RINGS OF A THUNDERING TREE: EVOKING IMAGINED SENSORY EXPERIENCE THROUGH IMAGERY

by

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submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

ENGLISH

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF. I. RABINOWITZ

JUNE 2008

Abstract

The collection of sonnets *Rings of a Thundering Tree* (2000), by R. K. Belcher, is rich in metaphorical imagery; lending itself particularly well to textual analyses of imagined sensory perceptions. Although perspectives on or theories about metaphor can be deployed in such analyses, an imagined sense of sensory perception in itself theoretically frames the study of this poetic imagery.

In this regard, the titles of the sonnets within this collection and their themes, as well as the title of the collection and the theme of "South African decay" (with which this title is linked), are explored with an emphasis on imagined sensory experiences.

Ten Key Terms:

Ronald Kenneth Belcher, R. K. Belcher, South African Poetry, Metaphor, Imagined Sensory Perception, Sight, Sound, Taste, Smell, Touch.

Preface

Although R. K. Belcher has suggested that there are at times thematic connections between his Afrikaans and English publications, this dissertation is not a comparative study of the Afrikaans *Ringe in 'n Geelhoutboom* (1982) and *Rings of a Thundering Tree* (2000). While an intertextual comparison between rings of a Yellow-wood and a "Thundering" tree might bring new knowledge to the subject of nonconformity and the sonnet form in relation to two South African languages, such a comparison is not within the scope of this research.

The dissertation uses some of the techniques associated with New Critical analysis to elucidate the significance of titles, voice, form, and rhythm, *inter alia*, in relation to the presence of sensory evocation in the sonnets. This mode of analysis does not, however, include a comprehensive consideration of philosophically or syntactically oriented metaphors (as discussed in Chapter Two). Linkages between theoretical literatures – even the theoretical literature most often referred to within this dissertation (i.e. sensory perception and metaphor) – could profitably be demonstrated, but such connections are secondary to the aim of this dissertation, even though such connections are occasionally established in order to support the principal aim of the dissertation: the illustration of ways in which imagined sensory experience evokes the theme of *Rings of a Thundering Tree*. Exegetical skill at weaving almost innumerable secondary variables, in other words, would ultimately result in theoretical excess, which would in turn insidiously undermine the final conclusion of this dissertation – that a unique category of metaphor, imagined sensory experience, articulates and conveys Belcher's uncompromising perspective on the state of South Africa.

Liturgical connotations of "See" are referred to in an analysis of the sonnet "The Boland Wine Farmer ['as lord and master']" (2000, 1). Belcher, however, does not himself use the word "see" as a verb or "See" as a noun within this sonnet – despite the fact that "sight", within this verse, is the sense which most notably constructs the idea that one's "power" is dependent upon one's social and financial "position" (as read in Chapter Three). In this regard, where Belcher writes "I watch my vineyard ripen row by row" (l.4), the noun "See" could have replaced the verb "watch" without affecting syllabic scansion; and at the same time – through obvious grammatical incorrectness – signal definitional duplicity. With this sort of replacement, in other words, the sense of "sight" is apparent because of the letters "s-e-e"; the grammar of the main clause (of the sentence) requires readers to "read" a verb into it even though "see" has been written as a noun, "See". Moreover, the theme of this sonnet – that of "power", as seen through the eyes of a "lord and master" – is simultaneously enriched by the simple capitalization of the letter "S", owing to the associations that can be made between a See, who sits high upon a see-seat, and a Boland wine farmer, who, from "high ground", looks upon his vineyards on the slopes below.

It is not the case that Belcher's verse is un-poetically straightforward; tropes of tropes are a feature of his poetry, as mentioned in the final chapter of this dissertation. But where a

meaning of a poem rests upon the ability to identify (often cryptic) metaphorical description of metaphor, for example, the same cannot be said of Belcher's deployment of sensory-oriented language – with the exception, of course, of sense impressions being themselves implied through such metaphorical descriptions.

A lacuna which probably cannot be filled, then, is that the definitions of sensory perception given in Chapter One are wider in scope than Belcher's uses of these definitions within *Rings of a Thundering Tree*. Such definitions might have been circumscribed within this chapter in a way that would give the impression that these definitions fully correlate with Belcher's applications of sensory-oriented language. This lacuna "cannot be filled", in other words, because the analytical lengths to which one would have to go in "proving" such correlations would open the door to – as well as validate – unquestionable refutation. Rather than pretend, however, that Belcher's functional uses of a word such as "see", for example, all link up with one or the other denotation, connotation, or association of the word, the choice was made to be inclusive about the definitions, whilst transparently showing that this inclusiveness tacitly suggests there exist ways in which Belcher might have utilized sensory-oriented language to a greater extent.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about imagined sensory experience as evoked through the metaphorical imagery of Ronald Kenneth Belcher's collection of English sonnets, *Rings of a Thundering Tree* (2000). Thus, it is about the faculty of sight; it is about audition, which makes hearing and interpretation of sounds possible; it is about a way of perceiving taste through the tongue and palate, for example; through the sense of touch, or through the sense of smell; and it is also about a sense of bodily awareness, or "proprioception", and human movement, or "kinaesthesis", as well as about an ability to understand one sensory perception more fully through an imagined perception of another – namely, synaesthesia.

For the sake of argument, it is not possible to hear with an actual ear, let alone "see" with a similarly biological ear the imagery within this collection of sonnets. In actuality, feeling a leaf of paper between our fingers or seeing the visible symbols on it – the printed text, the ink (or even the white space surrounding it) – is the closest we come to experiencing any of the above sensory faculties whilst involving ourselves in an act of reading, in spite of the fact that the imagery may expect of us a richly imagined sensual experience. It might be tempting to agree with Michael Jackson, who discusses how "print" isolates the reader; or subscribe to his proposed remedy about how to overcome this isolation through the application of "theories" such as radical empiricism – that is, to live amongst the people, places and objects being studied and live their lives,

experiencing "their" senses and their surroundings in the most radical way (Jackson, 1989: 8).

Or, we could ask ourselves to what extent our own imaginations – and specifically our own imagined sensory experiences – can render these arguments gratuitous. We could ask ourselves (somewhat rhetorically) if our imaginations not only enable us, but also give us each the right to go beyond the printed text and to see with a mind's eye the rulers that enslave us, for example; to hear with an imagined pair of ears how these rulers chastise us for not fulfilling the labour-oriented goals they themselves have set for us; to taste with this same sort of imaginary tongue, and smell with an imaginary nose our daily sweat; or touch the hems of our rulers' garments, begging for freedom with our imaginary pair of hands; and then still to sense the space to which our hands belong through imagined proprioception; and to sense our kinaesthetic resistance when our right hands are forcibly removed from our sides, held down on a block of wood, and mercilessly hacked off; a lack of movement which is compensated by a fullness of feeling as we strike the air – "viva Africa!" – with our voices, through an imagined sense of synaesthesia, in ironical protest or support of our own unforgiving kind.

In establishing what the relationship is between these forms of imagined sensory experience and various kinds of metaphorical imagery within *Rings of a Thundering Tree*, this dissertation further measures this relationship against the individual themes of the sonnets, as well as the theme of this collection on the whole in light of Belcher's own perspectives on South Africa, its people and its history.

I maintain that these themes concern feelings and thoughts as well as opinions or beliefs of many cultures and subcultures within South African society. However, having described one of the teleological ends in this research – to understand *Rings of a Thundering Tree* in relation to some aspects of South African history, such as the uniting of the Griqua community, or Blood River, for example – it must be said that this dissertation is not about a nationalistic agenda; it is not about reading this agenda from the texts as though that would be a close reflection of author intent, nor is it about attributing it to, or projecting it into, the author's words.

"Western philosophical tradition, all the way from Plato to Lévi-Strauss", Terry Eagleton maintains, "has consistently vilified writing as a mere lifeless, alienated form of expression, and consistently celebrated the living voice" (1983: 130). In other words, from the Ancient Greeks to some theorists of today the subject of spoken versus written language in light of "reality" has taken a privileged place in scholarly discussions because of their seemingly oppositional nature.

For instance, Ferdinand De Saussure's theory, as stated by himself and as described by both Eagleton and Ann Jefferson, allowed readers to "exclude" the author, by looking at language as if it were a system of signs that should be studied synchronically – "that is to say, studied as a complete system at a given point in time – rather than 'diachronically,' in its historical development". Within the context of a synchronic study of signs, in other words, Saussure claimed that there was an "interdependen[cy]" of speech and written

language, but privileged the former, claiming it influenced the latter (Saussure, 1966: 19; Eagleton, 1983: 96; Jefferson, 1986: 92). Derrida's poststructuralism deconstructed the unequal relationship between spoken and written language, saying that the one only gained meaning because of the other (Derrida, 1976: 30, 31). Because Derrida does not challenge the outer structure of binary oppositions except for merely wanting to remove the "centre" in structuralism, J. G. Merquior even suggested that Derrida's theory is not radical when compared with structuralism, adding that it might be more appropriate to think of Derrida as a "neo-structuralist" (Merquior, 1986: 195).

The issue of "truth" is linked to this ongoing debate about whether orality represents reality more accurately than written language. In this regard, the poststructuralist (or neo-structuralist) Derrida, making the "Heideggerian connections explicit", conveyed the notion that "truth – cut off from […] knowledge – is constantly determined as revelation, non-veiling, that is: necessarily as presence, presentation of the present" (Derrida, 1976: lxiii).

Over the last half of the twentieth century, efforts to bring into question the supremacy of either orality or written language – in other words, to establish which is more "present" (or more "truthful") – appear to have brought about changes in general theoretical approaches within a number of academic disciplines. For instance, Robert Dixon – in his quest to rid the sensory dimension of philosophical nonsense – himself seems to conjecture a hypothesis about the validity of Cartesian dualism; and then supports his entire argument throughout his book *The Baumgarten Corruption* (1995) with

infinitesimal layers of dichotomies. For instance, he differentiates between a multitude of one-and-the-same abstract nouns by capitalizing and underscoring, depending upon the sense in which he uses the words.

Eagleton seems to have deplored constructing dichotomies through arbitrarily setting up orality in opposition to written language. He writes, "back and forth, present and absent, forward and sideways", for example illustrating the many ways in which language cannot be thought of as a simple linear phenomenon but rather as a web-like complexity of signs (1986 [1983]: 132). His description of this web-like complexity suggests to me, however, that coordinal limitations are apparently amidst our very attempts to understand the complexity of language.

Since metaphor is a main subject contributing to the theoretical development of the sonnets within this dissertation (as discussed in Chapter Two), it seems worthwhile to adapt the discussion about "twos" to a perspective stemming from within this field.

The views relayed below illustrate, in my opinion, the casualness with which binary-oriented logic sometimes appears to creep into what might have otherwise come across as a fair and complex debate. Christoph G. Leidl writes about metaphor, for example:

> A student starting his research in metaphor may be tempted to follow what in modern epistemological parlance is called a 'top-down' strategy: trying to establish a firm theoretical equipment for deciding what metaphors are, to what uses they may be put, and whether they can contribute to knowledge beyond the function of being an ornament of speech and so forth. Thus he will form strong opinions on many of these subjects. But these will not withstand for long the test to which they are subjected by the 'bottom-up' strategy – which is, plainly speaking, the reading of ancient texts. (Leidl in Boys-Stones, 2003: 33)

It might appear, in other words, that there is a presumptuous tendency to reduce complexity to seeming simplicity; which is not to presuppose that all apparent simplicity is in fact so; the binary code comes to mind in this regard – where all numerical possibilities can be replaced by a complex representation of only two components, ones and zeroes.

Eagleton, illustrating the level of inseparableness between written and spoken language (and even "thought" language), in my view, comes closest in showing the utter inconsequentiality of boundaries in regard to dichotomies, in that any of these forms of language are no more and no less real than the others. He explains, for example:

> Nothing is ever fully present in signs: it is an illusion for me to believe that I can ever be fully present to you in what I say or write, because to use signs at all entails that my meaning is always somehow dispersed, divided and never quite at one with itself. Not only my meaning, indeed, but *me*: since language is something I am made out of, rather than merely a convenient tool I use, the whole idea that I am a stable unified entity must also be a fiction. Not only can I never be fully present to you, but I can never be fully present to myself either. I still need to use signs when I look into my mind or search my soul…My spoken words seem immediately present to my consciousness, and my voice becomes their intimate, spontaneous medium. In writing, by contrast, my meanings threaten to escape from my control: I commit my thoughts to the impersonal medium of print, and since a printed text has a durable, material existence it can always be circulated, reproduced, cited, used in ways which I did not foresee or intend. Writing seems to rob me of my being [….] (Eagleton, 1983: 130)

He finally links reality with the exact moments of action in which we "*do*" a speech act, for instance, saying that "words like 'truth', 'reality', 'knowledge' and 'certainty' have something restored to them, when we think of language rather as something we *do*, as indissociably interwoven with our practical forms of life" (1983:147). Though clearly a complex conclusion finally to reach, something in it still seems – to me – to echo the rather dualistic adage, "actions speak louder than words". In my view it looks

paradoxically as though we are back where we started – reality is all a case of "one more than the other".

It might be necessary to put this kind of literary theory aside, unlearn it, forget about it, or resist its logical attractions, for the moment, in order to avoid investing Belcher's words with a sense of "reality"; because in view of this well-known academic debate about reality and language, literary theory literally threatens to excise a sense of appreciation from imagined sensory experiences – that is, it threatens to make "imagined" experiences "real".

The overall approach to research conducted within this dissertation can itself be viewed as having been approached in a way so as to limit the effects of hermeneutically uncovering "intentions". This entails keeping in mind both Barthes' and Beardsley's viewpoints concerning reception; which is, that authors or painters, for example, are in a sense "dead" because people project themselves differently into their experiences of hearing words or viewing artifacts (Beardsley, 1958).

On the assumption that the "I" in "Commemorative Trek of a South African English Poet" refers to the author himself (Belcher 2000: 10), then when he continues saying "…and wove the language throbbing in their breast / in rhythmic patterns of the written word more intricate than those they'd ever heard", it seems to follow that the author lays claim to having woven words more intricately than "those [we've] ever heard".

However, Belcher himself says emphatically that his poems – although admittedly not "completely" so – are better read as "autodynamic complexes" in which there is no poet but that the poem itself is the poet (2005, interview); rather than reading them as though they literally represent his intentions. He exemplifies his point of view, saying: "Say for instance you read a poem by Shakespeare, and Shakespeare says, 'I love you'. You would ask [dismissively] 'but how does he know me?'" The answer to that, of course, is that Shakespeare does not know you – nor does he love you. "Everything within a poem", Belcher explains, "must serve a function" and this "functionality" gives the poem meaning; a meaning that is not so much dependent upon the poet, but upon the subjective way in which readers interpret such functions. "Love", in this example, in other words, plays a function within a hypothetical poem, and the meaning of this poem would probably depend upon the extent to which a reader can establish functions for "love". In my view, it seems as though Belcher "lived" his ideas with regard to the varying, analytical abilities of different readers; he reminisces about readers, for instance, having presented their interpretations of his poems to him, and, however unrealistic they were, he seems to have had the sense of mind to view those interpretations as "true" for those individuals (2005).

Depending upon the point at which one finds oneself at this moment in time in our discourse on reception, answers as to who this "our" is may vary. Some may find that the many imagined forms of sensory experience are shared between ourselves and the author, whilst others may find that only what they bring to a text is valid.

Adapting Michael Bakhtin's double voiced discourse – as interpreted by Kevin Korsyn – may ease us over the problem of whose experience matters; that is, Bakhtin argued that when looking into oneself through the eyes of another, some sort of marginalization between the two experiences seems to take place (Korsyn, 1999). It seems necessary to keep this in mind, because throughout *Rings of a Thundering Tree* there seem to be at least two experiences running simultaneously. For example, readers might "see" a person or a character within a sonnet whilst reading about this person, yet this person may also "observe". So it is necessary to consider not only what readers bring to the text in their own imagined sensory experience of what they understand through the imagery, but also what sensory experiences the narrators or personified objects or concepts within the sonnets themselves experience.

But there is also a third sensory experience to be considered – the author's. If the theory about the death of the author is courageously not applied wholeheartedly to Belcher's texts, but acknowledged – as Belcher does (2005) – that it is not sensible to claim any text is entirely autonomous, then his understanding of sensory experience also requires consideration (as discussed in the "Preface").

Robert Dixon maintains, "*aesthetic orthodoxy*…is broad and diverse enough to embrace fiercely quarreling factions within its ranks, such as modernists versus traditionalists, but all share what I see as the defining orthodox presumption: that art is the paradigm aesthetic; and that Art is the paradigm art" (Dixon, 1995: 37). He continues, however, asking of us to question from where all this presumed meaning in art or Art stems;

"'Where is the meaning in a picture or text'. Is it in the author's mind, or in the ink, or in the viewer's head?" (1995: 41). Dixon thus gestures several movements of reception and interpretation: from the author's mind, which echoes pre-structuralism – a time in which "correct" interpretations rested upon being able to hermeneutically uncover author intent; from the text, which echoes structuralism – a time in which semiotic-oriented artefacts were studied as though they were created autonomously and thus their meanings derived from relationships constructed between determinants only within those creations; and from within receivers' heads, which to some extent signifies postmodernism – which is more or less the belief of today, where meaning changes not only from time to time and from place to place but more so from person to person.

Viewing a Classical theory about poetry and painting together with Dixon's questions about aesthetic reception and my explanation of them best illustrates the extent to which meanings are as many as people. John Graham explains the theory about poetry and painting:

> *Ut pictura poesis:* 'as is painting so is poetry,' is often either implicitly or explicitly reversed to "as is poetry so is painting," to indicate an extended analogy, if not an identification, between the two media. This classical theory of parallels between the arts was widely held and developed, especially from the Middle Ages through the Enlightenment, and served as the testing ground for theories of imitation and as the incubator for systematic aesthetics. The discussions often revolved around "natural" (painting) and "arbitrary" (language) signs and symbols, and the questions, usually unstated until the eighteenth century, were "How does painting or poetry communicate?" and "What are the limits of each medium in time and space?"
>
> Particular emphasis was always placed on the ability of the poet (or orator) to make his listener see the object, and of the painter to make his viewer understand meaning as well as imagine action. (Graham, "No Date": *Dictionary of the History of Ideas", www*)

Not only can it be said confidently that people project meaning into their experiences, but if they are themselves the artists – which they are, when they paint for themselves their own imagined pictures (or sensations) that stem from the poet's imagery – then it does not matter whether any author, painter, or composer is "dead"; it does not matter because it is "receivers" who create imagined pictures as they "receive" these very same self-made imaginary creations.

A consideration of multiple experiences is important because although readers may have a sensory perspective on what transpires all the time through imagery, it is nevertheless sometimes unclear if the sensory experiences belong to a narrator or narratee within the sonnet, to the sonnet's first creator (the author), or to these readers – their re-creators.

The primary sources are Belcher's *Rings of a Thundering Tree*, copious amounts of correspondence – conducted via email and telephone – as well as personal interviews with the author himself. Secondary sources are many; they include not only studies related to imagery – such as A. Ortony's, G. Miller's, M. Black's, or D. Schön's articles in *Metaphor and Thought* (1993), G. Boys-Stones' *Metaphor, Allegory, and The Classical Tradition* (2003), and P. Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor* (2003) – but also a seemingly different subject, namely sensory perception and aesthetics. Sources contributing to the latter include: M. Beardsley's *Aesthetics* (1958), D. Howes' *Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991), and R. Dixon's *The Baumgarten Corruption: From Sense to Nonsense in Art and Philosophy* (1995). A list of important sources would be incomplete without mentioning reference material; so added to the above list, M. H.

Abrams' *Glossary of Literary Terms* (1988) and the online OED's comprehensive entries

about sensory perceptions will also make a worthy contribution.

CHAPTER ONE

Sensory Perception and Imagined Sensory Experience

in Relation to Titles

Imagine that we are Ancient Greeks. Then imagine that I say to you "the shape, the colour and the odour of the dog shit on the pavement are aesthetic but its bylaw and toxicology are noetic" (adapted from Dixon, 1995: 32). You – also being an Ancient Greek – understand that I have used the word "aesthetic" to refer to the shape, the colour, and the smell of this excrement. Of course, if I were that articulate as to use the words "bylaw", "toxicology" and "noetic", I would probably not have had to use the expletive "shit" within the same sentence. But apart from this paradox of linguistic style in Dixon's writing,[1] our imagined interaction does illustrate that "aesthetic" – in the time of Ancient Greece – concerned what we sensed through our eyes and nose, for example. So the word "aesthetic" originally referred to what is sensible; more so, "what is 'perceivable' through the senses" as opposed to "what is 'conceivable' through the mind about what is perceivable through the senses".

If I were Plato and you were Aristotle, we could entitle this discussion "Aesthetics". Today, however, the word "aesthetic" means something different; it no longer has much to do with biological "sensory perception".

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[1] This paradox of linguistic representation is ironical because it appears within a book where the author aims at erasing "paradoxes" from human thought through a focus on "real" sensory experiences.

In 1750, the philosopher Alexander Baumgarten used the word "aesthetic" in relation to "taste" within philosophical discourse (Dixon, 1995: 1). He did not use it to describe the various experiences people have through the touch of their tongues, but to describe only the experiences and (particularly) judgements of "rational" minds. This is still how the word is used today; which means that "aesthetic" might just as well mean "noetic", because it actually refers more to how people conceive of and reason about the "bylaw" and "toxicology" of the above excrement than to how they sense its "shape", "colour" and "odour". With this change in usage came an unfortunate connotation of the word "aesthetic"; which is, there is often thought to be an ideal "taste" – an ideal way of tasting with the mind. The educated, the learned, the knowledgeable, the philosophical, or any number of other "clever" ways of mindful tasting have consequently been considered "correct" and therefore thought to represent this ideal.

When the term "aesthetic" is used to describe something that a person likes, they consequently attribute to it their presumed preference. In part, this restrictive connotation of "good" when speaking about "aesthetic taste" was also possibly why Immanuel Kant responded to the corruption of the word, urging in 1781 – toward the end of the Augustan Age – that people "give up using the name [aesthetic] in this sense of critique of taste [and rather to] reserve it for that doctrine of sensibility" (Kant in Dixon, 1995: 49).

Echoing Kant's suggestion, Dixon theorizes that Art is not necessarily art – where a big "A" represents so-called superior aesthetic taste, manifest in not-that-many framed pieces hanging in galleries, and where a small "a" represents the two- or three-dimensional images of everyday art, such as advertisements. He writes that "in our ardent desire to pursue the matter of aesthetics, this wider view of the concept [that is, of viewing "art" or "Art" as a descriptive term, not a categorical one] sets us free. We are at last released from that ascetic diet of 'challenging' formal innovations served up in white-walled shrines, whose flavour and decorum more readily suggest aesthetic nemesis than a banquet of the senses" (1995: 45).

Of course, Dixon acknowledges in his own counterargument – speaking as a mathematician-cum-geometrician and on behalf of scientists and physicists as well – that nature herself seems to have a type of logically derived aesthetic taste. "The sphere" – as in a bubble, a planet, or a drop of water – for example, "is the least surface area enclosing a given volume"; hence, "optimal form" (1995: 106). In this regard, optimal form is studied as though it were aesthetically pleasing. Many such examples can be cited from nature. But in Art – in the Picassos, for example, which are enshrined as aesthetically superior to the many other forms of everyday art – our version of optimal form results from being influenced by others; it has been decided upon in theory by relatively few people who comment "academically" upon fine art, endorsing and validating it with their stamps of approval.

Dixon writes, therefore:

> The Baumgarten Corruption of *aesthetic* takes a matter-of-fact Greek descriptive label
> for an elemental distinction in human knowledge, and turns it into a buzz word for a
> system of belief that confuses the perception of beauty with the cultivation of Art
> appreciation. Since Baumgarten, Art has drifted all the way from an eighteenth-century
> provision for aristocratic consumption to a twentieth-century cult of State Modernism.
> So it has long since reduced this system of belief to absurdity. (1995: 80)

One of the ways in which Dixon claims the misappropriation of "aesthetic" can be

rectified is by reconnecting "'taste'…to its prosaic reference to the palate and tongue"

(1995: 70, 74). Purposefully putting intellectual "taste" back into a metaphorical palate

may seem like a worthwhile endeavor. In doing this, an appreciation of a variety of

intellectual experiences might be possible, because these experiences are not so much

"judgemental" as they are "aesthetic" (meaning "sensory" in this context). Through a

reconnection of "taste" to any bodily organ that mediates sensory experience, in other

words, simplistic and dualistic assessments such as "good" and "bad" may dissipate.

Whatever is to become of our rightly- or wrongly-used terminology, it is now known that

at present there is a wave of academic interest which lies outside philosophy.

> Today, the academic world has numerous departments engaged in empirical
> programmes of cognitive research. [Jean] Piaget's missionary wish was for it to be
> possible to study knowledge without being obliged to study Philosophy. This has now
> been achieved. There are numerous fields of enquiry which tackle aspects of
> knowledge which are independent of Philosophy and with various degrees of scientific
> success: artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology, theory of perception, education,
> information theory, etc. (Dixon, 1995: 36)

Philosophy may be thought of as a frustrating study with never-ending questions – for if

you find answers to the questions, you will have nothing to philosophize about (Dixon,

1995: 70, 74). However, it may be possible to study the disciplines Dixon cites without Philosophy. If these disciplines can be studied without Philosophy, then it follows that they too can be explored without the threat of answering questions with questions, and thus without riddles upon paradoxes and so on. This interest in human cognition and human perception simultaneously marks the end of an era concerned with behaviorism (Baron-Cohen, 1995: "Neurochemistry", www).

Here follows a brief survey of the definitional meanings of the usual five senses as well as those of the senses proprioception, kinaesthesis, and synaesthesia. This review of definitional meanings covers what are, in my view, relatively known denotations or connotations of the usual five senses on the one hand, and, on the other, relatively unknown meanings of proprioception, kinaesthesis, and synaesthesia.

"Sight", unlike "see", has been used widely and over centuries as both a verb as well as a noun. In times of Modern English "sight" was once removed from its usual connection with vision; "sight" was connected with inventions such as binoculars or telescopic lenses for firearms, for example (OED, 2005: "*sight*"). Since the nineteenth century "sight" has been used colloquially as an adverb – such as, "it's a damn sight harder to…than to…", for example. But for the most part, from Old English until today, "sight" as a verb and as a noun (as well as a verbal noun, "sighting") has been and still is used to relay acts of "seeing" and also to describe what people behold during these acts. The things we sight are themselves "sights".

It seems plausible that figurative and literal uses of the word "sight" share a history of kinship; when eyesight was understood as something quite literal, its imagined counterpart perception – what is seen through a mind's eye, such as "visions" – was understood to be a sight similar within the same timeframe (about the thirteenth century).

Contexts in which these forms of "sight" have been used include the following. A spectacle has been called a "sight" – whether it has positive or less than positive connotations and associations. The action in "seeing" such a spectacle has also been linked with the word "sight" (as a verb, in other words); take for example "a sight for sore eyes" and a "shocking sight!" or "love at first sight", respectively. Some other well-known spectacles with which the word "sight" can be linked include the sights of a town, or – particularly appropriate when discussing nature – sighting wildlife. "Sight" can also imply "right there and then", as in "on sight". Another kind of preposition added to "sight" signifies knowledge or this in some sense; that is "insight", which is of course an imagined form of seeing that is itself synonymous with "knowledge". About knowledge, which is widely influenced by our personal views and opinions, it may not be difficult to see why – since, during, and prior to Middle English – "sight" itself meant "opinion". Today, the word "view" is used similarly – "your view", in other words, is your "opinion". Several centuries ago it might have been said that people "sight" something, whereas today – in my opinion – anything other than the everyday verbs "see" or "look" are rarely used. Sometimes these words are even used together tautologically, as in "look-see".

Of course, a literal understanding of eyesight was not always seen positively; whilst "seeing" might be considered "believing", within religious contexts a doubting Thomas who puts his faith in "sight" simultaneously seemed to attribute negativity to this sensory perception. Sight has for many centuries threatened to take something away from "faith" (OED, 2005: "*Sight*" and "*See*").

Whilst our sense of sight might be the most underdeveloped faculty at birth (Hannigan, "no date": "The Sense of Sight", www), once it is developed fully it is thought to be our most complex faculty. For example, vision is given pride and place in Chomsky's works – and by consequence vision is also a central component of generative linguistics (Werry, 2002). Michel Foucault said that the "gaze" – applying attitude in the manner of our looking – is widely accepted as the most influential sensory experience upon our beings (De Jager, 2004: 90). But this sort of "gaze" has connotations of exclusion and thus limits itself to Philosophy; that is, it is said that "high art, which represents the most refined extreme of purified 'taste', offers its secret pleasures only to the 'pure gaze', that condition of aesthetic appreciation formulated by the philosophers" (Dixon,1995: 68).

Arguments in support of sight as the most important faculty seem to stem, therefore, from scientific experimentation on cognition, subsequent linguistic theory on how this cognition is manifest in computation and representation, and philosophical outlooks on our senses, as well as from the negative religious connotations linked with a lack of it.

There is an overwhelmingly popular practice to which we can all relate, in this respect; sight is in a sense tantamount to bearing witness. Thus, an understanding about the practical advantages of "seeing" can in some ways be seen as paralleling philosophical or religious perspectives on the importance of sight. In line-ups of accused people, using our faculty of sight to identify a person is enough to lay a charge against them (seconded, perhaps, only by our ability to also recognize the sound of their voice); as Dixon says, "it is often the most mundane acts of witness which convict a murderer" (1995: 25).

A fairly recent addition to the vocabulary on audition pertaining to the perception of sound ironically has to do with some people's lack of it (OED, 2005: "*hear*"); the participial adjectives "hearing-ear" have been linked with the word "dog" since the late 1970s – echoing the same way in which "seeing" and "eye" have been linked to describe a "seeing-eye dog" for the blind. The gerundial meaning of "hearing" in this example, however, is not any different to its usual use as a verbal noun since about the mid-thirteenth century to the present. "Hear" from about the tenth century, of course, is found only in the form of a verb – to perceive or experience a sensation of sound. Because it is most commonly linked with our own sensory perceptions, it frequently follows a subject of a sentence in the form of an infinitive, present or past participial – as in, "I hear" or "I heard."

From the end of the ninth to the beginning of the fourteenth century, "sound" could be used as a noun, which meant "the power or action of swimming" (OED, 2005: "*sound*"). The connotations of "swimming" linked with this meaning of "sound" were apparent

even when speaking of the fish species that bears caviar – namely the Sturgeon fish, which were said to have "swimming bladders". There are other links with water; for example, a pool of water, a strait, or an inlet to the sea is a "sound". In these cases, the word "sound" actually implies touch, taste and perhaps even movement; "sound" as in "frequency" may consequently be implied through this movement, though it is not a direct connotation of the water-oriented "sound".

Sound, of course, is most commonly understood through the measurement known as "frequency". Both extremely high and low forms of frequency are beyond human perception; animals such as bats or whales, however, can hear ultra-, super- or infra-sonic sounds. The use of "sound" as a noun most commonly defines the auditory effects created by the things we can actually hear. If we cannot hear certain sounds, curiously we denote our inability to hear them – even though they are real, and truly exist – by prefixing "sound" with ultra- , super- or infra-.

In my opinion, the explanations of "sound" within the comprehensive online OED tacitly illustrate that "sound" – both as a verb and a noun – is found very often within two contexts; that is, contexts involving musical instruments or the human voice – whether it is the singing, the spoken, or the written "voice" found in linguistic texts. Instruments, however, have also long since been seen as extensions of "the human voice" in that it is the human voice to which Classical musicians most often aspire in imitating (De Jager, 2004: 289-322). For example, since the nineteenth century musicians and musicologists have metaphorically described Frédéric Chopin as the "poet" of the piano. In doing this,

they have likened his music to the exceptional charm of the human voice in the recitation of poetry. Chopin was not in a strict sense a poet, though he was an avid reader of poetry. This means, in other words, that both "Chopin" and "poetry" have metonymically come to replace, in certain instances, the words "music" and "style of music" respectively; that is because the word "Chopin" actually refers not to the man but to his music and because there is an actual relationship heard between his "poetical" music and the enchantment in hearing verse.

In 2000, Madison subjected people to variations in quality of sound, rhythm and tempo and discovered that his respondents relayed their experiences of these variations similarly. This experiment suggests, in other words, that people might tend to interpret variations in sound similarly because of some kind of innate human form of logic (2000: 335-356). Two examples supporting this idea can be taken from incidents within contexts of Formula One and Hollywood. A documentary in dedication of Murray Walker's life-long contribution to Formula One Racing was produced following the death of this commentator. Many fans were interviewed and questioned about Walker's style of live commentary. From their commentary on his own commentary, it is clear that his harsh, aggressive and "manly" way of speaking was thought to be suitable for the "manly" sport of car racing. A rather simple correlation was made, in other words, between a certain quality of voice and a certain type of context (Tricket, 2001: *The Unspeakable Murray Walker*). So too was a simplistic correlation drawn in the film – and by the producers of – *The Piano*. When Holly Hunter played her piano softly and sweetly versus loudly and harshly, her neighbour (portrayed by Harvey Keitel) attributed the meanings "seductive"

and its opposite, respectively, to what he had heard. This was clear when – as interpreted by the producers – this seducer advanced during the soft sweet music and stalled during the loud, harsh music (Depardieu and Chapman, 1992: *The Piano*). Sounds, when classifiable as "opposites", are therefore attributed rather simplistic, biologically-oriented meanings such as "masculine" and "feminine."

"Taste" – both before and after the "corrupted" word "aesthetic" was linked with it in 1750 to describe "good taste" – has defined more than the biological experience associated with the tongue and palate. By the fifteenth century, taste could also signify judgements, discriminative faculties, or preferences. In this sense, the word "taste" would be used to describe one's preferences within widely varying contexts – such as taste in music, religion or recreation, for example.

It is not difficult to see why taste as a "discriminative faculty" by the late seventeenth century would also signify a "sense of what is appropriate, harmonious, or beautiful." A form of beauty which was especially seen as tasteful in art, literature, and nature, or the like (OED: see "*Taste, n.1*").

Historically congruent with what I have already discussed about aesthetic taste, OED introduces the word "aesthetic" in its definition of taste as it relates to the mid-eighteenth century. Again, aesthetic taste is used to describe an enlightened form of intellectual appetite. Though, it does also claim the existence of "bad" aesthetic taste; where the words "aesthetic" and "taste" can be determined as denoting poor judgement from the

negative contexts in which they are used. When words such as "poor" or "bad" are not used in reference to "aesthetic" or "taste" the presumption is that "aesthetic" and "taste" refers to "good taste".

By the late fourteenth century, taste could also refer to the smell of something; illustrating the closeness in experience, perhaps, of these faculties (OED, 2005: "*taste*"). And similar to the adverbial use of the word "sight" – as in, "a damn sight harder" for example – "taste" too can be used adverbially and colloquially to describe slightness. A "damn taste harder," in other words, would mean much the same thing. Like sight, this expression of taste has been used since the nineteenth century.

In our everyday language, "smell" as an abstract noun or as an adjective would not ordinarily relay a pleasant experience; a smell is not pleasant and nor is something that smells. Since the early sixteenth century (*ante* 1526), there is record that the detection of "hypocrisy", for example, was the equivalent of getting scent of a "smell" (OED, 2005: "*smell*"). It is not difficult, in other words, to see that the negative associations that might be made with "smell" have been fathered by other much earlier negative associations also made with the same sense.

The expression about "smelling a rat" clearly echoes such early associations. It is also from such an expression that an historical link between "smell" and "discernment" can be appreciated – a link established already by the late-fourteenth to nineteenth centuries. As if by smell, for example, we can also detect, discover by natural shrewdness, sagacity, or

instinct; or suspect, have an inkling or divine (OED: see, "*smell v.*"). Adapting Dixon's

words, it should be cautioned, however, as done similarly with the issue of orthodox

"aesthetic taste" and discernment, not to let "aesthetic distinctions" about "smell" become

"acts of social discrimination and class repression" (Dixon, 1995: 67).

From Old English until the present use of Modern English, "smell" must seemingly be

used as some sort of verb to denote the simple perception of our olfactory sense if it is to

have a neutral connotation. "I smell flowers, or dog excrement" for example; the first of

which is a good experience and the second, not. Not because of the word "smell",

however, but due to the nature of what I am smelling – that is, flowers and faeces.

Touch "is the most general of the bodily senses, diffused through all parts of the skin, but

(in man) specially developed in the tips of the fingers and the lips"; it is the sense "by

which a material object is perceived by means of the contact with it of some part of the

body" (OED: see "*touch n.*"). Skin is the largest organ, a fact that correlates with the

statement that touch is the most general of the sensory experiences.

By the late sixteenth century, touch – as seen with "sight" and "taste" – could be used

figuratively to mean "slightness" or "moment"; "touching" on some topic, for example,

best illustrates this. This currently used phrase shows the effects of the gerund on our

understanding of this sense; we understand that it refers to a brief and slight encounter.

Also by the late sixteenth century, "touched" could refer to emotional affectation – a

meaning that we still use. And a little over a century later – by the 1700s – "touched" could also be used in reference to the mentally challenged (OED, 2005: "*touch*").

Contexts are many and varied in which touch has been used as a verb. The following examples of both figurative and non-figurative uses stem from the periods Middle to Modern English: military, medicine, money, music and sound, religions, sexual relations, sciences, sports, and writing (OED: "*touch v*."). In fact, it is difficult to think of a subject in which "touch" has not been used to denote the connecting of two or more agents. Specifically with regard to "touching upon" something (a subject, for example), it appears that "touch" has been appropriated to the same lengths as "sight". The phrase "in my view", for instance, can be followed by any subject imaginable; and we can also touch upon any subject we choose. So of the five bodily senses discussed above, the biological definitions of sight and touch have been extended the most. They now signify imagined acts of seeing and touching, where the two figurative meanings of this signification can be applied to any possible context.

"Touch" was at one time ranked the lowest of the sensory experiences. Aristotle viewed lust negatively, and because he thought lust was most fully manifest through a sense of "touch", "touch" was consequently viewed negatively (Howes, 1991: 63). "Touch" – in this Aristotelian sense and in the sense that we can "touch" on something with our minds – subsequently, and surprisingly, has negative connotations. "Surprisingly," because, today, a negative association between "touching" and the "topic" being touched is not explicit – unless the topic was perhaps itself unsavory. By the end of the 1700s, early

1800s, however, with a move toward humanistic subjects, the study of feral children

seems to have resulted in a reevaluation of the associative meanings attributed to "touch".

For example, the Wild Boy of Aveyron was thought to have an uncivilized sense of

touch, and because he was also thought to be lacking in intellect, "touch" – or at least a

refined sense of it – was therefore thought to represent intellectuality (Howes, 1991: 49).

If language creates models of reality, then the sense of proprioception is the latest

construction in regard to the selection of sensory perceptions in this dissertation. Of all

the forms of sensory perception discussed here, proprioception is the newest way of

thinking about how people experience their worlds – or how they imagine experiencing

them. In 1906, proprioceptors were defined within the field of physiology as the sensory

structures that enable living things to sense their position in relation to their surroundings

and to sense changes in these surroundings, as well as to sense changes internal of

themselves. By 1968, the *New Scientist* defined proprioception, saying that it described

"the tension in the muscles and the location and movement of the parts of the limb (OED:

"*Proprioception*"). Proprioception was thus also linked with kinaesthesis.

In 1840 "kinematics" referred to sciences of pure motion (OED, 2005: "*kinematics*"). By

1864 this science of motion was especially studied in relation to the motions of bodies

and the forces acting upon them – hence, "kinetic" (OED, 2005: "*kinetic*"). In chemistry,

kinetics refers to the rates of chemical processes and reactions. Unlike proprioception,

kinetics has to do with the movement of objects and the forces that make objects move,

which does not necessarily involve a spatial sense. In 1880, movement of our own bodies – which is, muscular, skeletal, or musculoskeletal movements and tensions – was termed "kinaesthesis" (OED, 2005: "*kinaesthesis*"). Kinetics will be used within the following discussion to refer to a variety of movement, whilst kinaesthesis to movement that is mostly linked with the human body.

Synaesthesia is not a sense per se. Abrams' *Glossary of Literary Terms* defines "synesthesia" as "the psychological term for experiencing two or more modes of sensation when only one sense is being stimulated. It seems, then, that in literature the term is applied to descriptions of one kind of sensation in terms of another" (Abrams, 1988: 187). In paraphrase, synaesthesia is the experience of one sense already discussed above through terms of one of the others – also discussed above. In linguistics, however, synaesthesia has also been defined as "the expression of more than one kind of sense-impression in the same word" (OED: "*synaesthesia*").

But if the above linguistic definition stands, then any number of words produce a sense of synaesthesia. The word "path" for example implies both sight and touch – for we can imagine seeing a path and we can imagine touching it with our feet. A more precise definition of synaesthesia must be the former, where transference takes place – that is, when touching actually becomes seeing, for example. In this case, a "path" must be accompanied by another word that relates not to sight and touch, but a different sense.

For example, a "meandering path" creates a sense of synaesthesia because a path ordinarily does not "move" – it is not kinetically oriented. Within the body of this argument, synaesthesia will not be used to refer to various sense impressions created by a single word but to sensory transference.

A consideration of the title of the collection – *Rings of a Thundering Tree* – and individual titles of the sonnets within this compilation evoke, through illustration, some imagined sensory experiences as well as the multiplicity of experience discussed thus far.

The implied sensory experience stemming from the title of this collection does not correspond with our usual forms of sensory experience. This is because the word "thunder" is ordinarily linked with an atmospheric phenomenon – not a "tree". Consider, for example, the sonnet "Cape Dutch".

When your Van Riebeeck with his fancy boots
trod on our Cape of Storms, he heard a speak
far distant from his own linguistic roots:
sly Harry's and his wiley mates that reek
of booze and do not know of "Thanks" and "Please"
and "Could you pass the wine cup?" and likewise,
lions and lepers lurking in the trees
and blasphemies that thunder through the skies.
But in a blink and wink we took your beat
and forged our words along your foreign lines
until your dour Germanic lips could greet
your yellow serfs with crippled Dutch and signs
with which we call our loved ones by their name
and you despise us while you do the same.
(Belcher, 2000: 12)

Although "thunder" metaphorically describes blasphemous language, it is nevertheless literally linked with its natural context – "through the skies". "Thunder" can of course be linked figuratively with any sort of loud sound or movement – as evident in "Commemoration at Blood River", when it is used to describe the Voortrekkers' conquest at the Ncome River as well as the strength and pride of the winners (Belcher, 2000: 35. l. 2). It is in this figurative sense that "thunder" is found in "Game Song" – the sonnet from which the title of the collection is derived; a sonnet about "a song which 'thunders' about 300 years of South African decay" (Belcher, 2005).

Three hundred year rings in the struck-down log
that was a thundering tree can make one tremble:
a sapling surging upwards from a bog
towards the heavens where the years assemble
above our glorious times: our first-born village
beside a stream where Van der Stel held court,
swelling into a torrent red with blood and pillage;
the British Yoke; Soweto; Red Onslaught,
lies crucified in shame upon the soil
from which its glory rose; the golden rings
that harboured centuries of hope and toil
lie rotting on the path of useless things,
and all the alien seedlings in the field of corn
will vanish in the turf and never be reborn.
(Belcher, 2000: 37)

Several sense-impressions are created by the word "tree". It is possible to see and touch a tree. It is not ordinarily possible to hear a tree, however. Imagination is required to sense the audible effects of, say, wind through its leaves as well as sensing a resultant movement. But Belcher tells us that this tree "thunders", from which the sense of sound-oriented movement becomes apparent. Synaesthesia, in other words, occurs because of the relationship between the sense-impressions of the words "thundering" and "tree"; that

is, sensory transference occurs because the sense of sight (of seeing a tree, for example) is experienced in terms of – and influenced by – sound-oriented "movement" (i.e. "thundering").

The word "rings" describes the many concentric circles of this thundering tree. In other words, the tree is old and its many rings attest to many years of growth; which is why the metaphorical "decay" of South Africa that Belcher talks about seems so much more immense, given the tumultuous sound of success – "thunder" – as physically manifest in these rings (Belcher, 2005).

"Rings" can be seen in a tree struck down, and they can also be "touched" in the sense that they can be physically "traced" with a moving finger. This is the plausible and rational limit of sensing rotting "rings" according to an interpretation of bodily experiences. Smelling, tasting or hearing these "rings" would require a form of synaesthesia; tasting these rings through sight, for example, would have to be imagined. The title alone does not indicate that these rings can be sensed through synaesthesia.

From forty titles, within *Rings of a Thundering Tree*, at least twenty refer to "objects" – the mental images of which, to an extent, encourage us to sense these objects through sight or touch, for example; fifteen imply a sense of proprioception and kinaesthesis; and five refer to abstract ideas, or concepts.

Many of the titles linked with objects, however, are also kinaesthetic or kinetically oriented or relay a sense of proprioception: "Boland Wine Farmer" (farming), "Gangers" (railway-oriented labour), "Highway" (sense of movement, and direction), "Disciple" (following), "Italian Prisoner of War I, II" (restricted body), "Captives" (again, restricted bodies) ["Captives" is not actually in this collection, although it is included in the T.O.C], "Servant" (restriction and physical labour), "Sunbathers" (tanning), and respectively "Fishing Paradise" and "S(tell)enbosch" giving a quite literal sense of physical-movement-through-fishing and cryptically "telling" somebody something and relaying a sense of change – from a mound of earth (a "tell") to a city. In a sense, the overall sensory experience linked with the titles of these sonnets is not only one of sight but also proprioception and kinaesthesis.

The sensory experience imagined through the titles seems also to be linked with the overall tenor of the sonnets. For instance, from the title of "Commemoration at Blood River", which relays a sense that something is being done, a sense of action, the sonnet continues to draw heavily upon verbs or parts of speech that are linked with proprioception and kinaesthesis; "stood", "thunder" (abstract noun used as a verb), "reproaches", "appeals", "sat", "ripped", "executed", "crush", "disappeared", "left bleeding", "shredded", "see rising" (latter, verb as gerund), "meet", "see pipe bombs pollinate".

It is not as though all these words relay only a sense of movement or tension, however. Some of them also relay a sense of touch (as in "ripped") and even sight (as in "disappeared"). Nor is it the case that other poems do not contain doing words, they do; but where "The Boland Wine Farmer", for example, has only ten verbs, "Commemoration at Blood River" has almost twenty and they are profoundly more movement oriented than those found in "Wine Farmer" – compare "thunder", "ripped", "executed", and "crush" with "watch", "face", "carry", "behold", and "hide", for example. In this example, when the sonnet begins to "see" passively it continues to "see" in this way, and when it actively "moves" it continues to do so.

This is not a rule, however. Not all the sonnets that begin with "movement" continue to affect our sense of kinaesthesis throughout to the same degree as "Commemoration at Blood River". The sonnets "A Visit to Paris, France" and "A Visit to a Literary Museum" both indicate movement. However, there are only about ten doing words – or "doing" images – in these two sonnets, which is considerably less than "Commemoration at Blood River". Content, in other words, may also be linked with the extent to which the sense-impression of the title is established throughout the fourteen lines; in this case, the context of a visit to either "Paris, France" or a "Literary Museum" implies less action than the context of the historical battle between the Voortrekkers and Zulus at the Ncome River.

In conclusion of this chapter, it has been said of Eagleton that he "is interested in aesthetics only in so far as it proposes a metaphysics and an epistemology of the sensate

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person to counter the dictates of political control. What the self, the body, the senses would reclaim in such an emancipation is left an open question" (Dixon, 1995: 73, 74). It seems, in other words, that Dixon claims not to know what is reclaimed in the movement away from the control of politics and aesthetic orthodoxy; it appears that he has trouble in seeing the link between physical colonization and the colonization of the human mind. I would say that if Eagleton does not presume the reclamation of something in the process of sensory and bodily emancipation and the emancipation of the self, that is because he understands that freedom is the ultimate goal – freedom *is* what is being reclaimed, and all the varieties of choice that go with it.

To this end, definitions on sensory experience must be understood in light of the fact that they may be understood and applied differently, according to a person's individuality and their own choices. People "paint" their own imagined pictures and sensory perceptions, from which their sensory experiences stem, which is also of their unique "design". Whilst it should be acknowledged that there has been a particular choice of word by the poet himself (as in the above titles), the sense-impressions created through that choice of word are also created according to people's personal, imaginary artistic purport.

I have suggested that in relation to imagined sensory experience the title of the collection and of the sonnets themselves relay both ordinarily- and extraordinarily-imagined sensory experiences; sight and touch as well as synaesthesia are relayed through *Rings of a Thundering Tree*, and a feel for proprioception and kinaesthesis is relayed through many of the individual titles.

CHAPTER TWO

Metaphor, Imagery, and Imagined Sensory Experience

Imagine that we are Plato and Aristotle and that landmines existed in our time. Then imagine that I say to you "the 'landmine' on the pavement smells dangerous". If we were to engage over aspects of this sentence – especially my use of the word "landmine" – I would probably open our debate by saying that I have ornamented my everyday language; in place of simply being sensible, by calling the excrement on the pavement "dog shit", I have cross-referenced my personal vocabulary to find an emotionally-charged, "frilly" substitute for (at least what is now considered to be) straightforward – though unsavory – slang. You might say, however, that both canine faeces and "landmines" elicit similar responses from us – we would not willingly step in or on either of them; so whilst the metaphor may seem melodramatically ornamental, it nevertheless took some degree of ingenuity on my part to draw upon this similarity in order to come up with an alternative for the words "dog shit".

Plato, as Norma Mayfield (1986: 24, 25) and Michael Silk (2003: 116) maintain, saw metaphor as an ornamentation of language. He discouraged the use of it, claiming that "reason" would be impaired by "feeling". Aristotle, however, saw metaphor as a sign of genius, maintaining that it takes intelligence to create corresponding similarities between a subject and a description of this subject through metaphor.

Metaphor was therefore seen as a "poetic" tool alone, because it used "mechanisms outside the realm of everyday conventional language" (Lakoff, 1993: 202). In this classical sense, metaphor was – however cleverly or sentimentally conjured up with the help of the imagination – an ornament to language; in an historical sense, my above adaptation of Dixon's words about "dog shit" (Dixon, 1995: 32) turns prose into poetry. Thus the line which might be drawn between these two blurs, because poetry – as in the example about landmines – could conceptually stem from prose owing to the ease with which an everyday word can be appropriated to become metaphor.

Whether the use of metaphor was evidence of intellectuality or emotionality, today it can be said – as G. R. Boys-Stones does – that the classical definition about the poetic exclusivity of metaphor is no longer adequate. "Argument", Boys-Stones claims, "rages over the kind of model needed to replace the 'classical' definition of metaphor" (Boys-Stones, 2003: 1). He continues, saying that "there is now general agreement at least that an account of metaphor which makes it merely an ornament to language […] simply does not hold up to the realities of metaphorical usage" (2003: 1).

Questioning ourselves, as cognitive scientists and linguists, for example, about the generalizations governing "the linguistic expressions referred to classically as 'poetic' metaphors" may lead to the discovery that the classical definition cannot actually withstand rigorous analytical disquisitions (Lakoff, 1993: 203). This is because – as Lakoff explains – "the generalizations governing poetic metaphorical expressions are not in language, but in thought: they are general mappings across conceptual domains"

(1993: 203). In short, general principles about conceptual mappings apply as much to everyday language as they do to poetic metaphor

Michael Reddy, in "The Conduit Metaphor: A Case of Frame Conflict in Our Language About Language" (1993 [1979]: 164-201), partly summarizes his idea of a "conduit metaphor" by saying that "language functions like a conduit, transferring thoughts bodily from one person to another" (1993: 170). In explaining his idea, drawing upon many phrases – such as "*get* your *thoughts across* better" – made up of everyday speech, Reddy, perhaps unknowingly (as Lakoff claims), is said to have illustrated that "the locus of metaphor is thought, not language"; and, as Lakoff states, "that metaphor is a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world" (Lakoff, 1993: 204).

In short, Reddy maintains that – to either more or less of a degree in correctness – listeners read their (metaphorical) thoughts and feelings into words, suggesting that words can actually *contain* these attributed meanings. For example, "[…] *find* any good *ideas in* the essay [?]" or "you're *reading things into* the poem [!]"; where the former shows that a reader has had to extract meaning contained in words and the latter relays "the absurd expression [which] faults" him for having inserted too many of his own thoughts or feelings into the words of the poem. Moreover, if words can contain thoughts and feelings, it follows that we can conceptualize words in general – and in metaphorical terms – as possessing both "insides" and "outsides" (Reddy, 1993: 168,169).

Coleridge, I.A. Richards, and W. Schibles, as Mayfield implies (1986: 24), are among the most important figures playing an historical role in the change of perspectives on metaphor discussed thus far; Reddy's radical take on the locus of metaphor is preceded, in other words, by Coleridge calling metaphor the "living power and prime agent of all human perceptions" – which clearly illustrates a break from the classical definition, labeling metaphor as merely an "ornament"; and by I. A. Richards opening the "door" on metaphor so wide that it is befitting to say – as Schibles did in 1974 – that all language is metaphorical (Mayfield, 1986: 26). All words are in a sense symbols (signifiers); even when signifiers signify signifiers, the latter – now signifieds – are nevertheless metaphorical of the former; if one looks up a word in the dictionary, as the now-classic example goes, he will find only other corresponding words for it – not the agent it represents.

Metaphor, in short, escaped circumscription to poetry; was set free within the world of everyday language; and changed its location – from everyday language to everyday thought, where almost any linguistic sign is comprehensible in terms of metaphor.

"Philosophy" and "syntax", in my view, are two forms of inquiry – in the wake of the classical definition – through which contemporary theorists often develop their perspectives on metaphor. In order to support this view – and, especially, to illustrate how philosophy and syntax in light of metaphor, and its link with sensory-oriented imagery, relate to Belcher's *Rings of a Thundering Tree* – it is necessary to consider more

closely a number of perspectives on and theories about metaphor. The discussion below focuses first on philosophy, followed by a consideration of syntax.

Philosophy, as discussed in Chapter One, is strongly linked with riddle and paradox; both of which, in my opinion, relay a sense of problem-setting and solving. Problem-setting and solving – or the "elucidation of answers", we might say – have also been viewed as foundations on which modern theories about metaphor are built; L. R. Waugh and M. Monville-Burston maintain, for example, that recent deployments of metaphor to "elucidate culture are directly descendant" from a co-founder of the Prague Linguistic Circle and the father of structuralism, Roman Jakobson (Waugh and Monville-Burston (eds.), 1995: 44).

Problem-setting as it relates to cultural ideologies, and the role that a certain kind of metaphor plays in solving problems, are discussed in Donald Schön's article, "Generative Metaphor: A Perspective on Problem-Setting in Social Policy" (1993).

How to overcome a lack of popularity with regard to a certain paintbrush and how to positively conceptualize low-income housing are two "problems" that Schön attempts to throw light on in his discussion about metaphor.

In an attempt to discover how to make a not-so-effective brush popular, Schön maintains that a researcher metaphorically described the brush as a "pump" – noticing how paint is literally "pumped" through the bristles during application. This meant that the word

"pump" not only re-described the word "brush", but was an alternative way of thinking about "brush" and "brushing" – which in turn resulted in a totally new way of perceiving both tools and their uses (Schön, 1993: 141).

This "new way" of perceiving both tools, is linked – as Schön says – to problem solving; the researcher stumbled across the metaphor "pump" in an attempt to solve the problem as to how a brush works; also, the trendy metaphor of a "pump", that provided a new way of seeing the brush, seemed simultaneously to solve the problem of how to advertise the brush in a way that would hopefully increase its popularity.

Schön's less technologically-oriented discussion about social policy adds to our understanding of problem-setting and solving in light of metaphor:

> Problems are not given. They are constructed by human beings in their attempts to make sense of complex and troubling situations. Ways of describing problems move into and out of good currency (as the urban problem, for example, tended to be defined in the 1950s as "congestion"; in the 1960s as "poverty"; and in the 1970s as "fiscal insolvency"). New descriptions of problems tend not to spring from the solutions of the problem earlier set, but to evolve independently as new features of situations come into prominence. Indeed, societal problem solving has often created unintended consequences, which come to be perceived as problems in their own right (as public housing, conceived initially as a solution to the problem of housing the temporarily poor, came later to be perceived as a concentration of social pathology). (1993: 144)

There are remarkable parallels between philosophy, as discussed in the previous chapter, and the deployment of metaphor with the purpose of "solving" philosophical problems, as discussed above. In the previous chapter, a paradoxical problem arose from the suggestion that philosophical riddles could actually be solved; that is, there would be

nothing to philosophize about. Similarly, in using metaphor to understand cultural problems, we arrive not at answers, according to Schön, but yet more problems; there is a sense, in other words, in which mind does not overcome matter – thoughtful solutions do not actually solve material problems.

The process underpinning the need for, rise in, and purpose of generating, particular culturally-oriented metaphors will be considered in relation to Belcher's imagery – as found in his sonnet "O.B.", for example; a consideration undertaken, if not to produce timelessly correct answers, at least to throw light on the generation of certain images and the hoped-for (political) result in evoking these images.

A generative metaphor [stemming from a need to solve a problem, and linked to new ways of perceiving old objects or ideas] is a "'carrying over' of frames or perspectives from one domain of experience to another" (Schön, 1993: 137).

It is necessary, prior to considering the link between metaphor and education, however, to take a closer look at some of Max Black's perspectives on metaphor. This consideration is essential because the views on metaphor in relation to education, which I wish present and apply within this and the following chapter, stem from Black's generation of new knowledge about metaphor.

Michael Silk maintains that the "substitution principle has been challenged long and hard…most strenuously in the theory of Max Black". Black gives a metaphorical

statement a new cognitive significance, "through 'interaction' of two separate frames of reference" (Silk, 2003: 118,119). Black himself acknowledges that his preferred view on metaphor must be weighed against "its only available alternatives" – that is, the substitution and comparison view (1993: 27).

Whether the two major components of metaphorical statements are called "primary" and "secondary", "principle" and "subsidiary", or, as sometimes stated within this dissertation, "topical" and "vehicular" subjects, Black "prefers" to view metaphorical statements, (ironically) irrespective of these terminological substitutes, in terms of "interaction" (1993: 27). "Interaction", therefore, in a sense describes the "inseparable" sort of relationship that he sees existing between the two main components of metaphorical statements. His view on metaphor stems partly in reaction to what might be called a simplistic view on the relationship between metaphor and substitution; for example, that "similarity connects a metaphorical term with the term for which it is substituted" (Jakobson, 2002 [1956]: 47).

Black succinctly explains his position on substitution and comparison thus:

> The substitution view regards "the entire sentence that is the locus of the metaphor as replacing some set of literal sentences"; while the comparison view takes the imputed literal paraphrase to be a statement of some similarity or analogy, and so takes every metaphor to be a condensed or elliptic simile.
>
> The reader will notice that both of these views treat metaphors as unemphatic, in my terminology – in principle, expendable if one disregards the incidental pleasures of stating figuratively what might just as well have been said literally. (Black, 1993 [1977]: 27)

In other words, Black takes issue with metaphor-as-mere-substitution – especially in the

second paragraph of the above quote – because if metaphor is viewed as a mere

replacement of the subject it describes, then there is no apparent need for the metaphor in

the first place. We "might just as well [speak] literally". In Silk's explanation of Black's

preference for an "interactional" view on metaphor, we learn that a certain kind of

"modification" takes place (Silk, 2003: 118,119). When metaphor (the vehicle), in other

words, "modifies" what is ordinarily known about a (topical) subject, then this metaphor

is better called "interactional" than "substitutional". "Modification", therefore, eschews

the notion that one subject is able to replace completely (or substitute for) the other; and

it introduces the idea that something new – a "modified" meaning – can be learnt about

these subjects because of the interaction between them.

It may not be incorrect to say that education is all about "learning". Hugh G. Petrie and

Rebecca S. Oshlag, in their article "Metaphor and Learning" (1993), state that their

writing about the role of metaphor in education is made purposeful because of the

appropriateness of Black's "interactive" view on metaphor. They write:

> The interactive level of metaphor […] creates similarities. [Thus,] it could
> provide the bridge between a student's earlier conceptual and representational
> schemes and the later scheme of the totally unfamiliar subject to be learned by
> the student. Interactive metaphor would allow truly new forms of knowledge
> and understanding to be acquired by the student without presupposing the
> student already knows, in some sense, that which is being learned. (Petrie and
> Oshlag, 1993: 585)

When "metaphors", Mayfield relays, exist "as models/methodologies/hypotheses"

outside of their "particularized domains of poetics, philosophy, semantics, education, and

psychology [for example]", they are then to be studied "as phenomena […], analyzed

semantically […], epistemologically […], and artistically" (Mayfield, 1986: 20, 21).

Mayfield herself – in her PhD dissertation on metaphor and education, entitled *The Bridge to the Other Side* – illustrates how these sorts of "expansive" metaphors possess educational-like powers, which literally "expand" our knowledge.

It is premature to draw the conclusion, however, that an "interactional" metaphor always expands our knowledge; or that an interactional perspective on metaphor always goes hand in hand with an educational one, simply because new knowledge is generated through the interaction of primary and secondary subjects. Petrie and Oshlag, for example, do not restrict their thoughts about the educational side of metaphor to Black's interactional view. In fact, they formulate an irrefutable counter argument, in my view, through which they claim that the extent to which metaphor must be viewed solely as "interactional" is a matter of perspective. Contrary to Black's preference for an "interactional" view on metaphor over a "comparative" one, Petrie and Oshlag explain that

> One and the same metaphor can be comparative *and* interactive, depending on the point of view taken. An educational metaphor like "The atom is a miniature solar system" is probably a comparative metaphor from the point of view of the teacher. The teacher already knows both about the solar system and about atoms and is relying on the similarity between them that already exists in our collective understanding. But from the point of view of the student just beginning physics, the metaphor, assuming it is successful, will be interactive. It will (help) create the similarity *for the student.* (1993: 585)

Whilst the student may learn something new, in other words, due to the interaction of the subject and its metaphorical description, it seems unlikely that the teacher's knowledge expands likewise. Thus, "new" meanings, linked to the interaction of the subject and its

metaphor, play less of a role and possess less meaning for a teacher than do the mere comparisons to which attention is drawn.

Another way in which I conceive "learning" to take place in light of metaphor, is when metaphorical statements themselves uphold certain teachings; here, I am speaking about the Biblical-like "Thou Shalt Not[s]" found within many different societies. These "root" metaphors are said to "act as […] underlying principles guiding the development of institutions (or movements), [which are] often expressed linguistically as ideologies [that link institutions] to a philosophy, history, or social science; condition beliefs, values, and world views; and influence the way people relate to one another, their personal behavior, and their expectations" (Mayfield, 1986: 31). These kinds of "educational" metaphors, conditioning societies' collective knowledge, are often found in slogans or mottos concerning cultural ideologies, for example.

Educational properties of metaphor will be adapted within the body of this chapter to show how the poet, Belcher, sometimes writes instructional verse; that is, his imagery, rich in sense-impressions, is only fully appreciated when there is a concomitant understanding of the interaction between "new" information in light of what is already known – or, the "old". Similarly, in light of root metaphors, we might learn – through Belcher's conception and versification of others' sensory experiences – of principles underlying certain cultures within South Africa.

Two final philosophical perspectives on metaphor requiring discussion concern Lakoff, and his and Johnson's joint conceptualizations of cross-domain mappings and language-as-war (Lakoff, 1993: 205-210; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 4). Lakoff writes that an important contemporary theory about metaphor concerns "generalizations governing inference patterns". He continues: "that is, cases where a pattern of inferences from one conceptual domain is used in another domain" (1993: 205). I will refer to this "inference between domains", in light of metaphor, as an "ontological" metaphor; and refer to "warlike" metaphors as "structural" – as done so, similarly, by Mayfield (1986: 28). The reasons for which – at least in regard to the former – automatically follow below, in light of my discussion on "inference patterns". Note should also be made that through a discussion of the "ontological" metaphor, support is simultaneously given to the historiography of metaphor – especially the conceptual shift, placing the "home" of metaphor in thought, instead of language – as discussed at the outset of this chapter.

Structural metaphors are prevalent in everyday language (Mayfield, 1986: 28). Knowing that the locus of metaphor is now thought by many to be "thought", it is worthwhile to rephrase Mayfield and her sources somewhat, saying that structural metaphors are prevalent in our very conceptualization of the world – although obviously and audibly manifest in spoken language. This overwhelming prevalence of structural metaphors stems from the idea that language has itself been metaphorically described as a "war" in which speakers constantly battle – through the way in which they structure their language and choose their words – against listeners; language, so structured in an attempt to convince listeners of personal points of view. For example, "one *strengthens* and *defends*

arguments against *opponents* and someone *wins* or *loses*" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 4),

where words italicized metaphorically describe what people do with language, their

approach toward respondents, and the results of using language in argument; that is,

people try make their point of view invincible, steamroll views that they consider to be

oppositional, and thus often hope to win their battles through words. Metaphorical

statements that lack this sort of warrior-like strategy, on the other hand, are perhaps better

viewed other than "structural", possibly in terms of any number of philosophical theories

about non-argumentative language (already mentioned), since they may lack the "active

ingredient" aimed at conquering oppositional (or what I would say are simply different)

views.

In regard to the ontological metaphor, if I were to say that "love is a journey", the word

"mapping" would describe not that "love" is a "journey"; rather, this word particularly

refers to the correspondences that lie conceptually between "love" and "journey" (Lakoff,

1993: 207). Consider, for example, my adaptation of Lakoff's argument below,

rearranged so that his phrasal examples linked with this metaphorical "journey" are

followed directly by those linked with "love":

> Two travelers are in a vehicle, traveling with common destinations; two lovers are
> in a love relationship, pursuing common life goals.
>
> The vehicle encounters some impediment and gets stuck, that is, becomes
> nonfunctional; the relationship encounters some difficulty, which makes it
> nonfunctional.
>
> If the travelers do nothing, they will not reach their destinations; if they do
> nothing, they will not be able to achieve their life goals.
>
> There are a limited number of alternatives for action:

> They can try to get the vehicle moving again, either by fixing it or getting it past
> the impediment that stopped it; they can try to get [the relationship] moving again,
> either by fixing it or getting it past the difficulty.
>
> They can abandon the vehicle; they can abandon the relationship. (1993: 208)

What becomes clear in this rearrangement is that love and journeys can conceptually follow the same path – they can start or get stuck, for example, at similar places; as Lakoff says, mapping is "a set of ontological correspondences that characterize epistemic correspondences by mapping knowledge about journeys onto knowledge about love" (1993: 207). Further, it is this mapping across conceptual domains that makes metaphor "not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason; [A] view of metaphor [that] is thoroughly at odds with the view that metaphors are just linguistic expressions" (1993: 208, 209).

George A. Miller is said to have taken exception to Lakoff's and Johnson's categorizations of metaphor (according to structural or ontological qualities, for example), choosing to study metaphor in relation to syntactical rather than philosophical criteria; nouns, verbs, adjectives, predicates, for example, and their phrases, might fit into one of three syntactical groups – nominal, sentential, or predicative (Mayfield, 1986: 30-32).

The subject of syntax and metaphor, however, is in my view actually best preceded by one on syntax and simile. Syntax in relation to metaphor should probably include some consideration of simile, not because simile can be – to more or less of an extent – viewed

as metaphor, but because, in establishing this view, simile can be linked syntactically with metaphor.

Simile constitutes a "syntactic variation" on metaphor – relying on the use of words such as "like", "as", or "sort of", for example, where the first two are linked with the word "truthful" and the last two with the word "partial" – to establish the relationship between two subjects (Mayfield, 1986: 32-34). Ortony, as Mayfield maintains, claims that "the most important difference between the two figures, metaphor and simile, lies in the quality of *directness*". Metaphor is an indirect statement of simile (Mayfield, 1986: 32).

Belcher's sonnet "A Visit to Paris, France" can help illustrate ways in which simile and metaphor coalesce, depending upon syntactic variation.

As if in cottonwool the specks of farm,
no, landscape, gleam below; the Boeing lands
at Orly airport, and a lusty balm
embraces us like surly women's hands,
but naked Moulin Rouge's jinking pranks,
the blackened Notre Dame's relentless host
of candles and the Seine's enlightened banks
afford no niche for a tired Holy Ghost.
My heart begins to yearn for avenues
of jacaranda trees in old Transvaal
where every bit of patriotic news
ripples through every heart that loves ons taal,
young confirmands disclose their secret sins
and Tukkie maidens stroke their violins.
(Belcher, 2000: 8)

A truthful simile is clearly present in the verse "The Boeing lands / at Orly airport, and a lusty balm / embraces us like surly women's hands" (ll. 2-4) due to the obvious comparison between the two subjects "lusty balm embraces" and "surly women's hands".

The word signifying simile – in other words, "like" – however, can be omitted, turning this verse into a metaphorical statement; which can in turn illustrate syntactical variations of metaphor (nominal, sentential, and predicative), as viewed by Miller.

Nominal metaphor is where nouns *are* each other. For instance, "A lusty balm (a noun) *is* surly women's hands (the other noun)". Thus, in this syntactical variation, simile becomes a certain type of metaphor. Sentential metaphor is where the metaphor completely omits the referent – as in, "surly women's hands embrace us". This form of proposed metaphor would be especially difficult to decipher, because unless the reader knows that "a lusty balm" is the referent that has been omitted, it is difficult to deduce that "the embrace of surly women's hands" describes that (omitted) smell. A sentential metaphor may be determined easily, only if the context preceding the use of it firmly establishes the comparison of two subjects. Hypothetically, if the smell at the airport had been described previously to lines three and four in terms of a feminine embrace, then the connection between an embrace of women's hands with a balm would, in my view, be apparent by line four.

Lastly, even fewer words require consideration to understand the predicative metaphor. Look at the following verbs and adjectives/predicates, for example: "a lusty balm" and

"balm embraces us." In the first, the adjective "lusty" metaphorically describes "balm" and, in the second, the verb "embraces" predicates or asserts – or says – something about what the subject ("balm") is doing. If the original quote was, in other words, a metaphor and not a simile, it is plausible that it would most easily be studied as a predicative metaphor, since nothing really needs to be changed in the wording. The signifier of the simile – the word "like" – could be kept and it can still be maintained that predicative metaphors exist on either side of this signifier. For example, "A lusty balm [predicative metaphor] embraces us like surly women's hands [predicative metaphor]".

In short, creating an apparent "directness" through a kind of "syntactical" comparison of two subjects (i.e. "truthful" simile), makes as apparent and seemingly real the type of smell at Orly airport. Conversely, had this directness been less – say, through the subtle use of a metaphor, difficult to interpret owing to complex syntax – the imagined smell of Orly airport might, arguably, have lessened likewise.

Although metaphor may be predominantly discussed, philosophically, in relation to metonymy, syntax can also, theoretically, be viewed as a factor in this same discussion. Following is a consideration of metonymy and syntax, as seen by Jakobson, Paul Ricoeur, Michael Silk, and Laird.

Jakobson is said to have seen a bipolar structure to language; where metaphor, based on similarity, is the fundamental trope of poetry and where metonymy, based on contiguity, is the major figure of prose (Waugh and Monville-Burston (eds.), 1995: 115). I aim not to

focus on Jakobson's idea that "all [varieties of aphasia] lie between … two polar[ities] – i.e. metaphoric and metonymic poles" (1995: 115) – since theorizing in twos and opposites is antithetical to the epistemological basis of this dissertation, but to draw attention to the nature of proposed linkages between metaphor, similarity and poetry, and metonymy, contiguity, and prose.

"Similarity", of course, is a cornerstone in metaphorical discussion and has been touched on at the outset of this chapter. Here, an additional though slightly different view on the role that similarity plays with regard to metaphor is reproduced – partly to refresh previous discussion, but also to help illustrate how metonymy is thought to deviate from metaphor. Consider, for example, Miller's claim about reality in light of metaphor and similarity:

> Metaphor presents an apperceptive problem. A metaphor that is literally false of the real world can still be added to our image and used to constrain our model, but it creates a tension between our conception of the real world and our conception of the world that the author had in mind. In similar situations in the real world, we try to synthesize a textual concept as information in such a way that its truth conflicts as little as possible with our conception of the real world. (Miller, 1993: 367)

Metaphor, in sum, varies in its effectiveness depending upon corresponding variations of similarity between primary and secondary subjects; thus, explaining the existence and application of a "tensive" metaphor – as in Mayfield's research, for example (1986) – where more or less correspondences between two subjects result, respectively, in more or less tension.

Whilst "tension" may not be foreign to metonymy, metonymy seems, also, to be

connected on some level with syntactical variation. Jakobson maintains, for example, in

"Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles":

> The development of a discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity. The metaphoric way would be the most appropriate term for the first case and the metonymic way for the second […]
>
> In a well-known psychological test, children are confronted with some noun and told to utter the first verbal response that comes into their heads. In this experiment two opposite linguistic predilections are invariably exhibited […]
>
> To the stimulus *hut* one response was *burnt out*; another, *is a poor little house*. Both reactions are predicative; but the first creates a purely narrative context, while in the second there is a double connection with the subject *hut*: on the one hand, a positional (namely, syntactic) contiguity, and on the other a semantic similarity. (Jakobson, 2002 [1956]: 42)

Jakobson, Silk maintains, is one of the most remarkable literary theorists of recent history

because he sets up metaphor, "not as a single special phenomenon, but as a contrastive

member of a polarity: *metaphor*, centred on analogy or similarity, is opposed to

metonymy, centred on association or contiguity" (Laird, 2003: 120,121). Paul Ricoeur is

"among those who have mounted a challenge to Jakobson's system". That is because

Ricoeur is said to have taken issue with Jakobson's "diarchy of metaphor and

metonymy", seeking to "re-establish the special status of metaphor itself". Silk continues,

saying that "in an interactional spirit […] Ricoeur sees in metaphor the power to

redescribe reality and a significance that goes far beyond poetry. Metonymy, by contrast,

is turned back into the modest thing the ancient tropologists took it to be: a limited

literary device and a substitution of a simple kind, whereas metaphor is not a substitution

at all" (2003: 120,121).

A claim such as "metaphor is not a substitution at all" of course loudly echoes Black's perspective; if metaphor merely substitutes for literal thought, what is the need for metaphorical talk? Apart from the apparent answer that, yes, there is indeed no need to speak metaphorically, it can be added that his "interactional" view suits the study of metaphor. This is because the more tension exists between subjects through dissimilarity the more metaphors live up to their reputation of bringing to mind what might have otherwise been "unimaginable". Metonymy, conversely, is strongly linked with "reality" and "real" connections between two subjects (Jakobson, 2002 [1956]: 43) – it might even be said that a metonymical relationship is based on actuality. Metonymy could conceptually – as with the example about a hut being redescribed as *a poor little house* – redescribe reality, partly through syntactic variation, although, in this somewhat literal redescription, it remains (what is said to be) a simple substitute; as discussed in Chapter One, I could just as well say "I am listening to Chopin" when actually listening to his music, because of associations commonly made between the one and the other, resulting in a closeness of relationship perceived to exist between the man and what he is thought to wholly represent. This association and closeness supports the idea that the word "Chopin" easily substitutes for the words "his music", even though the sense impressions stemming from an imagined image of a person alone are different from those implied when imagining music. The metonymical kind of trope known as synecdoche is where a part or aspect of a whole is substituted for that whole (Gibbs, 1993: 259). In my view, this kind of substitution – for instance, the substitution of "a glove" to describe a baseball player – shows, also, that sense impressions stemming from the "part" do not necessarily

wholly substitute for those of the "whole"; literally speaking, a glove cannot move in a kinetic, let alone kinaesthetic, way on its own, for example.

It is possible, however, that syntactical variation of metonymical statements may not result in corresponding redescriptions; Miller points out that "different copulas of similitude are not interchangeable [–] they impose different syntactic requirements on the constituents being compared, and often have different meanings […]" (Miller, 1993: 371). Although this conclusion is drawn in relation to syntactical variations of simile – looks like, acts like, for example – I will show that syntactic variations also result in different meanings, nonsensical meanings, as well as differences in sense impressions in relation to metonymy (for example, Belcher's sonnet "Commemoration at Blood River", which appears later in this chapter).

In summing up the above theoretical discussion about metaphor, philosophy and syntax, simile and metonymy, it seems clear that ideas on metaphor have at times not only been considered "different", but sharply opposing. Ricoeur maintains, for example:

> …[an] opposition at the level of metaphor between a substitution theory and an interaction theory, reflects the deeper opposition at the level of basic linguistic postulates between semiotic monism (which rules the semantics of the word and of the sentence) and a dualism of semiotics and semantics, where the semantics of the sentence is built on principles distinct from all operations with respect to signs. (Ricoeur, 2003 [1975]: 119)

However, as seen in the example of Black's, Petrie's, and Oshlag's interactional versus educational views on metaphor, as well as in the words of Mayfield, at times there is also overlap in perspectives on metaphor (Mayfield, 1986: 26). This suggests that perspectives

are more useful if seen as different tools with which to work on the same task, each

producing a different result through analysis, rather than as tools for strict categorization.

In this way, metaphors are not unlike geometry, in which changing one's perspective on a

spatial problem (or on a metaphor) simply offers another way in which to appreciate it,

producing through analysis different though equally valid results.

A structural metaphor is evident when the "Boland Wine Farmer" says:

What I behold bears witness to my right
as lord and master…
(Belcher, 2000: 1. ll. 9, 10)

This extract is from the first sonnet of the collection, *Rings of a Thundering Tree.* It is

one – of about twenty (of the forty sonnets making up the entire collection) – that refers

to visible objects. The title of this sonnet, as well as its opening line – "From high ground

on my Stellenbosch estate" – prompt us to look at the wine farmer himself and then to

look with him upon his vineyard below. Sight is the primary faculty influencing our

interpretation of this imagery.

Using a common phrase, "bears witness", the wine farmer metaphorically relays his

understanding – and, more so, belief – that what he sees is like a physical testament to his

rightful position as a powerful sovereign. Sight as well as what is seen in this act of sight

is tantamount to "power"; and sight, according to this farmer, has the ability to prove his

point of view. The implication is that, in this particular example, the powerful sense of

sight is matched with an equal sort of "power" that is evident in the language which creates the warlike structural metaphor.

 "Sight", however, does not only pertain to the twenty titles that refer to people, places and things; the last sonnet in *Rings of a Thundering Tree* – "Histoire" – is about the abstract concepts of "time" and "history" and it too draws upon our sense of sight. For example, within the opening line the word "dark" is used to describe the African continent. In my opinion, this illustrates that even though the theme of a sonnet may concern concepts rather than objects, this theme may nevertheless be in some way dependent upon our imagined sense of sight – of seeing "darkness", in this instance – in order for us to understand its abstractness.

Where this dark continent rumbles and groans
beneath its heaving mountains, and the stark
rays of the sun batter the crumbling stones
of creepered cities where the bleached ruins mark
their graves, rulers and hunters still adorn
the moulded walls of caverns, and in rhymes
and rhythms warriors still storm the dawn
and share the spoils of war in haunting chimes.
Their songs echo a long forgotten race,
their wagons rumbling over southern plains,
their footprints scratched across the sullen face
of once their promised land, their scarred remains
wiped out, but now and then an earthquake shock
will wrest a skull or gable from a rock.
(2000: 40)

If the sonnet did not draw upon "visible" imagery – of the "real" world – to develop the abstract theme about "time" and "history" but rather expounded verse about time and history theoretically, I maintain that imagining the sight of this "dark" history would be substituted with imagining the relationships between theories about it. But, of course, that

would mean the sonnet might sound like a theoretical discussion void of sensory impressions rather than an imaginative expression.

To this end, the abstract concepts of "history" and "time" are known to readers because they are able to imagine and understand these abstract concepts, metaphorically, in terms of things that they can sense; the abstract concepts of history and time are expressed through objects such as "sun", "stones", "ruins", "plains"; through entities like "darkness" or a "promised land"; sounds such as "groans", "echoes" and "chimes"; as well as through human-oriented imagery; for instance, "rulers", "hunters", "warriors", "graves", "skulls", "faces" and "footprints".

An ontological metaphor is where one category of concepts is discussed in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 26), and where, in particular, cross-mapping results in epistemic, logical correspondences between the two subjects of a metaphorical statement – as in the example "love is a journey". In other words, "time – or history – is a pathway" in much the same way that "love is a journey"; because, in validating efforts to imagine seeing something ordinarily not visible, correspondences between time-travel and traveling upon a pathway are simultaneously mapped.

Warlike sounds are evident in Belcher's sonnet entitled "O.B."

Sheltered by trees and dunes near Milnerton
far from the battlefield we had the guts
to aim our wooden guns and make a din
with brave manoeuvering against Jan Smuts,
and when the pigeons in the Avenue
rose with the cannon blast, we sallied forth

and battled with the patriotic few
who prayed in silence for the boys up north
for whom we now as silvered head of state
assemble with the crowds on Heroes' Day
with face towards the flag in proud salute
to lay a solemn wreath on Soldiers' Way
and honour them who died on foreign shores
far from our salutation and applause
(Belcher, 2000: 4)

The abbreviation "O.B." refers to the Afrikaans militant faction Ossewa Brandwag – in English, "Ox-wagon Watchman". Similar to the strained political relationship perceived to exist between the Afrikaans-Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) and "free" South Africans prior to independence (1994), a strained, and often violent, relationship persisted between the tyrannical "O.B." faction and Jan Smuts (and his supporters).[2]

Imagery within the sonnet O.B. relays a sense of sound; the sound of the historical movement move and "manoeuvre" – which implies a kinaesthetic sense; the sound of actual frequency (a "din") or the lack of it (as in "silence"); and through metaphorical description – where the concept of this political movement is physically manifest in imagery linked with battlefields – the sound of this political movement fighting for its cause can also be heard. Thus, similar to being able to imagine seeing both what we can and cannot, it is also possible to imagine what is both audible and inaudible.

The metaphor of this noisy faction – fighting against wheels-of-change – advertised itself through the generated image of an ox-wagon watchman. Generative metaphors were said

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[2] The political movement O.B. is now only a part of history, but its treachery was at one time known first-hand by many Afrikaners or Afrikaans-speaking people; my own father, for example, reminisced jokingly with Belcher about a plot involving vicious intent in the 1940s – "each male member of neighbouring O.B. extremists [who were ironically related to the De Jagers] had the task of killing a designated De Jager living on Sagan farm, all of whom did not support O.B." (De Jager, F. J. in conversation with Belcher, 2005.)

to be linked with problem-setting and solving. In solving problems, however, there was an additional kind of side-effect: that is, the generative metaphor seems to advertise itself in the course of problem solving. Problem-setting and solving, as well as their link with "advertising", can be appreciated better when seen in light of problems that I propose were likely to face the political movement O.B. For example, problems that had to be addressed – conjecturably – included: how to make the political movement popular; or, what icon or slogan to use and advertise in order to help popularize the movement and its ideals.

Moreover, Schön (1979), as Mayfield relays, claims further that a generative metaphor "has a limited lifespan, [serving] a particular purpose: to restructure the way a particular phenomenon or idea is perceived leading to new explanations of phenomena and new inventions…Once it has outlived its usefulness it is abandoned and replaced" (Mayfield, 1986: 30). Advertisements, in other words, come and go depending upon the rise and fall in demand of the things they advertise. Metaphors used in the jargon of advertisements have been created with a specific function and end in mind. When whatever this metaphor advertises becomes passé, so too does its corresponding metaphor. "O.B." – "Ox-wagon Watchman" – is one such example; although this radical party might have thought it solved political problems through the advertisement of a certain metaphor, it became impotent in time, fading during the course of history. It is doubtful whether South Africans of today would collectively relate to the importance of an ox-wagon or ox-wagon watchman metaphorically describing a set of extremist, "patriotic" ideologies. In

view of the many more advanced modes of transport in use today, an ox-wagon watchman seems archaic and powerless.

New perceptions, and subsequent new meanings, about both ox-wagon watchmen and "patriotic" political parties may have been generated; for example, a political party might not, prior to the generation of the metaphor, have ordinarily been considered "alert" – like a watchman. However, such meanings would have, expectedly, become superfluous as the people themselves find the party's political ideals unappealing and irrelevant; which is not to say that these sounds are ineffective in developing the "feeling" of this sonnet for a reader of today. Rather, all the sounds in this sonnet that contribute to the evocation of the O.B. movement – including "battlefield," "din", "cannon blast", "silence", "salutation and applause" – concomitant with whatever new understandings were reached in its lifespan (owing to the interaction of topical and vehicular subjects) become obsolete in the sense that the narrator's evocation of these sounds and meanings seems to be directed at contemporaneous O.B. supporters or opponents (the narratees).

Imagining the taste and its implied sense of smell when eating "unclean food" (l. 11) – in the following sonnet, "Disciple" – is linked with the image of wayward Moslem girls, following an "unclean" Christian path.

I batcha'd the Qurãn a dozen-fold
for Anas Ibnu Malick testified
that they will tread the Jan'nah's streets of gold
who read God's Book and by his laws abide.
My parents and myself will be erased
forever from the book of death and shame
and by the Tree my soul shall stand amazed
when in the Book of Life I read my name.
I praised the ways of Islam where I stood
among the heathen but could find no praise
for Moslem girls who eat the unclean food
of Christian men who walk their Godless ways.
God curse their souls and make their off-spring blind
that we may be delivered from their kind.
(Belcher, 2000: 14)

"Unclean food" can be discussed in relation to what is both imaginable and

unimaginable; unclean food is easily imagined, its unsavory taste and particular smell,

but people cannot have a real sense of taste and smell for a metaphorical concept of it.

Therefore, when a lack of cleanliness metaphorically describes something that is not

manifest physically – such as a belief contrary to one's own – it helps to imagine the taste

of something real, unclean, and of a particular smell. Correspondences, in other words,

can be mapped between a sensing of unclean food and (so-called) unclean human

behavior. For example, a person may mistake a poisonous mushroom for an edible one

whilst touching it, in consideration of eating it; similarly, they may mistake an

unwholesome cult for an established, reputable religion, dipping into it in consideration

of converting to it; then, he may actually bite into the mushroom, become sick, vomiting

it out; which is similar to the way in which he might convert to the cult, feed on its

ideologies, but get a whiff of its rotting system and therefore purge himself of those

ideologies. Philosophically, taste and smell could be discussed in terms of an ontological

metaphor because of these correspondences that can be mapped across two subjects in a

kind of chronological order. It is possible, however, also to discuss unclean food in light of education; particularly, what root metaphors teach us about perceived rights and wrongs within certain religions.

The teaching apparently upheld in the above sonnet is that, for all the Biblical teachings against unclean lifestyles, beliefs, or practices (metaphorically, unclean food), Moslems may have their own conception of unclean food; which is ironically, in this example, believing in a Christian God.

In "Missing Lady", below, the words "lover's hand" form a predicative metaphor. "Lover" is used adjectively to describe the "hand" of a person who will unearth a petrified woman millions of years from now. On a scale larger than adjective-to-noun, it can be said that the "lover" is also a metaphor for whomever discovers the missing lady.

When she was seventeen her pimple-face
drove boys away because she was a nerd
and other girls her age wouldn't embrace
a skeleton of a baboon or bird,
but she, while chipping in a cutting's veins,
longed for the day when she'd upturn a sod
or stone and find hér chosen one's remains:
a human petrified into the form of God.
And now her footprints vanish in the sand
where no geologist would ever think
that twenty million years from now a lover's hand
will prise a groove and hear his stone-axe clink
against her limbs, and stroke her where she lies
staring at him from holes that were her eyes.
(Belcher, 2000: 39)

Why geologist? Why not archaeologist or anthropologist? In my opinion, geologists are not usually associated with "raising the dead". In answer to my own questions, Belcher himself says that "geologist" scans better than "archeologist" (Belcher, 2005); further, where the words "archeologist" or "anthropologist" raise a feeling of expectation in "prising grooves" with a logical end in mind (of uncovering a human fossil), the idea of a geologist raises no such expectation. Therefore, the surprise in discovering the missing lady is enhanced. On the other hand, and in answer to the same questions above, this missing lady is in a future tense "petrified" – in other words, she *is* stone (hence, "geology"); thus, after millions of years, there is nothing to discover in her except a heart of stone – so to speak. Unlike an archeologist, the geologist values this historical being for her "mineral" wealth.

In this regard, whether the lover – the geologist – knows (or knows not) that he is clinking away at an archeological find, the effect is given that this love affair has somehow been tempted by fate. Whoever finds her, is her lover; and it is a sense of touch and kinaesthesis – tied to the images of "clinking away" and "prising grooves" – that metaphorically defines this person as that lover.

Kinaesthesis can also be accompanied by proprioception, as seen in the sonnet "At a Cremation", the very title of which creates a feeling of being in a particular place where a certain atmosphere of stillness prevails.

The aged find consolation at a grave
where they can ponder their beloved's bones
remindful of a new dawn when the brave
and holy hearts will rise above the stones,
their dust returned to dust gathered anew
as risen flesh with bodies, feet and eyes
having communion with the chosen few
before the angels speed them to the skies.
But we prefer a method where no rot
will waste their flesh away, for while we smell
the fleeting scents of roses in a pot
the flames of diesel burners will dispel
the maggots, and their bodies will return
to heaven in a fine Venetian urn.
(Belcher, 2000: 19)

Where the title – "At A Cremation" – might have relayed an impression of kinaesthesis, if it were prefixed with the words, "crying", "weeping", or "mourning", for example, it now relays a powerful apprehension of stasis, of motionless proprioception; a sense of simply being physically present, surrounded by an atmosphere full of emotion. The tension lies therein – not in the form of a kinaesthetic tension, but a non-muscular tension created through knowing what it is like to be at a cremation.

The sonnet does, of course, develop from a profoundly still and dignified air within which people merely *are*, to a space within which they could conceivably "move" or, rather, "be moved". For example, the predicative metaphor of "holy hearts" – as read in "the brave and holy hearts will rise above" (ll.1, 2) – produces an effect of spatial "orientation", and change within that orientation, comparable to Lakoff's and Johnson's views on this sort of imaginary depiction (1980: 15). Proprioception, then, turns, figuratively, into kinaesthesis. For instance, "holy hearts rising above" does not literally signify human movement. Rather, the phrase metaphorically defines a number of

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spiritually-oriented things: imagined (metaphysical) kinaesthetic transcendence of the

material world by the spirits of righteous people, conquering through courage, and the

metaphysical elevation of these righteous people as their spirits leave the earthly world.

"In the 1950s", Belcher maintains, "the poem 'Vergewe en Vergeet' (*Forgive and*

Forget) – by J. F. E. Cilliers – was in the South African school syllabus. Within this

Afrikaans poem, the Afrikaans nation is likened with 'doorn boompies' (*thorn trees*)"

(Belcher, 2005). Belcher admits to having satirized Cilliers' symbolism, by choosing,

rather, to call the Zulus "thorn trees" – in his sonnet "Commemoration at Blood River";

this is realistic, since a closer correlation exists, historically, between Zulus and

indigenous flora than Dutch settlers and African thorn trees.

Metonymy and its link with substitution, syntax, realism, as well as the evocation of

sensory impressions can be illustrated through a consideration of the sonnet,

"Commemoration at Blood River".

We, thorn trees, stood beside your beaten tracks
and heard you thunder as your wagon wheels
trod us to pieces with their heavy packs
roughriding our reproaches and appeals:
"Where we sat down at Weenen and Blaauwkrantz
you ripped our infant nation from its womb
that's why we executed our war-dance
and came to crush your flower in its bloom."
Your wagons disappeared into the sun
and left us bent and bleeding from our wounds,
our stems shredded and bare, but one by one
you'll see us rising after many moons
till one fine day when face to face we meet
you'll see our pipe bombs pollinate your street.
(Belcher, 2000: 35)

Readers are never told that thorn trees are people; though, it can be assumed that indigenous trees substitute for the idea of native South Africans because of the ensuing context in which these trees are described – that is, in "human" terms. The image of an indigenous genus of tree, personifying revengeful black Africans, is firmly established in the last two lines; thorn trees can "pollinate", but the image of pollination is far removed from the likes of man-made explosives. From this curious textual link between nature and mankind, it can be argued, in other words, that the symbol of "trees" substitutes for people.

Under ordinarily imagined circumstances an acacia, for example, cannot stand for a Zulu within a text without careful qualification of their imaginary linkage. In this regard, although thorn trees substitute for people in the imagery of "Commemoration at Blood River" – suggesting therefore metonymy or perhaps even synecdoche (since the idea of thorn trees is not a well-known, nor a commonly assumed replacement for the idea of "people") – substitution can be shown more decisively in relation to wording, connected with the infamous battle that took place at the Ncome river.

"Blood River" is noun modifying a noun – meaning river of blood. In this modification, "blood" also describes "river", even though it is not strictly speaking an adjective – otherwise it should read, "bloody". "River", conversely, cannot in this sense be viewed as an adjective; "blood of river" does not make much sense – temporally, or in terms of sensory experience – let alone mean the same thing as "river of blood". Thus, in "Blood River", the former also becomes a participial adjective of sorts, though keeping its form

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as a noun; whether they are seen as two nouns or as an adjectival participial and a noun, however, together they signify one thing – an historical event at which a battle between the Voortrekkers and Zulus reportedly resulted in the bloodshed of three thousand Zulus. Blood River, then, for all intents and purposes, could read as one lexical item. There is in this signification a well-known and assumed relationship between the idea of a river of blood and a battle, a place at which blood was shed, as well as the severity of this battle – evident because of the amount of blood shed.

It is safe to assume that almost every adult South African knows about this fairly recent historical event; which means that one does not need to explain that the most concise syntactical grouping of the words "Blood" and "River" – Blood River – signifies several related subjects. Thus, when a vehicular subject – or in this case the metaphor of a bloody river – describes, and wholly substitutes for, these different (or related) subjects because of well-known associations made between them, then the relationship between primary and secondary subjects can be defined as "metonymical".

In the example of "Blood River", the sense impressions of seeing "red" and feeling it "flow" in the form of a river – all tied to a single signifier, "Blood River" – creates a "linguistic" definition of synaesthesia. This is because a single lexical item – which, in my view, amounts to one word – relays several sense-impressions. A more complex way of thinking about synaesthesia – as discussed in Chapter One – is when one sense is imagined through the experience of another. This complexity can be illustrated with reference to Belcher's sonnet, "Statue of Bartholemew Diaz".

Under a canopy of oaks your green
and weathered statue stands with slitted eyes
formed by the tropic wind and sun, your sheen
not polished by a hand, but lightning skies,
body aslant towards the sea: bold figurehead
thrust forward through the cleft of a bow wave
as through an ancient parchment yet unread
from which dead seamen leave their opened grave.
You placed your off-spring here who'd never heard
your voice: fierce patters burning on the strand
for God, Ferreiras preaching the enlightened word
from Cape l'Agulhas into Gazaland,
and vis á vis a porra selling fish
lying on seaweed in a plastic dish.
(Belcher, 2000: 27)

"Tropic" is a region, and the effect given is that it is possible to perceive its place in the world; proprioception describes the perception of our spatial relationship with this region. The sensory effects of the "wind" and "sun", of course, can be imagined easily; the movement of wind and the warmth of the sun can be felt through the touch of our skin – aside from simply seeing the sun. The images of wind and sun also form the topical subject; which can be imagined more fully because of the vehicular subject – a metaphorical region. Proprioception of a geographical region thus modifies our understanding of the topical subject.

The word "tropic" describes "wind" and "sun"; this region – between the parallel latitudinal lines of Cancer and Capricorn – in other words, describes physical entities that people can feel, sense moving, and see. It is through this imaginary exchange that synaesthesia takes place; a geographical location proprioceptively describes entities ordinarily linked with the senses of sight, touch and kinaesthesis.

If the phrase within the third line of verse were a "truthful" simile – as in, "the wind and sun are like the tropics" – then the subject and its vehicle become apparent. However, "tropic" used adjectively makes the metaphorical relationship between the two subjects less obvious, partly because the word "like" is absent, but also because the elements under consideration all share some sort of natural quality, which suggests they are all more alike than unlike – compare earth (region), air (wind) and fire (sun), for example. Therefore, this earthly connection between the elements seems to hide the tension – present in the experience of them through synaesthesia – created through the description of unlike entities.

An analysis of specific examples of Belcher's imagery in relation to varying perspectives on metaphor demonstrates that readers are expected to see both what they can and cannot, because of metaphor; of which the same can be said of the remaining senses – again, because of metaphor. For instance, it is possible to see both the Boland wine farmer and the concept of history as well as to hear both the battle at Blood River and the dying political popularity of the ox-wagon and its watchman. Metaphor, then, seems key in evoking both imaginable and unimaginable sensory experiences through its description of what is tangible, for example; and it is the different types of philosophically- or syntactically-oriented perspectives on metaphor that have helped develop analyses of sensory experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

Themes of Selected Sonnets in *Rings of A Thundering Tree*

The themes of the individual sonnets in *Rings of a Thundering Tree* are discussed in this chapter with reference to the theoretical framework established during the course of Chapters One and Two; that is, in relation to sensory definitions, perspectives on or theories about metaphor, and in terms of a concomitant view of these definitions, perspectives or theories. In addition to the thematic treatment of sensory definitions and discussion pertaining to the nature of metaphor, Belcher's own ideas concerning many aspects of his English sonnets (2000) in light of South African history will be a major source of consideration.

Any one sonnet in *Rings of a Thundering Tree* may relay more than one theme. Looking in-depth at the sonnets with regard to the following themes, in other words, is not to imply that the topics under which they appear to have been placed define their concerns in totality.

Although not tub-thumped for the sake of politics, the Dutch Reformed Church in the "'old' South Africa was linked quietly with the 'ruling party', the Nationalist Party" (Belcher, 2005); which meant that this political party was tacitly connected to this church's conservative beliefs – one of which was that "there is only one way" to God. An implication of this belief was that, in order to embark properly upon the Dutch Reformed Church's version of a religious journey, one had best be christened as an infant. The

sects, not associated with the Dutch Reformed Church, however, saw – and still see –

adult baptism as a way of consciously choosing what was – and still is – believed to be a

religious path. Whilst the "ruling" Dutch Reformed faith seemed overly bent on Church

law, the sects claimed a conscious freedom of choice; yet according to the sonnet below,

ironically, the sects consequently imposed laws upon themselves that made them look,

ideologically, not all that different from the conservative Church they wished not to

emulate.

The sonnet "Infant Baptism, Adult Baptism" pokes fun at inconsistencies in judgement

about what is "right" and "wrong"; the sonnet is, as Belcher says, a "satire on [ideas

about] baptism and Afrikaner ways" (Belcher, 2005).

Infant baptism is political
methodics: party members will adhere
to history and the ruling party's will
and nothing from outside will interfere
with what their leaders think, for at the front
they promised God that while their infant lives
they will, as children of the covenant,
show him the way with no alternatives.
Adult baptism is to come awake
and consciously partake in grown-up sins
like gently holding hands for true love's sake
and sent to jail because of different skins,
that's why we'll clap our hands and sing our pain
to pieces on the hallelujah train.
(Belcher, 2000: 30)

"Grown-up sins like gently holding hands for true love's sake" or "sent to jail because of

different skins" (ll. 10, 11, 12) are phrases that illustrate the inconsistencies of judgement.

The question could be posed, for example, how can a consenting true-love relationship

between adults, imagined only through the touch of each other's hands, be sinful?; and

how can sheer colour of skin be incriminating to the extent that it warrants criminal sentencing? If these lines are linked, it might even be asked, "is any law so particular as to condemn love and cross-cultural relationships?" As Belcher explains about the Afrikaner context under question: "if a leader says '*do* this', then *that's* the [sinless] way – no alternative" (Belcher, 2005). In this regard, during the years of apartheid, especially, cross-cultural relationships were simply not *done*. Thus, "grown-up" metaphorically and sarcastically predicates something about "sinful" human behaviour: that even consenting adult behaviour, in an Afrikaner context, is sometimes seen as sinful when it is perceived to be contrary both to the way of "no alternatives" as well as to the way of so-called freedom of choice within liberal sects.

"Enlightenment", then, euphemistically describes the theme of this sonnet, for it would seem that our attentions are brought to quite the contrary of enlightenment. Rather, the sonnet is about subconscious contradictions in so-called adult kinds of thinking which masquerade as god-sent enlightenment. Baptism in adulthood – in the lines where a nominal metaphor of "coming awake" describes "adult baptism" (l. 9) – seems no less unenlightened than infant baptism (also described through a nominal metaphor, "political methodics" (l. 1, 2)). Thus hypocrisy enters in relation to whichever belief, because the same sort of narrow-minded people who exercise poor judgement in adulthood also christen their infants.

Nominal metaphors seem to add to the strictness one might associate with "church law" – "this", for example, "*is* that". In other words, a strong feeling for a presence of this

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hypocrisy can be coupled ironically, in theory, with unquestionable, syntactical comparisons made between primary and secondary subjects of (nominal) metaphorical statements (as found in the lines 1-2 and 9). But then these metaphorical religious lessons are textually undermined because of the context implied in the ensuing verse; a religious context in which hypocrisy is linked with people who supposedly subscribe to and abide by those "strict" Church laws.

Within this sonnet, the sense of "touch" is one of the main senses linked with the idea of hypocrisy. In this regard, this sense was perceived as being the lowest of the sensory experiences by Aristotle, because he claimed that it implied a lustful thirst for inappropriate kinds of physical contact. Although "touch", evoked through "gently holding hands" (l. 11), represents true love in this sonnet, it is nevertheless also seen as lustful (and therefore sinful) by the adult figures who witness the lovers making this kind of contact. Scholars of feral children, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, deduced that a refined – we might say, "gentle" – sense of touch was tantamount to intellectuality (Chapter One, "Touch"). A refined (or "intellectual") sense of touch, depicted through the imagery of gentle physical contact, adds to our understanding of true love – that "it conquers all", for instance, even differences in the colour of the lovers' skin. This all-conquering true love, however, is met – by witnesses of this contact – with a lack of intellectuality. Ironically, in other words, lesser intellectuals fail this true love for the same reason this type of love has conquered; it is failed because of the witnesses' ability to "see" the lovers "touch", but it is precisely this sense of "touch" that illustrates the way in which "sight" becomes irrelevant to the lovers.

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This sonnet, in short, illustrates the manner in which beliefs condemn the sense of touch, especially when accompanied by the simultaneous sight of contrasting colours. The implication is that the two churches, often perceived as being polar opposites, are actually quite similar, because they are strongly influenced by their perceptions of touch and sight, and by the religiously-oriented inferences they think stem from these perceptions, as opposed to sensing something they cannot physically feel or see – namely, God.

The last three sonnets in *Rings of a Thundering Tree* – "Gondwana", "Missing Lady", and "Histoire" – are about "time". As discussed in Chapter Two, "Missing Lady" is about the petrifaction of a woman, where petrifaction symbolizes actual physical changes brought about by a passing of time; "Histoire" is about time itself, where the image of a dark continent metaphorically describes the abstractness of history. Imagined sensory experiences evoked in the following sonnet, "Gondwana" – the landmass (earth) prior to tectonic drift – add to our understanding of "time".

When the pack became too large, their space too small
for love and mating, an eruptive brave
turned from his ancients shining from the wall,
and rising from the darkness of the cave
he trod a path he'd never trod before,
feeling his way across a stream, a lake,
a valley rift, a faraway seashore,
and through the ages streaming in his wake
saw men and continents drifting apart
in his own image: speck of crumbled stone
shedding the bedrock of a mother's heart,
a brother's love, but knew that blood and bone
within the mind can never fully shed
the ancient ways for which the fathers bled.
(Belcher, 2000: 38)

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A "stream" is part of the imagined neanderthal man's "path". But the path itself is "the ages". In other words, "time" (or "the ages") has been metaphorically described as a "path" and the "stream" is part of this "path". It follows then that the stream, too, is part of the metaphor. The gerund "streaming" continues to build upon the metaphor of a "stream" being a part of the path-of-the-ages – and the same relationship exists between the words "drifting" and "stream".

Andrew Laird maintains that "scholars seem to have little difficulty in isolating allegorical figures, allegorical passages, allegorical texts, allegorical interpretations, allegorical genres, and even periods of cultural history in which allegory is supposed to be prominent as a form of expression or interpretation" (Laird, 2003: 153). But Laird continues to say that "find[ing] an example of allegory", however, "is no less difficult than settling on a definition. Examples of allegory are like Macavity the Mystery Cat: it is very hard to tell whether or not they were really there". Thus Laird suggests that allegory is a subjective phenomenon, "a question of ideology", because "someone's detection of an allegory is more likely to be determined by culturally induced expectations than by any personal perspective". In "Gondwana", the ontological, metaphorical link between "time" and a "path" of the ages, as discussed in Chapter Two, is not a question of subjective detection or interpretation; "time is a journey" is an extremely well-known metaphorical – or "allegorical" – depiction.

Whilst allegory may not seem like a modern technique, but found in long, religious works such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* or Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, it has over the course of a few lines in Belcher's sonnets been used to extend the metaphor of water, which extends the metaphor of a path – that in turn allegorically describes evolution.

With regard to sensory experience, the mind visualizes "a path", even though it is the concept of a path – in other words, an abstract concept of "the ages", or of "time". Imagery linked with this abstraction grows in complexity with regard to the allegorical suspension; after having imagined seeing something that is not physically present, it is also imagined through a sense of touch and kinaesthetic movement. That is, imagined feet "walk", for example, and then "time" itself "streams" past humankind as they imagine walking along a path of evolution.

Thus, epistemic correspondences can be mapped between secondary and primary subjects in terms of sensory experience. In mapping these correspondences, the theme of evolution is relayed through a sustained metaphor. Moreover, a greater sensory-oriented understanding of this theme is reached due to the other ways – in addition to sight – through which it is possible to imagine sensing "evolution".

The sonnet "At the Tomb of Sheik Yussuf", below, continues to build upon the theme of fundamentalism, as touched on in relation to Moslems and their perception of a lack in cleanliness concerning Christian ways ("Disciple", Chapter Two).

When Joe, the herd, slept on a frutang bed
and dreamed he found Sheik Yussuf's long-lost tomb
next to a dune in sight of Lion's Head,
the threads and tufts of our Islamic loom
were long since interwoven in your rugs:
You shoved us onto paths where heathen trod
while on your altars and communion jugs
our artwork glorified your Christian God.
Our words and phrases nestled on your tongue
as ordered by our Nabi (Allah grant him peace)
like Yussuf on the Voetboog, and among
the relics of your past your houses cease
to be unique, for our Islamic domes
curve in the gables of your Cape Dutch homes.
(Belcher, 2000: 15)

Islamic belief is said to be physically manifest in Christian art and artefacts. Unlike the above sonnet, the disciple in "Disciple" beseeches God – not Allah – to "curse their souls and make their off-spring blind" so that they can be "delivered from their kind" (Belcher, 2000: 14; ll. 13, 14); suggesting – at least in regard to the final lines of the sonnet – a turn away from Islam and the Qurãn toward Christianity and the Bible. But Christianity itself cannot wholly be viewed as the "right" way – as seen, conversely, in the above sonnet – because traces of Islamic belief take from Christianity a sense of purity; centuries of Islamic influence over South African Christianity is evident in rugs, jugs, and artwork. Even the design of Cape Dutch homes is said to have been influenced by Eastern taste, owing to Yussuf's landing in South Africa after passage by ship (the Voetboog) from the East (Belcher, 2005). If it is assumed that a "right way" can be associated with whatever came first and whichever is "uncontaminated" by the other, then, in this case, that would appear to be Islamic law.

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In this regard, Belcher appears to face one religion off against the other, although giving Islam an advantage. Strongly-worded phrases, "our Islamic loom were long since interwoven in your rugs", "while on your altars our artwork glorified", and "your houses cease to be unique," support this claim. Following an act of sight, which places us at a specific location (near Lion's Head in Cape Town, South Africa), the word "interwoven" then draws upon a sense of touch and kinaesthesis to develop the idea that threads of Islamic belief were woven through metaphorical looms into the fabric of existing Christian society; "glorify" personifies Islamic artwork as it comes to life in Christian artefacts – another word, in other words, which draws upon the image of "worship" to describe how Christians' artefacts spiritually praise Moslems'; and the word "cease" suggests a death in uniqueness of so-called Christian architecture. There is a strong sense of movement, in other words, not only because of the effect produced by persuasive rhetoric (structural metaphors), but because the sense impressions evoked through the imagery used within this argument themselves relate to our sense of movement.

"The total onslaught on our land", Belcher maintains, "was a phrase used by O.B. and its supporters to indoctrinate the entire Afrikaans nation" (Belcher, 2005). Therefore, the theme of the sonnet "Onslaught" could be interpreted in light of this historical propaganda. However, Belcher himself has implied that "onslaught" has connotations that can be linked with global and industrial developments (Belcher, 2005); in this regard, the word "overseas" in the sonnet below (l. 10), for example, relays a sense of this globalization.

As individuals and as a race
we feared the total onslaught on our land:
all we desired was our little place
where we could till the soil with loving hand
when suddenly our ways were shoved aside
by alien powers: roads and railway lines
linking to structures ripping deep and wide
and augers turning maizelands into mines.
The pugmill and the wooden butter churn
were spurned by engineers from overseas,
but now we hear atomic rotors turn
where treetops used to rustle in the breeze
and pylons on our new horizons warn:
tread lightly in the ways you used to scorn.
(Belcher, 2000: 2)

A change in South African landscape – from one of nature to one marked by man-made structures – appears to be a logical consequence of this country being part of a global community. Thus, roads, railway lines, mines, atomic rotors and pylons – everything that engineers brought from abroad – are "inventions" attesting to the fact that South Africa is now a part of this community.

Ways of life have changed consequently – from subsistence living to an industrialized existence. This change is depicted through a sense of change in movement; for example, a natural movement relayed through the image of rustling treetops is replaced by a sense of artificial movement, sensible because of synaesthesia. It is through audition that we sense both the sight and movement of atomic rotors, for example. Moreover, an impression of kinaesthesis implied through the image of churning butter is replaced by a sense of kinetics implied in the turning of atomic rotors. Human movement is also

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outmoded by mechanical movement when "tilling soil" is "shoved aside" by "roads and railway lines", as well as when "maizelands" become "mines".

In "Onslaught" people are told to "tread lightly in the ways [they] used to scorn". This is because the way of life predating globalization might actually be conceivably and comparably better than our modern way of life. This theme can be elaborated upon in light of the sonnet "S(tell)enbosch", in which an inert mound of earth (a "tell belonging to Francois Du Toit" (Belcher, 2005)) becomes, ironically, an "uncivilized" neighborhood. Industrialization, though it may relay the impression of a "civilized" society, is linked with uncouth behavior (l. 13, 14) in the following sonnet:

Monsieur Guillaume du Toit burnt clincker bricks
near Stellenbosch, dug a foundation trench,
and as man without deceit or tricks
was duly chosen to the elders' bench.
His noble fellow Christian, Adam Tas,
paid visits once a week, ate custard tart,
sampled his wine, and in refined Cape Dutch
held long discourse on politics and art.
But then, without an heir, he had to sell;
his farm became a run-down neighbourhood
and where his homestead was, is just a tell
on which a street boy hides his stolen food
and sees his weeing sister make a sign
which says: "Look other way, you blerrie swine!"
(Belcher, 2000: 32)

Industrialism, linked with so-called civilized societies, is described in terms of "smell" in Belcher's sonnet, "Fishing Paradise".

Across the leaden waters of a cover
the members of the maritime coastguard
observe from lookout posts through dense mangrove
the trawler fleet that for a second scarred
the radar screen, and then throughout the day
drew nets and piled their decks with writhing loads
till every reef around St Lucia Bay
was programmed into military codes.
A Shackleton reconnoitering off-shore
searches through lenses of a camera
in vain for missiles, and sees nothing more
through shifting mists than sickles of Mockbá
mowing the sea till all its towns lie bare
like shipwrecks rotting in the saline air.
(Belcher, 2000: 29)

Military ordnance can be viewed in terms of industrialization; weaponry, machinery, and advances in aviation, for example, can be linked with the wars of the twentieth century. Linkages between negatively-portrayed images can be seen in the light of sensory experience and syntax. For example, there exists an obvious syntactical comparison – or truthful simile – between industrial wastelands ("bare towns") and victims of militarization ("rotting shipwrecks"); and, from this imagined "rotting" smell, a corresponding smell borne of communism is an inferential step away. The predicative metaphor "rotting" – although not as apparent as the simile (the word "like", for example, does not lie between the words "shipwrecks" and "rotting") – in itself describes "shipwrecks"; thus this subtle metaphor feels as immediate as the "direct" simile because the former is syntactically linked with the latter.

This smell is linked with history, as interpreted by Belcher. "Historically", Belcher claims, "Russian fishing boats were killing our [South African] coastlines and all our fish… supposedly. In the mean time, they were spies, making maps and coding these coastlines" (Belcher, 2005). The so-called technological progress of humankind is often

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relayed not entirely positively in Belcher's sonnets; in this regard, Belcher himself says that *Rings of a Thundering Tree* draws substantially from an O.B. document in which the metaphor of "total decay or 'onslaught'" describes what might expectably happen to "our land"(2005).

Primordialism has been described as "'attachments' [that are] derived from place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language, and social practices" (Geertz and Brass, 1994: 83, 84). Nationalism – as it is studied within many academic or aesthetic disciplines, and in relation to many authoritative figures – is thus often perceived as encompassing primordialism, because artists, writers, or composers, for example, are often profiled according to their place of birth. Clifford Geertz and Paul Brass have suggested, however, that even "place of birth and kinship connections" might lose their "emotional significance" for some people, and they may thus view such connections negatively.

In the sonnet "A Visit to Paris, France", however, as discussed in Chapter Two, Belcher views his place of birth, South Africa, positively, whilst at the same time poking fun at France by evoking the "surly" smell of Orly airport. In an interview with him, he was candid about the pretentiousness of having to call farms "farms" in South Africa but "landscape" in France (Belcher, 2005). In this regard, his tender attachment to South Africa – or, arguably, that of the speaker within the sonnet – is evident:

"my heart begins to yearn for avenues
 of jacaranda trees in old Transvaal
 where every bit of patriotic news
 ripples through every heart that loves ons taal".
 (ll. 9-12)

The speaker, now in Paris, longs for Transvaal and, especially, the language associated with this region – "ons taal", which metonymically defines the language of Afrikaans. Thus a primordial perspective seems apparent in this verse even though, ironically, neither the fragrance and lilac colours of Jacaranda trees nor the sound of Afrikaans originally stem from within the borders of South Africa. The language evolved from settlers and the exotic trees naturalized within its borders; with an historical sense in mind, neither the language nor the trees are strictly "indigenous".

Belcher, however, does not appear to fool himself or his readers by over-idealizing his homeland in verse. For example, when the "hotch-potch" – in the sonnet "Vasco Da Gama", below – colonize the Cape of Good Hope, the folly of their human inclinations negatively affects our perception of a geographical location:

You followed in the wake of those who ground
 the waves to snuff but in the torrid sea
along the Wild Coast had to turn around
because of vitamin deficiency.
These tormentoso's couldn't stop your gait
when calculating knots from caves to coves
and coves to capes, but when you couldn't wait
you stormed the land of cinnamon and cloves.
And then the hotch-potch followed in your tracks
and dug their heels in Table Mountain: brothers
with Bibles, curry-breaths and hairy-backs;
young girls discover men and leave their mothers;
the Jentoo drifts off course, messes our shores
and the Cape of Good Hope becomes the Cape of Whores.
(Belcher, 2000: 28)

The Cape of Good Hope was a trustworthy stop-over en route to India, where tradesmen collected fresh water and bartered with the Khoikhoi for fresh meat. This cape served a

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necessary function along the trade route, for it supplied a valuable service to the travelers and tradesman who landed upon its shores. But its function changed in value the more the route became established; and it is through the imagery of a stormy passage – associated mostly with the pioneer who established the trade route to India in 1498, ten years after Bartholemew Diaz's exploratory voyage – that a feel for historical changes are conveyed.

"The cape of whores" metaphorically describes "the Cape of Good Hope"; thus, as read in line fourteen of the sonnet, a lust for – or human vice, one might say, linked with – sex and money evoked in the latter metaphorical statement replaces a non-tangible feeling of hope – or human virtue – in the former. In light of Black's views on metaphor advanced in Chapter Two, however, this is not a simple, metaphorical substitution, because most, if not all, of the sensory impressions relayed through the imagery of whores are unlike those of "hope": one is physical, the other abstract.

It is through the interaction of these vastly dissimilar subjects, however, that readers are able to appreciate the historical changes implied in the metaphorical statements; for instance, all the sensory impressions linked with the imagery of "whores" – the emptiness of feeling connected with the sex-trade, for example – define, through antonymic inferences, the abstract idea of "hope", which is void of sensory impressions.

Belcher's sonnet "Servant" can be analyzed in a way that builds upon the theme of fate and folly, as it relates to sexual relations (and its sometimes unctuous connection with money), racism, as well as bribery and corruption.

Constable Kleinhans, henpecked but hardcase
and Savior of the Unpolluted Race
slammed handcuffs on a vicar and his char
partaking of communion in a car.
"for God's sake, Captain, I've a wife and kid
and what if they discover what I did?
I know that I have sinned against my flesh
but I can purify myself with cash."
This sad confession made the cop despair
but soon he found an answer to his prayer:
a thousand greenbacks as a small deposit
with monthly payments hid behind his closet.
And when God's servant vanished in the night
the copper gave his catch her first love-bite.
(Belcher, 2000: 21)

As discussed in the section on "sight" (Chapter One) and applied in relation to an extract

taken from Belcher's sonnet "The Boland Wine Farmer" (Chapter Two), an imagined

sensory experience of sight may be tantamount to "power"; seeing is said to be

"believing" and thus, in some cases, the most mundane acts of witness are substantial

enough for a criminal conviction. A similar sort of link between sight and power is

evident in the above sonnet: the policeman could arrest the vicar legally for lewd

conduct, yet an unexpected twist at the scene of the sexual crime prohibits readers from

making this conviction (as they ordinarily would, through the policeman's eyes) – that is,

a thousand green-coloured notes change hands in the form of a bribe.

Imagined sensory experience, as it is evoked through the imagery of pollution, can help

us better understand the (sadly) ironical theme of this sonnet.

An industrially-oriented image of pollution implies a sense of smell and sight; through

the fumes emitted by exhausts from cars and through seeing this type of pollution hang

over industrialized Johannesburg at dusk, for example. Pollution creates an unwanted sense of smell and even an undesirable sight of oily emissions.

Within this sonnet, the reader is not told that the word "unpolluted" metaphorically describes – or is part of a simile describing – "white Afrikaners". In other words, the referent has been completely omitted; yet there is a prior intimation of identity. The metaphor of the "unpolluted race" defines white Afrikaners, not only because of the Afrikaans surname Kleinhans but because of the light colour implied by the word "unpolluted" itself. Thus, a sentential metaphor – as discussed in Chapter Two – adjectively describes what Constable Kleinhans sees as a pure race; that is, his own. Moreover, Belcher, not having plainly written or syntactically implied that "unpolluted" stands for or is "like" "white Afrikaans people", respectively, appears to presume his readers possess the ability to correlate, conversely, a sensory impression of "pollution" with that of native South Africans – in a sense, it seems fated that such a correlation can be made without explanation; hence Belcher's licence to omit the referent – "white" – without having to qualify this omission. Of course, for all the (possible) presumption evident in this linguistic style – or, rather, my analysis of it – the theme of the sonnet illustrates that presumption (and its link with self-righteousness) turns on itself at times; the unpolluted race is not morally strong at all, but rather weak and "polluted", engaging in inappropriate sexual relations as well as being complicit in acts of bribery and corruption.

Similar to the double standards in moral judgement above, hypocrisy is also evident in the sonnet "At The Funeral of a Statesman", the title of which includes a reference to the thing that makes us most "human" – which is, of course, death.

And so our friend at last beheld his hole:
behold him, solid hero, patriot,
twoscore and ten and not yet near his goal
now lying like a baby in its cot.
To land and countrymen he vowed his life
and so immune was he to worldly treasures
that even God and his beloved wife
had to forgive his extra-mural pleasures.
But now he can't explain to his bereaved
that he was mortal as they stand and weep
because they feel rejected and deceived
by lofty promises he couldn't keep,
and grieve because they didn't place their hope
in God, but human protein that couldn't cope.
(Belcher, 2000: 31)

"*Sien jou gat*" in Afrikaans means "see your backside". However, Belcher has translated the Afrikaans adage about failure literally – "[behold] your hole" is his euphemistic, though literally correct, translation. In other words, in dying, the extent to which this statesman's failures appear "only human" is apparent not only because the hole beheld by him attests to the failure of his physical body but because it also describes his anal orifice, which figuratively represents the failures of his human nature.

The ways in which this statesman has failed are perhaps understood better in light of the word "extra-mural", which echoes sports or pastimes outside official obligations, on the one hand, and the word "-marital", which refers more specifically to marriage, on the other. Dosia Reichardt (2005) suggests that Belcher has used the former rather than the latter because it scans better as two rather than three syllables; but also because in

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referring to "-mural" there is a reference to Greek/Roman gods – "Jupiter/Zeus were well known philanderers (with mortal woman). This reference means, in other words, outside Olympus as well as outside marriage". Belcher confirms this analysis, saying "-mural" refers to "everything" in which the statesman fails (Belcher, 2005). In this regard, the affairs of this statesman extended beyond his bedroom, then, since he cheated on his vocational calling as well as on his wife; his human failure seems complete in that he was a hypocrite in terms of both his private and public life.

"Protein" – which can be linked with the mythological figure of Proteus, continuing the idea of a human/god dichotomy within this sonnet – metaphorically satirizes the human body. Arguably, all sensory experiences imaginable (as discussed in Chapter One) are inferred through the image of our own bodies, because all our senses coexist within them. In relation to the theme of the above sonnets, in other words, the complete and utter failure of this statesman is tragically linked with his being human.

Although the statesman ultimately fell from his apparently heroic position of power, it can be presupposed that this tragic fall occurred only after – or perhaps because of – a comparably commendable rise within political ranks. Innuendos about the powerful "upper class", within the sonnet "The Boland Wine Farmer" below, poetically define the sort of pride that might be followed by a fall.

"Sight" is empowering to the extent that a lack of it threatens to take away something of the certainty of religious faith (Chapter One). Conversely, as seen in the sonnet below (l.

11), the presence of something seen (particularly "light") affirms the idea that God has found favour with the character therein. Part of the sonnet "The Boland Wine Farmer" was quoted previously to illustrate the power of sight. This sonnet is now presented in its entirety to develop more fully an understanding of sight in the context of what I interpret as a "Napoleonic" theme.

From high ground on my Stellenbosch estate
bequeathed by an ancestral Huguenot,
with age-old homestead, cellar, pillared, gate,
I watch my vineyards ripen row by row
and slope by slope, facing towards the sea
where cool Atlantic tides give added punch
to granulated lime and three-two-three
and every bearer carries an ecstatic bunch.
What I behold bears witness to my right
as lord and master: beacons in the sun,
soft window-panes reflecting God's clear light,
a posterbed, a double-barreled gun,
and hidden in a stinkwood kist behind
a Bible rack: my transport duly signed.
(Belcher, 2000: 1)

It is not difficult to imagine that a "See" who has worked his way up liturgical rungs overlooks his "church" from his "see-seat" in probably much the same way that the wine farmer looks upon his vineyard. In both cases, power is therefore rightfully theirs because of their position of "height" (metaphorically speaking) within the church and from physically being on "high ground" within the wine estate (l. 1). All this sight-borne power, in turn, which is linked with being able to sense the presence of material things, takes away the need for "faith" – however ironical it is that God seems present because of the presence of "light".

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The theme of imperial-like power within this sonnet is linked mostly with sight, though also somewhat through a sense of kinaesthesis. For example, signed title deeds ("transport", from the Afrikaans *Kaart en Transport* (Belcher, 2005)) change hands from generation to generation and, along with these deeds, the land. The empire that this wine farmer boasts about was "bequeathed" to him, relaying a sense of movement (through time) through which he inherited his powerful status. (Although thoroughly at odds with historical fact, as discussed below.)

Assuming that viticulture – particularly owning and running a wine farm – represents the finest level of (or, metaphorically, most "tasteful") culture within South Africa, it would follow that Belcher, having begun life as one of more-than-a-dozen children belonging to an impoverished household, changed his status. He established his position within the cultural "elite" in his later years when he owned his own vineyard. Although it cannot be said with certainty that the wine farmer depicted in this sonnet is Belcher himself, historical fact does parallel to some extent the story depicted in the poem.

A sense of kinaesthesis and kinetics as well as proprioception – as in "generation to generation" or as implied in intervals of time – contributes to the theme of justice in the sonnet "Children's Crusade":

The kids decided: British occupation
of Cape of Good Hope; sheep and cattle trek
to the interior; the forming of a nation
beyond the barrier peaks of Drakensnek;
the taming of the land; petrol from coal;
communication systems; curfew bell;
laws that unite and separate; Big Hole –
the whole damn box and dice can go to hell.
In every public place they threw a show,
stoned police vans, smashed doors and window-panes
and set their books alight because they knew
that flame and smoke would free them from their chains,
but then a news placard dispelled all fear:
A Full Inquiry Will Take Place This Year.
(Belcher, 2000: 33)

The form of this sonnet is thematic; the historical account of rebellious "kids" – that can
"decide", and that can act upon their "decisions" – is developed throughout the fourteen
lines of verse. Within this development, however, there is a remarkable change in meter
(between the first and second sentences); various types of meter occur in the first eight
lines, but iambic pentameter (save line fourteen) dominates the last six. The first part of
the sonnet, in other words, lists historical events – separated by semicolons – in a way
that suggests "meter" is unimportant. The second part of the sonnet, although also
recounting history (that is, the rebellious uprisings of black students during the apartheid
era), shows that meter can be used to parallel content; in other words, it may not be a
tenuous claim to say that the rising iambic pentameter parallels the "kinaesthetic"
uprisings of these youths.

Proprioception turns into kinaesthesis when the image of being unjustly "trapped" turns
into one of being set free from chains (l. 12). Justice, it would seem, will prevail. Belcher,
however, mocked political propaganda linked with "justice": "don't worry. A full inquiry

will follow", he says sarcastically, and continues, "as though the threat of an inquiry was ever enough to dispel corruption" (Belcher, 2005). An important historical fact – linked with this "full inquiry" – is that just as the Dutch rebelled against the annexation of the Cape by the British, so too did the indigenous people of Southern Africa rebel against the system of apartheid implemented by those very same pioneering "rebels" – the "Voortrekkers". Although the judicial system may be wanting in "justice", the ironical theme of "poetical justice" seems historically inescapable; thus the theme "it will be done unto you as you have done unto others" is relayed through a sense of movement inherent in history. For example, rebellious – and thus abstract historical – "movements" (implied through the idea of "retaliation") exist between the British and the Voortrekkers and, in turn, the "Voortrekkers" and native South Africans, as well as physical movements resulting from this rebellion – that is, for example, the Voortrekkers moving from the Cape to Transvaal, or the native South Africans physically reclaiming their land.

"The political faction O.B.", Belcher states, "spoke about Oom Voortrekker being 'Father Christmas'" (2005). He continues, saying "isn't that ridiculous! The Afrikaners, the De Jagers[3] used to go bash the Christians who were praying in Cape Town". Belcher's impatience of the "ridiculous" becomes apparent when he maintained, further, that "the military manoeuvres of O.B. followers amounted to drill movements with wooden guns". The sonnet "Prescriptions for an Afrikaner Christmas", then, is "also about the [ridiculous] O.B. document, which refers to a heathen presence; 'Father Voortrekker' will come on horseback, not a sleigh drawn by reindeer, and even children's Christmas toys

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[3] Belcher wittingly and jokingly uses a well-known Afrikaans surname – namely, my own – to appropriate his point of view to historical fact.

are about Voortrekker". However absurd this may sound, in light of Belcher's own words on this part of South African history, this sort of "absurdity" appears to define the nationalistic sentiments of Afrikaners, as they are characterized in the following sonnet.

The little ones will sing as if in prayer
God of our fathers, and their parents will recite
stories of farmfolk filling British hearts with fear
and impi's slaying girls who could not fight.
Oom Voortrekker will lead his panting charge
to water, greet the audience, then take a look
into his sermon notes and solemnly enlarge
upon our history from the Bible Book.
He'll stack the gifts befitting what we are
upon an open Vierkleur: springbok hide,
Paul Kruger coins in a ceramic jar,
a map of where Retief suffered and died,
and to triumphant singing and applause
he'll thank the Child for dying for our cause.
(Belcher, 2000: 5)

The theme of nationalism is depicted through a sense of seeing the abstract concept of nationalistic "power"; for example, seeing a "springbok hide" (which is actually striped in three colours) "upon a Vierkleur [flag]", or in seeing "monetary value" – physically evident in the lustre of gold coins. God or history cannot be seen, however, even though both seem to possess a kind of power pertinent to the Voortrekkers.

In this regard, power has predominantly been linked with sight. In the above sonnet, however, power is also linked with sound. For example, the metaphorical voice embedded within the "Bible Book" enlarges "history", because the several hundred Voortrekkers attributed their victory over thousands of Zulu warriors (at Ncome River) not simply to their weaponry, but to their being in favour with a Christian God. Thus God becomes an historical "fact" used in support of Voortrekkers' beliefs as well as in support

of their nationalistic agenda. Additionally, these so-called "facts" are passed on from

generation to generation through an oral tradition, through which the sound of God's

voice – as supposedly relayed by the sound of Oom Voortrekker's – is thought to validate

their cause. Then the voice of God is met with other vocal sounds; that is, voices which

sing and applaud triumphantly, creating a kind of refrain (ll. 13, 14). In this example, an

impression of movement, associated with the sound – fluctuations in meter, rhythm and

pitch, for example – of the human voice, defines the "strength" of this human sound.

The sonnet "Commemorative Trek of a South African English Poet" establishes

connections between Afrikaner-like nationalism and the "powerful" kinaesthetic sense of

the human voice.

As six year-old I closed my father's gate
and watched the men and horses tripple past
with swanky gait and manes that emulate
the white flags flowing from a sailship's mast.
St. George's midday bells forgot to peal
as schoolgirls held their shoulders to their task
behind a green ox-wagon's crunching wheel
while singing: We shall offer what you ask.
And so I started on my new-found trail
and left my heritage behind in quest
of my adopted kinsmen's holy grail,
and wove the language throbbing in their breast
in rhythmic patterns of the written word
more intricate than those they'd ever heard.
(Belcher, 2000: 10)

The words "commemorative", "trek", and "English" conflict with each other when

considered in relation to history. The English did not "trek" (move); Afrikaner forefathers

were the "trekkers" (the Voortrekkers, particularly – who left the annexed Cape for

Transvaal). However, Belcher satirically describes this English poet's "trek" by making

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an analogy between the changes in his life and the change in location concerning the Voortrekkers, mentioned above. Thus kinaesthesis, itself, implied in the title of the sonnet – through the image of an historical "commemorative trek" – is an analogy of a poetic voice that "moves" from one language to another.

Similarly, kinetic-oriented imagery – for example, animal-oriented movement – is developed in a human, kinaesthetic sense (l. 9), because it is a South African poet (i.e. human being) who discovers a "new-found [English] trail". Assuming that the "trail" being left behind is not "English" but probably one of Afrikaner nationalism, then the kinaesthetic feeling created through this imagery subsequently develops a feel for metaphorical movement from one language to another: thus, "we shall offer what you ask" (taken from the Afrikaans anthem, Die Stem) appears in English.

In terms of the theme "nationalism", then, Belcher could have supported the Afrikaners in their enterprise to subscribe timelessly to Voortrekker-like ideologies; however, he forsakes Afrikaner nationalism by making a metaphorical trek towards the English literary "camp", where the powerful sound of his voice is nonetheless heard in an "intricate" kinaesthetic "weave" (l. 12).

The following sonnets, "Viva Africa" and "Stone Table" respectively, portray the brutality which is often associated with Africa.

Day One: the right hand of a Congo boy
is publicly chopped off while on his knees
by Leopold's men because the damn kodoi
refused to tap his quota rubber trees.
His fellow criminals are willingly displayed
with notice boards for visitors to see
the reasons for requesting foreign aid
for Africa's affliction: Leprosy.
Day Two: A ten-foot stack of Belgian limbs
smoulders on Freedom Square for old time's sake;
a pot of human fat boils at its brims
for making soap; a nun dies on a stake.
Day Three: A mission church declares its aim:
From now on Africa will never be the same.
(Belcher, 2000: 36)

Barbarianism might exist within Africa, but amongst the things Belcher pokes fun at within this sonnet, is the first world's tendency to jump to the conclusion of "barbarianism" when its own savagery is the cause. Belcher maintains, for instance, that "when the Congo was under Belgian rule, a boy who tapped rubber would still lose his hand for not filling his daily quota. Then pictures of 'leprosy' would appear in the papers, which belied the underlying truth – and savagery of the so-called first world". With this irony in mind, Belcher states that his sonnet "Viva Africa" is about "the audacity of many people [who] say they will save Africa" (Belcher, 2005). It is not the case that first world continents cannot be brutal – they can; but where their judgements and criminal sentences seem cleansed by "ethical" criteria (which have been decided upon through the politically-oriented legislature of ruling majorities), executions stemming from similar sorts of judgements and sentences within third worlds appear primitive.

In terms of metaphorical analyses, the above sonnet is surprisingly void of "figurative" language. Not even "structural" metaphors – describing the warlike feel of everyday

arguments – stand out; nothing "bears witness", in other words. Possibly, this is because the speakers within the sonnet do not argue their points of view – they speak in a way that says, "this is simply how it is". The imagery, though most often literal, nonetheless conveys strong sense impressions – as in the mutilation of hands and limbs, for example (as adapted and discussed in the "Introduction"). Thus it might be postulated that, at times, the theme of primitivism requires neither the subtle, "philosophical" metaphor, nor syntactical complexity of wording, in order to relay the graphic nature of sensory experience.

The slogan "Viva Africa" is uttered vocally (and adapted by Belcher ironically) in support of Africa, as well as in support of any number of traditions through which the identity of Africa is upheld. Sense impressions implied in the imagery of a totally unindustrialized and uneducated "Stone Table" (below) seem to mock, on the one hand, Africa's failing attempt to ape the example set by the first world and, on the other, mock the first world in assuming such an attempt could have been made.

Your books presented our illiterate tribe
as knobble-arsed baboons sitting on rocks
and clicking how your pen-men should describe
how Dutchmen came and put our land in stocks;
but then you saw your Lord will kick your bums
because you treat our womenfolk like shit
and brought your books and learning to our slums
and gave us Christian names that hardly fit.
And then with thank you boss then thank you sir
we humbly praised you for your worthy deed,
but now, colleagues, we gather and confer
at boardroom tables how we should proceed
to stop the all and sundry with their bid
to grab our land the way the Dutchmen did.
(Belcher, 2000: 13)

Writing from the perspective of what might appear to be a "primitive" African, Belcher recounts some of the changes that have taken place within South Africa; that is, "that those looked down upon actually became colleagues and writers themselves" (Belcher, 2005). Racism, cultural and societal differences are thus apparent in this sonnet. The condemnatory style of speech evident in this verse – which includes totally "un-ornamental" slang that sounds wholly accusatory – makes these differences easy to understand. Such differences are amongst the themes most prevalent in the entire collection, *Rings of a Thundering Tree*; and they are not always crudely evoked as in the text of the above sonnet, "Stone Table".

"Royal Visit 1947 And After", "Highway", "The Way", "Cape Dutch", "Sunbathers", and "Genadendal" are some of the many sonnets in which the above themes surface.

The sonnet "Royal Visit 1947 And After", Belcher maintains, was written in reference to the "pettiness of [the politician] Malan who refused to shake hands with, or even officially greet, the royal family on their visit to South Africa. He called the king a 'SAP' [a member of Jan Smuts' South African Party] – a reference to Malan's political opposition" (Belcher, 2005).

Blood-curdling speeches about heritage
at Party meetings on remembrance days
made us decide to take a spoken pledge
against King George and Royal Co. because
he was a Smuts man. Then in Forty Eight
no-one could stop our nation on the march;
we framed our future on Apart and Hate
and made our language our triumphal arch.
We gave each race the status of a nation
and called them pioneers but lured them back
as partners in a business constellation
and so officially abolished "white" and "black",
but wince when white boys play with picannins
no matter if the home team always wins.
(Belcher, 2000: 6)

Unlike having to imagine hearing something audible or inaudible (such as atomic rotors, or the "movement" of the political party, O.B.), another way in which sound can affect our appreciation of the theme of a sonnet is through imagining the implied sounds of written language, stemming from the words themselves. Within this sonnet, the theme of racism is strongly linked with audition; not in terms of an imaginable sense of sound evoked through sense impressions stemming from imagery embedded in verse, however, but through Belcher's play on words – that is, the literal sound of the words "apart" and "hate" (l. 7), which sound phonetically alike "apartheid". Therefore, the metaphorical description of history – though in the sonnet, of the "future" (l.7) – in terms of two pictures framed separately, educates readers about hateful racial segregation through the imagined correspondences in sound; in other words, between the sound of the word that ordinarily defined this segregation, on the one hand, and the sounds of the two words that mimic this ordinarily imagined definitional sound, on the other.

The human voice – as discussed above for example (in relation to "nationalism") – seems to possess a kind of kinaesthetic power, because of the sense of movement conveyed when imagining the "movement" of speech. In this regard, the educative metaphor under discussion becomes complex; this is because kinaesthesis itself (implied through the sense impressions surrounding the word "frame") metaphorically describes the (phonetically-oriented) metaphor of "apart"-"hate", which describes (and mimics the sound of) "apartheid" – readers learn about racial segregation, then, as they metaphorically "frame" (or imagine "framing") the metaphorical pictures of "apart" and "hate" which phonetically and, again, metaphorically describe apartheid.

The sonnets "The Way" and "Highway" illustrate that cultural differences, stemming from differences in skin colour, are evident within South Africa. It would, however, be incorrect to assume that the colour of white alone, for instance, represents a united society. In the first of the following sonnets, for example, cultural differences stem from differences in skin colour. In the second, differences arise from perceptions about "class":

Come, darky bradda, come let pick our arse
up from de stink-pissed corner of backyard
an stop complain de hungry nevva pass
from stummick an de whites got betta card,
for goddam fuck-all give us nice to eat
wit knife and fork if us not tell us ear
to listen Jesus say walk in my feet
away from kill de white an drink de beer.
But if de hammer an de sickle bend
from chop-chop in our hand when do nice job
wit bossy whitey den de shit it end,
an one day den we stan by corner-stone
of hebbin an de angel turn de knob
for me an you and say: darkies alone.
'The Way': Belcher, 2000: 24)

We are the upper class of Bishops' Court
far from suburban plebs who do not know
of dishes served with Groot Constantia port
in tinctured glass, while Madam on the go
must work to earn some cash in posh hotels
to keep the pot alive: stables and grooms,
French poodles with their fragrances and smells
and glazened peacocks in reception rooms.
Master (that's me) enjoys his weekly run
down to the car-wash with his mount (his merc)
and then to Tattersalls to see which jockey won
while Madam has her perm (her weekly perk),
but shuns a dad who doesn't use a comb
and doesn't wear a dress-suit while at home.
('Highway': Belcher, 2000: 7)

"The Way" is written, phonetically, in a manner of speech that can be associated with a particular South African region (the Cape), as well as with a particular people – namely, the 'Cape-coloureds'. In other words, Belcher relies upon an understanding of geographically-oriented pronunciations of English words, in order to mediate the racial and cultural differences – as expressed by the narrator to his narratees – within South Africa.

In "proper" English, on the other hand, "Highway" illustrates that a fine line is sometimes thought to distinguish some white people from other white people, even though it may be argued sensibly that they belong to one and the same culture. Seeing and smelling "french poodles" and seeing "peacocks" – the images of a dog and a bird, phrased bluntly – relay what is thought to amount to cultured taste. Similarly, it seems possible to discriminate against the 'lower classes' through a sense of "taste" – both literally and figuratively; drinking Groot Constantia port out of tinctured glass creates a sense impression linked with the palate, for example, whilst this experience itself suggests the

social aspirations of those who claim to possess a refined and sophisticated sensibility and a connoisseur's appreciation of the good things in life.

Of course, a twist in this sonnet is that the behaviour of the master – who does not comb his hair – belies the societal differences to which his wife subscribes (because of sensory "proof"). For example, "dad" seems not to mistake personal aesthetic taste for a fake appreciation of things that help "keep up [his wife's] appearances". Rather, being himself is what matters – however uncivilized that might appear to be. In this regard, "Highway", Belcher says, "exposes the hypocrisy and stupidity of folk-Afrikaner ideology" (Belcher, 2005).

As discussed in Chapter One, however, nature herself seems to have a preference for a kind of "aesthetic taste", where a type of scientific law underlies certain structures found in nature – a relationship between scientific law and nature called "optimal form". Optimal form, in other words, seems to hint at the idea that valid differences in regard to the colour of people's skins might exist. These differences are noted in the following sonnet, "Sunbathers".

We brave the blazing sun with due restraint
for in a wink he can become quite mean
and pluck our bodies from their grease and paint
and tint our frail skins with a blistered sheen,
for we who suffer from a pinkish hide
will soon discover that although we shirk
the colour theme, our pigment will decide
if we are brown enough to keep our work.
But he, the Sun, will always interfere
with colour schemes and place us so apart
in different worlds that he would never fear
that evolutions of the skin will start
when colours of the spectrum re-unite
and so become predominantly white.
(Belcher, 2000: 23)

Irony upon irony is implied here, in that optimal form in terms of human colouration and humans' inhabitation of Africa does not correspond with optimal form as it is studied with regard to science and the study of light – wherein all colours become one. Belcher wittingly "mocks" any attempt to segregate according to colour alone, maintaining that when the colours of the spectrum unite, it all becomes white (Belcher, 2005).

An effect of sarcastic over-dramatization is apparent because the narrator speaks as though he represents a collective – all white South Africans – rather than simply representing himself. For example, "…although we shirk / the colour theme, our pigment will decide / if we are brown enough to keep our work" (ll. 6-8). Whilst this over-dramatic voice unifies the sonnet on the whole (because "we" speak throughout), this sonnet can be divided into a two-part scheme – the first sentence being about politics and the second about science. In this regard, the sonnet seems more formal than thematic, since there is less of a development of a single thesis than a mere display of the contradiction lying between two topical points, political and scientific. From this sharp conflict, between an assertion about politics (l. 7, 8) and a presentation of a fact about science (l. 13, 14), comes a tone of disharmony between subjectivity and objectivity – where the latter (l. 13, 14), as one might expect, is less comedic than the former. For example, within the "political" first part – "brown enough" (/ ^^) and "keep our work" (/ ^^) – the dactylic rhythm adds comedy to the strongly-worded and sarcastic statements; and within the scientific part, the corresponding (or rather "conflicting") point made, the rhythm is ^/ ^/ ("and so" and "become") followed by ^/^^^ / ("predominantly white").

The lack of 'comedy' in the accentuation of this line (when compared with l. 8) seems to add to the ironic poignancy of Belcher's thesis that politics and science are somewhat irreconcilable. With regard to the theme of racial, cultural, or societal differences, Belcher seems to challenge South Africans by teaching them about scientific fact: that visible colours can re-unite kinetically to become one, if not kinaesthetically – in other words, in terms of colours associated with race.

Societies within which people share the colour of their skin may also appear divided. In the following sonnet, "Sects", this division is made in terms of religion:

> We did our share in knocking brothers flat
> in this dark shantytown where Jesus bled
> in front of Checkers while we passed the hat
> and warned against the lures that lie ahead.
> This made the dagga-smokers stop their scorn
> and the deceiver saw he'd lost his fights
> because his children were so newly-born
> they had to dim their eyes in traffic lights.
> And so we built our Pentecostal hall
> where words from heaven purified our lips
> and all hell's angels couldn't make us fall
> not even for a woman's breasts and hips,
> and praised the Lord when drunken alcoholics
> belittled us as fucking apostolics.
> (Belcher, 2000: 26)

Apostolics are despised as "sects" by historically-bent protestant churches. Differences in levels of devotion are emphasized through imagery that implies nonreligious connotations: dagga, alcohol, breasts and hips, for example. In particular, the "conservative" historical churches of South Africa are associated with alcoholism – a taste for drunkenness. It is ironic (and somewhat hypocritical), therefore, that "fucking apostolics", possessing abstemious natures are "belittled".

Arguably, the most intense form of segregation is when some kinds of oppositional views alone divide people who share both the colour of their skin as well as their religious beliefs. The sonnet "Birthday Commemoration at Robberg", below, stems from a little-known part of South African history. In order to fully appreciate the sensory impressions evoked therein, an historical account – as relayed by Belcher himself – follows the sonnet.

At rest a distance from the mother queen
lies Stockenstroom le Fleur, servant of God
rejoicing in the tomb for having seen
the glory of the Lord swaying his rod
over the scattered bones of Adam Kok
that no more bleach along the Griqua way
but stand in glory on the solid rock
of Robberg where they come to sing and pray.
Now on his birthday at our sacred place
we, scattered bones, unite our hearts in prayer
to ask our man of God to plead His grace
and lead our hearts away from snarl and snare
that we may use His words to shout and sing
that Christ was born to die as Griqua king.
(Belcher, 2000: 11)

Belcher undertook to learn more about the oral traditions – especially about the "Griqua Truth" – in Kranshoek. A fulfilment of Griqua prophecy has been linked by this community to his scholarly endeavour – as Belcher relays:

> I approached a woman – over a century in age – standing still as a statue as she watched me arrive in Kranshoek. I said, 'Ek soek die Griqua waarheid'. Ouma Siena September then directed me to an elder of the community. [Belcher interrupts his story to say that recounting it always gives him 'hoendervleis' ('gooseflesh', or 'goose-bumps').] There was an old man in a collar, tie and suit and he said, 'Ek is Gert Gal. Vandag is die sewende Julie 1979 en maar veertig jaar minner [meneer], ons wag veertig jaar vir minner …op sewende Julie 1939… 'n man het vir my gesé… [when Gert Gal was a young boy, he was apparently told by another Griqua elder,] "Gertjie Gal, ek gaan vir jou nou die Griqua waarheid vertel, maar nou my mond praat met jou…vertig jaar van vandag af gaan 'n wit man kom en vertel

die Griqua warheid by jou."' [And the elder speaking with Belcher says that at that time he wondered 'is hierdie man mal?']

As a result of being seen as the fulfillment of prophecy, Belcher was asked to speak at a Griqua ceremony; at which he acted unknowingly as a middleman during an historic turn of events within the South African, Griqua community.

"I am the only honorary Griqua in the world", Belcher says, and continues to explain why:

> Near Plettenbergbay, Kranshoek…a place on the sea called Robberg. This is the place he came to rest; Andrew Abram Stockenstroom Le Fleur was their great reformer and leader and eventually led them to – let's call it their "holy land" – a place called Kranshoek. He's buried in Robberg.
>
> They say all coloured people are Griquas, but the first Griqua was a leader from the East who came over as a freed slave…and as a cook on a ship, landed here and [heard] the call. The Khoi and Gariekariekwa joined and were advised to be known as Griqua by a minister, Campbell.
>
> Two factions developed within the Griquas, both descendents of [A. A. S.] Le Fleur; The one backed the founder of the Griquas, the other [supported] his brother, Eric Le Fleur. There was great inequity between the two factions!
>
> I was once invited to Robberg to speak about the Griqua, Le Fleur, who was known as a kind of prophet – a miracle worker. When I arrived, I see – good heavens! – both factions! 'We're in for trouble…tog, nou wat moet ek nou doen? [now what must I do?]. Now I'm in trouble', I thought.
>
> Here stands the one faction against the other… and who must I please? I said to them all, 'this shows what a great leader your prophet was. That you are all here today is one of his greatest miracles'. It came in the newspaper the next day, 'Griqua Factions Unite'. (Belcher, 2005)

Belcher's interpretation of what a "miracle" meant within this community was met with the factions' mutual repentance. He therefore became the only honorary Griqua, made so as a result of his role in re-uniting these factions. Belcher also said about the Griquas that he found them very "old testamentical", referring to seeing rainbows, for example, as signs like those you might expect in the Bible. In this regard, the imagery – and the

implied sense impressions – of the above sonnet echoes a kind of religious orthodoxy: for example, "solid rock", "sacred place", or "scattered bones" becoming "united hearts" through "prayer" (ll. 7, 9, 10).

The poems "Anglicistic Campaign" and "The Language of Angels" follow respectively. They are both about radical cultural and societal changes – "changes" that I compare metaphorically with a sort of "revolution".

"Anglicistic Campaign", particularly, is written from an Englishman's perspective; hence, letting words such as "koppie" and "kloof" settle on our (English) "ship"; and "you'd rather [die] than let our [English] words caress a Boer child's lip" (ll. 9, 12). The nations to which this poem draws our attention, therefore, are those of the English and Afrikaner.[4]

Through heaving waters of Algoa Bay
our fathers landed in the rising sun
and on their way to Cathcart said goodbye
to Johathan and how d'ya do to Jan,
for soon they heard the letters of this land
echoing English words like wind and storm,
my ink pen & my lamp is (*sic*) in my hand
and: water in September is so warm.
And so with koppie, kloof, velskoen and trek
we let your language settle on our ship
while all along you'd rather give your neck
than let our words caress a Boer child's lip
the way you cock your metfords and prepare your young
to fight the Anglo Boer War of the tongue.
(Belcher, 2000: 9)

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[4] There is an oddity in that at least one symbolic reference within this sonnet contradicts the depiction of these nations; that is, "[Lee] Metford" (l. 13) was not the Boers' choice weapon – they rather used Mausers. The English, on the other hand, used Metfords. With regard to history, in other words, the symbolism is paradoxical; and, possibly, not even an in-depth discussion about the hermeneutics of this symbolism would justify its historical incorrectness – especially since the "you" and "our" (ll. 8-14) clearly refer to the Boers and English.

In supreme irony, it was during the establishment of a trade route to India that South Africa – as a kind of stop-over – became important; an historical landing from which the pool of imported languages began to hybridize. Some South Africans have attributed a gratuitious type of importance to their language, given that such a language developed quite per chance, as a result of much greater – "global" – historical developments taking place beyond the borders of (what is now) – local – South Africa. In short, South Africa was not the desired ultimate destination along this trade route.[5]

The theme of the poem is clear, despite the oddity concerning weaponry and despite the inappropriate importance bestowed upon some languages; following suit from the title – in which the word "campaign" of radical change through a kinaesthetic movement toward English – a "fight" is heard between the languages of English and Afrikaans; which is symbolized through instruments of war. The effect produced is one of loud movement; the battle of words is fierce, and sounds comparable to the Anglo-Boer war itself.

This battle, however, is portrayed not without irony. "Wind" and "storm", for example, are Afrikaans words which echo – if not in the English pronunciation – the English words of the same meaning; in other words, "wind" and "storm" may be pronounced differently within English and Afrikaans, but these loanwords are spelt precisely the same in either

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[5] In this regard, Afrikaans grew from the melting pot of the Cape, evolving into a colloquial kind of Dutch, influenced by Khoikhoi and slaves from Malaya, Indonesia, Madagascar and West Africa. Other languages that influenced Afrikaans include Portuguese, German and French. That Afrikaans was considered by the Boers to be a "sacred" language, however, is an historical certainty; the new dispensation of South Africa (1994) still claims it is one of the official languages, although it has lost something of its power, no longer being forced upon South Africa's learners as a first language.

language. Similarly (and conversely), English-speaking people of South Africa have borrowed from Afrikaans words such as "koppie, kloof, velskoen and trek". There exists mutual borrowing of words, which suggests that South African culture may be unified on some level. The irony of this mutual borrowing of language is that any cultural sovereignty hoped for by the Boers – in their enshrining of Afrikaans – is as much undermined within the context of South Africa as would it be for the English – and their language. (Should they, of course, assume cultural superiority in the same way.) The revolution, in short, is that the sound of the languages themselves seems to unify what might have otherwise been seen as separate and disparate subcultures within a single society.

Another type of radical change is evoked through the sounds of "The Language of Angels".

Behold the latter heroes of the word:
finger that used to crawl along a line
of script now gallivant like heifers in a herd
of TV sausages while battling Ewings dine
on Texas beef, and flat protagonists
with rounded fronts start fidgeting like ants
into the grey-haired TV watchers' lists
until they reach catharsis in their pants.
Bid au revoir to papirus (*sic*) and ink,
though gentle readers, for the typograph
grows weary and the letter-setters blink
their sleepy eyes, their bosses greet their staff,
and at the box the Dallas-watching chaps
beckon to us to shut our bloody traps.
(Belcher, 2000: 20)

In the previous sonnet, the sound of language was revolutionary – it seems to unite unlike nations. In the sonnet above, however, language itself is revolutionized; that is, from one

spoken by "angels" to one spoken by a multitude of Dallas-watching chaps (l. 13) – or the "Shhhh-I'm-Watching-TV people", as Belcher calls them (Belcher, 2005).

Of course, the radical change in language follows hard on the heels of general revolutionary changes within society; from a society which, lacking television, valued written language, to a society which, having television, bestows less importance on paper, ink, and the skillfully written word. Advancements in technology – TV, for example – have compromised the importance of written language; a compromise from which Belcher's idea of a "tired" language stems. Naturally, written language cannot be beset by "fatigue" or "grow weary" – as Belcher writes – unless it is personified. "Typograph grow[ing] weary" brings a human, kinaesthetic element to written language; over and above the usual kinaesthetic relationship irrefutably and evidently lying between a writer and what he authors in his actual act of writing, typograph is now itself the (kinaesthetically) "tired" "author". This personification metaphorically describes radical changes in linguistic taste and appetite.

Du Toit's Kloof and Zonderwater were two South African sites where Italian prisoners of war were held; the former site now known as a mountainous pass in Paarl. Thus, Italian "seed" made its way into South African bloodlines – as read in the sonnet "Italian Prisoner of War" (l. 11).

Fed-up with Hitler's loud philandering
with Mussolini while we bled and died,
we knew that victory bells would never ring
and downed our arms to take the freedom ride
to Zonderwater. On your Boland farms
we strummed your daughters' bodies like guitars,
and after just an hour in our arms
they started singing love-songs to the stars.
Trusting our old Mediterranean wile
in making love, we tilled their virgin soil
and sowed our seed along the way, but while
we stroked their limbs with love and olive oil
we gave their first-born just that little hint
 – maybe it matters – of a darker tint.
(Belcher, 2000: 16)

Sexual relations are evoked through the imagery of playing "bodies" as though they were "guitars" (l. 6). Whilst a guitar is not strictly an "Italian" instrument (it is the national instrument of Spain), it has over many centuries – across both musicological and ethnomusicological fields – been viewed as a "masculine" instrument (De Jager, 2004). So when the "Italian Prisoner of War" plays "daughters' bodies like guitars", the simile indicates that the young women substitute for guitars, thus becoming instruments for Mediterranean men's pleasures. Belcher's idea that the sounds resulting from such a "substitution" amount to a "strumming", does not wholly tie in, however, with "masculine" and "feminine" sounds, as defined in Chapter One (see, "Sound"); this is because the effect of "strumming" "bodies" evokes a musical sound different – and, arguably, less sensitive – to an "arpeggiated" sound, for example.

In terms of sensory experience, touch, kinaesthesis, and an implied (resultant) presence of sound are relayed through the imagery of "strumming" a guitar; in other words, the theme

of sexual relations within this sonnet appears "musical". Musical sounds evoked in the

sonnet "Italian Prisoner of War II", below, depict the theme of "love" (l. 13).

A P.O.W. cross in Du Toits Kloof Pass
bears witness to our brief and humble stay
when we, brave warriors, were forced to class
your wool, chop wood, and keep the birds at bay.
At day's end by the faint light of your homes
we carved the Virgin and her rosaries
from bits of boxwood, and in Dante poems
found solace in óur groves and cypress trees.
Your cities had no ancient ruins to show
or via appias – only castle walls
with young guides keen to offer what they know
while in the Town Hall Violetta calls
her lover to their final sacrament
in words that ring with a Karroo accent.
(Belcher, 2000: 17)[6]

Although the theme of "love" can be explored through sense impressions created by

music, in other words, in this particular example – as the couplet of the final lines

confirms – the theme of love is wanting owing to a lack in musicality.

Perhaps, though, the crudest link between music (and all sensory impressions associated

with it) and sexual relations can be read in Belcher's sonnet "Circle", in which

masturbation metaphorically describes lonely-sounding music.

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[6] Belcher laughs when he recalls his choice of character Violetta: "she is a character from an Opera, I forget which one, but she dies for hours; and when sung by an Afrikaner…" He grimaces as if to say, "her death sounds especially slow and painful" (Belcher, 2005).

Okay, okay, we'll prick the brown chicks thick
behind the toilet of a township shack
or in a car and do not give a stick
if a damn flatfoot pisses down our back
so now we're jailbirds. For a month or six
we'll pluck the lonely string and think our thing,
and while we sit and contemplate our dicks
we'll hear our babies cry, their mothers sing.
Our little girls will take the streets and toy
with men like us and mother off-white kids
too fancy for the township hoipolloi,
until the cops lie tossing in their beds
and look for other jobs because they know
our kind will stuff the country white as snow.
(Belcher, 2000: 22)

Onanism is evident from the phrase "plucking a lonely string" (ll. 6-7). A "string",

however, is of course not literally a penis – only with a push of the imagination is there a

vague sight-oriented resemblance between the two. In this regard, "string" is a sentential

metaphor because the referent – the word "penis" (although hinted at colloquially through

the word "dick") – is completely omitted. Synecdoche exists within the above verse, in

relation to this metaphor, however, because it is only the movement implied in "plucking

strings" that describes the whole experience of *draadtrek* (or "wire-pulling", as translated

by Belcher directly from Afrikaans, colloquially defining "masturbation").

It is conceivable that we might expect a symphony of strings being sounded in mutual

acts of *pizzicato* (or "plucking strings"), because "we" in the sonnet above refers to more

than one incarcerate; more than one inmate plucks his string, in other words. As line

seven confirms, "we sit and contemplate our dicks". In terms of syntax, then, the

preceding verse might have read "we'll pluck our lonely *strings*", rather than "lonely

string". However, where an imagined plurality of this experience, through mutual acts of

masturbation, would produce a full body of polyphonic sound, the singularity of "string" creates an impression of monophony – a singularity of feeling which, obviously, better suits the descriptive word "lonely". Thus, an emptiness of feeling is linked with this sexual act through a corresponding emptiness of sound.

"Visit to a Literary Museum", on the other hand, draws upon the subject of music in a way that creates a fullness of feeling:

When I, Petrarch, weary of forming rhymes
about the rhythms of the universe
in sonnets, I could wander through the times
when I, a love-lost youth, made verse
with Laura through the longing in my heart,
and in the silence of my soul I found
a string on which to tune my pen as art
composed by love: sonare – to make sound.
And so through fourteen lines I heard her call
across the years and searched the dusty shelves
deep in my heart, and on its barren wall
where nothing but my heartbreak ever delves
I read the sacred words that made me quiver:
A thing of beauty is a joy forever.
(Belcher, 2000: 18)

In light of the discussion about comparative and interactional metaphors in the previous chapter, Belcher's metaphorical description of "love" – through an imagined sound of "music" – can be described as "comparative", since his knowledge about love and music does not expand in the same way as his readers'; that is, he had to know of the comparisons between "love" and "music" in order to relay his metaphorical statement about these subjects. Readers, on the other hand, presumably learn something about Belcher's metaphorical description of love through an evocation of music; hence, interactional metaphor.

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In regard to "learning" (i.e. the latter kind of metaphor, above), it appears possible to hear what would ordinarily be an unimaginable concept of "feelings" – in particular, "true love". This unimaginable concept becomes known to us through the word "sonare", which Belcher teaches us about – that is, it means "to make sound". Given the context under which we are taught the meaning of "sonare", however, Belcher seems to imply that "making sound" – or even this implied sound in "making verse" (l. 4) – also metaphorically defines "making love". It may be argued, though, that "sound" metaphorically describing "love" does not in itself imply "music". In this regard, the words "string", "tune" and "composed" (ll. 7, 8), for example, overturn this conjectured argument in that these words metaphorically describe the "sound" under discussion; thus connecting one metaphor with the other – in other words, "making sound" becomes "making music", which means "making love".

Synaesthesia has been discussed in relation to some of the sonnets. Owing to the many combinations possible with regard to sensory experience, however, it seems worthwhile to consider synaesthesia more closely in relation to its effect upon themes.

Personification sometimes creates the impression that an object is being given an unusual "sensory" character; as in the adjective-to-noun relationship depicted – through a transferred epithet – in a bunch of "ecstatic" grapes ("Boland Wine Farmer", l. 8); and also in the adverb-to-noun relationship – and, again, through a transferred epithet – found in the sonnet "Language of Angels" where "typograph grows weary" (l. 11). A sense of

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joyful kinaesthetic movement when imagining the sight of a bunch of grapes being

carried to a winery is not a usually expected sensory experience of grapes. Nor is it

ordinarily imaginable that typograph can get physically tired. Arguably, when an

imagined sensory experience evoked through imagery linked with an adjective or adverb,

for example, does not dove-tail the sensory impression, created through the imagery of

the nouns they signify, then synaesthesia takes place. This conclusion can be supported

further through an analysis of the sonnet "Diaspora".

Our ancestors unrolled the tapestries
of Africa when huts of clay and dung
dove-tailed the races into families
and nations through an interwoven tongue,
but saw them turn their backs and shift their eyes
as climates and the earth's foundations change:
the seasons drift off course; a river dries;
a desert plain becomes a mountain range.
But then the saving Word of God brought hate
through uniformed assailants' clubs and fists
that made the people's blood coagulate
into revenging bands of terrorist
who slayed the land, and now hyenas lurch
through ruins that used to be a Christian church.
(Belcher, 2000: 34)

Kinaesthesis should define "interwoven" (l. 4), as human movement is implied in

creating a weave; and taste should have related to the word "tongue". However,

kinaesthesis – in "interwoven tongue" – now defines a sense of "taste" as it is depicted

through the imagery of a tongue. The theme – which concerns the dispersion of a people

and their language through drastic cultural changes (i.e. the theme of cultural revolution)

– is enhanced through a sense of synaesthesia, in other words. This is because the sensory

experience of kinaesthesis is imagined through a sense of taste; put another way,

kinaesthesis and taste are – like the dispersion of people – themselves "dispersed"

between each other (even though they jointly form a conceit) because of the adjective-to-noun relationship through which they are evoked.

Similarly, the words "interwoven" and "lives" (l. 10), within the sonnet "Genadendal", also create a sense of synaesthesia in that the sensory experience of "life" (which encompasses all our sensory experiences) is known better through the feel of a "weave" – which mainly implies a sense of touch and kinaesthetic movement.

The faint word: Welcome on a painted gate
says that we're family; for it is here
that we can come to church and celebrate
the founding of our town with ginger beer
on Children's Day, and our togetherness
smiles from a guilded photo on the wall:
a white grandfather, smart in army dress,
child on his knee, his brown wife standing tall.
Under the fragrant smells of beams and thatch
our lives were interwoven with the strings
of onions and a window with a latch
and with a distant past that memory brings
to life in ways and customs we hold dear
but our white cousins in the cities fear.
(Belcher, 2000: 25)

A conceit within a conceit emerges from this sonnet when the weave, in "interwoven lives", is itself described as being made up of "strings of onion" (l. 10, 11). Had the conceit about people ("lives were interwoven", l.10) read "onions were interwoven" (omitting the referent "lives"), the resulting (hypothetical) sentential metaphor would have eschewed a number of sensory experiences – that is, onions cannot see, move kinaesthetically, or sense proprioception, for example. In other words, read conversely, the inclusion of the word "lives" indisputably completes the human-oriented theme of this sonnet because all sensory experiences are implied therein.

In this regard, the sensory impressions of taste and smell which are relayed through the imagery of "onions" synaesthetically describe the synaesthetic relationship already existing between the words "interwoven" and "lives". This subtle layering of all sensory perceptions, creating an impression of "wholeness", parallels the theme of this sonnet: meaning, despite the prevalence of xenophobia, cultural or societal differences, weaving Whites and Browns (resulting in related colours – or, rather, Coloureds) creates a sense of cultural homogeneity; and, thus, the "weave" – metaphorically describing the onion-like "bite" to South African interbreeding – is layered in terms of DNA.

Adjectives – in light of personification – do not always introduce alternative ways of experiencing their signified subjects through synaesthesia, however. In Belcher's sonnet "A Visit to Paris, France", the "tired Holy Ghost" (l. 8), for example, concerns a non-physical, supernatural persona that – in taking the form of a human body (or its implied personification through the word "ghost") – could conceivably feel the human phenomenon of fatigue.

Another way in which synaesthesia enters the sonnets of Belcher's *Rings of a Thundering Tree* is through words that describe the actions of things – verbs or their gerundial forms, in other words. Verbs and gerunds create synaesthesia in the sonnet "Gangers", below; a sonnet which tells of Belcher, "as a small boy in Bloemfontein, watching fathers sacrifice themselves as they lay railway lines through the Hex" (Belcher, 2005).

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On yellowed photographs in silent rows
our teenage fathers stand to rest their backs
and aching limbs before the shiftboss blows
his whistle for the crew to heave the tracks
with jack and crowbar, until rows of steel
and sleepers breach the Hex where the remains
of vanished swamps swelter under the heel
of the karroo sun thumping on the plains,
that we can feed the hungry frontline states
with loads of mealie-meal and frozen meat
on low-cost credit and at special rates,
but while we count our costs that they can eat
they revel in the prospects of a stand
before our gates to occupy our land.
(Belcher, 2000: 3)

It is not possible to "hear" the sun, let alone hear it "thump". Since the gerund

"thumping" (l. 8) is irreconcilable with the form of sensory perception linked ordinarily

with sensing the sun's presence, synaesthesia contributes to the theme of civil or

industrial revolutions through the depiction of an angry and violent sun. Similarly, words

denoting action in "Anglicistic Campaign" relay a sense of synaesthesia; "language

settles" and "words caress" (l. 10, 12), and thus sensory properties that allow us to sense

its "movement" and even its "touch" are attributed to language (which is linked primarily

with a sense of sound). The theme of cultural revolution – of a war between words

("fight[ing] the Anglo Boer War of the tongue", l. 14) – is amplified, then, because of the

revolutionary effects that kinaesthesis and touch produce in describing the sounds of

words.

Synaesthesia is exemplary in illustrating how cognitive "redescription" takes place; how

something "new" is learned in light of "old" knowledge – or what is already known. All

the conceits above – "ecstatic grapes", "typograph grows weary", "interwoven tongue",

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"interwoven lives", "tired Holy Ghost", or "sun thumping" – show that old knowledge about the subject being metaphorically described within each statement is replaced by new knowledge about both subjects because of this metaphorical description; a new cognitive experience due to the interaction and mutual redescription of these subjects. Further, imagined sensory impressions, inherent in each subject, concomitantly contribute in the metaphorical redescriptions. It is our imagined experience of sensing the interaction between physical "ecstasy" and seeing "grapes", for example, that consequently validates our attempts to discuss "redescription" in terms of metaphor.

Although not all the links between metaphor and sensory perception display epistemic correspondence, using the more imaginable to evoke the less imaginable appears to be a technique deployed in most of the sonnets. Some examples include "inappropriate" types of physical contact to better understand an abstract concept about a lack of "enlightenment"; "unclean food" to better understand "sinful" behaviour; "rotting" to describe industrial overkill; "Jentoo drifting off course" to describe wayward human nature and human vice; or guns (Metfords) to describe a battle between English and Afrikaans words. Structural metaphors, on the other hand, were discussed in relation to the argumentative-sounding speech of fundamentalists. In this regard, imagined sensory experience – for example, as read in "cease to be unique" or "our artwork glorified" – is linked with the point of the argument, in that the kinaesthetic experience of death or spiritual worship described the fundamentalist view that Christian artefacts are totally void of uniqueness and that Islamic artwork should rather be "praised".

When metaphorical statements appear to be lacking within a sonnet, a graphic sensory experience is consequently evoked through literal language; primitive brutality, as read in "Viva Africa" for example, illustrates that literal thought is able to capture imagined sensory experience as (if not more) powerfully as (than) figurative language. Black implies that there is no need to use figurative language (such as metaphor) if literal language means precisely the same thing (1993: 27). In saying this, he implies – in my view – that metaphor has the ability to relay something more than literal thought; and whilst that may appear to be a probable implication – as seen in the numerous depictions of abstractions through metaphorical descriptions of tangible things – literal thought seems also to achieve something that metaphor cannot (that is, it can depict a sense of graphic brutality, for example, as seen in the evocation of cruel sensory experiences within the context of a "savage" Africa). From such a conclusion, it could further be postulated that imagined sensory experience alone could substantially contribute to the theoretical analyses of themes, without necessarily requiring either the paradox of philosophical metaphors or the complexity of syntactical ones. In this regard, metaphor – as a "generic" form – could be piled upon metaphor, which often subsequently implies a sense of synaesthesia (see "Royal Visit", "Visit to a Literary Museum", or the section about synaesthesia, above, for example); and it is the imagined interaction of sensory experiences within these generic forms of metaphor that shape and augment our understanding of the themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

"*Rings of a Thundering Tree* tells of a new hero", Belcher says (2005). He continues, saying that "the South African 'hero' is no longer the 'Voortrekker'". The theme of this collection of sonnets on the whole, in other words, is about changed conceptions with regard to historical figures within South Africa. However, readers are not told who this new hero is; only that he is no longer a forefather of the Afrikaner nation. In keeping with the theoretical position extrapolated about thinking beyond the level of twos (in the "Introduction"), although it has been said that this hero is not the Voortrekker, it cannot be said that the new hero is simply the Voortrekkers' opposite – for example, the British of the same time period. This conclusion appears irrefutable because this collection of sonnets is not written in a way that suggests it can be divided antagonistically into two (three, or four) politically- or culturally-oriented groups. For instance, although Moslems and Christians or whites and blacks are depicted as though they – at times – represented oppositional extremities concerning religion or culture respectively, even within Christian belief or white culture alone, views are radically different (as read in the sonnets "Infant and Adult Baptism", or "Highway", for example).

The following quotation illustrates, in my view, that Belcher could disprove with ease an assumed applicability of a basic, logical principle to a South African context; the sort of refutation which seems to underlie his approach in characterizing his subjects.

Many Afrikaans people raised their eyebrows that I should deliver my inaugural lecture – as read in *Afrikaans: A Reappraisal* (1988) – in English. The *New York Times* wrote that this document should serve for the UN – so as not to judge Afrikaans arbitrarily; for instance, all Afrikaners are racists, so if you speak Afrikaans, you too are racist. (Belcher, 2005)

His witty aversion for simplistic thought exemplifies this entire collection of sonnets in the sense that *Rings of a Thundering Tree* portrays South Africa's "heroes" multifariously rather than dualistically.

From a reader's perspective it may seem that no hero appears to be above reproach; Moslems, Christians, whites, blacks, coloureds and Griquas are amongst the many new "heroes" represented within this collection of sonnets – all of whom, ironically, are to no more or less of an extent themselves vilified by Belcher in jest (like the political movement O.B. and its "Father Voortrekker [Christmas]"). Narrators (and personas) within the sonnets, however, speaking (and appearing) sincerely, seem to believe they are above reproach; those both pre- or post-dating Father Voortrekker are comically clear in conscience amidst their persecutions or exploitations of others – of different races, sexes, or simply of those who hold different opinions or beliefs. For example, the policeman's shameless bribery in "Servant", or the prideful convict bragging about "pricking chicks thick" in "Circle" (Belcher, 2000: 21, 22). As Kristeva enlarges on "abjection" and these kinds of so-called macabre "heroes" in *Powers of Horror*, they are like the traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, and the killer who claims he is savior (Chapter One, Kristeva, 1982).[7]

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[7] Roughly thirty of the forty sonnets in this collection concern "abjection". The remaining sonnets, not voicing the beliefs, feelings or opinions of a narrator or persona, seem, consequently, to reflect Belcher's own perspectives about abstractions – such as "time", for example (as read in "Histoire", "Gondwana", or "Missing Lady").

It is difficult, however, to reconcile Belcher's claim that the image of "rings of a thundering tree represents three hundred years of South African decay" with the idea that every echelon within South Africa represents a "hero" (2005). Linking "decay" with "heroism" does not seem to follow, unless, of course, "decay" is euphemistically as well as deleteriously linked with "heroism"; that is, a new South Africa – based upon so-called solidarity – may appear to have become unified over the last three hundred years, yet the people claiming to be the heroes of this country's solidarity actually illustrate that their conflicting views, or corrupt actions, *smell* of a lack in unification – in a word, "decay".

Belcher is adamant about "everything [having] a function"; and when asked about whether or not he keeps sensory perception in mind when writing poetry, he responds likewise: "everything must correspond" (2005). It cannot be said, however, that the sensory impressions evoked in *Rings of a Thundering Tree* always correspond with "reality". Although imaginable experiences are depicted, it is often necessary to 'imagine imagining' whatever reality is not. Assuming Belcher truly keeps "everything" in mind – miscellaneous correspondences inscribed self-reflexively within metaphorical descriptions of metaphor, for example – then the complex conclusions about the themes stem not so much from a subjective analysis of his choice of words or syntax (as argued in the "Introduction" in relation to "autodynamic complexes"), for instance, but from his conviction that the sonnet form is "fatalistic". For Belcher, every word counts. In this regard, when asked, "How does poetry come to you?", he answers, "I go to the poetry", and continues, saying that "being an artisan, [means] you know how to write a poem.

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Inspiration does play a role. Sometimes, I hear or read a fantastic word. I think, 'I can write a poem about this word'" (2005).

In light of this perspective, it seems likely that a single metaphorical statement or its implied sensory experience(s), or a single sense impression itself – as discussed in the previous chapter – has the capacity to contribute substantially to the theme of a sonnet. Similarly – and as concluded above – a single sense impression of "smelling" South Africa's "heroic decay" succinctly describes the overall theme of this collection of sonnets.

In regard to sensory perception, the sense of sight clearly plays a major role in relaying an impression of "power": for example, as read in "Infant Baptism, Adult Baptism", sighting physical contact between people whose skin colour differs incriminates them in the context of a (hypocritically) religious, "old" South Africa; in "Gondwana", it is possible to catch sight of our own evolution from Neanderthal to Man; "S(tell)enbosch" relays the understanding that the spectacle of a girl "weeing" in her neighbourhood is tantamount to seeing how civility does not necessarily follow on the heels of industrialization; or, as read in "At The Funeral of [an untrustworthy] Statesman", it is conceivable that a saying such as "one sees one's *gat*" is a figurative way of conveying the idea that an implied *action* – through an act of sight – describes human nature's failures.

Sight, however, does not appear to be the only powerful (and powerfully incriminating) sense; the human voice in "Prescriptions for an Afrikaner Christmas", for example, through which "God's word" is manifest (Belcher, 2000: 5), for instance, is also powerful – and the power of this sound, in turn, is linked with kinaesthesis because of the metaphorical movement implied through the changes in frequency of this "living" agent. However, it may be premature to conclude that the power of sight is equaled by that of other senses; since it was through an act of sight, for instance, that the sense of touch, manifest in a cross-cultural relationship, was considered illegal and "sinful" ("Infant Baptism, Adult Baptism"). The privileged place "sight" holds in the study of generative linguistics is echoed in Belcher's poetry: it is inseparably linked with knowledge and thus seems to have 'the last word'.

Touch and kinaesthesis have been discussed in terms of imagery linked with concerns such as evolution, industrialism, justice and sexual relations. Similar to the way in which we are able to see, as well as view "understanding" as a way of seeing (Chapter Two), touch and kinaesthesis can also depict things metaphysical – for example, the path of the ages, which is touched with our feet as we walk (kinaesthetically) along it. Smell, as defined in Chapter One, seldom has a positive connotation – unless, of course, it is coupled with a word that reverses such negativity. This appears to be true in light of Belcher's sonnets discussed in Chapter Three, in that only once does the word "smell" relay a pleasant experience – and then it is preceded by the word "fragrant" ("Genadendal", l. 9). Thus, "smell" suitably relays a sense of "detection" – as discussed in relation to the definitional meaning of "smell" (Chapter One) – within the context of

global war; as read in the sonnet "Fishing Paradise", which was about "smelling out" the deceit of Russian "fishing boats" that were actually "encoding" South Africa's coastline.

"Taste", as depicted within the sonnets above, confirms the idea that a palatable sensory experience – such as the simple taste imagined through the image of "onions" – can in some cases be (conveniently) confused with an aesthetic taste; for instance, "Madam" confuses the taste of port with cultural "good" taste ("Highway", 2000: 7). The simple sensory perceptions of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, for example, become richer than the immediate experiences they signify when the metaphors through which they are evoked are themselves described metaphorically. Tropes of tropes are, in other words, a feature of Belcher's poetry. For example, the "lives" composing South African society are metaphorically described in terms of a "weave", yet the threads making up this weave are themselves metaphorically (and synaesthetically) described as "strings" of "onion". It is through tropes of tropes that self-reflexive sensory experiences turn into web-like complexities of sensory interchange.

In terms of metaphor, of course, sensory experience gains a type of philosophical or syntactical importance; respectively, that would mean, for example, that sensory experience seems to be a type of education when depicted in the (comparative-interactional) metaphorical statement, "love is like sound"; and sensory experience can be evoked in a way that disproves the supposedly godly nature of (nominal) religious-oriented metaphors, when "Adult Baptism *is* to come awake" is disproved not by a "coming awake" – and the sort of all-seeing and -accepting mind that one might expect to

go with this kind of spirituality – but by a lack of enlightenment, evidenced through narrow-minded "adult" actions that discriminate against meaningful, cross-cultural relationships.

The most inimitable way of viewing sensory experience in light of metaphor stems, however, from having imagined, for example, how kinaesthesis enacts the activity of "trekking" from one language to another ("Commemorative Trek of a South African English Poet", 2000: 10); or how the sounds of the words "apart" and "hate" themselves describe the "apartheid" regime ("Royal Visit 1947 and After", 2000: 6); or how a style of phonetic writing – "darky bradda", for example ("The Way", 2000: 24) – denotes a coloured speaker. It could be said that the word "trekking" is metaphorical of a poet's choice to compose in English rather than Afrikaans, for example; or said that the words "apart" and "hate" metaphorically describe – through a play on the word "apartheid" – two aspects intrinsic to the system of apartheid. But, as read in the third example, it cannot be said that "(the word or) the words" "darky bradda" (is or) are metaphorical of a coloured speaker; unquestionably, to be exact, it is the particular type of sound, implied through the way in which the words are composed of certain letters, which metaphorically brings the narrator to life. Similarly – looking back at the first two examples given – so too it can be said that the *kinaesthetic* movement implied in the word "trekking" and the *sounds* implicit in the words "apart" and "hate" are metaphorical of the subjects they signify. Stated conversely, for example, Belcher could just as easily have written, "apartheid is 'separateness' and 'abhorrence'". In conclusion, sensory perception is thus itself metaphor.

If, however, the conclusion that "sensory perception can actually be metaphor" stands, then, on a sensory level, on the whole, this collection of sonnets does suggest a kind of unity – even though the views expressed reek of "disparity". The collection is unified through the way in which Belcher "abjectifies" most – if not all – narrators and personas; that is, his continuous shifts of perspective – from the views of one culture to another, one time to another, and so on – metaphorically describe the differences in feelings, thoughts, opinions or beliefs, amongst the many "heroic" echelons of South Africa. Kinaesthesis is, in other words, the superlative technique – or, rather, metaphor – within this collection of sonnets; this is because kinaesthesis metaphorically conveys the feeling of movement between perspectives as Belcher versifies the diversity of South African cultures as personified through their voices, in speaking about who they are and what they represent. However, again, if kinaesthesis metaphorically describes the general purport of the entire collection of sonnets, as we travel from perspective to perspective, then synaesthesia also occurs constantly at the same level of this kind of metaphorical description; that is because all the sense impressions relayed through the imagined experience of imagery within each sonnet are evoked through an imagined singular sensory experience – of human movement – which defines the overall theme. To this end, we "taste" and "smell" a change in movement from the religious "food" of the Bible to that of the Qurãn; we "hear" and "touch" the change in movement from "whistling treetops" and "maizelands" to "atomic rotors" and "mines"; and we "see" the change in movement from "Gondwana" and its "eruptive brave" to South Africa and its business constellations.

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