

Direction Metaphors in English

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Geographical direction is a scientific reality, but human perception varies. One strand of the *Cognitive Toponymy* Research Network (2014-2016) explores ways in which place-names reflect the ‘mental compass’ used by individual speech communities to orientate themselves in space. Building on this, the present paper draws on another project, *Mapping Metaphor with the Historical Thesaurus* (2012-2015), which has produced a freely-available, interactive online Map of metaphor throughout the history of the English language.

This presentation will demonstrate the online resource, and offer an analysis of direction metaphors. The Map divides semantic space into 415 categories, organised under the three main Thesaurus sections of the External World, Mental World and Social World. Category 1L07 ‘Direction’ has metaphorical links with 38 other semantic categories in Old English, and over 70 in later English. In many instances, it is the source category, as with 1I13 ‘Hearing and Noise’ (*up*; metaphor instantiated from Old English). In others, it is the target category, as with 1E08 ‘Reptiles’ (*serpentine, snake*; metaphor instantiated from 17th century). Some links are bidirectional, as with 1L07 ‘Hell’ (*nether, hellward*; metaphor instantiated from Old English). As with these examples, more than a third of all links are with other categories in the External World. Also numerous are links with categories in the Mental World, as with 2A05 ‘Psychology’ (*extrovert, introverted*) and 2E03 ‘Willingness and Desire’ (*backward(s), forward*). Fewer but still well-represented are links with categories in the Social World, as with 3D01 ‘Command and Control’ (*direction, well-guided*) and 3F05 ‘Moral Evil’ (*obliquely, tortuousness*).

Some direction metaphors contribute to well-known conceptual metaphors such as LANDSCAPE IS A BODY, LIFE IS A JOURNEY and TIME IS SPACE. Others were previously unrecognised.

Cognitive Toponymy: <http://cogtop.org/>

Historical Thesaurus of English: <http://historicalthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/>

Mapping Metaphor with the Historical Thesaurus:

<http://mappingmetaphor.arts.gla.ac.uk/>