveal how the bereaved perceive their grief (Neuman et al., 2006, p. 1373). Grief metaphors have received some attention in clinical circles (Moules et al., 2004; Nadeau, 2006; Young, 2007), but have received less attention in research on discourse. In a similar vein, while research on metaphors in discourse has noted that metaphors are dynamic (Semino, 2008, p. 10), little has been said about how time influences variation in metaphor usage. Because grief is understood to be multi-faceted and to change across time (Moules et al., 2004, p. 100), investigating grief metaphors can yield a better understanding of both the grief experience and the extent to which time influences metaphor variation in discourse. This thesis, then, examines grief metaphors and usage variation in online discourse: first, I compare metaphor usage variation in early grievers versus late grievers (Chapter 4); second, I compare how grievers describe early grief versus late grief (Chapter 5); third and finally, I compare how grievers conceptualize grief at two different times in their grief (Chapter

6). The discussion now turns to prior research on grief and metaphor (§2), followed by the

methodology (Chapter 3), findings (Chapters 4-6), and discussion (Chapter 7).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"there is nothing / Either good or bad, but thinking makes it so"

—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Grief is complex and multi-faceted. Grief is composed of emotions beyond just sorrow, such as guilt and anger. Grief simultaneously mourns and celebrates the life of the deceased (Moules, 2004, p. 100). Additionally, grief changes shape with the passage of time. Although Kübler-Ross's (1969) stage-model greatly misrepresents the many messy ways grief manifests, her model nonetheless highlights how grief transforms across time. Indeed, it is the prescribed, invariable order of emotions Kübler-Ross imposes that is rejected by grievers, not the shapeshifting nature of grief. One way to investigate how the bereaved actually grieve is to examine the metaphors the community uses to conceptualize their grief. In Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) seminal work Metaphors we live by, the authors demonstrated that metaphors reflect underlying cognitive patterns of thought. By examining grief metaphors, then, it is possible to reveal the underlying beliefs shaping how the bereaved perceive and experience grief.

Although the present thesis joins prior research in using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980; 1999) conceptual metaphor theory as a starting point, the theory's lack of a formal framework for

empirical research and use of constructed language examples necessitates turning to additional approaches. Therefore, after reviewing conceptual metaphor theory (§2.1), the discussion turns to Fauconnier and Turner's (1998; 2002) blending theory to provide a framework for metaphor analysis (§2.2), and then to the practices of corpus linguistics as a means of collecting and examining authentic discourse (§2.3). The approaches once outlined, the discussion reviews the findings of previous research on how metaphors function in discourse (§2.4), and what research on grief metaphors has revealed (§2.5). Following this, the research questions that motivated this thesis are outlined (§2.6).

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Metaphors provide a lens that color how we view a given event, effectively shaping our perceptions of the world (Semino, 2008, p. 33). Through analogy, metaphors allow us to articulate and understand unfamiliar or abstract concepts using the language and background knowledge of more familiar experiences. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980; 1999) conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) laid the foundation for research on metaphor by introducing conceptual metaphors: the underlying patterns of thought linguistically realized through fixed mappings between source domains (the familiar) and target domains (the unfamiliar or abstract). Dispelling the myth that metaphors only appear as literary devices in poetry and prose, the authors demonstrated that metaphors inconspicuously pervade day-to-day conversation (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 45). Consider, for example, the conceptual metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 54), in which the subjective target domain UNDERSTANDING is structured using language from the target domain:

(2.1)   He doesn't always **grasp** the inner workings of government, which are the different from the intricacies of the business world.

(2.2)   I couldn't **<u>fathom</u>**[1] why he hadn't been arrested.

While the verbs are different in (2.1) and (2.2), both examples stand as linguistic realizations of the same underlying conceptual metaphor, in which the target domain (UNDERSTANDING) is articulated using language from the source domain (GRASPING). The conceptual metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS GRASPING is so conventionalized[2] that it might not even be recognized as metaphoric language by those employing it. The above example also demonstrates what in CMT is referred to as the "embodied mind," the notion that how we perceive our subjective experiences is largely and unconsciously shaped by how our bodies (particularly the sensorimotor system) interact with the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 43). That we cannot physically grasp concepts illustrates how comprehension is perceived as being tied to the body, and the above examples demonstrate how metaphors reflect and reinforce such perceptions.

Although conceptual metaphor theory laid the foundation for research on metaphor, the theory was not designed for empirical research. Rather, CMT is a veritable springboard: researchers are propelled into the water, but must navigate the waters on their own. Two researchers who took the plunge were Fauconnier and Turner (1998; 2002), whose blending theory offers a useful framework for examining metaphor.

2.2 Blending Theory

In blending theory, metaphoric language is understood to result from conceptual blending, an unconscious cognitive operation in which concepts from mental spaces are integrated to a single blend (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 18)[3]. Reminiscent of source and target domains, mental spaces are "conceptual packets," composed of elements reflecting what we know about a given

---

[1] According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the original meaning of "fathom" was "To encircle with extended arms."

[2] Conventional metaphors are those that are so regularly employed in daily discourse that users are often not aware that they are using metaphorical language at all.

[3] Notably, in blending theory, conceptual integration constructs all thought; metaphor is only one of many results of conceptual blending.

topic (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998, p. 137). For example, a JOURNEY mental space will contain

elements such as paths, travelers, and long distances. The elements in a mental space are

organized by frames reflecting our background knowledge about the topic (i.e., our schematic

knowledge). To extend the example, a JOURNEY frame organizes the elements in the mental

space—such as hikers, mountain ranges, and backpacks—into familiar scenarios: hikers will

carry backpacks filled with snacks and water, hikers will traverse the path to reach a specified

destination, hikers returning from the destination will inform hikers they pass how far until the

end is reached, and so forth. Mental spaces, then, are influenced by our experiences and

background knowledge, and similarly reflect how we think and speak (Fauconnier & Turner,

1998, p. 137). When mental spaces are integrated, blends emerge.
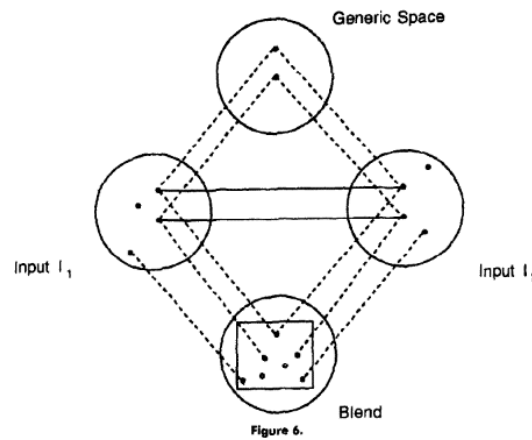
Figure 1: The Network Model of Conceptual Integration (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998, p. 143).

Blends are composed of a minimum of four mental spaces: two or more input spaces, a generic

space, and a blended space (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 279). Figure 2.1 illustrates a simple

blend following Fauconnier and Turner's (1998) Network Model of Conceptual Integration. The

input spaces contain the meat of what is to be blended; that is, the collection of aspects that

compose the "conceptual packet." The generic space maps corresponding aspects in the input

spaces (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998, p. 142). Although an input space contains a myriad of

aspects, only the aspects relevant to the blend will be mapped by the generic space and subsequently projected into the blended space; this is referred to as selective projection (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998, pp. 143-144). The blended space blends the projections, triggering emergent structure unique to the blended space (that is, structure that is not found in the input spaces). Because of selective projection, the same input spaces can yield entirely different blends; what is projected into the blended space depends on what the user aims to achieve with the blend.

Blending theory provides a useful framework for understanding how metaphors arise through conceptual blending. Through blending theory, we can examine which elements are integrated within the blended space and the inferences that arise through such integration. Of additional interest is how metaphors unfurl throughout discourse by "running the blend"; that is, how a metaphor is creatively extended after its conception. Although Fauconnier and Turner did not detail how blends develop throughout discourse, research in corpus linguistics has dedicated a great deal of attention to this very phenomenon.

2.3 Corpus Linguistics

A common critique of CMT is that its claims were founded on invented examples. Invented data is problematic because it lacks context, can yield ambiguous readings, and does not always accurately reflect how metaphor is used in authentic discourse (Deignan, 2008b, p. 151). In the past few decades, corpus linguistics has arisen as an effective approach to refine claims made in CMT by examining authentic discourse (Semino, 2008, p. 196). For example, Semino's (2008, p. 192) corpus-based study of the word "rich" revealed that the term "rich life" did not neatly fit into the A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A BUSINESS conventional metaphor, as CMT claimed it did in phrases such as "He has a rich life." Instead, Semino found that "rich" patterns as a marker of abundance, typically with a positive connotation, across a wide range of target domains. In "He has a rich

life," "rich" indicates a general abundance rather than monetary wealth. Corpus linguistics, then, is an effective approach to examining how metaphor functions in authentic discourse.

A corpus is a collection of written and/or spoken discourse, and as such is useful in analyzing how language behaves in discourse. Corpora allow researchers to examine target structures in their original, naturally occuring context and track their frequency of use across a large data set. For research on metaphors, context is particularly important in understanding how and why different metaphors are used, and examining metaphors across a wide breadth of texts may reveal patterns of use that might otherwise go unnoticed if examining a small data set (Deignan, 2008a, p. 280). Furthermore, examining metaphors in their original context can reveal how the metaphor is extended, repurposed, or modified throughout the discourse (Deignan, 2008a, p. 287). In this thesis, I use a corpus-driven approach to examine what metaphors are used by the bereaved when writing about their grief experiences.

2.4 Metaphors in Discourse

In discourse, metaphors perform various functions. As has been illustrated above, metaphors guide thought by providing a specific lens through which to interpret events. In this way, as Semino (2008, p. 32) notes, metaphors are not neutral, conveying the values and ideologies of the person using them. Metaphors, then, can construct and reinforce interpersonal relationships, where certain metaphors are used to demonstrate group membership (Semino, 2008, p. 33). Indeed, Semino's (2008, p. 180) case study of a radio show broadcast about depression found that people with depression and people without used different metaphors to conceptualize the illness, revealing differing perspectives regarding the extent to which people with depression were perceived to be responsible for their diagnosis. The metaphors used by people with depression suggested that they did not find themselves responsible for being depressed, and also did not consider themselves to have an agentive role in their recovery (p. 189). Conversely, the

9

metaphors used by people without depression reflected the opposite, where some aspect of depressed people's personalities made them succumb to depression (p. 189). The different perspectives of depression were conveyed through different metaphors, specifically in regards to which source domain was mapped onto the target domain. This in turn distinguished those with depression from those without.

In the same vein, research has found that the metaphors reveal how users perceive their life experiences. As noted above, metaphors are built by highlighting specific aspects in input spaces while bypassing others, yielding certain inferences. For example, Semino et al.'s 2015 investigation on two cancer metaphors exemplifies how different conceptual metaphors reflect perceptions of experiences, focusing on JOURNEY and VIOLENCE frames. The authors examined how JOURNEY and VIOLENCE frames were used in two corpora: the first corpus was comprised of blog entries by health professionals; the second corpus was comprised of forum posts by patients diagnosed with cancer. Focusing on the latter population, the authors found that VIOLENCE and JOURNEY frames functioned differently when cancer patients discussed their experiences: VIOLENCE metaphors framed cancer as an adversary that the patient must defeat, highlighting the agency of the patient; JOURNEY metaphors emphasized the process of treatment patients endure, highlighting the lack of agency patients experience. Although VIOLENCE metaphors tend to be eschewed by the general public for the inference that cancer patients who become terminal are responsible for "losing the battle," the authors noted that both frames were frequently used (p. 64).

Research has also examined how metaphors influence how we perceive others' hardship experiences. Hendricks and colleagues (2018) examined the metaphor framing effect of BATTLE frames and JOURNEY frames on participants reading a narrative about a cancer patient losing their fight with cancer (to use a metaphor). More specifically, the authors investigated the extent to which participants felt cancer patients would feel guilty about or make peace with based on

whether the narrative used a JOURNEY frame or a BATTLE frame. Hendricks and colleagues tested the extent of the metaphor framing effect by extending the discussion to depression, where the narrative replaced the person with a terminal cancer diagnosis with one enduring lifelong depression. The authors found that metaphor frames influenced how participants felt about others' cancer and depression, specifically regarding the extent to which those with terminal diagnoses would make peace with their diagnoses: JOURNEY frames inspired greater perceptions of peace, whereas BATTLE frames incurred greater perceptions of guilt. The authors suggested the difference was due to the degrees of agency allowed by the roles within the two frames. For example, while a BATTLE frame casts cancer patients as warriors battling against their diagnoses, "losing" the battle may inspire guilt and negative self-perceptions. The BATTLE frame also may influence patients not to take preventative measures to address their diagnoses, such as changing diet, the inference being that the patients would be on the defense rather than the offense in the battle. The JOURNEY frame, on the other hand, casts patients as travelers moving peacefully along the path of life. However, the JOURNEY frame does not offer the same degree of agency that is allowed by the BATTLE frame.

Ruscher (2011) conducted a similar study to measure the effect metaphor frames primed participants' perceptions of others' grief. The author separated his 48 participants into two groups, showing each a different prime: the first prime was a visual using an ego-moving frame, in which a stick figure moved through a still environment; the second prime used a time-moving frame, in which the environment (sans stick figure) was shown to move with arrows. After receiving their prime, participants were asked to speculate on the depth and duration of grief a mother who lost her only child would experience. The author found that ego-moving primes yielded the perception that grief would dissipate after five months; time-moving frames, on the other hand, yielded the perception that 10 months would pass before grief dissipated (p. 228). It is evident, then, that metaphors shape how hardship experiences are perceived.

Finally, variation in metaphor usage in discourse has been examined from several different viewpoints to better understand why certain metaphors are used. Charteris-Black (2012) examined the influence gender had on depression metaphor usage, examining interviews from 22 women and 16 men (38 total). The author found that the type and frequency of depression metaphor use was strikingly similar between men and woman, concluding that gender was not a notable influence on metaphor usage (p. 207). Similarly, Semino's (2008) aforementioned study of depression metaphors found that variation was influenced by community-belonging. However, there is seemingly no research examining the influence time has on metaphor usage, and the variation it may inspire. The present thesis, then, will address this theoretical gap by investigating the influence time may or may not have on metaphor variation in conceptualizations of grief.

2.5 Grief Metaphors

Research on grief metaphors has largely centered on the therapeutic benefits and uses of metaphors. Nadeau (2006) examined metaphors that appeared spontaneously during counseling sessions of four long-term patients, focusing on metaphors pertaining to grief that were vivid and detailed. The author purposefully selected long-term clients in order to see how metaphors developed over time and confirm the validity of her interpretations with the clients. Nadeau discussed one metaphor per client, asking for each 1) what aspects of grief the metaphor illuminated, 2) what aspects were obscured, and 3) the metaphor's potential therapeutic implications (p. 207). Nadeau found that metaphors allow grievers to explore new realities by exploring different metaphors (p. 219), and that the counselor can extend the metaphors introduced by the griever in the session to reflect on their grief and identify opportunities for growth and healing (Nadeau, 2006, pp. 217-218). Furthermore, Nadeau (2006, p. 218) found that metaphors allow grievers to distance themselves from reliving their trauma. Seligman (2007) reached a similar conclusion in his case study of one woman's grief experience using a mentalization model. The author advanced that through metaphor, grievers can refer to

themselves in third-person/as a separate entity, therefore allowing them to discuss their trauma while keeping metaphorical distance from the events (p. 335). This is what Seligman (2007) refers to as "me-not-me" language (p. 335), which allows grievers to talk about their grief experiences while creating a buffer through metaphor. While the above researchers focused on one-on-one counseling contexts, research has also attended the benefits of metaphor usage in bereavement writing groups.

Research has also revealed creativity in grief metaphor usage. In Young's 2007 study, the author examined the metaphors used by 10 women belonging to a bereavement writing group, the meetings of which the investigator sat in on. Across an eight-week period, the members responded to two writing prompts per meeting, sharing their work with one another. Each meeting was concluded by reflecting on the prevalent themes that arose in the writing. Young found that the metaphors that arose in the meetings fell into two sets: the first set highlighted survival and growth, while the second set highlighted transformation (p. 365). Nadeau's 2006 study also identified four unique metaphors that reflected the individuals' unique grief experiences: the geodesic sphere metaphor, the motoring metaphor, the family sacrifice metaphor, and the family life raft metaphor (pp. 207-214). Similar to Young (2007), Nadeau explored the inferences yielded by the individual metaphors, which relate to issues of power (the motoring metaphor) and relationships (the geodesic sphere, family sacrifice, and family life raft metaphors); also similar to Young (2007), Nadeau's findings highlight creative uses of metaphor, but do not continue to discuss the possible underlying conventional metaphors (nor did they intend to; it was not the aim of their research). Additionally, while previous research on grief metaphors has noted creative usages, the influence time has on metaphor usage in discourse has, at the time of this thesis, received no attention. Therefore, the present thesis aims to investigate how time influences variation in metaphor usage when conceptualizing grief.

2.6 Research Questions

In my thesis, I examine the effect time has on the variation of grief metaphor usage. Because grief is understood to manifest differently across time, investigating grief metaphors can also shed light on how time triggers variation of metaphor usage in discourse. Furthermore, there are different types of grief resulting from different types of losses and relationships, which in turn entail different conceptualizations of grief (Nadeau, 2006, p. 202); therefore, this thesis investigates grief resulting from the loss of one or both parents. This thesis, then was motivated by the following research questions:

1. How do early grievers use grief metaphors versus late grievers?

2. How does an individual's metaphor use change when recounting their early grief versus their late grief?

3. How does individual metaphor usage change with the passage of time?

I address these three questions in turn in the following chapters. Before doing so, I discuss the methods I followed to gather, code, and interpret the data.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

"Though this be madness, yet there is method / in 't."

—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

In the following, I detail the steps taken to answer my three research questions. The following sections will introduce the specialized Corpus of Lost Daughters (COLD) and explain the methods used to compile and examine it (§3.1), then explain the coding procedure (§3.2).

3.1 Compiling the Grief Corpus: Corpus of Lost Daughters

My first step was to compile a specialized corpus of grief narratives. To do so, I gathered posts from an Instagram page dedicated to people who have lost parents. Although the posts were accompanied by images, only the accompanying text was collected. The page was created on January 1st, 2019, and users post unique grief narratives on a weekly basis, each composed by a different author. The page is public, and therefore accessible to anyone with an Instagram profile. For a narrative to appear on the page, writers must register for an account takeover, where the login information for the page is given to the writer. There are two types of takeovers: in the Weekly Takeover, the writer can post as in/frequently as they choose from Monday to Saturday

of their assigned week; in the Sunday Mourning Takeover, writers are limited to a single post composed of under 400 words. Writers voluntarily share their grief stories and pictures, and have the choice to remain anonymous since all posts are made under the Instagram page's name. To further protect posters' privacy, I anonymized all posts and did not include the pictures or personal details in my corpus. I organized the posts by publication date, labeling the narratives as their numerical placement plus the presented gender of the author (e.g., 001F). Originally, the corpus contained 113 narratives. However, to control for potential cross-cultural and gender influences, I only selected the narratives written by women in the United States. This left me with a total of 64 narratives, containing 171,329 total words. I named this narrowed corpus the Corpus of Lost Daughters, which is how many writers self-identified. From this narrowed corpus, I found narratives that lent themselves to answering my aforementioned research questions.

Of the 64 narratives, there was considerable variation in writer age, their age at the time of their parent's death, and how many months had passed since their parent died. The average age at time of posting was roughly 32 years old, with the youngest author being 16 and the oldest being 64. The median author age at the time of parent loss was 24 years old, with the youngest being one year old and the oldest being 48 years old. Time since parent death also varied, with the average being 5.5 years. The range extended from one month to 54 years, thus creating a wide range of early and late grief. Notably, not all 64 narratives contained information regarding age at time of writing and age at time of event, though all noted how much time had passed since the parent's death. The writers of COLD are, by and large, young grievers who lost parents at a young age.

Regarding narrative content and organization, there were typically two objectives of the grief narratives: to remember and celebrate the deceased parent(s), and to reflect on their grief experience. Although there was variation in how the narratives were organized, the grief narratives typically progressed in the following steps: 1) introductions of self, parent(s), and narrative organization; 2) background on parent(s); 3) events prior to death; 4) the parent death;

5) events following death and subsequent grief; 6) summary/final thoughts about grief and shout-outs (see Appendix for example). If the parent died of a prolonged illness (e.g., cancer), much of the narrative focused on the treatment.

As noted, to answer my three research questions, I grouped relevant narratives from COLD: first, to answer how grief metaphor usage varies between early grievers versus late grievers, I selected 10 narratives written by early grievers and 10 narratives written by late grievers (Chapter 4); second, to investigate how metaphor usage varied when grievers reflected on early versus late grief, I selected two narratives where the writers categorized their grief experience into different times (Chapter 5); finally, to examine how individual metaphor usage varied with the passage of time, I selected two narratives where the writers conceptualized grief at two different time periods post-loss (Chapter 6).

3.2 Coding Procedure

To code my data, I read through the narratives multiple times to manually isolate conceptual grief metaphors. In my first pass, I bolded metaphorical language about grief; I revised as necessary in subsequent passes. I utilized the Pragglejaz Group's (2007) metaphor identification procedure (MIP) if I had difficulty determining if a passage was metaphorical. The Pragglejaz Group (2007) refer to the MIP as an "intuition-sharpener" (p. 36), and note that the MIP's purpose is to yield consistent, precise metaphor identifications (p. 2). In its essence, the MIP proceeds along the following steps (adapted from Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3):

Step 1: Understand the context and meaning

Step 2: Separate discourse into lexical units

Step 3: Determine if a given lexical unit's contextual meaning aligns or contrasts with its basic meaning

Step 4: Mark appropriate lexical units as metaphorical

According to the authors, basic meanings are typically more precise than vague, more concrete than abstract, historically older than newer, and generally "related to bodily action" (p. 3). The authors determined lexical unit boundaries by consulting their dictionary entries, which allowed them to mark phrasal verbs as single lexical units (p. 15). When determining basic meaning in my own samples, I used the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

After determining the metaphorical passages, I color-coded the metaphors by source domain, revising the coding as necessary with each subsequent read-through. For example, the terms "**turning points in my grief**" and "**having gone through something so life-changing and traumatic**" would be color-coded green to indicate belonging to a JOURNEY domain. I read through the narratives numerous times, refining my color-coding and adding or removing source domains where necessary. Notably, all excerpts listed in the following chapters appear as they do in the original narratives; that is, I did not make any grammar-related revisions. The discussion will now turn to the results of the three research questions that motivated this thesis.

CHAPTER IV

COMPARING METAPHORS OF EARLY GRIEF AND LATE GRIEF

I compared metaphors used by early grievers to those used by late grievers to see if there were differences in their perceptions of grief. To do this, I examined ten narratives where the least amount of time had passed since parent loss (i.e., early grievers), and ten narratives where the most time had passed (i.e., late grievers). Table 1 lists the ten earliest grievers: the table details the authors' identity numbers (recall that all narratives were anonymized), their age at time of posting (if included in the narrative; otherwise listed as not available (NA)), their age at time of parent loss (PL), and how much time passed since parent loss.

Author ID	Posting Age	PL Age	Time Passed
007	19	18	2 months
018	23	23	4 months
036	NA	NA	4 months
060	NA	NA	6 months
061	31	30	7 months
089	NA	NA	8 months
048	32	32	9 months
109	35	34	10 months
112	33	33	10 months
053	27	27	11 months

Table 1: Ten Earliest Grievers

Table 2 lists the ten latest grievers in a similar fashion: author identity number, posting age, age at time of parent loss, and time passed since parent loss.

Author ID	Posting Age	PL Age	Time Passed
040	22	13	9 years
088	27	17	10 years
003	28	17	11 years
022	36	24	12 years
015	38	22	14 years
002	35	20	15 years
034	36	21	15 years
005	31	14	17 years
101	37	1	36 years
050	64	10	54 years

Table 2: Ten Latest Grievers

In the following subsections, I discuss how the conventional metaphors used by early and late grievers were remapped to conceptualize the grief experience. Both early and late grievers typically centered their narratives on memories of their parent(s); grief itself was infrequently discussed, thus yielding few distinct metaphors for examination. This is a persistent theme that will also be seen in chapters 5 and 6. For this study, I examined the two conventional metaphors that enjoyed the most usage: LIFE IS A JOURNEY (§4.1), and EMOTIONS ARE PEOPLE (§4.2). I will summarize patterns in the final section (§4.3).

4.1 LIFE IS A JOURNEY

The LIFE IS A JOURNEY conventional metaphor enjoys wide use, and, for example, frames people as travelers, goals as destinations, and difficulties as obstacles (Semino, 2008, p. 92). When a grief frame is added to the LIFE IS AJOURNEY metaphor, both early grievers and late grievers paint grief as part of the journey's environment, such as the terrain or the weather; the difference lies in how the grievers interact with this environment. Early grievers typically become trapped by the environment, whereas late grievers have adapted to it to resume their journey. Despite this difference, late grievers reference memories of similar environmental entrapment. This suggests

that late grievers perceive grief similarly to early grievers; late grievers are simply farther along the journey, deeper into the grief environment, than early grievers. In the following discussion, examples from early grievers will be marked EG, while those from late grievers will be marked LG.

4.1.1 Early Grief

Early grievers emphasize the immobilizing shock of grief by perceiving themselves as trapped by the environment, preventing their journey's progress. There are 27 examples of this throughout the 10 narratives. The following examples illustrate different impediments early grievers find on their life journey:

(4.1)　　I miss my mom dearly. I knew as I watched her take her last breath that I would need to figure something out. **I was not going to spiral to a place I couldn't get out of**. […]
[My boyfriend] still doesnt understand **what I went through and am still going through**, and he wont until that day comes for him. I've come to terms with that. **I didnt like being in that hole** anymore than he did, **so I crawled out**. I still mourn my mother every day that goes by, but I also started living again. (EG: 007)

(4.2)　　While my heart aches every single day in my mom's absence, I have some amazing people (and fur people) in my life **who have kept me afloat these last ten months when I felt like I was drowning**. (EG: 048)

(4.3)　　Early grief is horrific. I call it **the grief tornado**. Everything is happening so fast and **you're in a fog that doesn't end**. **I felt like I was on a ship getting constantly bashed against the rocks**. Thanksgiving. My birthday. Christmas. New Years. All happened within the first three months after dad passed. Looking back, **I don't know how I survived that**. (EG: 089)

In (4.1), the author perceives intense grief as being stuck in a hole, highlighting the immobilizing effect grief had on her; it is not until she crawls out of the hole that she is able to resume life. Notably, (4.1)'s author also refers to parent loss and the resulting grief as something she "went through and [is] still going through," reinforcing the idea that grief is perceived as an environment that must be traversed. In (4.2), the author's journey is not so much impeded as it is a bid for her life: highlighting the overwhelming intensity of grief, she perceives herself as drowning, often only being "kept afloat" through the support of others. Unlike (4.1), the author of (4.2) must exert incredible effort in her stagnation, suggesting that she perceives her grief as exhausting and life-threatening. In (4.3), the author perceives her grief as a tornado, highlighting the unrelenting pain intense grief inflicts. Unlike the first two examples, (4.3)'s author has no volition; she is entirely at the mercy of her grief. Indeed, the three examples above illustrate different levels of volition present in the narratives. Similar across all three examples, and indeed all 10 narratives, was the propensity to become caught in the journey's environment, with grief being the impediment. The perceived impediments suggest early grievers feel helpless in their grief, unable to live as they did prior to parent loss.

Additionally, the above examples highlight the shock of grief that dulls grievers' senses. The early grievers' metaphors often depicted grief as enveloping them, impeding clear thinking. For example, because (4.1)'s author is trapped in a hole, she cannot see beyond her impediment. Similarly, the author in (4.2) is drowning, presumably submerged in water, and (4.3)'s author is caught in a tornado, enveloped in fog. That early grievers' metaphors effectively swallow them highlights grief's impact on grievers' cognitive functions. Taken together with the impediments on the life journey, early grievers perceive themselves as impacted physically and mentally by grief: physically, by impeding day-to-day activities; mentally, by impeding clear thinking and feeling. Although there are differences in how early grievers perceive their journey impeded, the

LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphors used by early grievers typically highlighted their inability to function physically and mentally as they did pre-loss.

4.1.2 Late Grief

Late grievers stress the necessity of adapting to the journey's environment in order to survive, emphasizing the importance of understanding grief. There are 30 examples of this throughout the ten samples. The following examples illustrate how late grievers describe grief in terms of an environment that must be adapted to and explored:

(4.4)   I hope that by sharing my story, I can show anyone who may feel as scared and alone as I have that they're not alone - that **there is a way to survive**. I'm still learning and growing and **adapting to life without my mom**, and it sucks and I hate it so much, but I'm thankful for this life and for the life I had with her. (LG: 088)

(4.5)   When it's really cold out, you can run against the wind for miles, and once you make the turn to come home, the wind may be gone, but you're so cold that you can't really feel anything anymore. It's the perfect analogy for what the first five years after my mom died were like for me and my sister. One challenge after another (i.e. crooked people looking for windfalls in the wake of death) with not a whole lot of time to truly grieve and digest the pain. **I just put my head down and continued to run into the wind, eventually coming to expect it to be windy all the time**. (LG: 015)

(4.6)   About 20 years after the death of my dad, **I began to really explore and understand my grief**, **with the guidance of a gentle and skilled therapist**. She knew just how to **usher me through the dark tunnels I had not yet explored**. (LG: 050)

In (4.4), the writer foreshadows to her fellow grievers that they will survive and adapt to their grief. This hints that early grief must be survived, similar to what was seen with early grievers.

(4.4) also highlights the intensity of grief that never dissipates; instead, grievers "adapt" to grief over time. (4.5) similarly illustrates how grief's intensity must be endured and adapted to. By describing grief as a perpetual wind, the author highlights that grief itself never improves; rather, the griever simply endures and adapts to ever-present grief. (4.6) exemplifies how late grievers often discuss their grief in terms of exploration. Here, the author describes how expansive the grief environment is, describing the "dark tunnels" that must be explored to understand grief. Additionally, the author notes the role therapists play in the metaphor, acting as guides to grievers. Grief as an expansive, unexplored environment highlights that grief is long-lasting, that grief does not improve by ending. Instead, grief improves through exploration, through understanding.

Late grievers typically lend themselves considerable volition in the metaphors they use: in (4.4), the author actively works to adapt to her unfriendly environment; in (4.5), the writer determinedly runs against the wind; in (4.6), purposefully and extensively explores the grief environment. There was only one example where a late griever perceived herself as stuck in her present grief:

(4.7) My junior and senior years were dotted with "little" traumas, obviously amounting to a pretty big one. **I'm still working through it**. **I often feel stuck in these moments**: Getting a call while I'm out with my friends that my dad is in the hospital and that he has a brain tumor. Being told a few days later that he only has a year to live. Watching him come out of surgery, no longer able to speak or walk. (LG: 003)

In (4.7), the writer's journey is only impeded when recalling traumatic memories, in which case she becomes "stuck" in them. Still, the writer continues "working through" such memories, suggesting that she is able to free herself, that she retains her volition. This suggests that the late grief environment is not entirely free from potential entrapments. The following example also illustrates the potential for grief's intensity to reappear, impeding the grievers' journey:

(4.8)   I particularly **struggled** for the first four years after my dad died. I leaned on [fiancé]

for all of my happiness, and that was incredibly stressful and we broke up in 2007.

This brought my grief right to the surface and the next 5 months were particularly

terrible. (LG: 034)

In recounting her grief, (4.8)'s author notes that her grief resurfaced after her breakup. This

suggests that there is always the potential for grief to intensify when encountering new

challenges.

How late grievers use the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor is similar to how early grievers use the

metaphor: grief is an unfriendly environment, and grief's intensity impedes the journey. As

discussed, the difference lies in how grievers interact with the grief environment: for early

grievers, grief overwhelms and subdues them; for late grievers, adapting to and exploring the

grief environment allows them to continue their life journey. These different interactions also

reveal different degrees of agency. That grief is perceived as the environment when added to the

LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor is not surprising when considering other common conventional

metaphors. Indeed, when using the JOURNEY domain, difficulties are often conceptualized as

obstacles in the journey (Semino, 2008, p. 92), and states of mind are conventionalized as

locations (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 52). Therefore, that grievers conceptualize grief as the

environment is somewhat unsurprising. The takeaway, then, is that early grievers perceive grief

differently from late grievers, as evidenced by their use of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor.

4.2 EMOTIONS ARE PEOPLE

Personification is commonly employed in metaphorical language (Semino, 2008, p. 101), and,

when used to discuss emotions, yields conceptual metaphors such as ANGER IS A SOCIAL

SUPERIOR and LOVE IS AN OPPONENT (Kövecses, 2008, p. 381). To generalize, I refer to this

phenomenon as the EMOTIONS ARE PEOPLE conceptual metaphor. When grief is personified, both

early and late grievers emphasize the intensity and unpredictability of grief by painting it as a volatile companion. Similar to how both groups dealt with the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conventional metaphor, the difference lies in how early and late grievers interact with the companion, and how the companion interacts with them.

4.2.1 Early Grief

Early grievers emphasize grief's longevity and intensity by framing it as a persistent, volatile companion. There are ten instances of this throughout the ten narratives. The following examples illustrate the often-tempestuous relationships grievers have with their grief:

(4.9)   I used to think that anger & grief were one in the same, but as it turns out, grief hurts a hell of a lot more. Anger is easier to express & then suppress. **But grief? It swallows you whole. It numbs you until you can't breathe or think or feel**. (EG: 048)

(4.10)   **Grief is a constant companion at my table**. She loves cheese and bread and chocolate. She hates doing laundry and believes that any clothes that are not pajamas should be banned. **She is always welcome at my table and has overstayed the open invitation**. **Sometimes she is loud and shouts until I give Grief the attention she desires and sometimes she is quiet, patiently waiting to tap me on the shoulder and remind that she's still there**. Sometimes she surprises me in public when I'm surrounded by acquaintances or strangers with no clear way to escape and talk her down from what she is waiting to do to me. Grief is a beautiful girl, she is young and immature and selfish. She waits for no one and doesn't care what others think of her seemingly insane outbursts. She likes to visit if I'm busy and don't have time to talk with her and she likes to visit in the middle of the night and keep me up chatting into the early morning hours when the sun begins to come awake again. Grief has become a dear friend of mine **who will someday visit less and less often**. Her presence means

that my mother was loved dearly, for wherever Grief is, that just means that there was a great, big love. **While Grief chooses to grace me with her big, beautiful, difficult, ugly presence I will embrace her**. Each time she taps me on the shoulder, I will open up my arms and give her a hug, imagining that she is a version of my mother coming back to visit. **Someday Grief will not be my daily companion**, begging for my attention, but while she is, this beautiful child named Grief, I will get to know her and I will cherish her and I will tightly hold onto her little hand. (EG: 018)

(4.11)   I encourage everyone to take their own form of "me time" after the loss of a loved one. Life can wait. **Grief shouldn't be pushed aside**, despite society's expectations. (EG: 053)

(4.12)   I learned to do "grief work", carving out time **to intentionally sit with my grief**. (EG: 109)

(4.9) highlights the all-encompassing pain inflicted by grief, painting grief as a wild animal that consumes the writer. In the stomach of the grief-beast, the author's senses are subdued, effectively immobilizing her. This is the most violent depiction of grief found in the early narratives, and is reminiscent of how early grievers survived grief in the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conventional metaphor. While the authors in the subsequent examples maintain their volition, (4.9)'s author is completely at the mercy of her grief, and is subsequently consumed by it. In (4.10), grief is a walking contradiction: both patient and demanding, welcome and intrusive, the author relays in great detail how she views grief as a volatile houseguest, highlighting the vacillating intensity of grief. She also optimistically predicts that her grief will visit her less frequently over time. That the writer perceives herself as fostering a relationship with her grief emphasizes its complexity and longevity. (4.11) and (4.12) also view grief in terms of a relationship, noting that grief's intensity only eases once it is attended. When grief is perceived in terms of a relationship, how the grievers interact with their grief is center-staged: as seen in 4.1, grief itself does not necessarily change; rather, it is the griever who changes their approach to

grief, modifying their own behavior to accommodate their grief. This sentiment is also seen in how late grievers perceive their grief.

4.2.2 Late Grief

Late grievers similarly emphasize the longevity and unpredictability of grief by speaking of it in terms of a relationship, notably one where the grievers change to accommodate their grief. There are 18 examples of this throughout the ten narratives. As seen in the following examples, grief can be violent, but is typically more persistent and less volatile:

(4.13) **Grief is an ever-evolving beast for me**. Every once in a while there are days when it is **a ravenous monster that consumes every piece of my mind and heart**. **And I let it**. But most of the time now, **it has settled into its rightful place** as a part of my life; it has shaped me and influenced my path, but it no longer defines who I am. **I have learned to stop fighting it as as enemy. Instead I now welcome it in, listen to it**, knowing that by doing so I'm learning, growing. (LG: 015)

(4.14) He had cancer, lung cancer. He said he was going to beat it. He said he would be all right. I guess I shouldn't have been so surprised - he had been a smoker since he was a teenager - but the shock I felt and still sometimes feel about his being gone **feels like my breath is being squeezed out of me**. (LG: 022)

(4.15) **My relationship and history with grief have been messy and complicated and painful** and if I'm being honest, it's a part of me that I have shared with very few people. (LG: 088)

(4.16) I got injured and had to forgo the 2012 race. When I lost the running, **the grief caught up with me**. (LG: 015)

(4.17) It was now time to begin running towards something instead of away; to address the agitations in my soul; **to sit intimately and quietly with my grief**. (LG: 015)

28

(4.18)   **Grief took up residence in my body, and like an uninvited guest, it remained**

           steadfast in its commitment to stay. (LG: 050)

In (4.13), the author perceives her grief as a shapeshifter with a propensity for violence,

highlighting the unpredictability of grief. Although the author has changed her behavior to better

her relationship with grief, the threat of grief intensifying is ever-present. Although the grief in

(4.13) has "settled," the author nonetheless notes that she had to learn "to stop fighting" her grief.

This suggests that the griever changes over time along with their grief. (4.13) also centers the

longevity of death, the author noting that her grief is a constant companion. (4.14) similarly paints

grief as an aggressor, where the author notes her initial grief "squeezed" the breath from her.

Notably, (4.14)'s author still occasionally experiences such intense grief, which highlights the

unpredictability and inevitability of intense grief despite how many years pass. More often, grief

is perceived as a partner in a relationship, as illustrated in (4.15). When grief is described in such

terms, as in (4.15), it brings to mind the potential for arguments and high emotions associated

with complicated relationships. (4.15), then, highlights grief's longevity and emotional

fluctuation. In (4.15), the author emphasizes that grief does not disappear, that grief will

inevitably catch up. The same author later elaborates that improving her quality of life involved

sitting "intimately and quietly" with grief, as seen in (4.17). (4.16) and (4.17) illustrate that the

relationship with grief only improves when the griever changes her approach to it.

Anthropomorphizing grief in such a way highlights the patience and tolerance necessary when

accommodating grief. In (4.18), the writer paints grief as "an uninvited guest," one that remained

even 54 years after her father's death. (4.18) resembles (4.10) in that grief is perceived as a

houseguest, though the relationship here is certainly more tense. (4.18) also highlights the lack of

control over grief present throughout the ten late grief narratives, taking up residence without

invitation. Personifying grief highlights its dynamicity and complexity, embodying the full

spectrum of human emotion. Furthermore, the above examples illustrate that grief does not

change over time so much as it is appeased by the griever, who must change how they interact with their grief.

When comparing how early and late grievers personify grief, there are marked similarities: both groups view grief in terms of an antagonistic companion or a complicated relationship, and both stress the importance of accommodating grief to improve the relationship. Additionally, both groups note that, while grief will not disappear entirely, its intensity will reduce once grievers improve their relationship with it. Late grievers also note the inevitability of intense grief days, as seen in (4.14). That grief is personified by grievers is not particularly surprising, since difficulties are often conceptualized as opponents (Semino, 2008, p.71). The interest lies in how the relationships are managed differently by grievers.

4.3 Chapter Conclusion

To summarize, early grievers and late grievers remapped conventional metaphors in similar ways: when using the LIFE IS A JOURNEY conventional metaphor, grief became the journey's environment; when using the EMOTIONS ARE PEOPLE conventional metaphor, grief was a temperamental companion. In both, early grievers and late grievers interacted differently with grief: early grievers were subdued and trapped by their grief, whereas late grievers learned to accommodate their grief.

This examination was limited by relative lack of data. As mentioned above, the corpus contributors infrequently discussed their grief specifically. There were, therefore, few examples to examine. Future research would benefit from examining a larger number of narratives, and so a larger collection of examples. Because of this, the findings listed here offer promise for further research rather than definitive conclusions.

CHAPTER V

COMPARING REFLECTIONS ON GRIEF

To investigate how individual metaphor usage changed when recounting early grief versus late grief, I examine two narratives in which the writers discuss how their grief changed across the years. The first author, Pam, organized her grief experience by year, writing a brief paragraph detailing her emotions each year. The second author, Rita, organized her grief by emotion, using headers to organize the narrative into seven emotion groups. The following table introduces the writers of the two narratives examined:

Author (ID)	Years Since Loss	Categorization
Pam (078)	4	Year 1. Year 1 2. Year 2 3. Year 3 4. Year 4
Rita (022)	12	Emotion 1. Shock 2. Pride 3. Anger 4. Guilt 5. Love 6. Regret 7. Resilience

Table 3: Overview of narratives examined in Chapter 5

Because COLD members dedicate most of their narratives to sharing memories of their parent(s), there are few examples where grief is discussed at length. Indeed, Pam and Rita were the only members that discussed their grief extensively and how it changed across time. Pam's and Rita's narratives, then, provide a unique opportunity to compare how grievers perceive early grief differently from late grief. The following sections compare Pam's and Rita's metaphor usage when discussing early grief (§5.1) versus late grief (§5.2). I argue that the difference between perceptions of early and late grief centers on agency and volition.

5.1 Early Grief

When discussing early grief, both Pam and Rita used metaphors that highlighted their lack of agency, drawing from HOSTAGE, MACHINE, SOCIAL SUPERIOR, and FRAGILE OBJECT domains. As seen in the following examples, both authors used metaphors that emphasized feelings of suppression and entrapment, where they note the lack of control inherent to early grief:

(5.1)   The first year can be summed up by the word "**trapped**." I felt obligated to do things and answer to others. "How are you?" was the worst thing that people asked me - I would often skip a response entirely. I **stifled** myself especially around others who had not experienced a close loss because I didn't want to reveal how negative I constantly felt inside. Once the shock **wore off** months later, I found myself absolutely **powerless to my emotions** and genuinely did not know how to act normal in public having gone through something so life-changing and traumatic, while life continued on as normal for others. (Pam: Year 1)

(5.2)   I guess I shouldn't have been so surprised - he had been a smoker since he was a teenager - but **the shock I felt and still sometimes feel about his being gone feels like my breath is being squeezed out of me**. (Rita: Shock)

(5.3)   For months, I lived in a fluctuating state of emotions, between denial, shock, pain, and

back to denial [terrain]. **So I shut down**. (Rita: Shock)

(5.4)   Life while my dad was sick felt so out of control, **but with him gone my world was**

chaos, ruled by anger and pain. (Rita: Anger)

In (5.1), Pam's position is reminiscent of that of a hostage: she is "trapped," "stifled," and

"powerless" in her own grief. Pam also perceives shock to "[wear] off" after enough time has

passed, aligning the emotion to the effects of a drug. In all, Pam's metaphors in (5.1) draw from a

HOSTAGE domain to emphasize her vulnerability and lack of control in her own life. In (5.2), Rita

is similarly victim to her emotions, perceiving her shock as squeezing the breath from her. Rita's

discussion of early grief continues in (5.3), where she perceives herself as a device that "shut

down" due to her grief. This metaphor draws from a MACHINE domain, and highlights Rita's

inability to process her emotions (to continue the metaphor), preventing her from functioning at

all. In (5.4), Rita notes that she was "ruled by" anger and pain, again emphasizing her

powerlessness by drawing from a SOCIAL SUPERIOR domain. That both Pam and Rita perceive

themselves to be controlled by outside influences suggests that early grief's intensity not only

subdues grievers, but also removes their sense of agency, causing them to feel out of control of

their lives.

As time passes, however, agency is slowly returned to the grievers, as seen in Pam's discussion of

second-year grief, in which she draws from a FRAGILE OBJECT domain once again:

(5.5)   During this year I decided to try grief counseling to start to **pick up the pieces and**

rebuild my new life without him. (Pam: Year 2)

In (5.5), Pam gains greater agency with a therapist's assistance, where she is able to "pick up"

and "rebuild" her life piece by piece, no longer entirely entrapped by her emotions. That Pam is

just now picking up the pieces suggests that she perceived her life to have been shattered by the

death of her father. That is, that in early grief, Pam's life was composed of shattered, scattered

pieces. This further highlights the notion of stagnancy reinforced in Pam's account of her first year of grief. Drawing from a FRAGILE OBJECT domain highlights the effect parent loss has on Pam's perceptions of self, where the loss triggers a cause-and-effect reaction: parent loss is the cause (i.e., breaking Pam's life to pieces), and grief is the effect (i.e., picking up and reassembling the pieces). In all, the metaphors used by Pam and Rita highlight the lack of volition and agency they perceived themselves having in early grief.

5.2 Late Grief

When discussing late grief, both Pam and Rita used metaphors highlighting their regained agency, drawing from JOURNEY, FRAGILE OBJECT, BATTLE, and BULLY domains. The returned control, however, is tempered by the threat of intense grief returning. As seen in the following examples, although Pam and Rita both perceive themselves as having greater volition in late grief, intense grief removes this agency when it inevitably returns:

(5.6)   There will be waves of support. Some will show up immediately, some will **sit with you through the fresh grief**, and some will **walk alongside you** and cheer you on **as you rebuild your life**. Appreciate the friends who show up for each wave. Few will be there to **ride out all of these waves alongside you**; those people are unicorns and should be celebrated endlessly. (Pam: Year 4)

(5.7)   I am a different person post-loss and I really like **how I've rebuilt my life**. (Pam: Year 4)

(5.8)   I don't think I will ever truly understand or accept that he had to die so young. **But I have become stronger and more resilient**. (Rita: Resilience)

(5.9)   I spent most of my 20s, and even into my 30s, in denial, doing everything I could **to avoid facing my grief, or burying my feelings in exercise**. With the help of family and a therapist, **I am finally beginning to face my feelings**. In my early 30s, I began

realizing that my relationship with exercise was unhealthy. I still **struggle to manage my feelings and anxiety** and I continue to **use exercise as a crutch**. But, I have become much more aware. (Rita: Resilience)

In (5.6), Pam uses several metaphors that illustrate her regained agency: although she occasionally must passively endure intense grief, Pam perceives herself moving forward (JOURNEY), rebuilding her life (FRAGILE OBJECT), and riding out intense grief days (JOURNEY). While "powerless" in early grief ((5.1)), Pam's metaphorical language highlights the power she now wields. In (5.7), Pam reflects on how she "rebuilt" her life. Similar to (5.5), Pam perceives the death of her father to have shattered her life, leaving behind scattered pieces. However, in late grief, Pam has not only successfully picked up the pieces, but has also reassembled them. When taken together with (5.5), (5.6) and (5.7) mark the progression of Pam's return to power. In (5.8), Rita similarly reflects on how she has changed throughout her grief experience, noting her increased strength and resilience. Notably, Rita perceives herself as becoming stronger rather than grief reducing its intensity, possibly drawing from a BATTLE domain. This is similar to Pam's reference to recurring waves of grief in (5.6). Both suggest that grief's intensity does not diminish; rather, grievers adapt to their grief. In (5.9), Rita describes how her relationship with grief changed from avoiding her grief to addressing it, drawing from a BULLY domain. While it is notably still a struggle, Rita nonetheless maintains her agency in her discussion of late grief. In all, the metaphors used by Pam and Rita in late grief highlight their perceived return of agency. Additionally, both women note that grief will fluctuate in intensity. For Pam, intense grief's return removes her agency, where her emotions roll by her; for Rita, intense grief is a moment of mismanagement, where her feelings escape her control.

5.3 Chapter Conclusion

To answer the research question motivating this chapter, individual metaphor usage does seem to change when recounting early grief versus late grief. In comparing Pam's and Rita's use of

metaphors when describing early grief versus late grief, both exhibit a change in the degree of agency they maintain: in early grief, they are subdued by their grief, their agency stripped from them; in late grief, they regain control, though must weather grief's fluctuating intensity.

The conclusion discussed here are tempered by several limitations. First, two narratives are perhaps too few to draw firm conclusions. This examination would certainly benefit from examining additional narratives. Second, and in a similar vein, Pam and Rita do not discuss their grief extensively, and use few metaphors when they do. The limited data, therefore, offers a promising point for further examination than conclusive, generalizable data. Still, the findings listed here are promising.

CHAPTER VI

COMPARING INDIVIDUAL GRIEF AT DIFFERENT TIMES

To investigate how grief metaphor usage varied with the passage of time, I compared the writings

of grievers who wrote about their grief in two separate narratives written at different points in

time. It was difficult to find such narratives because the Instagram grief community's members

generally only sign up for a single takeover week, meaning each griever typically yielded a single

narrative. The following table introduces the two grievers whose work was examined in this

chapter:

Author (ID)	First Narrative	Second Narrative	Time between Narratives	Structure
Molly (002; 034)	15 years post-loss	15.5 years post-loss	6 months	2 account takeovers
Lucy (081)	8 months post-loss	3 years post-loss	18 months	1 takeover, with diary entry from early grief

Table 4: Overview of narratives examined in Chapter 6

The first writer, referred to by the pseudonym Molly, had two takeover weeks separated by six

months. The second writer, Lucy, wrote about the loss of her mother three years prior in a single

takeover week, during which she included a diary entry written just eight months after her mother's death; the distance between narratives was approximately 18 months. As noted in the previous chapters, grievers typically dedicate the majority of their narrative to sharing memories of their parent(s), spending little time addressing their grief directly. This was also evident in Molly's and Lucy's narratives. There were, therefore, very few grief metaphors to examine. In comparing the metaphors used in the first narratives versus the second narratives, the differences are slight: while both grievers perceive their grief as remaining unchanged across the years, their metaphor usage reveals that the stifling intensity of early grief eventually dissipates from the first narrative to the second. Furthermore, in the second narratives, the writers exhibit greater agency. I compare the writers' metaphors in the following sections, beginning with those in the first narratives (§6.1) before moving to those in the second narratives (§6.2).

6.1 First Narratives

In their first narratives, Molly and Lucy drew from different source domains to emphasize their estrangement: Molly perceived herself as estranged from others, drawing from an ALIEN domain, while Lucy perceived herself as estranged from herself, drawing from FRAGILE OBJECT and TELEVISION domains. As noted, Molly and Lucy dedicated their posts primarily to celebrating their parent's life, writing very little about their own grief. This is very apparent in the narratives examined in this section, where each griever yielded a single relevant excerpt:

(6.1)   For one – I had no privacy. **No space to scream. Nowhere to be alone**. I had no one to relate to – most of the students around me spent their time worrying about papers and primping for themed parties – their interests and worries were so different from mine. **I was living on another planet**. At the time I didn't know of any friends with sick parents, or have any peers who had lost their parents as teenagers or young adults. **I felt so alone**. (Molly)

(6.2)   Do you miss me like I miss you? It's awful not having you around. It's definitely like **a piece of me is gone**. I feel **muted** in a way. It's hard without you. (Lucy)

In (6.1), Molly perceives herself in contradicting ways, both constantly surrounded and completely isolated from the world. Her lack of control is evident: she has no power to find or escape isolation. Molly's estrangement stems from having "no one to relate to" since none of her peers had experienced similar loss. This is illustrated by her use of an ALIEN domain, framing herself as living on a different planet. Although Molly was supported by family members, her return to university resulted in her being separated from her support. Because her friends and roommates had not experienced similar loss, Molly felt alienated. Indeed, she perceived herself as "living on another planet," a veritable alien to those around her. The implications of this source domain not only highlight her peers' ignorance of parent loss, but also the mixture of fascination with and fear of encountering such a novelty. Molly, then, was surrounded by her peers, thus preventing her from visibly grieving, yet isolated by her peers' lack of understanding. To Molly, then, early grief is both lonely and claustrophobic.

Lucy similarly perceives herself as almost alien, missing a "piece" of herself and feeling "muted." Notably, however, Lucy feels alienated from herself rather than other people. In (6.2), Lucy perceives her grief as oppressing her, both fragmenting and silencing her. When noting that she is missing a piece of herself, Lucy emphasizes the loss of identity resulting from parent loss. Drawing from a FRAGILE OBJECT domain, Lucy's fragmentation reveals that she perceives her parents as being pieces of herself. The death of her mother, then, resulted in losing that particular piece of herself. This is reminiscent of Chapter 5, in which Rita similarly drew from a FRAGILE OBJECT domain to emphasize the intensity of early grief. Additionally, Lucy feels silenced in her grief, as though her volume has been muted. This may draw from a TELEVISION source domain, highlighting the numbing effect of early grief. That Lucy perceives herself as directly impacted

suggests a certain estrangement from herself. In both cases, Lucy is passive, grief wielding control over her. Molly is similarly a passive victim to her grief. While both women are powerless against their grief in their first narratives, they draw from different source domains, revealing subtly different perceptions of grief.

6.2 Second Narrative

In their second narratives, Molly and Lucy perceive themselves as having greater agency. Again, both authors used very few metaphors in the rare occasions when they discussed their grief experiences. The metaphors they do use draw from OFFICE, ZOMBIE, and STORM domains. The following excerpts are the only examples in Molly's and Lucy's second narratives:

(6.3)   **Managing multiple losses is complicated**, and I still haven't figured out **what works** for me. (Molly)

(6.4)   I remember my first night back, 9 days my dad's death, joining friends in the dining hall for dinner, and **I felt so foreign**. **This was a world where I didn't belong**. And I never felt like I fit in for the 15 months until I graduated.

As I **zombie-walked** around campus the rest of semester I constantly had people telling me to smile or cheer up. (UGHHHH - Shut. The. Fuck. Up.). **The world was in grayscale**, and I figured that this was how it would be for the rest of my life. (Molly)

(6.5)   Before my sister died I would tell people who were **early in their grief storm** that it takes time, but you create a new normal. That the new normal will be totally different from what you ever knew, but that it can be ok. (Molly)

(6.6)   My mom has been gone for almost 3 years and I miss her like she's been gone two days. In my head, **she has been gone for a long trip and decided not to call** -

which both pisses me off and makes me really sad. So death or **a long trip where she's incommunicado**? I guess they are near one and the same. (Lucy)

(6.7)   And even being almost **3 years away from her death**…Sigh... The "missing" hasn't gotten any easier. I miss her so much **my heart aches**. (Lucy)

In (6.3), Molly perceives herself as "managing" her grief, wielding more agency than in her first narrative. Here, Molly actively manages her grief, and is continuously trying to improve the work performance. That Molly draws from an OFFICE source domain suggests a certain hecticness in managing her emotions, where her grief needs to be reined in to prevent the office falling into chaos. In (6.4), Molly's metaphors are reminiscent of those in (6.1), where she perceives herself as being isolated from her peers. She perceived herself as "foreign," again stressing the alienating effect of early grief. In (6.4), however, Molly elaborates on her early grief in two ways: first, by describing herself as a zombie, emphasizing the numbing effects of early, intense grief; and second, by describing her world as void of color, again centering intense grief's impact. Her focus, then, is less on how others interacted with her and more on how she interacted with the world. Drawing from a ZOMBIE domain, Molly's senses are dimmed, leaving her in a "grayscale" world. Molly's reference that she previously thought her world would permanently be in "grayscale" suggests that she no longer feels this way, though she does not say this outright. This is also seen in (6.5), her final nod to grief in her second narrative. In (6.5), Molly refers to grief as a "storm." It is possible that specifying "early" means Molly perceives the entire grief experience as a storm, and that the first parts of a storm are particularly chaotic and intense. Drawing from a STORM source domain yields several implications regarding how Molly perceives her grief: storms change in severity and symptoms, at times bringing heavy rain, winds, and lightning, and at others pausing the downpour for a moment of gloomy silence before eventually resuming. Molly's perception of grief as a storm suggests that grief's increased intensity is aligned with the storm's increased severity. Therefore, Molly's grief, while maintaining its right to again remove her agency, does transform.

41

Lucy is remarkably reticent regarding her grief experience, focusing instead on celebrating her mother's memory in her narrative. She does, however, twice observe her thoughts on parent death, from which we can glean some clues about how she perceives her grief experience. In (6.6), Lucy presents her mother's death as if she were merely on a road trip, which, in many ways, denies the grief experience entirely because there is nothing to grieve. As Lucy notes, this allows her to revel in anger as well as sadness since she feels her mother willingly left. Comparing (6.6) to (6.2), Lucy changes how she perceives her mother's death: in (6.2), her mother's death results in Lucy losing a piece of herself, presumably permanently; in (6.6), her mother's absence is perceived as indefinite, relying on the mother's decision to return or not. This latter example highlights feelings of abandonment: the mother chose to go on the trip, has deliberately decided not to stay in contact, and has chosen not to return. Regarding this last point, the fact that Lucy perceives her mother as choosing to not return perhaps allows her to feel justified in her anger. A common misconception about grief is that it only involves sadness, so when grievers feel other emotions such as anger, they feel guilty. Lucy's use of the TRIP domain possibly allows her to house her anger without triggering guilt. Although Lucy again centers her mother's death in (6.7), she also stresses that her grief maintains its severity. For Lucy, her grief has not changed; however, she notably uses different source domains in the two narratives, suggesting a shift in perception: in her first narrative, Lucy feels fragmented and muted; in her second narrative, her only reference to herself is when she notes her "heart aches" in (6.7). Furthermore, she perceives herself being "3 years away from" her mother's death, drawing from a JOURNEY domain. In doing so, Lucy frames herself as having continued moving along the life journey, thus exhibiting considerable volition. Lucy's subtle shifts in source domains mirrors the subtle shifts in her grief.

6.3 Chapter Conclusion

There are differences in Molly's and Lucy's metaphor usage between their first and second narratives. In comparing Molly's and Lucy's two narratives, the grievers make slight shifts in how they perceive their grief across time, as evidenced in their metaphor usage. Both women gain more agency in their second narrative after time has passed, and both women change how they perceive grief. For Molly, intense grief eventually dissipates, though never disappears entirely, with the threat of increased severity always present. For Lucy, her mother is not so much missing as she is willfully absent, thus accommodating her anger without triggering guilt. Both women, therefore, exhibit subtle changes in how they perceive grief, suggesting that the passage of time influences metaphor usage.

This chapter was tempered by several limitations. As has been the case with the prior two chapters, the narratives examined here contained very few metaphors specific to the grief experience: in the first narratives, each author produced a single example; the second narratives, while slightly more substantial, similarly offered few examples of grief-specific metaphors. Because there were so few examples to examine, the findings are necessarily limited. In a similar vein, two samples are perhaps too few to draw firm conclusions; additional narratives would be beneficial in creating claims. Another possible limitation is how little time elapsed between Molly's narratives. Six months is perhaps too short of time to examine how grief perceptions change, as seen in Molly's similar metaphor usage in (6.1) and (6.4). Still, her latter emphasis on adapting to grief in (6.3) and (6.5) illustrates a subtle change in control, where Molly actively manages and weathers her grief. Further research would benefit from examining narratives written farther apart.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

A prevalent theme throughout the three chapters is the lack of agency in early grief that is eventually regained in late grief. Indeed, time seems to be an important influence in determining how grief will be conceptualized by grievers and what metaphors will appear. When comparing metaphor usage by early grievers versus late grievers, early grievers were subdued by their grief while late grievers learned to accommodate it, thus reducing its intensity. When comparing how late grievers reflected on early grief versus late grief, grievers eventually regain agency as they move from early to late grief, as evidenced by their metaphor usage. Similarly, when comparing grievers' narratives written in early grief versus those written in late grief, agency is again regained. Notably, the threat of grief intensifying remains in late grief, which effectively subdues the grievers once again.

In conclusion, the findings listed here contribute to research on grief metaphors and metaphors in discourse. First, there are differences in how early grief is perceived versus late grief, both by early and late grievers. Furthermore, time does indeed seem to trigger variation in metaphor

usage. Due to the limited sample size and relative lack of data, it would be beneficial to further explore these themes. Still, the findings discussed here provide a window into the grief experience of daughters mourning lost parents, and notably push against Kübler-Ross's (1969) stage-model. This latter point is particularly important since grief is often misunderstood in society. This in turn makes grievers feel isolated in their grief, particularly since they must endure comments that (often unintentionally) diminish their grief. Encouraging and engaging in discussions of grief can improve our understanding of the grief experience and remove its taboo-status. In doing so, we may better understand how to support grievers.

REFERENCES

Chateris-Black, J. (2012). Shattering the bell jar: Metaphor, gender, and depression. *Metaphor and Symbol, 27*(3), 199-216. DOI: 10.1080/10926488.2012.665796

Deignan, A. (2008a). Corpus linguistics and metaphor. In R.W. Gibbs, Jr. (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought*. (pp. 280-294). Cambridge University Press.

Deignan, A. (2008b). Corpus linguistic data and conceptual metaphor theory. In M.S. Zanotto, L.

Cameron, & M.C. Cavalcanti (Eds.), *Confronting metaphor in use: An applied linguistic approach*. (pp. 149-162). John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Fauconnier, G. & Turner, M. (1998). Conceptual integration networks. *Cognitive Science, 22*(2), 133-187.

Fauconnier, G. & Turner, M. (2002). *The way we think*. Basic Books.

Hendricks, R.K., Demjén, Z., Semino, E., & Boroditsky, L. (2018). Emotional implications of metaphor: Consequences of metaphor framing for mindset about cancer. *Metaphor and Symbol, 33*(4), 267-279. DOI: 10.1080/10926488.2018.1549835.

Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Kübler-Ross, E., & Kessler, D. (2005). *On grief and grieving: Finding the meaning of grief through the five stages of loss*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. The University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*. Basic Books: A Member of the Perseus Books Group.

Lattanzi, M. & Hale, M.E. (1984). Giving grief words: Writing during bereavement. *OMEGA*, *15*(1), 1984-1985. DOI: 10.2190/TT15-WAPL-LLMT-X2WD

Moules, N.J., Simonson, K., Prins, M., Angus, P., & Bell, J.M. (2004). Making room for grief: Walking backwards and living forward. *Nursing Inquiry, 11*(2), 99-107.

Nadeau, J.W. (2006). Metaphorically speaking: The use of metaphors in grief therapy. *Illness, Crisis, & Loss, 14*(3), 201-221.

Neuman, Y., Nadav, M., & Bessor, Y. (2006). The pragmatics of bereavement. *Journal of Pragmatics, 38*, 1369-1384. DOI: 10.1016/j.pragma.2005.09.005.

Overvad, A.T. & Wagoner, B. (2020). Grief after suicide: A study of taboo and metaphor. *Culture & Psychology, 26*(3), 369-383. DOI: 10.1177/1354067X19861047.

Pragglejaz Group (2007). MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol, 22*(1), 1-39.

Ruscher, J.B. (2011). Moving forward: The effect of spatiotemporal metaphors on perceptions about grief. *Social Psychology, 42*(3), 225-230. DOI: 10.1027/1864-9335/a000066.

Seligman, S. (2007). Mentalization and metaphor, acknowledgment and grief: Forms of

transformation in the reflective space. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 17*(3), 321-344.

Semino, E. (2008). *Metaphor in discourse*. Cambridge University Press.

Semino, E., Demjén, Z., Demmen, J., Koller, V., Payne, S., Hardie, A., & Rayson, P. (2015).

The online use of violence and journey metaphors by patients with cancer, as compared

with health professionals: A mixed methods study. *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care, 7*,

60-66. DOI: 10.1136/bmjspcare-2014-000785.

Stroebe, M., Schut, H., Boerner, K. (2017). Cautioning health-care professionals: Bereaved

persons are misguided through the stages of grief. *OMEGA—Journal of Death and

Dying, 74*(4), 455-473. DOI: 10.1177/0030222817691870.

Young, E. (2008). Figures of grief: Metaphors from a bereavement writing group. *OMEGA,

56*(4), 359-367. DOI: 10.2190/OM.56.4.d

APPENDICES

Coding Key
- LIFE IS A JOURNEY
  - TERRAIN
  - ELEMENTS
  - FUEL
  - VEHICLE
- VIOLENCE
  - WOUND
  - MEDICINE
- LIFE IS A FRAGILE OBJECT
- HOSTAGE
  - DRUG
  - CONFRONTATION
- MONARCHY
- PERSONIFICATION
  - CONFRONTATION
  - BULLY
  - OPPONENT
  - BEFRIEND
- CONTAINER
  - STEAM
- EMOTIONS ARE OBJECTS
  - BAGGAGE
  - JUGGLE/BALANCE
- MACHINE
- CLAY
- UNCERTAIN
- PLANTS

49

Sample Narrative:

Hi everyone, my name is [Pam] and I'm here to talk about my dad [name] this week. He died unexpectedly while training for a mud run race almost 4 years ago in May 2016 when I was 26 years old. Grievers are rarely given a safe outlet to share, so thank you [admin] for creating this beautiful platform and allowing me the opportunity to share this week. I'll be sharing snapshots of who my dad was and snapshots of my grief process. Music was really important to my dad, so I'm excited to share some of his favorite songs in this account's stories with more photos that I love.

I'd love to start by sharing a bit about him. My dad prioritized people, not things. When I was younger, I asked my dad about our financial situation, "Are we rich?" He responded quickly saying that we were rich in family and friends. This answer was too vague for me to comprehend as a child, but I grew to understand and cherish his perspective. This idea of being rich in family is now a touchstone in my life.

His nicknames: Dad Pie, Mr. Fix It, Mr. Mellow, Jaws

Things he liked: coffee, skiing, growing orchids in our backyard, putting up a lot of Christmas lights, fireworks, traveling, camping and hiking as a family, figuring out how things worked, being punctual, creating new traditions

Quirks: sometimes eating nearly nothing all day at work then 2 bowls of cereal for dinner, dancing exclusively to the song "Burning Down the House" on the dance floor

My dad was a CPA and CFO. Although he was a "numbers guy," at his core, he was a people person and a leader.

When my brother and I were younger, he would teach his accounting and business lessons in sneaky ways.

He used a giant whiteboard and our own kid-interests to teach us how to solve math problems. He would draw 10 cookies and "eat" 7 of them to help us understand subtraction.

He also taught me math by reusing his old business cards and turning them into flashcards.

After my first year of college, I really wanted an iPhone and he made me put together a Powerpoint that outlined exactly why I needed this fancy phone. I think we all knew he was going to break down and get me the phone from the start, but it was a hilarious and useful exercise that I'm sure he got a kick out of anyway. My mom and brother sat in on my presentation and we still laugh about it today.

As I grew older, he was the first person I'd call to talk to about work. He taught me how to negotiate my salary for my first job. He loved hearing about business challenges and gave helpful advice on how to solve problems and mentor others in the workplace.

He pulled me and my brother into many projects around the house and loved to teach us how to do functional things—such as jump a car battery, use power tools, build fences

and gates, and even simply learn how to do a project properly the first time. He'd always joke that every house project somehow took a minimum of 3 trips to Home Depot.

His motto was from Green Eggs and Ham - "Try them, try them, and you may! Try them and you may I say," because he loved trying new things and traveling to new places. He truly believed in the possibilities of new experiences. He applied this motto to our family trips and side adventures, and encouraged us to explore new hobbies and sports. This motto has always had a really positive influence on my life... aside from that one time he forced me to try green beans when I was 8.

Turning points in my grief [JOURNEY] happened to fall on the year mark.

The first year can be summed up by the word "**trapped**." [HOSTAGE] I felt obligated to do things and answer to others. "How are you?" was the worst thing that people asked me - I would often skip a response entirely. I **stifled** myself [HOSTAGE] especially around others who had not experienced a close loss because I didn't want to reveal how negative I constantly felt inside. Once the shock **wore off** [DRUG] months later, I found myself absolutely **powerless** to my emotions [HOSTAGE] and genuinely did not know how to act normal in public having **gone through** [TERRAIN] something so life-changing and traumatic, while life continued on as normal for others. I'm sure some good things happened this year, but at the end of the day, my dad was still dead and that was always the most important takeaway of each day.

In the second year after loss, I had the **overwhelming** feeling [HOSTAGE] that others had seen my loss as a singular event that didn't still **shape my everyday life** [CLAY]. I **compulsively** kept talking about my dad [?], to an awkward and uncomfortable degree, because I was desperately trying to remind others that my dad's loss was still the most important thing that had ever happened to me. I desperately needed him to stay relevant. During this year I decided to try grief counseling to start **to pick up the pieces and rebuild my new life** [FRAGILE OBJECT] without him.

The third year was filled with making connections, mostly through starting a grief project (which I will talk about later this week). a source I surrounded myself with **grief survivors** [WAR], built a strong community and was able to be fully present to ask them how they got **through their losses** [TERRAIN]. I learned **to let joy in alongside my pain** [CONTAINER]. I learned to fully cherish the good days. And I learned to recognize that **dark days** still happen [ELEMENTS], and to be comfortable with the fact that they always will.

It's still uncomfortable for me to reveal how **truly dark** my life was after loss [ELEMENTS], especially for the first two years. If you have **suffered a loss** [WAR] recently and can relate to these feelings, please know that how terrible you feel now will not last forever, and that you are not alone. I also need this reminder from time to time.

It is a privilege that I have found a sense of purpose **through loss** [TERRAIN].

In 2018 I quit my day job without income lined up and started a company (now a nonprofit) with my aunt. We started interviewing and photographing cancer survivors to give hope to cancer fighters, which is something my aunt has always wanted to do since surviving pediatric cancer. A couple months into this project, I realized that we needed to do a similar project for the grief community. I personally needed to know how grievers **further along in their grief journeys had navigated their new life after loss** [JOURNEY]. I wanted to see it to believe it for myself, so we started @[handle].

We started to video interview and photograph grievers with the mementos they keep of their loved ones. We wanted to know how they **moved through their loss**, and what **life after loss** [TERRAIN] looked like for them. We wanted to give grievers a voice and show those newly grieving a sense of community over shared experience. To date, we have interviewed 81 grievers who experienced a close, life-shifting loss and the years after loss range from 1-66 years. It is a privilege to bear witness to their stories and to learn from every single one of them. Connecting with so many grievers has been a blessing and a source of tremendous **healing** [WOUND] **along the way** [JOURNEY]. I'll never be able to express my full gratitude for their courage [WAR] in sharing their intimate stories of loss to help others **through the darkness too** [ELEMENTS].

I love this work. Humanizing this taboo topic of grief and helping bridge the gap in understanding between grievers and supporters is how I wish to make my mark on the world.

It's both beautiful and devastating to me that each interview, each photo, each connection and new friend I make from this project is possible because my dad died.

What I wish I knew sooner about grief…

The good times hurt too. Some of my toughest grief days have been days of immense joy, such as the day I quit my day job, the day that my aunt and I officially created our nonprofit foundation, and the day we signed our first book deal. This used to catch me off guard [WAR] but now I've come **to accept** these bittersweet moments **and welcome** [BEFRIEND] what I call "**pangs of grief**" [WOUND]. I've now realized that it would be weird if I didn't acknowledge my dad during these big life moments that he would have otherwise rejoiced in.

For me, birthdays have been so hard **after loss** [JOURNEY]. The **milestone** birthdays are [JOURNEY] a **fresh** [WOUND] hell. But, we **survive** [WAR] and **get through them** [JOURNEY], as we have **survived** all of our hard days so far [WAR].

I wish I knew that people can be so unpredictable after loss.

Most people will be silent. I've never quite figured out why people who knew him or grew up with me continue to remain silent. Is it because grief is **scary** [VIOLENCE]? Do they think they will remind me of the loss simply by bringing him up? Are they too afraid of their own people dying to acknowledge that mine did? I wonder about this from time to time, and welcome any insight to this in the comments here!

Some people will be slow to get it, but they will get there. Two separate people (who have not experienced parent loss) have come forward this last year to share that they regret not being there for me **at the beginning of my grief** [JOURNEY]. I don't expect anyone to understand parent loss until they lose a parent, but it was an amazing gesture and I'm still floored by the courage it took for them to say that.

There will be waves of support. Some will show up immediately, some will sit with you **through** the fresh grief [TERRAIN], and **some will walk alongside you** [JOURNEY] and cheer you on **as you rebuild your life** [FRAGILE]. Appreciate the friends who show up for **each wave** [TERRAIN]. Few will be there **to ride out all of these waves alongside you** [TERRAIN]; those people are unicorns and should be celebrated endlessly.

The art of spreading ashes in epic places... A few months after my dad's death, we spread some of his ashes on his favorite hikes: Half Dome and Mt. Whitney. He had already secured permits a couple months before he died, so we decided to still go in his honor.

A year ago, I set my sights on spreading his ashes on Mt. Kilimanjaro. This trek would have been right up his alley. He was our adventure dad and expert hiker, and there was no way he wouldn't have wanted me to go on this adventure to hike the tallest freestanding mountain in the world in his honor.

I took training very seriously. After I did a few small hikes, my mom brought a few maps to me and let me know that my dad bought them before he died, likely to train for the Half Dome and Mt. Whitney hikes he was supposed to go on. Well, another mission was born; I decided I needed to go and spread his ashes on all of those peaks he intended to go on too. Before I left for my trek, I conquered the six tallest peaks in Southern California alongside some amazing friends and fellow members of the #deaddadsclub.

I traveled solo to Tanzania and had the time of my life. I expected the trek to be emotional and challenging, but I would have never imagined the pure joy that I felt at the summit.

I often think back to how hopeless and **empty** I felt at the time of loss [CONTAINER]. The day he died, I remember so vividly thinking that I'd never laugh or smile again. If there was one snapshot I could share with my 26 year old self at the time of loss, this summit photo would be it - frozen fingers and toes, chapped lips, teary eyes, goofy hat, and genuine smile while holding his ashes. This photo is what life **after loss** looks like [JOURNEY]. It's joy, and also **a well** of sadness [CONTAINER]. I wish I knew at the time of loss that these two emotions can **coexist** [PERSONIFICATION].

It felt amazing to accomplish exactly what I set out to do and give my dad a pretty epic view of glaciers and clouds. This experience was a true adventure and so much fun. The best part is that even though it was ultimately a solo journey, I was able to share in the experience and train with so many. It made the experience much "richer" and I think my dad would have loved that.

What I wish others knew about my grief process…

Like many grievers, I love sharing about who I lost. So much of my identity is influenced by this wonderful person, so getting to know him is getting to know me too. Asking about

him will not suddenly remind me that he's dead; it validates how he continues to be **a pillar in my life** [STRUCTURE].

My grief isn't sad all the time [PERSONIFICATION]. Yes, sometimes it looks like tears at Target, but sometimes it looks like going on a hike, baking his secret family recipe chocolate chip cookies, or finding/cherishing new grief friends who are also a part of the #deadparentsclub. I've come to see all of these moments of grief as a celebration of life.

Talking about the realness of grief does not make me a negative person. The more we normalize grief, the more we can all **move through it a lot easier without unnecessary obstacles** [TERRAIN].

Since my dad died the day before his birthday, I call these 2 days my "Dad Days." These are the 2 days that I let myself feel anything and make it all about my dad, out of 365 days in the year. I clear my schedule and **fully embrace** [PERSONIFICATION] **all emotions that surface** [TERRAIN]. Dad Days are sacred to me, so interrupting my celebration of these days feels particularly disrespectful. The greatest gift you can give me during these times is to acknowledge it - check in the week before, share a memory of him if you have one, ask how my grief project is going - saying anything at all tells me that you care too and shows me that you are someone I can trust and talk to if I'd like to share.

I love seeing daughters and dads together. I like hearing about other peoples' dads too, whether they are alive or not. It's nice to see others cherishing the special relationships they have in their lives.

My dark humor has gotten even darker. When I tell funny stories about the REI cashier not understanding that my dad is dead and still insisting that he needs to show up to cancel his membership… laugh with me. When I am getting my dad's belts resized so I can wear them and the repairman asks if my dad will ever want them back before he makes permanent adjustments… laugh with me. Grief is weird and awkward and sometimes really funny and it's all normal [PERSONIFICATION].

The four of us…

We did everything together as a family. It was always the four of us and our family unit was really special. The loss of this family dynamic with him is the secondary loss that **hits the hardest** for me [VIOLENCE].

My parents were a seamless partnership and a loving couple for over 40 years. They **built a life** together [FRAGILE], helped each other **grow** [PLANTS], and they were everyone's couple goals. Watching the pain in my mom has been absolutely heart wrenching, and it's also been painful to learn and accept that there is nothing I can do about it. My heart breaks for her missing her other half and my heart breaks for her having to be both parents for us. I am so proud of her and proud of all of us for **surviving this** [WAR] and sticking together. I often think of **the milestones** we will need **to navigate** [JOURNEY] without someone so important to us. My dad would have loved being a grandfather.

The three of us are very much **still complete** and we are as close as ever, but it's been a process **to fill the tangible hole in our family unit while we manage the holes in our**

own individual hearts [FRAGILE]. We are all different **in our grief** [TERRAIN], but we are all the same in wishing he was here at the end of the day.

Four years later, we're still up to the same shenanigans - usually dancing in the kitchen to Earth Wind & Fire songs - and there is no shortage of laughter and group hugs. My aunt has always been more like an older sibling in our family, and one of the best things to emerge from the last four years has been the new "four of us." We go to concerts together, we plan over the top birthday surprises and scavenger hunts for each other, and share memes in our family group chat. We celebrate life and we celebrate each other even louder now. This has absolutely been a gift from grief [PERSONIFICATION].

It's been a great privilege to share this week. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for reading along and being so supportive.

I am a different person post-loss and I really like how I've **rebuilt** my life [FRAGILE]. Every day I am thankful for what has **blossomed** in my life since loss [TERRAIN], especially the sense of community from @[handle]. There's nothing like connecting with others who "get it." Grief **allows me** to remember the best dad in the world and to keep him alive [personification]. I strive to live my life in a way that would make my dad and my 26 year old self proud. I've taken on the perspective that I am seeing the world through both of our eyes now.

I love sharing about him and this has been a wonderful opportunity to share just how much he means to me and continues to impact my life. Thank you [admin] for creating this vibrant and beautiful community and allowing me to share in it.

VITA

Sarah Camsuzou

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: GOOD GRIEF: A CORPUS-DRIVEN ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTUAL GRIEF
METAPHORS IN ONLINE DISCOURSE

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in English at Oklahoma
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2021.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in English at California
Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California in 2014.

Experience:

Graduate Teaching Assistant at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater,
Oklahoma from Fall 2018 to Spring 2021.

Writing Center Consultant at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma
from Fall 2018 to Spring 2021

Professional Memberships:

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi