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**A METAPHORICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF
D.J. OPPERMAN'S *KOMAS UIT 'N BAMBOESSTOK* IN
TERMS OF RELEVANCE THEORY AND THE
CONTEMPORARY THEORY OF METAPHOR**

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ABSTRACT

Since the inception of Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory, the theory of communication it proposes has attracted a variety of responses, ranging from acceptance to criticism and in some cases to misinterpretation. The vast magnitude of scholarly attention it has enjoyed since it was first introduced bears testimony to its valuable contribution relating to the description and explanation of verbal communication.

Similar to previous academic papers on the topic of relevance, this dissertation too responds to specific claims proposed by relevance theory. The relevance-theoretic account of the recovery of metaphorical interpretations is of particular interest and is considered relative to the assertions of Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) and Lakoff and Turner (1989), proponents of the cognitive linguistic approach to metaphor.

The study has three distinct parts. It firstly explores the treatment of metaphor within the framework of Relevance Theory. Secondly, it argues via the assertions of the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor that the relevance-theoretic treatment of metaphor is in violation of one of its fundamental claims about cognition, namely, that human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance. Thirdly the salience of the cognitive-linguistic

view of metaphor is illustrated through the metaphorical characterisation of D.J. Opperman's (1979) volume of poetry *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok*. The role of Opperman's use of the conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY, ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY as binding factor is explored. In addition to this it is demonstrated that the recovery of metaphorical interpretations by means of the cognitive-linguistic approach in *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok* is optimally relevant. Furthermore, the analysis of the literary text explores whether a volume of poetry itself can be a metaphor.

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"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

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CHAPTER ONE

A METHODOLOGICAL EXPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERISATION OF D.J. OPPERMAN'S *KOMAS UIT 'N BAMBOESSTOK* IN TERMS OF RELEVANCE THEORY AND THE CONTEMPORARY THEORY OF METAPHOR

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In ordinary daily discourse, a given speaker produces a myriad of utterances, which are intended to be interpreted and understood by a heterogeneous audience. Encapsulated in each of the messages produced, it is astonishing how much of the speaker's discourse is metaphorical in nature, whether produced intentionally or unintentionally.

A survey of the nature of language used in literature delivers similar results. Metaphor is ubiquitous. The untrained observer would predict that literature contains more metaphorical content than oral discourse as it could be claimed that the speaker puts more thought into producing the text. The fuzzy proposal above is in all probability shaped by the theory on metaphor that the speaker has been influenced by.

Why is the aforementioned proposal deemed fuzzy? What is metaphor really? Is it possible for metaphor to structure thought without the user being aware of it? Does metaphor function beyond its traditional poetic sense? On our quest to answer these questions three fundamental landmarks should be visited.

1.2 SCOPE OF STUDY

Firstly, we need to establish where the recovery of metaphor fits into the process of interpreting utterances. Secondly we need to understand which type of utterances are interpreted as metaphorical and why. Thirdly we need to propose or subscribe to a salient theory which allows us to identify language as metaphorical.

Once these landmarks have been visited a text is required on which to test our hypothesis. D.J. Opperman's (1979) volume of poetry *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok* will serve as the text under investigation and will be primarily characterized metaphorically in terms of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's Contemporary Theory of Metaphor. Reference will also be made to Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's Relevance Theoretic account of metaphor, which offer proposals for the manner in which metaphorical interpretations are recovered.

One level in which this study is different from other studies based on the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor is that much more will be done than merely identifying and elaborating on the occurrence of specific metaphors in specific poems within the volume of poetry. One of our aims will be to trace the occurrence and scope of a few metaphors throughout the volume of poetry with the aim of illustrating how these metaphors contribute to the volume of poetry being perceived as a unit and how it facilitates our interpretation and understanding of individual poems. The pursuance of the abovementioned aim leads us to address three more questions. Can a volume of poetry itself be metaphorical? If it (Komas uit 'n bamboesstok) can be or is metaphorical in nature, what would it be a metaphor of? Is this metaphor in any way linked to the pervasive metaphors in the volume of poetry itself?

It is essential that the nature of this dissertation is clarified. The thrust of this study is geared toward applying an existing theory of metaphor on the literary text. It is therefore clearly not a foundational study on metaphor. It is neither the platform on which varying exhaustive theories of metaphor are introduced, contrasted or compared in order to highlight what seems to be the most salient theory of metaphor. This study will however illustrate the salience of one theory on metaphor, namely, the Contemporary theory of

Metaphor. It will address the validity of one aspect of Relevance Theory, namely, an account of the manner in which metaphorical interpretations are recovered. Only the contrast on the manner in which metaphor is perceived by the two theories will be presented and argued with the aim of presenting a unified account of metaphor which is acceptable via the mechanisms and tenets of either theory. In order to arrive at this point it will therefore be necessary to recall and present the mechanisms of each theory. In Chapter four, in which textual analysis takes place, it needs to be stressed that the Contemporary Theory of metaphor is the primary mechanism through which it is done and that the role that Relevance Theory had played up until that point is only to identify specific metaphorical interpretations that are optimally relevant as a result of the ideas of The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor. Even though we will deal specifically with Relevance Theory and the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively it may be wondered why it is necessary to introduce Relevance Theory if it functions to a lesser degree. When one considers the main assertions of Relevance Theory it becomes apparent that interesting claims are made about communication and cognition and is hence relevant in the way in which we perceive any text. What exactly are the main assertions and what implications are there on the reading of the literary text?

1.3 THE MAIN ASSERTIONS OF RELEVANCE THEORY

Wilson (1999:720) claims that relevance is treated as a property of inputs to cognitive processes and analysed in terms of the notions of cognitive effect and processing effort. Within the context of verbal communication, an utterance may serve as an input to the cognitive processes. The input itself is processed within the context of assumptions, which are available to the hearer. Wilson (1999:720) claims that the process results in the yielding of relating cognitive effects which in turn strengthens, modifies or reorganises the hearer's existing assumptions. The relevance of a specific input is determined on two grounds: Firstly, other things being equal, the greater the cognitive effects, the greater the degree of relevance. An additional variable to the notion of relevance is processing effort, since it is required to process various inputs. Relevance of an input is thus secondly defined as, other things being equal, the smaller the processing effort, the greater the relevance.

1.3.1 THE PRINCIPLES OF RELEVANCE

Based on the notion of what is defined as relevant, Sperber and Wilson make two fundamental claims. One relates to cognition and the other to communication. The two proposed principles which are respectively called

the Cognitive Principle and the Communicative Principle are formulated as follows (Sperber and Wilson 1995:260):

- (1) The Cognitive Principle of Relevance: Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance.
- (2) The Communicative Principle of Relevance: Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

Sperber and Wilson (1999:720) further claim that due to the Cognitive Principle of Relevance human attention and processing resources are allocated to information that seems relevant and that due to Communicative Principle of Relevance, the speaker by the very act of addressing someone, communicates that his/her utterance is the most relevant one compatible with his/her abilities and preferences, and is at least relevant enough to be worth the processing effort.

This claim becomes extremely interesting against the process of textually analysing *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* to the degree that the reader's processing resources and attention are allocated to that which seems relevant. Due to the metaphorical focus of the reading and resulting

interpretation of the volume of poetry it is astounding how a different interpretation of the same text can be arrived at by a different reader with a differing focus. In spite of this, the focused reader is driven by the Communicative Principle, which signals that the poet had communicated an entire volume of poetry which he regards as most relevant, which is compatible with his abilities and preferences and is at least relevant enough to be worth processing. In the fourth chapter, even though we do not systematically evaluate the merit of individual verses in terms of the principles of relevance, we implicitly acknowledge that by utilizing more processing effort in interpreting a text which initially seems to have had only one interpretation, we are rewarded when we arrive at a second, more relevant interpretation. This interpretation is the result of inputs provided by the poet which interact with our assumptions. By incrementally interacting with our own assumptions we realise that each word is worth processing.

Before we consider an analysis of the literary text, we need to frame the manner in which we deal with Relevance Theory. We will explore its historical development, revisit its basic principles and processes and contextualise it relative to the recovery of metaphorical interpretations. If there are any shortcomings in the manner in which Relevance Theory deals with the recovery of metaphor, it will be highlighted. Thereafter a cognitive link needs to be made between Relevance Theory and The Contemporary

Theory of Metaphor. Let us now turn to the historical development of Relevance Theory.

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CHAPTER TWO

RELEVANCE THEORY AND METAPHOR

2. THE THEORY OF RELEVANCE

2.1 Historical development – Paul Grice

Relevance Theory is a pragmatic theory which was developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson. The theory is based on central claims made by Paul Grice. The first Gricean claim which gives impetus to their theory is that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions (Sperber and Wilson 2004:607). Grice's account is manifest through his inferential model of communication in which the communicator grants verification of his/ her intention to express a particular meaning. The specific meaning is inferred by the audience and is arrived at as a result of the evidence provided by the communicator.

Grice's inferential model is in contrast to the classical code model, which proposes that communication is achieved by encoding and decoding messages (Sperber & Wilson, 1995:2). An intended message reaches the receiver after a process of encoding on the part of the communicator by which the message is converted into a signal, and a process of decoding on

the part of the receiver whereby the signal is converted into a message by using a blueprint of the original code. Grice's inferential model proposes that communication is achieved by producing and interpreting evidence (Sperber & Wilson, 1995:2).

The two models of communication are not mutually exclusive and can be combined. It can, and has been shown that communication is achieved by both coding and inferential processes.

The second Gricean claim on which relevance theory rests is that utterances automatically create expectations which guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning (Sperber and Wilson 2004:607). In his *William James Lectures*, a series of lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1967 which addressed ideas proposed in Grice 1957 and 1961, he claims that during communication the expectations which guide the hearer to the communicators meaning are subject to a Co-operative principle and maxims of Quality (truthfulness), Quantity (informativeness), Relation (relevance) and Manner (clarity).

2.1.1 Grice's co-operative principle

Of the Co-operative principle governing verbal communication Grice (1975:45) claims:

Our talk exchanges...are characteristically, to some degree at least, co-operative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction...at each stage, some possible conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable. We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected to observe, namely: make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

The maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner, which characterizes the co-operative principle, are formulated as follows:

2.1.2 Maxims of Quantity

1. Make your contribution as informative as required.
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

2.1.3 Maxims of Quality

Supermaxim: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

2.1.4 Maxim of Relation

1. Be relevant.

2.1.5 Maxims of Manner

Supermaxim: Be perspicuous.

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief.
4. Be orderly.

In practice, according to Grice, the interpretation a hearer arrives at is one that best satisfies his maxims of communication. Sperber and Wilson (1986)

agree with Grice on the aspect that utterances raise expectations of relevance, but are not entirely convinced that there is a need for a cooperative principle and accompanying maxims. Sperber and Wilson (2004:608) purport that the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough and predictable enough to guide a hearer towards the speaker's meaning.

The essence of what exactly constitutes the notion of relevance is detailed in their publication *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Sperber and Wilson 1986). For the purposes of this dissertation we will not duplicate the foundational studies done by Sperber and Wilson, but we will systematically introduce their central claims, highlight visible shortcomings and propose amendments.

2.2 RELEVANCE THEORY – AN OVERVIEW OF BASIC PROCESSES

Since the inception of Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory, the theory of communication it proposes has had varying responses. These responses ranged from acceptance, to widespread criticism and in some cases to misinterpretation. The vast magnitude of scholarly attention it has attracted since it was first introduced bears testimony to its importance with regards to its description and explanation of verbal communication. Similar to previous academic papers on the topic of relevance, this dissertation too responds to some of the claims proposed by Relevance Theory. We are

particularly interested in the relevance-theoretic account of the recovery of metaphorical interpretations. Evidence from research done by proponents of contemporary metaphor theory, namely, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) and Lakoff and Turner (1989) which we will later explore, leads one to believe that the relevance-theoretic treatment of metaphor is in violation of one its fundamental claims about cognition. Sperber and Wilson's (1995:260) claim is that human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance. The ensuing chapters will illustrate the extent to which their account of the recovery of metaphor is in violation of this cognitive claim of relevance. We will propose a unified account of metaphor, which is plausible within the domains of both Relevance Theory and the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor. As a point of departure it is essential to give an exposition of Relevance Theory with an initial emphasis on the analysis of utterance interpretation.

2.2.1 UTTERANCE INTERPRETATION

In their guide to relevance theory, Sinclair and Winkler (1991:9) give an outline of utterance interpretation. This complex process involves a variety of tasks. The first major subtask is the recovery of the semantic representations of the sentence uttered. The second major subtask is to recover the explicit content conveyed by means of the utterance. It involves three sub-subtasks: (i) disambiguating the utterance, (ii) assigning

referents to the referring expressions that occur in the utterance, and (iii) enriching vague terms that occur in the utterance. The third major subtask is the recovery of implicit content conveyed by means of the utterance, which in turn involves a number of sub-subtasks. They are: (i) the recovery of implicatures in the case of an ordinary assertion, (ii) recovery of possible stylistic effects, including poetic effects, (iii) recovering of a possible metaphorical interpretation, (iv) recovering a possible ironical interpretation, and (v) recovering the illocutionary force of the utterance.

2.2.2 THE RECOVERY OF SEMANTIC REPRESENTATIONS

A thought as conceived by a speaker has a propositional form. In order to make this thought manifest to the hearer it becomes embodied by means of an utterance. The utterance too possesses a propositional form. It is apparent that the utterance is a representation of the speaker's thought in that it shares logical properties, specifically logical and contextual implications (Sperber and Wilson 1986:228). Suppose a speaker has a thought of a certain individual Jack, who is in the process of performing the action of climbing a beanstalk. The speaker's thought may be represented by the following utterance:

- (1) Jack is climbing the beanstalk.

The speaker's ability to verbalise (1) is enabled by the grammar of the language of the utterance, which yields a range of suitable semantic representations (Sinclair and Winkler, 1991). Utterance (1) therefore represents the thought of the speaker and is composed of a series of semantic units that contain and expresses information about that thought. The successful interpretation of (1) by the hearer, involves the sub-task of recovering the semantic representation(s) of the utterance. The hearer's command of the grammar of the language in question ensures the effortless recovery of the semantic representation(s).

Recovering just the semantic representation(s) of an utterance is inadequate. Suppose John asks Mary:

(2) Do you know the poetry of Pablo Neruda?

And she quotes:

(3) And it was at that age...poetry arrived in search of me. I don't know, I don't know where it came from, from winter or a river.

Assuming John is an avid reader of Neruda poetry, he will recognise that Mary is quoting the poem *Poetry*. If John's interpretation of (3) were guided solely by the recovery of the semantic representation of the sentence uttered, he would not arrive at the interpretation intended by Mary, namely, that she indeed knows the poetry of Pablo Neruda. If Mary were to utter (4)

instead of (3), which is a quote from Neruda's *Love Sonnet XI*, she would still convey the same thought even though her utterance has been represented by a different semantic representation.

(4) I crave your mouth your voice your hair. Silent and starving, I
prowl through the streets.

In spite of being unable to guide the hearer to the intended interpretation of an utterance all of the time, as highlighted in (3) and (4), the recovery of its semantic representation nevertheless serves as a crucial starting point in the process of utterance interpretation.

2.2.3 THE RECOVERY OF EXPLICIT CONTENT

When an utterance is produced, the hearer is faced with the task of recovering the utterance's unique propositional form. Once the utterance's semantic representation has been recovered, it may be discovered that the utterance contains semantic units, which are vague, ambiguous or referentially indeterminate. The hearer therefore has to recover the utterance's explicit content. In order to arrive at the interpretation intended by the speaker, the hearer has to select a specific interpretation from a

range of possibilities, which has been supplied by the utterance's semantic representation.

2.2.3.1 DISAMBIGUATION

Suppose the following is uttered:

(5) John's program is too short.

Sentence (5) is ambiguous in the sense that the noun *program* could refer to:

- a) A listing of the order of events and other pertinent information for a public presentation.
- b) A set of coded instructions that enables a machine, especially a computer, to perform a desired sequence of operations.
- c) A scheduled radio or television show.
- d) A system of services, opportunities or projects, usually designed to meet a social need.
- e) A course of academic study.
- f) An instruction sequence in programmed instruction.
- g) An ordered list of events to take place, or procedures to be followed.

During the decoding process seven semantic representations are produced, one for each meaning of the noun *program* listed above. For the hearer, the

task of disambiguation involves the selection of one of the possible seven semantic representations available. Selecting the correct semantic representation brings the hearer one step closer to arriving at the interpretation intended by the speaker. However, in order to fully recover the utterance's explicit content, the hearer has to complete the tasks of reference assignment and enrichment of vague terms.

2.2.3.2 REFERENCE ASSIGNMENT

(6) They told Peter that his program was too short.

After the disambiguation of utterance (6), it is evident that there are semantic units, which are referentially indeterminate. The grammar of the language in which the utterance is produced does not clarify the referents, which are being referred to. In order to derive at the interpretation intended by the speaker of (6), the hearer therefore has to determine whom the proper noun *Peter* and the pronoun *they* refers to. As far as the pronoun *they* is concerned, the hearer may assume that it refers to more than one individual which is neither him/herself nor the speaker. The hearer's choice of referent will thus be determined by information other than grammatical.

2.2.3.3 ENRICHMENT OF VAGUE TERMS

Referring again to utterance (6), there are vague units that have to be enriched in order for the utterance to be correctly interpreted. Unless the hearer knows what is meant by *too short* the intended interpretation will not be arrived at. Once it has been established what the program is too short for, the hearer is well on his/her way in arriving at the intended interpretation.

2.2.4 THE RECOVERY OF IMPLICIT CONTENT

Recovering semantic and explicit content still leaves unrecovered possible implicit information, which may be communicated by means of the utterance. During the process of the recovery of an utterance's implicit content, the hearer has to firstly realise that the information, which is being communicated conveys implicit content and secondly he/she needs to establish exactly what the implicitly communicated information is. This implicit content can be communicated through ordinary assertions, stylistic effects, ironical utterances, utterances communicating an illocutionary force and lastly, through metaphorical utterances.

2.2.4.1 THE RECOVERY OF IMPLICATURES OF ORDINARY ASSUMPTIONS

Our first example of information, which is conveyed implicitly, is found in the ordinary assertion (7b) that is uttered in response to proposition (7a).

- (7) (a) Jill: Would you like to go with me to the movies?
(b) Jack: Any hot-blooded male would jump at the opportunity to go to the movies with the most popular girl on campus.

In (7a) Jill extends an invitation to Jack in which she requests that he accompany her to the movies. Entrenched in her request is the implicature that she will pay for the movie ticket. This information is not stated explicitly and will therefore have to be inferred by Jack.

One would expect Jack's response to be a yes or no answer. Instead (7b) is uttered. His utterance expresses the opinion that a certain type of male would gladly accompany Jill to the movies. There is no explicit evidence in the utterance to indicate that Jack is willing or reluctant to take her up on her offer. Contextual factors will direct Jill to the answer implied by Jack. Essential to the recovery of the implicit message in (7b) is Jill's knowledge of the type of male that Jack is.

2.2.4.2 THE RECOVERY OF THE ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE

The second case of an utterance, which contains implicitly conveyed information are those utterances, which are expressed with an illocutionary force. In (8) the hearer is faced with the task of deciding exactly which illocutionary force is intended by the utterance.

(8) I will see to it that you get what you deserve.

Two possibilities that are available to the hearer, is that the utterance is intended to be interpreted as either a promise or a threat. The utterance itself does not explicitly convey the nature of the illocutionary force and therefore has to be implicitly recovered by the hearer. The hearer's task is thus two-fold: (1) to realise that the information, which is conveyed, carries an illocutionary force and (2) to recover the precise nature of the illocutionary force.

2.2.4.3 THE RECOVERY OF STYLISTIC EFFECTS

In producing utterances, such as (9b) which exhibits a stylistic effect, such stylistic effects signal to the hearer that the utterance contains implicitly

communicated information and that the nature of such information is entrenched in the stylistic effect.

(9) (a) I saw a burglar in the room.

(b) I saw a burglar, a burglar in the room.

The proposition that a burglar is present in the room is expressed by both utterances (9a) and (9b), yet the repetition of the noun *burglar* has the additional function of implicitly communicating, among other things, that the speaker is unsettled by the presence of the burglar, that material possessions in the home are at risk of being stolen and that the speaker fears that his/her life (and possibly the lives of others present in the home) is in danger. The stylistic effect therefore has the purpose of encouraging the hearer to access his/her encyclopaedic knowledge of the entity *burglar*, which aids the recovery of the implicitly communicated message.

2.2.4.4 THE RECOVERY OF IRONICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Consider a situation in which Mary intends to play matchmaker. She convinces John to go on a blind date with her close friend Cindy by uttering the following:

(10) Cindy is a bombshell.

Mary deceives John in making him believe that (10) holds true and withholds a vital piece of information, namely, that Cindy has had difficulty in drawing the attention of the opposite sex, because they found her unattractive.

After the date, fuming with anger, John approaches Mary and utters (11).

(11) Cindy is indeed a bombshell. The men couldn't keep their eyes off her.

Instead of conveying the literal meaning of (11), John wishes to convey his feelings of anger and resentment towards Mary. Within the given context, in order to recover the intended content, Mary has to first realise that the utterance is an ironical one and secondly recover such ironical content.

2.2.4.5 THE RECOVERY OF METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

The final case of an utterance which exhibits implicitly communicated information, are those utterances which have metaphorical content. Suppose a speaker utters (12).

(12) Professor Smith is a walking encyclopaedia.

The hearer who is expected to recover the proposition in (12) will reject its literal translation due to contextual factors, such as knowledge of whom the referent *Professor Smith* refers to and the fact that Professor Smith's physical form contradicts the material form of the entity *encyclopaedia*. Instead the utterance expresses the proposition that the entity Professor Smith exhibits qualities that are shared by encyclopaedias, namely, that he is a comprehensive summary of knowledge and that he has the ability to act as a source of reference, shedding light on a vast range of articles and topics pertaining to human knowledge.

The interpretation of (12), which is hinted at, is not expressed explicitly but has to be recovered implicitly. The task facing the hearer is once again two-fold: It has to be realised that the information that is being conveyed is metaphorical and the exact nature of such metaphorical content has to be recovered.

Utterance (12) is an example of a metaphorical utterance that makes a strong implicature available, but there are examples where the implicatures are weakly presented. Consider the following utterance:

(13) You are wasting my time.

Unlike (12) where the hearer almost immediately realises that utterance is not to be interpreted literally, (13) proposes that time is an entity which is capable of being wasted. Time, which is an abstract concept, is presented as though it were a tangible object. This is achieved through our metaphorical understanding of time as a resource. In terms of this metaphor we are able to express (14) – (16), a range of related utterances.

(14) We cherished the time we spent together.

(15) You should manage your time correctly.

(16) Will you spare me a couple of minutes?

Utterances (14) to (16) are related in that time, which is a resource is something that can *cherished, managed and spared*. The interesting thing about the utterances above is that their propositions are often interpreted literally, but the concepts within the proposition exhibit metaphorical

content. How exactly is this content arrived at? In an attempt to answer this question we will turn to the views of Relevance Theory and see if it provides a suitable answer.

One of the major claims of Relevance Theory is that it is the goal of human cognition to maximize relevance. From this it follows that humans, in search of optimal relevance will pay attention to relevant information only. The subtask of recovering any metaphorical interpretation, Sperber and Wilson (1986) argue, requires no special interpretive abilities or procedures on the part of the hearer. The intended metaphorical interpretation is recovered as a result of the hearer's search for optimal relevance.

Fundamental to their relevance-theoretic exposition of metaphor is the relationship between the propositional form of an utterance and the thought, which that utterance represents. For Sperber and Wilson (1986), a thought is an exemplification of a representation, which has a propositional form. Every utterance, which represents a thought of a speaker, becomes a public interpretation of that thought. The relationship between the propositional form of an utterance and the propositional form of a thought therefore, is that every utterance is an interpretive expression of a thought of the speaker's.

During verbal communication it is possible for an utterance's propositional form to vaguely resemble the propositional form of the thought it represents. This does however not imply that it will give rise to failed communication. Sperber and Wilson (1986:158) deny that identity between the two propositional forms is necessary, but maintain that the degree of resemblance is always determined by the principle of relevance, as formulated below:

(14) Principle of relevance

"Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of optimal relevance."

(15) Presumption of optimal relevance

"(a) The set of assumptions $\{I\}$ which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus.

(b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one the communicator could have used to communicate $\{I\}$."

The nature of resemblance between the two propositional forms plays a role in determining the degree of literality of an utterance. An utterance is said to be strictly literal if it has the same propositional form as that of the thought it is an interpretation of. Similarly, an utterance is considered less than strictly literal when its propositional form shares some, but not all of the properties of thought it represents.

If an utterance is strictly literal it does not presuppose that it is the most relevant one. Consider the following example:

- (16) (a) Jack: How long will you be studying at university?
- (b) Jill: Two years, 8 months and six days.
- (c) Jill: Three years.

In response to the question of how long she'll be studying at university, Jill has the option of stating either the strictly literal answer (16b) or the less than literal answer (16c). Assuming that Jill knows that Jack wants to calculate the total cost of her studies, by answering (16c) she has made the most relevant choice in spite of it being less than strictly literal and less

truthful than answer (16b). Given the knowledge that one academic year is not as long as an actual year, yet still considered a year in the context of academic studies, answer (16c) is more relevant. Both answers yield the same contextual implication, but answer (16c) is more relevant because the hearer requires less mental effort when making his calculations in round figures. Looseness of expression as seen above is prevalent in communication and is often accepted as being most relevant in a given situation. Sperber and Wilson's (1986:233) view on strict literality is that a hearer should take an utterance as strictly literal only if nothing less confirms the presumption of optimal relevance (15).

This leads us to their treatment of metaphor. For Sperber and Wilson (1986:233) the recovery of metaphorical interpretations is categorized with the loose use of language. This implies that the propositional form of the utterance differs to a greater or lesser degree from the thought of which it is an interpretation. During the recovery of metaphorical interpretations the hearer proceeds on the assumption that the two propositional forms have some identifiable logical and contextual implications in common.

The relevance-theoretic treatment of the utterance,

(17) This place is hell

suggests that the utterance evokes an encyclopaedic schema generating a range of assumptions. Of these assumptions one or two will be dominant and most highly accessible. In (17) the dominant assumptions for the concept "hell" is that it is a place of torment, which is unbearable and unpleasant. During the recovery of the metaphorical interpretation, it yields the implication that the place concerned is a place of torment, which is both unbearable and unpleasant. The processes which led us to this conclusion are a combination of the consistency criterion and the task specific criterion, Sperber and Wilson (1986:177).

(18) *Consistency criterion*

The correct interpretation of a linguistic utterance is the first accessible interpretation of it, which on being appropriately tested, is found to be consistent with the principle of relevance.

(19) *Task specific criterion*

The correct task-specific interpretation is the first task-specific interpretation, which leads to an overall interpretation, which meets the consistency criterion.

The interpretation of (17), which has been the correct task specific interpretation, is the first accessible interpretation, which led to an overall interpretation, which met the consistency criterion. For the hearer to have recovered this interpretation, the hearer had to first select the most accessible assumption and thereafter test whether it was in fact the intended interpretation. If this first accessible interpretation had failed to satisfy the consistency criterion, the hearer would have been expected to select the next most accessible assumption. This process would be iterated until the hearer finally reached an interpretation that satisfies the consistency criterion.

If in fact our goal during communication is to maximize relevance, would it not be more cost effective to have uttered:

(20) It is extremely unbearable and unpleasant in this place.

Processing (17) requires more effort than (20), but assuming that (17) was communicated in good faith, the speaker guarantees that it will be worth the hearer's while to process (17). The extra processing effort is justified since the hearer obtains additional contextual effects. The metaphorical

interpretation conveys the idea that the place in question is unbearable - beyond that of acceptable norms.

Consider the Metaphor:

(21) D.J. Opperman is Marco Polo.

Unlike (17), (21) does not generate a list of assumptions of which one or two is most highly accessible. In some respects, the two encyclopedic entries are contradictory, for example, D.J. Opperman is an Afrikaans poet and Marco Polo a Venetian traveler and author. This contradiction prompts the hearer to discard the irrelevant contextual implications, one of which being that D.J. Opperman and Marco Polo are not the same person. This leaves the hearer with a range of weaker implicatures, for example, that D.J. Opperman also embarked on a "journey" of discovery, that he documented his experiences in the "foreign" land and that he returned with numerous "treasures." In contrast to the recovery of (17), the hearer has a greater responsibility in the interpretation of (21). During the process of recovering the metaphorical interpretation of the creative metaphors such as (21), the hearer is yet again guided by the consistency criterion (18).

On the nature of creative metaphors, Sperber and Wilson (1986:236) argue that, "A good creative metaphor is precisely one in which a variety of contextual effects can be retained and understood as weakly implicated by the speaker. In the richest and most successful cases, the hearer or reader can go beyond just exploring the immediate context and the entries for concepts involved in it, accessing a wide area of knowledge, adding metaphors of his own as interpretations of possible developments he is not ready to go into, and getting more and more very weak implicatures, with suggestions for still further processing. The result is a quite complex picture, for which the hearer has to take a large part of the responsibility, but the discovery of which has been triggered by the writer. The surprise or beauty of a successful creative metaphor lies in this condensation, in the fact that a single expression which has itself been loosely used will determine a very wide range of acceptable weak implicatures."

One of the claims about metaphor mentioned above is that it is a case of the loose use of language. It is thought not to be strictly literal, in other words, the utterance does not have the same propositional form as the thought it represents. How would one explain examples, which defy this claim as in (22)?

(22) You are *wasting* my time.

Let us now turn to the proposals of the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor which will shed light on cases like (22).

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CHAPTER THREE

THE CONTEMPORARY THEORY OF METAPHOR

3.1 THE RECOVERY OF METAPHOR IN TERMS OF RELEVANCE THEORY AND THE CONTEMPORARY THEORY OF METAPHOR

Is it adequate to categorize metaphor as a case of the loose use of language, where an utterance does not have the same propositional form as the thought that it represents? In order to sufficiently address this issue, the views of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the proponents of the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor, must be explored. For the sake of continuity and ease of reference (22) is recalled.

(22) You are *wasting* my time.

In Western culture, time is conceptualized as a resource. Time in itself is not a money-like resource, but it becomes conceptualized as a resource when we think of it metaphorically. When the resource schema, which is the source domain, is evoked, characteristics from this schema are mapped onto elements in the target domain. Through this mapping time is conceptualized as a resource. It thus becomes meaningful to use words like *waste*, *save*, *spare*, *need*, *cherish*, *use*, etc. in the target domain as it is defined relative to elements in the resource schema. The result is that both individual

experiences and a large part of society become structured relative to the metaphor TIME IS A RESOURCE. Within this context it should be evident that (22) could be considered strictly literal.

It may be argued that when utterances like (22) become conventionalized, it is "dead" - they lose their metaphorical meaning and they no longer are metaphors though they once might have been. It could furthermore be argued that the words *waste, save and spare* in the time domain are polysemous.

Lakoff and Turner (1989:127) claim that a common oversight on the part of the Literal Meaning Theory is that it fails to acknowledge the automatic and unconscious character of conventional thought and language. On the contrary they argue that the conventional aspects of language are the ones that are most alive since they are embodied in our minds, that they are constantly used and that they affect the way we think and talk every day. Lakoff and Turner (1989:127) furthermore argue that when linguistic mechanisms are conventional, it means they are fixed and that they are not made up anew each time we use them. The reason why conventional metaphorical expressions are sometimes considered dead is because it is part of a live system that is also fixed.

Another weakness in the Relevance Theory approach to metaphor is that it treats each metaphorical expression as unique. The result is that more processing effort is required in interpreting a range of related metaphors and that it is unable to make predictions as to precisely which interpretations will be recovered during the recovery of say, creative metaphors.

The failure to seek general principles in recovering metaphor denies a fundamental aspect of the nature of metaphors – that they are conceptual in nature, that they are effortless and that they are mappings from aspects of a source domain to aspects of a target domain. Returning to our shared metaphorical conception TIME IS A RESOURCE we are able to make different utterances like “he wasted his time”, “I need more time to do my work” and “will you spare me some time” and understand them all to be expressions of the single metaphor TIME IS A RESOURCE. The fact that we are able to see them as single expressions of the same metaphor shows us that metaphors are more than linguistic expressions and that their conceptual structure enables us to recover the metaphorical interpretation with relative ease. Because speakers share conceptual mappings from source to target domains hearers are guided to the appropriate metaphorical interpretation by the entailments of the conceptual metaphor.

This view is hinted at, although not explicitly stated in the relevance-theoretic account. For Sperber and Wilson (1986:237), the discovery of metaphor is triggered by the speaker who leaves a large part of the discovery of the metaphorical interpretation to the hearer. Their theory does not account for the existence of conceptual mappings which are responsible for the richness of the metaphorical interpretation and serves as a guide by which the hearer makes predictions about which metaphorical interpretations are accessible and which are not.

If Relevance Theory were to make provision for the conceptual nature of metaphor, then only will metaphor truly be recovered as a result of the hearer's search for optimal relevance. If optimal relevance is determined by the recovery of maximal contextual effects in return for the least amount of processing effort, then the recovery of metaphor within the framework of relevance theory is by no means optimal when compared to the proposals of The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor. By acknowledging the existence of conceptual mappings from source domain to target domain, recovered metaphorical interpretations will be the first accessible interpretations, which are consistent with the principle of relevance because they will be guided by these conceptual mappings. Because these conceptual mappings are structured the hearer then has as greater ability to determine the range of metaphorical interpretations, which has been triggered by the speaker.

If Relevance Theory were to incorporate the conceptual nature of metaphor, would it be possible to give an account of metaphorical interpretations, yet still maintaining the basic mechanisms of the theory? How would the consistency criterion (18), for example be affected?

(18) *Consistency criterion*

The correct interpretation of a linguistic utterance is the first accessible interpretation of it, which on being appropriately tested, is found to be consistent with the principle of relevance.

The recovery of conventional metaphors, which are automatic, effortless and generally established as a mode of thought among members of the linguistic community, would not be problematic. Consider again the TIME IS A RESOURCE metaphor. Because most of us probably have it conventionalized on the conceptual level, when the metaphor is activated the conceptual mapping from source domain to target domain effortlessly occurs. From this point onward the consistency criterion comes into effect. Since there are already structured mappings from source to target domain, it guides the hearer to select the correct interpretation. The correct interpretation is a consequence of the mappings from source to target domain. Due to the structured nature of these mappings, the interpretation is consistent with the principle of relevance (14).

(14) Principle of relevance

"Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of optimal relevance."

In the case of poetic metaphor, its recovery is not as effortless as that of conventional metaphor because they are conscious and draw upon different cognitive resources. But in using poetic metaphor, authors may call upon our knowledge of basic conceptual metaphors in order to manipulate them in unusual ways (Lakoff and Johnson 1989:72). We therefore still have basic metaphorical mappings contributing to the recovery of the more conscious poetic metaphor. The recovery of poetic metaphors therefore requires a greater amount of processing effort, but still proves to be consistent with the principle of relevance in that the set of assumptions which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus.

The above argument presupposes that the reader is familiar with and understands the mechanisms of The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor. It is however necessary to further expound on the concepts: conceptual metaphor, conceptual domains, schemas and conceptual mappings. A thorough knowledge of these concepts is essential as it will be regularly

referred to in the next chapter when a metaphorical analysis and characterization of D J Opperman's (1979) *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok* is made.

3.2 THE CONTEMPORARY THEORY OF METAPHOR – A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC VIEW OF METAPHOR

By referring to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's account of metaphor as a contemporary theory of metaphor, we are presupposing the existence of a traditional theory or views on the topic. Their influential publication *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) set out to challenge the essential aspects of the traditional theory, which can be traced back to Aristotle, and proposes a new way of viewing metaphor. This new way of theorising metaphor has become known as the cognitive linguistic view of metaphor. The magnitude of Lakoff and Johnson's foundational study is vast and cannot be repeated here due to the scope of this study, however the fact that their theory has been empirically tested attests to its validity. The focus of this study relates specifically to the application of contemporary metaphor theory to literature, yet it should be realized that in its entirety the theory addresses a variety of topics relating to the nature and function of metaphor, for example metaphor and cultural coherence, the systematicity of metaphorical concepts, the grounding of our conceptual systems, causation, personification, metonymy etc., all by means of the same theory.

What then is the nature of the traditional theory which is being referred to and which aspects are challenged? In their publication, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson (1999:119) systematically explores and explicitly proves why the traditional theory is false. The five specific tenets of the traditional theory which are challenged are:

- (i) *Metaphor is a matter of words, not thought. Metaphor occurs when a word is applied not to what it normally designates, but to something else.*
- (ii) *Metaphorical language is not part of ordinary conventional language. Instead it is novel and typically arises in poetry, rhetorical attempts at persuasion and scientific discovery.*
- (iii) *Metaphorical language is deviant. In metaphor, words are not used in their proper senses.*
- (iv) *Conventional metaphorical expressions in ordinary everyday language are "dead metaphors," that is, expressions that once were metaphorical, but have become frozen into literal expressions.*
- (v) *Metaphors express similarities. That is, there are preexisting similarities between what words normally designate and what they designate when they are used metaphorically.*

Many people are still largely influenced by the traditional theory. Consider for example the manner in which *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines metaphor: “application or name or descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable.” The definition clearly reflects tenet (i) where a huge emphasis is placed on the linguistic property of metaphors, in other words, that it is a matter of a word or a phrase applied to an object or action. No reference is made to its conceptual nature, which is a prominent aspect of the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor.

Kövecses (2002:viii) succinctly captures the essence of Lakoff and Johnson’s theory in terms of how it relates to the proposals of the traditional theory¹. Firstly, metaphor is proposed to be a property of concepts, and not of words. Secondly, metaphor functions to facilitate our understanding of certain concepts, which goes beyond the notion of it being used artistically. Thirdly, metaphor is produced effortlessly in daily human interaction by ordinary human beings and is not reserved for people who have a way with words. Fourthly, metaphor is often not based on similarity. Fifthly, the production and use of metaphor is an unavoidable process of human thought and reasoning.

¹ Only the essence Lakoff and Johnson’s assertions and how it relates to the traditional theory of metaphor is mentioned here. The detailed argument is presented in Lakoff and Johnson (1999:120-129). The entailments and application of their view on metaphor is dealt with in the fourth chapter.

Consider the following paragraph as an example of how we refer to the concept of love in ordinary daily conversation:

*These days people seem to approach love and relationships with far greater caution than preceding generations. The choice of a suitable life partner is largely determined by possessed attributes that will enable the lovers to deal with all the **obstacles** on **life's path**. No one wants someone who heads in a **different direction** when the relationship struggles to stay **afloat** or who **bails out** when things get tough. Instead there is a persistent quest to find that one person who treats life's **twists and turns** as an adventure rather than a **path** that leads to **nowhere**.*

The concept of love as reflected in the paragraph above is presented in a manner commonly found in daily discourse. It is not elaborate or deviant, nor is it intended to be poetic. It is an ordinary way to speak about love, yet it is metaphorical. Even though words are used to refer to love, it entails more than the just the recovery of the semantic value of those words. It largely involves thought and reasoning. What precisely is a metaphor then?

According to the cognitive linguistic view, a conceptual metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another. In order to

express or understand metaphor, two conceptual domains are involved. One of these conceptual domains are accessed and used to better understand the other. Kövecses (2002:4) defines a conceptual domain as a coherent organization of experience. In our example, the conceptual domain of love is understood in terms of journeys. What does a coherent organization of experience relating to journeys entail?

Journeys involve movement by a traveler from a point of departure in a specific direction to destination (if specified). Ground is covered over a period of time and usually requires stopping at a number of landmarks along the way before the final destination (if there is one) is reached. The quickest way of reaching the destination is by travelling along a straight line between the point of departure and the destination. Most journeys however do not allow for this as there are obstacles on the path which impede forward motion. Many variables may come into play once the journey has started, for example, crossroads, forks and unnamed streets, which affect motion in the direction of the ultimate destination. Lakoff and Johnson (1999:193) claim that the conceptual domain of journeys may be used to understand a range of different conceptual domains and that these domains are usually long-term activities, which frequently have a number of intermediate purposes. In the example above, journeys are used to better understand love. In chapter

four we will extensively see how journeys enrich our understanding of the concepts of life and illness.

Literature on the cognitive linguistic view of metaphor frequently uses the shorthand **CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (A) IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (B)** when identifying a particular conceptual metaphor. It should be noted that the terms *conceptual metaphor* and *metaphorical linguistic expressions*, are not synonymous. The former represents the named conceptual domain which facilitates the understanding of the other. LOVE IS A JOURNEY for example, is the name of the conceptual metaphor in which the conceptual domain of love is understood in terms of the conceptual domain of journeys. On the other hand, *with all the obstacles on life's path, head in a different direction, struggles to stay afloat, life's twists and turns* and *a path that leads to nowhere* are examples of metaphorical linguistic expressions which are words or expressions that stem from the language used to encapsulate conceptual domain B. The metaphoric linguistic expressions are therefore not the metaphor itself, but collectively manifest the conceptual metaphor. If we were to consider the expression *head in a different direction* in isolation, one would be aware that the expression is metaphorical, but identifying the underlying conceptual metaphor is more difficult than if it were considered in the presence of related metaphorical expressions *with all the obstacles on life's path, struggles to stay afloat and life's twists and turns*.

As a further illustration, we know that the expression he *knocked her off her feet* is metaphorical. Naming the conceptual metaphor becomes difficult especially if you are unaware of related metaphorical linguistic expressions such as *they were attracted to each other* and *the magnetism between them was overwhelming*, which are expressions from the LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE metaphor. Difficulty in naming the conceptual metaphors however does not deny the existence of conceptual metaphors. The fact that we are able to unconsciously produce metaphorical expressions, which on occasion are novel, proves that conceptual metaphors are alive in our conceptual systems.

Specific names are given to domains A and B. Domain B, the conceptual domain from which words and expressions are drawn to better understand the other domain is termed the source domain. The usually more abstract domain, which is understood in terms of the more concrete source domain, is called the target domain. In the conceptual metaphors LOVE IS A JOURNEY, LIFE IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY, the concept journey serves as a common source domain to better understand the target domains of love, life and illness. By the same token a common source domain can be understood in terms a variety of target domains, as can be seen in LIFE IS A GAMBLING GAME, LIFE IS A JOURNEY and LIFE IS A CONTAINER. In metaphor, the direction in

which one concept is understood in terms of the other is fixed. It is always the target domain which is understood in terms of the source domain and never the other way around. We understand love in terms of the language of journeys; however we do not understand journeys in terms of the journeys of love. An *obstacle* in a love relationship could refer specifically to financial hardships, however when we talk about journeys, and we come across an obstacle along the path, we do not call it a financial hardship.

Lakoff and Johnson's (1999:123) claim that metaphor is not a matter of words, but thought can be argued by looking at the specific relationship between the source and target domains. In the LIFE IS A GAMBLING GAME example, we see that there are specific correspondences or metaphorical mappings between items in the target domain to items in the source domain.

The coherent organization of experience that we have of gambling games is that it involves a gambler who wagers money or items of personal value on an event which has an uncertain outcome. The consequences of this action are that the wagered money is either entirely lost or that additional money or goods are gained. The gambler's intent however is that the wagered money or goods multiply in value. Types of gambling include casino games, gaming machines, lotteries, pools and event betting.

Typical metaphorical linguistic expressions which draws from the source domain of gambling include: *I'll **take my chances** on that decision. I could tell **he was bluffing**. I have an **ace up my sleeve**. I **drew a joker** when I employed that guy. He will get far if he plays **his cards right**. He turned out to be a success even though **the odds were against him**.*

We are able to understand the meanings of the expressions above due to our understanding of the correspondences between the target and source domains. The produced metaphorical linguistic expressions relate to both the activity of gambling in general as well as to specific types of gambling, for example, card games. The correspondences between the source and target domains which are known as metaphorical mappings are as follows:

Source domain	⇒	Target domain
The gambler	⇒	The person leading the life
The odds	⇒	The probability of a life-decision succeeding/failing
Taking a chance	⇒	Making a life-decision against the probability of it succeeding/failing

Aces	⇒	An attribute or life-action which may lead to success
Cards	⇒	Life-circumstances
Playing the game	⇒	Living the life
Bluffing	⇒	Deception which causes people to believe that things are going better than they actually are
The dealer	⇒	God / Life
Jokers	⇒	People, events or commodities which have no effect on the person living the life's hope for success

The mappings from the source domain to the target domain result in the structuring of the target domain and contribute to the manner in which the target domain is conceptualized and experienced. Cultures in which gambling does not exist will therefore have different ways of structuring and experiencing the abstract concept of life, which may be culture specific and hence different to the western view thereof. It should also be noted that even though there is a systematic correspondence between target and source domains, not every aspect of the source domain will map onto an aspect in the target domain. The lever of a slot machine (*source domain*) for

example does not map onto a corresponding item in the target domain, while the term *jackpot* does. From the argument above it can be seen that our ability to understand metaphor is intrinsically linked to our ability to understand which items in the source domain map onto corresponding items in the target domain. The moment we understand the metaphorical mappings, we will immediately understand the underlying metaphor.

Through our knowledge of metaphorical mappings we are able to reason about the target domain due to the structuring role of the source domain. By considering the expression, *the odds are against him*, we are able to make a range of assumptions about the referent *him*. We are able to deduce that the person being referred to has a slim chance of succeeding, that he stands to lose something and that he is engaging in an event pertaining to life. In this case metaphor is seen to transcend the traditional sense of being but a word which is used to designate something else. Instead, life is experienced as a gambling game. When we succeed in life we respond in a manner we would when we make material gains at a game of chance. Similarly when we fail a particular stage of life, we physically experience feelings of loss.

The basic notion of conceptual metaphor has a variety of incarnations. These various forms will now be explored and illuminated as we systematically analyse D.J. Opperman's *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok*. Through each poem

which is dealt with a unique feature of conceptual metaphor will be discussed. To maintain a focused study only a few prominent metaphors will feature throughout our analysis.

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CHAPTER FOUR

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: A METAPHORICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF *KOMAS UIT 'N BAMBOESSTOK*

4.1 METAPHORICAL CHARACTERIZATION

With a sound knowledge of the mechanisms of the contemporary theory of metaphor we can use our new insights to metaphorically characterize D.J. Opperman's (1979) to *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*.

4.2 METAPHOR IN KOMAS UIT 'N BAMBOESSTOK

4.2.1 *KOMAS UIT 'N BAMBOESSTOK* - AN INTRODUCTION

Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok is an early postmodern text and grew out of D.J. Opperman's desire to write about his illness and miraculous recovery without sounding too sentimental or being self-centered. Several events contributed to the nature and content of the volume of poetry.

Three years before *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* was published, Opperman was hospitalized after being diagnosed with jaundice and a swollen abdomen. The symptoms were a result of long-term alcohol abuse. It was expected he would soon resume his duties at the University of Stellenbosch, but his condition was worse than anticipated. Tests confirmed that he had an acute

case of cirrhosis and first-degree jaundice. He was treated with the drug oxytetracycline, but the drug too had damaging effects on the liver.

Despite a low protein diet and vitamin treatments his condition worsened. He lost control over his bodily functions and fell into a coma. He partially recovered from the coma, but he still was disoriented, had speech difficulties and was not at the desired level of consciousness. The general consensus amongst doctors, colleagues and friends was that he would die. According to Kannemeyer (1986:400) the media was so sure of his impending death that they commenced production on articles and documentaries about him, in preparation for his passing away. While he was still ill the University of Stellenbosch decided to award him a posthumous honorary doctorate. His condition was unpredictable and he had several relapses. Beyond everyone's expectation, he gradually recovered and accepted the posthumous degree himself. His recovery included learning to speak coherently and learning to write. It eventually culminated in the production and publishing of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*.

4.2.2 COVER DESIGN AND BOOK COVER

Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok interestingly has two separate, but thematically interwoven designs on its covers. The first, which immediately catches the eye is the design displayed on the jacket of the book. It is a black and white

photograph of the author, with immense detail of his face emphasizing every crease and fold reminiscent of someone run down by old age (and possibly illness). Kannemeyer (1986:421) suggests that the jacket of the book is the end product of a commission by Opperman that the cover should reflect the various traces / tracks manifested in his volume of poetry. The emphasis of the creases and folds on the poet's face bears physical resemblance to (vehicle) tracks and is symbolic of those tracks left behind by travelers in the volume of poetry. Throughout *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* the journey motif comes to the fore and there are suggestions of tracks left behind by either the traveler or the vehicle, for example, tracks left behind via the Marco Polo intertext, the railway motif in "Touwsrivier" or that of Glaucus in "Glaukus klim uit die water". The face of Opperman as depicted on the cover page of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* is therefore the epitome of the nature of the volume of poetry, since it encapsulates its autobiographical nature as well as the illness and journey motifs.

The second design is found on the book itself. It is concealed and becomes visible only once the jacket cover is removed. The design is a drawing of a fish facing left. It could be argued that the drawing connects with the Glaucus myth in "Glaukus klim uit die water", yet due to the nature of the volume of poetry, the drawing also renders itself to other interpretations. The drawing physically resembles the ichthus sign, a sign used by early persecuted Christians as a password to identify themselves as followers of

Jesus Christ. In contemporary times it has become a Christian symbol indicating rebirth. Considering the drawing of the fish as an ichthus is valid when viewed in conjunction with the Bontekoe quatrain on the title page. Taking the ichthus sign one step further, one could argue that the ichthus resembles alpha (α), the first letter of the Greek alphabet, which is also indicative of the beginning, and within the context of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*, the beginning of the metaphorical journey.

4.2.3 TITLE PAGE

The preceding information sheds light on the title page of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*, which is of metaphorical significance as it contains various elements that guide us to a greater understanding of the volume of poetry as a whole. As a point of departure it would therefore be useful to make an analysis of the title page and thereafter follow the metaphorical leads as it is manifested in the poems that follow.

4.2.3.1 TITLE AND SUB-TITLE

The title, *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* can be interpreted on at least two levels. The first interpretation lends itself to the illness motif and reads, *Comas as a result of / out of a bamboo stick*. Evidence from the poems "My appelliefie van Inchange" and "Gesponste Lei" suggests that the (bamboo)

stick is the symbolic phallus. Given its symbolic value, the malfunctioning phallus is contributory to the ensuing comas. Further evidence from "Vergiftig deur Roxy", which describes the devastating effects of the drug oxytetracycline on the badly damaged liver elaborates on bodily malfunctioning, such as jaundice and the body's inability to rid itself of toxins in spite of profuse urination.

The bamboo stick has an additional symbolic value, namely, being a staff or walking stick. This symbolic value declares the volume of poetry to be a journey of discovery, as the title reads, *Comas from a bamboo staff*. The significance and usefulness of the staff in early land travels is highlighted in "High roads robbery", where bamboo staves are containers in which valuable silkworms and cocoons were smuggled from the east. In the context of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*, the staff is significant in that it accompanies the speaker on his metaphorical journey. As he undergoes different experiences, the various stages of his illness are documented sequentially and concealed in the staff until he has completed his journey. As he ventures into the unknown, his journey becomes a journey of discovery. In spite of being largely unpleasant, the journey turns out to be profitable as he returns with new insights, purged from trying experiences and transformed into a valuable work of poetry.

There is a strong correlation between the sub-title, *'n volksboek*, and the linguistic nature of the poems contained in *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*. Many of the poems are narrative in nature, seem to be more accessible to people having knowledge of Afrikaner cultural background, they make reference to well known names and places and very often words are meant to be understood by their folk meanings. Snyman (1983:141) proposes that the sub-title is meant to function as it would on a French title page by characterizing the exact nature of the volume of poetry. One realizes the validity of Snyman's claim when one scrutinizes the title page. In spite of being absent from the title page, the sub-title clearly is an inventory of the inscription thereon, which in turn is a thematic outline of the volume of poetry.

The connection between illness and journey is explicitly stated on the title page. Line 3, for example, which refers to his miraculous "return" from cirrhosis (as opposed to recovery from cirrhosis), is expressed in the language of travel. The content is presented as "journey descriptions" (L5) and stylistically bears resemblance to journals of early seafarers.

The inseparability of the illness and journey motifs are concretely manifested by the conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY or more specifically, ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY. Since *Komas*

uit 'n bamboesstok places a special emphasis on the illness motif we will expound on the mappings in the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor, the general principles of which will also apply to the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor. To fully comprehend the nature of the mappings from the source to target domain it is essential to have adequate knowledge of the source domain. In order to fully understand the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor, we need to tap into our knowledge of journeys. As a special case we require additional knowledge about journeys of discovery.

At the most basic level, journeys are comprised of travelers, a point of departure, a path, significant points on the path and if the journey is purposeful, a destination. With the journey of discovery, the traveler leaves the starting point, moves along a path, collects artefacts, documents discoveries at significant points on the path and proceeds to the destination. Often, the traveler may encounter difficulties. These difficulties are impediments to motion and prevent the traveler from reaching his goal. Difficulties are overcome, by removing the obstacle from the path, moving through, over or under it, or taking a detour. The journey is successful if the traveler achieves what he has set out to accomplish.

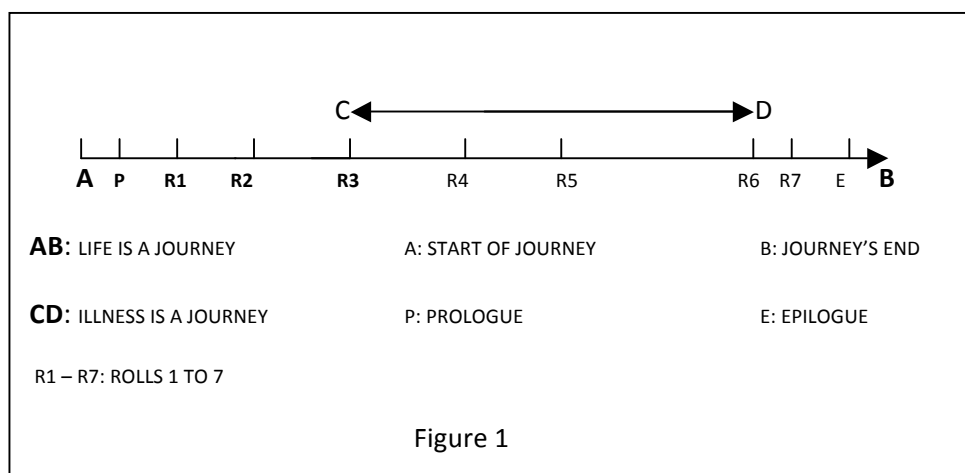
Understanding illness as a journey requires mappings from slots in the journey of discovery schema to corresponding slots in the illness schema.

We therefore need to know the correspondence between the traveler and the ill person, the point of departure and the circumstances contributing to the illness, the nature of the journey and the nature of the illness, impediments to motion and factors causing deterioration in health, artefacts and valuable insights gained during the time of illness, a successful journey and recovery from illness, and an unsuccessful journey and death.

The title page of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* presents Opperman as the metaphorical Marco Polo. With the Marco Polo schema evoked, slots from its schema are mapped onto the Opperman schema, enabling us to see the correspondence between Marco Polo and Opperman. Opperman is thus a traveler. His illness is a journey of discovery. His new insights, which are embodied in his poetry are artefacts taken from a foreign land. The various stages of illness are points on the path of the journey. His miraculous recovery is reaching the destination, which is the return to the point of departure. On reaching the point of departure the traveler has been changed by his experiences, especially the trying experiences encountered during the voyage. The metaphorical mappings from source domain to target domain become very specific, when the slots "Donata", "Fantina", "Belella" and "Moreta" are mapped onto Opperman's wife and three daughters.

As a result of our knowledge about journeys, the impediments to motion mentioned in the quartet on the page preceding the title page make known the fact that Opperman's illness was a terrible ordeal. Similarly, the God that saved the traveler after trials of water, fire, desert and starvation is the God who saved Opperman from imminent death.

When the journey schema, which is evoked on the title page, is fully understood, the reader, as a result of his knowledge of journeys has the expectation of finding in the course of the volume, the designated path followed by the traveler. By scrutinizing *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*, one finds an embedded metaphorical structure (fig. 1). On the surface level is the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, where significant points on the path are landmarks in Opperman's life. Embedded in this metaphor is the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor, which surfaces when reference is made to the period preceding, during and after his illness.



Guided by the categorization in *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*, we are able to demarcate a specific path. The volume is divided into nine sections, consisting of a prologue, seven rolls and an epilogue. The rolls are rightfully named so, as it is consistent with the aforementioned idea of the bamboo staff being an aide to the traveller, which contains rolled up scrolls of the documented journey.

In agreement with synopses by Grové (1979:9-30), Spies (1992:180-186) and Kannemeyer (2005:240-244) the prologue seems to be a period of stasis, yet the reader is meant to understand that the story of Opperman is being told. The first roll symbolizes Opperman's youth and is also a guide, which directs the reader to the path traveled by him. The second roll builds on information mentioned in the first and is a presentation of selected South African historical events, leading to the idea of mixing of traditions. The third roll symbolizes new experiences. It incarnates the parent in the child and the poet in his work of poetry. The journey is conceived of geographically, but a different, internal journey is also embarked on, as there are warnings of the ensuing cirrhosis. The fourth roll is the world of hallucinations, stupefaction and comas. Here the internal journey reaches a climax. The fifth role characterizes delirium and the struggle against illness, but also the miraculous recovery. The sixth role marks the end of the ordeal. The traveler with his newly attained insights, who previously was the subject of torment, now looks back contemplatively. In the seventh role, the journey is a thing

of the past, but as a result of insights gained during the journey, he is able to experience the world anew. The epilogue marks a state of completion. He surrenders the loot and bids his traveling companions farewell.

The analysis above focused mainly on the required components of journeys, for example, travelers, a point of departure, a path and impediments to motion. It is interesting that *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* in its metaphorical structure, explores the optional components pertaining to journeys as well, such as traveling companions. It has been mentioned that Opperman identifies himself with Marco Polo, but we find that he also identifies himself with other prominent figures like the Dutch explorer Bontekoe in "Bontekoe" (1979:79), Glaucus in "Glaucus klim uit die water" (1979:88), Odysseus in "Odysseus ruik moer" (1979:73) and Dante in "Koggelbos" (1979:64). As a result of these mappings our conceptualization of illness is remarkably rich and varied.

If by the same token we were to recover the metaphorical content of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* using the basic mechanisms of relevance theory, each metaphorical expression would be regarded as unique until the metaphorical interpretation has been fully recovered. Compared to the proposals of contemporary metaphor theory, the recovery of metaphorical interpretations are by no means optimal and hence not consistent with the cognitive and

communicative principles of relevance since the extra processing effort is not totally justified. By failing to seek general principles in the recovery of metaphor, the structured mappings from aspects of the source domain to corresponding aspects in the target domain are being denied.

We will now explore the manner in which the contemporary theory of metaphor optimally recovers metaphorical interpretations through a chronological exploration of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*.

4.2.4 THE SEVEN ROLLS

Our exploration of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* is chronological in that we will systematically explore the seven rolls of which it consists, yet not all the poems within the volume will be discussed. We will however select at least one poem from each roll, which encapsulates the essence of that roll. The aim of this exercise would be to identify the common strand(s) that run(s) through the volume. Thereafter the poems will be discussed within the framework of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphors. When all the rolls have been discussed, it will be weighed up against the volume's prologue and epilogue. As the scope of the journey and illness metaphors in *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* are established, the occurrence of these metaphors will be explained within the framework of contemporary metaphor theory.

4.2.4.1 ROLL 1 – YOUTH

The methodology proposed above will require of us to fully explore the source domain, namely, the domain of journeys. To view the journey through the eyes of the traveler, D.J. Opperman (presented as the metaphorical Marco Polo on the title page) guides us in an understanding of the set course or route. With this metaphor in place, the Marco Polo schema is evoked. It allows us not only to see the correspondence between Marco Polo and Opperman in the poems to follow, but enables us to identify information pertaining to the Marco polo intertext.

It is not surprising then that the Marco Polo intertext serves as a point of reference in six out of the ten poems contained in the first roll. The roll starts with the poem "Wegwyser", which has an ambiguous interpretation. The first meaning rendered by the title is that of a sign / indicator (wyser) that indicates the way or marks a route to be traveled. The second meaning is recovered when one considers the adverb "weg" to mean "away" which renders the interpretation "a sign that warns one away from the current location." The content of "Wegwyser" juxtaposes the Opperman and Marco Polo schemas. Line 1 for example, makes reference to Dannhauser, a town in the district of Dundee, where Opperman was born, and Isfahan, one of the eight kingdoms of Persia encountered by Polo during his travels. It is clear

that Opperman is the subject under discussion. Not only is his physical address mentioned by "Thibaultstraat 3" and "Kiepersol" in lines 10 and 12 respectively, but it is also suggested that he has returned from a journey, "die teruggekeerde Opperman" in line 2. It is the nature of the journey that urges him to document the experiences undergone during this time (line 14). The journey is initially described as "die reise van ryswyn" (line 14), which when translated reads "the journeys of rice wine". The notion of rice wine is foreign within the South African context and therefore suggests that the journey is a foreign one and that individual experiences have not been encountered before. Marco Polo in *The Travels of Marco Polo* gives various accounts of his encounters with rice wine during his travels in the east. "You must know that most of the inhabitants of the province of Cathay drink a wine such as I will describe to you. They make a drink of rice and an assortment of excellent spices, prepared in such a way that it is better to drink than any other wine." Polo (1958:156) and "There is no grape wine, but wine is made of wheat and rice with many spices, and a very good drink it is." Polo (1958:176). Not only does line 14 indicate a foreign journey, but also bears significance through its implicit meaning that the journey (reise) was initiated or came about as a result of the misuse of alcohol "ryswyn".

"Wegwyser" therefore serves as a guide to the rest of the volume of poetry on two levels. It firstly demarcates the domain to be traveled into via the Marco Polo intertext and secondly sets in motion the reader's experience of

the journey, (lines 11 and 12) through Opperman's documented account of his metaphorical journey. Through this documented account, Opperman experiences the journey for the second time, but this time as one revisiting landmarks on route.

The Marco Polo intertext is further activated in the poems "Tai khoen", "Ou Niek", "My Appelliefie van Inchanga", "Bye" and "High Roads' Robbery" by the numerous references to the *Travels of Marco Polo*. Through this activation Opperman succeeds in presenting references pertaining to the East and localizing information so that it becomes relevant within the South African context. In "Bye" for example, the first three lines read:

Almal kan nie boer nie: party ooms

Skiet uit die aarde swart klippe

Wat langer as miskoeke brand,

Lines 2 and 3, which refers to the mining of coal bears striking resemblance to Marco Polo's (1958:156) account of the same. "Let me tell you next of stones that burn like logs. It is a fact that throughout the province of Cathay there is a sort of black stone, which is dug out of veins in the hillsides and burns like logs. These stones keep a fire going better than wood. I assure

you that if you put them on the fire in the evening and see that they are well alight, they will continue to burn all night, so that will still find them glowing in the morning”

The Polo account of coal is localized in “Bye” through the comparison to it with “miskoeke” - dried cow dung, which was traditionally burned as a heat source. It becomes evident that Opperman accesses the intertext, thereby drawing on information that shares common strands with the subject matter or the particular theme in the poem. This information is then cleverly adapted so that the unique experience of various South African traditions and locations are evoked in the mind of the reader. At the same time the richness of the original text is kept alive and its vibrancy is transposed onto the target text.

With the assumption that the LIFE IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphors are at work in *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*, the reader has the expectation to be taken from one location to the next or from one beacon on the journey to the next via the semantic richness of the lexical items attached to the LIFE and more specifically JOURNEY schemas.

Scrutiny of the first roll however, which symbolizes Opperman’s youth reveals that movement from one childhood experience to the next or the

revisiting of pertinent locations in Opperman's youth are brought about by the D.J. OPPERMAN IS MARCO POLO metaphor. The entailments of the Marco Polo schema are the vehicle whereby motion from one location to the next becomes possible. In the first roll the Polo intertext is not explicitly utilized in every poem, as in "Penwortel", but nevertheless is an important mechanism, which allows us to visit the important landmarks on the route. In our search for "die teruggekeerde Opperman" and the route traveled by him, "Penwortel" offers invaluable insights in terms of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok's* autobiographical nature and the thematic content of the first role.

PENWORTEL

Dit gaan hier net om eerste dinge,

begin my vader sy *Herinneringe*:

moeder het vertel – ek was nog jonk –

Oupa ly aan kanker van die tong.

In sy geselskap word ek daagliks groot

as getuie van bedienings uit die dood:

hoe hy, omdat hy nie kon praat,

met griffel op 'n lei moes tekens maak.

Toe onse kos nie meer kon binnekom,
het sy oorle moeder hom –
toe daar reeds strepies was van bloed –
met melk en brood van Anderkant gevoed.

Moeder het sy woorde uitgespel
en sy drie susters dit herhaal, indelibel.
Ek mog ook soms sy lei skoon spons,
maar ewig woon die woord tussen ons.

Hy het geskryf oor daardie Stad van Goud,
oor Dorings en die Kruis van Doringhout.

By sy begrafnis – selfs van oorkant die rivier,
het almal saamgesing, ook die populier.

On an autobiographical level “Penwortel” brings tribute to Opperman’s maternal grandfather Christiaan Jacobus Cronjé, who had a long deathbed as a result of cancer of the tongue. Because his speech was affected, he was unable to speak and communicated by means of slate and slate-pencil. His

illness also affected his ability to ingest food. Kannemeyer (1986:18) states that Opperman's father's unpublished manuscript *Eerste herinneringe* makes specific mention of this time of illness.

Information, which is particularly relevant to "Penwortel", bears reference to a dream that Cronjé had during the time he was unable to eat. He dreamed of his deceased mother, who due to his condition was compelled to feed him rectally with bread and milk. He also dreamed of a city with streets of gold and of Jesus and His angels. Cronjé's communication on slate was diligently documented by his daughters before being erased. In doing so they managed to preserve the memory of their father for the generations to follow.

The most readily accessible interpretation to the title "Penwortel"² when viewed against the content of the poem is that it renders the interpretation "genealogy". More specifically, the genealogy of DJ Opperman is presented as *Herinneringe*, the title of his father's book, which is explicitly mentioned in line 2. Through this interpretation the theme: establishment of lineage through reproduction, is introduced. Thematically one is compelled to consider the theme of growth, due to the purpose and function of the tap-

² The Afrikaans word *penwortel* directly translates into the English word tap-root. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a tap-root as a straight root of circular section, thick at the top, and tapering to a point, growing directly downwards from the stem and forming the centre from which subsidiary rootlets spring.

root. "Penwortel" serves too as the symbolic phallus, which is in line with the theme of reproduction.

The semantic richness of the title renders a further interpretation when one considers "Penwortel" to be a compound consisting of the nouns "pen" – a writing instrument, and "wortel" – root. Snyman (1987:211) purports that it refers to the root of a pen, namely, its nib and that the ink that flows from it brings about the frozen word and hence activates the theme of stasis, which is in stark contrast to the theme of growth when compared to the tap-root interpretation of the title. There is a creation (hence growth) versus stasis ambiguity in the "root of a pen" reading of "Penwortel" in that the frozen word³ – when it is penned down, is produced through a creative process.

The landmarks on the journey as portrayed in "Penwortel" are recollections of the past presented by the egocentric speaker⁴. A number of important relatives, namely, the father, grandfather, mother, grandmother and three sisters are introduced, which affirms the genealogy reading of the poem. The father⁵ and grandfather⁶ figures are later to develop into alter egos of the

³ Within the context of the poem, the frozen word refers to poetry.

⁴ The *I* speaking in the poem, who at different junctures in the narrative is presented as a different alter ego.

⁵ *Vader* in line 3.

⁶ *Oupa* in line 4.

egocentric speaker, who in turn become the autobiographical speaker as the poem progresses via the speaker's account of the sequence of events.

The first stanza commences with the opening lines of the speaker's father's book *Herinneringe*. The father reminisces about the ailing grandfather who is suffering from cancer of the tongue. The reminiscence is verbalised by the egocentric speaker and in doing so blurs the distinction between the father and the egocentric speaker with the function of developing the father into the speaker's alter ego. In a similar vein the grandfather, father and son are developed into alter egos of each other. It also becomes evident that there is no clear distinction between the father in the first stanza who documents his memories and D.J. Opperman in the last stanza that wrote about "daardie Stad van Goud" and "oor Dorings en die Kruis van Doringhout." The first stanza reflects a contrast similar to the type of ambiguity generated by the title. Whereas there is an evident growth – stasis ambiguity in the title of the poem, the first stanza reflects a growth⁷ – regression⁸ ambiguity.

The consequences of the grandfather's regression are explored in the second stanza. In spite of his inability to produce the spoken word the grandfather nevertheless communicates through writing – a creative activity through

⁷ As reflected by the youth of the grandson

⁸ Indicated by the grandfather's illness

which a concrete, written product is produced. This specific activity activates autobiographical information about D.J. Opperman and allows him to use the grandfather figure as vehicle to write about the events regarding and following his illness. There is thus a regression – creation ambiguity at work in this stanza. When the state of comas is hinted at in line 6, it is the first time in the volume of poetry that the condition is mentioned. Referred to as “bedienings uit die dood⁹”, Opperman traverses the boundaries separating life and death, the present and eternity, the primordial and time. Through his exploration of the essence of comas, there is an indistinguishable boundary between the state of coma and consciousness. A continuum between life and death is produced and has the effect of dissolving the existing temporal boundary.

The first two lines of the third stanza recall an elapsed period in time through the usage of the outdated lexical items “onse¹⁰” and “oorle.¹¹” Snyman (1987) aptly describes the stylistic presentation of the text as a component of an elapsed language era that has been recorded via literature. The lexical items “strepies van bloed¹²” activate a connection with the suffering of

⁹ Ministry from the realm of death

¹⁰ Personal pronoun meaning our

¹¹ *Oorlede* is its contemporary form and means deceased

¹² Stripes of blood

Christ¹³. The mentioning of “melk en brood¹⁴” which strongly correlates with the redemptive symbols of blood and bread reinforces this reading. The sacraments of milk and bread however have been fed from “Anderkant¹⁵” and we once again have a continuum existing between this world as we know it and the realm of the hereafter.

In the fourth stanza the production of the word is the result of the influence from “the other side.” As the mother spells the words, the three sisters repeat it and it becomes indelible. The three sisters not only activate the Marco Polo / D.J. Opperman schema where it maps on to Polo / Opperman’s three daughters, but invariably refers to and develop into the three muses.

Jobes (1961:1138) describe the muses as “Greek goddesses presiding over music, poetry, and science. Originally nymphs of the inspiring springs of dawn and nurses of Apollo, whose body was wrapped in pure white linen. In one version they were created by Zeus at the request of the victorious deities after the war with the Titans in order to commemorate their deeds in song. In Another tradition they were the four daughters of Zeus and Plusia: Arche (beginning), Aoide (song), Melete (meditation), Thexinoe (heart

¹³ As prophesied by Isaiah 53:5 he was wounded by our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed

¹⁴ Milk and bread

¹⁵ The other side; not of this world; the world of the unknown; the occult

delighter). In still another account they were the three daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne: Aoide, Melete and Mneme (memory). They were finally fixed as the following nine: Calliope (sweet-voiced), Clio (proclaimer of praise), Erato (loveliness), Euterpe (charm or delight), Melpomene (singer), Polyphymnia (lover of song), Terpsichore (delight in dancing), Thalia (the joyous) and Urania (heavenly)."

Within the context of the information furnished by the preceding stanzas, there seems to be a salient fit in terms of the "three daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne" reading of the muses. By the inspiration of Mneme and Melete it becomes possible for the autobiographical speaker to recover from illness as evidenced by the restoration of memory and through the meditation on and finally the creative production of the indelible world. Aoide's role is yet to be played and will be confirmed in the following stanza.

A further interesting piece of information highlighted by Jobes (1968:1138) concerning the muses is that their libations consisted of honey, milk and water; never wine. Line 12 therefore renders a further interpretation: that the inspiration¹⁶ came about as a result of the libations of milk and bread. The indelible nature of the word transcends the boundary of time and is elevated to the level of cultural immortality.

¹⁶ "Van Anderkant gevoed"

In the fifth and final stanza the “hy¹⁷” (that wrote about “daardie stad van Goud” and “Oor Dorings en die Kruis van Doringhout”) and egocentric speaker are assimilated. The poem’s last two lines focus on the grandfather’s death. At the funeral there is singing by both mortals and immortals¹⁸ from “oorkant die rivier”. It is here where Aoidé’s serves her purpose. Cirlot (1971:274) adds that the river corresponds to the creative power both of nature and of time. On the one hand it signifies fertility and the progressive irrigation of the soil; and on the other hand it stands for the irreversible passage of time, and in consequence, for a sense of loss and oblivion.”

Initially “Wegwyser” is considered to be the starting point of the journey as it is the opening poem of the first roll. Opperman’s residence¹⁹ as mentioned in the poem is the physical point at which the reader’s journey in search of “die teruggekeerde Opperman²⁰” starts. A series of concurrent and distinct journeys are embarked upon. We firstly have the Opperman journey as documented in *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* in which his testing experiences contribute to the gaining of new insights. Through the reading of the text the reader too is taken on a journey in which Opperman serves as a guide and

¹⁷Personal pronoun he

¹⁸Following the symbolic reading of the word “river”

¹⁹ Kiepersol (line 12), which is physically located at 3 Thibault street (line 10) in Stellenbosch (line 9)

²⁰ Line 2

traveling companion. For the reader the journey becomes a journey of discovery as numerous pieces of information are supplied and is ultimately used to construct a profile of the subject²¹ and his journey of discovery.

The reader's journey starts at a physical location and is progressive in that the essential landmarks in the Opperman journey are largely chronologically accessed. The reader's journey is also regressive in that he/she is taken to locations temporally preceding the journey's starting point. In view of the above "Penwortel" is a fundamental landmark in the documented journey. The reader is not only exposed to the Opperman lineage through the regressive temporal journey, but also taken as far back as the primordial as suggested by the poem's reference to the state comas in which the line separating the present from the primordial are blurred.

If the first role is meant to symbolise youth, one wonders why "Penwortel" makes reference to illness. A possible explanation could be that Opperman wishes to establish prominent themes early in the volume of poetry, so that when it is fully explored later on it serves to link the poems intertextually and thereby reinforcing the idea that the volume of poetry should be read as a unit.

²¹ Opperman

4.2.4.2 ROLL 2 – INFLUENCING FACTORS

Continuing the quest for the essence of Opperman, it is found that Roll 2 not only serves to progress from the previous landmark, but also to expose the reader to those factors that have played an influencing role in Opperman's life. The figure of the boy, which was present in "Penwortel", is yet again present in the roll's opening poem "Die slag van Tugela." Within the second roll he gradually matures and by the end of the second roll he is no longer perceivable.

Viewing the second roll chronologically, the influencing factors are seen to be: childhood experiences in reference to the Anglo-Boer war in "Die slag van Tugela", circus life in "Reisende Dorpe", the three prominent women in his life in "Drie Juwele", his father in "Onse Vader", Winwood Reade in "Uit: die dagboek van 'n Seun", Darwin and Jung in "Frenologie" and Dirk²² the poet in "Dirk der Duisende".

For the purpose of this study "Drie Juwele" will come under scrutiny. In addition to isolating specific people, places, things and experiences that have had a remarkable influence on Opperman these poems also embody the continuation of the D.J. OPPERMAN IS MARCO POLO metaphor through the

²² Nickname of Diederik Johannes Opperman

introduction of autobiographical information and its synthesis with the Marco Polo intertext.

Drie Juwele

Maagkoors...Sy het my uit die bos ontluis,
my hare kort geknip, my skoon geskrop.
,Is daar, onder daardie doek, hare op jou kop?
En waarom hang aan jou gordel dan 'n Kruis?'

My Moeder het gesorg dat kinderpyn,
soos masels, die kruis van armoede en vrees
vir die donker en die pienk Makatees
saam met die weggesteekte rosekrans verdwyn.

En jy, My Vrou, het uit die Koeblai Khan se ryk
die ring met die tier se oog gesteel
waar jou voorletter deur bamboesstele
'n brandyster (M) gloeiend na my kyk.

As mentioned above “Drie Juwele²³” makes reference to three prominent women in the speaker’s life. In the first stanza it is the Catholic nun that nurses and nurtures the young boy, while at the same time stimulates his curiosity and causes him to wonder: “Is daar, onder daardie doek, hare op jou kop²⁴?” and “... waarom hang aan jou gordel dan `n Kruis²⁵?”

The mother is introduced in the second stanza and fulfills a more fundamental role to that of the nun. In spite of being raised in poverty his mother’s attributes enable him to view their plight as insignificant. His faith in her stems from her roles as healer, provider, protector and source of steadfastness, as she ensured that “kinderpyn, soos masels, die kruis van armoede en vrees vir pienk Makatees²⁶ saam met die rosekrans verdwyn²⁷.” As a result of her remarkable influence over him all notable factors symbolized by the nun and the cross are superceded by the principles that she instills in him.

²³ Three jewels

²⁴ Is there (under your habit) hair on your head?

²⁵ ... why do you have a cross hanging from your belt?

²⁶ Member of a particular African group, specifically of the Sotho tribes in Transvaal. The name is derived from the female captain Mmantatise, resident in the Eastern Free State, notorious for pillage, death and destruction in the Transvaal area. “Pienk Makatees” within the context of “Drie Juwele” is used metaphorically and denotes childhood fears.

²⁷ Children’s trauma such as measles, the cross of poverty, the fear of the dark and other sources of fear common to children disappeared together with the concealed rosary.

The poem reaches its climax in the final stanza and is attributed to his wife, who fulfills a captivating role. The last stanza is worthy of note since the vocabulary used to describe her influence over him originates from the source domain in the D.J. OPPERMAN IS MARCO POLO metaphor as a sub-metaphor of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor. The stanza reads as follows:

En jy, My Vrou, uit die Koeblai Khan se ryk

Die ring met die tier se oog gesteel

Waar jou voorletter deur bamboesstele

'n brandyster (M) gloeiend na my kyk.

An interesting aspect of the conceptual metaphor above is that it is used to reason with and therefore enables us to completely understand the result of the metaphorical mapping of the source domain onto the target domain. The D.J. OPPERMAN IS MARCO POLO metaphor is not merely responsible for allowing the use of the vocabulary of the Marco Polo schema to be applied to the Opperman schema, but the mapping also allows us to use the forms of reasoning about the Marco Polo intertext for use in our reasoning about Opperman. In the process inferences about the Polo schema are mapped into inferences about Opperman.

To understand how this works it is necessary to elaborate on the entailments of the vocabulary pertaining to the Marco Polo schema. The appropriate lexical items are “Koeblai Khan se ryk²⁸”, “tier²⁹”, “steel³⁰” and “bamboesstele³¹”

Within the context of the Marco Polo schema for example, Kubilai Khan is identifiable as the ruler for whom Polo served as diplomat and for whom numerous missions were embarked upon. As a result of the nature of the relationship between Polo and the Khan one can therefore infer that in spite of having freedom of movement and being under the protection of the Khan during his missionary journeys, Polo remains obliged to follow the Khan’s directives and is therefore bound by the constraints of the Khan empire.

Logically reasoning about Polo’s state of affairs, Polo can regain his freedom by considering at least three possible options:

²⁸ Kubilai Khan’s empire

²⁹ Tiger

³⁰ Steal

³¹ Bamboo stalks

1. Defect and totally disregard the power of the Khan. This is an unwise decision due to the character, nature and power of the Khan and will in all probability have fatal consequences if he were to be captured.
2. Request the Khan's permission to be relieved of all duties. The character and nature of the Khan will determine the success of this approach.
3. Rely on the assistance of an ally who is either as powerful as or more powerful than Khan in order to negotiate or forcefully ensure the relieving of duties.

Before illustrating how the reasoning about the source domain can be used to reason about the target domain it becomes necessary to indicate the network of metaphors currently activated. Within the context of the volume of poetry there is the activation of the LIFE IS JOURNEY metaphor. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the LIFE IS JOURNEY metaphor has an embedded ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY, or more specifically ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY metaphor. This implies that all the landmarks along the journey of illness are the corresponding landmarks along life's journey. The relevant sub-metaphors to the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, which are activated in "Drie Juwele", are: D.J. OPPERMAN IS A TRAVELER and D.J. OPPERMAN IS MARCO POLO.

As we continue our explanation of how the reasoning about the source domain can similarly be used to apply to the target domain we need to clarify the elements in the target domain that corresponds with its counterparts in the source domain. Expounding on the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, D.J. Opperman is identified as the traveler. Within the context of “Drie Juwele” the traveler is Marco Polo and hence results in the activation of the live D.J. OPPERMAN IS MARCO POLO metaphor. The ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY metaphor results in the mapping of Kubilai Khan’s empire onto illness because it represents a landscape being traveled on and is the specific landscape from which artefacts³² have been collected.

With the knowledge that the subject (the traveler) is in a state of illness one can reason, in a similar manner to the way in which we reasoned about the source domain, that if the subject wished to be freed from the stronghold of illness, he could:

1. Totally disregard the power of the illness and hope to be healed through his own strength. This is an unwise option, as it is in most cases prohibited due to the character and nature of the particular illness. Should the condition be untreated it may have fatal consequences.

³² Experiences undergone during the time of illness

2. Try to reason with the illness. This is not an option as the character and nature of the illness prohibits it. The purpose of illness is to destroy body tissue. Allowing the sufferer to negotiate health is thus against the purpose of illness.
3. Rely on the assistance of individuals capable of breaking him loose from the stronghold of illness.

What is interesting about the last stanza is how the recovery of the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY metaphor is dependent on the activation of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Through the mentioning of "Kublai Khan se ryk" in line 9, it simultaneously proposes a location (a landmark on the route being traveled) as well as a state (illness). If the final stanza were to be perused in isolation, the reader would have no idea that illness is being referred to. This is because the semantic content communicated by the lexical items of which the verse consists makes no reference to illness at all. Yet, when the poem is viewed in the context of the volume of poetry as a whole the recovery of the verse's reference to illness occurs automatically. On a primary level the stanza refers to the speaker's wife who is in possession of a tiger's-eye ring with her initial "M" etched on it. It is perceived as a glowing branding iron or cautery staring at him.

Following the reasoning about the target domain above, it becomes clear that the wife depicted in the third stanza is considered to have the power to

assist the sufferer's release from illness' grasp. This interpretation is confirmed by the "ring...waar jou voorletter deur die bamboesstele 'n brandyster (M) gloeiend na my kyk³³". The ambiguous interpretation of "brandyster", which renders the meanings "branding iron" and "cautery", attributes two characteristics to the wife that is in line with the content of the poem as a whole as well as with the illness motif. The "branding iron" reading emphasizes the pivotal role played by his wife. Once "branded" by her influence, the process is irreversible and the things that she imparts in his life become unalterable – unlike the influences of the nun (in the first stanza) which had a diminishing effect when contrasted with the influences of his mother.

The "cautery" reading attributes to the wife a "healer" quality. The women present in the first two stanzas fulfill healing roles, so too it is implied that the wife is responsible for his remarkable healing.

The introduction of the words "bamboesstele" creates a visual link between the colour of the tiger's-eye ring and the appearance of the bamboo canes. Through this link the ring functions as a metaphorical bamboo cane. In the Polo account bamboo staves are reported to have a number of uses. Besides being used in building and shipping, it was also used to keep wild animals at

³³ Literally - The ring where your initial (through bamboo staves) is a branding iron / cautery that glowingly looks at me.

bay. There is therefore a conceptual link between the glowing bamboo canes and the wife's ring. Of the province of Tibet Polo (1958:171) reports:

"This country produces canes of immense size and girth; indeed I can assure you that they grow to about three palms in circumference and a good fifteen paces in length, the distance from one knot to the next amounting to fully three palms. Merchants and other travelers who were passing through this country at night use these canes as fuel because, when they are alight, they make such a popping and banging that lions³⁴ and bears and other beasts of prey are scared away in terror and dare not on any account come near the fire...You must understand that the canes are taken when quite green and thrown on a fire made of a substantial pile of logs. When they have lain for some time on a fire of this size, they begin to warp and to burst, and then they make such a bang that it can be heard at nights a full ten miles away."

Unlike the Polo account, the ring does not serve to keep Opperman³⁵ at bay, but rather functions to captivate his attention. The wife who is represented through the personification of the ring diverts his attention from his current state of affairs and in doing so manages to coax him from the grasp of Illness. Through this action she successfully manages to steal the tiger from

³⁴ sometimes referred to as tigers

³⁵ The tiger

the Khan Empire. This action bears resemblance to the smuggling of silkworms³⁶ as depicted in the poem “High Roads’ Robbery”, in roll 1.

In its implicit reference to illness, the reader is able to identify the speaker’s attitude toward his illness. Through the conceptual metaphor ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY, the power of illness is debunked and its consequences viewed in a positive light. One positive outcome in perceiving illness in this way is that the effects of the illness are written off as unpleasant experiences encountered along the journey. On the other hand life-lessons or insights gained during the period of illness are considered to be artefacts taken from a foreign land. By activating this specific metaphor Opperman therefore succeeds in writing about his illness in an objective manner.

Opperman’s approach to his illness differs from some of the other ways in which illness is perceived. Consider the following expressions:

³⁶ In “High Roads’ Robbery” silkworms were smuggled in bamoo canes. In “Drie Juwele” the word “steel” suggests a similar association in terms of the purpose of the cane. Here however, the bamboo cane has the additional purpose of coaxing the smuggled item from its current location.

1. Communities have been wounded and families crushed by the TB pandemic.
2. The war on TB has just begun and those on the frontlines are fighting back with all the resources they have.
3. Sufferers shouldn't idly sit by, but should fight back if they hope to survive.
4. The Department of Health has acknowledged that it is the worst plague that the nation has ever faced.

Expressions 1 – 3 are examples of the ILLNESS IS WAR metaphor. Through this metaphor illness is seen as an invading enemy. The sufferers are seen as the victims of war and the arsenal used in the counterattack is treatment and education. The consequence to individuals subscribing to the use of this metaphor is that fear is evoked by the imagery of war. This is especially true if the illness is conceived of as an enemy capable of destroying victims in its path. In some instances the elicited fear may have a paralyzing effect, so much so that sufferers mentally surrender to the illness and are left feeling helpless and defeated.

Another alternative illness metaphor with debilitating consequences is metaphors of the type highlighted in expression 4. The specific metaphor in question is: ILLNESS IS A PLAGUE. Metaphors of this type cause sufferers to be ridden by guilt and view themselves as helpless victims. Here sufferer's

guilt is fuelled by the belief that they are somehow responsible for their affliction and that the illness is a result of divine retribution. In retrospect therefore, Opperman provides a refreshing new way of viewing illness.

The manner in which the wife is immersed into the Polo domain is an interesting technique through which illness is dealt with objectively. A balance is struck in that the poem does not wholly contain references to the Polo intertext, but also includes local South African references as evidenced by the use of the word "Makatees" in line 7, which serves as a constant reminder that the Opperman story is being told.

4.2.4.3 ROLL 3 – NEW EXPERIENCES

The third roll is not only characterized by the exploration of new terrain and indulgences of the flesh, but the consequences of these culminating indulgences become a reality in the three closing poems "Medisinaal", "Vergiftig deur Roxy" and "Roudiens, Gansbaai", where the illness motif overtly comes to the fore. Due to the purpose of this study and in striving towards continuity regarding the poems already dealt with, special attention will not be given to the poems mentioned above; however, the illness motif will be fully explored in the fourth roll.

The third roll opens with the poem "Drie Susters", which in many respects elaborates on the information furnished in "Drie Juwele". The poet's play on the number three immediately strikes the reader. The play is initiated on the title page where reference is made to the speaker's wife and three daughters. Thereafter the number three is emphasized as we observe the three daughters developing into the three muses in "Penwortel" and the wife being considered as one of the three jewels in "Drie Juwele."

In the third roll, the speaker's three daughters are presented as the three Fates. *The New Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology* (1985:163) describes the Fates³⁷ or Moerae as "... the inescapable destiny, which followed every mortal being. They were three in number, daughters of Night, and they were called Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. Clotho the spinner, personified the thread of life. Lachesis was chance, the element of luck that a man had the right to expect. Atropos was inescapable fate, against which there was no appeal." Clotho therefore spins the thread of human life. The length of the thread, which is proportional to the length of a person's life is determined and measured by Lachesis and then finally cut by Atropos.

The image of the wife as sketched in "Drie Juwele" is further expounded upon in "Drie Susters" where her prominence is elevated because she bore

³⁷ The Romans called them the Parcae

the speaker three children. The bond forged between the speaker and his family is one that is unalterable, similar to the predestined functioning of the Fates in mankind as proposed in Greek mythology.

An interesting synthesis is at work in "Drie Juwele." On the first level the Polo intertext is evoked. The speaker "Ek³⁸" in the opening line is immediately identifiable as Marco Polo through the introduction of Polo's wife Donata and three daughters Fantina, Bellela and Moreta. On the second level reference is made to Greek mythology as Fantina, Bellella and Moreta are juxtaposed with Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos respectively. The synthesis allows biographical details, namely, the specific influence that Opperman's wife and daughters have on him, to be treated objectively. The D.J. OPPERMAN IS MARCO POLO metaphor ensures that the items Donata, Fantina, Bellela and Moreta are mapped onto Opperman's wife Marié and three daughters Diederi, Trienke and Heila.

The Polo references above are localized in the second stanza through the description of a specific landscape:

³⁸ English I

Júllie kyk na sterreblare teen die tinne
van die Karoo se erdekoppies en strak
styg spitskoppig bo dié landskap
Júllie, my spitsvondige drie skikgodinne

Here, the daughters are presented as a mass of rock rising from the earth, seemingly the Three Sisters mountain range, which is situated in the Karoo. This idea is further reinforced by the presence of “vygiebos³⁹”, “geitjie⁴⁰” and “toldissel⁴¹”, items that are peculiar to the Karoo. Thereafter each sister, along with her attributes are identified with the Fates in Greek mythology and also brings to the fore three essential aspects of poetry:

Fantina

jý wat doemspreuke van die gode ken,

Bellela

jý wat deur mooi-wees die mens verwen,

Moreta

Jý wat vingers om snaar en skale klem.

³⁹ Flowering succulent *Lampranthus*

⁴⁰ Gecko

⁴¹ Tumble-weed

Fantina, through her knowledge of the spells of Fate personifies the word. Bellela, through her beauty personifies aesthetics. Moreta, which bears phonological resemblance to Morta the Roman counterpart of the Greek Atropos personifies music.

Even though Atropos evokes an image of a goddess with a pair of shears in her hands waiting to cut life's thread, the word "snaar"⁴² in line 14 seems to soften this cold image by highlighting her association to music. The Fates are believed to sing in unison with the music of the Sirens⁴³. Clotho sings of the things that are, Lachesis of the things that were and Atropos of the things that are to be. Against the background of the Fates' association with the Sirens, Atropos' seemingly harmless association to music is nullified and enhances her fatal role.

There is a stark contrast in the manner in which the prominent women are perceived in "Drie Juwele" to the way in which the three sisters are portrayed in "Drie Susters". "Drie Juwele" culminates in the glorification of

⁴² String (of stringed instrument)

⁴³ It is said that the Sirens had maidens' features, but from the thighs down they had the form of birds. One of them played the lyre, another the flute and the other sang. Their performance enticed seafarers and eventually led them to their destruction.

the women. "Drie Susters" however depicts the respective women in a negative way. The last stanza specifically elucidates this attitude:

Altyd júllie drie wat drade om my spin,
al draai ek hóé met motor of per trein
tussen vygiebos en geitjie, altyd júllie wat verskyn...
júllie toldissel...hekel my die spinnerakke in.

Here the metaphorical thread of life becomes the metaphorical thread of influence. The thread is described as a spider's web that captures and eventually entangles the speaker. The metaphorical use of the word "thread" is particularly apt, especially when one considers how Opperman the poet succeeds in using the thread of the word to crochet⁴⁴ together the various levels of interpretation into a remarkable poem.

In "Drie Susters" one observes the speaker's thread of life being spun, measured and crocheted, but Atropos' role through her alter ego Moreta remains incomplete in that the thread remains intact. The reader therefore has the expectation that the journey, which was embarked upon, has not yet reached its end.

⁴⁴ The English equivalent of the word "hekel" in line 18.

Our exploration of the original metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY and LIFE IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY deviates slightly when we read "Drie Susters" because our attention shifts to the metaphor LIFE IS A THREAD. The properties of the source domain THREAD are as follows:

1. It has two ends, a beginning and an end. The manufacturer determines its length.
2. The longer the thread, the more usable it is.
3. A thread has served its purpose when its end has been reached.
4. It can be used for a variety of purposes, for example, sewing, knitting, weaving, crocheting and tying.

The properties of the source domain THREAD allow us to make the following inferences about the target domain LIFE:

1. It has a beginning and an end. Its duration is determined by the Creator.
2. The longer the life, the greater potential it has for being purposive.
3. A life is expired when its end has been reached. At this point it becomes non-purposive.
4. A life can be devoted to a variety of purposes.

Even though the metaphors for LIFE, which have come under discussion thus far, are disparate they are related to one another by virtue of manner in which the source domain is structured. Lakoff and Turner (1989:86) attribute the relationship to a commonplace theory that can be factored into two parts, a very general part and an elaboration of it. The general part is that life is a cycle, which ends where it began. It has a structure of three stages; first, we're not alive; second, we are alive; and third, we are dead. Because the target domain of LIFE is structured in this way, it is natural to conceive of it in terms of metaphors whose source domains can have the same three-part structure.

Let us consider how this applies to the LIFE metaphors discussed thus far:

First, LIFE IS A JOURNEY: Before birth we are stationary, after birth we are mobile, after death we are stationary again. Second, LIFE IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY: first we don't have it, then we obtain it (artefacts along the journey); then we lose it. Third, LIFE IS A THREAD: Before birth it is not yet spun, after birth it is spun and measured, at death it is cut. The metaphors above are related in the sense that the tripartite structure of each source domain – journey, journey of discovery and thread can be mapped onto the corresponding structure in the target domain.

Lakoff and Turner (1989:89) assert that not all metaphors map conceptual structures onto other conceptual structures. They claim “in addition to the metaphors that unconsciously and automatically organize our ordinary comprehension of the world by mapping concepts onto other concepts, there are also more fleeting metaphors which involve not the mapping of concepts but rather the mapping of images.”

The LIFE IS A THREAD metaphor as it occurs in “Drie Susters” is interesting because it not only succeeds in mapping one conceptual structure onto another, but also maps one image onto another. Consider again lines 15 and 18:

(15) Altyd júllie drie wat drade om my spin,

(18) júllie toldissel...hekel my die spinnerakke in

On a conceptual level, as discussed above, the Fates function to map the source domain THREAD into the target domain LIFE. The mental image called to mind in line 15 is one of the Fates spinning a thread. The image of the thread is superimposed onto the life of the speaker by virtue of the similarity between a thread and the linear image evoked when the target domain LIFE is considered to be that entity which exists between the points of life and death. The linear image of course is evoked because the LIFE IS A

JOURNEY metaphor is alive in our conceptual system and seems to fuse the linear path of the journey with that of the target domain LIFE. The result then is a mental image of life as a linear entity. Through this mental image one end of the thread is mapped onto the point of birth and the other end onto the moment of death. The lexical items in the poem do not tell us which part of the thread to map onto a particular point in life; however the words function to trigger the reader to perform the mapping from one conventional image to another at the conceptual level.

This image mapping contributes to the semantic richness of line 18. On an image level it portrays the speaker being cocooned by the intricate weaving / crocheting of the sisters. On a conceptual level this entanglement suggests life's complexities and can be seen as a concealed warning of the ensuing illness.

4.2.4.4 ROLL 4 – HALLUCINATIONS, STUPEFACTION AND COMAS

In the previous rolls there were warnings of the illness to follow. In "Penwortel" for example, we observed the references to the state of comas and how the description thereof traverses the boundaries, which separate

life and death. This boundary is further explored in “Roudiens, Gansbaai⁴⁵”, the closing poem to the third roll. There is an announcement of a memorial service, but there are no signs of a corpse and hence no funeral.

The circumstances surrounding the supposed death are significant. It is reported that the character Dirk van Dyk, Dirk Opperman’s⁴⁶ alter ego, allegedly drowned whilst trying to collect redbait. This allegation is fuelled by sightings of his disappearance among the kelp⁴⁷. The word “bamboes” in line 12 serves as a vivid reminder of the volume of poetry’s title and interpretation; there is a strong correlation between Dirk’s demise and his proximity to and possible entanglement in the kelp / “bamboes.” Until the drowning is confirmed or proved untrue, the Polo figure, another alter ego of D.J. Opperman, will remain absent.

The fact that the character supposedly drowns is also noteworthy for it suggests a submersion into water. This submersion triggers a range of possible interpretations. It firstly brings to mind the process of baptism. The submersion into water signifies a death and cleansing: death to the old way of life and gratifications of the flesh and cleansing of past influences.

⁴⁵ Memorial service, Gansbaai

⁴⁶ Diederik Johannes Opperman

⁴⁷ The context in which the word “bamboes” is used in line 12 renders the interpretation kelp

Secondly, a process of rebirth is suggested. The salience of this interpretation is strengthened by the following quatrain found on the title page. The quatrain also signifies that this process is accompanied by immense tribulation. Elements of this struggle will come under discussion in later rolls.

*DIT IS DIE BEELD WAT DIE GESIN BEWAAR
VAN MARCO POLO DEUR GOD UITGESPAAR⁴⁸
NA HY IN STORMS GELOOI IS TOT DIE DOOD
DEUR WATER, VUUR, WOESTYN EN HONGERSNOOD.*

Linked to the process of rebirth is the symbolic connection of water to the primordial. Cirlot (1962:23) asserts, "the symbolism of immersion into water derives from that of water itself, and signifies not only purification but, more fundamentally, regeneration through the effect of the transitional powers (implying change, destruction and re-creation) of the 'primordial waters'."

⁴⁸ Spared or saved

The Opperman journey continues. The third roll ends with a supposed drowning at sea. The fourth roll, which opens with “Vreters van die Bossie,⁴⁹” commences with the submersion of the subject into water. The reader is thereby taken on an underwater expedition. Since the Polo character can no longer be used for this facet of the journey, an alternative guide is chosen and presented in the form of the Glaucus legend.

Vreters van die Bossie

Hy sink onder die waterlyn

na die glaucane:

in die Donker Kolk die swart serpentyn,

uit die vars waters die ghielies en die springers,

en in dié domein waar sponse stoel

en die verlore uitverkorenes

in trekskole spoel

en in die vreugde van die laterale lyn

⁴⁹ Eaters of the shrub. The Afrikaans word “vreter” usually designates an animal engaging in the activity of eating. When this word is used to refer to a human being it does so in a derogatory way and amongst other things emphasises a gluttonous manner of eating.

die ongeordende, evangeliese walrus
preek
oor ons ewige korale
en in stiller waters
die knorhane en die knobbelknoetse
tussen magistrate en rooisteenbrasse
in middagsluimer lê
en wilder die goue kruier rol -
almal na die jonger nimf in blinker skubberok
wat haar treurlied tussen Drie Ankers sing
in benede- en in bowetone
voor die opper- en die ondermane.

Eenkant wei afwykende amfibiane;
diepseeskilpaaie deur lou waters,
op die sand die arselende krap
en die belangrike bloueblaas
en die seeluis en slierdrelle
van die eerste kwalle uit die Dal,

en in skeure stekelrige pers see-eiers,
porseleinseevarkies en van borslinne
deur doppermanne uitgemors
op strande tot stukkende wit vinne,
visse van die stok en spies, die glad en glibberige
tong, die bekbroeiers en horingslakkies
wat in vlakwaters vroetel
met die blaasoppies en muntelose meerminbeursies
oor die streep gespat.

Maar by die volle vreters van dié bossie
word alle menswees en gewete uitgewis,
uitgeklop in skuim op klippe, uitgeswalp
in blouselwaters – al die vlekke,
besonderhede, tyd en plekke en herinneringe,
formaliteite, jeremiades, marmalades
by gebraaide spek en eiers –
en ten spyte van die haaie en skaamoog
alles vergeet op die gelyke wieging

van pruttelende monde
in eindelose weivelde van plankton
op die swym van die laterale drang
in die ewige paaiwaters...

met die naslaap se ontspanne sak
deur borrels tot sagter beddings
by oop- en toeprop van walviskorale
en baleinse deinings in die oerkreun
en –snork onderoseaanse orrels.

The New Larousse encyclopedia of mythology mentions two accounts of the Glaucus legend. The first account states that he was a humble fisherman from Anthedon. One day when he returned from fishing, he placed his catch among some herbs that grew along the shore. After eating the herbs, he noticed the fish leaping up and flinging themselves back into the sea. He too tasted the herbs and was transformed into a Triton⁵⁰. He jumped into the sea and dwelt as one with other marine deities.

⁵⁰ Triton is often described as having the form of a merman and is commonly depicted with a human torso that tapers into a fish's tail.

In the second account it is told that whilst pursuing a hare he noticed the animal eating a herb and instantaneously regaining its agility. In curiosity Glaucus also tasted the strange herb and thereby acquired immortality. He took to the sea either in obedience to a secret impulse sent by Zeus, or because he was vexed at being unable to make his fellow men acknowledge his immortality.

The poem opens with the lines:

Hy sink onder die waterlyn
na die glaucane⁵¹:

Here the Glaucus character has already been transformed and is about to join the other sea creatures. The stanzas that follow give an account of who these creatures are.

On the primary level of interpretation the Glaucus character descends into the ocean. On a secondary level the reader is aware of the correspondence between Glaucus and the figure of DJ Opperman. Due to the placement of

⁵¹ He sinks beneath the water-line to the Glaucaans

“VreTERS van die Bossie” in the volume of Poetry and with the LIFE IS A JOURNEY / ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor activated, the reader understands that the poem has bearing on the state of illness. Why is it that the reader arrives at this interpretation? The answer to this question is that we know unconsciously and automatically various metaphors for understanding life and illness. The inclusion of the verb “sink” in line 1 aids the reader in arriving at this interpretation. Let us consider again the relevant correspondences between the domains of life and journeys:

1. The person leading the life is the traveler.
2. His / her purposes are destinations.
3. The means for achieving purposes are routes.
4. Difficulties in life are impediments to motion.
5. The body is the vehicle.

From the correspondences above we can deduce that:

1. If the vehicle (body) sinks, motion/progress is impeded and the traveler is unable to reach his/her destination.
2. If the destination is not reached, then life’s purpose has not been fulfilled.

We know that difficulties in life are impediments to motion, but what exactly leads us to believe that illness is the difficulty under discussion? The answer lies in our unconscious and automatic activation of orientational metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:14) label them as such, "since most of them have to do with spatial orientation: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral. These spatial orientations arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment. Orientational metaphors give a concept a spatial orientation. Such metaphorical orientations are not arbitrary. They have a basis in our physical and cultural experience."

For the purpose of our discussion the up-down spatialization metaphors are particularly relevant. Let us now consider specific examples of the following orientational metaphors that lead us to the assumption that illness is the difficulty being experienced:

1. HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN

I'm feeling *up*. I'm *on top* of the world. The morale was *high* in the victors' locker room. She has the ability to *lift* my spirits. He's *down* in the dumps. My mood *sank* when my team lost. He *fell* into a depression.

2. HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP; SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN

HE *rose* from his from his sickbed. He's at his *peak*. After months of training he is finally in *top* form. He *fell* ill. He came *down* with the flu. His health took a *dive*. He's *slipping* away. He *dropped* dead.

3. CONSCIOUS IS UP; UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN

Wake him *up*! You should *rise* earlier if you wish to get to work on time. He *jumped* out of bed. She *fell* asleep during lectures. He's under hypnosis. He sank into a deep coma.

In view of the examples above, where emotional well-being, health and life, and consciousness are metaphorically expressed in terms of being up and upright, it comes as no surprise when "VreTERS van die Bossie's" opening line contains the word "sink" as it is aptly placed in a roll which deals with hallucinations, stupefaction and comas. The journey the reader is taken on is therefore a journey into the state of comas. During this part of the journey the reader observes opaque journey descriptions.

The next step in our analysis explores the correspondence between DJ Opperman and Glaucus. Against the D.J. OPPERMAN IS GLAUCUS metaphor we observe the following source domain characteristics:

1. Glaucus took to the water as a result of eating from the herb.
2. The herb contributed towards his transformation.
3. The effect of the herb set him apart from mortals, who have not eaten from the herb.
4. Glaucus' transformation can be viewed as progressive when considered against the gifts of rejuvenation and immortality.
5. The transformation can also be viewed as regressive in that he was changed into a lower being.

Fundamental to fully understanding the mapping from source domain to target domain we need to know which element in the target domain the herb maps onto. There are at least two possibilities. Because we know that the D.J. Opperman figure sank into a coma as a result of alcohol abuse, we firstly explore the avenue that the herb maps onto alcohol. Particulars in the Glaucus legend however lead us to refute this possibility. According to the legend the herb was a source of rejuvenation. We therefore consider the second possibility, namely, that the herb maps onto the attraction of creative writing. This reading seems to be more salient.

The Glaucus account in "VreTERS van die Bossie" deviates from the original legend in that the latter emphasizes the submarine journey after the herb had been eaten, while the former juxtaposes elements in the underwater journey with prominent figures in Afrikaans literature. The result is that this

particular landmark along the Opperman journey is meant to reflect a journey through Afrikaans literature.

On a primary level the text presents the Glaucans as creatures that dwell in the sea like “die aarselende krap⁵²” in line 23, “die belangrike bloueblaas⁵³” in line 24 and “pers see-eiers⁵⁴” in line 27. On a secondary level a number of these Glaucans (who have eaten from the herb of creative writing) refer to specific contributors to Afrikaans literature, for example, “almal na die jonger nimf in blinker skubberok wat haar treurlied tussen drie Ankers sing⁵⁵” in lines 17 and 18 refers to the poet Ingrid Jonker who committed suicide through drowning at Three Anchor Bay. Grové (1979:17) and Malan (1986:106) also indicate the presence of other literary figures such as Eugene N. Marais, Erasmus Smit, C.J. Langenhoven, N.P. van Wyk Louw, W.E.G. Louw, Peter Blum, Wilma Stockenström and Lina Spies.

It is noticeable that descriptions of these literary figures are cryptically presented. A sufficient amount of knowledge regarding the contribution of these figures to Afrikaans literature as well as a fair amount of processing effort on the part of the reader is required to recover the intended

⁵² The wavering crab

⁵³ The important bluebottle (Portugese man-of-war)

⁵⁴ Purple sea urchins

⁵⁵ ...all towards the young nymph in gleaming dress of scales who sings her dirge between Three Anchors

interpretations. Opperman's means of presenting this information echoes the mood and purpose of the fourth roll and leaves the reader feeling that portions of the account are unintelligible.

The Glaucan journey as per "Vreters van die Bossie" is described as a journey into the primordial. This is conveyed by the semantic richness of the words "Donker Kolk"⁵⁶ in line 3 which render at least two mutually inclusive interpretations. The first interpretation assigns the meaning "whirlpool" to the word "kolk" which evokes the image of a submerging Glaucus being magnetically drawn into a new domain. The adjective "donker" elucidates the nature and character of the whirlpool in that it is described as dark. Literally an absence of light is signified. Metaphorically, among other things, it signifies gloom and mysteriousness.

The second interpretation assigns the meaning "abyss" to the word "kolk", which renders the interpretation "the primeval chaos out of which it was believed that the earth and sky were formed." The assertion that Glaucus' submersion signifies a rebirth is therefore strongly supported. The modifier "donker" yet again enriches its target⁵⁷ and emphasises the primordial space before the creation of light.

⁵⁶ Dark whirlpool / abyss

⁵⁷ Abyss

The new domain in which the Glaucus character finds himself is inhabited by “verlore uitverkorenes”; elect individuals who are lost to the society they originally formed part of. This marine society is comprised of members from various walks of life. Their role and importance in society is signified by the names they are referred by. We observe for example the presence of an “evangeliese walrus⁵⁸” (line 9), “magistrate⁵⁹” (line 14) and “doppermane⁶⁰” (line 29) representing religion, rules and governing principles of the community and a specific form of religion, respectively. Apart from referring to specific figures in Afrikaans literature, they function too as archetypes, which have the purpose of defining the society. Among the varying types of individuals present, there are loiterers (“slierdrelle”), parasites (“seeluis⁶¹”) and those lacking in courage and vitality (“kwalle⁶²”). Alternatively the aforementioned creatures may also metaphorically represent the nature of the earliest Afrikaans literature.

The marine community is a heterogeneous one and is attested by the polarization of the aberrant amphibians, those who have yet to realize the

⁵⁸ Evangelical walrus

⁵⁹ Magistrates

⁶⁰ Members of the Reformed Church

⁶¹ Sea louse

⁶² Jellyfish

full potential of their poetic creativity. A distinction is made between them – the dabblers in creative writing and those who are totally immersed in it and have undergone total transformation. The latter are considered “volle vreters van die bossie.⁶³” The verb “vreet,” suggests a level of addiction, a compulsion of similar magnitude to that of the whirlpool in the second stanza.

The third stanza describes the transformation process. It involves the stripping away of all humanity (menswees) and the deletion of all conscience (gewete). The waters of rebirth purge all remnants of the former way of life, including details (“besonderhede”), time and places (“tyd en plekke”) and memories (“herinneringe”). Having almost undergone total metamorphosis, the Glaucus character continues his descent to the ocean floor. The rebirth seems to have a similar effect to that of an addictive substance on an addict. The effects of his addiction debunk the initial mystery evoked by the dark abyss as well as sources of fear.⁶⁴ He is so intoxicated by the effects of the substance, that the communication of fellow marine dwellers is experienced as mutterings, which have a lulling effect on him. The idea that his journey

⁶³ Line 36 –true / genuine / complete eaters of the shrub

⁶⁴ Represented by the presence of the sharks (“haaie”)

has a primordial destination is reinforced by "ewige paaiwaters."⁶⁵ It is reminiscent of the amniotic fluid, which encapsulate the developing fetus.

In the final stanza, after complete metamorphosis Opperman succeeds in transforming the metaphorical interpretation of the word "sak"⁶⁶. In our discussion of orientational metaphors we indicated the negative connotations associated with sinking and being horizontal. Experientially there is a vast contrast to the Glaucus character sinking toward the dark whirlpool in the opening stanza to that of the transformed creature dropping ("sak") towards the ocean bed. Opperman's success in altering the negative connotations associated with "sak" into a positive experience is achieved through the inclusion of the modifier "ontspanne" in line 49. He is furthermore welcomed to his primordial destination by a primal groan as he finally descends through soothing bubbles to the soft ocean bed.

In conclusion then, poetry is perceived as a primordial activity, which is a source of rejuvenation and a space in which the poet can become totally immersed in order to be freed from the constraints of reality.

⁶⁵ Eternal lulling waters

⁶⁶ Drop

The Opperman journey thus far may be perceived of as multi-directional. Firstly, there is a forward journey, which reaches "VreTERS van die Bossie", a specific landmark on a chronological route. Secondly there is a downward journey, represented by Glaucus' descent from the water surface to the ocean bed. Lastly, there is a backward journey into the primordial, culminating in the rebirth of the Glaucus character. On an autobiographical level we were exposed to the state of comas. On a literary level we were introduced to prominent figures in Afrikaans literature. This fusion is successfully presented through the combination of metaphor and the Glaucus legend.

4.2.4.5 ROLL 5 – DELIRIUM, STRUGGLE AND MIRACULOUS RECOVERY

Following the progression presented thus far, one suspects that after the height of the state of illness has been reached recovery is to follow. Our suspicion is confirmed in "Kokers", the opening poem to the fifth role.

KOKERS

oker vir die omies

in die soutwoestyne

as vetplante vetter

word van opgebergde kokerghries

dat die kokers bome koker

wat hinnekend opspring

oor die deririum van duine

pylers kwylend

en neusgate ope

vir die namibiese wit merrie

se vertrekkende kwakbries

Here there is yet again no explicit mention of illness or recovery. Our assumption is largely based on the role of metaphor in the poem. Inherent to the poem runs the theme of survival.

The title "kokers" in itself is ambiguous. It primarily refers to the large aloe or quiver tree, which is endemic to dry, semi-desert regions of Southern Africa. It secondly refers to the phallus and specifically renders the interpretation "stallion's pizzle". The third interpretation of "quiver" or "cylindrical casing" is particularly relevant when viewed against the title of the volume of poetry for it not only bears a visual resemblance to a bamboo staff, but also serves the same metaphorical function of housing or storing artefacts collected along the journey. During this particular phase of the

journey it contains the artefacts of delirium, struggle and recovery. Through the visual resemblance of the quiver (tree) to the bamboo staff Opperman manages to localize events.

The content of the poem is an infusion of the ambiguity reflected in the title. On one level the image is evoked of quiver trees in the Namib Desert awaiting the arrival of a refreshing breeze. This description has sexual undertones when one views the erect aloe as a phallus. The salience of this reading is confirmed by the second level of interpretation, which portrays the aroused Namibian stallions responding to the scent of the white mare in heat carried by the desert breeze.

Where then are the references to illness or recovery? The answer lies in the metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS, which exists in our conceptual systems. Lakoff and Turner (1989:27) assert that this metaphor is a standard way of talking and understanding about the life cycle, to which people are plants or parts of plants and a human life corresponds to a plant's life cycle. In terms of the metaphorical mapping from the source domain of plants to the target domain of people, the stages of plants and parts of plants in their yearly cycle correspond to the stages of life – the bud to youth, full leaf to maturity, and withered leaf to old age. In plants that are cultivated, such as wheat or

maize, the time of sowing corresponds to conception and harvesting corresponds to the moment of death.

In “Koker” we see the quiver tree corresponding to the life of the Opperman figure. To understand the entailments of the mapping from the source domain to the target domain, we need to elaborate on the nature of quiver trees.

Quiver trees are succulents that have the ability to flourish in arid conditions. It has smooth branches, which are covered with a thin layer of whitish powder that helps to reflect the sun’s hot rays. They start as a single trunk with a grayish bark, which splits open to reveal a golden, paper-like bark as the tree grows. The leaves are thick like those of a succulent, rather than thin and papery as on non-succulents. It is an extremely tough tree that may reach an age of over eighty years.

In portraying the Opperman figure as a quiver tree, adaptation to unfavourable conditions and survival in the midst of threatening circumstances are implied. The juxtaposition of the decay – survival ambiguity is presented through the reference to “opgebergde kokerghries⁶⁷”

⁶⁷ Stored aloe grease / sap

in line 4. On the one hand there is a weak implicature of the accompanying symptoms of cirrhosis of the liver, namely, the inability of the body to rid itself of toxins in spite of prolific urination. This implicature is supported in line 1 by the word "oker⁶⁸" – the colour of urine.

The images of survival however are more prominent. It is asserted that growth and progress comes about as a result of struggle. This growth is suggested by "...as vetplante vetter word van kokerghries dat die kokers bome koker wat hinnekend opspring⁶⁹..." The image is evoked of a flourishing aloe. We are witnesses to the growth process; the bark splits and it quivers the ever-emerging leading stem. This stem, which metaphorically corresponds to the phallus, seems to have regained its potency as we see it leaping toward the sky. It is here especially where signs of recovery come to the fore. In the preceding roll where we discussed the role of orientation metaphors, we indicated that sadness, sickness, death and unconsciousness are expressed metaphorically in terms of being down. In "Koker" we notice the opposite. Health and life is expressed metaphorically in terms of being up and upright. The Opperman figure, previously incarnated as the

⁶⁸ Ochre

⁶⁹ When succulents become fatter as a result of stored sap (so) that quiver trees (will) quiver trees which neighingly leaps...

legendary Glaucus, no longer lies on the ocean bed, but is systematically making his way to the water's surface.

One can't help but notice the correspondence of "Koker" to "Penwortel". Due to the references to the phallus, they share the theme of life and reproduction. Also, the "pen" in "penwortel", which metonymically stands for poetic creativity by means of metaphorical extension, finds its way to "Koker" – a quiver from which sprouts the creative expression of the recovery from illness. Opperman's choice of plant to reflect recovery is an interesting one, for the previously mentioned aloe sap - the "kokerghries" once processed is a useful ingredient in folk remedies.

Let us now ponder on the progress of the Opperman journey to recovery. It would be useful to refer to the quatrain found on the title page, quoted once more for ease of reference:

DIT IS DIE BEELD WAT DIE GESIN BEWAAR

VAN MARCO POLO DEUR GOD UITGESPAAR

NA HY IN STORMS GELOOI IS TOT DIE DOOD

DEUR WATER, VUUR, WOESTYN EN HONGERSNOOD⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ This is the image preserved by the family, of Marco Polo saved by God, after being thrashed by storms and left for dead, through water, fire, desert and famine.

Thus far we have seen and discussed the Opperman ordeal through water in “VreTERS van die bossie”. We have witnessed his tribulation in the desert in “Koker” and will still discuss how he responds to storms and famine in “Bontekoe”. Before we do this let us further elaborate on his journey to recovery.

The poem “Odysseus Ruik Moer” is an excellent account of the nature of this journey. The name Odysseus in the title immediately evokes the image of the hero of the Trojan War who is to return to his loved ones after a successful campaign. Details of *The Odyssey* structure the poem, but we will see that there are numerous deviations to the original tale. It proposes an Ithaca in the absence of an Odysseus.

Odysseus Ruik Moer

Dit syfer tot jou deur

hier aan die grens

waar jy teen die terroriste veg:

Jou vrou voel eensaam en trakteer
haar vroeër vryers op kroonwyne
uit jou kelder, sy leen jou boeke
aan besoekers uit. Snags skrik
jy wakker van die horries: jy sien
sy lag met ander mans intiem.

Jou oudste dogter sê jy moet
leer eerbied vir jou liggaam hê;
die tweede wil, ten spyte van haar kind,
onmiddellik skei. Die jongste swier
met motor pleks van klavier.

Jou skoonseuns pas jou klere aan.

Die verf blaker van die mure af,
dakpanne lek, en die kikoejoekweek
raak wild, soos die bediendes
en die skuld. Van jou tantièmes
kan jy slegs teen rente trek.

Alles om jou bars en breek.

Almal verwag dat jy sal sterf

en dan 'n Erekrus ontvang.

Morkel en Merwe wil hê dat jy

rondom eie nes moet mors.

Jou assistente by die werk

begin reeds oor jou opvolg baklei.

Jou liggaam span gegrief,

rek hom tot die uiterste

en korrel

deur al nege ringe

Alkoholies aggressief.

In the original epic the Greek hero Odysseus finds himself in a dilemma. Troy has fallen, but ten years after the victory he has still not returned to his home in Ithaca. He is believed to be dead and as a result all the young men of Ithaca and surrounding regions are trying to take over his vacant position. They besiege his palace and set themselves up as suitors to his wife Penelope. His ultimate quest is not only to return home, but also to

reacquire the identity and status that once was his. His successful journey home is considered a greater feat than his victory at Troy.

The title "Odysseus Ruik Moer"⁷¹ uses the word "moer" in its figurative sense and is probably derived from the expression "Hy is die moer in vir iemand", which means to be infuriated with someone. The title therefore reads "Odysseus writhing in anger". If one considers the word "moer" to render the verb "to hit very hard", the title reads, "Odysseus smells a fight". The two interpretations are mutually inclusive, for Odysseus' desire to fight (for what is his) is driven by his anger towards his adversaries.

The first stanza conjures up the image of war. The subject is on the border at war against the terrorists⁷². It immediately strikes the reader that the narration is in the second person. In previous poems we have seen Opperman presenting his ordeal objectively by telling the tale through metaphorical traveling companions. In the current poem it is achieved yet again, through the character of Odysseus. Further objectivity is achieved by means of the second person narration. As the reader glances over the subsequent stanzas it becomes evident that the poem is not a retelling of *The Odyssey*, but that illness and the recovery thereof is on the foreground.

⁷¹ The word "moer" is a contraction of the word "moeder", which means mother. Used as a noun it renders the interpretation "womb". When used as a verb it means to hit someone very hard, usually with the fist.

⁷² "Terroriste" (line 3)

This conclusion is reached again by means of metaphorical extension. The metaphor in question is ILLNESS IS WAR.

How is this metaphor different from other metaphors of illness? In which sense does one's form of existence during illness differ from that when one is in good health? The answer lies in the sense of embattlement. You become aware that you have a body that is of value to you and to those who love you. There is an entity known as illness that wishes to devalue your life. You are in a state of illness when your body is under attack and to ensure survival, there has to be the need to retaliate. During this process energy is harnessed to weaken the effect of the illness and ultimately eradicate its existence. In terms of the source domain of war Lakoff and Johnson (1980:4) claim that the awareness that one has of being besieged comes from the experience that one gets of being in a warlike situation even though it is not actual combat.

We can see how the target domain is structured in terms of the vocabulary of the source domain by considering the characteristics of illness:

1. You have a life that is of value to you. (*taking a particular position in war*)
2. The illness has no regard for your life. (*takes a conflicting position*)
3. The difference in position gives rise to a particular effect on the body.
(*conflict*)

4. Your body resists by means of the immune system (*front line of defense*) and may be further strengthened through the intervention of medication. (*allied forces*)
5. The effectiveness of the body's resistance to the illness lies in the knowledge of the composition of the illness and treats it so that its effects diminishes and ultimately disappears. Alternatively, the illness can affect a part of the body where there is very little resistance. (*attack*)
6. The illness may be present without the sufferer's knowledge thereof. (*covert invasion*)
7. The body may become weak and unable to rid itself of the illness which may ultimately lead to death (*surrender and defeat*) OR
8. The body may recover and full health may be restored. (*victory*)

Based on the argument presented above, the "terrorists" mentioned in the first stanza is identified as illness that has infiltrated the body. The word "veg"⁷³ tells us that the sufferer is not a passive participant in the war, but that he is offering resistance. The location of the war is significant. We are told that the subject is at the "grens"⁷⁴. In war the border is one of the locations where armed combat takes place. When we view the battleground metaphorically, the word "grens" can have at least two interpretations. In

⁷³ Fight

⁷⁴ Border

the first place it could refer to the line separating illness from health. The second interpretation, which assigns to "grens" the meaning "limit", suggests that the subject's body has reached its physical limits as far as illness is concerned. As a result there are two possible outcomes. The subject may either be overwhelmed by the illness, not recover and die or he may fight back and regain his health. The fact that the subject is at a border of sorts implies that he is separated from his loved ones and that there is no communication between them. It could hence imply a state of coma or unconsciousness.

The arsenal at the subject's disposal is fueled by nightmares of dispossession. In the second stanza, which is symbolic of marital decay, he is plagued by nightmares that challenge previously held beliefs. His esteemed wife for example, who in "Drie Juwele" was described as a remarkable influence in his life, is depicted in a negative way. He has visions of her entertaining and intimately engaging with suitors at his expense. These events deviate from the original epic where Penelope is portrayed as the faithful wife. Her resourcefulness and faithfulness is reflected when she is pressurized by her suitors to marry one of them. She promises to marry only after she had woven a shroud for Laertes, Odysseus' father. She deceives her suitors by weaving by day and undoing the day's progress by night. Her trick however is discovered three years later and she is forced to complete the garment.

The third stanza symbolizes the deterioration of the family and reflects especially on his three daughters. Here too, women who were previously elevated and held in high regard are portrayed as being banal. They are neither his muses as in "Penwortel" nor do they fulfill a fateful role as in "Drie Susters". The visions he has of them is one where they, with the exception of his eldest daughter, are not fulfilling the ideals he once had for them. In the case of his second-eldest daughter for example, there are signs of marital breakdown. His youngest daughter chooses a fast life ("swier") as opposed to a preferred life of sophistication ("klavier"⁷⁵). In his absence his son-in-laws are setting their hopes on assuming his role. Here too there is a deviation from *The Odyssey*. Odysseus has no daughters, but a son Telemachus who in contrast flourishes under pressure. Instead of allowing the suitors to overrun his father's estate and defile his mother, he does his utmost to keep them at bay. He also clings to the conviction that his father is still alive and sets out to prove this belief.

The fourth stanza depicts the ruin and deterioration of his estate. An image is evoked of flaking walls, overgrown weeds, unruly servants and financial struggle. This image may also be symbolic of bodily degradation driven by the metaphor A BODY IS A BUILDING with the sub-mapping ILLNESS IS

⁷⁵ Piano

DESTRUCTION TO THE BUILDING hence “alles om jou bars en breek⁷⁶” in line 21 may on a secondary level refer to failing body organs.

The consequences of the previously suggested bodily degradation are explored in the fifth stanza: everyone expects the subject to die. The value of his life's contribution will be affirmed by a posthumous commendation however the superficiality of this intention is highlighted by the infighting of his assistants, who, while he is still alive argue about who would serve as a successor.

The final stanza portrays an aggrieved subject that has reached the limits of psychological and physical torment. The hallucinations reflecting his downfall serve to catapult him to recovery. Here the image is evoked of the subject, metaphorically presented as an arrow on the verge of being released from a bowstring. The proposed transposition from one location to the next represents the movement from the state of illness toward the state of recovery. The poem ends in a climax and it seems as if the moment prior to the subject being flung to consciousness is frozen in time. The reader's attention is drawn to an event in *The Odyssey*, the moment before Odysseus reveals himself to Penelope, Homer(2000:334):

⁷⁶ Everything around you bursts and breaks

“Odysseus strung the great bow. Lifting it up,
He plucked the string, and it sang beautifully
Under his touch, with a note like a swallow’s.
The suitors were aghast. The color drained
From their faces, and Zeus thundered loud,
Showing his portents and cheering the heart
Of the long-enduring, godlike Odysseus.
One arrow lay bare on the table. The rest,
Which the suitors were about to taste,
Were still in the quiver. Odysseus picked up
The arrow from the table and laid it upon
The bridge of the bow, and, still in his chair,
Drew the bowstring and the notched arrow back.
He took aim and let fly, and the bronze-tipped arrow
Passed clean through the holes of the twelve axeheads
From first to last ”

The quotation above describes the final challenge that Penelope poses to her suitors. She retrieves Odysseus' great bow from the storeroom and orders her maids bring forth twelve axeheads. The one who is able to string

her husband's bow and shoot an arrow through all the axeheads will win her hand in marriage. The anticipation that mounts among the spectators moments before the arrow leaves the bowstring is similar to that which is achieved in the final stanza. The subject's confidence to succeed in the task at hand is strengthened by his adversaries' will for him to fail. In *The Odyssey*, the suitors ridicule Odysseus who is disguised as a beggar, when he carefully inspects the bow before shooting the arrow. Opperman, the Odysseus counterpart is driven to recover by the characters Morkel (van Tonder) and Merwe (Scholtz) who wants him to divulge pertinent information about his literature ("rondom eie nes moet mors"⁷⁷). In *The Odyssey* the arrow passes through twelve axeheads. In "Odysseus Ruik Moer" however the body⁷⁸, which is the metaphorical arrow, passes through nine rings. Why do we have this inconsistency?

The answer lies in Opperman's circumscription of illness. If we are to consider the metaphor D.J. OPPERMAN IS DANTE then the number nine bears particular significance, for it attributes to illness the nine dimensions of hell. As far as the volume of poetry is concerned, the nine rings may correspond to its nine sections, namely, the seven rolls, the prologue and the epilogue.

⁷⁷ Line 25

⁷⁸ "liggaam" in line 28

In the poem's progression from the first stanza to the last, the reader searches for the character of Odysseus. In the opening stanza the reader suspects that it is Odysseus that is at war. In the second stanza one suspects that Penelope is being discussed. As we proceed through the poem the numerous inconsistencies with *The Odyssey* and the style of the poem indicate that what we have here is a parody of the original text. Our search for Odysseus therefore, is futile. It does however enable us to reveal a disguised character.

The art of disguise though is true to *The Odyssey*. Athena for example appears to Telemachus in disguise to encourage him to search for his father. Before finally revealing his true identity, Odysseus disguises himself to test the faithfulness of Penelope. It is the disguised character of D.J. Opperman that is unmasked in the fifth stanza. Although previously presented information⁷⁹ alluded to the suspicion, there are several indications in the stanza to support this view.

The mentioning of the Cross of Honour ("erekruis" in line 23) that is awarded posthumously confirms the salience of the mapping from the domain of

⁷⁹ For example, mentioning that he has three daughters.

Odysseus to that of D.J. Opperman. The following credentials listed on the title page strengthen the metaphorical correspondence:

...BEWERK DEUR⁸⁰

D.J. OPPERMAN

D.LITT.,D.LITT. (H.C.), D.LITT. (H.C. POSTUUM)

Here we see the Cross of Honour mapping on to a posthumous degree by means of the ILLNESS IS WAR metaphor.

With the words "rondom eie nes"⁸¹ (line 25) that bears resemblance to the title of N.P. van Wyk Louw's (1970) *Rondom Eie Werk*⁸² in which the poet comments on his own work, there are suggestions that the figures Morkel and Merwe (line 24), Opperman's contemporaries in the literary world, wants him to make revelations about his own work.

"Odysseus Ruik Moer" is a pertinent poem as far as illness and recovery is concerned. *The Odyssey* structures the concept of illness in the sense that it presents the recovery from illness as an odyssey. Through the OPPERMAN IS

⁸⁰ Edited by D.J. Opperman, D.LITT.,D.LITT. (H.C.), D.LITT. (H.C. POSTHUMOUS)

⁸¹ About own nest

⁸² About own work

DANTE metaphor the experiential nature of recovery is depicted as the torments of hell. It calls to mind the image of fire and hence has associations to the like mentioned in the quatrain on the title page. Through the activation of the Odysseus and Dante source domains we are able to infer that recovery is certain.

Chronologically, in terms of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphors one would expect "Bontekoe" to directly follow "Odysseus Ruik Moer", because the latter ends in a climax where the subject is metaphorically about to be propelled into space and the former begins where an explosion literally flings the character Bontekoe into the air. The Opperman journey proceeds via the Odysseus-Bontekoe metamorphosis. The Bontekoe guise remarkably enriches the journey of illness.

Bontekoe

Dit het teen kerslig met die dop begin

toe vate vlam vat en die skip

vol brandende brandewyn opspring

en my, Bontekoe, nader skiet na God.

Ek val terug...moet in `n kleiner boot inklim.

`n Rukkie, in die skip se ligitelaaie,
sien ons kase, mensekoppe, waatlemoene,
spanspekke, pekelvarke en skouerblaai
dobberend geklits in kookwaters
deur swaardvisse en blouvinhaai.

Ek neem die brood en water op rantsoen.
Die brood raak op. Uit ons laaste vaasje
skep ek smoors in die neusie van `n skoen
`n slok...Elkeen drink sy eie water,
buike en die bene swel – party bars groen.

Die matrose fluister snags en murmureer.
Kyk, kyk hoe hulle na die jong seun kyk.
Ek praat en soebat, smeeek ons Liewe Heer,
toe skielik uit die mis en tropereën
skreeu om ons `n duisend meeu.

Later die matrose weer: die seun! Ek beloof

as daar geen uitkoms is, my eie lyf.

Maar skielik uit die water breek 'n boog

gevlakte vis. En skommelend nader dryf –

o God, drie maal geprys! – harig 'n klapperdop.

The explicit introduction of the character Bontekoe comes as no surprise to a reader who has encyclopedic knowledge of the intertext: *Journael ofte gedenkwaardige beschrijvinghe van de Oost-Indische reijse van Willem Ysbrantsz. Bontekoe*⁸³. The journal describes the encounters of the Dutch seafarer Willem Ysbrantz. Bontekoe, who in service of the Dutch East Indies Company⁸⁴ embarked on a voyage of trade to the East Indies. The journey descriptions are presented as being both perilous and exhilarating. On the whole the voyage is considered an ordeal and like Odysseus, the skipper's quest for survival leads to the voyage's success.

There are a number of clues at the beginning of the volume of poetry that primes the suspicion that Bontekoe will later resurface. The first is the quatrain found opposite the title page. It is clear that that it has been modeled from Bontekoe's journal. In *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok* the quatrain is placed below a picture/drawing of D.J. Opperman, which is stylistically

⁸³ Memorable descriptions of the East Indian voyage of Willem Ysbrantz. Bontekoe

⁸⁴ Verenigde Oostindiesche Compagnie (VOC)

similar to the following text that is inscribed below a sketch of Bontekoe in the intertext. In doing so Opperman metaphorically links himself to the Dutch seafarer, yet stresses that the experiences documented in the volume of poetry are his own.

Dits 't beelt van Bonte -koe, dien Godt, op zijne vaert
Tot elckx verwonderingh, heft wonderlijk bewaert:
Mits hij de doodt ontgingh, self midden inde Doodt;
In 't water, Vuer in Moordt in Dorst en Hongersnoodt -

Further entanglement of the Opperman, Marco Polo and Bontekoe figures is visible on the title page, which stylistically corresponds to the plate in the Bontekoe journal, Bontekoe (1952:10). In *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok* the poet Opperman presents himself as Marco Polo and introduces the volume of poetry as journey descriptions in the style of an entry in a captain's (Bontekoe) log. Proceeding to the prologue in *Komas*, here too it is clear that the poem "Voorschrift aen Clerken" is based on "Voor-reden aen den leser" in Bontekoe's Journal, Bontekoe (1952:5).

"Bontekoe" is not a retelling of the entire seventeenth century voyage, but highlights the incidents surrounding the fire and explosion on board the ship

“Nieuw Hoorn.” As with previous intertextual adaptations pertaining to the underlying themes of the volume of poetry, “Bontekoe” too elaborates and deviates from the original text. The focus of our textual analysis will be on metaphors that express illness and recovery.

In the original text the cellarman takes a candle and makes his way to the hold of the ship to fill his cask with brandy. The candle used to illuminate the dark space sets the brandy alight and the fire spreads. Bontekoe and his crew unsuccessfully try to extinguish the blaze. The fire becomes uncontrollable, ignites the gunpowder on board and the ship is destroyed in the explosion. Bontekoe is flung into the air and uncertain whether he would survive the ordeal reaches his hands toward the heavens and prays, “Daer vaer ick heen, o Heer! Weest my arme sondaer genadigh!”⁸⁵ Bontekoe (1957:30). He survives the blast and lands in the water amongst the ship’s remains. Back in the water he exclaims, “In’t water leggende kreeg ick sulcke nieuwe couragie gelijk of ick een nieu mensch hadde gheweest”⁸⁶ Bontekoe (1952:30). Sailors help him on board a lifeboat and their quest for survival begins amidst diminishing provisions of water and bread. In the heart of their privation the crew is driven to drink seawater and their own urine. Relief comes in the form of seagulls, who allow themselves to be caught and flying fish that unexpectedly leap into the boat. Afterwards, due

⁸⁵ Here I come oh Lord. Be merciful to a sinner like me.

⁸⁶ In the water my courage is renewed and it seems that I have become a new person (being).

to the scarcity of nourishment the castaways threaten to eat the younger members of the crew. Bontekoe does his utmost to dissuade them from doing so. Before resorting to this extreme measure they see land and after arriving there, they eat coconuts and drink its milk to satisfy hunger and thirst.

Snyman's (1987:22) comprehensive analysis of "Bontekoe" shows a systematic deictic shift from the character of Bontekoe to that of Opperman as well as a shift from 1619 in the Ocean surrounding Sumatra to 1979 (the date in which *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok* came into existence). Unlike other analyses of this particular poem, which explore deixis, the role of various symbols and metaphors and the theme of salvation, our analysis will mainly explore the manner in which metaphors express and explore illness and recovery.

Assuming the transposition from the character of Bontekoe to the character of D.J. Opperman we need to explore the notion of illness within context of the source domains Bontekoe and journeys. A striking feature of "Bontekoe" is the manner in which Opperman contracts the elaborate original text into five stanzas and yet maintains the dramatic content of key events.

The first stanza depicts an explosion onboard the ship, which literally propels the Bontekoe character into the air and figuratively flings him nearer to God. To understand what this event means in the domain of Opperman, the reader has to grasp which elements in the source domain map onto which elements in the target domain. The elements of travel, namely, the vehicle, the direction, the route, the destination and the traveler, bear specific significance in our interpretation. The fact that Opperman is the traveler is obvious. Let us propose that the ship, which is the vehicle, maps onto the body of Opperman. In order for the journey to be purposive, the vehicle, namely the body has to move in the direction of the destination. The ultimate mortal destination is the end of life, while landmarks represent particular events experienced during a lifetime. The destruction of the vehicle poses a threat to a purposive journey, since the intended destination is reached without passing landmarks on the itinerary. In the first stanza however, the Bontekoe ship is destroyed due to the flammable brandy. Mapping Bontekoe onto Opperman, the reader understands that the (ab)use of alcohol caused the degradation of the body. Metaphorically, one would expect the journey to have reached its end, but line 4 negates this expectation as we notice on the level of Bontekoe, the skipper climbing into a smaller boat. How is it possible to propose that Opperman assumes residence in another body? The answer lies in a previously cited exclamation in the Bontekoe journal, Bontekoe (1952:30), "In't water leggende kreeg ick sulcke nieuwe couragie gelijk of ick een nieu mensch hadde gheweest."

Here the change of vehicle suggests a rebirth. Through the embarking onto a smaller boat, the reader understands that the Opperman character is driven to humility and self-denial. The recovery of this interpretation is made possible by the metaphor, PROMINENCE IS BIG, INSIGNIFICANCE IS SMALL.

Oriental metaphors in the first stanza are used in an unusual way. In our conceptual systems we unconsciously access the metaphor SUCCESS IS UP, FAILURE IS DOWN. The following are examples of this metaphor:

1. *He's back on top.*
2. *He will soar above his problems.*
3. *He's going all the way up.*
4. *She fell from grace.*
5. *She is down in the dumps.*

In the first stanza we notice these orientational metaphors being used paradoxically. Through the explosion the character of Bontekoe is shot vertically towards God, "en my, Bontekoe, nader skiet na God" (line 3). Hereby an upward motion is proposed. Metaphorically speaking it should be a good thing – and it is, for it suggests a spiritual union with God. It simultaneously suggests an undesirable result, namely, death. Physically, the upward propulsion has the potential of culminating in death. The Bontekoe character also falls back, "Ek val terug...moet in 'n kleiner boot

inklim" (line 5). Metaphorically it is undesirable because it suggests the breaking of fellowship with God and failure. Literally, it is a good thing because the end result, as per text, is survival.

In the second stanza the subject witnesses the destruction of the ship by fire. The use of the definite article "die" in "die skip"⁸⁷ affirms the subject's denial of self through the conceptual metaphor THE BODY IS A VEHICLE. A range of religious symbols are present. Firstly, there is the purging effect of fire, which relates to the process of rebirth. Secondly, the process of baptism comes to mind when one considers that the subject is totally surrounded by water. The reader particularly has in mind the idea of a baptism of fire, for the water surrounding the subject is referred to as "kookwaters."⁸⁸ Thirdly a communion is proposed through the symbols of bread and water. In line 11 it is noteworthy that the subject is being served the elements of communion,⁸⁹ and therefore on the receiving end of mercy. In the fourth stanza the subject only has to contend with the onslaught of the elements, whereas the young boy in the boat is also in danger of being the victim of cannibalism. The empathetic subject prays and pleads for the boy's physical salvation. Redemption comes from above in the form of seagulls which temporarily draws the starving sailors' attention away from the boy.

⁸⁷ The ship

⁸⁸ Boiling water(s)

⁸⁹ Ek neem die brood en water op rantsoen

Self-denial is personified in the final stanza when the subject promises to offer himself as ransom for the life of the boy, if cannibalism turned out to be the last resort. The crew is however saved temporarily through the provision of flying fish. They are also promised an end to their ordeal at sea, when they notice a coconut floating towards them – an additional form of nourishment and an indication of nearby land.

In view of the above, the Bontekoe figure experiences a remarkable transformation in character. He is purged, saved, baptized, redeemed, receives mercy and finally personifies mercy through the offering of his own body. Through the transposition of the character of Bontekoe to that of Opperman, the essence of these experiences is also transferred.

How does this information relate to the Opperman journeys of life and illness? First of all we notice that not much forward motion is observed in the Bontekoe / Opperman figures. This by no means indicates a lack of progress since the locations indicated by the opening and closing stanzas are distinctly different. Instead of depicting a moving observer to indicate forward movement, Opperman introduces new scenes and experiences, which has the effect of locations moving toward the observer.

Resuming the argument that the metaphors THE BODY IS A VEHICLE, ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY and LIFE IS A JOURNEY are readily accessed in "Bontekoe", we can deduce that the journey is purposive because the poem opens with the theme of destruction and ends with the theme of salvation, hope and life. The vehicle/ship/boat progresses from a location which is totally surrounded by water to a probable location of dry land. Through this motion there is a strong suggestion of recovery, for through the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY metaphor, the element dry land, which is a significant landmark, maps onto recovery.

As far as illness is concerned, there are several indications of the effects of the illness. The most prominent effect is that of hallucination. The mere fact that Opperman presents himself as a Bontekoe is a hallucination. In the second stanza, when the Bontekoe character witnesses the destruction of the ship, he sees cheese, decapitated heads, watermelons, cantaloupes, pickled pork and shoulder blades floating among the flotsam. Metaphorically the destruction of the ship on the level of Bontekoe maps onto the deterioration of the body on the level of Opperman. In spite of the ratio of ship to foodstuff, the items which Bontekoe notices are predominantly edible. Given the circumstances of the starving crew, which is later sketched, there is a strong implication that Bontekoe is hallucinating. This hallucination, through metaphorical projection maps onto a hallucinating Opperman figure.

Similarly, in the third stanza the crew's bodily degradation, "buike en bene swel – party bars groen", maps onto the degradation of the body of Opperman.

In conclusion, the metaphoric parallel between Bontekoe and Opperman is that the former is saved from drowning and the latter is recovering from cirrhosis. It should be noted that "Bontekoe" ends with a promise of dry land, an implication that it still has to be reached.

4.2.4.6 ROLL 6 – THE END OF THE ORDEAL

"Glaukus klim uit die water" fits in perfectly with the selected poems that reflect the essence of the rolls on illness and recovery. The journey into hallucinations, stupefaction and comas is represented by the Glaucus character. The journey of delirium, struggle and miraculous recovery are aptly indicated by the large aloe tree in "Koker", by Odysseus in "Odysseus Ruik Moer" and finally by the character Bontekoe in "Bontekoe." On an image level concerning the process of illness and recovery, we have seen illness portrayed as an immersion into water. The duration of illness was reflected as an odyssey. The immanence thereof was indicated as being surrounded by water. Taking the argument one step further, it should be

true that stepping out of water should imply recovery if we are to treat the mapping of metaphor ILLNESS / A COMA IS BEING IN WATER consistently. This is indeed the case in "Glaukus Klim uit die Water"

Glaukus Klim uit die Water

Hy skud die skubbe en die druppels af

en lig hom teen 'n vin

dié vaste wêreld in.

En uit die vier knoppe van die selekant

knop

voet na voet

hand na hand

kruip en waggel ek orent

langs die eersterivier

deur bos en tussen oorblare van die olifant

oor 'n wankelplank...

,hier wil ek woon':

Thibaultstr. 3

3340 jou telefoon

identiteitsdokument...?

En om my: uit die eerste waters

staan `n wêreld nat en skoon.

Ek moet die name

van die minerale leer,

van angelier, voëls-

alles noem en tel

en deur die noem besit:

dit annekseer,

my vlag laat wapper,

proklameer

en met kaart en transport

die aarde se katalogus

aan hierdie grens as pionier opstel

en my oortuig dat ek bo-waters woon.

Die takke van seringe drup,

japonicas is nat,

die voorkop van `n apie drup,
en hoepoes loop pik-pik
oor nat vlegsels van die kweek-
en alles drup, geweek
met waters van die doop.

En óp foon kom foon

duif óp duif

boek óp boek

skoelapper

uit `n gister sit

en alles stuif en teel,

is geil en naak;

en duif en boek

en vrou en alles ruik na sout en see,

bamboes en meeu

en alles sien ek bifokaal.

Klim in `n groot wit bad,

was af die slym,
dep met 'n handdoek droog,
trap versigtig,
o altyd so versigtig
vir die gly,
vir die terugglip tot vis, tot jakopeweroog.

In the analysis of "VreTERS van die Bossie" only the part of the Glaucus myth pertaining to his transformation into sea-being was discussed. As a precursor to the analysis of "Glaukus Klim uit die Water" further information relating to this mythological figure is worth mentioning. Along with his transformation into a Triton, Glaucus was granted the gift of immortality. Apollo conferred upon him the gift of prophesy. Once a year he would leave his underwater abode in Delos to patrol the various islands of the Aegean sea. He would appear to sailors with his emaciated body covered with seaweed and seashells to predict sinister occurrences. The resultant image is that of Glaucus performing a recurring ritual; emerging, proclaiming and submerging. According to the myth Glaucus does not leave his habitat of the ocean for his initial earthly dwelling place. His being is inherently linked to his home in the sea.

In contrast “Glaucus Klim uit die Water” presents a Glaucus which has undergone a full transformation. In *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* this full transformation is presented in two distinct parts. “Vreters van die Bossie” represents the first half of the cycle, namely, the metamorphosis from man to immortal Triton. “Glaucus Klim uit die Water” represents the other half of the cycle, which involves the metamorphosis from Triton back to man. Metaphorically we observe the transformation from D.J. Opperman to Glaucus to a reborn D.J. Opperman, where the Glaucus phase is a manifestation of the world of hallucinations, stupefaction and comas. Through the complete metamorphosis we see items in the source domain of Glaucus mapping onto items in the target domain of Opperman. Even though the transformed Opperman is distinct from the Glaucus-Opperman the relation between the two entities will remain due to the mappings from the target to the source domain. Any future references to the source domain of Glaucus will immediately activate a corresponding meaning in the Opperman domain.

Stylistically the poem is divided into six stanzas of uneven length. It is contained in the sixth roll in which we observe a rebirth, presented as the first birth of prototypical man via images of biblical creation. In the biblical account man was created on the sixth day which corresponds to the rebirth or recreation of Opperman which occurs in the sixth roll.

The first stanza is written in the third person and presents a Glaucus which emerges from the water. The use of the third person pronouns “hy” and “hom” proposes a distinction between the speaker and the Glaucus character, who we intertextually know through “Vreters van die Bossie” are alter egos of each other. The distinction is as a result of the previously cited conceptual metaphor ILLNESS / A COMA IS BEING IN WATER which entails that if you are submerged in water and hence in a coma, there is no awareness of self. Everything pertaining to being submerged in water metaphorically represents illness. The first step of the Glaucus-Opperman metamorphosis as portrayed in the first stanza thus involves the shedding of scales⁹⁰ and droplets of water.⁹¹ We also observe a change in habitat from water to land, which by the same metaphor signifies recovery. Here the metaphors are rich in imagistic detail where a detailed set of images are mapped from source to target domain unlike structural metaphors, where a source domain conceptually structures a target domain. From the image metaphor point of view, Glaucus is Opperman, the scales and droplets of water are particular elements of illness, the ocean is the state of unconsciousness and dry land is the state of consciousness.

In the second stanza the reader is presented with a metaphorical blend, which is a combination of the Glaucus figure and a synthesized tetrapod /

⁹⁰ “Skubbe” in line 1

⁹¹ “Druppels” in line 1

coelacanth image that gives rise to the metaphorical mappings from the source domain to the corresponding elements in the Opperman target domain. Details from the coelacanth / tetrapod domain (Heemstra 2004:91-93), which maps onto the Opperman domain are as follows: firstly, coelacanths are believed to be related to tetrapods which account for the metamorphosis of once sea dwelling creatures into land dwelling creatures. Coelacanths are secondly a prehistoric species which were believed to have been extinct since the Cretaceous period⁹² until a specimen was found near East London in 1938. It is therefore a living fossil, which had disappeared from one or more periods from the fossil record, only to reappear later.

The duality associated with the coelacanth in terms of being water based and having land based links, maps onto the state between illness and recovery. It is used on both a conceptual and imagistic level to represent the link between Glaucus and the emerging Opperman. The details pertaining to the belief that coelacanths were extinct until it was rediscovered maps onto the item in the Opperman domain relating to recovery from a coma, which was against the consensus amongst family and friends that he would die.

The character portrayed in the second stanza is therefore neither a typical Glaucus nor Opperman figure. Instead the character is something in-

⁹² Approximately 70 million years ago

between and is in the process of evolving into the person of the recovered Opperman. Out of the body of the coelacanth, feet⁹³ and hands⁹⁴ develop, which contribute to gradual directed motion. The speaker has now acquired an identity and unlike in the first stanza is conscious of the self as he refers to himself as "ek."⁹⁵ His motion is progressive; he initially crawls⁹⁶ and then staggers⁹⁷ upright toward a specific destination, 3 Thibault Street, the physical address of D.J.Opperman and starting point of the reader's search for the returned Opperman⁹⁸. The previously mentioned conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY help us to understand motion toward a destination as progress and recovery. Within the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor staggering would normally be seen as an impediment to motion, but within the context of the progression which starts with crawling that leads to upright staggering we understand it to mean health and consciousness as a result of the HEALTH AND LIFE ARE UP; SICKNESS AND DEATH ARE DOWN, and CONSCIOUS IS UP; UNCONSCIOUS IS DOWN orientational metaphors.

⁹³ "Voete" in line 6

⁹⁴ "hande" in line 7

⁹⁵ Lines 7 and 12

⁹⁶ "Kruip" in line 8

⁹⁷ "Waggel" in line 8

⁹⁸ 3 Thibault Street was originally alluded to in "Wegwyser" in roll 1

Whereas the speaker in the second stanza attained self-knowledge in claiming a specific identity, he now in the third stanza further observes the newly created world around him. Two discrete identities are observed. On the one hand there is the distinct Opperman character and on the other there is generic man. These two entities are fused through the conceptual metaphor DJ OPPERMAN IS ADAM. The result is that the poems can be read on at least two levels. On the level of Adam newly created man as the steward of creation names and thereafter stakes his claim on the fauna and flora around him.

On the level of Opperman there too is a process of naming and claiming. Here through the activation of the RECOVERY IS ANNEXATION OF LAND and the related LAND IS A CATEGORICAL ITEM conceptual metaphors, the ability to name and remember categorical items is understood as recovery. Each item which is named and learnt is understood to be land which is annexed. The apt use of the word annex⁹⁹ indicates that the territory on which the speaker finds himself is smaller than the two merging entities, the larger of the two being the underwater domain, the domain of illness. This signifies partial recovery. However, as more land is annexed and hence more items are named and categorized, the domain of health and recovery is

⁹⁹ "Annekseer" in line 23

established. It is this process that convinces the speaker that he now is a terrestrial being.¹⁰⁰

In the fourth stanza the newly created world is presented to the reader through the eyes of the newly baptized speaker. In the previous stanza he has had to learn the names of objects in his environment, but now he shows mastery in describing his world through his use of a combination of superordinate categories with basic level categories. He speaks for example of the Cape syringa¹⁰¹, japonicas,¹⁰² hoopoes,¹⁰³ a little ape¹⁰⁴ and quick grass¹⁰⁵. Through the conceptual metaphors mentioned in the previous paragraph, this indicates progressive recovery. The world as described by the speaker is like himself drenched by the waters of baptism. The word "waters" in line 35 refers specifically to baptism which can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Firstly, it could refer to the religious practice of christening, where allegiance is proclaimed to Christ and a name is given to the individual being baptized by the sprinkling of water on the forehead. Secondly it could refer to the biblical account of baptism which involves the

¹⁰⁰ "en my oortuig dat ek bo -waters woon" in line 29

¹⁰¹ "Seringe" in line 30

¹⁰² "Japonicas" in line 31

¹⁰³ "Hoepoes" in line 33

¹⁰⁴ "Apie" in line 32

¹⁰⁵ "Kweek" in line 34

entire submersion into water directly after the process of salvation. Thirdly it could signify an initiation where the individual is born into a new role. Each of these interpretations has its merit on distinct levels. The water dripping from the syringas, japonicas, quick grass and significantly on the forehead of the little ape are as a result of the christening or name-giving rite performed by the Adam, also known as Opperman. The Opperman figure himself is implicitly drenched as a newborn and reborn being, released from a watery domain of illness into the earthly domain of recovery where he is to fulfill the role into which he has been initiated. The waters of baptism which are referred to in the fourth stanza is distinct from the water¹⁰⁶ referred to in the second and third stanza's where it signifies primordial waters and the waters of birth respectively.

In addition to his stewardship role, the biblical Adam was also commanded to go forth and multiply. As a metaphorical Adam, productivity and creativity in the sphere of Opperman relates to artistic creativity or specifically to the production of poetic work. There is implicit evidence of this in the fifth stanza. There is firstly evidence of the speaker's recovery which is represented by the telephone calls of family and acquaintances¹⁰⁷, then

¹⁰⁶ "Eersterivier" in line 9 refers to both to an actual river which flows through the vicinity of Stellenbosch, and primordial waters. "Eerste waters" in line 16 refers both to primordial waters and the waters of birth.

¹⁰⁷ "En op foon kom foon" in line 37

comes divine inspiration¹⁰⁸ which is metaphorically and symbolically represented by a dove. Thereafter follows artistic production¹⁰⁹. The newness of his own creation is emphasized by the smell of salt and sea¹¹⁰ which drenches the content¹¹¹ of his creative work. The speaker/poet clearly has new insights; having experienced the tribulation of illness and the joy of recovery, he now has a bifocal¹¹² view of life.

The dual nature of the Glaucus figure resurfaces in the sixth stanza. In the preceding stanzas we have seen progressive recovery through the surfacing from the water of the Glaucus figure. According to the myth his appearance marked the prediction of sinister occurrences. In "Glaukus klim uit die water" the reader has the expectation that tragic events are somehow to be announced or to unfold, however we have in contrast witnessed remarkable recovery, which marks the end of the ordeal. In the final two lines of the poem we realize that there is a tragic fear inherent in the character of the Glaucan Opperman who worries that he could lose his Opperman nature to his Glaucus counterpart¹¹³.

¹⁰⁸ "Duif op duif" in line 38

¹⁰⁹ "Boek op boek" in line 39

¹¹⁰ " ...en alles ruik na sout en see"

¹¹¹ "en vrou" in line 45 and "bamboes en meeu" in line 46

¹¹² "En alles sien ek bifokaal" in line 47

¹¹³ "so versigtig vir die gly, vir die terugglip tot vis, tot jakopeweroog" in lines 52-22

The eminence of new perspectives and full recovery will now finally be explored through prominent metaphors in the seventh roll.

4.2.4.7 ROLL 7 – JOURNEY’S END: NEW PERSPECTIVES

The reader of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* has seen the Opperman figure assuming various guises within the journey of illness, life and recovery. We have seen him presented as a Marco Polo, an Odysseus, a Bontekoe and a Glaucus with each character richly and objectively contributing to an account of otherwise tragic events. The hyperbolic approach to illness and recovery extends to the various poems within the seventh roll, which focus on a variety of facets relating to the end of the journey of illness where the traveler / Opperman as a result of his transformation has gained new perspectives on life.

“Kaapse Skeepswerf”¹¹⁴ is an important poem in that it exhibits key elements of the seventh roll and that it links up with the metaphorical strands of illness, life and recovery that has run through the volume of poetry up to this point. Metaphorically the poem is significant in terms of the

¹¹⁴ Cape dry dock

specific metaphor as well as the type of metaphor used to achieve continuity and elaboration.

Kaapse Skeepswerf

Die groot ou reus lê op sy bed:

Kabels en pype loop uit ingewande,

Toue op die dek; aan die rand

Van die enorme gat sweis blouvlam-

Apparate. Die patryspoorte is oop,

Die lyke uitgehaal van passasiers,

Matrose wat glo aan gesigsbedrog

Van vroue, ysberge en groen serpentyne.

Die orkes is stil. 'n Seemeeu sit.

Voor ons, in die wit stilte staan manjefiek

dié more teruggekeer: die *Titanic*.

A glaring characteristic of "Kaapse Skeepswerf" is that it is written in the third person, which indicates that the destination of the journey of illness is presented objectively. Since the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY conceptual

metaphor is still under scrutiny and we have traced its workings throughout *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok* we instinctively search for elements in the source domain which is to map onto corresponding elements in the target domain. We will search for the traveler, the nature of travel and the destination. The title of the poem reveals two important aspects of the journey. Through the word "Kaapse" it firstly indicates a location, Cape Town, which on a city level is home to and also the destination of the traveler Opperman. "Skeepswerf" on the other hand indicates, by virtue of the ship being in dry dock, that the journey has had its toll on the vehicle, however it is also implied that the vehicle will be repaired and restored. In the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor, the traveler maps onto the patient, the vehicle maps onto the patient's condition and the destination maps onto recovery. The specific case of the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor, in "Kaapse Skeepswerf" is a journey at sea, where the vehicle, a ship, maps onto a state of health. Metaphorical linguistic expressions in ordinary conversation, which illustrate these mappings are:

1. *He's been through **rough waters**.*
2. *After intensive therapy it will be **smooth sailing**.*
3. *He has responded well to medication and **he's home free**.*

Concurrent with the ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor runs the OPPERMAN IS A SHIP METAPHOR which is an image metaphor. Here there are also mappings from a source domain to a target domain. Instead of mapping

conceptual structures onto other conceptual structures image metaphors involve the mapping of one mental image to another. Of image structure Lakoff and Turner (1989:90) says,

Image structure includes both part-whole relations and attribute structure. In images, part-whole relations are relations such as those between a roof and a house, or between a tombstone and a grave as a whole. Attribute structure include such things as color, intensity of light, physical shape, curvature, and, for events, aspects of the overall shape, such as continuous versus discrete, open-ended versus completed, repetitive versus not repetitive, brief versus extended. It is the existence of such structure within our conceptual images that permits one image to be mapped onto another by virtue of their common structure.

Through the OPPERMAN IS A SHIP / TITANIC METAPHOR the ship maps onto Opperman. This conceptual metaphor highlights the image metaphor in which the image of a ship resting on blocks in a dry dock maps onto a patient in a hospital bed (verse 1). The image is elaborated by the mapping of cables¹¹⁵, pipes¹¹⁶ and ropes¹¹⁷ onto intravenous drips, catheters and oxygen supply tubes. In addition to this, the ship's deck maps onto the

¹¹⁵ "Kabels" in line 2

¹¹⁶ "Pype" in line 2

¹¹⁷ "Toue" in line 3

surface of the body, a hole¹¹⁸ in the hull onto the site of operative incision and oxy acetylene torches onto cautery pens.

Opperman's command over the use of metaphor in this instance is remarkable. In conceptual metaphor there is ordinarily a unidirectional mapping from source to target domain. In the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor for example, the lovers are travelers and the love relationship is the vehicle. When we use this metaphor in discourse we might utter the following: *Our relationship ran out of gas*, which could mean that the relationship lacks emotional and physical intimacy. When we talk about a topic which involves the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor we will conceive of a love relationship in terms of a vehicle and not the other way around. We will not call fuel in the tank emotional and physical intimacy.

In reading "Kaapse Skeepswerf" the reader seemingly experiences bidirectional mappings between the domains of OPPERMAN and SHIP. On closer investigation we find that the two domains have a figure-ground relationship due to the primary and secondary levels of reading and interpretation. On the primary level we are presented with the ship personified, lying in dry dock. The personification is achieved through the VEHICLE/SHIP IS HUMAN metaphor. Within the context of the volume of

¹¹⁸ "die enorme gat" in line 4

poetry the metaphor is more specifically THE TITANIC IS OPPERMAN conceptual metaphor. We understand the Titanic in human terms: it is seen to be lying on a bed¹¹⁹ and possesses intestines¹²⁰.

The secondary level of interpretation however, is the level at which the reader is gripped. On this level the OPPERMAN IS THE TITANIC metaphor is activated. Through this metaphor Opperman is perceived of as a gigantic ship teeming with cables, pipes, ropes and oxy acetylene torches, with its metaphorical meaning obtained through the previously mentioned image mappings.

It seems that in addition to functioning on an image level, the OPPERMAN IS THE TITANIC metaphor simultaneously involves conceptual detail. On an image level the portholes¹²¹ could map onto eyes or bodily orifices. On a conceptual level it refers specifically to the mouth of the patient / Opperman. The ambiguous nature of the word "patryspoorte" is responsible for the reader arriving at this conclusion. The most obvious interpretation is that it denotes a porthole, which is in line with the OPPERMAN IS THE TITANIC metaphor. A second interpretation is arrived at when we consider the nouns

¹¹⁹ "...lê op sy bed" in line 1

¹²⁰ "Ingewande" in line 2

¹²¹ "Patryspoorte" in line 5

patrys and *poorte* independently. The *patrys* constituent renders the interpretation *patrix*, a mould of a Linotype machine, a machine used in early offset printing. The *poorte* constituent renders the interpretation portal or gateway. As a compound, the word *patryspoorte* now sheds specific light on the essence of Opperman. We understand him to be a fully recovered poet, the producer and gatekeeper of the creative word.

The portals of creative production are declared open as he proclaims his new perspectives on illness and his recovery metaphorically, still within the OPPERMAN IS THE TITANIC framework. For Opperman the traveler to be at the end of the journey of illness, he has to be devoid of all elements relating to illness. The systematic severance of these elements is presented as items being removed from a ship / the Titanic. Bodily toxins and the state of delirium are presented as passenger corpses¹²² and delusional sailors¹²³. Causes of the illness are presented as icebergs¹²⁴ and gallstones as green serpentines. By specifically mapping serpentines onto gallstones, the dimension of healing is affirmed. Serpentine stone is so called due to the snake-like pattern embedded in it. Ordinarily snakes are associated with the diabolical, but in this case we associate it to the staff of Asclepius, a snake-entwined staff which remains a symbol of medicine today. Within the context

¹²² "Die lyke uitgehaal van passasiers" in line 6

¹²³ "Matrose wat glo aan gesigsbedrog" in line 7

¹²⁴ "Ysberge" in line 8

of Komas uit 'n bamboesstok one can't help projecting the serpent onto the traveler's / Opperman's bamboo walking stick as a denotation of the healing of the traveler on his journey of illness.

It is clear that "Kaapse Skeepswerf" is an inversion of the original tale of the Titanic. The Opperman account of events proposes the impossible – a Titanic in dry dock as opposed to a Titanic on the ocean floor. The impossible could only become possible by a miracle. In terms of the conceptual domains of OPPERMAN and TITANIC there too is an inversion. At the time of sinking the Titanic was the largest passenger steamship in the world and popular belief was that it was unsinkable. Similarly, at the time that Opperman's condition was at its worse, popular belief was that he would never recover. Ironically the Titanic sank and Opperman recovered. As a result of the inversion and the OPPERMAN IS THE TITANIC metaphor, the miraculous / return recovery referred to on the title page materialises. The Titanic has returned¹²⁵. As a result the band¹²⁶ is silent. The band's silence however does not pertain to the moment of their fateful demise, but to their role moments before the Titanic sank. Survivors claimed that the ship's band played until it eventually sank, Barczewski (2004:127), in the hope that their actions would encourage a sense of calmness in the midst of crisis, Barczewski (2004:136). In the domain of Opperman the purpose of the band would be to instill hope in the

¹²⁵ "Die more teruggekeer: die Titanic." In line 11

¹²⁶ "Die orkes is stil" in line 9

midst of illness. At the moment of miraculous recovery the band has served its purpose and is silent.

In conclusion, through "Kaapse Skeepswerf" Opperman is shown to be at his destination. The journey of illness is a thing of the past. This destination however is but a landmark on the journey of life. A sense of expectation is created in the reader through the poem-specific *OPPERMAN IS THE TITANIC* metaphor and volume of poetry pervasive *LIFE IS A JOURNEY* metaphor. A magnificently restored Titanic has no place in a dry dock. Its repair implies the start of a new journey, which is consistent with Opperman's resounding declaration of rebirth within *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok*. This new journey could further imply the continuation of a previous journey.

Where does this leave the reader? By the same *OPPERMAN IS THE TITANIC* metaphor the reader metaphorically embarks the Titanic and accompanies Opperman on the new journey. At this point it seems that *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok* is recursive. The poet firstly physically experiences the illness. He revisits the state of illness a second time by documenting his experiences in a volume of poetry, which the reader reads. After having read the volume of poetry the reader too has new perspectives and is prompted to read it yet again.

4.2.4.8 EPILOGUE – A PROLOGUE AND EPILOGUE TOO

Having visited each of *Komas uit 'n bamboesstoks's* seven rolls sequentially it is clear that on the surface, the prologue does not fully achieve what a prologue ordinarily should achieve. The reader expects a preliminary discourse, which highlights the main themes of the body of text that is to follow, however, the two poems "Hooggeëerdes" and "Voorschrift aen Clercken" partially satisfies this expectation.

The placement of the two poems in the prologue serves to strengthen the *OPPERMAN IS MARCO POLO* and *OPPERMAN IS BONTEKOE* conceptual metaphors, which were activated through the Bontekoe quatrain and the Polo references on the title page. In terms of form, both poems mimic the original intertexts. The style used to address the audience in "Hooggeëerdes" bears a striking resemblance to the following excerpt from the prologue of *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Polo(1958:33):

"Emperors and kings, dukes and marquises, counts, knights and townsfolk, and all people who wish to know the various races of men and the percularities of the various regions of the world, take this book and have it read to you. Here you will find all the great wonders and curiosities of greater Armenia and Persia, of the Tartars and of India, and of many other territories. Our book will relate them to you plainly in due order, as they were related by Messer Marco Polo, a wise and noble citizen of Venice, who has seen them with his own eyes. There is also much here that he has not seen but has heard from men of credit and veracity. We will set down things seen as seen, things heard as heard, so that our book may be an accurate

record, free from any sort of fabrication. And all who read the book or hear it may do so with full confidence, because it contains nothing but the truth. For I would have you know that from the time when our Lord God formed Adam our first parent with His hands down to this day there has been no man, Christian or Pagan, Tartar or Indian, or of any race whatsoever, who has known or explored so many of the various parts of the world and of its great wonders as this same Messer Marco Polo. For this reason he made up his mind that it would be a pity if he did not have a written record made of all the things he had seen and had heard by true report, so that others who have not seen and do not know them may learn them from this book.”

In comparison to the Polo text, “Hooggeëerdes” is devoid of content. The speaker seemingly achieves no more than addressing his audience. By his own account he acknowledges this and commits himself to attempt to give content to the prologue at a later stage, “sal weer probeer...later” (lines 16 and 17). In spite of the low volume of explicit content, the poem teems with implicit intertextual content which is indirectly derived at as a result of the metaphorical mappings from the source domain of Marco Polo to the target domain of Opperman. Through related mappings between the two domains the following implicit information relating to the prologue may be recovered metaphorically: In this volume of poetry you will read about the great wonder of my (the Opperman) journey of discovery relating to life, illness and recovery. The experiences are personal, hence autobiographical. It is truthful – an accurate record and free from fabrication. The written record (*Komas uit 'n bamboesstok*) is for the benefit of the reader (who becomes the co-traveller on the journey of retelling) in order that he/she might gain

insights into my (Opperman's) experiences of illness and recovery (the various parts of the world and its great wonders that have been explored).

The addressee/reader of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* can be classified into two categories as per the prologue. Implicitly through the Polo to Opperman mappings the audience is all inclusive, targeted at all tiers of society, from kings to townsfolk, which includes you and me, the ordinary reader. Explicitly, however the "hooggeëerdes" or upper echelons of society, specifically the members of the university community of which Opperman was part of, are addressed. This is done not to exclude the ordinary reader, but to debunk the esteemedness of the parties concerned through the style and content of the poem.

Why then is the explicit content of the poem so vacuous? In order for the volume of poetry to be recursive, as suggested in the previous section, the new insights, which are attained through the metaphorical journey, cannot be revealed before the journey (for both Opperman and the reader) takes place. Strictly speaking the information should not be available to the speaker yet. Stylistically the prologue is technically fascinating as a result of the interplay between information which is implicitly and explicitly revealed.

“Voorschrift aen Clercken”, the second poem contained in the prologue can be treated in a similar vein.

Voorschrift aen Clercken

dat Oogh-wit in 't Beschrijven
van eene Reys
ofte wel eene Mirakele
is meer
op Getrouwlijckheydt
als op Cierelijckheydt
van segghen

Here too there is a remarkable similarity to remarks in the Bontekoe (1952:5) prologue, “Voor-reden aen den leser” which reads:

...Dat soo den leser inde stijl of maniere van segghen yets vindt, dat soo niet en is als de volmaecktheydt wel soude vereysschen, bidde daerin den autheur te verschoonen, want sijn oogh-wit in 't beschrijven van dese sijne reys is meer op waerheydt als op cierelijckheydt van segghen geweest.

The style and content of the Opperman text achieves the following: Firstly it serves to reaffirm the **OPPERMAN IS BONTEKOE** metaphor. Secondly it emphasises the autobiographical nature of the text, “is meer op getrouwlijckheydt als op cierelijckheydt van segghen” (lines 4-7). Lastly, by replicating the style of a seafarer’s journal and in declaring it to be a description of a miraculous journey (lines 1-3), the mappings from the **JOURNEY** source domain to the target domains of **LIFE**, **ILLNESS** and **RECOVERY** are activated.

The author's promise to try his hand at making remarks befitting a prologue at a later stage reaches fruition in the epilogue. This intention is immediately recognised due to the style of address of the epilogue poem, "Seremonie van die Naelstring¹²⁷". The said poem succeeds as a prologue poem in that it addresses an audience, and contextualizes and typifies the volume of poetry. According to Kannemeyer (1986:423) the poem was read by Opperman himself during the function which celebrated the release of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok*. It was dedicated in absentia to Jannie de Villiers, who was the rector of the University of Stellenbosch at the time. This is an ironic turn of events in relation to the posthumous honorary degree that Opperman accepted in person from the same university. The content signaled by the poem itself is that it encompasses the poet's development from foetus to professor within the context of the journey of illness.

"Seremonie van die Naelstring" exhibits qualities of an epilogue as well in that the poet concludes that his volume of poetry is a trinket¹²⁸ - a souvenir of an elapsed journey. It is also referred to as a cylinder case or scrinium¹²⁹ containing nine rolls,¹³⁰ symbolic of specific landmarks on the journey of

¹²⁷ Ceremony of the umbilical chord

¹²⁸ "Polfyntjie" in line 51.

¹²⁹ "Koker" in line 15.

¹³⁰ "Daar is nege rolle – korrek, Meneer die Rektor" in line 29.

illness and recovery. In addition to this, the notion of severance strongly comes to the fore through the title of the poem, in which a metaphorical connection is made between the separation of mother from child through the cutting of the umbilical chord, and the poet that gives life to a volume of creative work. Within the context of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* two births take place. There is firstly the rebirth of Opperman and secondly the birth of the created word contained in the scrinium, which relays the account of the illness and rebirth of the poet and the new insights attained in the process.

There is a severance of a different kind in "Tot Siens", *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok's* concluding poem.

Tot Siens!

En nou, my liewe Marco Polo, ná die High Roads
en die Low Roads, breek vir ons tesame
–die twee mislukte houbous van die Here–
die uur van die laaste doppe aan,
verby die marmarboog van die Rialto
eerder en toepaslik by El Alamein.

Jy drink jou chianti, maar ék
wat nou fonteine ken van die woestyn

en aan boekette van oerbronne proe,
weet hoe eufories en helder water skop.

In elk geval, 'n rukkie Rommel, 'n oer Germaan
(of Dingaan!) drink graag uit jou kop sy dop!

Ek het jou geroep, my liewe Marco, vir my skyndood
op hierdie reis – aanvanklik Italiaans
waar ek kryglustig renaissance in Afrikaans.

Boelala! Ek hang jou kop graag teen die muur
as trofee, nog 'n gipsgesig wat moet getuig.

Laat daardie lippe wat formaliteite ken,
dan vir oulaas as heildronk ietsie prewel:

,Deo Gratias

Amen. Amen'

The poet severs himself explicitly from the figure of Marco Polo and, implicitly from the Bontekoe figure and the reader. His severance from the Marco Polo character is a nostalgic reflection of the journey of illness. This is achieved through geographical leaps which result in a conceptual

manifestation of the nature of the journey of illness. Geographically he traverses from the Rialto in Venice, which is the domain of Polo, to South Africa his own domain, where his creativity through his poetry in Afrikaans is revived.¹³¹ The artistic revival is a direct result of the rebirth of the poet.

Between the Rialto and South Africa other historical locations and figures are recalled. There are references to El Alamein,¹³² the site of the Western Desert campaign of the Second world War, and to the warriors Erwin Rommel¹³³ the German Field Marshal, and Dingaan¹³⁴ the Zulu Chief. Metaphorically these locations and figures relate to the gravity and intensity of the experience of illness through the ILLNESS IS A BATTLE conceptual metaphor.

Through another conceptual leap the target domain ILLNESS is replaced by the domain POETRY hence still maintaining the war metaphor. Opperman who was previously the subject under attack by illness is now the war-

¹³¹“ Waar ek kryglustig renaissance in Afrikaans” in line 15.

¹³² In line 6.

¹³³ In line 11.

¹³⁴ In line 12.

hungry¹³⁵ warrior wielding the weapon, his pen, reviving his art, in his own language, Afrikaans.

The idea that Marco Polo was a metaphorical alter ego and mask through which the journey of illness and recovery was perceived, is affirmed as the speaker finally removes the mask and hangs it on the wall as trophy of his achievement(s) attained through his journey.¹³⁶ The separation of the figures of Opperman and Polo are stylistically reflected in line 20 where there is a clear separation between the words "Deo Gratias" the language and metaphorical representation of Marco Polo and "Amen. Amen", the language of Opperman.¹³⁷

How does Opperman sever himself from the reader and are there any references to Bontekoe, who played a significant role in the journey? The answer to the first part of the question lies in the title of the poem, "Tot Siens¹³⁸," where farewell is bid to the implicit and explicit audience. The finality of this greeting is further reinforced by the closing word "Amen" which is directly followed by a full stop signifying complete cessation.

¹³⁵ "kryglustig" in line 15

¹³⁶ "Boelala! Ek hang jou kop graag teen die muur as 'n troefee, nog 'n gipsgesig wat moet getuig" in lines 16 and 17

¹³⁷ Even though, out of context the word "Amen" is reflected in many other languages, within the context of "Tot Siens!" it is read in the Afrikaans language

¹³⁸ Good Bye

Without a reasonable familiarity with *Journalen van de gedenkwaardige reizen van Willem Ijsbrantz. Bontekoe 1618 – 1625*, Opperman's farewell to Bontekoe could easily be overlooked. As in the case of the prologue poem "Voorschrift aen Clercken" in which the form and content of "Voor-reden aen den leser" is partially mirrored, "Tot Siens!" ends with the same word as the Bontekoe intertext, Amen! In terms of form therefore, there is a miniscule similarity between the texts. It is however significant enough to acknowledge the connection between the texts, yet disparate enough to justify the severance from the original text and the Bontekoe character.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: METAPHOR AS THE BINDING FACTOR IN *KOMAS UIT 'N BAMBOESSTOK*

In an attempt to metaphorically characterize *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* this thesis has systematically approached the topic in the following ways: Firstly, the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor served as the primary mechanism through which the literary text was analysed. Secondly, it acknowledged and illustrated how the production and interpretation of metaphor occurs within the cognitive context of utterance interpretation. Thirdly, we turned to Relevance Theory, which provides a salient account of the optimal recovery of utterances. However, we have shown that the mechanisms of Relevance Theory fall short in terms of the way in which metaphor itself is viewed, namely, that it suggests that it is a case of the loose use of language and that it treats each metaphorical expression as unique. The result is that theoretically, more processing effort is required in interpreting a range of related metaphors and the hearer is unable to make predictions as to precisely which interpretations will be recovered during the recovery of creative metaphors. We therefore have an undesirable case of more processing effort in return for fewer contextual effects. Fourthly, we argued

for the proposals of the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor, which among other things stress the conceptual nature of metaphor, that they are recovered effortlessly and that they are mappings from aspects of a source domain to aspects of a target domain. These are the conceptual domains which allow us to make generalisations and view various metaphorical linguistic expressions as instances of the same conceptual metaphor. Fifthly, *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* was metaphorically characterized in terms of the proposals of the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor.

Our objective in Chapter 4, in which *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* is metaphorically characterized in no way aimed to juxtapose the Relevance Theoretic Account of the recovery of metaphorical expressions with the proposals of the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of either account. It rather sought to emphasise the efficiency through which conceptual metaphor in general, and metaphorical linguistic expressions in particular are recovered and the remarkable manner in which it contributes to the facilitation of comprehension.

The textual analysis in Chapter 4 produced the following outcomes:

It successfully illustrated that the cohesion that exists in the volume of poetry can largely be attributed to a few conceptual metaphors. The most prominent encapsulating conceptual metaphors under discussion were LIFE

IS A JOURNEY, ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY. These conceptual metaphors successfully weave the thematic strands of illness and recovery throughout the volume of poetry with the result that it, when viewed in its entirety, is perceived as a bound unit.

By understanding the metaphors for life and illness as presented in *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* the reader easily recovers the following intended interpretations, namely, that Opperman is the traveller, that illness is a journey of discovery, that the insights of the recovered Opperman are the artefacts recovered from the foreign land, that the various stages of illness are landmarks on the journeys of illness and life and that recovery is the destination within the journey of illness. The reason for the easy recovery of these interpretations is that the mappings between the appropriate source and target domains are active.

A final question remains. Can *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* itself be seen as a metaphor. If the answer is yes, what would it be a metaphor of? Returning to the findings of Chapter 4, we need to recall the most prominent conceptual metaphors, namely, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY and ILLNESS IS A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY. It was concluded that through the volume of poetry we could identify the correspondence between the traveller and Opperman. It is also clear that each one of the rolls along with

the prologue and epilogue represents a landmark within the journeys of life and illness and that the content of each one of the rolls represents the artefacts taken from the foreign land, which turns out to be the speaker's new insights into life, which has been achieved through the experience of illness. Taking the argument one step further it can be concluded that since each roll represents an artefact taken from a foreign land, namely, the new insights, the volume as a whole should be interpreted metaphorically as a collection of those insights. The metaphorical value of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* is derived from the mappings between the source domain of Marco Polo and the target domain of DJ Opperman. The encyclopaedic knowledge that this stems from relates to a segment in the Polo account where silkworms (artefacts) were smuggled from the east (foreign land) in Bamboo staves. In *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* we read the account of a Marco Polo (Opperman) that has returned from a foreign land (illness). In his walking stick (Volume of Poetry) lie all the artefacts (his experiences and new insights as a result of illness and recovery) smuggled from the foreign land (the domain of illness).

Through our textual analysis of *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* we have seen one or a range of related metaphors individually applied to each one of the roles to achieve cohesion throughout the volume of poetry as a result of interplay between roles.

Through the final poem "Aardkloot", I will show in conclusion how an individual poem can reflect the vital elements, which the volume of poetry exudes metaphorically as a whole.

Aardkloot

Vannag hang die aarde `n groot
deurskynende maan oor die afgrond
skuins bo die melkboomtakke rond:
aan die een kant hou die dun seewater
die skole galjoene en poenskoppe,
in die dikker water wieg kabeljou en haaie,
en langs my ritsel tjiemkerientjee
tussen bolplante, aartappels, beet en uie,
en die stede op daardie bol gloei
van fabriek en sasols met vuurpluime,
en die dodes loop oor die vlaktes rond –
die aarde hang, deursigtig grond.

The duality which is present in the interpretation of *bamboesstok* in the title *Komas uit 'n Bamboesstok* is similarly present in the title "Aardkloot". In the latter, the title is a compound consisting of the nouns *aard*, which means *earth* and *kloot*, which renders two interpretations. Out of context the first accessible interpretation is an archaic one, which renders the meaning *ball*, *globe* or *sphere*. The second accessible interpretation renders the meaning *testicle*, which seems odd when considered out of context. If however we consider the interpretation within the context of the phallic value of *bamboesstok* in the title of the volume of poetry, the *testes* interpretation is not only relevant, but also significant in the interpretation of the poem as a whole. In its entirety the title "Aardkloot" metaphorically blends the concept *earth* with the domains *ball* and *testes*. The resultant image in the mind of the reader is that of a testicle-like globe suspended in the universe. In addition to its salient semantic value, the reader also understands the target domain (earth) in terms of the source domain (testicle). In anticipation of the content of the poem, one could predict that the metaphorical blend, which is present in the title, would surface throughout the poem.

It becomes evident in the poem that the conceptual domain *aard* (earth) metaphorically represents the natural elements pertaining to creation and human existence, as expressed by the words "grond", "maan", "melkboomtakke", "seewater", "skole galjoene", "poenskoppe", "kabeljou", "haaie", "tjienkerientjee", "bolplante", "aartappels", "beet" and "uie".

Similarly the conceptual domain *kloot* (testicle, globe) represents the products of human creation, for example, “stede” and “fabrieke en sasols met vuurpluime”.

In the midst of the natural and manmade objects one finds the speaker alongside a rustling chincherinchee, a fynbos species endemic to South Africa. According to the *Tafelberg Bilingual Dictionary* the chincherinchee is also known as the star of Bethlehem. Incorporating this knowledge into the analysis of *Aardkloot* an interesting dimension to the interpretation of the poem is revealed. In Christian tradition the Star of Bethlehem revealed the Birth of Jesus to the magi, who were from the east, by leading them directly to the saviour’s birthplace. In *Aardkloot* the chincherinchee signals not only a birth, but a rebirth as declared on the title pages by “uitgespaar” and “mirakelagtige terugkeer”. This new birth is a precursor to full recovery, which is represented by the products of human hands “fabrieke en sasols met vuurpluime”. It is also contrasted with the notion of illness, which is represented by submersion in water, “aan die een kant hou in dun seewater die skole galjoene en poenskoppe” in lines 5 and 6.

The journey to find the elusive speaker/Opperman is complete. We have systematically seen the metaphors of life and illness bind the volume of poetry together and we have seen how the entailments of the main

metaphors have allowed us to interpret yet another individual poem while it in turn reflects the vital elements, which the volume of poetry exudes metaphorically as a whole.

Boelala! Ek hang jou kop graag teen die muur

As trofee, nog 'n gipsgesig wat moet getuig.

Laat daardie lippe wat formaliteite ken,

dan vir oulaas as heildronk ietsie prewel:

,Deo Gratias

Amen. Amen'

"Tot Siens!" in Opperman's (1979:137) *Komas uit 'n bamboesstok*

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