

The light within: Metaphor consistency in Quaker pamphlets, 1659-2010

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This paper contributes to the study of religious metaphor by combining discourse analysis with cognitive semantics. In particular, it engages in a diachronic study of 30 pamphlets written by British Quakers and addressed to the general public to investigate the consistency of metaphor use in that genre across three and a half centuries. Consistency is seen as metaphors recording the same source domains and/or scenarios and/or lexical realisations across time, with maximum consistency meeting all three criteria. .

Utilising the notions of genre and discourse community along with metaphor domains and scenarios, the analysis shows that among 19 metaphor domains that occur in texts from at least two different centuries, just under 60 per cent are highly or maximally consistent, with domains of maximum consistency being the largest group. The changing purposes of the pamphlet genre and the evolving social and historical and contexts do not diminish this long-term metaphor consistency.

This overall finding is explained with recourse to the dual-processing/representation theory of religious cognition, which posits a difference between theological and basic everyday representations and processing of God concepts. Quakerism shows an overall lack of an abstract theology, with Quakers instead establishing various metaphors for God to express

their lived experience of the divine. The remarkable consistency of metaphors in Quaker pamphlets suggests that Quakerism makes God concepts intuitively meaningful and relevant.

1. Introduction

Linguistic research into metaphor in religious discourse has been surprisingly slow to catch on. While theological debates on the metaphoric nature of religious thought and language have been going on for a considerable time (e.g. MacQuarrie, 1967; McFague, 1982; Soskice, 1985), a short burst of ‘theolinguistics’ in the 1980s, including some work on metaphor (van Noppen, 1983), did not prove sustainable (see Crystal, forthcoming for an overview). It was only from the late 1990s onwards that cognitive linguists, partly in collaboration with theologians, took an interest in the topic (Boeve & Feyaerts, 1999; Jäkel, 2002; Charteris-Black, 2004, pp. 171-240; DesCamp & Sweetser, 2005; Chilton & Kopytowska, forthcoming) and that theologians started exploring cognitive theories of metaphor (Masson, 2014). This late interest is surprising given that the ‘[a]bstract conceptual domains, theoretical constructs, and metaphysical ideas’ that comprise religious thought ‘are only made accessible to our understanding by means of metaphor’ (Jäkel, 2002, p. 22). The central but abstract concept of God in particular, ‘[f]rom the point of view of cognitive linguistics ... exhibits an impoverished non-metaphorical reality’ and as such ‘is often primarily understood through metaphor’ (DesCamp and Sweetser, 2005, p. 215). As the papers in this special issue show, religious discourse is a prime candidate for metaphor.

This paper contributes to the study of religious metaphor by taking an approach that combines discourse analysis with cognitive semantics. In particular, it engages in a diachronic study of Quaker pamphlets to investigate the consistency of metaphor use in that

genre and to discuss what any conceptual durability might tell us about the cognitive underpinnings of religion. That discussion is informed by the cognitive science of religion (CSR).

CSR is a fairly recent approach within cognitive science (but see Guthrie, 1980 for an early account). Its overall aim is to find out how ‘pan-cultural features of human minds, interacting with their natural and social environments, inform and constrain religious thought and action’ (Barrett, 2011, p. 230). As a research paradigm, CSR is strongly influenced by evolutionary psychology, with most researchers seeing religions as by-products of adaptive cognitive models and processes that proved successful in other domains. CSR scholars posit that individuals and communities unconsciously use particular ‘mental tools’ to form religious ideas, most notably the so-called agent detection device and theory of mind. The two work in tandem, because the most important agents from the human point of view, namely other humans, are endowed with beliefs, desires, values etc., which can be understood with the theory of mind mechanism (Tremlin, 2006, pp. 76-80). According to the cognitive science of religion these two mental tools make possible a belief in gods as agents with minds. What is more, gods are ‘minimally counterintuitive concepts’ (Barrett, 2000), meaning that they go against some biological, physical or psychological expectation – e.g. being immortal, invisible or omniscient -, but ‘conform in most respects to or intuitive ontology’ (Tremlin, 2006, p. 90). In this way, CSR, as a rationalist, naturalistic and non-teleological school of thought (Kripal, 2014, pp. 352-355), demystifies religion, theorising that what seems extraordinary is in fact a by-product of very fundamental and common cognitive processes and models.¹

The discussion towards the end of this paper will particularly draw on the dual processing theory developed within CSR to explain the remarkable consistency of metaphor

in religious texts over long time spans. Indeed, the analysis of British Quaker pamphlets from 350 years shows that there is a large group of metaphors which are maximally consistent, recording the same domains, scenarios and lexical realisations. Other metaphors demonstrate high consistency, with domains showing the same scenarios and lexis in various, although not all, centuries. Given the changing socio-historical contexts and hence communicative purposes and other linguistic features in the pamphlet genre, this consistency is explained by the lack of abstract theology in Quaker faith and practice. First though, let us contextualise the study by looking at some of the history and beliefs of British Quakers.

2. History and beliefs of British Quakers

The Religious Society of Friends, better known as Quakers, started as a group of Protestant dissenters in mid-17th century Britain. In an era that was rife with religious and political unrest, the Quakers and their founder, the itinerant preacher George Fox (1624-1691), distinguished themselves by their belief that everyone has God's metaphorical light or seed within them and is therefore able to have a personal, unmediated relationship with the Divine and to receive direct revelation. This belief brought with it a rejection of all clergy, a demotion of scripture as secondary, a comparative lack of abstract theology and a conviction, radical at the time, that all humans were equal and all believers were potential priests or ministers. It was especially Quakers' rejection of clergy and their refusal to pay tithes and bear arms though that led to their persecution following the Restoration of monarchy in Britain in 1660 (Punshon, 2006, p. 86). In that early period, Quakers very much sought to convince others by turning them to their 'inner light' through their particular style of preaching (see Hinds, 2011, pp. 33-55 for an account), in order to establish God's kingdom on earth as well as defend themselves from charges of heresy and unlawfulness. However, legal persecution was only to end with the Act of Toleration in 1689, by which time many

Quakers had emigrated to America (although not necessarily escaping persecution there either).

Although discrimination against Quakers was not fully abolished until 1870, when they were first permitted to enter university and the professions (Dandelion, 2007, p. 54), the Act of Toleration led to the consolidation of Quakers as a faith community. Together with the theology of Robert Barclay (1648-1690) – who has been referred to as ‘the only systematic theologian the Society of Friends has produced’ (Punshon, 2006, p. 142) -, the end of persecution ushered in the quietist period of Quakerism in the 18th century. In his *Apology for a True Christian Divinity* (1678), Barclay cemented the primacy of spiritual experience over scripture and emphasised once more that such experience could only be conveyed by God directly and without mediation. Discernment and passive waiting in silence thus became tantamount to believers and the focus accordingly shifted inwards.

This inward shift was accompanied by a profound distrust of all worldly issues and ‘creaturely activities’. Quaker communities separated themselves from the rest of the world, anxiously guarding their spiritual purity. Discipline within the community was strictly enforced and an increasing number of rules was policed at regional and local levels. Members who ‘walked disorderly’, i.e. broke the rules, were frequently disowned, although they could be re-admitted. Disownment, not marrying out and the reluctance to convert others, in addition to membership through voluntary confession rather than by birth, meant that numbers dwindled in Britain (but not America), and the quietist period may have signalled the end of Quakers as a community.

Yet, as the 18th gave way to the 19th century, the quietist lifestyle had become stagnant and in need of spiritual renewal which could only come from without. In America, where Quakers spread out through westward migration and where they faced less societal

disapproval, opening up to outside influences led to a number of schisms throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries (Dandelion, 2007, pp. 80-134), which did not leave British Quakers untouched: for much of the 19th century, evangelical, conservative and liberal strands could all be identified among British Quakers. The liberal strand ascended throughout the latter half of the century and became predominant after the 1895 Manchester Conference, which endorsed modern thought, including Darwin's theory of evolution, and biblical criticism (Dandelion, 2007, pp. 117-119; Punshon, 2006, pp. 240-241).

Today, the number of Quakers worldwide is estimated at 340,000, with the strongest communities located in Kenya (ca. 134,000 members), the US (ca. 87,000 members), and Bolivia and Guatemala (about 33,000 and 21,000 members, resp.).² In the UK, where numbers fell until the mid-19th century and have largely stagnated since (Dandelion, 2007, p. 170), Quakers record about 18,000 members. Liberal Quaker thought, which is predominant in Britain, is based on the tenets that a) individual and collective spiritual experience rather than scripture is primary and b) faith needs to be relevant to the historical period. From these two premises, it follows that c) God's truth is timeless but its revelation is continuous, with newer revelations surpassing older ones, and d) Quakers need to be 'open to new Light', i.e. continuing revelation (Dandelion, 2007, pp. 130-134). Quaker belief remains non-doctrinal and ministry by members of the community, rather than any abstract theology, continues to be seen as the most important expression of faith. While Quakers of different persuasions believe in 'the light within' or 'that of God in everyone' and subscribe to the testimonies of simplicity, truth, equality and peace, present-day liberal Quakers regard truth in relativist terms, as 'personal, partial or provisional' (Dandelion, 2007, p. 243).

3. Metaphor in the language of Quakers

British Quakers have a long tradition of unprogrammed meetings for worship held largely or completely in silence. The silence of a so-called 'gathered meeting' is seen as opening a

space in which the Spirit/Divine, in itself seen as beyond verbal expression, can be experienced (Dandelion, 2007, pp. 141-142). Spoken ministry, while prompted by God, is therefore secondary to silence. At the same time, however, Quakers have sought to distinguish themselves as a group and developed a specific discourse for both daily interactions and written works. Such 'Quaker language' has been the subject of both contemporaneous comments and linguistically inspired accounts; indeed Quakers 'have been characterized from the very beginning by an especially strong preoccupation with language' (Bauman, 1970, p. 67).

Early Quakers set store by 'plain speech', which rejected highbrow theological discourse, 'polish'd with Rhetorick and Oratory' (Chandler et al., 1693/1739, p. 22), and the abstract theology which was expressed through it. 'Plain' does not mean 'literal', however: the discourse of early Quakers crucially relied on metaphor and certainly, the central metaphor source domains of Quaker religious language were established in that early period. In his rhetorical study of 79 early Quaker sermons by 24 different preachers, supplemented by data from tracts, journals and letters, Graves (2009) notes five dominant conceptual source domains - light vs. dark, journey, seed, hunger/thirst, voice -, of which the first strikes him as central. The following paragraphs elaborate on the three domains that have been most noted in the literature, i.e. light vs dark, container – which Graves (2009, p. 189) notes but fails to recognise as metaphoric - and journey.

Light and darkness metaphors are hardly unique to Quakerism: Punshon (2006, p. 46) refers to the former as 'one of the most universal symbols for the divine among [hu]mankind', and MacQuarrie (1967, pp. 202-205) traces their origins to animistic beliefs. However, they were used in specific ways in the Quaker discourse community and have remained core concepts up to the present. Indeed, Graves (2009, p. 188) has pointed out that 'no other religious group has made the light-dark metaphor so central to their understanding

and communication of God's grace'. While the conceptual metaphor "*LIGHT IS GOOD*" (and, by implication, "*DARKNESS IS EVIL*") has a perceptual embodied basis, the more specific metaphoric understanding of Christ/God/the Spirit³ as light in Quaker writings is usually traced back to John 1:4-9. So prevalent was this metaphor to the first Quakers that they even referred to themselves as Children of the Light (cf. John 12:36) who were chosen by God to end the darkness of apostasy and restore the true Church.⁴

A central belief for Quakers is that of the 'light within', also described as 'the inward light' or 'the inner light'. These expressions all combine the embodied "*LIGHT*" and "*CONTAINER*" source domains. Just as light and darkness are antonyms with diametrically opposed evaluations attaching to them, so the "*CONTAINER*" domain positively evaluates the inner as referring to cognition and emotion, and devalues the outer, which denotes the material world. The early Quakers made an intertextual link with Romans 2:28-9, a passage they adapted to refer to those like themselves who 'possessed' Christ in their souls as opposed to those who only 'professed' Christian faith in their words (Creasey, 1962, p. 18). The metaphor therefore reflects the primacy for Quakers of spiritual experience over written scriptural texts, and of the unmediated expression of faith over abstract theology. Again, "*CONTAINER*" imagery is hardly unique to Quaker discourse (Creasey, 1962, pp. 18-19), but for Quakers it had a profound impact, not least in paving the way to quietism.

The point has been made that the "*JOURNEY*" domain 'permeates biblical literature and historical Christianity and is especially significant in ... seventeenth-century Christian writings' (Graves, 2009, p. 199). More than that, however, the conceptual metaphor "*LIFE IS A JOURNEY*", and the underlying "*SOURCE-PATH-GOAL*" schema based on moving the body through three-dimensional space, is a staple example of conceptual metaphor theory and the "*JOURNEY*" domain has been shown to be central to various discourses (e.g. Charteris-Black, 2014). Religious discourse is no exception; indeed, "the spiritual journey ... is a

common metaphor, practically a cliché” (Gillman, 2007, p. 19). Graves (2009, pp. 200-201) links the “*JOURNEY*” domain to the quest narrative, in which a hero wants to obtain a precious goal, such as, in the Quaker version of the story, inward communion with Christ, and goes on a (spiritual) journey to reach that goal, needs to overcome obstacles, but receives divine help to reach the desired goal.

4. A model for analysing metaphor consistency

In order to see if and what metaphors are diachronically consistent in the discourse of British Quakers, it was first necessary to limit the data by focusing on a particular genre, namely that of pamphlets written by British Quakers and addressed to the general public in order to inform others about their faith or, in the early period, defend their beliefs. The choice of data was motivated by the fact that pamphlets represent an argumentative and explanatory genre that introduces outsiders to the authors’ belief system; metaphoric conceptualisations can be expected to be repeated, extended and otherwise reinforced to familiarise and convince out-group readers about central ideas of religious faith and practice, or defend those ideas against critics.

In view of the history of Quakers as outlined in Section 2, it is not surprising that this genre has not only changed but also waxed and waned over the centuries: the latter half of the 17th century produced a considerable amount of apologetic literature by Quakers in reaction to their persecution. This kind of text production declined sharply in the 18th century, the quietist period, in which Quakers turned inward and sought less contact with the rest of society, largely limiting themselves to journals and letters as genres of religious reflection and advice. Discussion of beliefs and practices picked up again about the mid-19th century, but were now often internal, with the various schisms in the American Quaker community finding an echo in British Quaker magazines. From the 1920s onwards, the outwardly

directed pamphlet resurged, no longer as an apologetic genre but with an informative purpose. American and, to a lesser extent, British Quakers had started missionary activities in Asia and Africa in the latter half of the 19th century, and Quaker peace work during and between the two world wars gained a high public profile. Both missionary and peace-making and relief efforts necessitated short texts that explained Quaker beliefs and practices to national and international publics. Outreach activities in the 21st century have so far led to a number of increasingly multimodal print leaflets and websites explaining who Quakers are, what they believe, how they worship and how they are organised.

The changing prominence of outwardly directed pamphlets as a genre in Quaker discourse is reflected in the data sample. Comprising of 30 tracts, leaflets and websites, it includes nine specimens from the latter half of the 17th century, four from the 18th, five from the 19th, eight from the 20th and four from the first decade of the 21st century. Of this sample, five reasonably short texts were selected for in-depth analysis. These are:

Crook, J. et al. (1659). *A declaration of the people of God, in scorn called Quakers, to all magistrates and people*. London: Thomas Simmons.

Gordon, T. (1732): *A vindication of the Quakers: or, an answer to the Bp. of L-'s charge against them, and the late defence of that charge etc.* London: T. Cooper.

Corder, S. (1841). *A brief outline of the origin, principles, etc., of the Society of Friends*.
Lindfield: W. Eade.

Rowntree, J.S. (1927). *What the Quakers stand for*. London: Friends' Book Centre.

Gillman, H. (2010). *The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)*. Available at
<http://old.quaker.org.uk/religious-society-friends-quakers>, accessed 30 Dec 2015.

Any study of metaphor in discourse makes it necessary to draw on both discourse analysis and cognitive semantics. The present analysis utilises the notions of genre and discourse community from the former, integrating them with metaphor domains and scenarios from the latter.

As members' resources, genres not only create or foreground specific relations between discourse participants but also see members of a discourse community engage in them repeatedly. Quaker pamphlets can be seen as a 'class of communicative events' (Swales, 1990, p. 58) with changing purposes over time, i.e. to defend, persuade and inform. They are used to those ends by the faith-based Quaker discourse community, with social changes across the centuries being reflected in the pamphlets' linguistic features. Remarkably, however, changing purposes and contexts do not diminish metaphor consistency over centuries in Quaker pamphlets.

In order to identify the role played by metaphors in the genres used by a discourse community, identifying metaphoric expressions in text to infer conceptual metaphors such as "GOD IS LIGHT" is not the most helpful approach. Instead, it makes sense to trace metaphoric expressions to their underlying source domains: the sets of structured knowledge and beliefs about an entity. Such sets of structured knowledge not only give rise to expectations, attitudes and emotions, but are also used in metaphor scenarios. Metaphor scenarios have been defined as

a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about "typical" aspects of a source-situation, for example, its participants and their roles, the "dramatic" storylines and outcomes, and conventional evaluations of whether they count as successful or unsuccessful, normal or abnormal, permissible or illegitimate, etc.

(Musolff, 2006, p. 28)

This focus on scenarios helps to ‘capture ... discursive trends that are characteristic for particular discourse communities’, making it necessary to go beyond source domains (Musolff, 2006, p. 35). Accordingly, the analysis of the sample data will start with identifying source domains and then ascertain what scenarios they contribute to.

The five texts were manually analysed for metaphoric expressions referring to God, to the relationship between humans and God, to faith and believers, and to Quakers as a religious society. The metaphor identification procedure proposed by the Pragglejazz Group (2007) was used to identify relevant linguistic metaphors, with ambiguous cases being checked against contemporary or historical corpora for any more basic current or contemporaneous meaning than the one ascertained in the text. Intertextuality is a prominent feature in the pamphlets and relevant linguistic metaphors in quotes, while marked as such, were included as they were often strategically selected by the text producer. In a second step, the linguistic metaphors were categorised by what source domain they draw on. Each source domain needed to be present in at least two texts from different periods to warrant inclusion, so as to make sure that they were not mere idiosyncracies but actually part of Quaker discourse as represented in pamphlets. Inevitably, there were overlaps between conceptual domains; for example, the “*LIQUID*” source domain can be realised on its own (e.g. “*those deeper currents of the soul*”, Hibbert, 1941, p. 5)⁵ or be extended to overlap with the domains of “*PURITY*” (e.g. “*we are ... together refreshed and washed clean by the fountain of living waters*”, Gray, c.2010) or “*FOOD*” (e.g. “*true Bread and Water of Life, to satisfie every hungry and thirsty Soul*”, Penington, 1681) (see also Graves, 2009, p. 197). Where metaphoric expressions with different source domains were combined at clause level, they were listed under a category ‘combinations’. The eponymous ‘light within’ is an obvious and frequent case in point, but there are also more complex examples such as “*For the Light ... is*

all holy and pure, like the Fountain from whence it comes” (Penington, 1681). The source domains were established and added to throughout the analysis of the five texts, i.e. the analysis of the first text resulted in a list of domains which was supplemented when the next text yielded a new relevant source domain and so on. Whenever a new source domain was added to the list, the previously analysed texts were subjected to a second, sometimes third and fourth, analysis to make sure that no realisations of the newly added source domain had been overlooked. If after this procedure no examples of a source domain could be identified in a given text, the analysis was broadened to include supplementary texts from the same period, until the source domain was found (or not), in order to be reasonably confident that the domain in question was (not) realised in pamphlets of the time. To maintain the focus on the five texts, however, any new source domain found in that supplementary sample was not included in the list.

For the diachronic comparison, the analysis addressed how consistent or varied these source domains were over time, that is if they a) were used in all the texts across centuries, b) informed the same metaphor scenario, and c) were realised by the same linguistic metaphors. The third measure allows for different lemmata, e.g. ‘teacher’ and ‘teaching’ would be accepted as the same linguistic realisation. Supplementary texts were once more checked for metaphor scenarios and linguistic metaphors where these could not be found in the five central texts. (Again, new scenarios or metaphoric expressions identified in those texts were not taken into account.) All in all, ten supplementary texts had to be consulted for cases where metaphor consistency could be ascertained along the three dimensions.

The three measures of consistency indicated above make it possible to categorise the historical variation of source domains as shown in Table 1.

	Source domain is	Source domain	Source domain is
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	present in all texts	used in the same scenario	realised by the same linguistic metaphor(s)
Maximum consistency	Yes	Yes	Yes
High consistency	Yes	Yes	No
	Yes	No	Yes
Low consistency	Yes	No	No
Minimum consistency	No	No	No

Table 1: A model of metaphor consistency

For example, primary vertical metaphors were unsurprisingly present in all texts and realised with the word “*high*” throughout. (Other linguistic realisations were restricted to particular periods.) However, the word “*high*” has a number of functions in the data, including to brand the Quakers’ detractors as proud (“*the hand of God, which comes upon them when they are high and proud*”, 1659), to relate to alleged better members of the Quaker community (“*What is said ... about high and low Quakers, is a Distinction ridiculous and absurd*”, 1732) and to refer to God as “*the Most High*” (1841). The source domain is therefore highly, if not maximally, consistent and would be located on the shaded line in Table 1. In this model, consistency is primarily a question of whether a source domain is present throughout; if it is not, then neither metaphor scenarios nor linguistic metaphors can be. (This is why Table 1 has no categories with inconsistent domains, except for the last one.) However, in presenting the results, I will point out any scenario and/or lexical consistencies across at least two of the periods where the domain in question does occur. The next section will detail the metaphors and their level and kind of consistency as identified in the data.

5. Results

The analysis of the five central pamphlets shows 288 relevant metaphoric tokens, which realise 19 metaphor domains that occur in texts from at least two different centuries. Extra tokens were found when supplementary texts had to be consulted to ascertain metaphor consistency, but since those texts were not analysed in total, figures are for the five key texts only. The metaphoric tokens are distributed across the texts and domains as shown in Table 2.

	1659 (8pp)	1732 (32pp)	1841 (41pp)	1927 (3pp)	2010 (2pp)	Total
BODY	3	1	18	1	1	24
BUILDING	5	3	5	8	1	22
COMMODITY	0	0	3	0	5	8
CONTAINER	2	15	6	14	2	39
FAMILY	0	1	13	4	0	18
FOOD	0	2	3	0	0	5
HIGH & LOW	5	4	4	1	1	15
JOURNEY	2	13	1	1	4	31
LIFE & DEATH	0	3	1	0	0	4
LIGHT & DARKNESS	6	8	8	13	2	37
LIQUID	0	0	2	0	0	2
MACHINE/INSTRUMENT	0	1	2	1	0	4
MASTER & SERVANT	13	2	1	0	0	26
MOVEMENT	5	2	2	4	0	13
PLANT	0	1	5	2	2	10
PURITY & DIRT	2	1	1	0	0	4
TEACHER	1	4	5	0	0	10
VISION	0	3	2	0	1	6
VOICE	2	1	6	1	0	10
Total	46	65	106	52	19	288

Table 2: Metaphor tokens across texts and domains

As Table 2 shows, while the 19th century text records most metaphor tokens overall, the different lengths of the pamphlets means that it is 20th century text that features the highest metaphor density. In addition, “CONTAINER” and “LIGHT & DARKNESS” are realised most often overall, a combination which, as we shall see, is most often instantiated in the expressions ‘light within’, ‘inward light’ etc.

Among the 19 domains, seven show maximum consistency and four show minimum consistency, with an additional four domains each showing high and low consistency.

	Source domain is present in all texts	Source domain used in the same scenario	Source domain is realised by the same linguistic metaphor(s)
maximum consistency: “BODY”, “CONTAINER”, “FAMILY”, “JOURNEY”, “LIGHT & DARKNESS”, “PLANT”, “TEACHER”	Yes	Yes	Yes
high consistency: “VOICE”	Yes	Yes	No
high consistency: “HIGH & LOW”, “LIFE & DEATH”, “PURITY & DIRT”	Yes	No	Yes
low consistency: “BUILDING”, “LIQUID”, “MOVEMENT”, “VISION”	Yes	No	No
minimum consistency: “COMMODITY”, “FOOD”,	No	No	No

<i>“MACHINE/INSTRUMENT”</i> , <i>“MASTER & SERVANT”</i>		
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Table 3: Metaphor consistency in Quaker pamphlets

There is a measure of conceptual overlap between some of these domains, in particular between *“LIQUID”* and *“PURITY & DIRT”*, and *“LIQUID”* and *“FOOD”*, but also between *“LIGHT & DARKNESS”* and *“VISION”* (*“[Quakers] are ... as a Light shining in a dark Place, to which all Persons ... would do well to turn their Eyes”*, 1732); *“PLANT”* and *“LIFE & DEATH”* (*“the same Power, keeping the one [Seed] in Death and the other in Life”*, Penington, 1681).⁶ In addition, the texts show a number of antonymic domains, i.e. *“LIGHT & DARKNESS”*, *“LIFE & DEATH”*, and *“PURITY & DIRT”*. It is no coincidence that the examples of conceptual overlaps and antonyms mostly come from the 17th century data, as this is the time when Quakers were most outgoing in convincing others, seeking maximum impact through conceptually dense pamphlets and sermons, and thereby forming the metaphoric ‘landscape’ of Quaker discourse.

Maximally consistent domains form the largest group in the data. Starting with the *“PLANT”* domain, we see scenarios of faith as growing and beliefs as having roots (e.g. *“Quakerism is rooted in Christianity”*, Outreach Committee, 2000). The additional scenario of Christ as a tree growing branches, i.e. believers, is derived from the Bible (John 15:1-5) and is evidenced in early Quaker pamphlets (e.g. *“as they abide living Branches in [Jesus]”*, Chandler et al., 1693, pp. 23-24) as well as in recent examples, e.g. in an image of leaves and berries (Anonymous, c.2006). The lexical item consistent across all texts, however, is ‘seed’, which is realised in an equally consistent scenario in which God is a seed in the human soul. While the gospels (e.g. Luke 8:4-15) provide a parable in which the word of God is the seed, this has been metonymically compressed in Quaker discourse so that God, rather than his

word, becomes the seed.⁷ Although this scenario can be found in texts across the centuries, it is elaborated as the seed being the ground of religion in the earlier periods (e.g. *“that divine Seed ... is the sole invincible Basis of all true Religion”*, 1732), while the 21st century text alludes to Galatians 6:7-10 when mentioning how Quakers as a faith community are *“challenged by Spirit ... to nurture the seeds of the divine commonwealth”*. It is not the case then, as Hodson (2009) claims, that ‘Quakers dropped the metaphor of Seed altogether during the 19th century’, although later writers may use it interdiscursively or intertextually, i.e. by adopting the style of earlier texts or by quoting from them directly.

“*BODY*” and “*FAMILY*” are two domains that are used in scenarios describing social groups, be they faith communities or humankind more generally. Thus, we find variations of the biblical scenario of God or Christ as the head of the faith community (e.g. *“men ... become united to Christ, and living members of that body, of which He is the head”*, 1841), with early texts again showing a propensity for combining domains (e.g. *“Can there be a more intimate Union and Communion then between the Head and the Body, the Vine and the Branches”*, Chandler et al., 1693, pp. 45-46). The metaphoric expression “*body*” appears in all texts, but there is also another scenario in which humans embrace truth or, reciprocally, the Spirit embraces humans (*“the Few who embrace Truth”*, 1732; *“friends are brought together in the embrace of the Spirit”*, 2010). The earliest text further warns that *“all persecutors who abuse the power of God ... were suddenly overthrown by the hand of God”* (1659). As this notion of a vengeful God is rare in Quaker writings and certainly at odds with the peace testimony, we can assume that it is here used to admonish those who spoke out and acted against the early Quakers.

The “*FAMILY*” domain is present in conventional metaphoric references to Jesus as the son of God, with a consistent scenario of God as father to all humans, elaborated in the notion of humans being brothers (e.g. *“the brotherhood of men in the Fatherhood of God”*,

1927). In representing God as a paternal authority,⁸ this scenario is similar to that of humans obeying God or that in which God or the Holy Ghost teach human learners (e.g. *“the Holy Spirit being ... an all-sufficient Comforter and Teacher”*, 1841). Indeed, the “MASTER & SERVANT” and “TEACHER” domains can be combined, as in *“obeying this heavenly instructor”* (1841). The “TEACHER” domain is not only maximally consistent but also shows only one scenario, realised by lemmata of “teach”.

As noted above, the “JOURNEY” domain is hardly unique to religious discourse, although it is certainly central there as well. In Quaker pamphlets, it is consistently realised by the words “guide” and “lead”, with the most consistent scenario being that of God leading and guiding humans. The scenario is often quite elaborate in early texts, as in this example from 1732:

“If thou wilt be faithful to thine inward Guide ... thy Way will be made plain before thee, that thou shalt not err, nor stumble, but arrive, at last, to the desired Scope of all thy Travails and Endeavours”.

Again in early texts, the journey is from a bad place (*“to travel out of the Egyptian state”*, Penington, 1681, alluding to the Book of Exodus) to a good one (*“to lead us to Happiness here”*, 1732), providing further evidence for the observation that “the JOURNEY metaphor in the religious context ... draws a clear, dichotomous distinction between two ways of life, the good, moral life on the one hand versus the bad, immoral life on the other hand” (Jäkel, 2002, p. 25, emphasis omitted). With persecution of Quakers waning, the goal shifted toward deeper faith and understanding, whereas in the most recent texts, the focus is on the path or journey itself, which is realised both linguistically (e.g. *“we claim to be on a spiritual path”*, 2010) and visually, through the image of a tree-lined alley with someone walking in the

distance (Gray, c.2010). While contemporary texts still mention believers as “*following Jesus’ example*” (Outreach Committee, 2000), faith-based claims are typically modified and modalised (“*the Bible ... along with all the other books ... can guide us in life*”, Outreach Committee, 2000), backgrounding the notion of divine agency.

Like the “*JOURNEY*” domain, the “*CONTAINER*” domain, too, is embodied, being based on the universal human experience of the body as a bounded container which can hold substances going into, or being generated within, it. A vast body of evidence shows that emotion and mental states are conceptualised as being inside a person (Kövecses, 2003; Soriano, 2015), and so is faith in religious discourse. Quaker pamphlets are no exception in this respect (“*holy religion ... prevails in the hearts of [God’s] rational creatures*”, 1841),⁹ but are specific in placing the divine itself as being inside humans: e.g. “*there is in every man something of the Divine*” (1927). In this scenario, humans also seek and find unity with God inside themselves: “*a state of silent inward communion with Him*” (1841), “*seeking inwardly how we are to live outwardly*” (2010). As the last quote suggests, the ‘inward’ is always valued higher or at least primary in Quaker pamphlets: e.g. “*He who has known this inward communion has no need of outward ceremonial to bring him to God*” (1927). Finally, if God is within humans, any of the metaphor domains used to refer to the divine can also be within, and indeed we find a number of combinations with the domains of “*PLANT*” (“*a Secret hope, springing up in the heart from the true Seed*”, Penington, 1681), “*TEACHER*” (“*The word of God, ... Inward Teacher, or whatever we each like to call it*”, Gray, c.2010) and “*JOURNEY*” (“*their truly domestick Guide within*”, 1732).

However, it is the combination of the “*CONTAINER*” and “*LIGHT & DARKNESS*” domains that is most characteristic of Quaker discourse, including the pamphlet genre. God or Christ as the (inward) light is the consistent scenario for the “*LIGHT & DARKNESS*”

domain, and the word “*light*” itself is found in texts across the five centuries. As noted above (Section 3) the “*LIGHT & DARKNESS*” domain is a staple of religious discourse, but the prominence and consistency of the domain in Quaker texts are still remarkable. Drawing on John 1:9, the authors of the pamphlets write about “*the Light of Christ*” (1659) or “*the Divine Light*” (1927), often in contrastive scenarios (“*great numbers were ... turned from darkness to light*”, 1841, quoting Acts 26:18) with explicit evaluation (“*he that doth evil, he hates the Light, which is good*”, 1659) and, in early texts, in combinations with the “*PURITY & DIRT*” domain (“*the Light ... is all holy and pure*”, Penington, 1681). Combined with the “*CONTAINER*” domain, the “*LIGHT & DARKNESS*” domain gives rise to a highly consistent scenario that occurs in texts from four centuries. Characteristically, however, the most recent instances are reflective rather than declarative. Thus, we go from references to “*the Light of Christ that shineth in the heart*” (1659) to meta-references to “*the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light*” (1927) and meta-discourse stating that “*Friends like to talk of an ‘inward light’ within every human being*” (Outreach Committee, 2000).

To summarise, the five central pamphlets show 288 metaphor tokens that instantiate 19 metaphor domains with varying degrees of consistency. Of these, just under 60 per cent are highly or maximally consistent, with domains of maximum consistency being the largest group. Some of the domains show conceptual overlap or are organised as antonyms. In the early texts in particular, such antonyms are “amplified in psychological force when contrasted in the same context” (Graves, 2009, p. 192). Clusters and combinations of different metaphors are also especially prominent in the earliest texts, which were intended to defend rather than merely inform about Quakerism and to convince others to join the emerging faith community. Intertextuality is an important feature of Quaker pamphlets across centuries; the Bible is an obvious source but as of the 19th century, earlier Quaker texts are quoted or alluded to as well. While all sample texts reflect the social, political and religious

context of their time, the most recent and contemporary texts are noticeably different from the others. Not only do they combine language and images in realising metaphor domains, but they also eschew overt evaluation, opting instead for mitigation and modalisation.

Quakers are referred to in both the first and the third person plural and there is a fair amount of meta-discourse and explicit intertextuality. Crucially, the notion of the divine is backgrounded, leading to many domains being realised in scenarios that are not specifically religious.

Despite these differences, however, there is a sizable set of metaphors that shows very little variation across time. Not only do the respective domains and scenarios stay consistent, but the related lexis also shows remarkable continuity. In the last section, I will offer one possible explanation for this consistency.

6. Discussion and conclusion

It is tempting to think that it may be the most general, i.e. either embodied or “culturally entrenched non-primary metaphors” (DesCamp & Sweetser, 2005, p. 217) that are most consistent in Quaker pamphlets across time. However, those metaphors can be found for all degrees of consistency, including minimal and low consistency (“*FOOD*” and “*BUILDING*”, “*MOVEMENT*”, “*VISION*” domains) just as high and maximum consistency (“*HIGH & LOW*” and “*BODY*”, “*CONTAINER*”, “*JOURNEY*”, “*LIGHT & DARKNESS*”).

It is certainly true that some of the maximally consistent domains derive their consistency from phrases such as ‘inward light’ being used intertextually, as suggested by the quotes from earlier Quaker writings that can be found from the 19th century onwards (see also Soskice, 1985, pp. 154-158). However, I would like to advance an additional explanation by drawing on the dual processing model of religious thought, as developed by scholars in the cognitive

science of religion (CSR), especially the dual-processing/representation theory of religious cognition (Barrett & Keil, 1996).

Starting from the idea of gods as minimally counter-intuitive quasi-human agents, this theory posits a difference between theological and basic everyday representations and processing of God concepts. Research shows that theological representations are explicit, analytical and abstract, while basic ones are implicit, intuitive and allow for rich inferences. Accordingly, the respective processing is either slow, reflective or conscious, or fast, reflexive or unconscious. Importantly, proponents of the dual-processing/representation theory claim that intuitive God concepts are based on innate person templates and hence more relevant to believers, and that a religion that overemphasises abstract theological concepts will find itself reformed or become obsolete. One corollary of this is a frequent anthropomorphisation to metaphorically express the concept of God-as-human agent, often in contradiction to theological notions of the divine (Barrett & Keil, 1996). The Quaker pamphlets analysed in this paper indeed show a number of consistent anthropomorphic scenarios: God as the father and teacher of humans as well as leading, guiding and speaking to believers (e.g. *“there is one God and Father”*, 1841; *“The Divine Spirit is to guide in the transaction of church business”*, 1927; *“George Fox believed himself to be called of God”*, 1841). However, Quaker pamphlets also contain a number of other highly and maximally consistent domains which, while concrete, are not anthropomorphic. For the data under investigation then, Tremlin’s (2006, p. 5) contention that ‘the Christian god ... is described with human metaphors, thought about and interacted with as a personal being’ is only part of the story.

As we have seen, Quakerism shows an overall lack of an abstract theology but emphasises the belief that everyone has ‘that of God’ in them and can therefore minister.

Consequently, early preachers were often laypeople and sermons were improvised (Graves, 2009, p. 183). This non-doctrinal tradition means that ‘pinning down a single Quaker theology is not easy’ (Dandelion, 2007, p. 37). Contemporary British Quakers in particular are “a pluralistic group where theology is often kept private” (Dandelion, 2007, p. 145) and who “don’t spend much time discussing theology” (Outreach Committee, 2000). For pamphlet writers throughout the ages, the use of consistent metaphor domains and scenarios meant the same as for the early Quaker preachers, i.e. they helped them “avoid having to develop long, systematic, theological arguments” (Graves, 2009, p. 201) and instead provided a “metaphorical folk theory” (Jäkel, 2002, p. 35) of God and relations between humans and the divine. Gillman (2007, p. 117) makes a very similar point when he says that in the absence of a systematic theology, they established various metaphors for God – light, seed, master etc. – to express their lived experience of the divine.

Quakers, with their history of dissent, their lack of abstract theology and their emphasis on the immediate, ‘inward’ experience of God provide a good example of a religious society that seeks to reground Christian faith in basic concepts. The use of metaphor is instrumental to this aim: while some of the persistent metaphors have been ascertained for various faiths, they become for Quakers – and possibly other denominations as well - a prime device of bridging the gap between theological and intuitive representations of God. The remarkable consistency of metaphors in Quaker pamphlets across centuries is not only due to the metaphors’ embodied or culturally-entrenched nature but also shows how Quakerism makes God concepts intuitively meaningful and relevant, and thus provides an alternative to established Christian religion.

Combining discourse analysis and cognitive semantics, this paper has contributed to the study of metaphor in religious discourse, showing metaphor consistency in Quaker pamphlets from the mid-17th to the early 21st century. Beyond that, it has also offered a model

of metaphor consistency in discourse which can be applied to diachronic and synchronic comparisons. Finally, the article has drawn on the cognitive science of religion to offer an explanation for the remarkable consistency of metaphor in Quaker discourse. To gain further evidence, future research will have to address synchronic metaphor use across Quaker discourse communities in various cultural contexts, and, crucially, ascertain whether other denominations and faiths that focus more on abstract theology show less metaphor consistency.

Acknowledgements

My heartfelt thanks go to my Quaker friends Laura and Leslie Jones, at whose house I could finish this paper.

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Notes

¹ The implications of the cognitive science of religion for the belief in God have been discussed by Leech & Visala (2011) and Masson (2014). The latter provides an extensive discussion of metaphor and conceptual blending theory.

² http://www.fwccamericas.org/publications/images/fwcc_map_2007_sm.gif

³ I am here equating small but important differences in belief as shown in the writings of Quakers of different times.

⁴ A rather more mundane explanation is advanced by Moore (2000, p. 81), namely that metaphorically referring to Christ as the Light offered early Quakers protection from blasphemy charges.

⁵ In the following, the five central texts listed above will be referenced by the year of their publication only. Other data sources will be referenced in the usual way. Quotes from early

texts retain the original spelling and capitalisation but omit italicisation to avoid confusion with the format of metaphor domains.

⁶ Additional clusters of “*LIGHT*” and “*VOICE*”, “*VOICE*” and “*JOURNEY*”, “*VOICE*” and “*SEED*”, and “*LIGHT*” and “*SEED*” have been noted in the discourse of early Quakers (Graves, 2009, pp. 194 and 196; Creasey, 1962, p. 12), although these are not present in any of the data analysed for this paper, at least not on the level of the clause.

⁷ To complicate matters further, the word λόγος in John 1:1 (Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος) is translated as ‘word’ in both the King James Bible and the New International version, equating God with the word.

⁸ For a blending theory account of the “*FATHER*” and “*KING*” metaphor domains for God, see DesCamp & Sweetser (2005, pp. 227-235).

⁹ For ‘heart’ as a symbolic metonymy with a metaphoric function in religious discourse, see Nørager (1999).