

UNIVERSITE CHARLES-DE-GAULLE – LILLE III

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**DEATH SLANG PHRASES, "TO DIE" AND "TO KILL":  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH.  
(VOLUME 1)**

Frédéric DELEBARRE

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Directeur d'études et de recherches :  
Monsieur le professeur Fabrice ANTOINE

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5
<b>I. A STUDY OF THE SEMES LINKED TO DEATH.....</b>	<b>10</b>
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	11
I, 1. SEME 2: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF DEATH.....	16
1-1. CAUSES OF DEATH.....	16
1-2. CONSEQUENCES OF DEATH.....	22
I, 2. SEME 3: CULTURAL SYMBOLS OF DEATH.....	28
2-1. POSITIVE SYMBOLS OF DEATH.....	28
2-2. NEGATIVE SYMBOLS OF DEATH.....	31
2-3. NEUTRAL SYMBOLS OF DEATH.....	34
2-4. DEATH IS THE END.....	37
I, 3. SEME 1: STATE OF THE BODY.....	43
3-1. POSITION OF THE DEAD BODY.....	43
3-2. INACTIVITY OF THE DEAD BODY.....	44
3-3. TEXTURE OF THE DEAD BODY.....	44
3-4. LAST ACT BEFORE DYING.....	45
CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY.....	47
<b>II. ANALYSES OF TWO SIGNIFICANT FUNCTIONS OF DEATH SLANG</b>	<b>50</b>
II, 1. HUMOUR.....	51
1-1. COARSE HUMOUR.....	52
1-2. HUMOROUS VISIONS OF RELIGION.....	55
1-3. IRONY.....	57
1-4. FUNNY PERIPHRASES.....	58
1-5. FUNNY ELABORATIONS.....	61
1-6. DIFFERENT VISIONS OF THE SAME ACT.....	64
1-7. FUNNY EUPHEMISMS.....	65
1-8. INCONGRUOUS VISIONS.....	67
1-9. PUNS ON PRONUNCIATION.....	70
1-10. PUNS ON DOUBLE MEANINGS.....	71
1-11. RHYMING SLANG.....	72
1-12. BLENDS.....	73
1-13. VOCABULARY CORRUPTIONS.....	74
1-14. PUNS ON NAMES.....	75
II, 2. EUPHEMISMS.....	78

2-1. MERE ATTENUATIONS OF REALITY.....	79
2-2. VISIONS OF THE LAST ACT BEFORE DYING.....	80
2-3. POSITIVE VISIONS OF DEATH.....	82
2-4. NEUTRAL VISIONS OF DEATH.....	83
2-5. DEATH IS DARKNESS.....	84
2-6. DEATH IS A TRANSITION.....	85
2-7. DEATH IS NOT THE END.....	86
2-8. DEATH IS GIVING UP.....	87
2-9. DEATH IS DEPARTURE.....	89
2-10. DEATH IS ABSENCE.....	90
2-11. DEATH IS ISOLATION.....	92
2-12. DEATH IS THE END OF LIFE.....	93
2-13. DEATH IS THE END OF A JOB.....	94
2-14. DEATH IS THE END OF NEEDS.....	95
2-15. DEATH IS THE END OF FUNCTIONING.....	96
2-16. DEATH IS THE END OF ACTIVITY.....	97
2-17. DEATH IS THE END OF ORDINARY ACTIVITIES.....	98
CONCLUSION.....	102
SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	105

## INTRODUCTION

“Death is nature’s way of telling you to slow down.”

Anonymous wise person

Although my final subject – slang and colloquial expressions related to death – was not my first choice (I was interested in witchcraft), when Professor Fabrice Antoine hinted at death slang amid some other ideas for those who did not know what subject to choose yet, all of a sudden it became clear this would be mine.

Since my teenage years, I have been fascinated by death. How would I not? Death: something no one really knows or understands. Yet something everybody will undergo sometimes.

Death fascinates me, and I love humour, especially puns. Therefore, when I saw the opportunity to study death slang – that is a kind of language that mostly uses puns – which would be related to one of my biggest fascinations – I could not help but be seduced by the idea and asked Professor Antoine if I could take the subject.

I was delighted when he answered positively and following his advice, I read some books about slang to accustom myself to it. Slang has its own vocabulary. However, this big set of words is not enough to make a full language out of slang. Indeed, except for its few syntactic variations, jive talk uses the syntactic and grammatical rules of the language it originates from.

Moreover, it is not very common to hear more than two or three slang terms in a single sentence. The rest of the sentence is often everyday language easily understood by anybody.

Generally, slang vocabulary appears and develops following semantic matrices, which bring to the fore a few senses that are common to the everyday word (not colloquial) and to the mirror word, which becomes slang because of its change of meaning. There are several ways to generate slang words. Metaphors, suffixations, metonymies are some of them.

Yet what is really interesting is the reason why these words are created. At the beginning – that is probably during the Middle Ages – slang was conceived and used only by criminals. It was a way to talk in front of people without being understood. Therefore, slang had a cryptic function.

After a while, this language of criminals began to be used and formed by another sort of group. As a matter of fact, the people who were doing the same jobs generated their own terms. They did so because the tools they used were very specific, and in order not to be understood by customers too. Here the functions were cryptic again but also practical.

Besides, slang has another function, which is affective. Indeed, criminals as well as workers have feelings and slang was and still is a way to express their feelings as well as to encrypt their speeches. More than just an encryption device, slang can be used to give a point of view on the action described. This probably is the function that made it possible for slang to cross social barriers.

Today, slang is no longer the exclusive language of criminals, or even that of a particular job. One can hear the same slang term pronounced by a criminal, a police officer or a minister. Therefore the cryptic function, which is still present but to a far less important extent, is not sufficient to account for the existence of slang

anymore. Slang has become a way to distinguish oneself from the rest of society by claiming to belong to a social, cultural or ethnic group. But as was stated before, the cryptic function is less and less efficient, especially because of the media that have slang terms circulate very rapidly throughout all social groups. Therefore, slang nowadays is essentially an indicator of how the person using it wants to be perceived. Every Anglophone knows today that “to whack” someone is to kill them, as every French person knows that “crever” means to die. Yet some people will not use these terms whereas others will choose them on purpose.

To this function, another one could be added, which is a playful function. I wrote at the beginning of this introduction that slang used puns frequently, which is true. Humour is present in many slang phrases, and death slang is not an exception. Therefore, humour in death slang will be studied in the second part of this mémoire.

The second part should deal with euphemisms as well because they represent a big part too. In fact, the second part of the mémoire is to be divided into two parts: an analysis of humour in death slang, and an analysis of euphemisms in death slang. These two analyses should reveal interesting conclusions about the way both functions of death slang (the playful and the minimising functions) work.

Another aim of this mémoire is to find out whether all the slang expressions meaning “to die” or “to kill” are perfectly synonymous, which would seem explainable if encryption was the only goal – but then why should so many expressions with the same meaning have been generated?; or is slang a way to make a meaning clearer – death in our case – by adding a point of view to the idea contained in the standard term? It would also be interesting to know if English and French have the same use of slang. But before comparing their slang expressions, let us see if there are any differences between the visions they have of death.

Looking up the word “death” in dictionaries, you can find this definition: “the act of dying; the end of life; the total and permanent cessation of all the vital functions of an organism” (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*). Other dictionaries give approximately the same definition, including French ones; for instance *Le Petit Larousse en couleurs* reads: “Cessation complète et définitive de la vie” which is very close to the English definition. The verb “to die” and its French translation “mourir” also have the same definition: “to stop living”. Therefore, both languages seem to view death the same way. However, a notable difference can be found in the definitions of “to kill” and “tuer”. Indeed, English dictionaries give this: “to deprive of life: put to death” (*Webster’s New Encyclopedic Dictionary*), if not with the same words, at least with the same idea conveyed. As for French dictionaries, they add a notion that cannot be put aside: violence. In French, “tuer” means “faire mourir (qqn) de mort violente” (to make somebody die from violent death) (*Le Nouveau Petit Robert*), and this in all the dictionaries consulted. French-speakers always associate killing with violence, whereas the Anglophones just view death in the verb “to kill”. This raises some questions: are French people of a more violent nature than English-speaking ones? Or are the Anglophones more reserved? And if they are reserved, could this be a motive for creating slang phrases expressing this lack of the notion of violence?

Besides, in both cultures, death is represented by a human skeleton with a scythe, which is called the Reaper or Grim Reaper (“la Faucheuse” in French); and by the same colour: black. The two languages view death as a person, hard-working because it never stops reaping, and ruthless because it spares nobody. The Reaper is an uninvited guest who comes whenever it likes and takes the lives of people. This vision of death illustrates the way slang works. It mostly uses concrete images to picture abstract notions. And what is more abstract than death?

Therefore, it is not surprising to find that there are many slang expressions to designate the image of death and the verbs relative to it. However, what is to be studied in this mémoire is not why there are so many terms but the visions they convey and whether English and French have the same ones. The best way to do so is to study the semantic matrices used by each language and compare them. This is to be the content of the first part of the mémoire.

Before trying to answer the questions raised above, I had to gather the corpus. This I did mainly by reading many slang dictionaries, both unilingual and bilingual (these are listed in the selected bibliography). First, I could only consult them at the library because dictionaries cannot be borrowed. Nevertheless, after explaining this to Professor Antoine, he made an arrangement with the librarian of Bibliothèque Angellier so that I could take slang dictionaries home. This helped me a lot because it simplified my schedule.

Not very long after I had begun my research, I realised how important the corpus would be and decided to focus on two verbs relative to death: “to die”, and “to kill”. I stopped gathering other words meaning “corpse”, “cemetery”, etc. to concentrate on the ones I had chosen.

I also did some research on the Internet, but it soon turned out I would not find much useful information. First, there are not many slang dictionaries online because they usually are not free. Second, the ones I found were small, incomplete and sometimes did not seem reliable. That is why there are not many Internet sources in the corpus.

As I love reading and watching films, I kept a watchful eye on everything that passed before me during the two years of my writing and tried to give sources other than dictionaries as often as possible.

Eventually, this mémoire is where my research led me. The corpus is certainly incomplete even though I made it as exhaustive as I could, and the comparison may not always be perfectly made, but this is as far as I could go in two years and I hope it will enlighten people interested in this subject.

## **I. A STUDY OF THE SEMES LINKED TO DEATH.**



## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.

Before beginning the comparison, it should be noticed that there is a big difference in magnitude between the English and French corpora. As a matter of fact, the English corpus is composed of 998 entries (507 for “to die” and 491 for “to kill”) whereas the French one is made up of *only* 461 entries (189 for “to die” and 272 for “to kill”). This means the English language comprises more than twice the equivalent of the French language corpus.

This tends to validate the hypothesis made in the introduction that the Anglophones are more reserved about death than French speakers and therefore they need more slang phrases to speak of it freely, without hiding their thoughts about it.

Moreover, it is interesting to observe that “to die” tends to have more entries in English than “to kill” while French shows the opposite tendency. Apparently, French people know more ways to kill than to die, unlike English-speaking people. This shows a first difference of vision between the two languages. Indeed, if English-speaking people use more expressions meaning “to die” than ones meaning “to kill”, it implies that they have a tendency to view death through the eyes of the victims more than through those of the killers. It is the contrary for French people.

It is important to know that the phrases included in the corpus are not only slang and colloquial phrases, but also metaphors, idioms, euphemisms... To sum up, all phrases that differ from standard or formal speech or that express the idea of death indirectly or with an opinion on it. Therefore, here are the terms not considered in the corpus; it is interesting to notice that they have no seme in common with the death slang phrases depicted in the corpus, which tends to show that slang is partly used to give a point of view that does not appear in standard language. Indeed, the following verbs only designate the fact that someone is dead and sometimes the way they died, without any explicit nor implicit commentary:

- in English, for “stop living”:

die  
perish  
drown  
suffocate

- in French, for “stop living”:

décéder  
mourir  
périr  
succomber  
trépasser  
se noyer  
étouffer

- in English, for “make somebody or something die”:

kill  
assassinate  
slay  
asphyxiate  
strangle  
choke  
hang  
behead  
guillotine  
drown  
poison  
shoot (with a gun, arrow...)

- in French, for “make somebody or something die”:

tuer

assassiner

occire

exécuter

exterminer

asphyxier

étouffer

étrangler

pendre

guillotiner

décapiter

empoisonner

foudroyer

noyer

pourfendre

I would like to add that I do not make any distinction between slang phrases in the corpus regarding the degree of colloquialism. Thus I have neutralised all indications like *colloquial*, *popular*, *familiar*, etc. I have done so because I do not find them relevant as their degree changes in time and according to what people you take them from. As for dictionaries, both English and French ones are very vague about this. And when they are not, they strengthen my conclusion that it is purely subjective because they do not share their visions with other dictionaries. As a matter of fact, even the definitions given for these different terms are vague: “popular” is a language used by the people – as was stated in the introduction, people nowadays can use the same words whether they are rich or poor – “colloquial” is used in conversation but not in formal speech or writing, and “familiar” is a language commonly used in conversation but that can be perceived as incongruous in some formal conversation. Thus the differences between these terms can only be made subjectively.

I think people should not be afraid of words, including slang words. They are a way of expressing oneself. The more words a language has, the more precisely one can make oneself understood. George Orwell illustrated it brilliantly in *1984*<sup>1</sup>. In the society depicted in this novel, Big Brother, which stands for the government, eradicates as many words as he can

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<sup>1</sup> *1984*, by George Orwell (1949).

from the language, especially words designating emotions. By doing that, he prevents people from expressing their emotions, and what cannot be expressed finally cannot be thought of.

In both English and French corpora, semantic matrices are present. They have been divided into three categories, which coincide with the arrangement of the semes of the corpus. However, it should not be forgotten that for a part of the corpus one cannot ignore, no seme – at least no relevant one – was found. To be precise, 247 phrases in English (i.e. 25%) and 118 phrases in French (i.e. 26%) have no seme. This means the following commentaries only analyse the rest (i.e. 75% of the English corpus and 74% of the French one<sup>2</sup>).

The most recurrent semantic matrices are those corresponding to “seme 2”, which includes all expressions designating the dying or killing acts through their causes or consequences (46% of the English corpus and 47% of the French one). This shows that both languages have a tendency to view death, an abstract thing no one really knows or understands, through concrete situations: what precedes or what follows it. This should prove to be recurrent with slang. As a matter of fact, people tend to express things more concretely in slang than in standard language, because it helps them view what has happened in their minds. You cannot picture the verb “to die”, but you can with the phrases “to take an earth-bath”, or “to step off the carpet”.

What is more, one may like to know that the causes of death found in the slang phrases under study are only unnatural ones<sup>3</sup>. It certainly is because most of the phrases containing semes of cause describe a killing. Therefore it cannot be a natural death.

The other two categories are practically identical regarding their quantitative importance. The semantic matrices relative to “seme 3”, which contains all expressions designating the dying or killing acts through the cultural symbols of death they are associated with come second (27% of the English corpus and 22% of the French one).

It could be said that these visions of death are abstract for indeed cultural symbols of death are abstract ideas. Yet, they are expressed by concrete actions. For instance “to take the last jump” illustrates the notion of transition and “to be promoted” the notion of reward. Thus these expressions eventually appear to be grounded on very concrete visions of death.

As for the semantic matrices linked to “seme 1”, which rounds up all expressions designating the dying or killing acts through the state of the body, they are in the last position, although they are not far behind the preceding ones (11% of the English corpus and 9% of the French one).

These expressions are definitely based on concrete visions of death. Indeed, what would be more concrete than senses? The ones in use for the corpus are hearing (for instance in “to croak”, the speaker hears the dying person), touch (for instance in “to be stiff”, the speaker has to touch the dead person to know (s)he is dead) and sight (for instance in “to go tits-up”, the speaker sees the dead person “tits-up”).

After a first look at the two corpora, it appears that English and French have approximately the same amount of expressions for each group of semantic matrices. It seems to point to a resemblance between them. A closer look will show whether this similitude goes further.

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<sup>2</sup> The percentages given afterwards are not wrong. The reason why their addition makes more than respectively 75% and 74% is that some expressions can have several semes (for instance “to go to one’s last home” has three semes: “place” (seme 2), “eternity” and “end” (seme 3)). Therefore this expression is part of both seme 2 semantic matrices and seme 3 semantic matrices.

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<sup>3</sup> See the introduction to the corpus in the volume 2.

## I, 1. SEME 2: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF DEATH<sup>4</sup>.

As was stated before, semantic matrices corresponding to “Seme 2”, causes and consequences of death, are the most recurrent in both English and French corpora with respectively 46% and 47%. Therefore it seems relevant to begin the study with them.

### 1-1. Causes of death.

“Seme 2”, as its title suggests, is divided into two categories: causes and aftermath of death<sup>5</sup>. “Cause” is itself made of four subdivisions (fire, heat, hit and instrument). The corpus contains slang phrases using the semes of the subdivisions, but also the more general “cause” seme itself, when the phrase is obviously referring directly to the cause of the death. For instance “to burn”, which means “to die electrocuted”, has two semes: “cause” and “fire”. The second one is easy to understand. The “cause” seme is added because death is a logical consequence of burning. It is the same thing for “to go on the rocks”, to die: “to go on the rocks” has death for a logical consequence. Whereas “to knife”, to kill with a knife, has the “instrument” seme which is a subdivision of “cause” but not the “cause” seme itself, for death is not the logical consequence of the original meaning of “knife”.

The semantic matrix using the “cause” seme in its general sense is almost as abundant as the whole set of semantic matrices relative to the subdivisions of “cause”. As a matter of fact, the “cause” seme is present in 16% of the English slang phrases with a type 2 seme as against 26% for the other semes being subdivisions of “cause”. As for the French corpus, it contains 29% of “cause” against 32% of its subdivisions. The English semantic matrix relative to “cause” has been active from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the French one from the late 15<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>6</sup>.

The difference is slight between the two languages and the similitude goes further. English slang phrases for “to die” with the “cause” seme are 5% against 26% for “to kill”<sup>7</sup>. In French they are 17% for “to die” against 36% for “to kill”. Moreover, English slang phrases for “to die” with semes being subdivisions of “cause” are 5% against 45% for “to kill”. French ones are 8% for “to die” against 45% for “to kill”. Therefore it appears clearly that in both languages the “cause” seme and its subdivisions are really found more often in slang phrases meaning “to kill” than in the ones meaning “to die”. This is not surprising regarding what has already been noticed about causes, that is to say that the semes relative to cause in the corpus are all unnatural. The most unnatural ways to die are to get killed. Indeed, it seems that in both languages, people associate the causes of death with a killing more easily than with a demise.

To this reason, it could be added that the “cause” seme is found in English expressions meaning “to die” from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and in French ones from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, while it is

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<sup>4</sup> The percentages given in this chapter are relative to “seme 2” only, except for the first ones (46% and 47%).

<sup>5</sup> See the introduction to the corpus (seme 1, 2 and 3) and the semantic table of statistics in the volume 2 for details.

<sup>6</sup> Temporal indications are not totally reliable insofar as sources did not always give the information. Yet this fact applies for the English corpus more than for the French one.

<sup>7</sup> The percentages relative to meanings “to die” and “to kill” are only relative to respectively the total of phrases meaning “to die” (with a seme 2) or total of phrases meaning “to kill” (with a seme 2) in each language.

present in English slang phrases meaning “to kill” from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in French ones from the late 15<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The fact that expressions meaning “to die”, in both languages, were created later than expressions meaning “to kill” – beyond the fact that this accounts for the difference in magnitude between the two meanings – shows that people have not associated the causes of death with “to die” as early as with “to kill”.

It was said in the introduction that slang, in its beginning, was the language of criminals. They were using slang and generating slang terms before all other categories of users of slang (specialized workers, social groups, etc.) Therefore, since the expressions meaning “to kill” were created earlier than the ones meaning “to die”, it indicates that these phrases were generated by criminals. This could explain the difference in magnitude between the two meanings. Indeed, criminals often view death through killings, because for them death is violence. Death comes through aggression or revenge. Thus it is normal that they should only create slang phrases for describing violent deaths, that is deaths caused by killings. When criminals die in their beds, in natural ways, they are not debated upon by the others. There is no need for slang terms, then.

There is a big difference between the subdivisions of “cause”, mainly because the most prolific one, “instrument”, has subdivisions of its own. Here again, English and French are close to one another.

The “fire” seme represents 4% of the English slang phrases with a seme 2 and 3% of the French ones, and has been exploited approximately at the same time in both languages (from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for the English corpus and from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century for the French one). It illustrates a vision of death that could be associated with religion. People view death through combustion, as in the expression “to blow to blazes”, to kill. “Blazes” represent the fire burning in hell. Thus people would – maybe unconsciously – make an association in their minds between the act of dying or killing and a sort of punishment which would be combustion in hell. This may seem a little exaggerated because some slang phrases using this seme are formed following the image of gunfire (“to give the fireworks” or “to torch”, to kill with a gun), nevertheless the unconscious image of hell may still be present, even though it might have not been thought of when these expressions were created. The fact that the “punishment”<sup>8</sup> seme is also used in some slang expressions confirms the possibility that people could have a religious vision of death.

“Heat” appears in 2% of the English phrases, which are dated from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and in 1% of the French ones (the only date, 1974, is from a primary source: *Le loup-garou* by Boris Vian<sup>9</sup>). This seme follows approximately the same idea as “fire”, except that the people suffering are not burning but very close to the fire. “To fly too near the sun”, to be killed, is a good illustration of that. Again, the image of hell may be hidden behind the fire. Where do people feel so much heat that they cannot bear it? In hell. And as they are dead, it is the only place they can be. One thing should be added: the importance of religion at the time these two semantic matrices were created was really bigger than nowadays, therefore it is not exaggerated to think most people had a strong image of hell in their minds when they thought about death. All the more so since the Church was spreading an image of God that was that of a punisher more than a forgiving one.

“Hit” can be found in 5% of the English phrases, which are dated from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and in 4% of the French ones, which are dated from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century and from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century (it can be affirmed that there has been a break of the semantic matrix in French between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The “punishment” seme is a subdivision of “negative” and is a type 3 seme.

<sup>9</sup> “Le loup-garou” in *Le Loup-garou*, by Boris Vian (1974).

century because all expressions are dated). It has been written above that criminals associated death with violence. This seme confirms this statement. A way to kill someone is to hit them, and the persons who speak slang appear to have noticed that. This is why they use expressions like “to crash”, “to hit” or “to knock” when they mean “to kill”.

Finally, “instrument” is distinguished from the rest with 14% for the English language and 17% for the French one. This difference, as was said above, is due to the subdivision of this seme. Indeed, the “instrument” seme itself corresponds to only 3% of the English phrases, which are dated from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century; and 10% of the French ones, dated from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. It appears as a seme only when the phrases illustrate the instruments themselves, for example in “to tool”, to kill, “tool” is the instrument used to kill. On the contrary, in “to die of hempen fever”, to be hanged, the instrument used to kill is a rope (“hemp” is a plant used to make ropes) and there is only an allusion to it, which is indirect. Therefore the “rope” seme appears, but not “instrument”.

All the expressions using the “instrument” seme mean “to kill”, which seems completely normal because the vision depicted by these slang phrases is that of the instrument used to commit the murder (“to gun”, to kill with a gun, “to string up”, to hang or “to black-bottle”, to poison). The examples given show that this process makes it possible for the speaker to give precisions on the way the killing was perpetrated without long explanations (it should be noticed that this process is also applied to the expressions using the “hit” seme). Therefore, these phrases might have been created so as to tell what happened quickly, rather than to encrypt the meaning. It is not a point of view that is given but a precise fact. It could be concluded that here the same process is used as that used by workers who are specialized and need precise words that do not exist in the dictionary to designate their tools.

The subdivision “projectile” of “instrument” totals 5% of the English slang phrases (4% for the “projectile” seme – dated from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to nowadays – when the image of the slang phrase is a projectile or projections of projectiles, for instance as in “to bullet”, to kill with a gun, or in “to baste”, to kill with a gun, because what is basted is bullets; 1% for “hole” – dated from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century – when the image is the result a projectile has made, that is to say a hole, as in “to perforate”, to kill with a gun; and 4% for “sound 2” – dated from the early 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century – when the image is the sound made by the projectile, as in “to pop”, to kill with a gun) and 7% of the French ones (1% for the “projectile” seme itself, dated from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century; 7% for “hole”, dated from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century; and none for “sound 2”<sup>10</sup>).

As for the “instrument” seme, its “projectile” subdivision and the subdivisions of “projectile” have partly the same function, which is to specify the meaning: for instance “to bullet” gives complementary information on the killing by saying the victim was killed with bullets. However, this is not the only function. As a matter of fact, much frequently the expressions using the “projectile”, “hole” or “sound 2” semes give funny visions of the killing act. See these two examples: “to give a lead cocktail” or “to let daylight into the victualling department”, to kill with a gun. They reveal another function of slang. Here the users of slang show an

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<sup>10</sup> Apparently, French speaking people do not associate death with sounds because there are four different semes relative to sound in the corpus and French only has 2 slang phrases containing a seme of this sort (“sound 1” and “sound 3”).



inclination for black humour. Actually they often use puns as slang phrases to designate actions. Therefore, slang has also a playful function. This should be analysed later on in the commentary<sup>11</sup>.

As for other subdivisions of “instrument”, rope is 3% of the English phrases, dated from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, (all semes being found in phrases meaning “to kill”, which seems normal because the rope is used for hanging (execution)) and none for French phrases. This lack of the “rope” seme is not due to the inexistence of hangings in France, but to the fact that French people did not assimilate hanging with ropes (“agrafer” or “mettre en perche”, to hang); yet it should be notified that the French corpus has a lot more expressions designating beheading than hanging (capital punishment in France until its abolition in 1981 used the guillotine).

Indeed, the French phrases containing the “reduction” seme, often corresponding to a verb designating a beheading, are 9% – dated from the late 15<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century – whereas they are only 2% in English – dated from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These two semantic matrices which refer to hanging and beheading appear to have been active from an early time. This reflects the fact that the two ways of killing they describe are the oldest ones. “To look through a hempen window”, to be hanged, is one of many examples using the “rope” seme that can be given, and shows that humour has been present in slang phrases from an early time (this expression is dated from about 1625).

Taking a global look at the semes relative to “cause”, one should bear in mind that they are mainly found in phrases meaning “to kill”. This seems to indicate that most of these phrases were generated by criminals. Besides, except for little differences, the English and French corpora are alike for what concerns the “cause” seme and its subdivisions, including the periods of activity of their semantic matrices.

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<sup>11</sup> See the analysis of humour in death slang (II, 1).

## 1-2. Consequences of death.

The semantic matrices corresponding to the “aftermath” seme or its subdivisions do not work exactly as the ones relative to “cause”. Whereas the English corpus contains more phrases with aftermath semes (48%) than cause semes (26%), it is not so for the French corpus (31% for aftermath against 32% for cause). Nevertheless, a similarity between both corpora exists, but this similarity appears to be different from the one found for the “cause” seme. Indeed, the expressions using the “aftermath” seme itself are much rarer than the expressions using its subdivisions. The English language contains 18% of slang phrases with the “aftermath” seme, which are dated from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, against 48% with its subdivisions; and the French language 11%, dated from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, against 30% with its subdivisions.

Besides, the tendency is reversed compared with the phrases relative to the “cause” seme: the majority of phrases using the “aftermath” seme or its subdivisions are those meaning “to die”. As a matter of fact, semantic matrices using the subdivisions of “aftermath” are 73% for “to die” and 27% for “to kill” in English. In French, they are respectively 59% and 15%. The same phenomenon can be noticed for the “aftermath” seme itself: 27% for “to die” and 11% for “to kill” in English, 19% for “to die” and 6% for “to kill” in French.

Therefore, it seems that in both languages, people view dying persons through the aftermath of their deaths. This is logical because when you think of someone who is dead, you see them in their coffins for instance (“to become filling for a casket”, to die). On the contrary, when you think of someone who has been killed, you see the way they were killed, that is the cause of their death (“to spill somebody’s blood”, to kill somebody).

One subdivision of the “aftermath” seme is disproportionately numerous compared to other subdivisions. This is the “place” seme. “Place” represents 37% of the English corpus with a seme 2 (expressions using it are dated from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century), and 26% of the French one (dated from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century). This means it is practically the entire set of phrases with a subdivision seme of “aftermath”<sup>12</sup>. Apparently, the image of departure is very frequently associated with death. When you leave, you go to another place. This is what is meant by the “place” seme as in the slang phrase “to go west”, to die. Death means departure. This is because when someone experiences the loss of a close person, they never see them again. Therefore this person might as well have left. This is in fact a kind of euphemism. One of the most direct ways to express it with a slang phrase is “to depart this life”, to die, which says it all.

In English, its “aside” subdivision (when you are dead, you are set aside the living), represents 5%, whereas it is inexistent in French. The latter does not see death as isolation from the rest of the world, but only as a change of place. When the English language created the slang phrase “to be behind the scenes”, to be dead, the French one only has “tirer sa révérence”, to die<sup>13</sup>. The French view the dead quitting the scene but do not picture them alone afterwards, maybe because they remember them and therefore do not consider them as aside the living. The Anglophones’ vision is far bitterer. Yet it is difficult to find a reason for this difference. English-speaking people may feel unable to express their fears of being alone in death with standard language and

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<sup>12</sup> 37% for “place” when the whole set of phrases relative to aftermath is “48%” in English and 26% against 31% in French.

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to notice that both languages use the image of a theatre scene. As Shakespeare depicted it in *As you Like it* (ca 1599), “All the world’s a stage./ And all the men and women merely players:/ They have their exits, and their entrances”.

therefore use slang expressions. It would then mean that the French do not. This would fill out the hypothesis that was raised in the introduction, that is to say that the Anglophones are more reserved in standard language than the French-speaking and therefore need slang to express their true feelings. What was thought about violence then would be true about the fear of loneliness.

The “disappearance” seme is also a subdivision of the “place” seme because when someone has changed place (that is when someone has left), they have disappeared. However, it is far from being as used a seme as the “aside” seme. Indeed, “disappearance” is contained in only 1% of each corpus (4 entries in English and 3 in French). Therefore, it is not revealing of anything. This seme often uses the image of an animal or person that has disappeared as in the expression “to be as dead as a dodo”, to be dead.

The other subdivisions of “aftermath” are not really important. “Burial” has only one phrase in English, two in French. Yet its “coffin” subdivision is a bit more represented with 16 entries in English (3%) and 5 in French (2%), both active from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This use of the “coffin” seme shows the same vision of death as that of “place”, that is through its aftermath. Actually, when one thinks about it, the fact of being in one’s coffin means that they have changed place. In a way, “coffin” could be considered a precision of the “place” seme, even though the subdivision of “burial” was preferred because it has a direct link to death (at least in English and French cultures). Indeed, it appears here that both English and French-speaking people use something that symbolizes death in their cultures (a coffin) to express the fact that someone died. Thus “to be six feet under in a box”, to be dead and buried, contains the two semes: “place” because the corpse has changed place and is now underground, and “coffin” because it is in a box.

“Darkness” represents 3% in English (13 expressions) and 1% in French (3 expressions). This seme exploits the idea that when someone dies, they are bereft of light as in the phrase “to go into eclipse”, to die. Again, it may be farfetched to think about religion here but in most English and French-speaking people’s subconscious, darkness is associated with hell.

“Judgment” is 1% in English and none in French. Therefore this seme does not bring much information about the vision of death. Yet it could be noticed that it refers to the judgment of God, therefore it is another intrusion of religion into slang.

A global look at the aftermath category shows that its semes are mainly used in expressions meaning “to die”. Differences between the two corpora are small. English uses three more semes than French, yet only “aside” is relevant because the two other ones (“burial” and “judgment”) only total three expressions. As for the dating, it is roughly similar for both corpora.

To conclude, it could be said that English-speaking people picture death more through its consequences than through its causes, yet the English corpus uses more different views of causes than of consequences. As for French people, they have quite the same amount of phrases for both views; however the same phenomenon about the quantity of views in each picture (cause and consequence) is present. Apart from small differences, both corpora are alike. They have approximately the same percentages of semes used and the semantic matrices were operative at nearly the same period.

It is also important to remember that the “cause” seme and its subdivisions are used mainly in the expressions meaning “to kill”, whereas the “aftermath” seme and its subdivisions are used mainly in the phrases meaning “to die”. This is because when someone is killed, people think of the way they were killed, that is the

cause of their death. On the contrary, when someone dies, people think of the result, that is the state in which the dead person is afterwards: the consequence of their death.

It is known that slang was at first the language of criminals and these people associate death with the violence of killing. What is more, they do not need to encrypt their talking when they speak about natural death. Therefore they are likely to have created most of the expressions containing the “cause” seme or its subdivisions, but not many of the expressions with the “aftermath” seme or its subdivisions.

The study of seme 2 also enlightens us about the religious vision of death illustrated in some slang expressions. Indeed, this vision appears to be present in both causes and consequences of death. The “fire” seme partakes of this vision. It alludes to the combustion undergone in hell, as well as the “heat” seme. Moreover, maybe the “darkness” seme and more certainly the “judgment” seme also refer to religion. Darkness is opposed to the light of God, and the judgment hinted at in the slang phrases is that of God Himself. This presence of religion is not surprising at all in death slang. As a matter of fact, they are alike insofar as they both point to an unknown world. Besides, the cultures of both languages under study have always been very marked by religion.

The introduction explained that criminals were the first to use slang and that their reason was encryption. However, this study has shown that it was not the only reason, even for them. Indeed, criminals are some sort of specialized workers. They are specialized in crime, and therefore partly in killing. Some slang expressions illustrate this specialization by giving precisions on the way the criminals killed their victims. These expressions show that criminals used the same process as – let us say more conventional – specialized workers, that is using slang terms to designate their actions precisely rather than circumlocutions.

Some hints were also made at the playful function of slang. Nevertheless, it will not be discussed here because it is to be dealt with in the second part of this *mémoire*.

Death can be viewed by people as a departure. This is another vision shared by the users of both languages. By its very essence, this vision can only be euphemistic. Speaking of the death of someone by saying they have changed place is a way to minimise the loss caused by this demise, a way of saying “I don’t see them but that doesn’t mean they don’t exist anymore.”

This really contrasts with one of the reasons why the Anglophones may have many more slang phrases designating the acts of dying or killing than the French-speaking. Indeed, if some people use the “place” seme as a euphemism, it seems that some Anglophones have chosen to give more precision than this seme does by using another one which is “aside” and which is really more pessimistic. The conclusion that might be drawn from this use is that English-speaking people are more reserved than French-speaking people when they speak Standard English. Therefore, they would feel the need to give their points of view on death by the use of more slang terms.

Finally, the study of seme 2 has revealed the use of cultural symbols to describe death (“burial” and its “coffin” subdivision). One might wonder why they were put in the type 2 semes whereas the type 3 semes are precisely those relative to cultural symbols of death. Firstly, they are also consequences of death (when someone dies, they are buried in coffins). Secondly, they jar with the other notions contained in seme 3 (cleanliness, punishment...). However, it is interesting to note that connections can be made between different types of semes.

## I, 2. SEME 3: CULTURAL SYMBOLS OF DEATH<sup>14</sup>.

The semantic matrices corresponding to “seme 3”, cultural symbols of death, represent 27% of the English corpus and 22% of the French one.

“Seme 3” is divided into three categories: positive, negative and neutral<sup>15</sup>. Another category exists, which is independent from the previously quoted ones: “end”. It is present in phrases also containing “negative” and “neutral” semes.

### 2-1. Positive symbols of death.

The “positive” seme itself is in fact very rare. It appears only in two English expressions and no French one. It is so because few slang phrases clearly indicate that death is “positive” (“to be content”, to be dead, and much more ironical “to do a fucking favor<sup>16</sup>”, to kill). However, they sometimes hint indirectly at this fact, by associating death with “cleanliness”, “escape”, “improvement”, “relief” or “reward”, which all are subdivisions of the “positive” seme. As a matter of fact, these subdivisions are more numerous: in English, they represent 15% of the slang phrases with a seme 3; they are 25% in French. Both parts of the corpus are dated from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The semantic matrix corresponding to the “cleanliness” seme appears 9 times in each corpus. Taking into account the difference in magnitude between the two corpora, it represents a larger part (9%) for the French one – which was active from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century – than for the English one (3%) – active from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This seme was clearly used much more for expressing the action “to kill” than “to die”. Indeed, the English slang vocabulary has 7 ways to say “to kill” with this seme against 2 ways for “to die”. As for the French one, it is 8 against 1. People see the execution as a way of cleaning the victims, maybe from their sins. Thus “to wash” someone is to kill them. It is difficult to say whether there is a religious dimension in this vision. Anyway, it indicates an idea of purification by the process of dying, especially when being killed.

Contrary to French-speaking people, the Anglophones use the “escape” seme, in 7 slang phrases, dated from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is not surprising that they should view this idea only in “to die”. A person who gets killed does not escape but is caught. On the contrary, “to die” can be pictured as a way of escaping problems, as in the expression “to cheat the gallows”, to die before their execution, a situation in which the dying person actually escapes their own killing. This underlines a dark vision of life. With this seme, slang users show that they do not view life as something good or easy. They see it as something they would be glad to escape from. In the example above, it is not surprising because what the dying person escapes from is death anyway. Yet, some other expressions like “to be slipping”, to be dying, illustrate the deaths of people in bad living conditions (this slang phrase is applied to a prostitute who is by dying escaping from her pimp).

As for the “improvement” seme, the French corpus is the one that uses it, in 5 expressions dated from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The vision expressed by this seme is close to that of “cleanliness” insofar as

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<sup>14</sup> The percentages given in this chapter are relative to “seme 3” only, except for the first ones (20% and 15%).

<sup>15</sup> See the introduction to the corpus (seme 1, 2 and 3) and the semantic table of statistics in the volume 2 for details.

<sup>16</sup> This expression is from the American film *Casino*, by Martin Scorsese (1995). This is why “favor” is written the American way.

cleaning someone can be seen as an improvement (the person is better when not dirty anymore). It appears 4 times in slang phrases meaning “to kill”, just once in expressions meaning “to die”. As for cleanliness, it seems that the victims cannot reach a better state, that they cannot be purified, without the *help* of their executioners. They need to be “arrangées” (arranged) or “rectifiées” (rectified) by someone else.

The “relief” seme can be found in 10 English expressions (4% of the English corpus with a seme 3) and 3 French ones (3% of the French corpus with a seme 3). They are dated from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and equally divided among the two meanings. This seme suggests that life is made of sufferings and that death comes as a relief, as for instance in “to be feeling no pain”, to be dead, which implies that the dead person was feeling pain before dying. The fact that the semantic matrix stopped its activity before the 20<sup>th</sup> century may partially be explained by the improvement of both modern medicine and the English and French-speaking people’s standards of living.

7% of the English corpus with a seme 3 and 8% of the French one use the semantic matrix relative to “reward”, which makes 19 expressions in English, dated from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and 8 in French, dated from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The English corpus has nearly twice as many slang phrases for “to die” as for “to kill” and the French one three times as many, which is logical for people will not easily view a killing as a reward, lest they should be the killers themselves as in the expression “to reward”, to kill (however, this is ironical). Besides, this follows the same idea as the “relief” seme inasmuch as death puts the dead person in a better situation than before. Nevertheless, it does not imply the end of a suffering, but rather a reward which often comes from God as in “to go to heavens”, to die, but not always (“to go for a burton”, to die, means to get a glass of Burton ale which is generally considered a reward after hard work).

The “reward” seme has one subdivision: “paradise”, which is not a seme but brings another seme that is called “sound 3” in this mémoire. This seme is only found in one expression, in French: “entendre chanter les anges”<sup>17</sup>, to die, and was quoted only as additional information.

Before studying the other categories of seme 3, it could be enriching to have a global look at the first category, positive. The “positive” seme itself is not very much used at all in slang expressions. As for its subdivisions, they reveal some interesting differences between the two languages under study. As a matter of fact, even though some semes are used by both corpora (“cleanliness” mainly used in phrases meaning “to kill”, “relief” used equitably for both meanings and “reward” mainly used for saying “to die”), several ones only appear in one language: “positive” and “escape” are used uniquely by English-speaking people, “improvement” and “sound 3” by French-speaking people. On the contrary, the dating of both corpora appears to be very similar for the semes they share.

## 2-2. Negative symbols of death.

The semantic matrices relative to the subdivisions of the “negative” seme are approximately as prolific as the ones corresponding to the subdivisions of the “positive” seme (24% of the English corpus with a seme 3 and 25% of the French one). The English matrices were active from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the French ones from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>17</sup> This expression can be heard in *Les tontons flingueurs*, by George Lautner (1963). One may like to know that the dialogues of this film were written by Michel Audiard.

The “negative” seme itself is just a bit more productive than the “positive” seme, with 4 entries in English equally divided among “to die” and “to kill”, dated from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and 3 entries in French only for “to die”, dated from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At first sight, it is astonishing to notice that people do not openly view death as negative. One could think that it is because people are scared of death or that death is so bad news that they would rather use euphemisms to talk about it.

However, when taking a closer look, it appears that indirect ways are not necessarily euphemisms, but always more concrete. Indeed, “to make the supreme sacrifice”, to die for the sake of others, has “negative” as a seme and is abstract because one cannot clearly picture a sacrifice, whereas “to liquidate”, to die, contains the “bankrupt” seme and is much more concrete. Here people can picture a business which is being closed and selling everything in order to pay debts, and ends up empty.

In actual fact, “bankrupt” is not used much in the corpus. It comes 3 times in English and twice in French. One should note that it is also part of the “end” category for a bankruptcy is the end of a business. The reason why this seme was not very prolific may be that people do not generally associate a human life with a shop, except maybe for shopkeepers themselves. Nevertheless, it already brings forth the notion of failure that is to be analysed very soon in this part of the commentary, because a bankruptcy is nothing else than a failure to have one’s shop working.

Moreover, the “bankrupt” seme is one of several semes that use a particular vision of death. Indeed, death is often defined as the end, the negation of life. Therefore, the images designating life are often used (or rather the opposite images of those depicting life), to designate death. If life for a shopkeeper is his shop, then death is the closing of his shop: bankruptcy. It goes the same way for “darkness”, which is opposed to light, “end of game” opposed to game, etc.

“Dismantling” is part of “negative” subdivisions too. This seme is only present in French expressions (17% of slang phrases with a seme 3), which are dated from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are a bit more than three times as many expressions for saying “to kill” as “to die” (13 against 4). This is because the dismantling is often the result of an action committed by another person than the one who dies. “Dégommer”, “démonter”, “dévisser”... This kind of actions can only be done by the killer. Even though practically all the expressions using the “dismantling” seme were created by specialized workers who used terms coming from their work vocabulary, it cannot be denied that the “dismantling” seme draws a parallel between the human body and machines. Actually, the expressions using this seme prove that the human body is seen as a machine, which can be dismantled. The dead persons are no longer considered as human beings with feelings but are dehumanized. They are just mechanical pieces assembled together. This vision of the person to be killed may well be a useful trick to forget about their humanity and kill them without hesitation or remorse. Indeed, these expressions seem to fit perfectly the speeches of killers talking about their *work*. In the end, they could be considered euphemisms, even though they sometimes convey strong notions of violence (“démolir”, to kill).

English-speaking people do not view death as dismantling. Yet they have other views they do not share with French-speaking people. The “worthless” seme designates one of them and is contained in 22 phrases (8% of the English corpus with a seme 3). The expression “to die in the last ditch”, to die in the final impenitence, perfectly reflects the idea of worthlessness. As a matter of fact, the dead person is seen here as completely

uninteresting, unworthy of any attention. Their importance is denied and they are compared to a dog, a log, a bedpost, etc.<sup>18</sup>

“Failure” is another seme unshared with the French language. Four expressions, dated from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, use this seme. “To muff it”, to die, is a good example: it illustrates the idea which is that of the dying persons unable to achieve the aims of their lives. It seems that for some people, death means the end of a useless existence dedicated to an achievement they could not reach. Thus their life is a failure. The fact that there are not many slang phrases with this seme may be accounted for by the dating which is very short for a semantic matrix.

The third negative view that is not shared is “end of fight” which was reduced in the corpus to the “fight” seme. As its full name indicates, it is also contained in the “end” category. This seme is peripheral because only one expression uses it, “to lose the battle”, to die, yet it is characteristic of the vision the Anglophones have of death: “to lose the battle” does not only imply the end of a fight, but also a defeat, a failure. To die is to fail and no one can defend themselves from death. Death is always the winner in the end. Therefore human beings are the losers of the fight.

The semantic matrix corresponding to the “game” seme (actually “end of game”) represents 8% of the English slang phrases with a seme 3, which are dated from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and 4% of the French ones, which are dated from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apparently, the Anglophones picture life as a game more than French speakers. “To be out of the game”, to be dead, is just one of many expressions which counterbalance the vision of failure that is really strong. Here life is seen as a game, therefore it is not that important if the game ends. On the contrary, it could almost be said that to win the game, this latter inevitably has to end. It is actually closer to a euphemism, even though it still is negative because the player is out of the game.

The last subdivision of “negative” is “punishment”. This seme is present in 4% of both corpora with a seme 3 (12 expressions in English, dated from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and 4 expressions in French, dated from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century). The seme is equally divided among “to die” and “to kill”. This is explained by the fact that the punishment can come after death (“to lead apes in hell”, to die unmarried) or be death itself (“to sanction”, to kill). It should be noticed that the “reward” seme, which is the opposite of “punishment”, is used in more expressions than “punishment” (18 English slang phrases and 8 French ones for “reward” against 12 English expressions and 4 French ones for “punishment”). Is it to say that in both cultures people view death more positively than negatively? One could wonder. However, it should not be forgotten that when counting the whole set of expressions, “positive” and “negative” semes are approximately the same quantity in the French corpus and there are more negative semes than positive ones in the English corpus. And for the “punishment” seme in particular, it should be noticed that it is used in very few expressions referring to religion. This contrasts with the seme “reward” and could account for the quantitative difference.

Taking a global look at the semes of the negative category, it appears that some remarks made in the short conclusion for the previous category, positive, can be made again here. Indeed, the “negative” seme itself is not much exploited. Besides, English and French have little in common in this category: the “bankrupt” seme is used by both languages, as well as the “game” and “punishment” semes. However, there remains four other semes which are only used in one corpus. “Dismantling” can only be found in French slang expressions, while

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<sup>18</sup> See the complete expressions in the English corpus (to die like a dog, to be dead as a log, etc.) in the volume 2.



“worthless”, “failure” and “fight” are absent from this same corpus but are contained in the English one. Therefore dating is not very useful for comparing the two languages, yet it appears to be approximately identical when provided in both corpora.

### 2-3. Neutral symbols of death.

The semantic matrices using semes of the third category, “neutral”, are 18% in English (against 15% for positive and 24% for negative) and 12% in French (against 25% for positive and 25% for negative). This mere information already underlines a difference between the two corpora. Whereas the English one has nearly the same amount of expressions for the three categories, the French corpus has half as many slang phrases using the “neutral” category as expressions using each of the other two. What is more, the “neutral” seme itself is of course not used because the essence of slang is to give a point of view, which is by definition subjective, therefore it cannot be neutral. This category was chosen only to contrast with “positive” and “negative”, and “neutral” should be understood as “neither positive nor negative”.

There will be practically no comparison here between the two corpora because the French corpus has only 12 entries for the “neutral” subdivisions. One of the Anglophones’ visions shared with the French-speaking is the “transition” seme. 19 English expressions use this seme against only 3 French ones. It is clearly more used for “to die”. Death is seen as a transition between two worlds, two places. This brings a correspondence with the “place” type 2 seme. As the state of the body is changing, the dying person has to “pass the gate”, “cross the great divide” so as to “reach the other side”. Thus it can be inferred from this seme that people believe there is something after death. As Bob Dylan sang, “death is not the end<sup>19</sup>”, it is only a transition before reaching something new, some different place. This notion is not a surprise when one knows the place of religion in English and French-speaking cultures. The body dies but the soul survives.

The semantic matrix relative to the “sleep” seme was used in 5% of the English corpus (13 slang phrases) and in 6% of the French one (5 expressions) from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Like the “transition” seme, it is much more used for verbs meaning “to die”. People associate sleep with death because a dead person is quiet and therefore can seem to be sleeping. Also, death is seen as “the big sleep”<sup>20</sup>, a state in which the dead ones will stay forever. For instance, the expression “to take a dirt nap”, to die, pictures the dead person sleeping underground. It is a form of euphemism often used with children when someone close to them is dead. As a matter of fact, someone who is sleeping seems very calm and peaceful, like a dead body – at least when it has been embalmed and prepared to be shown to the family. Actually, the “sleep” seme related to death is only the follower of the act of embalming and preparing the body to prevent the family and friends from seeing it as it was when the person died. This also is a sort of euphemism. A way of saying without words: your relative has not suffered, their body will stay clean and fresh forever, as if they were sleeping. Therefore, it is clear that this notion is firmly fixed in both Anglophone and French cultures.

One sleep subdivision, “sound 4”, has been catalogued with just one expression: “to fizzle”, to die.

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<sup>19</sup> From the song “Death is not the end”, in *Down in the Groove*, by Bob Dylan (1988).

<sup>20</sup> *The Big Sleep*, a novel by Raymond Chandler (1939), adapted for the cinema in 1946 by Howard Hawks, uses the same seme to designate death.

The “eternity” subdivision can be found in 10 English slang phrases and in 3 French ones. It is certainly not surprising to find this seme in slang phrases relative to death because as far as everybody knows, death is eternal. As a matter of fact, this seme can complete the previously quoted one, “sleep”. The big sleep is in fact an everlasting sleep. “To be called to one’s eternal rest”, to die, perfectly illustrates this idea. The dead person is going to rest, that is to sleep, and this is going to last forever. The followers of reincarnation could argue that death is only the beginning of a new life, yet the languages under study do not count many speakers who are followers of this belief.

The “inexorability” seme appears in five English expressions equally divided between “to die” and “to kill”. It points out the fact that every human being is sure to end up dead in the end. Therefore, the dying person “lose[s] the decision”, dies. Everybody has the choice to do whatever they like during their lives (even though they have to deal with the consequences afterwards), but no one can choose not to die. Death is inexorable and even reincarnation agrees with this because to reincarnate, one has to die first.

Most of the time, death comes unexpectedly. “Unexpectedness” is used only 3 times in the English corpus, maybe because the seme is not easy to include in slang. For example, “to die all at once”, to die suddenly, is almost Standard English. Moreover, even though it is a relevant seme, it is not the first thing people think about when they picture death. Besides, death does not always come unexpectedly, even though the deaths that are talked about in slang are often those that came at surprising moments.

The last neutral subdivision, “end of sport”, which is also contained in the end category, is anecdotal for there is only one entry using this seme (“to jump the last hurdle”, to die).

If one has a global look at the neutral category, one should notice many differences between the two corpora. Actually, it is due to the fact that French people do not use many neutral semes in comparison to English-speaking people. Thus, they share only three semes out of seven: “eternity”, “sleep” and “transition”. The other four (“inexorability”, “unexpectedness”, “sound 4” and “sport”) are only used by Anglophones. However, it has to be admitted that they are not much used (10 expressions use these four semes against 42 ones for the three shared semes). But that still makes a difference for French only totals 12 expressions with neutral semes.

#### **2-4. Death is the end.**

The fourth category of seme 3 does not work the same way as the other three. It has only one seme that represents the category itself: “end”. This seme is contained in 42% of English slang expressions with a seme 3 (dated from the early 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and in 37% of French expressions (dated from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century). It designates death by stressing the fact that it is the end of life. For instance, in the expression “to make one’s final exit”, to die, it underlines that the exit is the final one, that is the last. Therefore it is the end of one’s life.

As a conclusion, it could be said that English-speaking people have roughly the same quantitative use of the three categories of type 3 semes, whereas French-speaking people use the semes of the neutral category half as much as those of the other two categories. Is it to say that French is more subjective than English? As was stated above, neutral does not mean that the expressions using these semes do not give subjective visions, but

that these visions are neither positive nor negative. However, neutral semes are more general notions. Actually, they are the most spread ones in the cultures of the languages under study. “Eternity”, “inexorability”, “transition”... these death semes cannot be denied, whereas some positive or negative semes are more subject to debate (“cleanliness”, “relief”, “failure”, “punishment”).

Strangely enough though, neutral semes are not very numerous in French. It seems that the semes not shared by everybody are the most used. On second thought, this is not that astonishing. Indeed, slang is a way to give a point of view that differs from the majority or that the majority does not want to hear. Thus it is normal that ideas accepted by everyone should not appear so often in slang phrases. This confirms the statement made in the introduction about slang: that it has more functions than just a cryptic one. Indeed, slang appears to be a way of expressing oneself with words one needs but cannot find in standard language. Therefore, one has to create them.

What about the English language, then? Why does it use as many neutral semes as positive or negative ones? The reason that can be given is one that has been suggested as a possibility in the study of seme 2: a more reserved standard language. As a matter of fact, this would account for English-speaking people’s need to have many slang phrases using neutral semes. If they are not allowed to express themselves on these notions in standard language, then it is normal that they should use slang to do so freely.

Besides, several differences between the two languages were underlined throughout the study of seme 3. It seems that their cultural symbols of death are partially different. Obviously, it was what could normally be expected to differ the most from one language to another. It has already been illustrated that seme 2 showed only small differences between the two languages, which was not surprising because the causes and consequences of death are the same in all languages. Moreover, although seme 1 has not been dissected yet, its study is likely to show fewer differences than that of seme 3 because the state of the body after death is also the same in all countries. Contrarily, cultures vary from one country to another, and the study of seme 3, the cultural symbols of death, confirms that this variation exists between English and French-speaking people.

Nevertheless, some visions are present in both cultures. This is the case of religion, which has already been mentioned in the study of seme 2. Indeed, it appears to be a leitmotiv in slang expressions relative to death. Religion has influenced or even inspired a lot of expressions contained in the corpus under study. Actually, some semes practically contain the idea of religion within them. Some “positive” subdivisions are concerned: “reward”, for instance, often designate the reward of going to heaven. This is a very direct link to religion.

The “cleanliness” seme is somewhat more allusive. As a matter of fact, it can be assumed that this seme means that the victims – “cleanliness” is used mainly in expressions meaning “to kill” – are cleaned from their sins. Anyway, the notion of purification, which strongly connotes the notion of religiousness, is present. This reflects the behaviour of most people towards dead people. It is not rare to notice that when someone is dead, people have the tendency to praise them, even though they were not always appreciated during their lives. In actual fact, people talk about the dead in a good way, or do not talk about them at all. This is how a bad person who is dead can receive the most unexpected compliment. Jim Morrison, who was not only the lead singer of the rock band “the doors” but also a poet, wrote a few lines about this that sum up the idea very well<sup>21</sup>:

Death makes angels of us all

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<sup>21</sup> *An American Prayer*, by James Douglas Morrison (1970).

& gives us wings  
where we had shoulders  
smooth as raven's  
claws

A neutral subdivision also hints at religion. It is “transition”. This seme implies that there is life after death, which is the main element of religion. Indeed, people are promised rewards when they die (heaven). This idea that there is something awaiting them after death is of great support to most believers. All the more so since this something is claimed to be better than what they know when they are alive. Religion gives people a positive vision of death. This is probably the reason why there are very few religious references in negative semes, even for the “punishment” seme. Though this seme, at first sight, connotes a religious punishment, this connotation is rarely developed in slang expressions relative to death. People definitely prefer to view the positive side of religion’s promises. If people do not live good lives, they will go to hell. Yet, they would rather think about the reward they will get if they are good.

As well as this need to believe in something better after life, the fact that so many expressions meaning “to die” or “to kill” picture death as positive is not a sign of calm resignation or fearlessness. On the contrary, this vision of death implies that life is viewed as something negative. Life is so bad that it is pictured as worse than death. Therefore, death is positive. For English-speaking people, it is a way of escaping life. For French-speaking people, it is an improvement. And for both, death is purification, and was a relief. However, the latter seme is no longer used. One may hope that the explanation is an improvement of life. Indeed, people’s way of life in the countries of the languages under study are really better than in the Middle Ages or even than a century ago. Therefore, to predict a diminishing use of positive semes to designate the act of dying or killing may not be too rash. Nevertheless, it should not be affirmed because one never knows what other reasons languages could find to use them anyway.

Contrarily, it seems very unlikely for negative semes to disappear. However, it has been noticed that the “negative” seme itself was not used much. Is it because the languages use euphemisms? They do, but not always. Actually, slang gives concrete expressions to abstract notions and negative is an abstract notion, as well as positive.

Thus the negative notion of death is given concrete expression through several semes. The idea of failure, which is practically inexistent in French, is one of these. In fact, this idea is represented in three different semes. The “failure” seme itself and the “fight” seme (meaning end of fight) that are only used by Anglophones, and the “bankrupt” seme that is used by both languages. Confronted with death, people feel hopeless and assess their lives as pointless because they are to end. Thus their lives are failures, and they are losers.

Since the English language does not really share the vision of failure with the French language, it seems logical that the “end” seme should be treated the same way. Indeed, why is death thought of as the end of life? It is mainly because people are afraid of the fact that this end could come too soon, before they have been able to achieve the aims of their lives. Thus it is not surprising that these two ideas should be used by the same corpus.

It was explained in the introduction of this *mémoire* that French people had a violent vision of the killing act (their definition of “tuer”, to kill, is to make somebody die from violent death), whereas English-speaking people did not have this notion of violence in standard language. However, it is amusing to realize that while the Anglophones have a bigger corpus than the French-speaking (the explanation being partly that their standard language is more reserved) because they need to express the strong visions they have of death, the French speakers have created a *seme* of their own just to do the opposite. That is to say that they used a *seme* (“dismantling”) to minimize their vision of death.

As a matter of fact, the *seme* “dismantling” is part of a process of dehumanization of the victims. It is a sort of euphemism used by criminals to protect themselves from hesitation or remorse. Violence may still be present but it is all right because the violent act is committed against something that is not human, or even alive. Thus, the aim of this *seme* is not to emphasize the violence perceived in the killing act, but on the contrary to persuade the users of the expressions that this violence is not so bad.

The study of *seme* 3 has also revealed an opposition between two negative *semes*: “failure” and “game” (end of game). The latter is opposed to the former inasmuch as if life is seen as a game, then its end is not that important. “It is just a game”, as one would say, even though it is likely that a lot of people would gladly play another one before dying. It is therefore an attenuation, a sort of euphemism to designate death.

Another euphemistic process used in both corpora and firmly fixed in both cultures is the metaphor of death pictured as sleep. It has been said that this vision could be compared with the embalming of dead bodies and this is the reason why it can be affirmed that the metaphor of sleep is well fixed in both English and French-speaking cultures.

The study of *seme* 3 has underlined an opposition made by the “eternity” *seme* between the eternity of death and fleeting life. Indeed, emphasizing the fact that death is eternal reminds in contrast that life is fleeting. It may be an unconscious way to remind oneself that the day must be seized, because there might be no tomorrow.

Finally, two neutral *semes* used exclusively by the Anglophones appear to bring mere descriptions of death. These *semes* are “inexorability” and “unexpectedness”. The essence of their *semes* makes them very close to complete objectivity. They are often a way to specify the meaning (for instance “this death was unexpected at that moment”). At first sight, one would tend to think that this should be the case for the expressions using type 1 *semes* too. This is what will be analysed in the following part.

### I, 3. SEME 1: STATE OF THE BODY<sup>22</sup>.

Slang phrases meaning “to die” and “to kill” using semantic matrices relative to seme 1, the state of the body, are the least numerous, with 11% of the English corpus and 9% of the French one. This fact should be reflected on later in the commentary, for it is now time to study the semes themselves.

Seme 1 is divided into four categories which are not semes themselves but contain subdivisions that are: “last act before dying” (with the “sound 1” seme), “texture” (with the “coldness”, “paleness” and “stiffness” semes), “position” (with the “horizontal” seme) and “inactivity” (with the “silence” and “stillness” semes). It can already be noticed that both English and French corpora have approximately the same distribution between their four categories.

#### 3-1. Position of the dead body.

The category ranking first in quantity is “position”, even though it has only one subdivision, which is the “horizontal” seme. As its category indicates, “horizontal” qualifies the position of the dead body. For instance, so as to “be with a garden on the stomach”, one must be lying, which is the normal position of a dead person. This seme is used in 46% of the English corpus with a seme 1 and in 38% of the French one. Both corpora show a use of the semantic matrix from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, a difference exists when taking a closer look. Indeed, the English corpus contains more phrases for “to die” (33) than for “to kill” (20), whereas it is the opposite for the French corpus: 4 expressions for “to die” against 12 for “to kill”. It is not that surprising because this seme does not seem to match better with one meaning than with the other.

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<sup>22</sup> The percentages given in this chapter are relative to “seme 1” only, except for the first ones (11% and 9%).

### 3-2. Inactivity of the dead body.

The “inactivity” category represents 34% of the English corpus with a seme 1 and 31% of the French one. English expressions are dated from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; French ones are dated from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This category, which is based on the fact that a dead body has no activity anymore, contains two semes.

The term “stillness” is used for a semantic matrix in the sense of motionlessness. A dead body no longer moves. The English corpus has it in 28% of its phrases with a seme 1 and the French one in 26%. “To stop”, to kill with a gun, is a perfect example of its use. The victim is stopped and will never move again.

The other seme of the category is “silence” and can be found in 6% of the English corpus and 5% of the French one. Again the seme has been created from the state of the body after death. Besides, it seems that “silence” can almost only be obtained by a killer for only one expression meaning “to die” uses the seme. Actually, it appears that people using the seme only view death as a way of making the dead person silent. Indeed, killers will “shut somebody’s trap”, but the victims will not wilfully “silence”<sup>23</sup> themselves. It can be assumed that most of the time the expressions using this seme have been formed by criminals who meant to make their victims silent so that they could not speak to the police or to their rivals. And the slang phrases for which it is not true at least mean that the victims were *bothering*.

### 3-3. Texture of the dead body.

The third category is “texture” and is composed of three semes, which are present in 18% of the English corpus and in 29% of the French one. The subdivisions of this category (“coldness”, “stiffness” and “paleness”) are equally divided between the two meanings under study.

The semantic matrix corresponding to the “coldness” seme is present in 14% of the English corpus with a seme 1 and in only 2% of the French one. The English expressions are dated from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and the French slang phrase (there is only one, “refroidir”) is dated from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. People use this seme because a dead body gets cold whereas someone who is alive produces warmth. As a matter of fact, the slang verb “to cool”, to die, illustrates the dying person losing their warmth.

The “stiffness” seme can be found in 4% of the English corpus with a seme 1 and in 24% of the French one. The difference of magnitude between the two languages seems to be accounted for by the dating: the English semantic matrix was active from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereas the French one was active from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and then again from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here is an instance of the use of this seme: “to be stiff”, to be dead. English also has “to stiffen”, to kill. Words speak for themselves.

Finally comes the “paleness” seme, which is also the state of a dead body but is only anecdotal for there is only one expression with it, in French: “rétamer”, to kill. What is more, the seme seems to be part of the idea only by chance, for the important one here is “improvement”, which is part of another semantic matrix a little more productive than “paleness” with 5% of the French expressions with a seme 3.

### 3-4. Last act before dying.

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<sup>23</sup> Both expressions mean “to kill”.

The last category, “last act before dying”, only contains one seme: “sound 1”. This refers to the sound produced during the pangs of death. Notice that here again, French does not use sound very much (only one entry). English has 16% of its corpus with a seme 1 containing this seme, which are dated from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Anglophones, contrary to the French speakers, easily picture death through the sounds it causes. Sometimes when a person dies, a gurgling sound can be heard coming from their throats. That is what is pictured in the verbs “to croak” or “to cark it”, both meaning “to die”.

Taking a global look, it could be said that both corpora are alike for what concerns semantic matrices with a seme 1. Nevertheless, some differences are notable: while the French corpus contains 24% of its expressions with a seme 1 having the “stiffness” seme, only 4% of the English corpus have. On the contrary, the English corpus has 14% of slang phrases with a seme 1 containing the “coldness” seme against only 2% for the French corpus. This shows that the users of both languages picture death through the texture of the dead body, but they use different semes to do so. English-speaking people think more easily about the body’s temperature whereas French-speaking people view the aspect of the flesh.

The same difference can be found for the “sound 1” seme (16% for the English corpus against 2% for the French one).

Another difference can be underlined about the magnitude of expressions meaning “to die” and “to kill” for two semes. In English, “horizontal” has a majority of phrases that mean “to die” (33 against 20 for “to kill”) whereas in French, it is the minority part (4 against 12 for “to kill”); and while “stillness” has 16 expressions for both “to die” and “to kill” in English, it has 8 phrases meaning “to die” against 3 for “to kill” in French.

As for the rest, it is roughly similar for both languages, including the periods of activity for each semantic matrix which are practically identical when dating is available for both corpora. Analysing the use of the type 1 semes in a more detailed way does not seem to be needed in itself because the semes used are very easy to understand. However, it is to be compared with the two other types in the following conclusion.



## CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY.

As a conclusion to this study of the different senses used in slang expressions designating the acts of dying and killing, several aspects of the corpus that have been revealed by the commentary should be considered so as to try and answer the questions raised in the introduction to this *mémoire*. Moreover, it is interesting to notice the existence of some notions conveyed by slang expressions that one would not necessarily imagine when only thinking about death slang in general.

To begin with, the study has shown that the slang expressions contained in the corpus are not all perfectly synonymous. Actually, slang is a way to specify a meaning, give a point of view, add or avoid a notion.

As was stated in the introduction, slang can be a lexical tool for specialized workers. Thus it makes it possible to specify a meaning without having to use several words. The commentary has stressed the fact that this process was not reserved to specialized workers. Indeed, criminals have used it a lot to specify how they had killed their victims. In this case, it appears clearly that the different phrases are not synonymous.

Slang can also be used to give a point of view. People choose to use a slang expression rather than another because they want to convey a certain idea that they have of the death they are talking about. Therefore, the phrase they have chosen has not exactly the same meaning as another one they could have chosen. For instance, if they use a pun to describe a demise, it will not have the same meaning as if they choose a euphemism<sup>24</sup>.

Jive talk is sometimes used to add a notion to that of death. Religion is probably the notion that is the most present in slang expressions relative to death. As a matter of fact, it can be added consciously to help the speaker in accepting death, or more unconsciously to connote the negative image of death. It seems indeed that negative religious connotations are more subconscious than positive ones in slang phrases. The importance of this notion in death slang is certainly due to the importance of religion in the two societies of the languages under study. Both English and French-speaking people have long been marked with religion, and religion is above all an answer to death. That is to say that when one believes in God, one is supposed to know what will come after death. Therefore believers are either reassured by religion because they know they will go to heaven when they die or scared by it because they fear going to hell.

To avoid a notion that is unbearable is also part of the functions of slang. When French people use the sense “dismantling”, it has been shown that it is in order to dehumanize their victims. This process is in fact a kind of euphemism. Reality is transformed by the use of an alternative vocabulary, making it possible for the speaker to turn a blind eye towards real facts (they killed someone).

Then, if English and French partly use slang differently, it is mainly because of their cultures. As a matter of fact, the biggest differences between the two languages can only be found in this category of senses. However, they are not really wide. English has the notions of failure and end of life; and French has dehumanization. But the two languages share the same main visions, even those born of sense 3: religion and sleep are the most representative. It is not so surprising because if death is seen differently by some peoples, the most striking difference would certainly be found between Western and Eastern visions. On the contrary, all Westerners share roughly the same vision of death. They have the same symbols for it, as was said in the introduction: the Reaper and the colour black.

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<sup>24</sup> Examples of both puns and euphemisms are analysed in the second part of this *mémoire*.

A hypothesis was made in the introduction on English-speaking people being more reserved than French-speaking people for what regards the standard language relative to death. Some arguments that confirmed it were found during the analysis of the corpus. Actually, this would be one of the reasons why the English corpus is so much bigger than the French one. They need to express their feelings through slang because standard language does not provide the adequate words. Then, this would also mean that French people are not more violent than English-speaking ones, but that they are more comfortable talking about it in standard language. The standard words catalogued in the introduction of the part I of the *mémoire* actually show that French has more standard ways of saying “to die” than English (7 against 4) and the same could be said for “to kill” in a smaller measure (this would explain why French has more expressions for “to kill” than for “to die” whereas it is the contrary for English).

Eventually, the study of all the *semes* used in the slang expressions meaning “to die” and “to kill” has revealed more similarities than differences between English and French. There are only some minor variations due to the cultures of each language. What is more, it appears reasonable to claim that the differences can only diminish in slang-phrases-to-be because the media tend to bring the two societies together. Besides, if one has a close look at the two corpora, one should notice that some recent slang expressions are really close to one another. Actually, some phrases even seem to be mere literal translations from one language to the other.

## **II. ANALYSES OF TWO SIGNIFICANT FUNCTIONS OF DEATH SLANG.**

## II, 1. HUMOUR.

“Analysing humour is like analysing a frog:  
you can do it, but the frog tends to die in the process.”

This anonymous quotation has always seemed true to me. Indeed, humour is always so subjective. The things that make someone laugh might not appear funny to someone else. Humour is sometimes so complex and sometimes so simple. There are so many kinds of humour, which are not recognized as so by everybody.

Humour is “the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*). At first sight, this definition seems to delimit clearly and definitely the scope of the notion that is to be studied here. However, who can tell with certainty what is funny and what is not? Is it the majority that can decide? If a joke makes only one person out of ten laugh, can this joke be funny? It seems as difficult to analyse humour as it is to delimit it. Some people find that the Monty Pythons are the funniest humorists in the world, whereas some others do not see what is funny in their sketches at all.

Nevertheless, the study of humour in death slang is the first objective of the second part of this mémoire. It was said in the introduction that one function of slang is a playful one. As a matter of fact, humour is regularly present in slang. Moreover, people love it. If someone walks into a bookshop and takes a look at the dictionaries displayed – unilingual as well as bilingual – they will probably see several slang dictionaries with attractive titles. These dictionaries are a sign that people nowadays are interested in slang. Some films also illustrate the fact that humour and slang get on well with one another. *Les tontons flingueurs*<sup>25</sup> is a perfect example of the humorous use of slang in French cinema. Actually, some of the expressions to be analysed are taken from this film.

Thus humour is present in slang. However, one could wonder whether it is also the case with a subject as serious and definitive as death. In actual fact, it seems that the creators and users of slang do not view death as a taboo subject. The contrary would have been surprising since one of the functions of slang is to make it possible for people to express their ideas, be those the coarsest, most irreverent or improper ideas. What is more, a great part of the creators of slang is criminals and death is something they are used to in their everyday life (this is also true for war soldiers and hospital workers). Yet, some questions remain: is the humour used in death slang a way of warding off death? Is it some kind of challenge, a way to defy death and prove to oneself that one is not scared of it? Or is it just the fact that no distinction is made between death and less lethal notions?

It could also be interesting to find out how humour is displayed in death slang, what stylistic devices are used and whether they always have the same functionality. What is more, knowing what kind or kinds of humour are used should be enriching. Therefore, the study of humour in death slang is to be done as follows: the expressions chosen to be analysed will be classified according to what kind of humour they use. Then they will be analysed mainly one by one.

### 1-1. Coarse humour.

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<sup>25</sup> *Les tontons flingueurs*, by Georges Lautner (1963).

The first kind of humour to be studied is coarse humour. Like many kinds of humour used to picture death, this one is often black humour. It is also one that can be found practically everywhere, but that one will not hear in what could be called good society. Indeed, this humour is vulgar and is not accepted by most societies' standards. Thus it is not surprising to find it in slang. Most of the time, the images created by coarse humour are very explicit and bring about a laugh mixed with disgust. It is actually often the fact that the image is disgusting that makes the hearer laugh. The following are some slang expressions using this humour:

- **to grease the track**, to be run over by a train

The body of the victim, who is run over by a train, cannot but let all its internal substances, including liquids, come out. Here, the liquids are compared to the grease used for train tracks.

- **to put somebody's pipe out**, to kill

The pipe stands for a tube of the victim's body that the killer puts out. As the previous expression, the latter pictures death in a really concrete and disgusting way. Actually, in these phrases, humour works because of the clarity of the images depicted. Indeed, one can easily imagine how a man run over by a train would be able to grease the track, or how a killer could put somebody's pipe out. And it is the very fact that these images are disgusting that makes the hearer laugh.

The corpus shows that French also uses this kind of humour. Here are some instances:

- **cracher dans le panier**, to be guillotined

Literally, it means "to spit into the basket". The idea is that when the head has been cut off, a lot of blood comes out from the headless corpse and is *spat* into the basket.

- **jouer à la boule**, to be guillotined

Literally, it means "to play ball". The victim is pictured as willingly playing with their head when being guillotined.

There are also slang expressions that could be classified in a kind of subdivision of coarse humour. It would be called lavatorial humour. As a matter of fact, it seems that the users of slang enjoy the humour that French people familiarly call "pipi caca":

- **to be gone for a shit**, to be dead

This expression views death through a purely functional and disgusting aspect of the body. As a matter of fact, a body lets all waste out when dead. Therefore, the victim is said to be gone in order to defecate. As can be seen here, the speaker could have chosen a less vulgar way to express it. Therefore, it is clear that this coarse image is not only used because it is the only way to picture the idea. The aim is to be vulgar.

- **to piss when somebody can't whistle**, to be hanged

Here again, the verb chosen could have been more polite: "to urinate" for example. This expression plays on the fact that when someone is hanged, they cannot whistle, yet as was stated before, death brings about the dropping of all waste. Therefore, the victim urinates.

This kind of humour also appears in French slang:

- **dégonfler sa vessie**, to die

This phrase would be translated literally by “to deflate one’s bladder”, meaning to empty it. This expression works on the same image of the dropping of all waste after death.

- **ébouser**, to kill

This term does not work as the previous phrases. As a matter of fact, here the slang verb suggests the flattening of dung on the ground. The expression is formed on the idea that the killer squashes the victim. Then the disgusting image of faecal matter is added in order to make the word funnier.

Apparently, coarse humour works on very simple images, completely devoid of subtlety. However, some slang phrases that use very simple pictures are not exactly coarse:

- **to burke**, to asphyxiate

This verb is formed on a funny onomatopoeia mimicking the gurgling of the throat. The process is very simple and can be found funny, yet it does not really sound coarse, though it is not subtle.

Besides, slang can sometimes even appear poetic:

- **to shoot one’s star**, to die

This expression compares the dead person with an evanescent shooting star. Such a vision is far from the previous ones and shows that slang is not only used in order to be vulgar or depreciating.

At first sight, coarse humour only seems to be a primitive way to have fun playing with the idea of death. However, the use of vulgarity is also a catharsis that makes it possible for people to release the painful feelings caused by the vision of death. The disgusting visions, associated with laughter, make death easier to deal with. The fact that people laugh about death gives them an impression of dominance over it. They feel reassured.

## **1-2. Humorous visions of religion.**

As was highlighted in the first part of the mémoire, religion is frequently present in death slang. Therefore, it is not astonishing to discover that some funny slang expressions refer to it too. Actually, it appears that these phrases often give irreverent visions of religion, which seems normal because religion is not meant to be funny. For all believers, it is a serious thing. Thus to laugh at it often gives a feeling of irreverence. Here are some examples of this humour:

- **to pay St. Peter a visit**, to die

In the Christian religion, St. Peter is the first disciple of Jesus and has been given the keys of God's realm by Christ himself. Therefore, he represents the guardian of heaven and is supposed to be the one who decides whether one can enter it or not. Then, "to pay St. Peter a visit" would be the consequence of being dead. This expression is irreverent insofar as it is meant to be funny and deprived of any respect. Indeed, the dead person is simply paying a visit to St. Peter as if he were a good *pal*. People would expect that the dead person showed more respect, if not fear, in front of the person who is to decide about their future situation that is to be everlasting.

- **to be gone to that great whatever in the sky**, to be dead

It is well known that heaven is supposed to be located in the sky. This phrase implies that the person talked about is gone there, and therefore is dead. However, it does not use the word "heaven" but a periphrasis "that great whatever in the sky". The reason why the periphrasis was preferred can only be the choice of irreverence. As a matter of fact, this expression raises the question of the existence of something that would be in the sky, "whatever" it may be.

- **to sprout wings**, to die

This phrase plays on a misinterpretation of the Bible. Indeed, it means that the person talked about has become an angel and sprouted wings, therefore they are dead. Nevertheless, in religion, angels are not former human beings but the messengers of God who instruct, inform or command human beings. They can also be guardians or protectors. Of course, it is funny to picture wings sprouting from the dead person's back. However, this last expression about religion appears to be less irreverent. It is just a misinterpretation of the Bible<sup>26</sup> that is common in people's minds, but does not seem to be an attack of any kind towards religion.

French slang appears to be more cautious with religion. As a matter of fact, no irreverent vision of religion could be found in the corpus. However, some funny expressions using religious references exist. Here is one of them:

- **entendre chanter les anges**<sup>27</sup>, to die

Literally, this phrase means "to hear the angels sing". As the angels live in God's realm, one can hear them sing because one is dead. As in the English expression above, the phrase is funny but not disrespectful.

For both the irreverent and the neutral visions of religion contained in humorous slang expressions, humour is not an end in itself. Indeed, the reason why people view death through religious humour is not far from the reason why they depict it through coarse humour. The humorous touch is as cathartic as coarse humour. As for the reference to religion, it is an attempt to hang on to soothing visions of death, by viewing what comes afterwards.

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<sup>26</sup> Angels can also be found in ancient Greek religion, Judaism or Islam. Yet, the Bible is quoted here because it is the main reference of Anglophones.



### 1-3. Irony.

Death slang is full of humorous expressions. Some of them are funny because they use irony. They are mostly expressions meaning “to kill”, which is completely and easily comprehensible for irony is often used by the persons who speak in order to mock their victims. Here are some instances:

- **to do a fucking favor**<sup>28</sup>, to kill

Of course, to kill the victim is not to do them a favour, it is ironical. By this process, the speaker (the killer or at least someone who views the killing from the killer’s side) mocks the victims by implying that they have such bad lives that they will be better off dead.

- **to put out of one’s misery**, to kill

This expression works as the previous one. The killer considers their act as being done out of kindness (ironically speaking). The death of the victim will be a relief.

- **to pay one’s respects to**, to kill

Here, irony is used differently. There is nothing said about how bad the life of the victim is. The speaker only indicates that the killer has respect for the victim. Of course it is ironical because the respects are paid by merely killing the victim. Actually, this expression means that the killer has no respect for the victim and expresses this fact with irony.

- **to throw a necktie party**, to hang

Of course, the necktie stands for the rope used for the hanging. Here, the killer is compared to the giver of a joyful party. The discrepancy between both events (the hanging and the party) produces laughter. The irony lies in the fact that one does not expect a hanging to be considered joyful.

The irony contained in humorous death slang expressions is actually mixed with cynicism. As a matter of fact, people using these expressions to designate the killing act show a cynical attitude. This way of picturing human beings as insincere and dishonest persons make them more comfortable with the idea of killing them. Moreover, humour again plays its cathartic role.

### 1-4. Funny periphrases.

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<sup>27</sup> This expression is from the French classic *Les tontons flingueurs*, by Georges Lautner (1963).

<sup>28</sup> This expression is from the American film *Casino*, by Martin Scorsese (1995). This is why “favor” is written the American way.

Many humoristic death slang expressions are funny periphrases. It is often the unexpected points of view on death that make these phrases comical, the fact that the speaker uses periphrases whereas it could have been said without one. Here are some examples:

- **to wear a wooden coat**, to die
- **enfiler un paletot de sapin**, to die

The two expressions are put together because the French phrase is the equivalent of the English one. Indeed, it literally means “to slip on a fir overcoat”. The only difference is that French is more precise about the wood used for the coffin. The periphrasis used here is simple: the coffin is represented by the “wooden coat” or “paletot de sapin” in French. Therefore, the dead person wears it.

Actually, there are many periphrases based on the image of buried corpses. Above was an example of the coffin. Here are some for underground:

- **to be counting worms**, to be dead and buried

When someone is underground, they are with worms and as they are in that place forever, they have time to count them.

- **to be with a garden on the stomach**, to be dead and buried

Again, the periphrasis represents the underground. As a matter of fact, in order to be with a garden on the stomach, one has to be underneath it, that is underground. The funny side of these slang phrases is not based on the periphrases themselves but on the fact that they are comical, that they bring about funny visions of the dead body.

- **rendre le cimetière bossu**, to be dead and buried

Literally, it means “to make a hunchback of the cemetery”. Therefore, it designates the hump made on the ground of the graveyard when burying someone. This funny picture is not that far from the English one.

- **to have one’s metabolic processes now history**<sup>29</sup>, to be dead

This expression plays on the fact that the body does not work anymore. Yet, instead of just plainly stating it, the speaker prefers to use this ludicrous image. The very choice of this expression shows that the effect aimed at is comical, and nothing else.

- **to look through a hempen window**, to be hanged
- **mettre la tête à la fenêtre**, to be guillotined

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<sup>29</sup> This expression is taken from *All the Words: Volume One*, by Graham Chapman (1989) and can be heard in a sketch by the Monty Pythons: “Dead Parrot”.

These two expressions show a similitude between English and French regarding the point of view chosen here to picture the death penalty. As a matter of fact, both languages play with the same vision: English compares the rope to a window through which the victim looks, French compares the guillotine to a window too, because of the frames that are alike, and the victim is said to “put their head through the window”. The periphrasis is now for rope or guillotine, however it is still funny because unexpected.

- **to be put to bed with a pickaxe and shovel**, to be dead and buried

- **to be put to bed with a mattock and tucked up with a spade**, to be dead and buried

These two periphrases clearly show that their aim is to be funny. They describe the way the corpse has been buried, enumerating the tools used to do so. The fact that two expressions exist with the same meaning shows that it was not created just to give a point of view different from that contained in “to be dead and buried”. Otherwise, only one phrase would have been sufficient. It is not in order to encrypt either, because the beginning of the two phrases being the same, when one can understand the first, one can easily deduce the sense of the second.

These two slang phrases also illustrate another tendency of humorous slang, which is to produce funny elaborations of one idea taken in a phrase using synonymous words like above, a periphrasis of the first expression or extending it. This is to be analysed just after the conclusion of the funny periphrases subdivision.

Obviously, the funny periphrases designating death have not humour as an only goal. Even the expressions that seem so at first, when looked from a closer distance, show at least one other purpose. Indeed, it is not by chance that all the phrases given as instances describe what happens before or after death. It is a choice of the speaker – maybe not always conscious – to focus on a moment that is close to death but that is not the very instant. Periphrases are a way to avoid speaking directly of death, in a blunt manner.

### **1-5. Funny elaborations.**

- **to kick the bucket from under**, to kill

This expression plays on the much more common slang phrase “to kick the bucket”, to die. The latter refers to a bucket in the sense of a “beam” or “yoke”, from Old French “buquet”, a balance. The bucket in question is used to hang a slaughtered pig by the heels. Yet, the elaboration of this expression meaning “to kill” alludes to the other possible meaning of the phrase, which is a bucket kicked away when committing suicide by hanging.

- **to buy somebody concrete galoshes**, to kill somebody

- **to wear cement overshoes**, to be killed

- **habiller d’un costard en ciment**, to kill

To realize how elaborate these expressions are, one has just to compare them to this French one, which means the same: “bétonner”<sup>30</sup>, to kill. The playful function of slang appears clearly in these expressions. The users of slang make the phrases longer on purpose, just to make them funnier. They do not really try to encrypt their speeches. Indeed, the sense of these phrases is not very difficult to understand. The victim has “concrete galoshes” or “wears cement overshoes” because they have been killed and put into cement so that there is no evidence left of the murder.

It is also interesting to notice that the French expression is very close to the English ones. Actually, one could wonder whether it is not simply a translation from one language to the other that is at the origin of this similitude.

- **to terminate with extreme prejudice**, to kill

This phrase is an elaboration of “to terminate”. The only aim of this precision “with extreme prejudice” is to make the expression funny because it neither changes the meaning nor improves the encryption.

The best English instance of funny elaborations is certainly the set of slang expressions inspired by “to dance”, to be hanged. As a matter of fact, the image of dance has been used many times in different expressions. It seems that Anglophones have spun out the dance metaphor as much as possible:

- **to dance a Newgate frisk**, to be hanged

- **to dance a Tyburn hornpipe on nothing**, to be hanged

- **to dance the Tyburn jig**, to be hanged

- **to dance upon nothing in a hempen cravat**, to be hanged

- **to dance at Beilby’s ball where the sheriff plays the music**, to be hanged

- **to dance at the sheriff’s ball and loll out one’s tongue at the company**, to be hanged

These are just some of the slang expressions using the dance metaphor. The picture is not difficult to get: someone who is hanged is aching and therefore “dances” because of the pain. Newgate and Tyburn are names of places where hangings used to take place in England. Beilby’s is probably a personified and punning perversion of “bilboes”, fetters. The rest is just for fun. The metaphor is spun out to the core, perhaps even more. The repetition of the same image, and further more the length of some expressions prove that they were not created to encrypt or speak quickly but to have fun while sharing the information of death.

These never-ending phrases are very common in English slang and there are some other examples of them in the corpus. Here are just some particularly interesting ones:

- **to keep sheep by moonlight**, to be hanged in chains

- **to keep an ironmonger’s shop by the side of a common where the sheriff sets one up**, to be hanged in chains

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<sup>30</sup> “Bétonner” is French for “to cement”.

The image is roughly the same in both expressions. The victim is hanged in chains and cannot escape. Therefore, they stay still for a very long time. However, the second one is much more developed than the first. This is not in order to give specific precision on the way they are hanged, but just for the fun of generating new expressions.

French also shows some examples of that kind:

- **emmener chez Belzébuth**, to kill
- **emmener au royaume des ombres**, to kill
- **emmener au pays des ténèbres éternelles**, to kill

These three phrases are taken from the same comic book by Peyo, *Johan et Pirlouit – La guerre des 7 fontaines* (1961). Literally meaning “to bring to Beelzebub’s”, “to bring to the realm of the shadows” and “to bring to the land of eternal darkness”, the aim of these expressions is to bring a laugh, as it is for these two:

- **renvoyer à la maison mère**, to kill
- **renvoyer au terminus des prétentieux**, to kill

They can be heard in the French film *Les tontons flingueurs*, by Georges Lautner (1963). Literally, they mean “to send back to the parent company” and “to send back to the last stop for self-important persons”. The former implies a flaw in the victim and the latter that the victim was too pretentious and that it killed them. However, the meaning in itself is not very important. The thing that counts is that these expressions sound funny.

However, it should not be ignored that if the elaborating process that has just been described appears too exaggerated, a very simple explanation can be given for that: humour plays a psychological role in people’s minds. Indeed, the example of the set of dancing expressions very well illustrates it: these phrases sound like mantras used by people to take fresh heart in front of death.

### 1-6. Different visions of the same act.

Contrary to funny elaborations that give many similar visions (see the dancing expressions), slang sometimes gives several different visions of the same act, as though it was a game between slang generators who compete to be the wittiest. Here are examples for the meaning “to drown”:

- **to make a hole in the water**, to drown
- **to take one’s last drink**, to drown
- **to feed the fishes**, to drown

The sense is the same for the three expressions. However, they use different visions to depict the demise. The first one just views the hole made in the water when the dead person has fallen into it. The second pictures the dead person having swallowed a mouthful. The third is coarser: it conveys the image of the dead person seen as food for the fish. Therefore, some expressions convey different visions of the same act, whereas others have the same vision for different acts. Thus the following phrase, which has the same vision as that of food for the fish:

- **to give the crows a pudding**, to die

The sense of this expression is not to drown but merely to die. However, it uses the same image of the dead person being food for animals.

Different visions for the same act or not, these expressions have the same psychological function as funny elaborations. They are generated in order to be funny, to play with words or ideas, and doing this makes it possible to forget or at least minimise the meaning hidden behind the funny expression. Laughter gives courage.

### 1-7. Funny euphemisms.

Slang is sometimes made of euphemisms. This is to be analyzed afterwards<sup>31</sup>. However, it appears that some euphemisms are funny. Here are some instances:

- **to cancel somebody's Christmas**, to kill somebody

The idea of this expression is simple: if someone dies, they will miss Christmas. Therefore, if someone kills someone else, they cancel their Christmas. This euphemism is funny because the image depicted is unexpected. Humour works here because of the discrepancy between the literal meaning (no Christmas for the victim) and the implied one (the death of the victim). Yet, one could argue that every euphemism shows a discrepancy between these two visions. Then, maybe the discrepancy is accentuated too much in funny expressions. Or is it just the hearer who finds it funny because the image sounds so to them? As was stated in the introduction to this analysis, humour is difficult to explain. Sometimes, you just know that something is funny but cannot explain why. Still, there has been a laugh, the only thing that proves the expression funny.

- **to tell the bad news**, to kill with a gun

The bad news told by the killer is in fact that the victim is going to get killed. It may refer to the particular situation when a killer is sent to eliminate someone. Therefore, the killer is a messenger. This euphemism, death only considered as bad news, sounds funny especially because people generally consider death so much more than just bad news. Here again, humour is produced by a big discrepancy between the literal and implied meanings of the expression. French also uses this process sometimes:

- **ne plus avoir mal aux dents**, to be dead for a certain time

This phrase literally means “not to have a toothache anymore”. Indeed, someone who is dead does not suffer from physical pain anymore. It could be added here that humour may also be prompted by the fact that the expression evokes a small detail compared with the implied meaning. As a matter of fact, not to have a toothache anymore is just one of many consequences linked to death.

All humorous euphemisms do not base their funny sides on the previously described discrepancy.

- **to die of throat trouble**, to be hanged

- **mourir de maux de gorge**, to be hanged

Both expressions have the same meaning, which shows a complete similitude of vision here between the two languages under study. The euphemism used for the hanging, “throat trouble”, is not funny because of the discrepancy but of the vision itself. The comparison between a hanging and throat trouble is what makes the phrases funny.

Some similarities can be found between funny euphemisms and funny periphrases. As a matter of fact, funny euphemisms sometimes also describe facts that precede or follow death. Besides, they sometimes depict

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<sup>31</sup> See Part II, 2. Euphemisms.

the precise instant of death, but they attenuate it as in the expressions above. Yet, humour is not necessary to the attenuation. Therefore, the characteristics of the euphemisms used in death slang will not be analysed here but in Part II, 2.

### **1-8. Incongruous visions.**

In fact, funny euphemisms are close to the next kind of humour to be analysed, which is humour caused by incongruous visions<sup>32</sup>. Indeed, what is incongruous is often the discrepancy between the description given in the expression and the implied meaning that is death. Here are some examples:

- **to become a landowner**, to die
- **to buy the farm**, to die

These two expressions use the same image of a person being the owner of the land *in* which they are for the first time when they are dead. What is funny is that one would not expect such a vision to be used for describing death. Moreover, the situation depicted is ironical: they have had to wait until their death to finally own land. However, now it is of no use to them.

- **to give the O-sign**, to die
- **to give the Q-sign**, to die

“O-sign” stands for the rounded, open mouth of a dead person. “Q-sign” represents the same, with the tongue hanging out like the tail of a capital Q. This funny, incongruous vision of the dead person is particularly used in hospitals, where death is common. Humour might be a way of coping with the daily vision of dying people. Thus, it is not surprising to find humorous expressions created by soldiers as well. See the following example:

- **to become a gold star in mother’s window**, to be killed

Usually, a soldier who is killed in war gets a medal. The “gold star” is one of the existing military rewards. As the soldier is dead, the family receives the medal.

- **to push the clouds around**, to die

In religion, the soul is supposed to survive the body and go up into the sky (where heaven is located). This expression plays on this and gets further in logic: if the soul survives and has to go somewhere, therefore it has to make place of its own. To make so, the soul has to “push the clouds around”.

- **to be now picking at the coverlet**, to be dead

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<sup>32</sup> Some kinds of humour intermingle, particularly funny periphrases, funny euphemisms and incongruous visions.



This expression also plays on the image of the surviving soul. Here, it is inferred to have become a ghost. Therefore, the dead person now being a ghost is bothering the living by “picking at the coverlet”.

- **to give a permanent wave**, to electrocute

The vision is that of the consequence of electrocution: the hair stands on end. Here, this is compared with a deliberately made hairdo called a “permanent wave”. Actually, a permanent wave is not meant to make the hair stand on end, but the phrase merely plays with the fact that the hair is changed.

- **frapper au monument**, to die

“Monument” is short for “monument aux morts”, war memorial. Therefore, the expression literally means “to knock at the war memorial”, in order to join the dead.

- **oublier de respirer**, to die

Literally, it means “to forget to breathe”. It is needless to explain that when someone stops breathing, they will shortly die. The funny thing here is that it is impossible to simply forget to breathe and die.

- **faire bâiller le colas**, to slit the throat

- **faire un deuxième sourire à**, to slit the throat

Literally, the first phrase means “to make the neck yawn” (“colas” is French slang for “cou”, neck); the second phrase means “to make a second smile to”. The pun is based on the comparison of the slit throat with a mouth (yawning in the first instance, smiling in the second). This is funny because it uses unexpected (and for the second phrase unexpectedly joyful) images.

- **piquer sa plaque**, to die

Literally meaning “to prick one’s plaque”, it alludes to the “plaque commémorative”, commemorative plaque, put on the grave of the dead that someone has to engrave by their own means. The image is unexpected. What is more, there is a funny alliteration in [p] and [k], which could explain why the expression was reduced to only three words.

There are many slang expressions using incongruous visions of death and they often intermingle with other kinds of humour. They also have the same function: to divert people’s attention from their built-in negative vision of death. Indeed, it seems that most of the time, this incongruousness causes a laugh. However, some people could fail to find some of the expressions funny. This is why only the funniest (let us hope!) were analyzed here. The kinds of humour left to be analyzed should be less controversial because even if one does not find them funny, it cannot be denied that they were intended to be puns.

### **1-9. Puns on pronunciation.**

Some puns contained in slang are based on the pronunciation of a word that is close to another one with a totally different meaning. Here are some examples:

- **to be diseased**, to be dead

The pun in this expression is obviously on the close pronunciation of “diseased” and “deceased”. The fact that a serious disease can bring about death is pure chance, nevertheless, it strengthens the relevance of the pun.

- **assaisonner**, to kill

The pun is on “assassin”, which is very close to “assaisonner”. This term also contains the idea of a hot meal, seasoned to get more taste, the meal being the victim and thus the killer being the person who eats them.

- **to be aged in wood**, to be dead and buried

The pun is farfetched. A *cask* contains wine, which can be aged. A *casket* contains a corpse. By analogy with wine, the corpse is said to be aged. As the coffin is made of wood, the dead person is aged in wood.

- **to be gone to Rot-His-Bone**, to be dead and buried

The pun is on “Ratisbon” and “Rot-His-Bone”, which hints at the fact that the bone of a dead person rots. Ratisbon is a German city in Bavaria.

- **to rest in pieces**, to be killed by an exploding shell

The pun is on the pronunciation of “pieces”, which is close to that of “peace”. The expression “to rest in peace”, from Latin “*requiescat in pace*”, is often used to describe the state of dead people or the state living people hope the dead are into. This slang expression could also have been catalogued in the coarse humour part, because the image of the body in pieces is realistically disgusting.

- **to be in deadly suspense**, to be hanged

The pun is on the close pronunciations of “suspense” and “suspension”, which alludes to the suspension of the hanging. The addition of “deadly”, which has a double meaning (“likely to cause death” and “extreme”) intensifies the pun.

- **to have a hearty-choke with caper-sauce for breakfast**, to be hanged

The pun is on “hearty-choke”, which is pronounced roughly the same as “artichoke”. The comparison between hanging and food is reinforced by the second pun, which uses the double meaning of “caper”. This one is to be explained in the next slang expression.

#### **1-10. Puns on double meanings.**

Indeed, some expressions play on the fact that some words have double meanings. Here are some instances:

- **to cut caper sauce**, to be hanged

“To cut a caper” means to dance a few steps. Therefore, this expression is one more that uses the “dance” vision to picture a hanging. The pun is on the double meaning of “caper”, which is also a flower bud used to flavour sauces, hence the expression “to cut caper **sauce**”.

Besides, it accounts for the presence of “caper-sauce” in the previous phrase. The artichoke is eaten with this particular sauce for breakfast.

- **to go cuckoo**, to die

The expression means “to lose one’s mind”. The pun is on the double meaning given to “mind”. As a matter of fact, the mind can also be considered as the soul. Since it is so, the image of the soul leaving the body can be used. Therefore, if someone loses their mind (i.e. their soul), they die.

- **canner**, to die

- **rendre sa canne au ministre**, to die

The first expression is not really funny. Yet, it accounts for the existence of the second. Indeed, the pun is on the double meaning of the word “canne”, cane, which in French slang means leg. Therefore, the person who “canne” leaves, that is dies.

The second expression is a funny elaboration of the first, still using the same double meaning, but moreover playing with the word’s standard meaning. Here the dead person gives their cane back because they no longer need it (the expression literally means “to give back one’s cane to the minister”). They cannot walk anymore. Death is no longer pictured as a departure but as stillness. As can be noticed from the corpus, the elaboration has brought about a change of sense.

### 1-11. Rhyming slang.

Another kind of pun, used uniquely by the English language, is rhyming slang. This particular slang mixes two functions: encryption and fun. Indeed, the expressions created by rhyming slang have nothing in common with their slang meaning. The only link to the hidden meaning is a rhyme. Here are two examples:

- **to be brown bread**, to be dead

- **to be loaf of bread**, to be dead

The phrases both use the same rhyme: “bread” and “dead”. They are the only instances that were found in the corpus. However, many other expressions exist with different hidden meanings.

### 1-12. Blends.

The following kind of pun was also found only in the English corpus. It consists of two words that are blended together to form a third one. Here are some instances of blends:

- **to extermish**, to kill

This is a blend of “exterminate” and “abolish”. The two verbs forming the blend contain the notion of “end”.

- **to oblivate**, to kill

This is a blend of “oblivion” and “obliterate”. The same remark as above can be made as for the notion of “end”.

- **to smog**, to kill in the gas chamber

This is a blend of “smoke” and “fog”. This blend uses two words conveying the same image: that of the gas used to kill the victim, difficult to see through.

- **to gasphyxiate**, to asphyxiate by gas

This is a blend of “gas” and “asphyxiate”. The two words blended together here are merely the words defining the new expression.

### 1-13. Vocabulary corruptions.

Another kind of humour creates new words or expressions by corrupting existing ones. Here are some instances:

- **to die of a hempen fever**, to be hanged

“Hemp” is a plant used to make ropes. Several English phrases use this metonymy to designate hangings. Here, a new expression is created with the word “fever” (indicating that the victim is struggling because of the pain) on models like “rheumatic fever”, “scarlet fever” or “yellow fever”. Of course, the “hempen fever” is not a real one.

- **être mortibus**, to be dead

This French pun is an amusing suffixation of “mort”, dead. This imaginary word is actually pseudo-Latin, maybe generated under the influence of “omnibus” or some Latin heard in churches.

Some of the corruptions that have generated this kind of puns were made in order to encrypt:

- **envoyer à Cone**, to kill

This is a pun on “cônr”, to die (in French slang). “Cone” becomes an imaginary town. This expression was made by (or at least registered thanks to) Villon<sup>33</sup>, as well as the following one:

- **aller à Ruel**, to be killed

This pun works the same way as the previous one. The homonymic substitution is for “ruer”, an old slang term for “to kill”.

### 1-14. Puns on names.

The English corpus also contains an expression playing on a surname:

- **to die with cotton in one’s ears**, to be hanged

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<sup>33</sup> François Villon (1431-1463?) was a criminal and a poet. Thus, some old slang expressions can be found in his writings.

This expression is actually a pun on the name of Cotton, the prison chaplain at Newgate. The condemned were spoken to by the chaplain before their hanging so that they could confess their crimes and be at peace with God. Therefore, they had “cotton” in their ears. This pun was only possible inasmuch as cotton is also the name of a plant that can be put in one’s ears, for instance in order to clean them.

The English corpus (and the French one for only 2 expressions) sometimes makes verbs out of names. It is difficult to say if this is funny or not. It really depends on the hearer’s sense of humour. Here are some examples given as illustrations:

- **to Chicago**, to kill

This American city is famous for its mythic criminals, hence its use as a verb meaning “to kill”.

- **to kevork**, to kill

This expression comes after Jack Kevorkian, an American doctor who helped his patients commit suicide.

- **to OJ**, to kill

This comes after O.J. Simpson, the football star who was tried for double murder. Notice that here the initials of the first name were preferred to the surname.

- **capahuter**, to kill somebody to steal their share of the loot

This French one comes after Capahut, a “chauffeur” (a person who heats their victims’ feet to make them talk) from Nanterre.

The last six kinds of humour used in death slang – which all are puns – are more particular than the other ones. Indeed, for the expressions contained in these categories, the playful function cannot be denied. It is clear that they were made for fun. However, it should not be forgotten that even if it is unconscious, these phrases were also created in order to minimise death. Every pun that has been quoted wanders from the real meaning of death. The puns on pronunciation, double meanings, or else all give a totally different description of death than the usual one. Can someone really view death through a “loaf of bread” or through the name “Chicago”? The psychological function of these kinds of humour is obvious: distance people from death.

As a conclusion, it could be said that death slang contains different kinds of humour, which often intermingle. Indeed, there are hardly real barriers between one humorous device and the others.

This analysis reveals that comical expressions often give more importance to humour than to encryption or quickness of speech. Nevertheless, it would be naïve to affirm that the only reason for the presence of humour in death slang is that the users of slang have good senses of humour.

As a matter of fact, humour is an efficient weapon to defend oneself from being overwhelmed by the negative feelings caused by death. Coarse humour is the most cathartic of all, associating disgusting visions with laughter in order to reassure people. Laughing at death gives them an impression of dominance over it. This impression is what reassures people and minimises their images of death.

The same process is used with irreverent visions of religion. By making irreverent allusions to God, people feel superior to Him because they can pretend they do not mind about what will happen to them when they die. At the same time, the references to religion found in humorous expressions are attempts to hang on to soothing visions of death, by viewing what comes afterwards.

Irony uses a different technique to attenuate the vision of death. It is mixed with cynicism and makes it possible for people to picture the victims who get killed as insincere and dishonest persons. Thanks to this depreciation of human beings, people feel more comfortable with the idea of death. Anyway, the dead persons were not good people and deserved to die.

Funny periphrases illustrate another way of minimising death. Indeed, they describe what happens before or after death, but not the very instant of death itself. Using this stylistic device, humour avoids speaking directly about death, in a blunt manner. As for funny euphemisms, they sometimes describe the very instant of death but always in an attenuated way.



Besides, humour plays the psychological role of a mantra in people's minds. Indeed, the big set of humorous expressions makes it possible for people to take fresh heart in front of death by viewing it with humour. Laughter gives courage.

Eventually, whatever kind of humour is used, the very fact that this humour makes people laugh proves that they all have one function in common. This function is to divert people's attention from their built-in negative vision of death. Humour, more than just a way to play with words or ideas, is present in many death slang expressions in order to attenuate the vision of death.

## II, 2. EUPHEMISMS.

In the previous analysis, which was about humour in death slang, it appeared very difficult to infer whether humour was first present in order to minimise death or to have fun. It is not the case with the function about to be analysed. Indeed, the function of euphemisms is crystal clear. A euphemism is “an indirect word or phrase that people often use to refer to [something] embarrassing or unpleasant, sometimes to make it seem more acceptable than it really is” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*). Therefore, euphemisms in death slang are used to minimise death. They have a minimising function.

Unlike the use of puns, the use of euphemisms has surely a one and only aim: to minimise death so as to make it possible for the speaking or hearing people to accept death with less pain. Death is something frightening, because no one knows what comes afterwards. Moreover, death means the end of life, the end of everything. Death means that the dead ones will never be seen again. This is why people need euphemisms to talk about it.

The second aim of this second part of the mémoire is to analyse the euphemisms used in death slang. These euphemisms have been classified into different categories. They are to be analysed one by one according to this classification. In the analysis, particular attention will be paid to the stylistic devices used, for it could be interesting to find out the frequency of this use and whether both languages use the same stylistic devices<sup>34</sup>. It could also be useful to compare the different categories of euphemisms and see whether there are big differences between them. At first sight, euphemisms use some of the basic characteristics of death. The analysis will try to find out what characteristics are used and why.

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<sup>34</sup> Euphemism itself is a stylistic device. However, it can intermingle with other ones.

## 2-1. Mere attenuations of reality.

To begin with, some euphemisms used in death slang are just attenuations of reality. This reality being that somebody is dead. Here are some examples of this category of euphemisms:

- **to compromise**, to kill

This verb is used by spies and is based on the fact that when spies are compromised, they are very likely to get killed by the enemy. Nevertheless, the speaker does not state it clearly but prefers to understate it by only saying “compromise”. Therefore, the metaphor created by this term is an attenuation of the real meaning. It depicts a vision that is not the killing but something that is supposed to precede it.

- **to get rid of**, to kill

- **to square**, to kill

“To square” implies the meaning “to get rid of”. Therefore, these two expressions convey the same vision. “To get rid of” is a metaphor of the killing. As a matter of fact, if someone is killed, they will not bother anybody anymore. The killer will have got rid of them. Again, it is simply an attenuation of the implied meaning, using a consequence of the killing this time.

- **to fail to return**, to be killed

This expression is a periphrasis of its implied meaning. Used especially for soldiers, it follows the consequence of a soldier being killed: failure to return.

- **attacher**, to hang

This phrase is a mere euphemism for “to hang”. Indeed, when someone is hanged, they are tied by the neck (“to tie” is the literal translation for this French expression).

These few expressions show the first aim of euphemisms, which is to attenuate the reality by understating the facts, describing what caused or followed the demise. They are not complicated and do not use any specific characteristic of death. Here, the speaker minimises death in the simplest possible way: death is not referred to directly. It is avoided. The euphemisms displayed above, like some humorous slang expressions analysed in the previous part, are attempts to hang on to soothing visions of death. Here, it is not done by imagining what the soul becomes afterwards, but merely by stating what precedes or what follows death. Thus, the vision of death itself is put aside.

## **2-2. Visions of the last act before dying.**

However, some other expressions use specific visions to depict death through euphemisms. Here are some instances of euphemisms using the vision of the last act before dying<sup>35</sup>:

- **to be hailed for the last time**, to die

This metaphor pictures the demise through the last act before it. Moreover, the act here is not even done by the dying person, who is only “hailed”. Anyway, they are hailed “for the last time”, which implies that they are to die. Again, the harshness of reality is attenuated due to a euphemism.

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<sup>35</sup> The last act before dying is specific because death is the end of activity (another category of euphemisms uses this vision and is analysed later on). Therefore, if the act described is the last one, it means that the person will be dead after having done it. It should be noticed that “last act before dying” is also a category of type 1 semes.

- **to fire one's last shot**, to be killed

The metaphor used in this expression uses the image of someone firing a gun for the last time. The fact that it is the last shot implies that the person who fired has been fired at too and that the shot got its aim. This is why the dead person has fired their last shot.

- **to draw one's terminal breath**, to die

- **rendre le dernier soupir**, to die

The two expressions convey the same vision of the last breath before dying. The metaphor is obvious since breath is a vital function. This could be compared with the comical phrase “oublier de respirer” (literally meaning “to forget to breathe”), to die, analysed in part II, 1. This funny expression is also a euphemism and could have been put here with the other two. The only difference is that it is humorous whereas the two phrases given as examples here are not.

- **to take one's last drink**, to drown

This metaphor uses the same kind of vision that the previous ones: it depicts the last act before dying. It should be added that it also describes the end of an ordinary activity (drinking). The use of this vision is to be analysed as another category later on.

This second category of euphemisms is more specific. However, the process is the same: the attenuation of death is accomplished by focusing on something that is related to it but that does not designate it directly. The last act done by the dying person before their death still describes them when they are alive. Thus, it makes it possible for the speaker to remember the dead person when they were alive. By doing this, it is easier to accept death because it appears as something not as different from what people know as it is. Euphemisms try and help people accept death.

### **2-3. Positive visions of death.**

As was stated above, the aim of euphemisms is to attenuate the damages caused by death. Therefore, the next category is not surprising at all. Indeed, the following examples are euphemisms using positive<sup>36</sup> descriptions as visions of death:

- **to go to see one's friends**, to die

This metaphor originated in boxing. It can be inferred that the original meaning was to be knocked out. As a matter of fact, when boxers are knocked out, they get out of the ring. Consequently, they can go to see their friends. As other visions of death seen through the image of unconsciousness, this one must have slipped to this more radical sense. With the meaning “to die”, the expression can take another sense, which is that death makes

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<sup>36</sup> It should be noticed that “positive” is also a category of type 3 semes and a seme itself.

it possible for someone to see their deceased friends. Thus the dead person is not alone in the new and unknown state that death is.

- **to be feeling no pain**, to be dead

This metaphor focuses on a positive aspect of death in order to minimise the grief it can cause. As a matter of fact, death is the end of physical sensations, therefore, it is also the end of pain. From a negative aspect of death, this expression points out a positive one. As can be seen in the next instance, French has a similar expression:

- **ne plus avoir mal aux dents**, to be dead for a certain time

Again, the metaphor puts the focus on a positive aspect of death. Here, the positive aspect is more of a detail. Indeed, the phrase literally means “not to have a toothache anymore”.

The fact that some euphemisms stress positive aspects of death is very revealing of the goal aimed at by the users of these euphemisms. As a matter of fact, why not simply say “to die” if death is really positive? Positive visions replace the mere statement of someone’s demise because the positive visions are not obvious at all. They are a means to take refuge from the painful vision of death.

#### **2-4. Neutral visions of death.**

Whereas some euphemisms put the attention on positive aspects of death, some other ones just give neutral descriptions of facts preceding or following death, in order to trivialize it. This process is another way of attenuating the image of death. Here are some examples:

- **to climb the ladder**, to be hanged

- **monter à l'échelle**, to be guillotined

The two metaphors have the same sense. The little difference of meaning is due to the fact that the Anglophones did more executions by hanging and the French-speaking more executions by beheading. These expressions view death through what precedes it: the condemned have to climb the ladder of the gallows before being hanged or guillotined. This way of saying things makes it possible to avoid the harsh vision of dead bodies. Indeed, the hearer pictures the condemned walking to the gallows, not the moment when they are executed.

- **to be backed**, to be dead

Unlike the previous ones, this metaphor pictures death through what follows it. As a matter of fact, the image depicted here is that of the procession organized before a burial. The dead person is on six men’s shoulders and carried to the grave.

- **to be six feet under in a box**, to be dead and buried

- **être six pieds sous terre**, to be dead and buried

Except for the precision of the English phrase: “in a box”, these two expressions convey exactly the same vision. The metaphor again pictures the consequence of death, this time later on, when the body has been buried.

In order to minimise death, the euphemisms contained in death slang can also give neutral visions of death. This is a way to trivialize it, to attenuate its importance. Death is horrible and disgusting, but to climb a ladder, to be backed by people or to be six feet under is not that terrible. It is just another way to attenuate the vision of death.

## **2-5. Death is darkness.**

Death slang is full of euphemisms. Some of them use the metaphor of darkness<sup>37</sup> to picture death. Here are some examples:

- **to shut one's lights off**, to die

- **éteindre sa bougie**, to die

The two metaphors convey the same vision. The French one is just more precise and indicates what kind of light is shut off (a candle). These expressions imply that when someone dies, they are put into darkness.

- **to do a blackout**, to die

This metaphor refers to the cinema or theatre, where the audience is put into darkness before the beginning of the show. The analogy between a show and death makes it possible for people to picture what death can look like.

By doing that, this expression attenuates the fear of the unknown.

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<sup>37</sup> It should be noticed that “darkness” is also a type 2 seme.

- **to go into eclipse**, to die

Here, the analogy is made between the darkness of death and the darkness brought about by an eclipse. Again, the euphemism compares the state of a dead person with something people know.

The euphemisms using the metaphor of darkness try to minimise death by comparing it with something people know. Even if they do not like darkness, they can picture it because they have already seen it. Darkness may not be pleasant, but it is surely less frightening than the horrible things people can imagine about death. Death means the totally unknown. Therefore, it is reassuring to picture it through something known.

## **2-6. Death is a transition.**

The next category of euphemisms does not attenuate the same fear. Whereas the vision of darkness tries to compare death with something people know, the vision analysed beneath puts forward the idea of another world, something after death. Here are some examples of expressions picturing death as a transition<sup>38</sup>:

- **to take the last jump**, to die

After noticing that this metaphor can also describe the last act before dying, it could be said that this expression pictures a jump from this world to the next one. Therefore, death is a transition. By affirming this, the euphemism prevents people from being scared by nothingness.

- **to cross the great divide**, to die

Here again, death is a transition. It is “the great divide”. Without denying that death is *the* important stage in a human being’s existence, this euphemism implies that it is not the end. It is just a divide between the known and the unknown world.

- **to get to the other side**, to die

- **passer de l’autre côté**, to die

The two metaphors picture death the same way: it is a transition between two places, two worlds. Therefore, to die is “to get to the other side”.

These euphemisms do not deny that what comes after death is unknown. Nevertheless, they affirm that there is something. This statement minimises death by erasing the fear of nothingness many people feel. Indeed, if there is something after death, then people will not disappear completely. This total disappearance is one of the most shared fears in humanity. Therefore, to deny it is to reassure people about what most scares them in death.

## **2-7. Death is not the end.**

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<sup>38</sup> It should be noticed that “transition” is also a type 3 seme.



The expressions conveying the vision of death as a transition are not that far from other phrases promising that there is something after death. The latter are part of the next category to be analysed. They are more precise about what the other world is. In fact, they affirm that they know what there is. Here are some instances of these religious euphemisms:

- **to go to the world to come**, to die
- **aller dans l'autre monde**, to die

These two metaphors use similar visions. The French expression literally means “to go to the other world”. They do not differ much from the previous phrases (to get to the other side); however, there is a notable difference. Indeed, “*the world to come*”, or “*the other world*” imply that this world is known by the speaker. It is heaven, the realm of God. Implicitly, these expressions refer to religion and the promise of a better world after death.

- **to go to meet one's maker**, to die

The “maker” of course designates God. Religion makes it possible for people to view death as a positive thing. As a matter of fact, someone who dies can meet God Himself. God believers consider this the reward of a good life on earth.

- **to be taken by the Lord**, to die

This metaphor goes further since the dead person will not only meet God but has been chosen by Him. They have been “taken by the Lord”, which means that they look important to Him. This euphemism is meant to make people forget about the bad sides of death.

Through the euphemisms of death slang, religion promises another life after death. As was stated in the former subdivision where death was seen as a transition, the fact that there is something after death reassures people. Moreover, religion affirms that this something is better than the known world. The soothing function of euphemisms is here at its height. Death is not only unimportant, it is definitely positive.

## **2-8. Death is giving up.**

Not all euphemisms consider death as positive. As has been shown before, some just attenuate the vision they convey of death. Here are some examples of expressions that picture death as giving up:

- **to give up**, to die

This euphemism is the more concise of the category. People who live do things, therefore, people who give up their activities die.

- **to give up the ship**, to die

This metaphor is a little more complex. Sailors only give up their ship when it is sinking because it is their whole life. Without it, they are dead. This euphemism could have been catalogued in another category to be analysed later on, which is the vision of the end of a job.

- **to throw up the cards**, to die

This metaphor uses the idea that when card players throw their cards up, it means that they give up the game. Then, it is the same vision as the previous expressions.

- **lâcher la bouée**, to die

Literally, this metaphor means “to let go of the buoy”. A buoy is used to save shipwrecked from drowning. Therefore, if someone lets go of the buoy, it means that they give up and drown. This is definitely not a positive vision, yet it is euphemistic compared to plainly saying “to die”.

What is euphemistic in viewing death as giving up? When someone gives up, it means they failed to achieve their aim. However, who has never given anything up? Everybody does so sometimes. It can be because they have not enough time or skill. Therefore, giving up is a euphemistic vision of death insofar as it is not always important to give up something. What is more, the use of this image makes people forget about the image of death itself. Giving up is not a positive vision, yet it is far less negative than the image of death.

## 2-9. Death is departure.

The next category of euphemisms to be analysed uses the image of departure<sup>39</sup> to picture death. Here are some instances:

- **to go**, to die
- **s'en aller**, to die

These two expressions that have the same meaning are the simplest of a big set of phrases using the metaphor of departure. The idea is that a dead person is gone. No one will ever see them again. Some other expressions convey the same vision in ways that are more complicated.

- **to pack up**, to die
- **faire sa malle**, to die

The French expression literally means “to pack one’s bags”. It is therefore just a little more precise than the English one. The vision is still that of departure: someone packs up because they are going away. It is an indirect way of stating the departure.

- **to kiss off**, to die

The phrase also implies departure. Someone kisses someone else off when they leave, in order to say goodbye.

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<sup>39</sup> It should be noticed that departure is also represented in the corpus by the place seme, which is a type 2 seme. When someone leaves, they change place.

- **to bow off**, to die
- **saluer le public**, to die

The French phrase literally means “to bow to the audience”. The idea is that in theatre, the actors bow off at the end of the play. After their performance, they can only leave.

- **to buy one’s lunch**, to die

This metaphor is perhaps the more reserved one in the set of expressions using the departure vision. Indeed, someone buys their lunch because they do not come back home to have it. Therefore, it means that they have left home. Here, the speaker does not even dare say “leave”.

As giving up, departure can sound negative. Indeed, it is always sad when someone you love has to leave for a long time. It is even worse when they leave forever. Nevertheless, if they leave the place where you are, it is to go somewhere else. It implies that there is something after death. Therefore, the dead person can be thought of as travelling, i.e. still alive in some way. Moreover, the image of departure again diverts people’s attention from the image of death.

## **2-10. Death is absence.**

Thus, there are different levels of euphemisms using this vision. Some are more reserved than others. Actually, some other categories of euphemisms are really close to the departure one. The euphemisms conveying the vision of absence<sup>40</sup> are part of one of the two. Here are some examples:

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<sup>40</sup> It should be noticed that, as for departure, absence is also represented in the corpus by the place seme, which is a type 2 seme. When someone is absent, it means they have changed place.

- **to be missing**, to be dead

When someone is dead, they are not present, they are missing. This simple fact is the base of this metaphor. As for other euphemisms, the image is used to attenuate the harshness of the vision.

- **to be sent for**, to be dead

The idea is that someone who has been sent for is absent. This is because they are not there that they have been sent for. It is to be noticed that this is not the first time this tendency to imply the attenuation was detected. Indeed, it has already been noted for some other expressions that they did not clearly state the vision used to minimise death. Here, the speaker does not say “to be missing” but “to be sent for”, which only implies that the person is missing.

- **not to have come back for one’s cap**, to be killed

As for the previous phrase, this periphrasis of absence does not simply state the fact that the person talked about is missing. The speaker only says that they have not come back for their cap. Why have they not? Because they are missing. And why are they missing? Because they have been killed. The deductions the hearer has to make before understanding the meaning of the phrase minimises the pain it causes.

The vision of absence is close to that of departure. As a matter of fact, someone who has left is absent. Therefore, there is not much to say that differs from what has already been said for departure. Yet the expressions analysed seemed interesting and this is why they are above.

## 2-11. Death is isolation.

Another way of viewing things can be to picture the dead person as aside<sup>41</sup> the living. The idea would be that when someone dies, they are isolated from the rest of the world. Here are some instances of this vision:

- **to be out of the game**, to be dead

This metaphor perfectly illustrates the isolation vision. Indeed, someone who is “out of the game” is aside the other players. Life is viewed as a game, therefore, the dead person is a player who has lost or stopped playing. It should be remarked that this expression also uses the idea referred to in the corpus by the game seme (meaning that the game is over for the dead person).

- **to be behind the scenes**, to be dead

After the performance is over and the actors have bowed off, they go behind the scenes. Therefore, they are aside the audience. This metaphor is the same as Shakespeare’s: “All the world’s a stage,/ And all the men and women merely players”. As long as people are alive, they are onstage. However, as soon as they die, they leave it and go behind the scenes, where they end up isolated.

- **to be shuffled clean out of the deck**, to be dead

The metaphor of the game is present again. Here, the dead person is pictured as a game card put aside the other cards of the deck. As for the other expression, the dead person was once part of a group, but has been severed from it.

Again, the vision conveyed by the euphemisms is not a positive one.

Indeed, few people like being isolated from the rest of the world. Human beings are naturally gregarious. Nevertheless, this vision has the same aim as the previous ones: to divert people’s attention from the vision of death.

## 2-12. Death is the end of life.

Death is the end<sup>42</sup> of life. Some euphemisms use this definition to attenuate the impact of such a tragedy. Here are some examples:

- **to cease to be**, to die

- **cesser d’être**, to die

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<sup>41</sup> It should be noticed that “aside” is also a type 2 seme.

<sup>42</sup> It should be noticed that “end” is also a type 3 seme.

The two expressions have exactly the same meaning. When someone stops being, it means that they are dead. The use of this periphrasis is merely a means of minimising death.

- **to be bereft of life**, to be dead

It is the same idea: when someone is deprived of life, the thing that remains for them is death.

- **to come to a bad end**, to die

This metaphor is a little more negative because of the word “bad”. Nevertheless, it is still an attenuation of the implied meaning. The bad end mentioned is the worst someone can undergo because it means the end of everything else as well.

The euphemisms designating death through the image of the end of life especially use what could nearly be called “empty words” to attenuate the vision of death. Indeed, what does “to be bereft of life” mean? It has exactly

the same meaning as “to be dead”. The only difference is that the person who hears it has to think a little more before understanding the meaning.

### **2-13. Death is the end of a job.**

Actually, some euphemisms are more precise and just picture death as the end of one thing. The next category views death as the end of a job. Here are some examples:

- **to shut up shop**, to die

The idea of this metaphor is that the shopkeeper who shuts up shop is bankrupt. Therefore, they have no job left. This vision is pictured in some other slang expressions designating death, particularly in French ones:

- **rendre son tablier**, to die

Literally, it means “to give back one’s work coat”. However, this French expression means “to hand in one’s resignation”. The idea is that when someone resigns, they do not need their work coat anymore and therefore give it back to the company.

- **mettre les volets à la boutique**, to die

This metaphor literally means “to close the shop’s shutters”. A shopkeeper does so at the closure of the shop. The idea here is that the closure is definitive. It means that the shopkeeper has no job left: they are dead.

The euphemisms using the metaphor of the end of a job to picture death again compare death to something people know. Almost everybody has or has had a job. Moreover, these expressions may have been created by workers themselves. To them, their jobs really represent their lives because without them, they cannot afford the necessary goods needed to live. In that sense, a job is a man's life and to lose one's job is to die.

#### **2-14. Death is the end of needs.**

Some euphemisms picture death as the end of needs. Here are some instances:

- **remercier son boulanger**, to die

This metaphor literally means "to thank one's baker", that is to dismiss one's baker. When someone is dead, they no longer need to eat. This is why they dismiss their baker.

- **to stick one's spoon in the wall**, to die

This metaphor has approximately the same vision as the previous one. As a matter of fact, someone who does not need to eat anymore no longer needs their spoon. Therefore, they can stick it in the wall.

- **to hang up one's hat**, to die

The idea of this metaphor is that a dead person no longer needs clothes. Therefore, they can hang up their hat.

- **laisser ses bottes quelque part**, to die

Literally, it means "to leave one's boots somewhere". Again, the idea is that someone who is dead no longer needs clothes. Here, the boots are left by the dead person.

Generally, when someone thinks of death, the first thing that comes to mind is negative. Most people are afraid of death. It is something unknown and prevents people from doing what they used to when they lived. Therefore, to picture death as the end of needs is a way to put aside the negative sides of death and only take into account a good side of it. Indeed, someone who has no need is free. They do not have to eat, or dress themselves. They are under no constraint anymore. Thus this vision is another way to minimise the impact of death on the mind of the user of slang.

#### **2-15. Death is the end of functioning.**

The human body is sometimes compared to a machine. Therefore, it is not that surprising to find that some euphemisms of death slang view death as the end of functioning. Here are some instances:

- **to stop ticking**, to die



The metaphor is that of a human body seen as a clock, by reference to the biological clock. Therefore, when it stops ticking, it is because the battery is flat and it means that the body is not functioning anymore. The person is dead.

- **s'éteindre**, to die slowly

Literally, it means "to go out". The French expression could refer to a television as well as to a fire or a lamp. Anyway, it implies the end of functioning (inasmuch as it is accepted that a fire can *function*).

- **to stall the engine**, to die

- **caler**, to die

The two metaphors have the same meaning. The English one is just more precise (it is the engine that is stalled). Anyway, both expressions imply that something no longer functions. Therefore, death is the end of functioning. The body stops functioning as a machine does.

Comparing the human body to a machine is a way to dehumanize people. The dismantling scene, as was stated in the first part of the *mémoire*, also uses this dehumanization to attenuate the bad feelings caused by death. To most people, a human being is the most important thing there is on earth. On the contrary, a machine is by far less important. Therefore, comparing a body to a machine makes it possible for people to minimise the importance of their demise. After all, a machine can always be replaced. And in the functional sense, no human being is irreplaceable.

## **2-16. Death is the end of activity.**

If something stops functioning, it no longer moves. Another category of euphemisms views death as the end of activity. Here are some examples:

- **to stop**, to kill with a gun

- **s'arrêter**, to die

These two metaphors have the same meaning, except that the French one is reflexive and means "to stop oneself". These expressions are clear: if someone is stopped or stops themselves, it is the end of their activity.

- **to put to sleep**, to kill

- **endormir**, to kill

These two metaphors mean the same. When someone goes to sleep, they do nothing at all. Therefore, to put someone to sleep is to put an end to their activity.

- **to be called to one's eternal rest**, to die

This metaphor uses roughly the same vision as the previous one. Here, the dead person does not go to sleep but to rest. However, someone who rests is inactive, like someone who sleeps. What is more, the precision that this rest is “eternal” confirms that the inactivity of the dead person is to be permanent.

Whereas the idea of death can cause visions of violence, suffering and loss, the first vision that comes to mind when thinking about inactivity is quietness, a peaceful situation. Therefore, the euphemisms using this vision really attenuate the painful side of death. As a matter of fact, inactivity is a consequence of death and contrary to some other consequences that people think of more easily when picturing death, it can appear as a positive one. Picturing death through inactivity can be very soothing.

## **2-17. Death is the end of ordinary activities.**

If life is activity, it is often ordinary activity. Some euphemisms, rather than picture death as the end of activity, view it as the end of *ordinary* activities, which is more specific. Here are some examples:

- **to hand in one's dinner pail**, to die

When someone is dead, they stop eating. Thus, when someone hands in their dinner pail, it is because they are dead. This act illustrates the end of an ordinary activity: eating.

- **to lay down the knife and fork**, to die

This metaphor uses the same vision as the previous one. The dead person stops eating, therefore they no longer need their knife and fork.

- **to sack one's saddle**, to die

A dead person no longer rides their horse. They sack their saddle because this ordinary activity of horsemen has ended for them. As for most of the other euphemisms, this one uses a metaphor to attenuate the vision of death.

Every activity that people do has to end. By viewing death as the end of an ordinary activity, people make a comparison they can understand because they have already experienced it. Again, death is compared to something people know. This prevents them from fearing the unknown. Actually, the euphemisms using this vision of death trivialize it in order to make it easier to accept. They point out that “death is no big deal”, it is just the end of ordinary activities.

As a conclusion, it could be said that the majority of euphemisms used in death slang view death through metaphors. This is not astonishing because metaphors are a good way to view a notion through an image that only shares some characteristics with the former. Thus, metaphors make it possible for the images to have a smaller impact on the minds of the hearers. Indeed, designating death with metaphors like darkness or departure enables people to view it in a more soothing way. It attenuates the pain or fear caused by death.

The same result can be produced by periphrases. However, it appears in this analysis that there are fewer expressions using this stylistic device along with death slang euphemisms. It may be because a periphrasis can easily be as violent, if not more, as the verb it describes (for instance “to splash somebody’s brains”, to kill somebody with a gun).

If someone drew a comparison between the two languages under study, they would probably say that both languages use roughly the same visions. Indeed, the analysis of euphemisms has been able to give examples in the two languages for nearly the whole set of categories. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from the analysis can be applied to both corpora.

As was written above, the euphemisms of death slang use some characteristics of death to picture it. The analysis has distinguished some kinds of characteristics. Some euphemisms view death through attenuated characteristics. This process makes it possible to avoid speaking directly about death. By doing this, the users of slang try to hang on to soothing visions of death.

Darkness is one of these characteristics. This notion is not that joyful. However, it is not as frightening as death itself because people know at least what to expect. They know what darkness looks like, thus comparing death to it changes it from an unknown thing to something known and understood.

It is the same with departure, absence, isolation, and giving up. These notions, even if they are negative, do not sound as bad as the terrible notion of death. They are a way to divert people’s attention from the vision of death. Moreover, a departure implies a destination. Therefore, the dead person can be thought of as travelling. Thus, it brings about a hope for an afterlife.

Another kind of characteristics is neutral ones. Indeed, some euphemisms minimise death by picturing it through its neutral characteristics. Some expressions describe the last acts done before dying, which are still actions made by living people. Thus, it makes it possible for the speaker to remember the dead person when they were alive. This is a way to try and help people accept death. Acceptance of death is one of the aims of euphemisms of death slang.

There are also neutral descriptions of acts that lead people to their deaths or descriptions of the aftermath of death. All the expressions using these characteristics attenuate the vision of death by avoiding to state it directly. By saying that someone has climbed the ladder or has been hailed for the last time, these euphemisms trivialize death, attenuate its vision.

Then, some euphemisms use positive characteristics of death. For example, when you are dead, you no longer suffer. These euphemisms try to reassure people and change their visions of death into positive ones. However, if they do not simply say “to die” instead of using these euphemisms, it is because the depicted positive visions are not that obvious. They are a means to take refuge from the painful vision of death.

This is why they suggest that death is not the end. Actually, they create new characteristics for death. Death becomes a transition between two worlds. This statement minimises death by eliminating the fear of nothingness many people feel. Indeed, if there is something after death, then people will not disappear completely. This total disappearance is one of the most shared fears in humanity. Therefore, to deny it is to reassure people about what most scares them in death. What is more, with the help of religion, death is even changed into a reward. To die means to go to heaven and live a happy afterlife beside God Himself.

And when death is not seen as something positive, it is opposed to something that is so. It is no longer death that euphemisms talk about but the end of life, for life is positive. It is actually close to politically correct

language. These euphemisms make the visions neutral or even positive by using “empty words” that do not carry any real information. The aim is just to divert people’s attention from the real meaning of death.

It is the same process when death is compared to the end of a job. A job is at the same time something people need to survive, and something that is usually considered a constraint. Thus by comparing death with the end of a job, the euphemisms imply that there is still a good side to death: you will not have to work anymore.

The reason is that when you are dead, you no longer have any needs. Therefore, you are free. Thus, to view death as the end of needs is another way to minimise its impact on the minds of the users of slang. In the end, minimising the image of death is always the main aim of euphemisms in death slang. Comparing death to the end of functioning has the same goal: dehumanization makes it possible for people to think of dead people as replaceable machines. No one is irreplaceable, therefore, no demise is that terrible.

In fact, the comparison of death with the end of activity may be the one that most perfectly reflects the vision the euphemisms of death slang try to convey. Indeed, whereas the idea of death can cause visions of violence, suffering and loss, the first vision that comes to mind when thinking about inactivity is a quiet and peaceful situation. Therefore, the euphemisms using this vision really attenuate the painful side of death, which is the aim of every euphemism contained in death slang.

## CONCLUSION.

As a final conclusion, it could be said that the corpus that has been studied in this *mémoire* contains 998 English slang expressions and 461 French slang expressions. All these phrases have just two meanings (with some small variations): “to die” and “to kill”. Before the beginning of my study, this fact made me wonder whether all these terms were really synonymous. The first part of the *mémoire* revealed that it was not the case for every expression. Indeed, it appeared that some slang functions were to specify a meaning, to give a point of view, to add or avoid a notion. For all the expressions concerned by these functions of slang, synonymy cannot be claimed.

When killers use slang terms to specify how they have killed their victims, there is no synonymy. When users of slang choose a pun to describe a demise, the meaning conveyed is not the same as though they chose a euphemism.

The study has also shown that some expressions contained other notions than the notion of death. One instance of that is religion, which is present in a significant number of phrases. Religious notions can be added to the notion of death both consciously and unconsciously. Actually, it can be added consciously to help the speaker in accepting death, or more unconsciously to connote the negative image of death.

Besides, some other expressions have been generated in order to avoid unbearable visions. This is why some expressions are euphemisms. This has been analysed more deeply in the second part of the *mémoire*. As a matter of fact, the second part of the *mémoire* consists in analysing two significant functions of death slang: humour and euphemisms.

The analysis of humour has shown that death slang contains different kinds of humour, which often intermingle. Indeed, there are hardly real barriers between one humorous device and the others. The analysis also revealed that comical expressions often give more importance to humour than to encryption or quickness of speech. However, the playful function of death slang is closer to the minimising function than expected.

Indeed, as euphemisms, humour is an efficient weapon to defend oneself from being overwhelmed by the negative feelings caused by death. It sometimes has a cathartic function, as was shown with coarse humour. It also uses cynicism to depreciate human beings and feel more comfortable with the idea of their deaths. Moreover, humour plays the psychological role of a mantra in people’s minds. It makes it possible for people to take fresh heart in front of death by viewing it with humour. Laughter gives courage.

Humour also uses ways of minimising death that are similar to the ways used by euphemisms. As a matter of fact, comical phrases sometimes avoid speaking directly about death, and just describe what precedes or what follows it. What is more, whatever kind of humour is used, the very fact that this humour makes people laugh proves that they all have one aim in common. This aim is to divert people’s attention from their built-in negative vision of death. Humour, more than just a way to play with words or ideas, is present in many death slang expressions in order to attenuate the vision of death.

Of course, euphemisms have the same aim: to minimise the negative vision of death. Some euphemisms compare it to something people know, in order to reassure them, because people are often afraid of the unknown. Some others even state that there is something after death. By making this statement, they neutralize people’s fear of nothingness. Actually, all the euphemisms of death slang have a common aim, which is acceptance of

death. Some euphemisms just give soothing visions of it, some try to trivialize it by making neutral descriptions of ordinary activities.

Some other euphemisms even give positive visions of death. They are means to take refuge from the painful visions of death. To achieve this aim, new characteristics are created: death becomes a transition between two worlds. The existence of an afterlife is mentioned and religion even affirms that death is in fact a reward.

In fact, some euphemisms compare death with the end of activity. This comparison perfectly reflects the vision the euphemisms of death slang try to convey. Indeed, whereas the idea of death can cause visions of violence, suffering and loss, the first vision that comes to mind when thinking about inactivity is a quiet and peaceful situation. Therefore, the euphemisms using this vision really attenuate the painful side of death, which is the aim of every euphemism contained in death slang.

Another issue that was part of the main ones in the introduction consisted in knowing whether the corpora of the two languages under study had significant differences between them. A hypothesis was even made in the introduction: the English corpus was twice as big as the French one because Anglophones were actually more reserved for what regards the standard language relative to death than French-speaking people. As for this hypothesis, several proofs have confirmed it.

However, the study of all the semes used in the slang expressions under study has revealed more similarities than differences between the two languages. This might be the final conclusion of this mémoire, which is after all a comparative study of English and French. It could also be added what was the conclusion of part I: it appears reasonable to claim that the differences between the two corpora can only diminish because the media tend to bring the two societies together.

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**DEATH SLANG PHRASES, "TO DIE" AND "TO KILL":  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH.  
(VOLUME 2)**

Frédéric DELEBARRE

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# **INTRODUCTION TO THE CORPUS**

Here are explanations on how the corpus is presented:

**ENTRY** – contains the phrases meaning “to die” and “to kill”, classified thematically, then alphabetically according to their first significant words. The phrases that are redundant are put just once, e.g. “to give the ax”, to kill & “to get the ax”, to be killed (the reader will only find the entry “to give the ax”). Because of the magnitude of the corpus, phrases that are alike are put in the same entry, e.g. “to be belly up”, “to be belly-up”, “to be belly-side up”, “to turn belly up”, etc. will all be found at “to be belly up”. That is why some signs are needed to simplify the arrangement of each entry and gain some space:

- ( ) words in brackets may appear or not in the phrase.  
e.g. **be (resting) easy**. Here “be resting easy” and “be easy” both exist.
- / slashes separate entire alternative phrases:  
- that do not have exactly the same meaning.  
e.g. **become a landowner/ be a landowner**. Here “become a landowner” means “die” and “be a landowner”, “be dead”.  
- that have more than one difference between one another but have the same meaning.  
e.g. **be daisy-pushing/ be pushing (up) (the) daisies**.
- or* *or* in italics indicates a one-word variation of the phrase.  
e.g. **be kaput or kapout**. Here “be kaput” and “be kapout” both exist.
- [ ] words in square brackets are not part of the phrase but give a precision.  
e.g. **get [one's] everlasting**. In context, the speaker could say “he got his everlasting” or “she got her everlasting”.
- , in context, the words following the commas should be put at the beginnings of the phrases.  
e.g. **be at home, not [to]**. Here “not [to] be at home” is the accurate phrase. It is arranged with the comma because entries are classified according to their first significant words. Here it is “be”.
- \* entries followed by an asterisk are humorous phrases analysed in the first subdivision of the second part of the mémoire.
- \*\* entries followed by two asterisks are euphemisms analysed in the second subdivision of the second part of the mémoire.

**PRECISE MEANING** – contains precision relative to the meaning of the phrases (only when their senses are not exactly “to die” or “to kill”). Some signs are used to gain space:

/ slashes separate different meanings pertaining to corresponding entries.  
e.g. the entry “go aloft/ be (soul) aloft” is followed by this precise meaning: **die/ be dead**. This signifies that “go aloft” means “die” and “be (soul) aloft” means “be dead”.

() words in brackets should be considered as preceded by “die” or “kill”.  
e.g. the entry “burn” is followed by this precise meaning: **(electrocuted)**. This signifies that “burn” means “die electrocuted”.

*(italics)* words in italics in brackets specify the subject of the phrase.  
e.g. the entry “pull a Frankie and Johnny” is followed by this precise meaning: **(of a wife) kill her husband because he "did her wrong"**. This signifies that the subject of the phrase is always a married woman.

**SOURCE** – contains sources validating the phrases. Each entry has a maximum of two sources, even when more than two exist. Non dictionary sources were privileged as often as possible because they fix phrases in time, which makes it possible to notice when they were already or still in use. Moreover, it appears to be more ludic. Dictionary sources are abbreviated, e.g. “**ATS**” stands for “**The American Thesaurus of Slang**”; other sources (films, books, etc.) are given by the name of the director, author, etc. e.g. “**Allen 1**” stands for “**Allen, Woody. (1) A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy**”. See the bibliography and list of abbreviations for further information.

**DATE** – contains chronological landmarks found in at least one of the sources. The date given is always the oldest (first time the entry was used) and as precise as possible (when no dictionary gives any date but the entry can be found in another source, the date of the source is given as an indication but should not be considered as the first time it was used. Thus it is followed by an asterisk e.g. **1981\***.) Again, information is reduced to gain space. The reader will find:

a specific year, e.g. **1849**. This means the phrase was first noticed in 1849; or

an approximate date, e.g. **ca 1930**. This means the phrase was first noticed about 1930; or

a century, e.g. **19**. This means the phrase was first noticed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; or

an event, e.g. **WW1**. This means the phrase was first noticed during the First World War.

**ORIGIN** – contains the origin of the phrase, which can be geographical, e.g. **Aus** (i.e. Australia); cultural, e.g. **bible**; etc.

**ETYMOLOGY** – contains the roots of a word, the reason of a pun, the meaning of a slang term, etc.

**SEME 1, 2 & 3** – contain the semes of the entries classified as follows (the semes used in the corpus are in **bold type**):

SEME 1: state of the body

- last act before dying:

**sound 1** (the dying sometimes make sounds just before their death)

- texture:

**coldness**

**paleness**

**stiffness**

- position:

**horizontal**

- inactivity:

**silence**

**stillness** (motionlessness)

SEME 2: causes and consequences of death

- **cause**:

unnatural:

**fire**

**heat**

**hit**

**instrument > projectile > hole**

> **sound 2** (projectiles make sounds brushing the air. guns make sounds firing)

> **rope**

> **reduction** (done with a guillotine, an axe, etc.)

- aftermath:

place > aside

> disappearance

burial > coffin

darkness

judgment

SEME 3: cultural symbols of death

- **positive** > **cleanliness**

> **escape**

> **improvement**

> **relief**

> **reward** > **paradise** > **sound 3** (sound of angels)

- **negative** > **bankrupt (end)**

> **dismantling (end)**

> **failure**

> **worthless**

> end of **fight (end)**

> end of **game (end)**

> **punishment**

- neutral > **eternity**

> **inexorability**

> **unexpectedness**

> **sleep** > **sound 4** (the sound made while sleeping)

> **transition**

> end of **sport** (**end**)

		<b>end</b>
<b>positive</b>	cleanliness	
<b>positive</b>	escape	
<b>positive</b>	improvement	
<b>positive</b>	relief	
<b>positive</b>	reward	
<b>positive</b>	sound 3	
<b>negative</b>		bankrupt
<b>negative</b>		dismantling
<b>negative</b>	failure	
<b>negative</b>	worthless	
<b>negative</b>		end of fight
<b>negative</b>		end of game
<b>negative</b>	punishment	
<b>neutral</b>	eternity	
<b>neutral</b>	inexorability	
<b>neutral</b>	unexpectedness	
<b>neutral</b>	sleep	
<b>neutral</b>	sound 4	
<b>neutral</b>	transition	
<b>neutral</b>		end of sport



**COMMENTARY** – contains commentaries on the entry, cross-references to other phrases, etc.

## ABBREVIATIONS.

To gain space, many abbreviations are used in the corpus. They are listed thematically, then alphabetically.

### SOURCES (BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES)

See the bibliography for details.

- Dictionaries.

ATQP	<i>L'argot tel qu'on le parle</i>
ATS	<i>The American Thesaurus of Slang</i>
DAFO	<i>Dictionnaire de l'argot français et de ses origines</i>
DBAA	<i>Dictionnaire bilingue de l'argot d'aujourd'hui</i>
DFAP	<i>Dictionnaire du français argotique et populaire</i>
DFNC	<i>Dictionnaire du français non conventionnel</i>
DHAF	<i>Dictionnaire historique des argots français</i>
DMMF	<i>Dictionnaire Marabout des mots fléchés</i>
DPP	<i>Dictionnaire de la police et de la pègre</i>
DS	<i>Dictionnaire des synonymes</i>
DSUE	<i>A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English</i>
GFF	<i>Le Guide du français familier</i>
H&H	<i>Hip &amp; Hot! A Dictionary of 10, 000 American Slang Expressions</i>
HDSC	<i>Harrap's English-French Dictionary of Slang and Colloquialisms</i>
HSD	<i>Harrap's Slang Dictionary</i>
LDEI	<i>Longman Dictionary of English Idioms</i>
NPR	<i>Le Nouveau petit Robert</i>
OALD	<i>Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary</i>
ODS	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Slang</i>
OERD	<i>Oxford English Reference Dictionary</i>
PLC	<i>Petit Larousse en couleurs</i>
RCS	<i>Le Robert &amp; Collins Senior</i>
TAS	<i>Thesaurus of American Slang</i>
TS	<i>The Thesaurus of Slang</i>

- Dictionaries from the Internet.

ADS@ *A Dictionary of Slang*

CSRP@ *The College Slang Research Project*

GHS@ *A Glossary of Hardboiled Slang*

OSD@ *The Online Slang Dictionary*

WSP@ *Western Slang & Phrases*

- Others.

AdLJC *L'argot*, de Louis-Jean CALVET

AdPG *L'argot*, de Pierre GUIRAUD

cont contemporary (expressions heard in conversations)

## **DATES**

16 (or 17, 18...) 16<sup>th</sup> century (or 17<sup>th</sup> century...)

BW Boer war (1899-1902)

ca circa (about)

WW1 First World War (1914-1918)

WW2 Second World War (1939-1945)

## ORIGINS

Afr	Africa
Afr Am	Unites States of America (African American)
Alg	Algeria
Aus	Australia
Bat' d' Af	Africa (African light infantry battalion)
Can	Canada
Flem	Northern Belgium (Flemish)
GB	Great Britain
Ir	Ireland
N. Afr	North Africa
N. Rus	North Russia
NZ	New Zealand
RAF	Royal Air Force
RFC	Royal Flying Corps
RN	Royal Navy
Scot	Scotland
US	United States of America

## ETYMOLOGIES, COMMENTARIES & OTHERS

abbr.	abbreviation
Abor	Aboriginal
Ara	Arabic
Aus	Australia(n)
ca	circa (about)
cf	confer (compare)
cp	catch phrase
EEG	electroencephalogram
e.g.	exempli gratia (for example)
Eng	English
esp.	especially
et al.	et alii (and other people or things)
etc.	et cetera
euph.	euphemism
ex	from, derived from
Flem	Flemish
Fr	French

gen.	generally
Ger	German
i.e.	id est (that is)
inf.	informal
Ir	Ireland; Irish
Ita	Italian
Lat	Latin
Mor	Moroccan
NZ	New Zealand
onom.	onomatopoeia
orig.	originally
prob.	probably
rh. sl.	rhyming slang
Rus	Russian
sb	somebody
Scot	Scottish
SE	Standard English
Sen	Senegalese
Span	Spanish
St.	Saint
sth	something
US	American; United States of America
usu.	usually
Xmas	Christmas

# ENGLISH CORPUS

## Expressions meaning “die”

expressions meaning "die" (unless specified)	precise meaning	source	date	origin	etymology	seme 1	seme 2	seme 3	commentary
be at death's door	be dying	LDEI						transition	
be burnt to the socket	be dying	DSUE2	late 17				fire		
be slipping	be dying	DSUE2	20	white slavers				escape	applied to a prostitute (working for a pimp)
be under sailing orders	be dying	DSUE2	mid 19	nautical			place	inexorability	i.e ordered to depart (cf marching orders)
answer the final summons		ATS		bible			judgment	end	biblical (referring to last judgement)
back gate		TS						transition	
back-door parole		TS						transition escape	at first, it meant getting out of prison through death
bag		H&H			ex hunting: bag a dead animal		aftermath	coffin	

be called to [one's] eternal rest**		LDEI		bible				eternity reward sleep	reward for a good way of living	
be curtains for [one]/ drop the curtain/ ring down the (final) curtain		ODS + Chapman	1901	US army + theatre				end	the curtain is closed at the end of the theatric performance. e.g. "it's curtains for him"	
be hailed for the last time**		DSUE2	1891	nautical				end	euph.	
be promoted		DSUE2	1890	salvation army				reward	ex the public funeral of Mrs Booth, General Booth's wife	
be taken		H&H							the dead person is seen as a prey, or taken in trap	
be taken by the Lord**		Sopranos 4	1999*	bible			place		i.e. to go to heaven. euph. e.g. "I wish the Lo would take me"	
beam up		H&H + TS			ex the television programme Star Trek		place	transition	i.e. transfer from one place to another	
become a landowner*/ be a landowner	die/ be dead	H&H + DSUE2	late 19				aftermat h		pun. prob. a development ex "landed estate", the grave. esp. among soldiers in WW1. see "buy the farm", die	
become filling for a casket		ATS						aftermath coffin		
belly-side up/ belly up/ go <i>or</i> turn belly up/ be belly up <i>or</i> belly-up <i>or</i> belly-side up	die/ be dead	H&H + DSUE	ca 1960	Can		horizontal			as a fish does when it dies	

bite <i>or</i> buy the big one		H&H + OSD@							the dying person is courageous facing death. "bite the bullet", behave bravely
bite <i>or</i> kiss the dust		LDEI + TS				horizontal			
blindo		DSUE	ca 1860	army	maybe on dekkko				
bow off**		ATS						end	at the end of the show comes the final bow
bow out		ATS + TAS						end	
bowl off		DSUE	1837					game	
box on the table		H&H		hospitals		horizontal	aftermath coffin		i.e. on the operation table
box/ be boxed	die/ be dead	TS + H&H			"box" stands for a coffin		aftermath coffin		
break it off		ATS						end	
breathe [one's] last		TS						end	
bump		ATS + TS					hit		
bump off		TS					hit		
buy [one's] lunch**		TS					place		because one is not coming back home to have it
buy a packet/ have bought a packet	die/ be dead	DSUE + HSD					coffin		
buy it/ have bought it	die/ be dead	DSUE + H&H	1912	RN + RFC + RAF			place		i.e. a ticket to beyond in order to make the ultimate trip
buy the dick		HDSC		US					



buy the farm <i>or</i> ranch*		H&H + ODS	1958	US	ex earlier sense "crash in an aircraft"		place		see "become a landowner", die	
call all bets off/ call off all bets/ be all bets off	die/ be dead	ATS + TS						end game	i.e. when you leave at the end of a game	
call it a day		ATS						end		
call it a job		ATS						end		
call it quits		ATS						end		
camp down		DSUE	late 19	Aus		horizontal	place			
cancel [one's] accounts/ close up [one's] accounts (with the world)/ settle accounts		ATS					aftermath			
cark <i>or</i> kark it		ASS@ + ODS	1977	Aus	maybe ex Aus "cark", caw, from the association of crows with death	sound 1				

cash in ([one's] checks <i>or</i> chips)/ hand in [one's] checks <i>or</i> chips <i>or</i> account/ pass in [one's] checks <i>or</i> chips <i>or</i> marbles/ throw in [one's] chips/ have had (got) [one's] chips	TAS + HDSC	1857	US				game end	"checks" are counters in the game of poker. hand in is to quit the game and cash one's pot chips, hence to die
cease to be**	Chaplin + Chapman	1952*					end	euph. see "cesser d'être", die
chalk out	TS						end	see "erase" + "rub out", kill
check in	TS					place		i.e. at the realm of the dead
check out	ATS + TS					place		i.e. of the realm of the living
choke	HSD					cause		
chuck [one's] hand in	DSUE	late 19					game end	
chuck <i>or</i> throw a seven/ chuck seven/ seven out	DSUE + ODS	late 19	Aus				game end	ex the game of craps, in which to throw a seven (except on the first roll) is to lose
chuck up the bunch of fives	DSUE	1909	boxing + US				end	"fives" means punches
click it	ATS				sound 1			

cock [one's] toes up/ cock <i>or</i> kick <i>or</i> turn up [one's] toes/ curl up [one's] toes (and die)/ turn [one's] toes up (to the daisies)/ turn up the toes (to the daisies)/ kick <i>or</i> lay <i>or</i> tip <i>or</i> topple <i>or</i> turn up [one's] heels/ be toe up/ be toes (up)	die/ be dead	Deftones + LDEI	16			horizontal				
coil up [one's] cable(s) <i>or</i> rope(s)/ slip [one's] cable/ cable has parted, [one's]/ cut [one's] cable/ cut the <i>or</i> [one's] painter/ slip the painter		ATS + HSD	1751	nautical			place			when the cable is cut, the ship leaves
come to a bad <i>or</i> sticky end**		LDEI						negative end		euph.
come to the end of the line		HSD					judgmen t	end		to add to other dead people waiting to be judged or be the next one to die in the line of living people
conflummox		ATS				maybe a blend of "confuse" and "flummox"				

conk off		TAS			imitative: ex the last few thumps of a failing motor	sound 1				
conk out		HSD + ATS	WW1		imitative: ex the last few thumps of a failing motor	sound 1		end		
conk/ be conked	die/ be dead	ATS + DSUE	1917	aviation	imitative: ex the last few thumps of a failing motor	sound 1				
cook		TS					heat			
cool		H&H + TS		hospitals		coldness	aftermath		become cold after death. euph.	
cool in [one's] linen		DSUE2				coldness horizontal	aftermath			
cool off		TS				coldness	aftermath			
cop it		DSUE + TAS	WW1	army				punishment	also means "be forced to endure"	
cop out		DSUE	BW	army				escape		
corp out		DSUE	1923		prob. ex corpse, after conk out					
crap out/ be crapped-out	die/ be dead	ATS + TS								
croak out		Altman	1969*			sound 1				

croak/ do a croak/ do the croak act		ADS@ + DPP	1812		ex the death-rattle: a gurgling sound sometimes heard in a dying person's throat	sound 1			see "croak", kill; hang	
cross over		ATS					place	transition	i.e. from this world to the other	
cross the great divide**		LDEI					place	transition	death (the great divide) regarded as separating the dead from the living. euph.	
crump out/ be crumped (out)	die/ be dead	H&H							like a shell does	
cut [one's] stick		ATS					place		the stick stands for the leg sb bends when the run. see "casser sa canne", die	
cut adrift		ATS					aside			
cut off		ATS					aside		i.e. from the world	
deep six		TS					place		graves are usu. six feet deep. see "deep six", kill	
demise		Chapman	1989*					end		
depart this life		LDEI					place		used esp. on gravestones	
do a blackout <i>or</i> fadeout**/ fade out		ATS					darkness		i.e. shut the lights in a cinema or theatre	
douse		ATS					fire	end	in order to put the fire out	

draw [one's] terminal breath**		Jones	1979*					end	
draw a blank		ATS						game	i.e. lose at a game
drop [one's] leaf		DSUE + ATS	ca 1820						ex the autumnal fall of leaves. see "go off with the leaf", be hanged
drop everything		ATS							
drop off		ATS + TS						sleep	
drop <i>or</i> be off the twig	die/ be dead	Chapman + HSD	1989*						like fruit
drop <i>or</i> hop the perch/ fall off the perch/ perch/ tip (over) the perch/ turn over the perch <i>or</i> pitch <i>or</i> tip/ hop a <i>or</i> the twig/ hop the stick		DSUE2 + ATS	1797					transition	i.e. make the big jump (into the beyond)
drop <i>or</i> pop off the hook(s)/ be <i>or</i> go off the hooks	die/ be dead	HSD + ATS	1830				aftermath		maybe ex a felon's corpse dropping, from she decay, off the hooks from which it has been suspended
drop short		DSUE	ca 1820						
drop the cue		DSUE + ATS	1909	billiard-players				game	see "casser sa queue de billard", die
eat it		TS							
ebb out/ go out with the ebb		ATS + DSUE2	late 19	nautical				aside	
end up (in the morgue)		ATS + Fuller	1989*					end	
escape		ATS						escape	
evaporate		ATS							

exit		ATS + TAS					place		
expire		Chapman + Gerber	1989*					end	
fan out		ATS							
farm		TAS					place		i.e. be close to the earth. see "buy the farm", die
fetch down		DSUE2	ca 1700			horizontal			i.e. fall down because of death
fizz		ATS			onom.			sleep sound 4	as if sleeping
fizzle out		ATS						end	
flack		TS							
flack out		TS							
flake out		TS				horizontal		sleep	
flatline		H&H + TS		hospitals			aftermat h		ex the flatness of the line on an EEG monitor
flatten out/ be flattened (out)	die/ be dead	ATS				horizontal	aftermat h		
flicker (out)		ATS					darkness		
float		DSUE2	1916	Aus		horizontal			
flunk out		ATS					aside	punishment	see "get the ax", die
fly off the handle/ go up the handle		ATS							image of a breaking object
fold (up)/ do a fold <i>or</i> fold-up		ATS							
get [one's] everlasting		ATS						eternity	
get [one's] ticket punched		H&H + TS						end	i.e. your journey through life is finished

get a back-gate commute		TS					place	transition	
get a one-way ride <i>or</i> ticket		TS					place		
get fitted for a wooden overcoat/ put on a wooden kimona <i>or</i> overcoat <i>or</i> suit/ wear a wooden coat*	die/ be dead	HSD + Scorsese 4					coffin		coffins are made of wood. see "give [sb] a wood overcoat", kill
get kayoed for keeps		TS				horizontal		eternity	
get <i>or</i> be trumped	die/ be dead	ATS + TS							
get out from under		ATS					place		
get paid off/ go to the (last) payoff		ATS						reward end	
get the ax		ATS						punishment	see "give the ax", kill + "flunk out", die
get the call/ hear <i>or</i> receive the final call/ receive the last (curtain) call/ take [one's] last curtain call/ take the final curtain call		ATS + TS						end	
give in		ATS							
give <i>or</i> make <i>or</i> yield the crow(s) a pudding*		DSUE2	late 16				aftermat h		also and orig. meant "hang on a gibbet"
give <i>or</i> yield up the ghost		DSUE2 + TAS							"ghost" in this phrase stands for a person's spirit
give out		TAS						end	



give the life the go-by <i>or</i> slip/ give the slip		ATS + DSUE2	ca 1830				escape	ex fox hunting	
give the Nebraska sign		H&H		hospitals			aftermath	"Nebraska sign" stands for a flat EEG indicating the death of the patient being monitored. Nebraska is a large flat open country	
give the O-sign*		H&H		hospitals			aftermath	"O-sign" stands for the rounded, open mouth of a dead person	
give the Q-sign*		H&H		hospitals			aftermath	"Q-sign" stands for the rounded, open mouth of a dead person with the tongue hanging out like the tail of a capital Q	
give up**		ATS							
give up on life/ lay down [one's] life		Southpark 6 + LDEI	1999*						
give up the ship**		ATS					place		
go**		Mate + Gerber	1950*				place		
go across (the river)/ be across the river	die/ be dead	ATS					place	transition	Egyptian (Isis and Osiris travel on a funeral rowboat) and Greek (dead souls cross the Styx on Charon's rowboat) mythology. see "send across the river", kill
go across <i>or</i> over the creek		TS					place	transition	
go aloft/ be (soul) aloft	die/ be dead	DSUE + ATS	1790	bible			place		referring to heaven
go blooey		ATS + TS				coldness	aftermath		i.e. become blue because of cooling

go bung/ be bong <i>or</i> boug <i>or</i> bung	die/ be dead	DSUE + ODS	1882	Aus + NZ	ex Abor (Jagara) "ba"				
go capooch		DSUE2	1881	Devon-shire					
go cuckoo*		ATS						lose one's mind, as if it was a spirit	
go dead		ATS + Allen 2	2002*						
go down		Penn	1967*				place		
go down the long trail		ATS					place		
go down the tube		TS					place		
go floeey		ATS + TS							
go for a burton		HSD + DSUE2	1939	RAF				reward	literally, for a glass of the excellent Burton ale rather than for a suit made by Montague Burton
go home		DSUE2	19	army				aside	aside compared with soldiers still at war
go home <i>or</i> out feet first/ be carried out feet first	die/ be dead	HSD + TAS				horizontal	place		see "sortir les pieds devant", die
go in		DSUE2	BW	army	ex dialectal sense, "come to an end"			end	
go into eclipse**		ATS						darkness	
go north/ have gone north about	( <i>of a sailor</i> ) die by other than drowning	TS + DSUE2	ca 1860	nautical				place	compare with "go west", die
go off		DSUE2 + ATS	17					place	

go on the rocks/ hit the rocks		ATS					cause		i.e. undergo a shipwreck	
go <i>or</i> be overboard	die/ be dead	ATS					aside			
go <i>or</i> be up the flue	die/ be dead	DSUE2 + ATS	ca 1850				aftermat h		i.e. like smoke or a soul	
go <i>or</i> be west	die/ be dead	ATS + HSD	late 16	army			place		figure of the sun sinking in the west. the emergence of the phrase in the US in the 19, yet, evidently stems from the earlier gone west, absconded into virgin territory, left to parts unknown, hence disappeared, died	
go <i>or</i> get to the other side**/ reach the other side		LDEI					place	transition	the other side being afterlife. euph.	
go <i>or</i> step off the deep end/ jump the deep end		ATS + TS						transition	end	
go out		DSUE2 + ATS	1915	army	after "pass out" + "go west"		place			
go over		DSUE2 + ATS	ca 1845		abbr. of "go over to join the majority"		place			
go over the range/ be out of range	die/ be dead	TS + ATS					place	aside		
go over to the (great) majority/ join the (great) majority		ATS + LDEI					place		referring to the number of dead as compared the number of people now living. euph.	

go the way of all flesh		ATS + LDEI	1909	bible	ex the Bible		aftermath		changed from "I go the way of all the earth. I thou strong therefore and show thyself a man (II Kings 2:2; David's dying words to Solomon)
go tits up/ be tits-up	die/ be dead	DPP + TS				horizontal			
go to [one's] (long) account		LDEI + ATS					judgment	eternity	referring to the Day of Judgement, when all souls must give an account of how they spent their time on earth. euph.
go to [one's] end		Wimmer						end	
go to [one's] last <i>or</i> long home		DSUE2 + LDEI					place	eternity end	euph. see "send to his long home", kill
go to Calabar		DSUE2	1909	navy			aftermath	place	"Calabar" is a white man's grave
go to glory/ be bound for glory	die/ be dead	HSD + TAS	1814	bible				reward	ex glory, the splendour and bliss of heaven
go to grass (with [one's] teeth upwards)		DSUE2 + ATS	ca 1820			horizontal			
go to heavens		Southpark 13	1999*	religion			place	reward	see "aller au paradis", die
go to kingdom come		DSUE2 + ATS	late 18	bible	"kingdom come" stands for the after-life		place	reward	ex "thy kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer, the Bible (Matthew 6:9-10) see "blow to kingdom come", kill
go to meet [one's] maker**/ meet [one's] maker		Chapman + Gerber	1989*	religion			place		euph.

go to pot/ be potted (out)	die/ be dead and buried	ATS + DSUE2	ca 1860		stillness	place		see "pot", kill. ex horticulture	
go to see [one's] friends**		DSUE2	ca 1810	boxing		place			
go to sherry		DSUE2	1887	circus	ex "sherry", run away	place			
go to the happy hunting grounds		ATS + TS				place			
go to the last roundup/ head for the last roundup		ATS + TS					end		
go to the races		ATS					game		
go to the wall		TS				cause		i.e. in order to be shot down	
go to the world to come**		Sopranos 3	1999*			place		see "aller dans l'autre monde", die	
go under/ be (put) under	die/ be dead and buried	DSUE2 + ATS	1849	US		aftermath place		i.e. underground. see "put under", kill. anglicised ca 1870, but never very general	
go up		ATS		religion		place		i.e. in heaven	
go up Salt River		ATS				aftermath place		see "be salted away", be dead	
hand <i>or</i> pass <i>or</i> turn in [one's] dinner pail**		DSUE2 + ODS	ca 1890	cockney			end	end of an ordinary activity	
hang up		ATS					end		
hang up [one's] harness <i>or</i> track		ATS					end		
hang up [one's] hat**		DSUE2 + ATS	ca 1850				end		

have (had) it	die/ be dead	HSD + TS	late 1939	RAF						
head for a hearse		TS					aftermat h			
honk out		ATS				sound 1				
hop off		DSUE2 + ATS	1797					transition	cf big jump	
hop the <i>or</i> [one's] last rattler		ATS						end		
hump it		DSUE2	1923		ex "hump", to shoulder and carry					
jack it		DSUE2	1909							
join the choir invisible		Chapman + LDEI	1989*	bible			place	reward	referring to those who have died and gone to heaven and sing the praises of God. euph.	
jump the last hurdle		ATS						sport	end	
keel over		ATS + ODS	1977		ex earlier sense: fall to the ground	horizontal				
kick		DSUE2 + ATS	1725							
kick in		TS + TAS								
kick off		ODS + GHS@	1921	US						
kick out		DSUE2 + ATS	1898	US			place			

kick the bucket/ kick it		Chapman + Hawks	1785						referring to "bucket", a beam or yoke (Old Fr "buquet", a balance) from which a slaughtered pig is hung by the heels. may also be in allusion to a bucket kicked away by a suicide by hanging
kick up		DSUE2							
kiss off**		H&H + TS	1945	US			place		i.e. say goodbye and leave
knock off		ATS + TS						end	see "knock off", kill
knock over		DSUE2 + ATS	ca 1890			horizontal			
launch into eternity/ take off for eternity		ATS						eternity	
lay [one's] bones		ATS				horizontal			
lay down [one's] <i>or</i> the knife and fork**/ lay down the shovel and the hoe		DSUE2 + ATS	1859					end	end of an ordinary activity
lay down on the job		ATS				horizontal			
lay 'em down		ATS				horizontal			maybe the legs
leave the minority		DSUE2	1879				place		compare to "join the majority", die
liquidate		ATS						bankrupt	see "liquidate", kill
lose		ATS						game	
lose the battle		Southpark 6	1999*					fight	
lose the decision		ATS						inexorability	

lose the number of [one's] mess		ATS						end	end of an ordinary activity	
make [one's] final exit		ATS					place	end		
make a die (of it)		DSUE + ATS	17							
make the last muster		TS						end	see "answer the last muster", kill	
meet Mr. Jordan/ be over Jordan	die/ be dead	DSUE2 + TS	1889	religion					ex its use in pietist language to symbolise dea	
mizzle		DSUE	ca 1810	boxing						
morris		DSUE2	ca 1810	boxing						
move off		DSUE2	ca 1760				place			
muff it		DSUE2	ca 1810	boxing				failure		
muzzle		DSUE2	ca 1810	boxing		silence				
napoo/ be napoo <i>or</i> napooh	die/ be dead	ATS + DSUE2	1915	army	ex Fr "il n'y en a plus", there is none left, in reply to inquiries for drink				see "napoo", kill	
off		H&H + DSUE2	1914	army			place	end	see "off", kill	
off it		ODS	1930		ex earlier sense: leave		place			



pack [one's] hand		DSUE2	1915	army			place		so as to leave. occasional variant of "pack up
pack up**		ATS + DSUE2	1915	army	prob. ex "pack (up) one's kit(-bag)"		place		so as to leave
pass away		Morrison 2 + donniedar ko	1971*				place		euph.
pass on		Kubrick 3 + Hawks	1940*				place		euph.
pass <i>or</i> step <i>or</i> be out of the picture	die/ be dead	H&H + ATS					place	aside	
pass out		TS + Polanski 1	1899				place		prob. abbr. of "pass out of sight"
pass spark out/ spark out		DSUE2	20	boxing	ex dialectal "spark out", utterly extinguished		darkness		
pass the gate		Preminger	1944*					transition	
pay St. Peter a visit*		ATS		bible			place	reward	St. Peter is dead and gone to heaven
pay the debt of nature		ATS + LDEI						inexorability	
pay the last debt		ATS + HDSC						end	

peg out		TS + TAS	1855	US				end game	i.e. end one's play by pegging in cribbage or croquet. anglicised by 1860
peter (out)		ATS						end	
pffft <i>or</i> phut/ be phfft	die/ be dead	H&H + ATS			onom.		darkness		be blown out like a candle
pike (off)		ATS + DSUE2	late 17		ex its sense "leave"		place		
pip		DSUE2	20		onom. (sound of gun firing)		sound 2		see "pip", kill
pip off		DSUE2	ca 1934			sound 1			ex the pip-pip of the radio
pip out		HSD + DSUE2	ca 1918		ex "pip", kill		sound 2		
pipe off		ATS + TS					place		
play [one's] last card <i>or</i> hand		ATS						end game	
play out		ATS							
poop (out)		ATS					aftermath		a body lets all waste out when dead. see "poop", kill with a gun
pop off		Coe + TS	1764				place		
pull a cluck		DSUE2	ca 1870		echoic	sound 1			
pull in at the last terminal		ATS				stillness		end	
pull the plug		TS						end	
push the clouds (around)*		ATS					place		i.e. to make yourself some space

put [one's] checks back in the rack		ATS						end	game	
quit the scene/ quit it		HSD + TS					place	end		
ring off		ATS						end		
ring out		ATS				sound 1				
roll up		DSUE2	20							
rot		ATS					aftermat h			
run down		ATS						end		
run out/ take a runout (powder)/ take a powder		ATS					place	end		
sack [one's] saddle**		ATS						end	end of an ordinary activity	
sell out		ATS						bankrupt		
shoot [one's] star*		DSUE2	late 19				place		ex evanescent shooting stars	
shoot the works		ATS								
shove off		ATS + TS					place			
shove over		TS								
shuffle off (this mortal coil)		Chapman + ATS	1989*				place	escape	coil here refers to the noise or haste of life	
shut [one's] lights off**/ switch off the lights/ be the lights doused	die/ be dead	DSUE2 + ATS	ca 1929				darkness		see "douse [sb's] lights", kill	
shut up shop**		HSD + ATS						end		
sign off		ATS						end		

skip (out)		DSUE2	late 19				place		
slam off		ATS + TS							
slide into the last oblivion		ATS					transition	end	
sling [one's] hook		DSUE2	ca 1860		ex its common sense: "go away"		place		
slip [one's] breath <i>or</i> wind		DSUE2 + ATS	1772	nautical					
slip away		OALD					place		
sluff off		ATS							
snuff and toddle		DSUE2	ca 1810	boxing			place		
sound off		ATS				sound 1			
sprout wings*		H&H + TS		bible			aftermat h	reward	i.e. die and become an angel
stall (the engine)**		ATS						end	see "stall sb's engine", kill
step below		DSUE2	ca 1810	boxing			place		
step into [one's] last bus		ATS					place	end	
step off		ATS + TS	1926				place		
step off the carpet <i>or</i> curb		ATS + H&H					place		
step out		ATS + DSUE2	late 19	US			place		anglicised in late 19

stick [one's] spoon in the wall**		DSUE2	mid 19							
stop ticking**		DSUE2	ca 1930					end		i.e. like a clock
strike bedrock		TS				horizontal				
strike out		ATS + TS						failure		
take a blinder		DSUE	mid 19					darkness		i.e. take a blind leap into the dark
take a dirt nap		H&H + TS					aftermat h place	sleep		i.e. be buried
take a ground sweat		ATS					aftermath place			i.e. be buried
take a leap into the great unknown		HSD						transition		
take a rest/ be at rest	die/ be dead	TS + LDEI						sleep		euph.
take an earth-bath		DSUE + ATS	19					aftermath place		i.e. be buried
take an out		ATS						place		
take gruel		DSUE2	1909					cause		ex gruel as staple food in long illness among the poor
take it (in)		DSUE2 + Alexandre	ca 1810	boxing						"it" may stand for "death"
take off		HSD + ATS						place		

take the (last <i>or</i> long) count/ be doubled up <i>or</i> down <i>or</i> out for the long count/ be (put) out for the long count	die/ be dead	ATS + H&H					judgment		i.e. the count of all your good and bad deeds
take the (last) jump**		ATS						transition end	
take the everlasting knock		DSUE	1889	sport			hit	eternity	
take the last cue from life's stage		ATS						end	
take the rap		ATS						punishment	
tap out		H&H				sound 1			
throw sixes		ATS						game	maybe ex a dice game in which throw sixes i to lose
throw up the cards <i>or</i> sponge**		ATS						game	
tip (off)		ATS + DSUE2	late 17						see "tip off", kill
toss in the alley		DSUE	1916	Aus					
turn it in		DSUE2 + TS	1914	army					i.e. give one's life back ("it" stands for "life")
unrove [one's] life-line		DSUE2	1883	nautical					
up and die		TS						unexpected-	ness
walk		DSUE2	1858		ex "walk", go away		place		
wash out		ATS						cleanliness	see "wash out", kill

wash up		ATS						cleanliness end	when the meal has been eaten. see "wash up" kill
weigh out		ATS					place		
wink out		ATS							
burn [oneself] out	work too hard and die early	DSUE	19				cause		
die in harness	(while at work)	ATS							
die in [one's] boots <i>or</i> shoes/ die with [one's] boots on	(in harness) <i>or</i> be hanged	DSUE + ATS	ca 1895						owing to US influence
cheat the gallows	(before their execution)	ATS						escape	
die by inches	(slowly)	ATS							
wither on the vine	(gradually)	LDEI							ex the fact that grapes die on the tree or vine they are not picked at the right time
die in [one's] bed	(peacefully)	LDEI + OALD			idiom	horizontal		sleep	
be cut off in [one's] prime	(suddenly when still young or at the best moment of one's life)	LDEI					reductio n		
die all at once	(suddenly)	ATS						unexpected-	ness
drop dead	(very suddenly)	LDEI + Burton	2004*			horizontal			

die dunghill	(contrite or cowardly)	DSUE	ca 1755						
die hard	(fighting bravely)	DSUE	19						SE sense: "die impenitent"
die game	(resolute)	DSUE2 + ATS							metaphor from sport
make the supreme sacrifice	(for the sake of others)	LDEI						negative	
die like a dog	(in conditions of great shame or pain)	LDEI						worthless	
die in the last ditch	(in the final impenitence)	HDSC						worthless	
cut up rich	(rich)	HDSC							
die like Jenkins's hen	(unmarried)	DSUE	18	Scot					
lead apes in hell	(unmarried)	ATS		religion			place	punishment	
die on [sb]	( <i>of a patient</i> ) (under the care of [sb])	H&H + Scorsese 3	1999*						
break [one's] neck	(when doing sth dangerous)	Huston 3 + LDEI	1967*				cause		
snuff it/ snuff out	(from disease or accident)	Gilliam & Jones + Kubrick 4	1864		idiom		darkness		referring to snuffing a candle (putting it out)
die of acceleration	(of starvation)	DSUE	ca 1880	vagrants			cause		ex refusals "to give food to the dying outcast"
do a perisher	(from lack of water)	DSUE2	20	Aus			cause		contrast with "do a perish", nearly die from lack of water



O.D./ OD	(from an overdose of drugs)	H&H + TS			initials of "overdose"	cause			
burn	(electrocuted)	H&H				cause	fire		
fry	(electrocuted)	H&H + TS				fire			
be spilled in the drink	drown	ATS				place			
feed the fishes*	drown or be drowned	Coppola 1 + ATS	ca 1890		ex "feed the fishes", be sea-sick	aftermath			
go to Davy Jones' locker	drown	ATS + TS			ex a legend (see commentary)				a legend suggests that a particularly fiendish pub owner named David Jones used to incapacitate hapless drinkers in his ale locker and send them off aboard ships
make a hole in the water*	drown	ATS							can also mean: "commit suicide by drowning"
take [one's] last drink**	drown	DSUE2 + ATS	late 19	Can	lumber-jacks		end		
smotherate	suffocate	ATS							blend of "smother", kill sb by covering their face so that they cannot breathe + "suffocate"

snuffocate	suffocate	ATS			blend of "snuff" and "suffocate"				
stuffocate	suffocate	ATS			blend of "stuff" and "suffocate"				
miff	( <i>of a plant</i> ) wither	ATS							
be (a) goner	be dead	DSUE2 + ATS	1847	US	prob. because they are "gone"		place		anglicised ca 1880
be (as) dead as a dodo	be dead	LDEI + DSUE	ca 1930	Aus			disappearance		referring to a large flightless bird formerly found in Mauritius
be (dead and) done for	be dead	HSD + Violent femmes	1994*						see "do for", kill
be (resting) easy	be dead	ATS						relief    reward	
be (stone) cold	be dead	HSD + Ray	1955*			coldness	aftermat h		
be a dustman	be dead	DSUE	late 18	bible			aftermat h		pun on the double meaning: be returned to du (biblical) + be a refuse collector
be a <i>or</i> [one's] late [sb]	be dead	Chapman + RCS	1989*						e.g. "he's her late husband"
be all off	be dead	ATS						end	
be all over	be dead	DSUE	1898					end	
be all U.P.	be dead	ATS			maybe a pun on "you pee"		aftermat h		a body lets all waste out when dead

be all up (for <i>or</i> with)	be dead	ATS						end	
be alleyed	be dead	DSUE	WW1	army					
be an ex-[sb <i>or</i> sth]	be dead	Chapman + Worms	1989*					end	e.g. "be an ex-parrot"
be asleep in the deep	be dead	ATS						sleep	you look deeply asleep when you're dead. rhyme "asleep" + "deep"
be at home, not [to]	be dead	DSUE2	ca 1810	boxing			place		euph.
be away to scrapings	be dead	DSUE2	20						
be backed**	be dead	DSUE	late 17				aftermat h		i.e. be on six men's shoulders and carried to t grave
be behind the scenes**	be dead	ATS		theatre			place	aside	i.e. not seen by the public
be bereft of life**	be dead	Chapman	1989*						euph.
be brown bread*	be dead	DSUE + ODS	1973	GB	rh. sl.				
be buzzard meat	be dead	H&H					aftermat h		
be ceased	be dead	ATS						end	pun on "deceased" + its own sense: "stop existing"
be content	be dead	DSUE + ATS	18					positive	i.e. content in death for there is no more trou
be cut down	be dead	ATS					reductio n		see "cut down", kill
be dead and buried	be dead	LDEI							

be dead as a bedpost <i>or</i> post	be dead	ATS + Hicks	1996*			stillness		worthless	
be dead as a log	be dead	ATS				stillness		worthless	
be dead as a wooden Indian	be dead	ATS					coffin		
be dead duck	be dead	TS						worthless	"dead duck": (inf.) a plan, an event, etc. that has failed or is certain to fail and that is therefore not worth discussing (OALD)
be dead for ado	be dead	DSUE	16						
be dead meat	be dead	Miller & Ogilvie + TS	1985*				aftermath		
be death-struck	be dead	ATS							
be diseased*	be dead	ATS				pun on "deceased"			
be dished	be dead	ATS							see "dish", kill
be dog meat	be dead	H&H + TS						worthless	typically in a threat
be done on toast	be dead	ATS					heat		see "toast", electrocute
be done under	be dead	ATS							
be done up	be dead	ATS					aftermath		the body is wrapped after death
be down the drain	be dead	TS							
be dust	be dead	H&H		bible			aftermath		
be erased	be dead	ATS							
be feeling no pain**	be dead	H&H						relief	euph.
be feet-first	be dead	TS				horizontal			

be finished	be dead	TS						end		
be flummoxed	be dead	ATS								
be full up	be dead	DSUE2	1935	taxi-drivers					ex taxi-driving	
be gone	be dead	Coppola 2 + Shadyac	1979*				place		euph.	
be gone cold	be dead	ATS				coldness	aftermat h			
be gone for a shit*	be dead	DSUE2	1939	Air force	synonym of "gone for a burton"		aftermat h		a body lets all waste out when dead	
be gone glimmering	be dead	TS					place		i.e. have become a star in the sky	
be gone to Abney Park	be dead	DSUE	1909	cockney			place		ex Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington, north London	
be gone to Peg Trantum's	be dead	DSUE2	ca 1690						occasionally Peg Crancum's	
be gone to that great whatever in the sky*	be dead	TS		bible			place	reward	referring to heaven	
be gone trumpet- cleaning	be dead	DSUE2	late 19	army				punishment	maybe a martial vision of a job in the heaven orchestra	
be good	be dead	ATS						relief		
be grounded for good	be dead	ATS + TS		aero- nautical		stillness				
be had	be dead	H&H								
be hooked up	be dead	DSUE2	1923		ex "drop off the hooks", die	stillness				
be in (cold) storage	be dead	H&H + ATS				coldness	place		i.e. on the undertaker's slab. see "put in cold storage", kill	

be in the dustbin	be dead	ATS					place		i.e. be useless	
be in the grand secret	be dead	DSUE2	ca 1780				aftermath		i.e. know what there is after death	
be installed in furnace No. 10	be dead	ATS				horizontal	aftermath place		referring to cremation	
be k.o.'d	be dead	ATS			ex "knocked out"	horizontal				
be kaput <i>or</i> kapout	be dead	DSUE2 + TS	1915	army	ex Ger "kaputt"				only predicatively	
be khaloss	be dead	DSUE2	1940	Aus army in Palestine and N. Afr						
be kickeraboo <i>or</i> kickerapoo	be dead	DSUE2	late 18	West Indies pidgin	ex "kick over the bucket" rather than ex "kick the bucket"					
be laid an egg	be dead	ATS								
be laid in the lockers	be dead	DSUE2	1813	nautical		horizontal	aside	coffin	the locker replacing the coffin	
be laid out	be dead	H&H + ATS				horizontal			see "lay out", kill	
be licked	be dead	ATS								
be loaf o(f) bread*	be dead	DSUE2 + ODS	late 19	GB	rh. sl.					

be mafeesh <i>or</i> mafish	be dead	DSUE2	1916	Eastern front army				ex Ara	
be missing**	be dead	ATS					aftermath place	euph. see "turn up missing", be killed	
be nichevo	be dead	DSUE2	1918	N. Rus army	directly ex Rus which means "no more"				
be no more	be dead	RCS + Gerber	2001*				end	euph.	
be now picking at the coverlet*	be dead	ATS					aftermath	i.e. be a ghost and bother the living	
be on a slab	be dead	TS				horizontal	aftermath place		
be on ice	be dead	ATS				coldness	aftermath	to prevent the body from rotting. see "put on ice", kill	
be on the cooling board	be dead	ATS				horizontal	aftermath place	i.e. on the undertaker's slab	
be on the shelf	be dead	ATS + DSUE2	ca 1870				aside	see "lay on the shelf", kill	
be out	be dead	ATS + DSUE2	1898				place	see "go out", die. ex knock out	
be out like a light	be dead	ATS					darkness		
be out of [one's] misery	be dead	ATS						relief	
be out of it	be dead	ATS					place	aside	

be out of print	be dead	DSUE2	ca 1820	book- sellers			end		
be out of the game**	be dead	ATS					aside	game	
be out of the running	be dead	ATS				stillness			
be outed	be dead	H&H					aside		see "out", kill
be piffed	be dead	H&H + TS							
be pifted	be dead	H&H + TS							
be planted	be dead	ATS				stillness	place		i.e. in the earth
be quartermaster material	be dead	TS		army			aftermat h		because the quartermaster gives your share to the others
be sent for**	be dead	DSUE2	20	army			place		e.g. "he has been sent for" i.e. he is not here
be sewed up	be dead	ATS							
be shuffled (clean) out of the deck**/ be shuffled out	be dead	ATS					aside	game	
be stiff	be dead	HSD + ODS	1859			stiffness	aftermat h		see "stiffen", kill
be thrown for a loss	be dead	ATS							
be took	be dead	H&H							
be tucked away	be dead	DSUE2	20	Aus			place		
be up the spout	be dead	DSUE2	ca 1850				aftermat h		i.e. like smoke or a soul
be used up	be dead	ATS					aftermat h		
be wasted	be dead	H&H							
be went	be dead	TS							



be with [one's] fathers	be dead	HSD					place		
have [one's] metabolic processes now history*	be dead	Chapman	1989*				aftermath		
have [one's] number up	be dead	DSUE2	20	army					yet, "one's number is up" means "he won't live"
have seen [one's] last gum-tree	be dead	DSUE2	1893	Aus nautical			end		
have the skids put under [one]	be dead	ATS					end		meaning you are about to land
lie by the wall	be dead	DSUE2	15			horizontal			
rest in peace	be dead	Chapman	1989*				relief		euph.
be a deader	be very recently dead	DSUE	late 19						
be DOA <i>or</i> D.O.A.	be dead on arrival	DPP + Mate	1950*	hospitals	initials of "dead on arrival"				
go home in a box/ be gone home in a box	be shipped home dead	H&H + HDSC					coffin	aside	
be aged in wood*	be dead and buried	ATS					coffin		pun on cask + casket. a cask contains wine (which can be aged) and a casket contains a corpse
be basketed	be dead and buried	ATS					aftermath coffin		the basket replacing the coffin
be beneath	be dead and buried	ATS					aftermath place		i.e. beneath the earth
be boxed up	be dead and buried	ATS					aftermath coffin		

be counting daisies/ be counting daisy roots/ be counting worms*/ grin at the daisy-roots	be dead and buried	ATS + DSUE2	ca 1880			place			
be daisy-pushing/ be pushing (up) (the) daisies/ be kicking up the daisies/ kick <i>or</i> push up daisies	be dead and buried	DSUE + Jarmusch	1914	army		place		usu. in the future tense. referring to a flower that often grows on graves. see "aller sous les fleurs", die	
be gone to Rot-His-Bone*	be dead and buried	DSUE2	late 18		pun on "Ratisbon" and a bone that rots	aftermath place			
be <i>or</i> have gone to the Diet of Worms	be dead and buried	DSUE	ca 1710			place		i.e. underground	
be put to bed with a (pickaxe and) shovel*	be dead and buried	DSUE + ATS	ca 1830			horizontal place	sleep	ex "put to bed with a shovel", kill and bury	
be put to bed with a mattock (and tucked up with a spade)*	be dead and buried	DSUE	18			horizontal place	sleep		
be salted away <i>or</i> down	be dead and buried	ATS				aftermath		i.e. not to rot	
be sewed in a <i>or</i> his blanket	be dead and buried	ATS + DSUE2	20	navy + army	stillness	coffin		the blanket replaces the coffin	
be six feet <i>or</i> foot under	be dead and buried	HSD + TS	1942			place			
be six feet under in a box**	be dead and buried	DPP				place	coffin		

be under (the) hatches	be dead and buried	DSUE2 + ATS	late 18	nautical			place		ex the literal nautical sense: below deck
be with a garden on the stomach*	be dead and buried	ATS				horizontal	aftermath place		
be dead and gone	be long dead	H&H + LDEI							
be dead as a (shotten) herring/ be deader than a herring	be quite dead	ATS + TS	17					worthless	a herring dies very soon after capture (on being removed from the water)
be dead as a door-nail <i>or</i> doornail/ be deader than a doornail	be quite dead	DSUE + HDSC	1350			stillness		worthless	
be dead as a hammer	be quite dead	DSUE				stillness		worthless	
be dead as a maggot	be quite dead	DSUE						worthless	
be dead as a mell	be quite dead	DSUE2	late 18	Scot	"mell" stands for the nose				
be dead as a moa	be quite dead	DSUE	20	NZ + Aus			disappearance		a "moa" is a large flightless bird that was hunted to extinction in NZ
be dead as a nit	be quite dead	DSUE	late 18			stillness		worthless	
be dead as a rag	be quite dead	DSUE				stillness		worthless	
be dead as a smelt	be quite dead	DSUE				stillness		worthless	
be dead as a tent-peg	be quite dead	DSUE	19			stillness		worthless	a tent-peg is constantly being hit on the head
be dead as Julius Caesar	be long dead	ATS + De Palma 2	19				disappearance		
be dead as mutton	be quite dead	DSUE + LDEI	1770			stillness		worthless	mutton is the flesh of a dead sheep

be dead as Pontius Pilate	be quite dead	DSUE2	1923				disappearance		
be dead as small beer	be quite dead	DSUE	19				worthless	small beer is soon flat and ancient	
be stone dead/ be stone-dead	be long dead	H&H + ATS				stiffness		i.e. as dead as a stone	

# ENGLISH CORPUS

## Expressions meaning “kill”

expressions meaning "kill" (unless specified)	precise meaning	source	date	origin	etymology	seme 1	seme 2	seme 3	commentary
abbreviate		ATS						end	
account for		DSUE	ca 1840	sport					
ace		DPP						game	in most card games, the ace beats all the other cards
answer the last muster/ answer the last roll call		ATS		army				end	see "make the last muster", die
bake [sb's] bread		DSUE	14				heat		
beef		WSP@	1860s		ex killing a cow to make beef to eat				
bilge		ATS							
blip off		GHS@ + TS				silence	darkness		
blot (out)		DPP + TS							
blot <i>or</i> wipe off the map		ATS + TS					aside		
blow <i>or</i> send to glory		H&H + ATS		religion			place	reward	ex "glory", the splendour and bliss of heaven

blow <i>or</i> send to kingdom come/ drop into Kingdom Come	DSUE2 + ATS	late 18	bible	"kingdom come" stands for the after-life	place		ex "thy kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer, in the Bible (Matthew 6:9-10) see "go to kingdom come", die	
blow <i>or</i> shut <i>or</i> switch <i>or</i> turn [sb's] lights out/ dim [sb's] lights/ douse [sb's] lights <i>or</i> glims/ put out [sb's] light/ blow out the lights for/ switch off the lights/ put <i>or</i> switch <i>or</i> turn the lights out for	ATS + DSUE2	17			darkness			
blow to blazes	LDEI		religion		place fire	punishment	i.e. the fire burning in hell	
blow to oblivion	Coe	2001*				end		
bottle up	ATS							
break [sb's] neck/ break the neck of	LDEI				cause			
brush off	ATS					cleanliness		
bury	ATS + Scorsese 2	1995*			aftermath	burial place		
bushwhack	TAS + R.E.M.	1992*			hit			
bust	Fastlane + Malle	1980*						
butcher	ATS + DPP							

buy [sb] concrete galoshes*/ fit with a concrete overcoat	TS + HSD					aftermath		image of a corpse hidden in concrete, lest he be put in it alive. see "wear cement boots", be killed
cack <i>or</i> kack <i>or</i> kak	H&H							
cancel [sb's] Christmas*	H&H						punishment	the dead person will miss Xmas
cancel [sb's] ticket	DPP						punishment	
carry <i>or</i> send home	DSUE2 + ATS	18				place		
Chicago*	ATS					a US city famous for its mythic criminals		
chill (off)/ put the chill on	GHS@ + H&H					coldness		
clean up on	ATS				semi-proverbial		cleanliness	
clip	Scorsese 2 + Sopranos 9	1995*				reduction		
compromise**	TS		spies			cause		
cook ([sb's] goose (for him))	DSUE + TS	ca 1850				heat		
cool (off <i>or</i> out)	TS + ODS	1920	US			coldness	aftermath	
corpse/ make a corpse of	DSUE + ATS	1884				aftermath		
count out	ATS					aside		

crash		DSUE	17		prob. ex dialect "crash", smash	hit			
cream		HSD + TS		US					
crease (up)		OERD + HDSC	1913	US				proleptic	
croak	kill; hang	GHS@ + TS	1823		ex the death- rattle: a gurgling sound sometimes heard in a dying person's throat	sound 1		see "croak", die	
cut adrift <i>or</i> off		ATS + TAS					aside	see "cut adrift", die	
deep six/ give the deep-six		H&H + ODS	1929	US			place	graves are usu. six feet deep. see "deep six", die	
diddle		DSUE	ca 1803		ex Jeremy Diddler in Kenney's <i>Raising the Wind</i> , 1803				
dish		ATS						see "be dished", be dead	
do (in)		Clark + Fincher	1823						
do [sb's] business (for)/ give the business/ put the business on		DSUE + H&H	ca 1660						



do a fucking favor*		Scorsese 2	1995*					positive		
do a man's job for him/ do the job for		DSUE2 + ATS	ca 1860							
do away with		Gerber + Coe	1927		ex earlier sense: get rid of					
do for/ be done-for	kill/ be hanged	HSD + ATS	early 18						see "be dead and done for", be dead	
do <i>or</i> put to death		LDEI + Kubrick 3	1962*							
douse		ATS				fire	end		in order to put the fire out	
draw [one's] full issue (esp. in action)		DSUE	WW1	army						
draw the curtain (for)/ drop the curtain on		ATS		theatre				end		
drive rivets into the coffin of		ATS						aftermath coffin		
drop		DPP + TS				horizontal				
dump		TS + TAS								
dust (off)		H&H + TS	1940	US				cleanliness		
eliminate		DSUE + Freeman	ca 1915					end		
erase		DPP + TS						end	see "rub out", kill	
executive fallout		TS		business						
exterminate		Wimmer						end		

extermish*		ATS			blend of "exterminate" and "abolish"		end		
fake (out and out)		DSUE + ATS	19						
figdean		DSUE2	ca 1810	ex Fr "figer"	stillness				
finish (off)		ATS + Wimmer	ca 1600				end		
fire		DPP				cause	fire		
fix		TS + TAS				stillness			
flatten out		ATS				horizontal		see "flatten out", die	
get	(esp. in revenge)	Mate + Morrison 1	1950*						
get a body		TS							
get rid of**		Scorsese 2 + Lewis	1954*						
give [sb] a wood overcoat		TS				coffin		coffins are made of wood. see "get fitted for a wooden overcoat", die	
give [sb] his gruel		DSUE2	ca 1795			cause		see "take gruel", die	
give [sb's] everlasting		ATS					eternity	see "get one's everlasting", die	

give 30		ATS + ODS	1929	US	ex earlier use of the figure 30 to mark the end of a piece of journalist's copy			end		
give a free <i>or</i> one-way ticket		ATS					place			
give a turn over the perch/ knock off the perch/ throw <i>or</i> turn over the perch		DSUE2	16				place			
give the ax		ATS						punishment	see "get the ax", die	
give the Grand Bounce		ATS								
give the shuffle		ATS						game	the victim will get a new life	
go cool		TS					cause		i.e. become ruthless	
go out in the country with/ go out in the country	kill/ be killed by gangsters	ATS + TAS					place			
grass		DSUE2	ca 1875			horizontal			i.e. bring to the ground	
grease		TS + TAS		army						
guzzle		TS + ODS	1901		ex earlier sense: seize by the throat					
handle		ATS + Sopranos 9	1999*							

hit/ make a hit		Coen 1 + Miller & Ogilvie	1983*	US			hit			
hose down		H&H					projectile		ex the image of spraying sb with bullets	
huff	(esp. by a fall from a plane)	ATS + DSUE2	1915	Air Force	ex the game of draughts	sound 1		game		
hush (up)		H&H + DSUE2	18			silence				
ice (down)		TS + ODS	1969	US		coldness				
kevork*		OSD@	1998		ex the last name of Jack Kevorkian, a doctor in the US who helps patients commit suicide					
kibosh/ put the kibosh on		ATS								
kick into the beyond		ATS					place			
kick the bucket from under*		ATS					cause		see "kick the bucket", die	
kiss off (top)		H&H + TS		US			reduction			
knacker		DSUE2	1887		ex "knacker", a horse-slaughterer				gen. in passive	

knock (off <i>or</i> out <i>or</i> over)		Tourneur + Kubrick 1	1919	US		horizontal	hit		
knock cold/ lay out cold		ATS + DSUE2	WW1	NZ + Aus		coldness	hit		
knock on the head		DSUE2	ca 1870				hit		
knock out for the long count/ be kayoed for the long count		ATS				horizontal	hit judgment		
KO		TS			initials of "knock out"	horizontal	hit		
launch into eternity		ATS						eternity	
lay (out)		DSUE2 + TS	1829	US	ex the laying-out of a corpse	horizontal			anglicised ca 1860
lay on the shelf		ATS				horizontal	aside		see "be on the shelf", die
lay out like a rug		ATS				horizontal			
leave him leaning		ATS							
leave [sb] where [sb] found [them]		Scorsese 2	1995*						
liquidate		H&H + TS						bankrupt	see "liquidate", die
lose	(esp. an unwanted associate)	ATS + Allen 1	1982*						euph.
lynch		TS		Afr Am					
make a funeral in [sb's] family		ATS					aftermath		

make bones		DPP					aftermath		i.e. bones are the only things left
make cold meat/ make (cold) meat of		DSUE2 + ATS	1848	US			coldness		anglicised ca 1870
make dead		ATS							
make disappear		TS					aftermath place		
make mincemeat of		ATS						worthless	
make mutton of		DSUE2	late 19					worthless	
make <i>or</i> put easy		ATS						relief reward	see "be easy", be dead
make <i>or</i> put out of the way		H&H + ATS					aside		
make roast meat for worms		ATS + DSUE2	late 16				aftermath		
make short work of		ATS						worthless	
measure out		DSUE2 + ATS	1891				aside		
meat-axe		ATS					instrumen t		
mill		DSUE2	late 17				derives ex sense "rob", which connotes "break into", "knock out"		
mop out <i>or</i> up		DSUE2 + ATS	1887	army + navy				cleanliness	gen. in passive
mummify		ATS					aftermath		

napoo/ napooh		DSUE2 + ATS	1915	GB					ex Fr "il n'y en a plus", there is none left, in reply to inquiries for drink. see "napoo", die
neutralize		TS				stillness			
nut (off)		ODS	1974				hit		usu. passive
oblivate*		ATS			blend of "oblivion" + "obliterate"		end		
off		HSD + TS	1968	US				end	see "off", die
OJ*		OSD@	late 20		ex the double murder trial of football star O.J. Simpson				
out		ATS + H&H	1899		ex earlier sense: knock unconscious		aside		see "be outed", die
pay [one's] respects to*		ATS							
pay off		TS						end reward	see "get paid off", die
pickle		TS					aftermath		
polish off		DPP + TS	1923						
pull the plug		TS						end	see "pull the plug", die
punch [sb's] ticket		TS						end	your journey through life is finished. see "get one's ticket punched", die
push (off <i>or</i> across)/ give the push <i>or</i> push-off		ATS + TS					place	transition	i.e. push to the other side, into death

put [sb's] pipe out*		DSUE2	ca 1860						
put a lily in [sb's] hand		ATS				place			i.e. put sb in their grave
put away <i>or</i> out <i>or</i> over		TS + TAS	1847			place			
put down		Shyamalan + Wimmer	2000*			horizontal			see "descendre", kill
put in cold storage		ATS				coldness	place		i.e. on the undertaker's slab. see "be in cold storage", be dead
put on a (marble) slab		ATS				horizontal	aftermath place		see "be on a slab", be dead
put on ice		ATS + DPP				coldness	aftermath		to prevent the body from rotting. see "be on ice", be dead
put on the extinguisher		ATS				fire	end		
put out a contract		TS							
put out of [one's] misery*	(esp. to end their sufferings)	ATS + LDEI					relief		see "be out of one's misery", be dead
put six feet underground		Coldplay	2002*			place			see "be six feet under", be dead
put the binger on		ATS							
put the brakes to		ATS				stillness			in order to stop them
put the cross on		ATS					(indirect) cause		first meant "mark for death", by extension, kill. see "put on the spot", kill



put the finisher on		ATS						end	
put the freeze on		DPP					coldness stillness		make them either cold or stop moving
put the rollers under		ATS							
put the settler on		ATS							
put the skids to <i>or</i> under		ATS					stillness		in order to stop them
put to bed		ATS					horizontal	sleep	
put ([sb's] fucking brain) to sleep**		Scorsese 2 + TS	1995*					sleep	euph.
put to the sword		LDEI						cause	
put under		DPP						aftermath place	i.e. underground. see "be put under", die
put under glass		ATS					stillness		
queer		ATS							
rap/ give the rap		HSD + DSUE2	1888	Aus	ex Scot "rap", knock heavily, strike		hit		
red-light		ATS					stillness		one must stop before a red light
reward		ATS						reward	
rip off		HSD + Reed 1	1976*						
rob [sb's] life/ take a <i>or</i> [sb's] life		Cave 2 + Coe	1996*						
roll		CSRP@						instrument	i.e. roll the corpse in sth
rub (off <i>or</i> out)		DPP + Preminger	1848	US	ex "erase"			end	anglicised ca 1870. see "erase", kill

sanction		DPP						punishment	
score		HSD + TS		US				game	
scupper		DSUE2	late 19	army	ex sense "cause sb to fail"			failure	
send across (the river)		ATS					place	transition	Egyptian (Isis and Osiris travel on a funeral rowboat) and Greek (dead souls cross the Styx on Charon's rowboat) mythology. see "go across the river", die
send to [one's] death		Cat Power	2003*						
send to [one's] grave		Aerosmith	1993*				place		
send to his long account		LDEI		religion				judgment	referring to the Day of Judgement, when all souls must give an account of how they spent their time on earth. euph. see "go to one's long account", die
send to his long home		LDEI		bible			place	eternity	ex Bible: "...man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets..." (Ecclesiastes 12:5). euph. see "go to one's long home", die

send to Jericho		ATS		bible			place	reward	the battle of Jericho led by Josue was won by the Israelites, therefore it is the promised land
send to Jesus		ATS		bible			place		i.e. to heaven
send to the happy hunting grounds		ATS					place		see "go to the happy hunting grounds", die
send up		ATS					place		see "go up", die
send up Salt River		ATS					place		see "go up Salt River", die
send west		ATS + TAS					place		see "go west", die
serve out and out		DSUE2	ca 1810						
set over		TS + ODS	1931	US			place		
settle		ATS + TS						end	
settle [sb's] hash		DSUE2 + ATS	1807	US				end	maybe learnt by the Eng in the war of 1812
shift		DSUE2	1898				place		
ship		ATS					place		
shop		DSUE2	late 19		ex "shop" meaning imprison	stillness			
shove across <i>or</i> off <i>or</i> under		ATS + DSUE2	20		ex "shove underground", bury		place		"shove under" mostly in passive
shunt		DSUE2	1909	railway-men	ex literal sense		place		
shut [sb's] mouth <i>or</i> trap		LDEI				silence			

shut up		HSD				silence			
shut up [sb's] shop		DSUE2	late 19					end	
silence		DSUE2 + ATS	19			silence			
skittle		DSUE2	late 19	Aus	ex the game of skittles	horizontal		game	
skrag		H&H							see "scrag", hang by the neck
slough		ATS					cause		
smash		DPP					hit		
smear		TS + ODS	1935	Aus					see "grease", kill
snabble/ be snabbed <i>or</i> snabbed	(esp. in battle)	DSUE2	mid 18						
snuff (out)		ODS + Cross	1932				darkness		
spiflicate		ATS							
spill [sb's] blood		OALD					cause		
split		DPP					aftermath		i.e. split the soul from the body (or more physically split the body in two)
spoil		H&H + TAS							
spot/ put on the spot		HSD + DPP					(indirect) cause		i.e. mark for death, by extension, kill. see "put the cross on", kill
square**		DSUE2	1888						i.e. get rid of, hence kill
stall [sb's] engine		ATS						end	see "stall the engine", die
stamp out		TS					hit		

stiff		ODS	1974		ex "stiff", corpse	stiffness				
stiffen		DSUE2	1888			stiffness			see "be stiff", die	
stonker		H&H + ODS	1917	Aus + NZ	prob. ex "stonk" artillery bombardment + "-er"					
stop [sb's] breath		LDEI					cause		rare	
stop [sb's] clock		ATS				stillness				
stop in [one's] tracks		ATS				stillness		unexpected-ness		
take (the) checkers		ATS						game		
take [sb's] wind/ take the wind out of		TS					cause			
take care of		Lubitsch + TAS								
take for an airing		TS					(indirect) cause	compare with "take for a ride", entice to a lonely spot and kill		
take into camp		DSUE	ca 1880	US			place			
take off <i>or</i> out		H&H + DPP	1939	US			place			
take out of the box		TS								
tear apart		Auster	1998*				cause			
terminate		DPP + Coppola 2	1979*					end		

terminate <i>or</i> dismiss with extreme prejudice*		ODS	1972	US spies				end		
tip off		DSUE2 + ODS	1920						see "tip off", die	
tool		DSUE2	ca 1845		ex a metaphor by De Quincey		instrument			
top (off)	kill; hang; behead	ADS@ + TS	1718		notion of beheading, i.e. removing sb's top		reduction			
total (out)		DPP + TS							i.e. injure sb so badly that they cannot survive	
turn off		ATS						end		
wash (away <i>or</i> out)		H&H + ODS	1941	US			place	cleanliness	see "wash out", die	
wash up		ATS						cleanliness end	when the meal has been eaten. see "wash up", die	
waste		Sopranos 12 + Coppola 2	1964	US						
wax		TS + ODS	1968	US	ex earlier sense: beat					
whack (out)		Sopranos 9 + Scorsese 1, 2	1990*					hit		
wipe (out)		Tarantino + Polanski 2	1968					cleanliness		

work off	(esp. hang)	ATS + DSUE2	1840							
X out/ be X'd (out)	kill/ be killed	TS + H&H						end	i.e. cross sb, eliminate them	
be buffing the dog	(such stolen dogs as are not advertised for)	DSUE	1781		prob. ex "buff" which stands for the bare skin	aftermath			after the dogs are dead, they strip them of their skins, which they sell, and give the flesh to other dogs	
dry-gulch	(shepherds and burn their wagons)	ATS + TS								
give the black draught	(a sailor dangerously ill)	DSUE	ca 1870	nautical			cause	relief	visualised as a black medicine given as a purge + black is the colour of death	
pull a Frankie and Johnny	( <i>of a wife</i> ) kill her husband because he "did her wrong"	ATS								
put to bed with a shovel	(and bury)	H&H				horizontal	place	sleep	i.e. bury. see "be put to bed with a shovel", be dead	
crawl [sb's] hump	(by stealth)	ATS								
give it to [sb] on the lam	(in flight)	ATS								
massacre	(one person with cruelty)	ATS								
mow down	(with a gun or car)	Eels 1 + TS	2000*			horizontal				
bang (off)	(with a gun)	ATS					hit	sound 2		

baste	(with a gun)	ATS					projectile		i.e. baste with bullets	
bing	(with a gun)	ATS			onom.		sound 2			
blast (down <i>or</i> out)/ put the blast on/ blast [sb's] head off	(with a gun)	Bukowski 1 + Gilliam	1979*							
blow (away <i>or</i> down <i>or</i> out <i>or</i> up)	(with a gun)	De Palma 1 + Southpark 8	1913	US						
blow [sb's] brains out/ splash [sb's] brains	(with a gun)	Ross + Watkins	1972*				cause			
blow [sb's] head <i>or</i> top off	(with a gun)	Cave 1 + Keighley	1948*				cause reduction			
blow <i>or</i> drill <i>or</i> shoot a hole in/ drill holes in/ drill/ put a hole in [sb's] face/ put a hole through/ put holes in [sb's] head	(with a gun)	Reed 2 + Cave 3	ca 1830				cause hole			
blow the gizzard out of	(with a gun)	ATS					cause			
bop	(with a gun)	GHS@ + TS			onom.		sound 2		sound of a (silenced) gun	
bore	(with a gun)	ATS					cause			
bullet	(with a gun)	ATS					projectile			
bulletize	(with a gun)	ATS					projectile			



bump (off <i>or</i> up)/ ease <i>or</i> slip the bump <i>or</i> bump-off/ give <i>or</i> hand <i>or</i> slide the bump	(with a gun)	Huston 2 + Kubrick 2	1907	US			hit	sound 2	variant of "knock off"	
burn down <i>or</i> out <i>or</i> up	(with a gun)	TAS + DPP					fire			
cannon	(with a gun)	ATS					hit			
crack (down)	(with a gun)	ATS					hit			
cut down	(with a gun)	GHS@ + ATS				horizontal				
feed a (fatal <i>or</i> lead) pill/ pill	(with a gun)	ATS					projectile		"lead" stands for the bullets	
feed lead (medicine <i>or</i> poison)/ fill <i>or</i> pump full of lead/ fill <i>or</i> splash with lead/ give a dose of hot lead/ give (a dose of) lead medicine <i>or</i> poison/ give a lead cocktail/ lead-poison/ plant lead in/ pump hot lead into/ pump <i>or</i> throw lead	(with a gun)	HSD + Cave 3	1996*				projectile	reward punishment	medicine implies a curing; poison implies the contrary. "lead" stands for the bullets	
flip	(with a gun)	DSUE2	1812							
fog	(with a gun)	ATS + DPP					projectile		fog with bullets or fog the victim	
gat (up)	(with a gun)	ATS								
get the lead	(with a gun)	DSUE2	late 19				projectile		"lead" stands for the bullets	

give <i>or</i> put it to	(with a gun)	ATS							
give <i>or</i> slip the works/ put the works on	(with a gun)	HSD + ATS	20	US					anglicised ca 1930
give the fireworks	(with a gun)	ATS					projectile fire		
go down blazing	(with a gun)	ATS					heat		
gun (down <i>or</i> up)/ give the gun	(with a gun)	Jarmusch + Scorsese 2	1969				instrumen t		
heat/ ease <i>or</i> give <i>or</i> slip the heat/ pour the heat (into)/ turn on the heat/ turn the heat on	(with a gun)	DSUE2 + TAS	ca 1932	US			heat		anglicised ex the US usage
iron out	(with a gun)	DPP + TS					projectile		bullets are made of iron
leave <i>or</i> let have it	(with a gun)	Peminger + Lewis	1944*						
nail	(with a gun)	ATS + DPP			"nail" stands for bullet		projectile		
peg	(with a gun)	ATS			"peg" stands for bullet		projectile		
perforate	(with a gun)	ATS					hole		
pick off	(with a gun)	ATS + Van Sant	2003*						
pip	(with a gun)	HSD + DSUE2	1900	army	"pip" stands for a bullet		projectile		
plug	(with a gun)	Alexandre + Huston 1	1875				cause		i.e. make the bullet penetrate the body

plump	(with a gun)	DSUE2	1785		onom.		sound 2		
poop	(with a gun)	GHS@ + ATS	ca 1930		onom.		sound 2		
pop	(with a gun)	Sopranos 12 + DPP	1725		onom.		sound 2		
pop a cap	(with a gun)	OSD@			onom. "cap" stands for the head		sound 2		
pop down	(with a gun)	DSUE2	1762		onom.	horizontal	sound 2		see "pop", kill with a gun
pop off	(with a gun)	HSD + ATS	1813		onom.		place sound 2		see "pop off", die
pot	(with a gun)	ATS + DSUE2	1860		onom.		place sound 2		idea of burying the victim + onom.; or kill for the pot, i.e. for food
pump off	(with a gun)	ATS							pump life or blood from the victim
puncture	(with a gun)	ATS					hole		
rod out	(with a gun)	ATS			a "rod" is a small gun in US slang		instrument		
saw off	(with a gun)	ATS					reduction		
send home via the rod route	(with a gun)	ATS			"rod" is a gun in US slang		place		
shoot down	(with a gun)	Cave 1 + Faulkner	1929*			horizontal	cause		
shoot up	(with a gun)	ATS					cause		
shoot up full of bullet holes	(with a gun)	Eels 2	2001*				cause hole		

slug/ throw a slug into	(with a gun)	ATS			"slug" is a bullet in US slang	projectile			
smoke (out <i>or</i> up)	(with a gun)	TS + Fastlane	2002*			fire		there's no smoke without fire. see "fumer", kill	
stop**	(with a gun)	ATS + DSUE2	1901	Aus		stillness			
talk to	(with a gun)	ATS						euph.	
tell the bad news*	(with a gun)	ATS					negative	euph.	
torch (out <i>or</i> up)	(with a gun)	ATS				fire			
turn it loose	(with a gun)	DPP				aftermath		i.e. the body that the victim cannot control anymore	
vomit leaden death	(with a gun)	ATS				projectile		"lead" stands for the bullets	
wing	(with a gun)	DPP							
wuff	(with a gun)	DSUE2	1940		onom.	sound 2			
zap/ put the zap on	(with a gun)	H&H + TS	1942	US	onom.	sound 2			
zing	(with a gun)	TAS			onom.	sound 2			
zonk	(with a gun)	DPP			onom.	sound 2			
zotz	(with a gun)	GHS@ + H&H			onom.	sound 2			
chop down <i>or</i> off/ be chopped/ get the chop	(with a gun)/ be killed with a gun	ODS + DPP	1945	army + RAF	maybe of the US underworld chopper, a machine-gun	reduction			
wipe [sb's] eye <i>or</i> nose	kill a bird that sb has missed with a gun	DSUE2	ca 1820	sport				sb is not the victim, but the one who missed the bird	

knock <i>or</i> let daylight into (the victualling department)/ knock <i>or</i> let daylight into the luncheon reservoir/ knock the daylights out of/ let <i>or</i> shoot the daylights into/ make daylight shine through/ put daylight through/ put the daylights through	(with a gun or knife)	DSUE + ATS	1774	US			hole			
put a bullet <i>or</i> knife through	(with a gun or knife)	HSD					cause			
cut with a blade	(with a knife)	DPP					cause			
knife	(with a knife)	Keighley + DPP	1948*				instrumen t			
shank/ chew <i>or</i> stick with a shank/ stick	(with a knife)	DPP			"shank" stands for a knife		instrumen t			
slash	(with a knife)	DPP					cause			
play iceman	(with an ice pick)	DPP								
brain	(by hitting the head)	ODS	1382		orig. meant "kill by smashing the brain"					
topper	(by hitting the head)	DSUE2	late 1860's				hit			
BO/ bug out	(with toxic substances)	TS			BO: initials of "bug out"					

smog*	(in the gas chamber)	DPP			blend of "smoke" + "fog"	instrument			
frag	(with a hand grenade)	TS + TAS	1970	US		projectile		some hand grenades fragment during the explosion	
burke*	asphyxiate	DPP			onom.	sound 1			
gasphyxiate*	asphyxiate by gas	ATS			blend of "gas" and "asphyxiate"				
bishop	drown	DSUE	1836					when one bishop drowned a boy in order to sell the body for dissecting purposes	
burn	electrocute; kill with a gun; be electrocuted	TS + TAS				fire			
fry	electrocute; be electrocuted	Coen 2 + TAS	1928	US		fire			
give a permanent (wave)*	electrocute	DPP + ATS						the hair is changed by the electrical shock	
roast	electrocute	TAS				heat			
toast	electrocute	TAS				heat		see "be done on toast", die	
take for a ride	entice to a lonely spot and kill	TS + TAS	ca 1937	US		(indirect) cause			

Alexander	hang	DSUE	ca 1670	Ir	ex the merciless way in which Sir Jerome Alexander, an Ir judge in 1660-74, carried out the duties of his office				
chop/ get the chop/ be topped and chopped	hang; guillotine/ be hanged	DSUE + HDSC				reduction			
crap <i>or</i> crop	hang	DSUE	ca 1780			cause		i.e. let the victim fall like "crap"	
derrick	hang	DSUE	1600		ex Derrick, the name of the public hangman ca 1593-1610				
jam	hang	DSUE2	mid 18		may equal "jamb"				
make gallows-apples of	hang	DSUE2	ca 1825						
neck	hang; choke	DSUE2	18					prob. the neck hanging phrases	
noose/ nooze	hang	DSUE2	ca 1670			rope			
nub	hang	DSUE2	ca 1670						

scrag	hang	TS + TAS	ca 1750						
scruff	hang	DSUE2	19		ex "scruff", the nape of the neck				
stretch	hang	ODS	1595			cause			
string up	hang	HDSC + ODS	1810			instrument			
swing	hang	DSUE2	ca 1815						rare (in the transitive form)
throw a necktie party*	hang	HDSC + ODS	1882	US		rope			"throw a party" is informal for "give a party"
treyn(e)/ trine/ tryne	hang	DSUE2	1560		maybe ex a shortening of "trine to the cheats", be hanged				
tuck (up)	hang	DSUE2	late 17		ex "tuck", put away in a safe place	place			
massacree	massacre	ATS			mispronunciation				
masticate	massacre	ATS			pronunciation close to "massacre"				
black-bottle	poison	ATS				instrument			the bottle containing the poison being black
pizen	poison	ATS			mispronunciation of "poison"				



be the death of/ be death on	cause the death of	LDEI/ ATS							often in the future tense
be cramped	be killed or hanged	DSUE	18		development ex dead SE "cramp", to compress a person's limbs as a punishment	cause			
be expended	be killed	DSUE	mid 18	nautical	ex bookkeeping accounts				i.e. be gone to sea for a longer time than planned
be finee kapout <i>or</i> kaput/ be finee <i>or</i> finni <i>or</i> finny <i>or</i> finnee <i>or</i> fini	be killed	DSUE2 + TS	late 1914	army	ex Fr "capot" or ex Lat "caput", the head. ex Fr fini, over		end		
be gone for six	be killed	DSUE2	ca 1930	RAF			place		i.e. six feet (underground)
be hashed-up	be killed	TS							
be kilt	be killed	DSUE2 + ATS	19	Ir	pun based on the close pronunciation of "kilt" and "killed"				
be kooferred	be killed	DSUE2	ca 1860	navy: Afr squadron					
be put <i>or</i> scratched out of [one's] mess	be killed	DSUE2	1887	army				relief	see "lose the number of one's mess", die
be sent to the skies	be killed	DSUE2	1909	religion			place		referring to heaven

be silent	be killed	DSUE2	1725			silence	aftermath		euph.	
be sunk	be killed	TS					cause			
be tapped	be killed	ATS					hit			
be used up	be killed	ATS + DSUE2	mid 18	army						originating from a message sent by the late General John Guise, on the expedition, ca 1740, at Carthagena, when he desired the commander-in-chief, to order him some more grenadiers, for those he had were all used up
become a gold star in mother's window*	be killed	ATS		army			aftermath			a "gold star" is a military reward
buy the farm	be killed	H&H					place			see "buy the farm", die
catch it where the chicken got it	be killed	ATS								be reserved the same end, i.e. death, as a chicken
come to a sticky end	be killed	DSUE	ca 1915					negative end		see "come to a sticky end", die
do [one's] bit	be killed	ATS		army			cause			i.e. do one's duty, hence be killed by the enemy
fail to return**	be killed	ATS		Air Force			aftermath	failure		euph.
fire [one's] last shot**	be killed	ATS		army				end		
fly too near the sun	be killed	ATS		Air Force			heat			i.e. like Icarus
get [one's] check	be killed	DSUE	WW1	army						

get [one's] come-uppance <i>or</i> come-uppings	be killed	ATS		religion	maybe ex "come up", get this order from above	place			
get his	be killed	DSUE2	ca 1914	army				inexorability	
get it	be killed	ATS + DSUE2		army				inexorability	variant much less usual than "get his"
go down	be killed	Scorsese 2	1995*			horizontal			
have [one's] number gone up	be killed	DSUE2	1915	army	ex turf jargon				e.g. "one's number has gone up"
lick the dust	be killed	ATS + LDEI				horizontal			
lose the number of [one's] mess/ lose [one's] number	be killed	DSUE2 + ATS	1887	navy + army				end	end of an ordinary activity. see "lose the number of one's mess", die
turn up missing	be killed	ATS		army				aftermath	
wear cement boots <i>or</i> overshoes*	be killed	DPP						aftermath	image of a corpse hidden in concrete, lest he be put in it alive. see "buy [sb] concrete galoshes", kill
write [one]self off/ be written off	be killed, esp. through carelessness or impetuoussness	DSUE2	1939	RAF				worthless	
come back for [one's] cap, not to have**	( <i>of an airman</i> ) have been killed	DSUE + ATS	1918	RFC + RAF				aftermath	

be dewitted	be killed by the mob	DSUE	ca 1685		as were the brothers De Witt, Dutch statesmen, in 1672				
be put in a bag	be killed, esp. in battle	DSUE2	1914	army			aftermath		ex shot birds put in a game-bag
go for a burton	( <i>of a pilot</i> ) be killed in an air crash	LDEI	1939	RAF				reward	a burton is a bottle of beer (made at Burton-on-Trent). see "go for a burton", die
pay the price of Admiralty	be killed at sea	DSUE2	20	navy					sarcastic euph.
rest in pieces*	be killed by an exploding shell	ATS		army	pun on "rest in peace"		aftermath		
be buzzed	be killed with a gun	DSUE	WW1	army	ex the buzz of a bullet	projectile sound 2			
be tubed	be killed with a gun	TS					instrument		ex the shape of a shotgun
sell out	be killed with a gun rather than surrender	ATS							the dying person is courageous facing death
stop one	be killed with a gun	ODS	1901		"one" refers to a bullet	cause			
hop headless	be beheaded	DSUE2	14				reduction		
be frummagemmed	be choked or strangled	DSUE2	ca 1670						
be juiced/ take the juice	be electrocuted	ATS					cause		
be shocked to death	be	ATS					cause		

	electrocuted									
be strapped	be electrocuted	DPP					(indirect) cause		so that you do not flee from the chair	
be wired	be electrocuted	DPP					instrument			
hit the chair	be electrocuted	DPP					hit			
jump	be electrocuted	TAS								
ride old Smoky <i>or</i> Sparky	be electrocuted	TAS + ODS	1923	US			fire			
ride the lightning	be electrocuted	TAS + ODS	1935	US			fire			
sizzle	be electrocuted	DPP + TAS					sound 1			
squat (hot)	be electrocuted	DPP + TAS					stillness		the condemned will not move away from the chair	
take the electric cure	be electrocuted	DPP					cause	relief		
be electrocuted	be electrocuted other than in the electric chair	ATS					fire			
kiss the maid	be guillotined	DSUE2	late 17			ex "maiden" which stands for a decapitating machine				

be binned	be hanged	DSUE	1883	London	referring to Bartholomew Binns, a hangman appointed in 1883				
be choked by a hempen quinsy	be hanged	DSUE	16				rope		"hemp" is a plant used to make ropes
be dempstered	be hanged	DSUE	mid 17	Scot	ex Dempster, that official whose duty was, until 1773, to repeat the sentence to the prisoner in open court				
be exalted	be hanged; be lynched	DSUE + ATS	19				cause		
be hung	be hanged	DSUE2	19						is increasingly considered a solecism for "hanged"
be in deadly suspense <i>or</i> suspense*	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1780		pun on suspension		cause		
be marwooded	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1875		ex executioner Marwood (?-1883)				
be stabbed with a Bridport <i>or</i> Brydport dagger	be hanged	DSUE	mid 17				cause rope		the Bridport dagger is a hangman's rope, much hemp being grown round Bridport
be tied-up	be hanged	DSUE2	1923				(indirect) cause		

be twisted	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1720					ex twisting as one swings on the rope
bless the world with [one's] heels	be hanged	DSUE	ca 1560			place		i.e. be above everybody because of hanging. see "bénir des pieds", be hanged
caper/ cut a caper (up)on nothing/ cut caper sauce*	be hanged	DSUE	18					"dance" because of the pain. "cut caper sauce" is a pun on the double meaning of caper, also a flower bud used to flavour sauces
catch <i>or</i> nab the stifles	be hanged	DSUE2	19		"stifles" stands for the gallows	cause		
catch rope	be hanged	DPP				cause	rope	
climb <i>or</i> mount the ladder (to rest)**/ go up the ladder (to rest)	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1560			(indirect) cause		
cry cockles	be hanged	DSUE	late 18			sound 1		ex the gurgling of strangulation
dance (off)	be hanged	DPP + TS	19			cause		
dance a Newgate frisk <i>or</i> hornpipe*/ dance a Tyburn hornpipe on nothing*/ dance the Paddington frisk/ dance the Tyburn jig*/ dangle in a Tyburn string	be hanged	DSUE2	1698			cause		Tyburn gallows, the place of execution for Middlesex from late 12 till 1783, stood where the present Bayswater and Edgware Roads join with Oxford Street; from 1783 until 1903, the death penalty was exacted at Newgate Prison. Paddington refers to Tyburn

dance at Beilby's ball (where the sheriff plays the music)*	be hanged	DSUE	late 18				cause		"Beilby's" is prob. a personified and punning perversion of "bilboes", fetters
dance at the sheriff's ball and loll out [one's] tongue at the company*/ dance on nothing at the sheriff's ball	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1780				cause		
dance on (the) air/ dance (up)on nothing/ dance upon nothing in a hempen cravat*	be hanged	LDEI + DPP	18				cause	rope	"hemp" is a plant used to make ropes
dangle in the Sheriff's picture-frame	be hanged	DSUE	late 18				cause		
die in [one's] shoes <i>or</i> boots	be hanged	DSUE + DSUE2	ca 1690						
die in a devil's <i>or</i> horse's nightcap/ go to rest in a horse's night-cap	be hanged	DSUE + ATS	17						
die like a dog	be hanged	DSUE	17					worthless	see "die like a dog", die
die of (a) hempen fever*	be hanged	DSUE2 + ATS	mid 18				rope		"hemp" is a plant used to make ropes
die of throat trouble*	be hanged	DPP					cause		
die on a fish-day	be hanged	DSUE	17			stillness			i.e. the victim hanging like a fish that is caught



die the death of a trooper's horse, [you will]	be hanged	DSUE	ca 1780	jocular cp					i.e. with your shoes on	
fetch a Tyburn stretch/ preach at Tyburn cross/ put on a Tyburn piccadill/ take a leap at Tyburn/ wear a Tyburn tippet/ wear Tyburn tiffany	be hanged	DSUE2	1573						Tyburn gallows, the place of execution for Middlesex (see "dance a Tyburn frisk" for more precision)	
go crossless home by Woodcock's Cross	repent and be hanged	DSUE2	17				place			
go off with the leaf	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1870	Ir					either ex the autumnal fall of leaves or ex a hanging-device shaped like the leaf of a table. see "drop one's leaf", die	
go through the trap	be hanged	DPP					cause			
go to heaven in a string	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1590	religion			place rope		"string" stands for the rope	
go upstairs out of the world	be hanged	DSUE2	late 17				place aside			
have a hearty-choke (and <i>or</i> with caper-sauce) for breakfast*	be hanged	DSUE2	1785						pun on "artichoke" and on "caper" (see "caper")	
kick away the prop	be hanged	DSUE2	early 19				cause			
kick the clouds (before the hotel	be hanged	DSUE2	1811				place			

door)										
kick the wind	be hanged	DSUE2	late 16				place			
leap at a daisy	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1550							
look through a hempen window*	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1625				rope		"hemp" is a plant used to make ropes. see "mettre la tête à la fenêtre", be guillotined	
make a wry mouth	be hanged	DSUE2	17		semi-proverbial		aftermath			
morrice/ morris	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1720							
mount the cart	be hanged	DSUE2	18				(indirect) cause		the victims proceeded in a cart to the place of execution	
nap a winder	be hanged	DSUE2	1859				cause		literally, catch something that winds one	
piss when [sb] can't whistle*	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1780				aftermath		a body lets all waste out when dead	
preach on Tower Hill	be hanged	DSUE2	16				place		Tower Hill was long the place of execution in London	
ride the mare	be hanged	DSUE2	late 16						when the mare moves, the condemned is hanged	
shake a cloth in the wind	be hanged	DSUE2	late 18							
stretch ((the) hemp)	be hanged; be lynched	ATS + DPP	mid 19				cause rope		"hemp" is a plant used to make ropes	

sus. per coll.	hanged	DSUE2	ca 1780		ex "suspensus per collum", hanged by the neck, the jailer's entry against a hanged man's name				
swing (in a halter)	be hanged	HDSC + DPP	1542		ex "swing", be hanged	rope			
take a leap in the dark	be hanged	DSUE2	17				cause darkness	compare with "take a leap into the great unknown", die	
take the long jump	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1921				cause		
trine to the cheats	be hanged	DSUE2							
wag hemp in the wind	be hanged	DSUE2	1620				cause rope	"hemp" is a plant used to make ropes	
wallop <i>or</i> wallup in a tether <i>or</i> tow	be hanged	DSUE2	ca 1780	Scot			rope		
wear a hempen necktie	be hanged	DSUE2	18				rope	"hemp" is a plant used to make ropes	
wear hemp	be hanged	DSUE2					rope	"hemp" is a plant used to make ropes	
die with cotton in [one's] ears*	be hanged at Newgate	DSUE						i.e. at Newgate where Cotton was the prison chaplain	
walk up Ladder Lane and down Hemp Street	be hanged at the Yard Arm	DSUE2	19	nautical			cause rope	by allusive topography: "hemp" is a plant used to make ropes	

keep an ironmonger's shop by the side of a common (where the sheriff sets one up)*	be hanged in chains	DSUE2	ca 1780			stillness				
keep sheep by moonlight*	be hanged in chains	DSUE2	18			stillness				
be run up	be lynched	ATS					cause			
die like a rat	be poisoned	DSUE	17					worthless		
grease the track*	be run over by a train	ATS								
take the hobo short line	be run over by a train	ATS								

# FRENCH CORPUS

## Expressions meaning “die”

expressions meaning "die" (unless specified)	precise meaning	source	date	origin	etymology	seme 1	seme 2	seme 3	commentary
aller ad patres		PLC + NPR			Lat: towards the ancestors		place		see "envoyer ad patres", kill
aller au paradis		Autrefois + Gainsbourg 5	1980*	religion			place	reward	see "go to heavens", die
aller aux enfers		Autrefois		religion			place	punishment	
aller dans l'autre monde**		PLC					place		see "go to the world to come", die
aller les pieds devant, s'en/ partir <i>or</i> sortir les pieds devant		Gainsbourg 1 + ATQP	ca 1462			horizontal	place		see "go out feet first", die
aller sous les fleurs		DFNC					place		see "be pushing up the daisies", be dead and buried
aller, s'en**		DS + Raphael	2000*				place		euph.
anéantir, s'		DMMF							

arrêter, s'***		DMMF				stillness			
avalier la <i>or</i> sa langue		DFNC + DAFO	1867				cause		
avalier le goujon		DAFO + ATQP	1806					end	ordinary thing representing activity, therefore life
avalier sa chaloupe		DHAF	1898	navy				end	implying the last one. ordinary thing representing activity, therefore life
avalier sa chiffe		DAFO + DHAF	1878		modification of the Old Fr "chipe" meaning rag, under the influence of "chiffre" meaning thing, person of little value. "chiffe" stands for tongue		cause	end	ordinary thing representing activity, therefore life
avalier sa chique		HSD + DFAP	1867					end	ordinary thing representing activity, therefore life
avalier sa cuiller <i>or</i> fourchette		DAFO + DFNC	1867					end	ordinary thing representing activity, therefore life
avalier sa gaffe		DHAF + DFNC	1832	navy				end	ordinary thing representing activity, therefore life

avaler son acte <i>or</i> bulletin <i>or</i> extrait de naissance/ avaler son extrait d'acte de naissance	ATQP + DFNC	1947					end	ordinary thing representing activity, therefore life
avaler son billet de logement	ATQP						end	a dead person no longer needs a home
avaler, l'	DFAP + DAFO						end	ordinary thing representing activity, therefore life
baiser la Camarde/ épouser la camarde/ faire ménage avec la Camarde	HSD + DHAF	1842						"Camarde" stands for death
barrer au royaume des ombres, se	ATQP	1972				place	darkness	
basourdir	AdLJC	17						
boucler <i>or</i> faire sa malle**	DAFO + DHAF	1883				place		i.e. go away
cadancher	HSD + DHAF	1889		distortion of "calancher"	stillness			
calancher/ calencher	DAFO + GFF	1846	prison	parasitic suffix "-ancher" on "caler", stop abruptly	stillness			the spelling "calencher" is frequent maybe under the influence of "déclencher"
caler**	AdPG				stillness			

canner*/ caner		DMMF + Munz & Bitton	1829		ex Swiss Fr "canner", jouer des cannes (i.e. run)	place		there is prob. a confusion between this verb and "caner" meaning "leave" and "die". "cannes" stand for the legs see "casser sa canne", die
cascader		DAFO + HDSC	1928		ex "cascade", stunt or "casquer", cough up			
casser <i>or</i> rompre le cou, se		PLC + Jacobs	1987*			cause		
casser sa canne		DHAF + Renaud 1	1866			place		also means "leave": you bend your leg run. see "cut one's stick" + "canner", di
casser sa pipe		DFNC + Podalydès	1856				end	
casser sa queue de billard		DAFO + DFNC	1901				game	see "drop the cue", die
casser son crachoir		DAFO	1856				end	
casser son fouet		DAFO	1856				end	
casser son œuf/ casser ses œufs		DAFO	1640				end	
casser, la		DAFO + DFNC	1856				end	



casser, se		DHAF	1947				place		by metonymy of "se la casser [la jambe]" meaning run away
cesser d'être**		PLC						end	euph. see "cease to be", die
changer son fusil d'épaule		ATQP						relief	i.e. take the military attitude of standing at ease. see "passer l'arme à gauche", c
cirer <i>or</i> graisser ses bottes		HSD + ATQP							
claboter/ clabotter/ clapoter		HSD + DFAP	1899						prob. linked to "claquer"
clamser/ clamcer/ clamecer/ clampser/ clampcer/ clapser		GFF + ATQP	1885	army	prob. linked to an expressive root "kla". consonant substitution: "crampecer", die, ex "crampe", cramp	stiffness			
claquer du bec		DAFO	1901		ex "claquer" meaning burst				
cônir/ caunir		DHAF	1562		ex "cône", horn. idea of stiffening	stiffness			

corder		DHAF	1926		"cordé", stiffened, speaking of the side or muscles (doctors)	stiffness				
cornancher		DHAF	1928							
cracher son âme <i>or</i> embouchure		DAFO	1867							
crampecer/ cramser/ crampser/ clavecer/ crabser/ crapser/ krapser/ crimpser		DHAF + DFNC	1867	under- taker	ex an expressive root "cra-"	stiffness				synonym of "raidir", die. see "crampecer", kill
crever		Truffaut 2 + Gide	mid 17				cause			see "crever", kill
crever son pneu		DAFO + ATQP	1901				cause			
cronir/ crônir/ chrônir/ crounir		DFNC + Brel	1889		ex "cornir", become of horn, i.e. inert, lifeless	stillness				
déchirer son faux col/ déchirer son habit <i>or</i> tablier/ rendre son tablier**		DAFO + ATQP	1867					end		i.e. quit

déchirer, la		DAFO + HSD	1960		overlapping and confusion between "avaler sa cartouche", die and "déchirer la cartouche", eat. soldiers' expression: they used to open the cartridges with their teeth to introduce the charge into the gun					
décoller		HSD			ex "colle", glue (idea of undoing, destructing; not of cutting the neck)			dismantling	see "décoller", kill	
décoller le billard		DAFO	1867					dismantling game		
décrocher		HSD								

défiler la parade		AdPG + ATQP	1843	army						in the literal sense, it is, before taking t guard duty, stand – last sacrament – before a superior who inspects you and who you salute
dégeler		DAFO + DHAF	1807					dismantling		part in pieces (of ice), like a watercour breaking up. see "dégeler", kill
dégommer		DHAF + DFNC	1846	prison	"gômer" meaning swell with water		aftermath			see "dégommer", kill
dégonfler sa vessie*		ATQP					aftermath			a body lets all waste out when dead
déménager		ATQP					place			
dépérir		DMMF								
déposer le <i>or</i> son bilan		AdPG + DAFO	1953	shop-keepers				bankrupt		
déposer ses bouts de manche		DAFO	1867					end		
déposer son mandat		DAFO	1901					end		
dépoter son géranium		HSD + DFAP	1982					end		
déramer		HSD					cause			i.e. get out of the rails
descendre dans la tombe		PLC + NPR					aftermath place			

descendre la garde		AdPG + DAFO	1808	army				end		
dessouder/ la dessouder/ se (la) dessouder		HSD + DFAP	1953				reduction	dismantling	in "la dessouder", "la" stands for "cafetière" meaning head	
dévisser son billard		DAFO + GFF	1865				reduction	game	allusion to the billard cue that the player unscrewed to put away when their game was finished	
dévisser, se		DFAP					reduction			
dévisser/ la dévisser		HSD + DFAP	1881				reduction			
disparaître		DMMF + PLC					place			
effacer, s'		Téléphone + DFAP	1927						euph.	
embrasser la faucheuse		Téhy	2002*						"faucheuse" stands for death	
endormir, s'		Pialat + Gainsbourg 3	1976*					sleep		

enfiler un paletot de sapin*/ se faire faire un costume en bois <i>or</i> sapin/ se faire tailler un costume en bois/ s'habiller de sapin/ s'habiller de quatre planches/ partir entre quatre planches	ATQP + DAFO	1867				coffin		coffins are made of wood, often fir
entendre chanter les anges*	Lautner	1963*	religion			place	reward sound 3	i.e. be in heaven
éteindre <i>or</i> fermer son gaz	HSD + DFAP	1867					end	
éteindre sa bougie <i>or</i> veilleuse <i>or</i> lampe**/ souffler sa veilleuse <i>or</i> camoufle	HSD + ATQP	1901		"camoufle" stands for a candle		darkness		see "snuff it", die
être rappelé à Dieu	NPR		religion			place	reward	
expirer	DMMF + PLC							
faire arranger, se	HSD						improvement	i.e. be mended, because there was sth wrong. see "arranger", kill
faire capout	DHAF	1830						see "capout maq", kill
faire couic	HSD + DAFO	1891		onom.	sound 1			
faire son paquet	DHAF					place		i.e. so as to leave
fermer les yeux	DFNC						sleep	

fermer <i>or</i> refermer son parapluie/ fermer <i>or</i> plier son pébroc <i>or</i> pébroque	DFNC + ATQP	1867		"pébroc" stands for umbrella	aftermath		an umbrella swells like a penis. when y are dead, you can no longer have sex
fermer sa porte	DFNC					end	
fermer son vasistas	DFNC					end	
filer son câble (par le bout)	AdPG + ATQP	1834	navy			place	let the anchor fall with its cable is a desperate action
finir	DMMF + Vian 4					end	
frapper au monument*	ATQP					place	i.e. "monument aux morts", war memorial; in order to join the dead
gober, la	DAFO	1862					
lâcher la bouée**	DAFO	1947				cause	i.e. give up and drown
lâcher la rampe	HSD + DFAP	1862				cause	the banister is a guide and support essential to life
laisser sa peau, y	Hallyday + Jacobs	1963*					
laisser ses bottes quelque part**	DAFO	1867				end	because you no longer need them
laisser ses os	Lautner	1963*				aftermath	
larguer les amarres	DAFO	1977				place	
macaber	DHAF	1883		ex "macabé", corpse			
macaber, se	DHAF	1901		ex "macabé", corpse			

manger du sapin		Semoun	2002*				coffin		coffins are made of wood, often fir
mettre les volets à la boutique**		DFAP + DAFO	1977					end bankrupt	shopkeepers shut their shutters when they close the shop
monter au ciel		Améris	2001*	religion			place	reward	i.e. go to heaven
oublier de respirer*		HSD + DFAP	1977				cause		
oublier <i>or</i> perdre le goût du pain		HSD + DFAP	1718				aftermath		you do not eat when you are dead
partir		Balavoine + DMMF	1983*				place		
partir en avant		HDSC					place		
partir pour le royaume des taupes/ s'en aller au royaume des taupes/ être dans le royaume des taupes	die/ be dead	HSD					place		i.e. underground
passer		Veber + DFAP	2003*						
passer de l'autre côté**		Autrefois					place	transition	see "go to the other side", die
passer de vie à trépas		Peyo + DS	1961*					transition	
passer l'arme à gauche		Benacquista 2 + Blier 2	1832	army				relief	i.e. take the military attitude of standing at ease. see "changer son fusil d'épaule" die



passer sa chique à bâbord	DHAF	1884	navy						funny transposition of "passer l'arme à gauche", die
passer, y	HSD + DFAP	1929							
perdre la vie	MC Solaar 2 + NPR	1994*					negative	see "lose the decision", die	
péter son lot	DFAP								
piquer sa plaque*	DAFO	1867				burial		i.e. to engrave the commemorative plaque ("plaque commémorative") that is put on the dead's grave	
plier bagage	HSD					place			
plier ses chemises	DAFO	1867				place		i.e. pack to leave	
poser <i>ou</i> déposer sa chique	DFAP + DAFO	1867							
prendre la secousse	DAFO + ATQP	1901				cause		you can give a start just before dying	
quimper	HSD + ATQP								
quitter	cont					place		euph. e.g. "il nous a quitté"	
raidir	DFAP + DHAF	16				stiffness			
recevoir le coup du lapin	DAFO	1866		"coup du lapin" is a lethal hit on the neck		cause	hit		

redevenir <i>or</i> retourner poussière	Renaud 3 + MC Solaar 2	1994*				aftermath			
remercier son boucher <i>or</i> boulanger**	HSD + DFAP	1866						here "remercier" means dismiss: the de person will never need meat or bread anymore	
remiser son fiacre	DAFO	1867			stillness			dead, you no longer need your carriage	
remiser son sapin	DAFO	1867				coffin		coffins are made of wood, often fir	
rendre l'âme	PLC + Jacobs	1987*	religion			aftermath		when you die, you give back the soul g gave you	
rendre le dernier soupir**	PLC + NPR					cause			
rendre sa bûche	DAFO	1867					end		
rendre sa canne au ministre*	DAFO	1867		pun on the double meaning of "canne": leg + cane	stillness			i.e. no longer use it to walk. see "canne die	
rendre sa clef/ rendre ses clefs	DAFO + DFAP	1867				place		i.e. no longer live in one's home. see "r to be at home", be dead	
rendre sa cuiller	DAFO	1867					end	i.e. no longer eat	
rendre son cordon	DAFO	1867					end		
rendre son livret	DAFO	1867					end		

rendre son permis de chasse		DAFO	1867					end		
renverser sa marmite		DAFO	1867					negative		
renverser son absinthe <i>or</i> café <i>or</i> mazagran		DAFO	1901					negative		
renverser son casque		DAFO	1867							
répandre, se		DAFO	1690							
rester, y		HSD + DS	1740				stillness			stop moving
saluer le public**		DHAF	1867	theatre				end		i.e. at the end of the show
sauter le pas		HDSC + ATQP						transition		
sécher		DAFO	1915					aftermath		
tirer le couvercle		Matzneff	1981*					coffin		i.e. that of the coffin
tirer sa révérence		cont						place		i.e. before leaving
tomber		DMMF					horizontal			
tortiller <i>or</i> tourner de l'œil/ virer l'œil		DAFO	1808					sleep		i.e. faint
tourner le coin		DAFO + HDSC	1954					disappearance		once you have turned at the corner of the street, you have disappeared
verser sa cuiller au magasin		DAFO	1867							
vider, se		DAFO + DHAF	1866					aftermath		a body lets all waste out when dead
claquer	(quickly)	MC Solaar 1 + Renoir	1859			ex "claquer" meaning burst				
être tortillé	(quickly)	DAFO	1867							

être troussé	(suddenly or very quickly)	DAFO	1690		ex an evolution in popular Lat ex classical Lat: "torquere", twist				
éteindre, s'***	(slowly)	PLC + DS							
filer de l'huile	(slowly)/ be dying	DFAP + DAFO	1925						allusion to sailors, who spread oil on the raging sea to calm her down
avalier sa cartouche	(just on retirement time)	DHAF + DFNC	1863	army				end	death is considered as a military discharge
viander, se	(in an accident)	DAFO + DHAF	1950		ex "viande", corpse		aftermath		i.e. become meat
glisser/ la glisser/ se laisser glisser	(naturally or by disease but not violently)	DFNC + Ravalec	1846	prison					i.e. slide on the slope of life
passer à la casserole	(gen. of violent death)	Vian 3 + DFNC	1974*				heat		see "cook", die + "passer à la casserole" kill
crever la gueule ouverte	starve to death/ die on one's own	DFAP + DAFO	1919				cause		
dormir avec les anges	be dead	NPR		religion				sleep	reward
être avec les anges	be dead	Gainsbourg 6	1984*	religion			place	reward	i.e. be in heaven
être bezardé	be dead	DHAF	1598						

être chtourbe	be dead	DAFO + DHAF	1856		ex Alsatian "storb", dead (Ger "gestorben")			see "estourbir", kill	
être dans le trou	be dead	DFAP					place		
être D.C.D. à l'arrivée	be dead	DPP			pun on "décédé", deceased			see "be DOA", be dead on arrival	
être esbasi	be dead	DHAF	1844		ex "esbasir", kill				
être mortibus*	be dead	DAFO	late 19		amusing suffixation, pseudo-Lat, of "mort", maybe under the influence of "omnibus" or of Lat heard in churches				
être nettoyé		DAFO	1901					cleanliness	
être porté en terre		DFAP					aftermath place		
être raidard(e)	be dead	DAFO	1917		"raide" + parasitic suffix "-ard"	stiffness			
être rétamé(e)	be dead	DAFO	1900			horizontal	hit		"rétamer", knock out

bouffer du pissenlit par la racine/ bouffer des <i>or</i> les pissenlits par la racine/ manger les pissenlits par la racine	be dead and buried	HSD + DAFO	1862				place		see "be pushing up the daisies", be dead
être au frais	be dead and buried	ATQP					place		i.e. underground
être éboulé à perpète	be dead and buried	DHAF	1947		"perpète" is an apocope of "perpétuité", perpetuity			eternity	
être six pieds sous terre**	be dead and buried	cont					place		see "be six feet under", be dead and buried
fumer les mauves/ fumer une couche	be dead and buried	DFNC + ATQP					aftermath		i.e. be used as manure
rendre le cimetière bossu*	be dead and buried	ATQP					aftermath		
reposer	be dead and buried	PLC						sleep	see "be at rest", be dead
taper dans le sap	be dead and buried	DAFO	1867		"sape" is an underground path		place		
téter les salades par la racine	be dead and buried	DAFO	1877				place		variation of "bouffer les pissenlits par la racine", be dead and buried
être aux allongés	be dead (at the morgue)	DAFO	1957			horizontal			the dead are lying

avoir mal aux dents, ne plus* **/ avoir plus mal aux crocs, n'	be dead for a certain time	DAFO + ATQP	mid 17				aftermath		e.g. "il n'a plus mal aux dents" or "les dents ne lui font plus mal"
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# FRENCH CORPUS

## Expressions meaning “kill”

expressions meaning "kill" (unless specified)	precise meaning	source	date	origin	etymology	seme 1	seme 2	seme 3	commentary
abasourdir		DHAF	1632		ex "basourdir"		hit		
abattre		DPP				horizontal			like a tree
allonger		DPP + DHAF	1940			horizontal			
apaiser		DHAF	1883					relief	the Eng verb "quell", s'apaiser meaning die, formerly meant "kill"
arracher à la vie/ ôter la vie		Autrefois + Matzneff	1981*						
arranger		DFNC + Renoir	1844		antiphrasis of a cooking term: in Fr, "on arrange un mets à l'huile"			improvement	
assaisonner*		DAFO + DFNC	1896		idea of a hot meal, seasoned to get more taste + "assaisonner" is close to "assassiner"				
attiger		DFAP							



avoir la peau de/ faire la peau (à <i>or</i> de)	Gainsbourg 2 + Truffaut 1	1676/ 1850				aftermath		the skin of an animal is the symbol of its death after the hunt
azimuter/ azimuther	DAFO	1954						idea of aiming at the victim from certain angle
basir/ bazir	AdLJC + DAFO	1455		the root may be Gallic: "bàs", death (Ir) but the word also exists in Ita slang				
basourdir	AdLJC + DHAF	1648		ex "bazir"				
bétonner	HSD + DPP					aftermath		image of a corpse hidden in concrete, lest he be put in it alive. see "buy sb concrete galoshes", ki
bigorner	DAFO + DHAF	1918				hit		ironic transformation of a technical verb meaning "forge on the anvil"
bousiller/ bouziller	Mickey 3d + Truffaut 1	1897		ex "bouse" + parasitic suffix "-iller"				in received Fr: "work neglectfully "waste": damage a machine by a wrong use is "la tuer"

bûcher		DAFO	1797		first sense is "abattre des arbres", chop trees down	horizontal			
buter/ butter	kill; guillotine (1827)	Eiffel + Klapisch	1821		ex "butte" or "bute" meaning scaffold, which is always built on a hillock (butte)	instrument			
calancher		DHAF	1930		"caler", stop abruptly + parasitic suffix: "-ancher"	stillness			the sense "kill" is rare. see "calancher", die
canner/ caner		HSD + DFNC	1940		ex Swiss Fr "canner", jouer des cannes (i.e. run)	place			there is prob. a confusion between this verb and "caner" meaning "leave" and "die". "cannes" stand the legs
capout maq/ faire capout		DHAF	1718/ 1870		maq, ex Ger "machen", make				
carboniser		DPP				fire			see "brûler", kill with a gun
chacler		DAFO + DFNC	1975						
chignoler		DPP			"chignole", drill		instrument hole		
cisailier		DPP							

clouer le bec pour de bon à		DPP				silence		eternity	so that they cannot speak	
coffier		DHAF + DFNC	1725		prob. ex patois "coffir" (ex Lat conficere, kill)					
cônir		DFAP + DHAF	1566		ex "cône", horn. idea of stiffening	stiffness			see "cônir", die	
cornancher		DAFO + DHAF	1953		"cornanche" stands for a punch		instrument hit			
coucher <i>or</i> étendre <i>or</i> laisser sur le carreau/ être <i>or</i> rester sur le carreau	kill/ be killed (1883)	PLC + DFAP	1600			horizontal				
couper le cou		DS					cause reduction			
crampecer		DHAF	1899		ex "crampe", cramp, i.e. convulsion just before death	stiffness			synonym of "raidir", die. see "crampecer", die	
crever	(often with a knife)	Vian 2 + Laclos	1782*				hole			
crever la gueule à		DAFO + Marchal	1821				hole			
cronir/ crônir/ crounir/ chrônir		HSD + DAFO	1894		ex "cornir", become of horn, i.e. inert, lifeless	stiffness stillness			see "cronir", die	
débarbouiller		DAFO	1972					cleanliness		

décoller		HSD + DAFO	1885		ex "colle", glue (idea of undoing, destructing; not of cutting the neck)		dismantling	see "décoller", die	
décoller le trognon		DFNC	WW1	army	"trognon" stands for the head	reduction			
découdre		DPP					dismantling		
défalquer		DPP				reduction			
dégeler		DAFO + ATQP	1901				dismantling	part in pieces (of ice), like a watercourse breaking up. see "dégeler", die	
déglinguer		DAFO + DPP	1935				dismantling		
dégonfler		DHAF	1916	army			hole	i.e. by making a hole into the vict	
dégotter/ dégoter		DAFO	1883		maybe linked to a word from Angers "got", hole for the ball, in a game	hole			
démolir		HSD + ATQP					dismantling		
démonter		Lautner	1963*				dismantling		
déquiller		DAFO + DPP	1975		ex "quille", skittle + prefix "dé-" which is often used to mean "kill"	horizontal		i.e. knock a skittle down	

dévisser		HSD + DFAP	1879					dismantling		
dézinguer		DAFO + La Tordue	1918	army	ex "zinc", machine + prefix "dé-"			dismantling		
donner le coup de grâce		DS						relief	the victim is suffering and death is seen as a relief	
ébobir		DHAF	1821		ex Fr "ébaubir" which stands for flabbergast					
ébouser*/ ébouzer		ATQP + DFNC	1954		ex "bousiller", by another word "ébousiller"				"ébouser", suggested by the flattening of dung on the ground	
écraser		DAFO + DHAF	1798							
effacer		Téhy + Ruiz	1867					disappearance		
éliminer		M + Jacobs & De Moor	1990*					end		
emmener au pays des ténèbres éternelles*		Peyo	1961*					place darkness	eternity punishment	
emmener au royaume des ombres*		Peyo	1961*					place		
emmener chez Belzébuth*		Peyo	1961*	religion				place	punishment	i.e. in hell
empaqueter		DAFO + DHAF	1916	army				aftermath		i.e. put the body in a packet after death

emporter		DS					place		e.g. "la mort l'a emporté"	
endormir**	kill; poison (1797)	DAFO + DHAF	1749					sleep	euph.	
enlever		PLC					place		e.g. "la mort l'a enlevé à ses amis"	
enlever <i>or</i> ôter le goût du pain à/ faire passer <i>or</i> perdre le goût du pain/ passer le goût du pain		Renaud 4 + DS	1640						one does not eat when they are de see "oublier le goût du pain", die	
entailler		DHAF + DFNC	1842				cause			
envoyer à Cone*		DHAF	1642			pun on "cônir", die				
envoyer ad patres		PLC				Lat: towards the ancestors	place		see "aller ad patres", die	
envoyer au tapis/ aller <i>or</i> descendre au tapis	kill/ be killed	DAFO	1949/ 1903				horizontal			
envoyer en enfer		cont	late 20	religion			place	punishment	see "aller aux enfers", die	
envoyer <i>or</i> fichier <i>or</i> flanquer <i>or</i> foutre <i>or</i> mettre en l'air		Vian 3 + Bernet & Abuli	1833				place			
éradiquer		Téhy	2002*					end		
esbasir		DHAF				old Ita slang "sbasir", die, kill			see "basir", kill	
escagasser		ATQP								

escaper		DHAF	1821		apocope of "escapoucher"				
escapoucher		DHAF	1836		Ita "scapucciare" (remove the hood); old Ita slang "scapuzzador", cut-throat				
escarper		DAFO + DHAF	1800		ex Provençal "escarpi", tear to pieces				
escoffier		HSD + DAFO	1796		ex Provençal "escouffia", ex "escoufi", kill				
estourbir		GFF + ATQP	1835		ex "stourbe", with an "e" added: "grouss pataille, tous estourbe" (Fr gibberish of fake Ger)				
étendre		DAFO + ATQP	1898			horizontal			
étourdir		DAFO + DHAF	1828						
expédier		HSD + ATQP					place		
faire		HSD							see "do", kill
faire avaler son bulletin de naissance à		HSD + DPP						end	see "avalér son bulletin de naissance", die

faire disparaître		PLC + Vance 4	1999*						see "disparaître", die	
faire le coup du père François		Pagnol	1938*							
faire <i>or</i> régler son affaire à		HSD + DFAP	1881							
faire suer		DAFO + DHAF	1808				cause		"sueur" usu. designates money, but here the victim sweats blood	
faire taire		Vance 3	1994*			silence			see "silence", kill	
faire un coup dur		DHAF	1924						euph.	
faire, se		HSD + DPP							see "do", kill	
farcir, se		DPP								
faucher	kill; guillotine (1828)	DAFO	1745			horizontal				
filer en l'air		DAFO	1927							
finir		DAFO + Alexis HK	1936					end		
fourlourer		DHAF	1835		ex "fourlourd", ill, which comes from Flem or Ger "verloren", lost, dead					
foutre en bas		DHAF	1791				place		i.e. underground	
fusiller		DAFO + HDSC	1908		ex "fusil", rifle		instrument			
gommer		HDSC					disappearance		see "effacer", kill	



habiller d'un costard en ciment*		DPP					aftermath		image of a corpse hidden in concrete, lest he be put in it alive. see "fit with a concrete overcoat", kill
lessiver		HSD + DFAP	1954					cleanliness	
lever		Ravalec	2001*						
liquider		Marker + Ozon	1928					bankrupt	
maraf		DAFO	1938		variation of "maraver"		hit		
marave		DFAP + DAFO	1977		variation of "maraver"		hit		
maraver		DAFO + DFNC	1952		ex Romany "marav", I hit		hit		
marier avec madame la Guillotine		DHAF	1843	prison			cause		
mettre à l'ombre		DAFO	1745				aftermath		buried corpses lie in the shade
mettre à zéro		DAFO	1968						
mettre en bombe		DAFO + DHAF	1917		ex Ita "bomba", bomb. "al bombo", kill or die (Argentinian slang)				
mettre en tas		DAFO	1948						
nettoyer		ATQP + DHAF	1844					cleanliness	

offrir, s'		DPP						reward		
pâler		DHAF	1883					aftermath		
passer à la casserole	kill; be killed	HSD + DAFO						heat		see "passer à la casserole", die
passer à la moulinette		DAFO	1969					cause		
passer par les armes		Gans	2001*					cause		
poinçonner		DAFO + DFNC	early 19					hole		see "percer", kill with a knife
raidir		DHAF	15					stiffness		see "stiffen", kill
ratatiner		HSD + DFAP	1927					reduction		
rebâtir		AdLJC + DHAF	1725							a bricklayer, to rebuild, destroys
rebouiser/ rebouisser		DAFO + DHAF	1867				ex prefix "re-" and "bouis", box tool used to correct	improvement		
réchauder		DAFO + DHAF	1904	Flem				cleanliness		in Flanders, people do not "échaude", wash in hot water, but "réchaude" the dishes
recorder		DAFO + DHAF	1821				ex Lat "recordare", call back	place		
rectifier		DHAF + DFNC	1940					improvement		
refroidir		Gainsbourg 4 + Bernet & Abuli	1828					coldness	aftermath	see "cool", kill

régler		DAFO + DHAF	1811	army	ellipsis of "régler son compte à"		end		
régler son compte à		Vance 1 + Nothomb 2	1835				end		
renvoyer à la maison mère*		Lautner	1963*				place		because they have a manufacturing flaw
renvoyer au terminus des prétentieux*		Lautner	1963*				place		
répandre		DAFO + DFNC	1890			stillness			the person spread is seen as inert matter
repasser		Decoin + DAFO	1921			horizontal			i.e. flatten
rétamer		DAFO + DPP	1900		ex "étain", tin	paleness		improvement	tin is white, like a dead person. all the idea of renovating
rincer		DFNC	18					cleanliness	i.e. make dirt disappear
ruer		AdPG	mid 15						
sabrer		DFNC			ex "sabre", sabre		instrument		
scafer		DAFO + DFNC	1953						
secouer		Podalydès	2003*				cause		
sectionner		DPP							
signer un permis		DHAF	1918	army			burial		i.e. "permis d'inhumer", burial certificate
supprimer		Vance 2 + Nothomb 1	1991*						

tordre		HSD							
tordre le cou à		HSD + PLC					cause		
transformer en passoire		HSD					hole		
travailler		DAFO	1800						see "work off", kill
travailler dans le rouge		DAFO	1881						"rouge" stands for blood
troncher/ trancher		DAFO	1985				cause		
trucidarès/ trucidarresse		DFNC	ca 1950		ex "trucider" + parasitic suffix "-arès/ -arresse"				
trucider		DBAA + DPP			ex Lat "trucidare"				
vendanger		DHAF	15						after the grape picking, there is nothing left on the vines
zigouiller	(particularly by slitting the throat)	Benacquista 1 + Podalydès	1895		word from Poitiers' dialect: cut with a bad knife. prob. ex "zigailer" (Bas-Berry), "ziguenailer" (Anjou), tear to pieces, cut; itself ex Lat "secare", cut				
dégommer, se	(each other)	DAFO	1862					dismantling	
faire viandox	(each other)	DAFO	1947		ex "viande" and "viandox"				

viander, se	(each other)	DAFO + DHAF	1950		ex "viande" which stands for a corpse			
capahuter*/ sauter <i>or</i> escarper à la Capahut	(sb to steal their share of the loot)	DAFO + DHAF	1836		ex "Capahut", name of a "chauffeur" (who heated his victims' feet to make them talk) from Nanterre (ca 1790)			
sabler	(by hitting the nape of the neck with an eel skin full of sand)	DAFO	ca 1800		ex "sable", sand		instrument	
gercer la tomate à	(by splitting the skull open)	DHAF	1913	Fr army in Alg	"tomate" stands for the head	cause		
servir	(with a weapon)	DAFO						the sense kill comes ex hunting (servir un cerf)
allumer	(with a gun)	DPP + Bernet & Abuli	1990*				fire	image of the fire getting out of the gun
bayafer	(with a gun)	DHAF	1836		ex "bayafe", gun		instrument	
brûler	(with a gun)	DPP + DHAF	1797		ex "brûler la cervelle", kill with a firearm		fire	see "burn down", kill with a gun
brûler la cervelle <i>or</i> gueule <i>or</i> moustache/ brûler le nez	(with a gun)	PLC + DHAF	1797				fire	

canarder	(with a gun)	DPP							
cloquer	(with a gun)	DPP					cause		the bullets make the blisters
composter	(with a gun)	DFNC	1970				hole		
cramer	(with a gun)	Boursinhac	2002*		ex old Provençal "cramar", burn (same family as "crématoire")		fire		see "brûler", kill with a gun
dégommer	(with a gun)	DAFO + Ravalec	1832					dismantling	
dégringoler (à la dure)	(with a gun)	ATQP + DFNC	1887			horizontal			
descendre	(with a gun)	Delannoy + Buñuel	1830			horizontal			see "put down", kill
dessouder	(with a gun)	HSD + DFAP	1935					dismantling	
écrabouiller la cervelle à/ faire sauter la cervelle à	(with a gun)	DPP + DAFO	1680				cause		
faire décrocher, se	(with a gun)	HSD				horizontal			i.e. fall down
faire sauter le caisson à	(with a gun)	DAFO	1833		"caisson" stands for the head				
faire un carton sur	(with a gun)	DPP					cause		"carton" refers here to that used as target for training
farcir <i>or</i> truffer de plomb	(with a gun)	Benacquista 3 + HSD	1999*		"plomb" designates the bullets		projectile		see "fill full of lead", kill with a g
flingoter/ flingotter	(with a gun)	HSD + DPP	1910		ex "flingot", gun		instrument		

flinguer	(with a gun)	Vance 1 + Blier 1	1947	prison	ex "flingoter", same meaning	instrument			
fumer	(with a gun)	Boursinhac + Ravalec	2001*			fire		there is no smoke without fire. see "smoke" and "brûler", same meaning	
laver la tête à [qqn] avec du plomb	(with a gun)	DAFO	1825			projectile	cleanliness		
moucher	(with a gun)	DAFO	1640						
plomber/ se faire plomber (le buffet)	(with a gun)/ be killed with a gun	HSD + DAFO	1934/ 1957		ex "plomb", lead. "buffet" stands for the belly	instrument	projectile		
revolveriser	(with a gun)	DPP			ex "revolver", gun	instrument			
seringuer	(with a gun)	Lautner + DAFO	1927		ex "seringue" which stands for a gun	instrument		image of a spurt (and a syringe cylinder is named "canon", gun or barrel)	
sulfater	(with a gun)	DPP			ex "sulfateuse", machine gun	instrument			
truffer	(with a gun)	DAFO + DPP	1947						
crever <i>or</i> trouer la peau à	(with a gun or knife)	GFF + Noir Désir	1870			cause	hole		
trouer	(with a gun or knife)	DPP + DHAF	1900			hole		see "percer", kill with a knife	
charcler/ charquer	(with a knife)	DAFO + DFNC	1979		maybe linked to "chacler"				

chouriner	(with a knife)	HSD + DFAP	1828		ex "chourin" (Romany "tchouri") which stands for a knife	instrument			
crever <i>or</i> trouser la paillasse à/ crever le ventre <i>or</i> corps à	(with a knife)	DPP + Noir Désir	1808/ 1950		"paillasse" stands for the belly	hole			
étriper	(with a knife)	PLC				cause			
faire une boutonnière avec un article	(with a knife)	DPP			"article" stands for a knife	cause			
farcir avec une lardoire	(with a knife)	DPP			"lardoire" stands for a knife	cause			
mettre de l'air dans l'estomac	(with a knife)	DHAF	1901			hole			
outiller	(with a knife)	DHAF + DFNC	1952		"outil", stands for a knife	instrument			
percer	(with a knife)	HSD + DAFO	1887			hole			
percer [qqn] de coups	(with a knife)	PLC				hole			
planter	(with a knife)	DHAF + DFNC	1898			cause			
rallonger	(with a knife)	DPP			ex "rallonge" which stands for a knife. close to "allonger", kill	instrument			
sacagner/ saccagner	(with a knife)	HSD + DPP			ex "saccagne" which stands for a knife	instrument			



sacailler/ saccailler	(with a knife)	HSD + ATQP							
saigner	(with a knife)	DFNC + Téhy	1831				cause		shift from bleed (a pig) to kill
scionner	(with a knife)	DAFO + DHAF	1846		ex "scion" which stands for a knife		instrument		
sécher	(with a knife)	HSD + DPP	1915	army			aftermath		see "sécher", die
suriner/ souriner	(with a knife)	HSD + DFAP	1827		ex "surin" which stands for a knife		instrument		abusively also means "kill with a gun" (1935)
viander	(with a knife)	DFAP			ex "viande" which stands for a corpse				
vider	(with a knife)	DPP							
clouer	disembowel a sleeper with a bayonet and pin him down	DHAF	1919	Bat' d' Af			cause hole		
passer au fil de l'épée	(with a sword)	PLC					cause		
couper le sifflet de	slit the throat	DFAP + DAFO	late 16				cause reduction		the human throat is a natural whis
faire bâiller le colas*	slit the throat	DAFO + DHAF	ca 1840		often mixed up with "bayer (aux corneilles)" and "béer". its common sense is "be open", out of surprise or other stimulus. "colas" stands for the neck		cause		pun: slit throat compared with a mouth

faire un deuxième sourire à*	slit the throat	DPP					cause		pun: the slit throat has the shape of a smile
sciager la gourgane	slit the throat	AdLJC	1800		ex "scier", saw. "gourgane" stands for the throat (gorge)		cause		
dévisser la tronche à/ dévisser le coco à	strangle	ATQP + DFNC	1846		"tronche" stands for the head			dismantling	
donner le coup de pouce à	strangle	HSD + DAFO	1783				cause		
donner un tour de vis à/ serrer <i>or</i> tordre <i>or</i> tortiller <i>or</i> tourner la vis à	strangle	DAFO + HDSC	1864					dismantling	see "dévisser", kill
épingler	strangle	DHAF	1899				cause		image of a clothes peg pinning on the throat
nouer la cravate à	strangle	HDSC					cause		pun
serrer	strangle	ATQP + DHAF	1867				cause		
serrer la gargamelle à	strangle	DAFO	1867		"gargamelle" stands for the throat (gorge)		cause		
serrer le gaviot à	strangle	DAFO	1867		"gaviot" stands for the neck		cause		
serrer le kiki à	strangle	DAFO + HDSC	1867		"kiki" stands for the neck		cause		
tortiller	strangle	DAFO + DHAF	1903						see "être tortillé", die quickly

agrafer	hang	HDSC					cause		
anguer	hang	HDSC + DHAF	1598		ex Eng "hang"				
attacher**	hang	DHAF	1489				cause		euph.
béquiller	hang	HDSC + DHAF	18		ex "béquille", gallows		instrument		
grupper	hang	HDSC							
marier	hang	DHAF	1408						
mettre en perche	hang	DHAF	1527				cause		
accourcir d'un demi-pied	behead	DHAF	1637				reduction		
basculer	guillotine; by extension: kill	DAFO + DHAF	1867						
couper cabèche	behead	DAFO	1914		"cabèche" comes from Span "cabeza", head		cause reduction		this was said by Sen or Mor soldiers during WWI
décoller la cafetière/ décoller le citron/ se faire décoller le cigare	guillotine/ be guillotined	DAFO + HDSC	1901		"cafetière", "citron" and "cigare" stand for the head		reduction		
faire la barbe à	guillotine; behead	DAFO + DHAF	1486				cause reduction		it can be inferred that the image of the headsman very soon brought to a softer sense "ennui", bore. pun: execution seen like a shaving. see "faire rafraîchir colas", guillotine

faire rafraîchir colas	guillotine	DAFO	1881		"colas" stands for the neck	cause		pun: execution seen like a shaving see "faire la barbe à", guillotine
faire suer le colas	behead	DAFO + DHAF	1829	prison	"colas" stands for the neck	cause		the victim sweats blood
laver	guillotine	DHAF	1793				cleanliness	
massacrer	guillotine	DAFO + DHAF	1821		ex "massacre", which stands for the head severed ex the body (hunting term)	reduction		
opérer	guillotine; kill with a gun (1953)	DAFO + DHAF	1881	prison			reward	being alive is considered a disease
raccourcir	behead; guillotine	DFAP + DAFO	1792			reduction		
raser la tronche	behead; guillotine	DAFO + DHAF	1598		"tronche" stands for the head	cause reduction		pun: execution seen like a shaving see "faire rafraîchir colas", guillotine
raser le colbac <i>or</i> colback <i>or</i> colbaque	behead; guillotine	DAFO + DHAF	1899		ex "col" with a parasitic suffix	cause reduction		pun: execution seen like a shaving see "faire rafraîchir colas", guillotine
rogner	guillotine	DAFO + DHAF	1829			reduction		

griller	electrocute; be electrocuted	DPP					heat		see "toast" and "frire", same meaning
coquer le poivre à	poison	DAFO	1836						
emboucaner/ embocaner	poison	DHAF	1925/ 1899		ex "boucan", poison		instrument		
filer un boucan	poison	DHAF	1925	prison	"boucan" stands for poison, ex Ita "boccane", poison		cause		
poivrer	poison; kill (1948)	DAFO	1829		ex "poivre" which stands for poison		instrument		
aller à Ruel*	be killed	AdPG	Villon		homonymic substitution made by Villon for "ruer" (pun in order to encrypt)				see "ruer", tuer
être décollmann	be killed	DHAF	1930		"décoller" + parasitic suffix "-mann"				see "décoller", kill
faire avoir, se	be killed	Vance 2	1991*						
gagner caisse	be killed	DHAF	1915				coffin		i.e. one's coffin
être épuré	be gunned down, by political "purge" (épuration)	DHAF	1828					cleanliness	
frire	be electrocuted	DAFO + DPP	1830				fire		see "fry", same meaning
passer à la chaise	be electrocuted	DPP					cause		i.e. the electric chair

aller du caillou <i>or</i> gadin, y	be guillotined	HDSC + DHAF	1928		"caillou" and "gadin" stand for the head	reduction			
basculer du chou <i>or</i> gadin	be guillotined	HDSC			"chou" and "gadin" stand for the head	reduction			
cracher dans le panier*/ cracher <i>or</i> éternuer dans le sac/ éternuer dans le sac <i>or</i> son/ éternuer dans la sciure	be guillotined	HDSC + DAFO	1793			aftermath			the head falls into the basket or ba (into which there is bran to absorb the blood) when it is cut
déménager par la fenêtre/ mettre la tête à la fenêtre*	be guillotined	DHAF + HDSC	1851			place			pun: the guillotine is shaped like a window. see "look through a hempen window", be hanged
faire la culbute	be beheaded	DAFO + DHAF	1829						
faire le trébuchet	be guillotined	DHAF							a bird-trap topples when the bird walks on it
jouer à la boule*	be guillotined	DHAF	1798		"boule", stands for the head		game		pun
monter à l'échelle**	be guillotined	DAFO	1872				(indirect) cause		
monter à la butte	be guillotined	DAFO + DHAF	1845				(indirect) cause		

tirer sa crampe avec la Veuve	be guillotined	HDSC			"tirer sa crampe" means have sex, but certainly influenced by "crampecer" and all the other verbs based on "crampe"				see "épouser la veuve", be hanged
bénir des pieds/ bénir la verdure	be hanged	DHAF	1527				place		i.e. be above everybody because of hanging. see "bless the world with one's heels", be hanged
danser	be hanged	DPP					cause		see "dance", be hanged
épouser la veuve <i>or</i> Veuve/ épouser le gibet	be hanged or guillotined/ be hanged	DAFO + HDSC	1628/ 1486		"veuve" stands for the gallows		cause		if you are married to the "veuve", widow, it means you are dead
être enhasté	be hanged	DHAF	1489		in old Fr "enhasté", run through				
être évêque des champs	be hanged	DHAF							
faire crocher, se	be hanged	DPP					cause		
gambiller	be hanged	DAFO + DHAF	1609		ex Norman "gambe", leg (jambe). "gambiller", jouer des jambes: swing one's legs				
glisser dans la trappe	be hanged	DPP					cause		

mourir de maux de gorge*	be hanged	DPP					cause		pun	
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# Semantic table of statistics

## The use of semes in death slang phrases

		English		English		<u>English</u>		French		French		<u>French</u>		
		die	%	kill	%	<u>total</u>	<u>%</u>	die	%	kill	%	<u>total</u>	<u>%</u>	
	<b>totals of phrases</b>	<b>507</b>		<b>491</b>		<b>998</b>		<b>189</b>		<b>272</b>		<b>461</b>		
	<b>last act before dying</b>	<b>sound 1</b>	13	21	5	9,8	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>	1	5,3	0	0	<u>1</u>	<u>2,4</u>
	texture	coldness	8	13	8	16	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>	0	0	1	4,3	<u>1</u>	<u>2,4</u>
	texture	paleeness	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	0	0	1	4,3	<u>1</u>	<u>2,4</u>
	texture	stiffness	2	3,2	2	3,9	<u>4</u>	<u>3,5</u>	6	32	4	17	<u>10</u>	<u>24</u>
	total texture		10	16	10	20	<u>20</u>	<u>18</u>	6	32	6	26	<u>12</u>	<u>29</u>
	position	horizontal	33	52	20	39	<u>53</u>	<u>46</u>	4	21	12	52	<u>16</u>	<u>38</u>
	inactivity	silence	1	1,6	6	12	<u>7</u>	<u>6,1</u>	0	0	2	8,7	<u>2</u>	<u>4,8</u>
	inactivity	stillness	16	25	16	31	<u>32</u>	<u>28</u>	8	42	3	13	<u>11</u>	<u>26</u>
	total inactivity		17	27	22	43	<u>39</u>	<u>34</u>	8	42	5	22	<u>13</u>	<u>31</u>
	total seme 1*		73	14	57	12	<u>130</u>	<u>13</u>	19	10	34	13	<u>53</u>	<u>11</u>
	total of expressions with seme 1*		63	12	51	10	<u>114</u>	<u>11</u>	19	10	23	8,5	<u>42</u>	<u>9,1</u>
<b>Seme 2</b>	<b>cause</b>	<b>cause</b>	10	4,6	63	26	<u>73</u>	<u>16</u>	13	17	50	36	<u>63</u>	<u>29</u>

Seme 2	cause	fire	4	1,8	13	5,3	<u>17</u>	<u>3,7</u>	0	0	7	5	<u>7</u>	<u>3,2</u>
Seme 2	cause	heat	2	0,9	7	2,8	<u>9</u>	<u>1,9</u>	1	1,3	2	1,4	<u>3</u>	<u>1,4</u>
Seme 2	cause	hit	1	0,5	20	8,1	<u>21</u>	<u>4,5</u>	2	2,6	6	4,3	<u>8</u>	<u>3,7</u>
Seme 2	cause	instrument	0	0	12	4,9	<u>12</u>	<u>2,6</u>	0	0	22	16	<u>22</u>	<u>10</u>
Seme 2	cause instrument	projectile	0	0	17	6,9	<u>17</u>	<u>3,7</u>	0	0	3	2,1	<u>3</u>	<u>1,4</u>
Seme 2	cause instrument projectile	hole	0	0	5	2	<u>5</u>	<u>1,1</u>	0	0	15	11	<u>15</u>	<u>6,9</u>
Seme 2	cause instrument projectile	sound 2	2	0,9	17	6,9	<u>19</u>	<u>4,1</u>	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Seme 2	total projectile		2	0,9	22	8,9	<u>24</u>	<u>5,2</u>	0	0	15	11	<u>15</u>	<u>6,9</u>
Seme 2	cause instrument	rope	0	0	16	6,5	<u>16</u>	<u>3,5</u>	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Seme 2	cause instrument	reduction	2	0,9	8	3,3	<u>10</u>	<u>2,2</u>	4	5,1	16	11	<u>20</u>	<u>9,2</u>
Seme 2	total instrument		4	1,8	63	26	<u>67</u>	<u>14</u>	4	5,1	34	24	<u>38</u>	<u>17</u>
Seme 2	total cause**		11	5,1	115	47	<u>126</u>	<u>27</u>	7	9	71	51	<u>78</u>	<u>36</u>
Seme 2	total of expressions with cause semes		11	5,1	111	45	<u>122</u>	<u>26</u>	6	7,7	63	45	<u>69</u>	<u>32</u>
Seme 2	aftermath	aftermath	58	27	27	11	<u>85</u>	<u>18</u>	15	19	9	6,4	<u>24</u>	<u>11</u>
Seme 2	aftermath	place	122	56	51	21	<u>173</u>	<u>37</u>	39	50	17	12	<u>56</u>	<u>26</u>
Seme 2	aftermath place	aside	16	7,4	8	3,3	<u>24</u>	<u>5,2</u>	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Seme 2	aftermath place	disappearance	4	1,8	0	0	<u>4</u>	<u>0,9</u>	1	1,3	2	1,4	<u>3</u>	<u>1,4</u>
Seme 2	total place		20	9,2	8	3,3	<u>28</u>	<u>6</u>	1	1,3	2	1,4	<u>3</u>	<u>1,4</u>
Seme 2	aftermath	burial	0	0	1	0,4	<u>1</u>	<u>0,2</u>	1	1,3	1	0,7	<u>2</u>	<u>0,9</u>
Seme 2	aftermath burial	coffin	14	6,5	2	0,8	<u>16</u>	<u>3,5</u>	4	5,1	1	0,7	<u>5</u>	<u>2,3</u>
Seme 2	aftermath	darkness	9	4,1	4	1,6	<u>13</u>	<u>2,8</u>	2	2,6	1	0,7	<u>3</u>	<u>1,4</u>
Seme 2	aftermath	judgment	0	0	2	0,8	<u>2</u>	<u>0,4</u>	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Seme 2	total aftermath**		165	76	68	28	<u>233</u>	<u>50</u>	47	60	22	16	<u>69</u>	<u>32</u>
Seme 2	total of expressions with aftermath semes		158	73	66	27	<u>224</u>	<u>48</u>	46	59	21	15	<u>67</u>	<u>31</u>
Seme 2	total seme 2*		244	48	273	56	<u>517</u>	<u>52</u>	82	43	152	56	<u>234</u>	<u>51</u>
Seme 2	total of expressions with seme 2		217	43	246	50	<u>463</u>	<u>46</u>	78	41	140	51	<u>218</u>	<u>47</u>
	positive	positive	1	0,5	1	1,2	<u>2</u>	<u>0,7</u>	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	positive	cleanliness	2	1,1	7	8,4	<u>9</u>	<u>3,3</u>	1	1,6	8	20	<u>9</u>	<u>8,8</u>
	positive	escape	7	3,7	0	0	<u>7</u>	<u>2,6</u>	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	positive	improvement	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	1	1,6	4	9,8	<u>5</u>	<u>4,9</u>
	positive	relief	5	2,6	5	6	<u>10</u>	<u>3,7</u>	2	3,3	1	2,4	<u>3</u>	<u>2,9</u>
	positive	reward	12	6,3	7	8,4	<u>19</u>	<u>7</u>	6	9,8	2	4,9	<u>8</u>	<u>7,8</u>
	positive reward paradise	sound 3	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	1	1,6	0	0	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

<b>total positive</b>		26	14	19	23	<b><u>45</u></b>	<b><u>16</u></b>	11	18	15	37	<b><u>26</u></b>	<b><u>25</u></b>
<b>total of expressions with positive semes</b>		25	13	18	22	<b><u>43</u></b>	<b><u>16</u></b>	10	16	15	37	<b><u>25</u></b>	<b><u>25</u></b>
<b>negative</b>	<b>negative</b>	2	1,1	2	2,4	<b><u>4</u></b>	<b><u>1,5</u></b>	3	4,9	0	0	<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>2,9</u></b>
negative	bankrupt (end)	2	1,1	1	1,2	<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>1,1</u></b>	1	1,6	1	2,4	<b><u>2</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>
negative	dismantling (end)	0	0	0	0	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>	4	6,6	13	32	<b><u>17</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>
negative	failure	2	1,1	2	2,4	<b><u>4</u></b>	<b><u>1,5</u></b>	0	0	0	0	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>
negative	worthless	16	8,4	6	7,2	<b><u>22</u></b>	<b><u>8,1</u></b>	0	0	0	0	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>
negative	end of fight (end)	1	0,5	0	0	<b><u>1</u></b>	<b><u>0,4</u></b>	0	0	0	0	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>
negative	end of game (end)	16	8,4	6	7,2	<b><u>22</u></b>	<b><u>8,1</u></b>	3	4,9	1	2,4	<b><u>4</u></b>	<b><u>3,9</u></b>
negative	punishment	6	3,2	6	7,2	<b><u>12</u></b>	<b><u>4,4</u></b>	1	1,6	3	7,3	<b><u>4</u></b>	<b><u>3,9</u></b>
<b>total negative</b>		43	23	21	25	<b><u>64</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>	9	15	18	44	<b><u>27</u></b>	<b><u>26</u></b>
<b>total of expressions with negative semes</b>		43	23	21	25	<b><u>64</u></b>	<b><u>23</u></b>	8	13	18	44	<b><u>26</u></b>	<b><u>25</u></b>
	eternity	7	3,7	3	3,6	<b><u>10</u></b>	<b><u>3,7</u></b>	1	1,6	2	4,9	<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>2,9</u></b>
	inexorability	3	1,6	2	2,4	<b><u>5</u></b>	<b><u>1,8</u></b>	0	0	0	0	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>
	unexpectedness	2	1,1	1	1,2	<b><u>3</u></b>	<b><u>1,1</u></b>	0	0	0	0	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>
	sleep	10	5,3	3	3,6	<b><u>13</u></b>	<b><u>4,8</u></b>	5	8,2	1	2,4	<b><u>6</u></b>	<b><u>5,9</u></b>
	sound 4	1	0,5	0	0	<b><u>1</u></b>	<b><u>0,4</u></b>	0	0	0	0	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>

	<b>transition</b>	17	8,9	2	2,4	<u>19</u>	<u>7</u>	3	4,9	0	0	<u>3</u>	<u>2,9</u>	
	<b>end of sport (end)</b>	1	0,5	0	0	<u>1</u>	<u>0,4</u>	0	0	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	
		41	22	11	13	<u>52</u>	<u>19</u>	9	15	3	7,3	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	
	<b>negative neutral</b>	<b>end</b>	82	43	31	37	<u>113</u>	<u>41</u>	32	52	6	15	<u>38</u>	<u>37</u>
	<b>total seme 3*</b>		195	38	85	17	<u>280</u>	<u>28</u>	64	34	42	15	<u>106</u>	<u>23</u>
	<b>total of expressions with seme 3</b>		190	37	83	17	<u>273</u>	<u>27</u>	61	32	41	15	<u>102</u>	<u>22</u>
<b>No seme</b>			108	21	139	28	<u>247</u>	<u>25</u>	42	22	76	28	<u>118</u>	<u>26</u>
		<b>totals of phrases</b>	<b>507</b>		<b>491</b>		<b><u>998</u></b>		<b>189</b>		<b>272</b>		<b><u>461</u></b>	