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Calmness Conquers Anxiety: What Language Tells Us about Mind and Body Control

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Abstract

This chapter is fully based on linguistic data representing Early Modern and Present-day English, including early English printed books and contemporary online texts. The main bulk of the data was collected with the search term *calmness*. The data indicates that it is important for people to experience control of their emotions and behavior and that they understand emotional calmness in terms of the kinds of tranquility that they see in nature, for example, when the sea is still. The connection between people and nature seems therefore to be strong. However, the data also suggest that calmness does not just naturally occur in people but has to be achieved through active work and that ideas concerning the nature of such work differ from one context, period, and location to another.

Keywords: body, control, linguistics, mind

1. Introduction

The English noun *calmness* covers a surprisingly wide range of phenomena from nature, mathematics, and music to action, body, and states of the body, including death. More generally, the topic of calmness relates, for example, to the trends of medicalization and mindfulness. People seek calmness by shutting out various kinds of noise: it can be external or internal noise. However, it is interesting how little my data say about drugs considering, for instance, Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* where a drug called *soma* provides a solution to human anxiety. This parallels the extent to which antidepressants offer a solution to many contemporary problems.

My original interest in the noun *calmness* had to do with emotions since I had written many studies concerning the linguistics of emotions, beginning from my PhD thesis on love [1]. I had the following kinds of questions: How often does the noun *calmness* refer to the control of emotions and in which contexts do people use it? Who is characterized as *calm* and how does that person achieve calmness? In this chapter, I deal with these questions on the basis of a comparison between Early Modern and Present-day English. Most of my Early Modern data come from a database called *Early English Books Online* (EEBO, 1473–1700). I used the *WebCorp* tool to collect Present-day English online data [2]. These sources provided me with hundreds of examples of how the noun *calmness* had been used.

1.1 On calmness of the mind, Western culture, and cognitive linguistics

Calmness as the control of emotions relates to at least two key ideas: One is that people can learn to control their emotions. The other is that this leads to a state of relative peace and happiness, which is worth attaining. Sorabji summarizes ancient ideas about these matters by suggesting that a transition occurred from Stoic agitation to Christian temptation [3]. Among the Roman philosophers, one that was interested in tranquility of the mind was Seneca [4]. Nowadays, people often associate calmness of the mind with meditation and mindfulness.

I associate the noun *calmness* with the relationship between the body and the mind from the perspective of a cognitive linguist. The pioneering cognitive linguists Lakoff and Johnson have strongly criticized what they consider the Cartesian dualism of Western thought; they emphasize that such dualism fails to understand that the mind and body work together and depend on each other [5, 6].

It is possible to see Western thought from another angle as well. Brosché has noticed that Cartesian dualism does not agree with the Hebrew thought represented by the Old Testament in the Christian Bible. In his view, there is thus no reason to claim that Christianity should adhere to such a dualism [7].

Many American cognitive linguists seem to lean toward Buddhism as a source of enlightenment on the relationship between body and mind. Varela, Thompson, and Rosch explain such ideas in detail in their book on human experience [8]. Their views resemble those of the 17th century philosopher Spinoza's, who in his turn is admired by a currently active, famous neuroscientist. This is how Damasio summarizes Spinoza's wisdom:

“... I assimilate the notion of spiritual to an intense experience of harmony, to the sense that the organism is functioning with the greatest possible perfection. The experience unfolds in association with the desire to act towards others with kindness and generosity. Thus to have a spiritual experience is to hold sustained feelings of a particular kind dominated by some variant of joy, however serene.” [9].

1.2 On the method used in this study

In this study, I have applied the corpus linguistic method to some corpora, a database and the Internet. Corpus linguistics is based on the idea that it is possible to store large, well-planned selections of linguistic materials electronically and that those materials can then be analyzed with the help of the computer. The programs used to analyze linguistic corpora assist in making simple searches for word forms but can also grow into complex modeling of textual structures.

Here, I have simply searched for words that begin with the stem *calm**, mostly for the noun *calmness* but also for some other words such as the adjective and noun *calm* with no suffix. Apart from the above-mentioned EEBO and the Internet—which cannot be, strictly speaking, considered linguistic corpora—I have used four small corpora that represent Early Modern English (1450–1700) and Present-day English (1991).

In this way, I acquired a dataset of hundreds of instances where someone had used words denoting calmness. This chapter delineates how they had used them; it sketches the meaning of *calm(ness)* in these data. Several methods could have been used to achieve this aim, ranging from lexicographical methods used by dictionary makers to semantic methods used by university scholars. I will return to a brief discussion of such methods soon. Suffice it here to say that this chapter focuses on who or what is characterized as calm and in what sense.

1.2.1 More on the data

To continue with EEBO, its home page tells us that it “contains page images of virtually every work printed in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and British North America and works in English printed elsewhere from 1473–1700” [10]. The materials for this study were collected as early as in 2004, when the University of Helsinki offered us a trial period for using EEBO. I then found 448 instances of the noun *calmness*.

What strikes the analyst at once is that almost all the examples of the noun *calmness* in EEBO are from the 17th century. This raises the questions whether it was a particularly popular word at the time, whether many people wrote about this particular topic then, or whether the database gives us a skewed idea of the matter, for one reason or another. A simple explanation could be that the number of printed books was very much on the rise in the 17th century as compared to the previous ones.

In addition to the examples from EEBO, this chapter deals with data collected from the Early Modern English part of the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (HC, 1500–1710) and the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* (CEECS, 1418–1680). Scholars have written several introductions to Early Modern English; one of them is by Nevalainen [11]. The Early Modern English part of the HC consists of selected texts representing a number of text types common to the period, while the CEECS data consists of letters, as suggested by the name of the corpus [12, 13]. These corpora are small in comparison to several Present-day English corpora, let alone the Internet. The Early Modern English part of the HC comprises 551,000 words and the CEECS 450,000 words.

The data on Present-day English were mainly collected with the help of a search program called WebCorp that is currently hosted by Birmingham City University. It was collected in 2006 when I worked as a fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. The program provided me with 682 occurrences of the word *calmness* in 116 different Internet addresses. These data are somewhat skewed in that they include a book titled *Calmness* that was written by bishop Shenouda III of the Coptic church already in 1989 and amended in 1997. It contains as many as 213 occurrences of the word form *calmness* [14]. This of course needs to be taken into account when evaluating the findings. It is unlikely that Christian uses of the word *calmness* comprise about a third of them. However, that this book occurs in the data reminds us of the important fact that the English language is used all over the world by various kinds of people and that when we search for English words online, we also encounter uses that are not typical of native speakers.

On top of the Internet materials, the Present-day data consulted in this chapter comprise two one-million-word corpora, the *Freiburg-Brown Corpus of American English* (FROWN) and the *Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English*, which both represent the year 1991 [15, 16]. These corpora were modeled after the pioneering 1960s corpora that represented American and British English: the *Brown University Standard Corpus of Present-Day American English* (usually simply referred to as the *Brown Corpus*), and the *Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen Corpus* (often referred to as the *LOB Corpus*), respectively.

Table 1 shows the sizes of the corpora and the numbers of instances of the *calm* words that were found in them. We can see that the *calm* words are more frequent in the Present-day than Early Modern materials but that there are nevertheless hundreds of examples from both periods.

1.2.2 On semantic analysis

To conclude the introduction, let us briefly consider ways of analyzing linguistic meaning, as suggested earlier. Since the 1960s, many linguists have been inspired by

Data source	Size in words	Hits	N/100,000
EEBO	(Exact size unknown)	448	(Unknown)
HC, Early Modern	551,000	5	1
CEECs	450,000	4	1
Early Modern total	—	457	—
WebCorp	(Exact size unknown)	682	(Unknown)
FLOB	1,000,000	44	4.4
FROWN	1,000,000	33	3.3
Present-day total	—	759	—

Table 1.
The data on calmness.

the idea that concepts such as word meanings do not have distinct boundaries but overlap with one another. Around 20 years later, this view was labeled prototype semantics. In 1997, Geeraerts wrote a book on how historical changes in word meanings can be discussed in terms of prototype semantics [17]. This study was inspired by prototype semantics although I ended up considerably simplifying the presentation of my findings. My first figures had far too many overlapping meanings to make sense to the viewer.

A development relatively simultaneous to the birth of prototype semantics in linguistics was the growing enthusiasm in the nature of metaphors that culminated in the idea that metaphors play a key role in our understanding of abstract concepts [5, 6]. Metaphor can be seen to play a key role in our understanding of calmness because people see correspondences between calmness in nature and calmness in humans. However, this chapter will not delve into that aspect of calmness.

Notably, many cognitive linguists are nowadays attracted by the idea that form and function go hand in hand and that what we need to do, above all, is to pay attention to structures that reoccur in language. This idea was epitomized, among others, by Goldberg who named a new type of grammar *construction grammar* [18]. However, it is also embraced through the use of other terms such as *frequency*, *entrenchment* and *salience*, which furthermore emphasize language use [19]. Of all these concepts, it is mainly language use that plays a role in this chapter because it is based on data that reflect how people use the studied words, notably in situations where they are not prompted to reflect on their linguistic meaning.

I have focused on cognitive linguistics here because I have profited as a cognitive linguist in my career and applied both prototype semantics and conceptual metaphor theory to my previous data [1]. However, while prototype semantics hovers in the background in this chapter, the presentation of the meaning of *calmness* is not rigidly prototype semantic. As already mentioned, when I first illustrated my data as clusters of overlapping meanings, the images became too crowded because I found so many subcategories of meaning. The overall picture was fascinating but confusing. The various senses of the noun *calmness* covered many kinds of things related to humans, their bodies and their activities, such as emotions and the will, the intellect, literary and verbal expression, music and society. These findings were driven by the research question who and what calmness is associated with. Many various kinds of things were characterized as calm.

Having noticed that it would be difficult to produce a brief, coherent description of all aspects of calmness in the data, I decided to aim at a more general description in this chapter. It includes a number of examples followed by two simple figures that summarize the data. However, extra information is provided in the appendix. As I

mentioned before, metaphors will not play a role in the chapter. It will nevertheless include comments on some other characteristics of the noun *calmness*, the primitive *calm*, and its further derivations that will help us understand what it means when someone or something is characterized as calm.

2. Where do we find calmness?

This section will begin by focusing on the four linguistic corpora. It will explain in what kind of contexts the substantive *calm* and its derivatives occur. To put it differently, this section will first zoom in on some detail that can be detected in the smaller sets of data, and then zoom out on findings in EEBO and the Internet. The first focus on the substantive *calm* can be justified by noting that the longer noun *calmness* is derived from it, and secondary in that sense.

To be more precise, it is difficult to say which occurred first in the English language, the noun *calm* or the verb *to calm*. It is likely that the noun preceded the verb because the compilers of the *Oxford English Dictionary* date it slightly earlier. However, the temporal difference between the first quote of the noun in 1393 and the first quote of the verb in 1399 is small. [20, 21] It only gives us a hint of what happened in spoken English.

2.1 Small corpora

2.1.1 The Early Modern corpora

The Early Modern English corpora attested only a small number of occurrences of the noun *calm* and its derivatives: 5 in HC and 4 in CEECS. These were more frequent in FROWN and FLOB where they occurred 33 and 44 times, respectively. It is impossible to claim anything statistically significant as regards differences between the two periods represented by these data, but these corpora nevertheless give us a glimpse of how the words were and are used.

Let us begin with a royal example from the 16th century and a second one that has to do with the art of dying:

1. And then hir majesty began to be more *calm* than befor, and, as I conceived, redyar to quallefy hir displeur and hir opinion. (CEECS 1586: William Cecil)
2. [He] spoke of his Conversion to God as a thing now grown up in him to a setled and *calm* serenity. (HC: Burnet: *Some Passages of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable John, Earl of Rochester*)

CEECS provides us with two examples of the noun, spelled *calme*, one example of the verb *to calm*, and one example of the adjective *calm*. Both occurrences of the noun concern seafaring. They occur in passages describing the safe journey of a ship from one harbor to another. The other two occurrences concern the queen's attitude changing from suspicious to favorable. Although all these occurrences of the words primarily convey an idea of tranquility, they also strongly denote favorable conditions. In other words, the writers are not only interested in whether the sea or queen is calm but also in the mindset of the seafarers and the recipients of the letters. It is natural that such connotations appear exactly in correspondence whose aim is to report information about circumstances in one place to a recipient located in another place.

In HC, the use of the word *calm* and its derivatives is clearly different from that in CEECS. It contains one occurrence of the form *calmys* that refers to the behavior

of the sea. All the other uses somehow relate to people's mental states. The only occurrence of the noun form *calmness* occurs in a passage discussing a situation where a woman wishes that a man would control his jealousy and listen to her patiently. The adjective *calm* occurs three times, twice in a biography and once in a comedy. The comedy again deals with jealousy, albeit the jealous person is now a woman, while the biography explains how a dying person is reconciled with God before death occurs.

To sum up how the *calm* words behave in the Early Modern data, they apply both to nature and to people. These two are unlikely to be completely separate phenomena—rather, they overlap in that when the sea is calm, the seafarers' and their senders' minds are calm as well. These data also suggest a synonym to *calmness*, *serenity*.

2.1.2 The Present-day English corpora

To move on to the Present-day English corpora, the noun *calm* and its derivatives appear 44 times in the FLOB corpus. The noun itself only occurs once, and the same applies to the longer form *calmness*. The adverb *calmly* occurs most frequently, 15 times, albeit the difference between the adverb and the adjective *calm* is minimal, the latter occurring 14 times. The verb *to calm*, including its reflexive form *to calm oneself*, also follows very closely with its 13 occurrences. The reflexive form is in fact particularly interesting, since it suggests that calmness has to do with self-control. Furthermore, the verb occurs in the phrase *to calm down*, as in example (3). It gives calmness a downward direction, which corresponds with the waves of the sea sinking to form an even surface of water. However, arguably a person is more responsible for calming down than the sea is.

3. "Now, now. *Calm down*." Rose spoke patiently as a nurse to a child. (FLOB: K K01: 11)

4. She took it *calmly*. (FLOB: K K05: 25)

Example (4) illustrates how the *calm* words often describe reactions to incidents, the other possibility being that calmness is a long-term attitude or emotional state. These by no means exclude each other. If a person is able to face sudden negative information calmly, it is likely that s/he has a calm attitude toward life in general. It should also be mentioned that at least 8 of the 44 occurrences of the *calm* words relate to people's way of speaking.

As to the FROWN corpus, it contains 33 occurrences of the noun *calm* and its derivatives. The most frequent is the adjective *calm*, which yields 17 hits, more than half of the data. It is followed by the verb *to calm* (7 hits), the adverb *calmly* (6), and lastly, the noun *calm* itself (3). The longer noun *calmness* does not appear in this corpus at all; neither does the reflexive verb form *to calm oneself*. The verb is used, among other things, to discuss situations where someone or something creates a calm state, as in example (5). The adjective *calm* is, for instance, combined with the verb *keep* in order to suggest the continuation of a state, as in example (6).

5. As I reflected on the most turbulent years of my life, that psalm *calmed* my memory, bringing peace and closure. (FROWN: F F16: 10)

6. No ... no ... *keep calm* ... It was only a play. (FROWN: G G24: 8)

Seen together, the two corpora suggest a central use of the *calm* words, exhortations to stay or become calm, which often appear in the form of formulaic

expressions (*calm down, keep calm*). Considering that people exhort one another to calmness, calmness does not only concern an individual's inner experience but is very intersubjective—a social matter, to put it differently. It is important for groups of people that their members are calm, able to control themselves.

2.2 The bigger data

When I collected data from EEBO and the Internet, I only focused on the noun *calmness*. There were two main reasons for this. The first one was that I had also analyzed data on two nouns that are similar to it in form, *happiness* and *sadness* [22, 23]. The other was that it was possible to find plenty of data by searching for this word form only. Moreover, based on my previous research, I could expect that the noun *calmness* would be more likely to be used in metaphorical expressions than the corresponding verb and adjective and that it would have more potential senses [1]. To verify such hypotheses would nevertheless require a separate study. The analysis consisted of categorizing the occurrences of *calmness* according to who or what attested calmness.

2.2.1 EEBO

Let us begin the discussion of the bigger sets of data from EEBO, which represents the earlier period. There I found 448 instances of the noun *calmness* after removing items that occurred twice in the same form. The analysis is not deep in the sense that I did not attempt to find the original sources and to peruse them to understand the contexts where the noun occurred. Consequently, I also allowed for some room for uncertainty in the analysis, including an open category in the Excel table where I put all the instances I was uncertain about. These comprised 41 items. The aim here is to draw a general picture of the data rather than discussing the data in intricate detail.

In most cases in EEBO, calmness was attributed to someone's *mind* (54 occurrences). It could also be attributed to their *spirit* (38) or *conscience* (21). The following seats of calmness could be included in the same series: *affections* (1), *brain* (1), *breast* (6), *heart* (6), *humor* (1), *judgment* (1), *nature* (1), *passions* (3), *reason* (7), *soul* (16), *temper* (10), *thoughts* (2), *virtue* (2), *understanding* (1), *will* (1), and *wisdom* (1). All of these relate in one way or another to the functions of the human mind (example 7), although it is possible to make further distinctions between such realms as emotion, reason, and spirituality. Furthermore, such a categorization is strictly speaking an anachronism because Early Modern people did not understand these concepts exactly as we do. For example, the noun *emotion* was not in wide use at the time when the EEBO data were written [24]. Instead, other words were used to discuss what we now categorize under that umbrella term.

7. We should bear all things with steady *calmness* and composedness of mind (Barrow 1685: *Of contentment, patience, and resignation to the will of God*).

If the above group was accepted as representing the mind, it would be possible to parallel it with a group representing calmness of the body, and even to suggest that EEBO represents a dualistic worldview. Note, however, that the abovementioned *breast* and *heart* suggest some overlapping of these two groups. In addition, EEBO suggests that calmness can characterize the entire *body* (4 occurrences), gestures, and ways of expressing oneself, including tone of voice (22 occurrences; example 8), *face* (6 occurrences), *eyes* (2), *brow* (1), *looks* (1), and *act(ion)* (7).

8. she told me with much grace and *calmness* (Boyle, *Earl of Orrery* 1676: *Parthenissa, that most fam'd romance the six volumes compleat*)

It is nevertheless not entirely clear that the EEBO data would convey a dualistic worldview. To return to the previous, can the breast and heart be separated from the body even if they are symbols rather than literal parts of the body? Would a calmness of the breast or heart not be reflected on the outside of the body, as the way a person behaves and looks like? In addition, calmness is associated with hearing, talking and ways of writing in EEBO, at least 7 times. In other words, it has to do with interaction. Calmness applies both to individuals and groups of people; it is a “social” word.

To continue with this theme, 111 occurrences of *calmness* in EEBO relate to people who are referred to with the pronouns *I* (13 times), *we* (9), *s/he* (56), *you* (6), and *they* (27). Here, I have also counted references with names under personal pronouns (example 9). The pronoun *it* only occurs once.

9. Dr. Norton is a Man of great gravity, *calmness*, sound Principles, of no Faction, an excellent Preacher (Baxter 1696: *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*)

The social and societal occurrences of *calmness* also include calmness applied to *life* (1 occurrence) and *death* and ways of dying (3; example 10) on the one hand, and *reign* (3), *church and state* (1), *world* (1), *peace* (1), *empire* (1), and the *commonwealth* (1) on the other.

10. he abundantly enjoyed ... that happy *calmness* of death, which the Emperor Augustus was wont to pray for (Pierce 1671: *A collection of sermons upon several occasions*).

Calmness is also seen in nature, and people wish for calmness in nature. The noun *calmness* occurs in contexts where people discuss the *elements* (1 times), *air* (7; example 11), the *climate* (1), weather (8), and various spaces and locations, which need not be geographical: *heaven* (5), the *firmament* (1), and above all, water and the sea (19).

11. one Great sign of an Earthquake is excessive *Calmness* of the Air (Watson 1682: *Religion our true interest, or, Practical notes upon the third chapter of Malachy the sixteen, seventeen and eighteen verses*).

Furthermore, the EEBO data contain conceptual associations of calmness to the blood of Christ (1 times), *face of things* (1) *that condition* (1; this has to do with a person’s position in society), *anything in this life* (1; example 12), *set forms* (1; this relates to prayer), and the metaphorical *sea of love* (1). In other words, this noun also belongs to rather abstract and general contexts.

12. nor is there anything in this life that can pretend to *calmness* and security (Lipsius 1670: *A discourse of constancy in two books chiefly consisting of consolations against public evils*).

To conclude on the EEBO data, in spite of the possibility to use the noun *calmness* in abstract and even vague senses, it suggests that calmness was something fairly concrete and observable, and not only in nature, but in the way other people appeared and behaved. Although the first two senses of the noun *calmness* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* describe nature [25], these data give no reason for us to assume that such senses would have been most salient to Early Modern speakers of English.

2.2.2 WebCorp

Next, I will discuss the data that were collected with the help of the WebCorp program. It consisted of 682 occurrences of the noun *calmness*. It was challenging to categorize and interpret these data, because the search result could be a short advert, for example. Sometimes, the same clause occurred several times in the data. To arrive at Figure 682, I pruned the data, leaving out doublets and web addresses.

The noun *mind* and the adjective *mental* outstood in the WebCorp data, with 51 occurrences (example 13), even though the mind did not play exactly as significant a role in these data as in the EEBO data. The following words that were associated with calmness may also be included in this set: *character* (2 occurrences), *head* (1), (a person's) *state* (3), *spirit* (4), *soul* (4), *temperament* (1), *thoughts* (5), and *inner being* (1). Emotions were represented in these data also by the words *anger* (2 times; it can be calmed), *emotions* (1), *feelings* (1), *love* (1), and *heart* (7).

13. system positively generating quietness and *calmness* in your emotional mind (http://www.yogawithsaed.co.uk/p3a_physio.html; last accessed 2009-27-11).

It is difficult to see the WebCorp data as attesting a dualist understanding of calmness in a human being that would separate the mind from the body or vice versa. It contains the explicit claim that the body and mind should be in balance. The word pair *body and mind* occurs twice, and the noun *body* 5 times. The data include explanations of how calmness concerns the electric system of the body (2 occurrences), *senses* (2), *breath* (5), *nerves* (6), and the *central nervous system* (1). People's calmness is reflected in their behavior and actions (3 times), *features* (3), *movement* (2; example 14), manner of using the sword (8; example 15), and speech and writing (11).

14. stillness of the senses and *calmness* of movement (http://www.tasbeha.org/content/hh_books/Calmness; last accessed 2019-02-08).

15. If the return of the sword to front center is lively, relaxed, and instantaneous, this represents the imperceptible movement in stillness known as *seishi*, or living *calmness*. (<http://www.unofficial.ki-society.org/VKS/vks19970330.txt>; last accessed 2009-27-11)

The WebCorp data also attest religious sentiments. They refer to the Virgin Mary (2 times), other saints (7, example 16), God (1), Satan (1), angels (1), Jesus (2), and a *monastery* (1). These correspond to references to particularly calm and exemplary people in EEBO.

16. God looked upon the *calmness* of His servant (http://www.kosovo.com/news/archive/2005/October_15/2.html; last accessed 2006-01-30).

To continue, like the EEBO data, the WebCorp data also attribute calmness to people: the first person *I* (11 times), *you* (68), *we* (37), *s/he* (130), *they* (48), and even to *everyone* (1). Potentially relevant to this group are also contexts which address the recipient not directly with the pronoun *you* but with referring to something that is theirs, for example, *your life* or *your body and mind*. Example (17) discusses the addressee's mind and body, and themselves, as a potential location of calmness.

17. Daily practice will calm down your mind. This *calmness* will influence your inner being, your body, your circumstances, and the people you meet. It will transform you into a peacefulness and *calmness* generator. (http://www.successconsciousness.com/index_000068.htm; last accessed 2019-02-08).

A single expression that should be mentioned because it occurs 7 times is *state of cessation*. It refers to a state which can be reached through Buddhist meditation (example 18).

18. The Amitabha Buddha who was, and is, revered and praised by Buddhists around the world radiates indefinite light and life from this “state of cessation”. This state is a continuous process of *calmness*. (http://www.buddhanet.net/cbp2_f6.htm; last accessed 2019-02-08).

The WebCorp data also suggest that speakers of Present-day English see *calmness* in *country life* (1 occurrence), and *music* (12). They would like to experience it even in the *city* (1 times). These people associate *calmness* with *inexperience* (1 times) and the Christian’s journey to heaven (1). Moreover, the noun *calmness* occurs as a mathematical concept (16 times), and it is used in contexts referring to *science* (1), *form* (4), and spaces (9). Example (19) was not among my WebCorp data but illustrates well how *calmness* is discussed in mathematics papers.

19. The paper deals with the *calmness* of a class of multifunctions in finite dimensions. Its first part is devoted to various conditions for *calmness*, which are derived in terms of coderivatives and subdifferentials. The second part demonstrates the importance of *calmness* in several areas of nonsmooth analysis. (<http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=589266>; last accessed 2019-02-08).

In nature, *calmness* appears in animals (2 times, example 20 talks about rats), *air* (1), roots of a tree (1), and water (2). *Calmness* in nature as a general concept is discussed 10 times. In addition, the WebCorp data contain 4 references to the *calmness* (balance) of *everything*.

20. Note that while moderate depigmentation tends to correlate with *calmness*, extreme depigmentation can correlate with neurological problems (Grandin 1998), as well as vision and hearing impairments. (<http://www.ratbehavior.org/CoatColor.htm>; last accessed 2019-02-08).

3. Discussion

This section continues to discuss the central senses of the nouns *calm* and *calmness* in Early Modern English before comparing the two varieties and drawing more general conclusions. It should be taken into account that although I use the terms Early Modern and Present-day English, the data representing these varieties are limited. Toward the end of this section, I will move on to discuss *calmness* of the mind. One question that can be asked is if it is a virtue rather than an emotional state.

3.1 Central meanings of the noun *calmness*

3.1.1 Early Modern English

The current data suggest that in Early Modern English, *calmness* was, above all, a person’s state. It could be rephrased, for example, as the tranquility radiating

from people and their behavior. It had subcategories relating to people's mind and emotions, their life and actions, and their death. Death could be discussed separately since it is likely that discussions of calm death have to do with the art of dying which involves the ability to prepare for one's departure. It may also be assumed that Christianity affected Early Modern English speakers' ideas of how people should think, talk, and act in their lives and in moments preceding their deaths. At the same time, it is important to remember that calmness and tranquility were not purely Christian ideals but that many ideas concerning them were rooted in Antique philosophy and literature. This is all the more so in these data since the learned people who wrote books in those days had studied Latin and Greek. However, the CEECS data also remind us that discussions containing *calm* words could be rather pragmatic and concern people's reactions to incidents in their everyday lives. They were not only used when discussing philosophy or religion.

I am reluctant to separate any of the central senses of the noun *calmness* from the others as regards Early Modern English. **Figure 1** shows the meaning of *calmness* in terms of three concentric circles. The outer circle that surrounds it all is tranquility in nature, the middle one is peaceful cohabitation in human societies, and the innermost and most central sense refers to the calmness of individual people. This underlines the interaction of all these senses: individuals contribute to society and society is located in and surrounded by nature. It is good to notice that people had not yet tamed nature to the extent that has happened since then. A sea journey, for example, involved a greater risk than it would involve for us now (excepting extreme cases such as refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea), and it was more likely to make a person even consider the art of dying.

It is even possible to consider the meaning of *calmness* in EEBO in terms of percentages, focusing on the mind–body distinction. If we compare references to the mind, intellect, character, and will (33%) with references to the body (3%), it looks like the focus of the meaning was on the mind. However, it is also possible to subsume references to people, their emotions, their literary and verbal expression, and actions as references to the body (33%). In that case, the noun refers to the body more frequently than the mind (36% vs. 33%). A reasonable compromise would be to assume that what is discussed is interaction between these two. More information is given in **Table A1** in the appendix.

3.1.2 Present-day English

In Present-day English, as represented by the WebCorp data, the noun *calmness* appears to have two main meanings that could be separated from each other in a dictionary: a more general sense of tranquility and a more specific sense in mathematics. As in Early Modern English, the noun *calmness* frequently characterizes people and their actions, but its central senses could be grouped in a somewhat different way. Two things appear to belong to the core of the idea of calmness: self-control and spirituality. Setting mathematical references aside, the most central senses of the noun *calmness* could thus be titled self-control and spiritual peace of the mind. These two senses overlap since it is often suggested that spirituality, for example, meditation, helps people gain self-control. It even happens that religious websites claim that the ideas presented there are backed up by science. It is surprising how central a place spirituality takes in Present-day English. The data contain both references to Christian saints and monasteries and Eastern meditation. It nevertheless has to be taken into account that the websites included in the data may not represent mainstream thinking, nor have they always been written by native speakers of English.

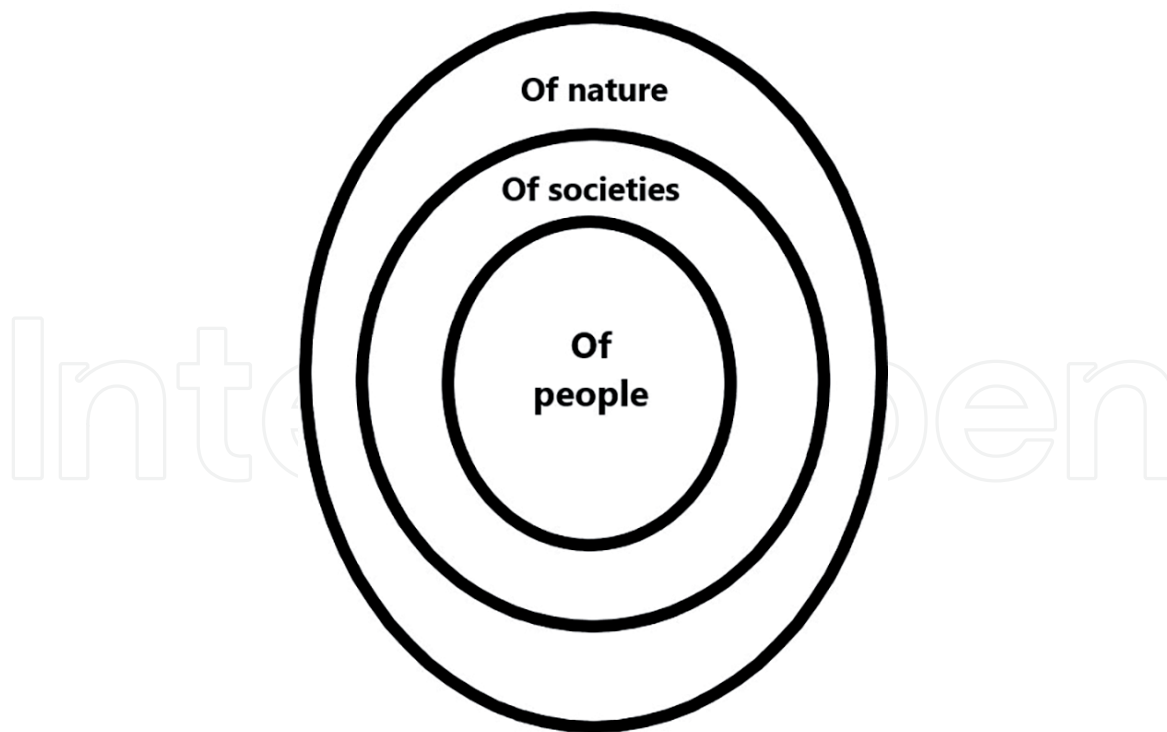


Figure 1.
Calmness in the Early Modern English data.

Something else still remains to be mentioned. Also, in Present-day English, the noun *calmness* refers furthermore to tranquility of nature and, more generally, the world surrounding the writers of the texts. It can be seen to form the background to the two central senses. It covers, for example, ruminations on how to escape noise in the city and how peaceful it is in the countryside, as well as descriptions of various physical spaces such as hotel rooms. Taken further, this framework could be seen to include references to political peace and even those to mathematical balance.

Again, percentages of senses in the WebCorp can be considered as well. The striking finding then becomes that calmness is associated with people, via pronouns or nouns such as *person*, in almost 44% of the data. The mind, intellect and character play a minor role compared to that (10.4%). References to the body are particularly infrequent (2.6%). Associations to religion and spirituality are in fact more frequent (5%). **Figure 2** is correct insofar as people's calmness is understood as their self-control. The body plays a key role insofar as such self-control can be read from the way they behave and carry themselves. The former is assumed here because self-control has become something that can be advertised, bought, and taught (cf. Section 3.1.3.). The latter may be assumed implicitly since the corpus data include exhortations to people to calm down. However, further research would be in place to understand this further. It could be that the mind–body dualism has faded into the background and that people now focus more on the calm person as a whole. Two hits that refer to the calmness of body and mind hint to such a conclusion. More information can be seen in **Table A2** in the appendix.

3.1.3 A comparison between the two varieties

There is something that clearly distinguishes the Early Modern data from its Present-day English counterpart in this study that has only been briefly mentioned so far. Many of the websites in the WebCorp data are commercial. Calmness is sold

to people. Adverts suggest that people can buy tranquility of mind in the form of recordings that they can listen to, or beautiful tourist sites, for instance. This difference might not be as accentuated if the Present-day English data were collected somewhere else than the Internet.

Clearly, the meaning of *calmness* in Early Modern English resembles that in Present-day English. Both varieties underline the role of individual human beings and their ability to control themselves and their behavior. Simultaneously, clear differences exist. The Early Modern English data is more specific about which aspects of people and their behavior can be calm. It also lacks references to religions other than Christianity while the Present-day English data suggest that calmness can be reached through Eastern meditation and martial arts. The Present-day English data hardly touch upon the art of dying, although they discuss Heaven. Surprisingly enough, the Early Modern English data also emphasize communication skills more. One potential explanation is that they focus more on cohabitation and collaboration, while the Present-day English data focus on individuals, their experience of internal well-being and how they appear to us on the outside. Similarly, the Early Modern English data put more weight on the state and its ruler. What they lack are references to scientific studies addressing, for example, human physiology; neither do they mention music nor mathematics, as the Present-day English data.

Let us return a little to the linguistic corpora. It may be added that the use of such phrases as *keep calm* and *calm down* seems to be typical of Present-day rather than Early Modern English. It seems that speakers of Early Modern English observed each other's calmness while speakers of Present-day English actively exhort each other to be calm. Notably, neither data include recorded conversations. While part of the Early Modern letters may come close to Early Modern spoken English, the Present-day English data contain imaginary conversations from novels. How these differ from each other could be studied further. It would also be interesting to ask which period allowed or allows more divergence from the norm in terms of how calm people should be.

When it comes to the percentages of different associations in the data, the most striking finding is that calmness is so simply and directly attributed to people in the Present-day English data. This may reflect the disappearance of a culture where calmness was analyzed in detail in terms of the mind and body, but it may also tell us that calmness has become something that is expected of people. In that case, the development of the calm words would parallel that of the adjective *happy* which nowadays tends to be relatively neutral. It is as if the assumption is that most people are relatively happy [23, 26].

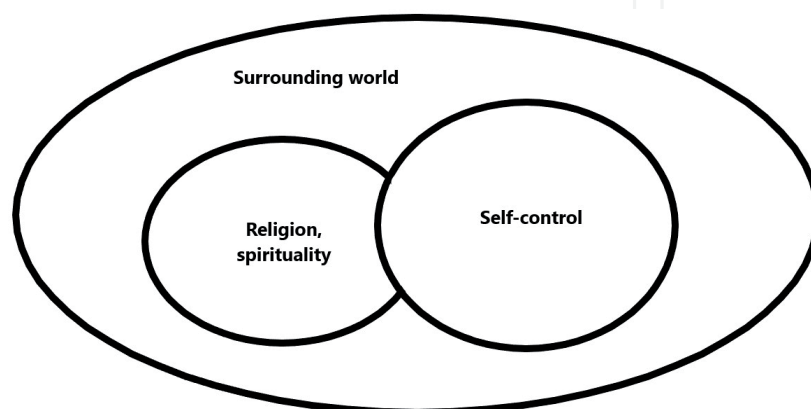


Figure 2.
Calmness in the Present-day English data.

3.2 On calmness of the mind

Lastly in this section, I will focus on the concept of calmness, or tranquility, of the mind which plays an important role in the findings. One question of interest is how people achieve or at least attempt to achieve such mental peace.

3.2.1 Calmness of the mind in the Early Modern data

The Early Modern data suggest that people aimed at calmness through reasoning and through controlling their emotions. The idea was not to let one's passions take over. Instead, people wanted to act and speak in a steady, stable manner regardless of circumstances. This was especially expected of leaders such as monarchs. It is this ideal that binds together discussions of firmness of character, judgment, wisdom, and eventually also the art of dying.

Another way to acquire calmness was to turn to God in order to be reconciled with God. Such a reconciliation provided a person with a clean conscience which in its turn led to calmness. This was particularly important at the hour of death.

Moreover, it pays to note that the Early Modern period was a stormy one in terms of politics and economy and that people extended their travels further and further around the globe. The data reflect this through referring to wars and seafaring. We may surely assume that such outer circumstances affected people's experience of calmness or lack of it regardless of how high their ideals were. Explorers reported of calm, paradisiacal conditions in places far away from their countries of birth.

3.2.2 Calmness of the mind in the Present-day English data

Moving on to the time of the Internet, people nowadays seek calmness in quiet environments, religion, and various techniques of mind and body control and meditation. It is interesting to consider how their experience and activities differ from those of their Early Modern predecessors in this respect. More and more people live in noisy cities and yearn after the peace of the countryside or even a monastery instead of dreaming of conquering new continents. At the same time, perhaps more than ever, people are regarded as organisms or machines that can be controlled if their workings are understood. People consider the matter in terms of biology, medicine, and even systems research. In addition to self-control, people are interested in ways to relax.

In both periods, some people stand out as models of mental calmness. However, it is somewhat surprising that in these data, Present-day English authors go further backwards in time to find such role models. The Early Modern texts mention contemporary people and some people that had passed away relatively recently, whereas the Internet data discuss the Virgin Mary, saints of old, and Jesus. To exaggerate a little, calmness seems to be associated with something that is remote, be it a person or a place.

3.2.3 Calmness of the mind as a virtue

My original interest in calmness is related to my interest in what language tells us about emotions. While these data suggest that calmness has to do with the control of emotions, it can also be approached from another angle. It can be seen as a virtue. This particularly applies to the Early Modern data which contain a couple of direct references to virtue, in addition to a plethora of comments suggesting that people should seek understanding, use reason and judgment, and control their emotions and behavior, even at the hour of death. To recapitulate, calmness of the mind is a rational virtue in the Early Modern data, but not only that: it is also a religious and

social virtue. It is considered good to be in good terms with both God and people: “There is no pillow as soft as a clear conscience.” In addition, a virtuous Early Modern monarch was capable of maintaining calmness in a country, which in turn led to calmness and tranquility in individual subjects’ lives.

It is not quite so clear if calmness is a virtue in our times. What is clear is that many people search for calmness. However, they do not necessarily seek to be virtuous; instead, they may seek inner calmness that involves a good feeling in general and, in particular, a feeling that they are in control of what is happening to them. Maybe calmness comes closer to happiness and satisfaction in Present-day than Early Modern English. In addition, it is more closely tied to this moment rather than the future, the future including an expectation of eternal life in the Early Modern data. However, if calmness has become the expected state of people in the way happiness appears to be, then it can be a virtue in that sense, meaning that people know they should be calm. This in turn would be a cause of why people feel bad if they do not feel calm and are willing to learn how to become calm. This could then lead them to commercial websites on the one hand, and to spirituality on the other hand.

Here we might return to the thought that Damasio quoted from Spinoza, namely that spirituality is intense harmony experienced by a person whose mind and body function in an ideal manner [9]. Damasio appears to consider such a harmony virtuous, but even if he quotes an Early Modern thinker, his understanding of spirituality fits our times. To specify, he sees the human being as a system that can function in an optimal way, rather than seeing it in relation to an invisible other, or an other-worldly existence more generally.

Lastly, if we only consider social interaction, calmness is certainly a virtue in both periods. When people live together and collaborate, it tends to be desirable that they all remain more or less calm and can express themselves in a clear, peaceful manner instead of letting their emotions take control. If emotions were allowed to rule, they could, in extreme cases, make people’s lives particularly difficult. They could also paralyze their experiencers, making them unable to contribute to the common good. Seen from this angle, it is not always a priority how calmness is achieved. In addition, it can be a virtue to make another person calm.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the English nouns *calm* and *calmness* and some other words that can be derived from the same stem. It has considered data from the Early Modern and Present-day English periods. The sample of around a thousand occurrences of these words suggests that both inner peace and outer peace were and are important to people in both periods but that they were and are associated with slightly different things. Data from both periods suggest that self-control helps us to achieve calmness, but it is not exactly the same concept. The Early Modern data emphasizes rationality, firmness of character, and the ability to express oneself in a good, constructive manner, and contains references to Christianity. The Present-day English data lean more toward techniques of controlling one’s body and mind and of meditation.

This piece of research could be developed not only by collecting more data but also by delving deeper into the original texts, other contemporary thought and further research on similar topics. It has nevertheless already given us an idea of how *calmness* is represented in selected Early Modern and Present-day English texts and how linguists can model concepts. Sometimes, these concepts can be central to society’s functioning; this could even be claimed of *calmness* even if it is not a word frequently in use in political discussions.

If these findings were taken over to social and political discussions, we might consider questions such as:

Is calmness of the body and mind a goal in itself or a means to an end? Or is it a byproduct of something else?

Does it matter how people achieve calmness of the body and mind? Should we evaluate how people attempt to achieve it?

Does everyone have a right to calmness of the body and mind? What does it mean in a situation where such calmness is also strongly commercialized?

Is it important that people act calm and stay calm in all situations? Are there any situations when they can be allowed to be anxious or angry, to raise their voices and shout, and even make trouble?

Is it more important to feel calm or to be able to control oneself? Does it depend on the situation?

A. Appendix

Category: Calmness of ...	Percentage of the data
Nature and the environment	9
Time	3.1
People	25
Mind	27
Intellect	2.7
Character	2.7
Will	0.2
Emotions	0.9
Body	3.1
Literary and verbal expression	4.7
Actions and behavior	2.5
Life and death	0.9
A geographical area	0.9
The conscience (+ 1 hit: Christ's blood)	4.9
Other things such as set forms	1.1
Unclear cases	11

Table A1.
Categories of calmness in EEBO.

Category: Calmness of ...	Percentage of the data
Environment	4.1
People	44
Mind	8.8
Intellect	1
Character	0.6
Emotions	1.8
Body and mind	0.3

Category: Calmness of ...	Percentage of the data
Body	2.6
Literary and verbal expression	1.6
Actions and behavior	1.9
Life and death	1
Religious people, God	5
Mathematical objects	2.3
Music	1.8
Others such as form	0.6
Unclear cases	23

Table A2.
Categories of calmness in WebCorp.

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