Poetic Effects and Visuospatial Form: A Relevance-Theoretic Perspective

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Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree. I was an enrolled student for the following award:

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Abstract

Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) posit the term *poetic effect* for the peculiar effect of an utterance which achieves most of its *relevance* through a wide array of *weak implicatures*. Crucially, the input to pragmatic processing, which prompts the derivation of a poetic effect, is achieved via some stylistically pronounced linguistic feature: for example, a repeated lexical item, a peculiar syntactic form, a piece of alliteration, and so on. However, what has never been considered to any great depth from a relevance-theoretic perspective is how unusual elements of visuospatial form might also impact upon the reader's basic understanding and wider interpretation of a given poetic text in ways that result in the derivation of specialised *poetic effects*. Therefore, the thesis posits a relevance-theoretic account of the cognitive-pragmatic effects of short line-length and line divisions, when employed and interpreted within complex forms of poetry.

The account is split into two hypotheses relating to short line-length and line divisions respectively. Hypothesis 1 states that the use of short line-length leads to the majority of the text's lexical material being perceived in a much slower, and therefore intense fashion, which consequently causes the lexical and encyclopaedic entries that such material links to within the mind to remain active for relatively longer periods of time. During such extended periods of lexical and encyclopaedic activation, literary readers are encouraged to inferentially process the text's explicit-propositional content in relation to a range of further items of encyclopaedic-contextual material, which can give rise to arrays of additional contextual effects of a weakly implicit and therefore *poetic* nature.

Hypothesis 2 states that line divisions are often intentionally utilised in poetic texts by writers in order to visuospatially separate integral syntactic units upon the page. This can encourage readers to pause and briefly consider, upon an anticipatory-hypothetical basis, the various possible pragmatic extensions of the text's momentarily incomplete logical and propositional status, pre-line division as it were. The various pragmatic extensions may be formulated as arrays of weak explicatures, which for some readers may achieve *poetic effects* (in the specialised relevance-theoretic sense of the term). The process effectively constitutes the visuospatial equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect', which triggers a considerable degree of further inferential processing, and provides a distinct communicational 'reward' primarily at an explicit-propositional level.

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The technique of art is to make objects “unfamiliar”, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an end in itself and must be prolonged (Shklovsky 1965:12).

1. Introduction

Various theorists acknowledge the idea that the perception of a given text's overall visuospatial design plays an important role within its initial classification and subsequent interpretation as literary in nature. For example, Culler (1975:188) argues that by taking a piece of banal journalistic prose and rearranging it on a page as a lyric poem, surrounded by "intimidating margins of silence", the words remain the same but due to the change in visuospatial layout their effects for *expert* poetic readers[1] are significantly altered. Culler's rearranged poem/text reads as follows:

(1.) Yesterday on the A7
An automobile
Travelling at sixty miles per hour
Crashed into a plane tree
Its four occupants were
Killed.

Culler (1975:189) states that when we recognise and respond to a text as a poem, "new effects become possible because the conventions of the genre produce a new range of signs" (Culler 1975:189). One such convention that the present thesis will explore from a relevance-theoretic perspective is Culler's idea that a poem's "typographic arrangements can be given spatial or temporal interpretations ('suspense' or 'isolation')" (Culler 1975:189). For instance, in (1.), Culler's choice to split the verb constituent, "were/ Killed", across two lines encodes a peculiar perceptual element that impacts upon the reader's mental construction of the constituent's logical form. The perceptual element is introduced via the line division itself; it falls directly in between the auxiliary and main lexical component of the overall constituent. Before perceiving the full constituent and completing its full logical form, the reader is encouraged by the added perceptual element to pause briefly before moving on to the following line – perhaps even running through a few potential scenarios, relating to how the text's linguistically encoded content is liable to develop beyond the penultimate line. The reader is left to wonder, albeit for the briefest of moments, about the fates of those involved in the car crash: perhaps they sustained only minor injuries, or even miraculously walked away without a single scratch. Therefore, this spreading of the constituent's individual linguistic components may be seen as the visuospatial

equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect'. The pause generated by the peculiar perceptual element builds up a significant degree of 'suspense' in the reader, and as a result, makes the fact that the car's passengers were "Killed" all the more shocking when this already highly charged lexical item is eventually perceived upon the final line. Furthermore, the act of isolating the word "Killed" upon its own individual line, right at the very end of the poem, may achieve a range of further semantic effects in its own right, accessing the thought that:

- death is a lonely and isolating experience;
- death is very much the end of life/existence;
- once you are gone you are gone etc.

Additionally, even though in respect of (1.), Culler is essentially making it more difficult for readers to perceive and construct the text's propositional content, the rearranged visuospatial design allows them to entertain a range of further semantic components, thus providing something of a communicational reward for the extra processing effort incurred. With this notion in mind, the present thesis aims to explore the general cognitive-pragmatic effects and potential communicational benefits of the visuo-textual devices of short line-length and line divisions from the perspective of relevance theory.

What Culler's experiment suggests is that the generic classification of a given text (or *genre-attribution*, as it is elsewhere referred to by Forceville 1999, 2005), and the distinct interpretive strategies that come into play as a result, may be signalled or triggered at an overall visuo-textual level; that is, as a result of its overall appearance upon the page. The impact that such generic classification can have upon the interpretation of texts was also the focus of a famous experiment conducted by Fish (1980) whilst teaching at an academic institution in the USA. Finding himself at a loose end between classes, Fish decided to rearrange a random list of names belonging to various linguists and literary critics that he had written on the board in his room during a previous class into a seemingly motivated textual pattern. During his next class, Fish told an unsuspecting group of literature students that the names were in fact a 17th Century metaphysical poem, which they were required to analyse as part of the forthcoming lesson. Interestingly, the students remained unwise to his ruse and proceeded to extract all manner of hidden meanings from the arbitrary list of names. The list Fish used is as follows:

(2.) Jacobs-Rosenbaum
Levin
Thorne
Hayes
Ohman (?)

Like Culler's (1975) experiment, explored above, this exercise demonstrates how linguistic formulations, which were not intended for literary/poetic purposes in their original contexts, when attributed as belonging to a particular generic class, can be granted with a special kind of attention and interpreted with certain "special purpose reading strategies" (Pilkington 1994:21) that they would not ordinarily receive, thus giving rise to a wide range of additional propositional effects.

Elsewhere, Schmidt (1991:413-424) argues that texts of a literary nature automatically create expectations to prioritise aesthetic effects and polyvalent meanings, whereas texts of a non-literary status, such as newspaper articles, create expectations to prioritise the representation of facts and monovalent meanings. Similarly, Forceville (2005:256) comments that awareness of a given text's generic classification "automatically" activates the conventions that govern that genre's interpretation and trigger interpretive strategies that consist of different types of effect which call upon different kinds of meaning. Likewise, Fokkema and Ibsch (2000:22) argue that "as soon as we recognise that a given discourse belongs to a genre with which we are familiar, we know what conventions to recruit in interpreting it, and what responses are appropriate to it" (Fokkema and Ibsch 2000; reported in Forceville 2014:11).

The general consensus of such insights would seem to be that it is the capability and willingness of human beings to agree upon a rule of conduct or convention, rather than features inherent to the text's formal-linguistic structure, which is decisive in generating specialised literary effects and/or value. Such qualitative remarks are reinforced further by empirical studies conducted by Zwaan (1993) and Steen (1994). Both used live reader response testing to show how the act of classifying texts as either literary or non-literary leads to very different interpretations amongst readers. Similarly, Forceville (1999) found that students when shown a photograph presented as part of an advertisement came up with contrasting interpretations from those who were told that the same photograph was an artistic picture.

However, empirical research exists which suggests that visuospatial layout and textual form do in fact play a decisive role in the activation of the types of reading associated with literary interpretation. For example, Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) posit that when scanning an individual poetic line perception of its lexical material seems to

slow down considerably towards its endpoint. The present thesis posits that longer perception of a given lexical item may lead to lengthier activation of its lexical and encyclopaedic entries, which Sperber and Wilson (1995:86) argue are stored at a particular "conceptual address" within the mind. Chapter 4 explores the idea that increased lexical activation can simultaneously lead to deeper exploration of the associated encyclopaedic material, and thus to the derivation of a range of further *contextual effects* (for details on the difference between lexical and encyclopaedic content, see Sperber and Wilson 1995:85-93; for more on *contextual/cognitive effects* see section 2.1 of the present thesis). The basic idea is that the use of short line-length can cause a greater proportion of a text's content to be situated relatively closer to each line's endpoint, at which the cognitive-stylistics research developed by Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) suggests reader-perception is at its pinnacle[2]. Therefore, short line-length can cause a greater range of the text's content to be arranged within this optimal perceptual zone, which can act as encouragement for the reader to take advantage of the longer lexical/encyclopaedic activation times, and as a result, process the text's linguistic material to a deeper contextual level.

The thesis also posits that within the context of specialised poetic discourse, the additional lines of contextual processing that short line-length encourages, may lead to the derivation of wide arrays of weakly communicated propositional forms, which in the specialised framework of relevance theory constitute the necessary criteria for the realisation of *poetic effects* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222). However, the thesis does not claim that short line-length generates such *poetic effects* per se; that is, across all contexts of text/discourse/interpretation, and for all types of reader. Rather what may be constant across all such contexts is the deeper forms of perception that the use of short line-length generates; however, in relation to different textual forms, certain conventions of the types of genre/discourse to which such texts are said to belong, may stipulate that readers respond to those deeper forms of perception in a range of different fashions, which leads to quite different levels of contextual processing, and to a range of relatively weaker-stronger cognitive-pragmatic effects. Compare, for example, the reading of a typical restaurant menu with the reading/interpretation of a complex poem. Both may employ units of line-length which are considered extremely short in nature; that is, when compared to conventional textual standards. However, it is highly likely that only the latter will be taken by the reader to be communicating at a *poetic* level. In respect of the former, the deeper forms of perception that short line-length generates may merely function to bring important aspects of the menu's content to the reader's

attention, such as pricing, food and drink types, key dietary information, and so on. The use of short line-length (and the deeper forms of perception that it generates) simply allows the reader to arrive at the menu's main explicit content/message as quickly as possible; the wider contextual effects of the explicit content are largely unimportant and would not be entertained by the average restaurant goer. When reading and responding to complex poetry however, readers are actively encouraged to go beyond the most obvious interpretations presented by the text's explicit structure, and therefore to take advantage of the lengthier activation times by indulging in wider forms of contextual exploration made available by short line-length.

The idea of increased lexical activation leading to deeper forms of contextual processing is explored within the framework of relevance theory by Pilkington (1994, 2000). Pilkington (1994:164; 2000:131) states that a wide range of verse features that are typically used in poetry (e.g. metre, metrical variation, alliteration, rhyme, line-length, stichic and strophic organisation, etc.) can generate *poetic effects*. Although many critics view verse features as merely contributing to the music rather than to the meaning of poetry, Pilkington (1994, 2000) considers how such features, when encountered by a reader in relation to a textual source, marginally increase the salience of a wide range of concepts and assumptions within the reader's cognitive environment, which combine to form a range of common impressions that emits a distinctly affective cognitive state, in an identical manner to the type of effect triggered by the peculiar elements of syntax and lexical repetition featuring within Sperber and Wilson's (1995) original version of the *poetic effects principle* (Pilkington 2000:131). The main idea within his thesis is that verse features slow down the reader's perception of the text's linguistic material, during which the reader can retrieve a greater range of concepts and assumptions from his or her encyclopaedic-contextual resources, which can then be employed in relation to the text's linguistic material within an inferentially active capacity (Pilkington 1994:167; 2000:132). Therefore, in effect, these concepts and assumptions become available for further processes of inference, through which a wide range of additional contextual effects can be derived – many being classified as *poetic* according to the model of relevance theory. Although Pilkington (1994:164; 2000:131) lists line-length as a feature of verse that can lead to poetic effects, he limits his investigation of poetic form to the topics of metrical variation, rhyme, and alliteration, and I know of no other research programme which looks at the poetic effects of line-length from within the framework of relevance theory. Therefore, the present thesis considers how the visuospatial characteristics pertaining to short units of line-length

may form their own unique inputs to pragmatic processing, which can derive cognitive effects deemed *poetic* within a relevance-theoretic light.

In various manifestations of their relevance-theoretic model, Sperber and Wilson pose a natural linkage between linguistic form and pragmatic processing, stating explicitly that the syntactic and phonological organisation of an utterance may directly affect the way it is processed and understood (Sperber and Wilson 1987a:706; Sperber and Wilson 1995:202-217; see also, Wilson and Sperber 1990, 1993, 2012b). More recently, Wilson (2018:191) explains that syntax and prosody are often used in poetic texts to affect interpretation in a way that bypasses the linguistically encoded meaning, yet still provides an input to pragmatic processing which can derive a range of contextual effects. Wilson adds that any external stimulus or internal representation (linguistic, sensorimotor, or conceptual) that provides an input to cognitive processes can achieve such contextual effects:

> a visual scene, a piece of behaviour, a facial expression, or use of a particular linguistic form may all be relevant to an individual at a given time. This makes it possible to see how the presence of a certain word or phrase, a certain syntactic structure or prosodic feature, may contribute directly to relevance by reducing processing effort or increasing cognitive effects (Wilson 2018:191).

Similarly, Cave and Wilson (2018b:12) observe that linguistic information may be presented in a form which makes it "more or less perceptually salient, more or less legible, more or less linguistically or logically intricate", and therefore requires that the individual to whom it is presented expends a relatively greater or lesser degree of processing effort in recovering its fundamental import. Although Cave and Wilson (2018b:12) argue that such perceptual nuances can affect your expectations of relevance, and even stop you from attending to the information in the first place, the present thesis contends that such elements can encourage the reader to pay even more attention to the information and expend even more processing effort in inferentially developing its propositional form and assessing its wider contextual effects.

Following Sperber and Wilson (1995), who in turn align themselves with Fodor (1983), Yus (2009b) sees the human mind as consisting of a series of specialised systems, known as *modules*, which have distinct, uniform, and genetically endowed (evolutionarily developed) functions. Each module can process only information of the appropriate representational format; for example, linguistic information is dealt with solely by the *language module*, and visual, auditory, and other types of perceptual information, by the *perceptual module* respectively. Despite the domain-specific nature

of each mental module, Yus (2009b:153) states that both linguistically and perceptually encoded inputs are capable of activating information within the respective modules of the brain, in order to yield items of decontextualized conceptual material, which in themselves can act as inputs to further processes of pragmatic enrichment in order to obtain fully contextualized interpretations of the original verbal or visual input (irrespective of their original representational formats).

Leading on from such remarks, the present thesis works from the idea that the visuospatial form/layout of a written text may correspond to the *packaging* rather than to the *content* of its linguistically encoded message (Wilson and Wharton 2006:1560; House 1990, 2006). This may well be the case because elements pertaining to a text's visuospatial structure (such as, number/length of lines, use of page space/visuospatial gaps, use of line divisions, and so on) could be argued to encode information of a raw perceptual, rather than complex linguistic nature. The thesis will argue that such visuospatial elements can impact upon the way the text's lexical material is perceived by readers, which consequently affects the manner in which the linguistically encoded content of such material is handled within a further inferential sense. Research exists which considers the cognitive-pragmatic effects of a range of prosodic features, when utilised within both speech and writing (see in particular: Wharton 2012; Clark 2013b; Scott 2017), however, what is missing from the relevance-theoretic literature in this area is a thorough investigation into the types of input that visuospatial elements – such as, line-length and line divisions – can provide to further pragmatic processing.

As previously mentioned, one highly influential idea arising from Sperber and Wilson's (1987a, 1995) early research into the effects of linguistic style on cognitive-pragmatic processing, is their notion of a *poetic effect* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222). Poetic effects, they state, are created by peculiar elements of linguistic style – a repeated word, or a peculiar piece of syntax, for example – which communicate common impressions and a sense of affective mutuality between communicators and their audiences via wide arrays of *weak implicatures*. However, what has never really been explored adequately within the specialised framework of relevance theory is how certain types of visuospatial form, such as short line-length and line divisions, can create poetic effects in their own right. A wide range of general stylistics research exists which investigates the cognitive effects of such visuospatial factors (see in particular: Zwaan 1991, 1994; Tsur 1998; Hanauer 2001; Steinhauer and Friederici 2001; Fisher et al. 2003; Emmott et al. 2006; Brouwer et al. 2012; Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014), but there is very little, it would seem, on the notion of these effects from the specialised

perspective of relevance theory. Instead, relevance theorists working within the field of pragmatics[3] have tended generally to focus on developing approaches to the study of literary uses of metaphor and irony, and on poetic effects generated at a fundamentally linguistic level. Some of the most notable contributions include[4]: Sperber and Wilson (1986a, b, 1987a, b, 1995, 1998a, 2002); Wilson and Sperber (1987, 2002a); Dogan (1992); Blakemore (1993, 2008, 2009); Clark (1996, 2009); Furlong (1996); MacMahon (1996); Uchida (1998); Pilkington (1989, 1992, 1996, 2000); Kolaiti (2009); Carston (2010b, c); Sperber and Wilson (2012b); Caink (2014); Vande Wiele (2016); and many of the papers in Cave and Wilson (2018a)[5].

The present thesis states that to understand the full nature of poetic effects, we need to adopt what might be best described as a multimodal approach, in which poetic effects are viewed as involving forms of representation, communication and interaction that comprise of something more than language (Jewitt 2014:1). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001:20) define multimodality as the use of "several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event". In respect of this view, a poem is a semiotic product in which various semiotic modes – such as visuospatial form or layout, written text, sound, typography, etc. – are combined to produce the unique experience of the poem as artistic object. All these modes of semiotic operation impact upon its fundamental meaning and help to shape its complex aesthetic status: that is, they all help to determine its *poetic effect*.

Linguistic form is taken widely to be the most utilised mode for the communication of poetic effects. The present thesis, however, builds from the assumption that such effects when employed within specialised literary discourse, particularly modernist and postmodernist poetry that has a predisposition for difficulty (Diepeveen 2003; Castiglione 2013, 2017), derive a range of affective cognitive states via multiple modes, all of which have the potential to contribute to the text's specialised literary/poetic texture and value.

The idea that poetic effects can arise through syntactic, lexical-semantic and phonological structuring or patterning has been considered at length (most notably by Pilkington 2000). However, the idea that such processes can be affected by arrangements of visuospatial form, such as line-length and line divisions, is an underdeveloped area within the relevance-theoretic stylistics literature. The approach within the present thesis will attempt to remedy this shortfall of the poetic effects model by looking at such visuospatial-formal elements from the specialised perspective of relevance theory; in particular, it will consider the notion that poetic effects can be

generated on a rudimentary perceptual, as well as complex linguistic basis.

Despite this lack of research in relevance theory, the multimodal character of poetic communication has been established in relation to different types of pictorial imagery, such as cartoons, where verbal and pictorial information often come together to form a range of weak implicatures, which communicates a common impression and constitutes the essential character of the humorous effect in cognitive-pragmatic terms. For example, when exploring the multimodal character of humorous cartoons which feature a mixture of verbal and pictorial information, Forceville (2005) states that since "non-verbal communication tends to be less explicit than verbal communication, the pictorial component in the cartoons may to some extent lead to different inference processes in different viewers" (Forceville 2005:253). In terms of the present thesis, what matters is that the multimodal character of humorous cartoons triggers the derivation of weak implicatures, creating a high degree of affective rather than cognitive mutuality (Sperber and Wilson 1995:224) between the cartoonist and his/her audience, which is the defining cognitive-pragmatic feature involved in the communication of poetic effects (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222).

When considering the *poetic* capabilities of visuospatial form, it should be noted that such form may apply at both an overall, and small-scale, textual level – both of which may lead to the generation of *poetic* forms of communication. At the former level, the reader's initial perception of the poem's overall visuospatial structure can cause him/her to classify the poem as belonging to a certain type of discourse, which should be interpreted and responded to in a very precise and distinct manner: that is, as a work of literature. Thus, when the overall look of a poem corresponds to a reader's internalised *schema* (Bartlett 1932; Schank and Abelson 1977) for how a poem should appear on the page, the correspondence – or *preservation*, in specialised *schema-theoretic* terms (Stockwell 2002:79) – may act as an initial trigger to consider the text's propositional content and wider implicit import within a relatively more indeterminate sense, than may have otherwise been the case, had the text been arranged within a different visuospatial format.

This notion begs the following question: can anything of a linguistic/textual nature, if made to resemble a poem at an overall textual level, be processed in a manifestly indeterminate, and thus *poetic* light? From a general reader-response perspective, Fish (1980:326) asserts that the answer must surely be yes, for it is not the case that the presence of "poetic qualities" demands a certain kind of attention, but that "the paying of a certain kind of attention results in the emergence of poetic qualities".

Once readers decide that what they are looking at on the page is poetic or literary in nature, they begin to look at it with "poetry seeing-eyes", that is, with a type of perception that views everything in relation to a pre-existing set of properties that they know and expect poems to possess (Fish 1980:326). For example, if your definition of the typical poem tells you that its meaning is often vague and indeterminate, then you will analyse the language of something that is classified as a poem in such a way as to bring out the indeterminacy you already 'know' to be there within its content (Fish 1980:327).

This notion suggests that *poetic* levels of processing, in addition to individual stylistic elements situated at specific points within the text's fundamental linguistic structure, can be triggered by the text's overall visuospatial format (i.e. the way its overall structure essentially appears within the reader's visual field). A text's overall visuospatial form may well effectively activate a *schematic* mental framework that contains as part of its sub-structure, a preconceived instruction to instigate a manner of contextual processing, in relation to all of the text's linguistically encoded content, which is deemed *poetic* within the specialised framework of relevance theory. In this case, readers use context to work out the wider relevance of this content within a relatively more expansive and imaginative manner, as a direct result of the overall visuospatial nature of the text corresponding with some pre-established schema for how the typical poem should appear upon the page. In short, such textual categorisation is triggered initially via the text's overall visuospatial form signalling its literary/poetic status, which then prompts the reader to adapt their chosen contextualisation of the text's linguistically encoded/propositional content accordingly.

At this initial point in the thesis, therefore, I would like to posit the possibility of a distinction existing between poetic effects which are visuospatially triggered at a *micro-textual* (by individual lines within a poem) and *macro-textual* level (by the holistic visuospatial design of a poem). In terms of the latter, poetic processing is characterised by a particular response to the poem's overall visuospatial form in the reader that influences the manner in which he or she will deal with the poem's propositional content at a cognitive-pragmatic level, almost irrespective of the chosen linguistic form or style, through which the writer has chosen to present that propositional content. However, although I have considered the possibility of such a distinction, it will be those 'types' of visuospatially generated poetic effects that I have conceived of as being triggered at a small-scale or micro-textual level that will be focused on primarily throughout the rest of the present thesis. Furthermore,

visuospatially generated poetic effects are distinct from those which are triggered by stylistically pronounced elements of the text's linguistic design; that is, within a syntactic, phonological or lexical-semantic sense. Thus, at the *micro-textual level*, which will be the primary focus of the thesis, poetic effects can be linguistically triggered, or generated via much subtler visuospatial means. However, it should be noted that, in a sense, this distinction is made for purely analytical purposes as the two 'types' of poetic effect mentioned here are clearly bound up within the same cognitive-pragmatic process; that is, it is the input, and therefore, trigger for this process, which varies, rather than the resulting inferential mechanisms that this input sets in motion. Thus, in addition to poetic effects being triggered through distinct elements of small-scale linguistic style, the levels of indeterminacy that provide such effects with their unique cognitive-pragmatic characteristics can stem purely from individual elements relating to the text's visuospatial form: such as, short units of line-length, and actual line divisions.

A characteristic of many complex poetic texts that scholars such as Yaron (2002, 2008) would call "difficult" and "obscure", and critics such as Roland Barthes (1974) "writerly" rather than "readerly", is that they often display their lexical material within extreme or unconventional visuospatial arrangements which alter the reader's basic perception and representation, as well as further pragmatic enrichment of their fundamental propositional content[6]. With this in mind, the thesis will use a small dataset consisting of the following three poetic texts, in order to investigate rigorously the poetic effects of line-length variation and line divisions:

- Tom Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' (see Appendix, *Figure 1*, for a scanned version of the full text);

- William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) 'This Is Just to Say' (see section 5.7 for the full text);

- Andrew Crozier's (1999:43) 'Driftwood and Seacoal' (see Appendix, *Figure 3*, for the full text).

I will say more about the rationale which determined the selection of these poems at the beginning of Chapter 5, however, it should be noted that the first two texts are varieties of standard poetic verse, whereas the third takes the form of a prose poem. Discussion

of this third text is based around the idea that the arbitrary and unmotivated visuospatial characteristics of prose poetry automatically instigates a default form of perception/processing in readers, which acts to nullify the communication of poetic effects via visuospatially generated means.

The poetic effects of visuospatial form will be explored in relation to two innovative hypotheses: hypothesis 1 relates to the use of short line-length; and hypothesis 2 relates to the use of line divisions. The thesis contends that both short line-length and line divisions introduce a peculiar perceptual element into the reader's live construction and representation of the text's logical form and propositional content, which are both capable of generating *poetic effects*. However, during each phenomenon, something different is happening in terms of how the *poetic effects* are triggered at a rudimentary visuospatial level, and in terms of how the *poetic effects* are formulated within a further cognitive-pragmatic manifestation. The basic idea pertaining to hypothesis 1 is that short line-length creates *poetic effects* because of the impact that the visuospatial brevity of short line-length has upon real time scanning of the text. Hypothesis 2, however, states that line divisions intentionally disrupt how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page, which acts as a kind of visuospatial equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect' that warrants a considerable degree of further inferential processing, and constitutes a distinct communicational 'reward' primarily at an explicit-propositional level. Both hypotheses will be worked out in detail throughout the first four chapters of the thesis, before being discussed directly in relation to the above dataset within Chapters 5 and 6. Hypothesis 1 will be discussed in relation to Tom Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' within Chapter 5, and Andrew Crozier's (1999:43) 'Driftwood and Seacoal' in Chapter 6. Hypothesis 2 will be discussed solely in relation to William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) 'This Is Just to Say' during sections 5.5-5.8.

In terms of the organisation of the overall thesis, Chapter 2 begins by outlining the cognitive and communicative foundations of relevance theory, before considering the inferential steps that hearers go through in the interpretation of utterances according to this theory, and how these steps can be exploited to generate specialised cognitive effects. The chapter then moves on to consider how different arrangements of linguistic form can impact upon pragmatic processing, before finally providing a detailed account of the specialised relevance-theoretic notion of *poetic effects* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222).

Chapter 3 begins by reviewing some of the instances where relevance theory

has been applied directly to the study of literature, before looking at how difficult or complex literary texts have been handled from a general cognitive-stylistic perspective. The chapter concludes by presenting a relevance-theoretic account of a linguistically and visuospatially unconventional poetic text, in order to shed new light upon types of poetic effect which push the boundaries of what is acceptable from a cognitive and communicative perspective.

Chapter 4 begins by expanding on the notion that poetic effects can be communicated as arrays of weak explicatures, as well as implicatures. It moves on to explore key insights from both general cognitive-stylistic (see in particular, Koops van 't Jagt at al. 2014, and to a lesser extent, Rayner 1998), and specialist relevance-theoretic perspectives (see in particular, Pilkington 2000), relating to increased perception/processing and lexical/encyclopaedic activation, upon which the central hypotheses of the overall thesis are built. The chapter then explores further implications of the hypothesis pertaining to the poetic effects of short line-length, before experimenting with the visuospatial arrangement of a piece of text taken from a non-literary source, as a way of preliminarily considering the aforementioned hypotheses.

As previously stated, Chapters 5 and 6 discuss these hypotheses more thoroughly in relation to the above dataset, before Chapter 7 further recaps the main points arising from the analysis conducted within the previous two chapters, by briefly considering such findings in relation to a further complex poem 'An English Sampler', by Fred D'Aguiar (1999:51-52). It also looks to suggest possible routes and ideas for future programmes of research within the specialised area set forth within the present thesis.

Overall, the original contribution of the thesis lies in the idea that peculiar elements of visuospatial form can trigger the derivation of *poetic effects*. It is clear from previous research in this area that non-linguistic visual stimuli, as well as nonverbal behaviours generally, do indeed give rise to both explicature and implicature-like cognitive effects (for further discussion, see Forceville and Clark 2014). However, none of the research appears directly to ask the question: can visuospatial form give rise to poetic effects? Consequently, I would argue that this sets my own research interests, relating to the poetic effects of short line-length and line divisions (and perhaps visuospatial layout generally) upon particularly innovative grounds.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. The notion of an *expert* poetic reader will be dealt with briefly in section 2.1 of the present thesis. For an in-depth account of the distinction between *expert* and *non-expert* poetic readers, see Peskin (1998).

2. Other empirical studies which suggest that poetry is read more slowly and processed more carefully than prose include: van Peer (1986); Hanauer (1996, 1998, 2001); Zwann (1991, 1994); Tsur (1998); Steinhauer and Friederici (2001); Fisher et al. (2003); and Brouwer et al. (2012).

3. The inception of pragmatics is often credited to Charles Morris (1938), who first defined it as the study of the relations between signs and their users. The central motivation behind the initial creation and following expansion of modern pragmatics was to account for the various differences between sentences and utterances on the one hand, and text and context on the other (for pre-*Relevance* frameworks pertaining to the notion of *context* see: Gazdar (1979); Johnson-Laird (1983); and Levinson (1983)). Many of the early concepts, distinctions and terminology within the field of pragmatics derive from the work of Austin (1962), and to a lesser extent Searle (1969), but it is Grice's (1975, 1989) work, particularly his distinction between 'what is said' and 'what is implicated', his derivation of the term *implicature*, and the conversational maxims subsumed within his *Co-operative Principle*, which are most synonymous with the sub-discipline of pragmatics. For neo-Gricean approaches to the study of pragmatics, which maintain a theoretical framework with similar properties to Grice's Co-operative Principle and maxims, see: Horn (1984, 1988, 2004) and Levinson (1987, 2000).

4. Other significant publications by eminent relevance-theorists, in which the authors expound the relevance-theoretic methodology from a general cognitive-pragmatic perspective, include Blakemore (1987, 1992) and Carston (2002a). Various other general reviews and commentaries on the relevance-theoretic approach to human communication can be found in: Austin et al. (1987); Mey (1994); Blakemore (1995); Furlong (1997); Carston and Uchida (1998); Yus (2009a, 2010); Carston (2012); Clark (2011, 2013a); Allott (2013). For general

critical accounts of the theory see: Bach and Harnish (1987); Berg (1991); Gao (2006). For critiques from an integrational-linguistics perspective, see: Toolan (1992, 1996, 1998, 1999); from a coding point of view: Chapman (2001); and on its application to literary analysis: Green (1993, 1997, 1998, 2001).

5. Various types of texts and textual interpretations have also been studied within the framework of relevance theory, such as: biblical interpretation (Meadowcroft 2002; Pattemore 2002, 2003, 2004; Green 2007, 2009, 2010), legal texts (Witczak-Plisiecka 2005; Shaer 2013), riddle solving (Jasnowski 1991), the interpretation of jokes (Larkin Galiñanes 2005), and fairy tales (Zipes 2006). Along with fairy tales, many other types of literary text have been analysed within the cognitive-pragmatic framework of relevance theory: for instance, the number of drama (Downes 1989; Albrecht 1992; Jacobson 2007; Hopkins and MacMahon 2013; Furlong 2014) and prose-fiction texts (Reboul 1987; Chapman and Routledge 1999; Furlong 2000; Morini 2010; Ruiz-Moneva 2010 Godoy and Ferreira 2014; MacMahon 2001, 2009a, b, 2012, 2014; Clark 2009, 2012, 2015), being extensive. In addition, the literary authors covered are amongst the most renowned and revered in literary history, for example: William Shakespeare (Blakemore 1994; Pilkington 2000; Keller 2010), Jane Austin (Peña Cerval 1997), Harold Pinter (Yus 1998) and Anton Chekhov (Clark 2014) – to name just a few.

6. A similar distinction is made by relevance theorist Billy Clark (2019) between "lazy" (passive, immersed, unquestioning, etc.) and "unlazy" (questioning, querying, interpretive, etc.) readings. Although, limited space prohibits me from exploring the idea in detail, it could be argued that short line-length promotes the latter reading style. It encourages the reader to take more notice of and commit more inferential development into individual items of lexically encoded content that when placed within other visuo-textual contexts would fail to be promoted. There is a level of suggestiveness to such content when it is presented in a visuo-textually distinct manner – as though its content should be attended to in a closer and more inferentially-involved fashion.

2. Relevance theory

2.1. Relevance theory: communication and cognition

Relevance theory[1] aims to provide a rigorous account of *relevance* and its role in human cognition (Sperber and Wilson 2012a:6). Whether externally perceived and attended to, as with utterances and other ostensive stimuli, or internally represented, as with thoughts, memories, conclusions and inferences, relevance is a potential property of any input to cognitive processes (Wilson and Sperber 2004:608; Sperber and Wilson 2012a:6). Such inputs are *relevant* to an individual when they connect with available contextual assumptions to derive *positive* or *worthwhile cognitive effects*, such as: the strengthening, or contradiction and removal, of existing assumptions, or the derivation of entirely new assumptions (contextual implications), which are not deducible from either input or context alone (Carston 1988b:58; Sperber and Wilson 1995:109; Carston 2002a:44-45; Sperber and Wilson 2012a:6). Other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input in a context of available assumptions, and the smaller the processing effort required (to represent the input, access a context, and yield the cognitive effects), the greater the relevance of the input to the individual who processes it at that time (Wilson and Sperber 2004:609; Sperber and Wilson 2012a:6).

Relevance theory is grounded upon two universal claims about the role of relevance in cognition and communication:

(3.) *Cognitive Principle of Relevance*

> Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1995:260-266).

(4.) *Communicative Principle of Relevance*

> Every act of overt communication conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1995:266-72).

These two principles are designed in order to distinguish between *maximal relevance* (the greatest possible effects for the smallest possible effort) and *optimal relevance*

(adequate effects for no unjustifiable effort), and to highlight the idea that while *cognition* tends to be geared to the *maximisation* of relevance, *communication* merely creates an expectation of *optimal* relevance (Higashimori and Wilson 1996:2).

Working from the assumption that the main aim of the human mind is to represent the world as accurately as possible, Clark (2013a:107) states that it would be rational to assume that human cognitive processes have evolved in ways that strive to achieve this goal in the most efficient manner possible. Sperber and Wilson (2012a:6) state that this evolutionary predisposition for efficient information processing means that human perception tends to pay more attention to certain types of stimuli than others (other human behaviour and sudden loud noises, for example, being amongst those typically responded to with greatest urgency), human retrieval mechanisms tend automatically to activate potentially relevant assumptions, and human inferential mechanisms tend automatically to process them in the most fruitful way possible. However, a key point to note is that such processes happen at a 'subpersonal', and therefore, unintentional level that is generally beyond our control (Clark 2013a:107).

Following on from this, the Communicative Principle of Relevance, which Sperber and Wilson (1995:263) state is "grounded" in the Cognitive Principle, explains how we make inferences about communicative intentions (Clark 2013a:107). Despite communicators being aware of their audiences desiring such cognitive ideals, during spontaneous, real-world situations of discourse, a range of environmental and sociological factors often come into play which make communicators unwilling or unable to produce the most relevant utterances possible (Higashimori and Wilson 1996:2). The notion of optimal relevance represents a communicative compromise by illustrating what the audience is entitled to expect given the parameters relating to effort and effect stipulated by the Cognitive Principle of Relevance. Sperber and Wilson (1995:270) propose the following formulation:

(5.) *Presumption of Optimal Relevance*

(a.) The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it;

(b.) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

The idea behind the presumption of optimal relevance is that when a speaker overtly claims the attention of a hearer, he/she makes his/her intention to communicate 'something' mutually manifest between both parties (Sperber and Wilson 1995:61). It is

then up to the hearer to use his/her cognitive resources to infer the distinct nature of the informative intention behind the speaker's utterance or nonverbal act of communication (Clark 2013a:108). A hearer can assume that when another individual overtly claims his/her attention through an ostensive act of communication (either verbal or nonverbal) that the speaker must think that it will be worth the hearer's while to expend his/her effort in working out what it is that the speaker intends to communicate, and that it will be relevant enough to justify paying attention to this stimulus rather than anything else the hearer could be paying attention to at that time (Sperber and Wilson 2012a:6; Clark 2013a:108).

As Clark (2013a:108) points out, since cognitive resources are valuable, we are not in the business of wasting them in attending to stimuli which will not reward our mental effort with a sufficient range of cognitive effects. Therefore, relevance theory states that hearers are equipped with an astute comprehension-heuristic, which is relevance-guided and allows them, when attending to ostensive acts of communication, to evaluate the relevance of potential interpretations and stop when expectations of relevance have been satisfied (Sperber, Cara and Girotto 1995:51; Wilson and Sperber 2004:613; Sperber and Wilson 2012a:7). Guided by this heuristic, hearers aim to find an interpretation of the speaker's meaning that satisfies the presumption of optimal relevance. When dealing with a spoken utterance, in order to achieve this goal, a hearer must enrich the utterance's linguistically decoded content to achieve a full-fledged propositional form at the explicit level, and complement it at an implicit level, by deriving enough contextual assumptions which will combine with it to produce ample positive cognitive effects to make the utterance achieve the expected levels of relevance in a wider inferential sense (Sperber and Wilson 2012a:7). According to the relevance-guided comprehension heuristic, the hearer should follow a path of least effort in disambiguating, assigning reference, constructing a context, deriving conclusions, and so on, and stop at the first interpretation that satisfies his or her expectations of relevance (Sperber and Wilson 2012a:7). Carston states that without such a procedure, in a bid to realize our goal of the greatest possible cognitive effects, "we would go on endlessly processing a conceptual representation delivered by the input system, bringing to bear on it more and more of our stock of beliefs to see whether they interact to alter our representation of the world" (Carston 1988b:58-59). This comprehension procedure, which is grounded within the notion of optimal relevance, is the key to relevance-theoretic pragmatics (Sperber and Wilson 2012a:7).

Essentially, the need for the Communicative Principle of Relevance has arisen

as a communicative prerequisite stipulated by various sociological and environmental factors occurring within 'actual' situations of discourse that impinge upon the biologically determined goal of striving for levels of cognitive efficiency par excellence. Whereas maximal relevance relates to the highest possible processing result of a given communicative act, optimal relevance relates to the most favourable or desirable communicative outcome achievable under specific performative conditions, as well as general cognitive aims. A stimulus that achieves maximal relevance is not always the best possible outcome. In an ideal world, maximal relevance would be most advantageous for obvious reasons to do with survival, evolutionary and biological development, and so on. However, in reality, striving for absolute maximal cognitive gain at all costs would be achieved to the detriment of the complex communicative and social needs and goals of both communicators and their audiences, thus potentially evincing a false economy in cognitive-communicative terms. Therefore, an optimal balance or compromise is struck between the biologically determined prerequisite for cognitive efficiency and the complex social needs and preferences of communicators and their audiences. If we just strived for absolute cognitive efficiency, in spite of our own and others' complex social and communicative needs and preferences, then we would end up creating more work for ourselves in the long run, in having to undo the damage to social relations and so on that our pursuit of such perfection would inevitably create.

One such example of this compromise is seen in the production and interpretation of literary/poetic texts. As Yus (2013:2) points out, literary authors often anticipate their readers' tendencies for choosing interpretations according to order of accessibility and expected levels of relevance, and subsequently constrain these tendencies by encouraging the derivation of a range of unusual and unforeseen interpretations. However, Castiglione (2017:118) points out that so-called "expert" poetic readers have quicker and more systematic access to certain interpretive strategies (e.g. allusions to other literary works, and contextualization) compared to novice readers, and cites Peskin's (1998:10) notion that the former tend to treat complex poetic interpretation not as "a finite problem, but [as] an open-ended task".

Furthermore, Peskin (1998:21) states that poetic readers of an expert or advanced level, are able to search for and find meaningful patterns which demonstrate "an extensive and deeply organized knowledge base", rapidly forming a representation of the task that systematically cues their expectations and associations seemingly with less effort than comparative non-experts (for further details, see: Ericsson and Charness

1994; and Sternberg and Horvath 1995). However, Peskin (1998) presents evidence which suggests that while expert readers rapidly make sense of difficult/complex poems, their protocols differ from those in most other studies on expertise in that they are longer than those of the non-experts. Often for expert readers, finding a meaningful pattern is only the starting point from which to launch a higher-level analysis (Peskin 1998:21). Similarly, Wineburg (1991) argues that expert readers' protocols for interpreting historical texts are longer and more complex than those implemented by their non-expert counterparts, and states in particular that the expertise pertaining to the former often lies not in what they know, but in what they are able to do when they do not know (Wineburg 1991:84).

Green (2001) argues that when processing complex literary texts, expert readers tend to opt for the most difficult and obscure interpretations possible, thus engaging in what Furlong (1996, 2014) refers to as acts of *non-spontaneous interpretation*. Such forms of interpretation involve readers going well beyond the obvious when determining a given text's wider contextual effect, and thus *relevance*. The idea is that expert readers are prompted by complex elements of literary form (and/or conventions pertaining to the literary genre itself) to explore the text's explicit-propositional material in relation to a wide range of contextual items that for practical and perhaps social reasons would be both unmanageable and unnecessary during face-to-face forms of ostensive-inferential communication which due to such constraints require a much shallower form of inferential processing termed *spontaneous* by Furlong (1996, 2014). Such views are shared by Cave (2018:167), who argues that "literature slows the reader down, [allowing] for reflective time as a matter of principle". However, rather than viewing the increased processing effort that much literary discourse intrinsically demands as a waste of cognitive resources, and thus something that stands as an occlusion to communicative efficiency, expert poetic readers revel in the deliberately abstruse communicative intentions of literary writers, and often choose to celebrate interpretive difficulty as a path to enlightened, intellectual thought – a tendency which Cave (2018:167) points out would be "catastrophic" for utterances occurring within spontaneous, real-world frames of utterance[2].

The linguistic arrangements in extremely unusual, challenging, and obscure poetic forms put readers to much more effort than perhaps is necessary, but given the fact that expert readers expect high levels of interpretive difficulty, it would not be in either the writer's or the expert reader's interests to deal in linguistic formulations and ostensive acts that communicate within a maximally relevant capacity. However, neither

would it be in either party's interests to push processing effort beyond levels that would see the cognitive reward falling short of levels deemed justifiable and/or satisfactory given the mental effort involved. Therefore, literary-textual communication requires that the writer maintains the right level of interpretive difficulty to satisfy the reader's cognitive demands and the aesthetic expectations stipulated and to some extent triggered by the text's generic classification, whilst enabling the reader to derive an overall level of communicative efficiency. The aim then, is one of achieving an optimal balance between effort and effects, given the complex needs and requirements of writer and reader and the conventions of production and interpretation set by the literary genre itself.

A key argument set forth within the present thesis is that although the poetic effects of short line-length and line divisions involve increased processing effort at the levels of perception, representation and inference, such increases will lead to a range of additional contextual effects being derived as a result of the extra inferential activity that is triggered by the text's stylistically pronounced visuospatial form. Therefore, such additional contextual effects will act to justify the reader's increased effort, thus redressing the balance of optimal relevance. The notion of optimal relevance, therefore, is one of the key cognitive-pragmatic elements that the framework of relevance theory contributes to the present thesis.

2.2. Explicatures

Aligning themselves with Fodor (1983), Sperber and Wilson (1995:71-72) see the human mind as consisting of a range of "specialised systems", each of which works independently to process the information conveyed by the different types of sensory stimuli received from our external environment (e.g. sights, sounds, utterances, nonverbal behaviour, and so on) ready for further inferential enrichment (Yus 2009b:153). Therefore, a distinction is made between the input systems, which process perceptual information of different formats (such as: visual, auditory, linguistic, and so on), and the central systems, which according to Sperber and Wilson (1995:71) integrate information derived from the various input systems with information retrieved from *context*, and perform inferential tasks. For relevance theory, context consists of old information sourced from previous utterances and other perceptual stimuli, whose interpretation provides a background against which new information gained from a range of newly perceived stimuli is processed (Yus 2009b:149).

Each input system is sensitive to information of the corresponding sensory format and has its own distinct method of representation and computation: for instance, auditory perception is sensitive to and can process only acoustic information; and the representational and computational processes involved in auditory perception are distinct from those which occur in visual perception, and so on. When processing a linguistic utterance, for instance, the relevant input system(s) derive(s) a preliminary string of conceptual representations which Sperber and Wilson (1995:72) refer to as the utterance's *logical form*. This logical form provides the initial semantic and grammatical characteristics which constitute the core propositional value for the utterance that invariably applies across all contexts of usage. However, logical forms only provide an initial conceptual-guide or blueprint for an utterance's full meaning, and therefore must be inferentially enriched with further conceptual material derived from context in order to derive a fully determinate and optimally relevant propositional form (Yus 2009b:153).

The enrichment of the logical form to acquire its explicit proposition (or *explicature*[3] in specialised relevance-theoretic terms) may involve several types of inferential development, such as: *reference assignment* – especially of indexical or deictic items (as in 6a.); *disambiguation* of vague terms (as in 6b.); or a process of *free (pragmatic) enrichment* (Recanati 1993; Carston 2016), which involves a specialised level of conceptual adjustment described as *ad hoc*[4] by lexical pragmaticians such as Carston (2002a, 2010b, c, 2016) – involving either the semantic broadening (as in 6c.), narrowing (as in 6d.), or more complex and imaginative modulation of the lexically encoded concept (as in 6e.):

(6.) (a.) *We* gave up – *they* wouldn't go *there*.
We [The speaker and *who*?] gave up – *they* [*who*?] wouldn't go *there* [*where*?].

(b.) The child left the *straw* in the glass.
[*Drinking tube? Cereal stalks?*].

(c.) Bill is *the nicest person there is*.
Bill is [*a very nice person*].

(d.) It'll take *time* for your knee to heal.
It'll take [*a long*] *time* for your knee to heal.

(e.) That surgeon is a *butcher*.
That surgeon [*is grossly incompetent*].

(Carston 2016:199; Sperber and Wilson 1995:186; Pilkington 2010:159-162; Vego Morano 2005:123).

In addition to such processes of pragmatic enrichment, explicatures may be more or less explicit, since they contain both linguistically decoded and pragmatically derived semantic features. Carston (1988a:167) states that in the case of explicature-construction there is always some level of linguistic guidance, from near total determination of the explicature itself (as in 7a., below) – thus involving a relatively low level of pragmatic development – to an extremely minimal contribution (as in 7b., below) – thus requiring a significant degree of enrichment from context:

(7.) (a.) The sun will rise at 5.25 am on May 15th 1990.

(b.) Later.

The degree of linguistic guidance provided by the utterance's logical form, therefore, determines the level of indeterminacy introduced into the inferential aspect of explicature-construction (Wilson and Sperber 2000:249; Sperber and Wilson 2005:367; Wilson 2012:2; Sperber and Wilson 2012a:13; Sperber and Wilson 2015:146-147; see also Owtram 2010:184-185; Forceville and Clark 2014:457). The general notion of *weak explicature* will be revisited in section 4.2, which will provide a more thorough examination of the cognitive-pragmatic nature of the phenomenon. Section 4.3 will examine the poetic effect of weak explicature, whilst also considering ways in which the notion of ad hoc conceptuality might shed some light on the vaguer, more poetic aspects of explicit forms of communication[5].

Sperber and Wilson's (1995) original theory on the inferential enrichment of explicit linguistic structure has been most thoroughly developed in Robyn Carston's (2002a) seminal publication *Thoughts and Utterances*. Other notable publications by Carston on this topic include: Carston (1987), (1988a), (2004), (2007), (2008), (2009a, b), (2010a), and (2016). In many of these texts, Carston tends to offer a more refined view of the pragmatic processes governing explicit linguistic communication through the respective concepts of *saturation* and *free enrichment*. Saturation involves processes of inferential development which are to some degree linguistically-indicated, either through the use of an overt indexical/variable (as in the case of the pronoun "We" in the utterance "We gave up"), or a covert indexical/variable or hidden element (as in the contextually supplied content which answers the bracketed question in the utterance "Paracetamol is better [than what?]").

A special case of "free" (pragmatic) enrichment (Recanati 1993; Carston 2016), however, involves adding an unarticulated constituent of content to the

explicature, with a total absence of linguistic control in either an overt or hidden sense. Consider the following example from Carston (2016:199):

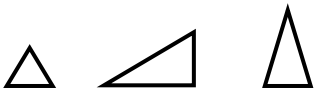
(6d.) It'll take time for your knee to heal.

Even after pragmatic enrichment of the referring expression "your", as well as any temporal variables, deems the utterance to be semantically and propositionally complete, further pragmatic enrichment ("adjustment") is required, otherwise the utterance is merely an irrelevant truism, since any process takes place over some discernible period of time (Carston 2016:199; Sperber and Wilson 1995:189). Carston (2016:199) states that, "in virtually no instance would a speaker of these sentences intend to express that uninformative, irrelevant proposition", rather a speaker aiming at optimal relevance will mean more besides the truism in question: perhaps, that it will take an amount of time for the individual's knee to heal that it would be particularly relevant to remark upon i.e. longer than would otherwise be expected (Sperber and Wilson 1995:189). Therefore, the speaker would intend to communicate an enriched or more developed proposition that interacts with the hearer's available contextual resources, in order to bring about a host of positive contextual effects (Carston 2016:199). Only in this totally non-linguistically mandated state do we have "free" pragmatic enrichment (for further research carried out on free enrichment, containing a range of examples of unarticulated constituents, see: Carston 2002a, 2010a, 2016; Stanley 2002; Marti 2006; Hall 2006, 2007, 2009, 2014; Recanati 2002, 2010). A central hypothesis of the thesis, to be discussed in detail in section 5.5-5.8, is that tactical placement of line divisions can be used to perceptually encode processing gaps within the text's developing linguistic structure, which trigger extra processes of pragmatic enrichment to occur in relation to the text's linguistically encoded content, that may not have otherwise been triggered, had the text been arranged within a relatively less visuospatially fragmented manner. Therefore, the reader is encouraged by the visuospatially fragmented nature of the text to consider the text's explicit structure within a relatively more logically and pragmatically indeterminate, and thus *poetic* light. Furthermore, the thesis contends that the levels of visuospatial fragmentation give rise to a wider range of propositional forms which will offset the increased processing effort generated within the reader, thus maintaining a balance of *optimal relevance*.

Although most of the relevance-theoretic approaches to both spoken and written acts of ostensive communication have focused on cases in which communicated

meaning is to some extent linguistically encoded, research exists that explores the extent to which such meaning is affected via certain non-linguistic factors[6]. For example, in relation to pictures and pictorial imagery, Forceville (1996:75-76) states that the pictorial context of an object co-determines how we perceive that object. In order to illustrate this point, Forceville (1996:75) presents the following table (originally from Bosch 1985:146[7]) containing five separate pictorial situations:

(8.)

situation	objects	natural description for the leftmost object
A		'the triangle'
B		'the small one'
C		'the large one'
D		'the equilateral one'
E		'the white one'

Each situation contains a series of objects that is distinct in relation to its own pictorial context; however, each of these situations is related as all contain the same triangular figure as their left-most object. Forceville states that if we were presented with it out of context, we would perceive and describe the left-most object invariably as a triangle; however, as he observes further:

> the five triangles do not stand on their own, but are accompanied by different figures in each case, and these influence our perception of the triangle. Depending on the pictorial 'context', we 'see' the triangle differently, and thus 'seeing differently' can be made explicit by our descriptions of it. The triangle can now be described as 'the small triangle'; 'the large triangle'; 'the equilateral triangle'; and 'the white triangle' respectively – or perhaps even 'the small one'; 'the large one'; 'the equilateral one'; and the 'white one' (Forceville 1996:76).

Thus, different pictorial contexts emphasize different aspects of the triangle's material form. Our perception of the immediately surrounding objects impacts upon our

perception of the left-most object. The present thesis contends that a similar phenomenon occurs in respect of the visuospatial presentation of written text. Different variations of line-length, and different placements of actual line divisions, emphasize different properties of the text's constituent structure, thus determining how we construct and represent its basic propositional structure within the mind. Thus, the visuospatial context, within which a given linguistic formulation is perceived, directly impacts upon the way in which its linguistically encoded content is arranged into a set of logical structures within the mind, ready for further processes of pragmatic enrichment. It may be the case that different visuospatial arrangements of the same linguistic material cause its linguistically encoded content to be represented and delivered into pragmatic processing alongside different forms of perceptual information, which are distinct to the visuospatial contexts in question and encourage varying levels of inferential enrichment, thus leading to the development of differing propositional forms.

Similarly, Forceville and Clark (2014) discuss the question of whether ostensive pictures (understood as images created with the intention to communicate) can be said to have explicit meaning. Within the framework of relevance theory, this equates to positing the idea that pictures may be capable of deriving *explicatures*. Since, according to relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995:182), explicatures require some degree of linguistic decoding, then it would follow that pictures lacking any textual element can give rise only to implications and implicatures (Forceville and Clark 2014:458): after all, the notion of explicature is a pragmatic refinement of the Gricean notion of what is *said*, rather than what is *seen*. However, Forceville and Clark (2014) believe that it is worth asking whether pictures can have explicatures, since research has revealed that there are encoded meanings which are non-linguistic in nature: including coded elements of nonverbal communication (discussed, for example, by Wharton 2009), and coded pictorial meanings, such as "pictograms" and other types of symbol that represent a physical object or an idea (discussed by Forceville 2011; see also Forceville et al. 2014). Relevance theory views the processes governing the interpretation of ostensive stimuli as working in parallel and mutually adjusting each other. Hypotheses about possible explicatures (including disambiguation, reference assignment, etc.) influence hypotheses about possible implicated premises and conclusions and so on (Forceville and Clark 2014:465 – for further discussion see Wilson and Sperber 2002b; Rosa Vega Moreno 2005, 2007; Wilson and Carston 2007). Forceville and Clark (2014:466) point out that while "'scanning' a picture takes time,

the whole picture appears at once in our visual field and all parts of it are available to our attention at once". However, with a spoken utterance, "we may begin to form hypotheses about speakers' intended meanings as soon as they begin to speak and then adjust our assumptions when we hear later parts of the utterance" (Forceville and Clark 2014:466). With a picture, therefore, the whole image is available immediately, which means that the viewer controls the order in which individual elements of the picture's constituent structure are perceived and represented; whereas when interpreting speech, and in fact when scanning written text, we process the individual constituents that make up the utterance's/text's logical/propositional structure as they become available incrementally and within a spatio-temporal sense.

Although one could argue that the whole content and form of a short poem might be available to the reader all at once, there is an arbitrary link between form and content in the case of linguistic phenomena. For their surface meaning to be understood, most poems and other short texts need to be read in close detail, and often with a conventional left-to-right scanning procedure. On the other hand, most of the surface meaning relating to most pictures can be recovered at a glance, with initial hypotheses based on attention to specific parts being adjusted when viewers subsequently notice further details (Forceville and Clark 2014:465). Therefore, whereas most of a picture's surface meaning will be recovered upon the first viewing, in one go as it were, the meaning of a short text will be constructed incrementally, by piecing together smaller chunks of linguistically encoded conceptual material, until a fuller representation of the underlying text-content is reached.

Whether pictures communicate explicatures, or simply implications and implicatures, is not directly important to the present thesis. What is relevant is the idea that non-linguistic form can stimulate further processes of pragmatic enrichment, which leads to the derivation of a range of cognitive effects. Generally, work on nonverbal communication within the framework of relevance theory has tended to concentrate on how various types of non-naturally meaning gestures and visual phenomena seem to encode conventional elements of meaning which are then fleshed-out by inference in an explicature-like way. For example, Wharton (2009) discusses culture-specific emblems, such as the thumbs-up and thumbs-down gestures, two raised fingers, and so on, which "whilst clearly non-linguistic, are equally clearly non-natural in Grice's sense" (Wharton 2009: 149), since they involve some level of coded communication, albeit of a non-linguistic nature. Forceville and Clark (2014:460) state that "when we process non-natural coded behaviour, whether in pictures or elsewhere, the coded material is

inferentially fleshed out to arrive at an interpretation". By the same token, Wharton points out that this applies equally to natural coded behaviours that are ostensive in nature:

> when natural coded behaviours are put to use in ostensive-inferential communication, the automatic decoding processes that govern their interpretation are supplemented by other equally specialised automatic – but this time inferential – processes that govern the interpretation of ostensive stimuli (Wharton 2009:115).

The important point made within these remarks is that nonverbal behaviours can present coded material which is inferentially enriched in an explicature-like way (Forceville and Clark 2014:460). However, where the present thesis differs from these and related approaches, is that it argues that line divisions, as distinct visuospatial units, rather than supplying further items of conceptual meaning which can supplement and combine with the encoded meaning of the text-content, before being inferentially enriched from context in an explicature-like way, affect the spatio-temporal manner in which the text-content's essential logical form and propositional structure is formed on a rudimentary cognitive basis. In essence, line divisions do not encode conceptual items akin to the conceptual material encoded by the text's linguistic structure, but rather units of a raw perceptual nature, which impact upon the way that the linguistically encoded text-content is initially arranged into structured strings of constituent concepts, and subsequently, the manner in which such logical forms are inferentially enriched and processed at a further pragmatic level.

The view of short line-length adopted within the present thesis draws on the theoretical insights of Pilkington's (1994; 2000) research into the cognitive-pragmatic effects of verse features, such as: metre, metrical variation, alliteration, rhyme, line-length, stichic and strophic organisation, etc. Pilkington (1994, 2000) states that such features slow down the reading of poetic text, during which lengthier activation of the associated lexical and encyclopaedic material gives rise to a range of additional contextual effects – many of which will be deemed *poetic* within a relevance-theoretic sense. By combining insights from the field of psycholinguistics into the process of *spreading activation of lexical access* (Marslen-Wilson 1987, 1989; Marslen-Wilson and Zwitserlood 1989) with insights from relevance theory concerning the structure of conceptual material within the mind (Sperber and Wilson 1995:85-93), Pilkington (2000:131-140) provides a thorough cognitive-pragmatic account of how rhyme, metre and alliteration are able to generate poetic levels of processing. Although Pilkington

lists line-length as capable of generating deeper levels of processing in the reader, it does not feature any further within the rest of his cognitive-pragmatic account of the phenomenon. Neither has the poetic effect of short line-length been explored within the framework of relevance theory since. With this in mind, Chapter 4 will introduce the idea that short line-length can lead to the derivation of poetic effects, before the notion is explored directly in relation to a poetic dataset within Chapters 5 and 6.

What can be concluded from this section is that the linguistic components of sentences at best encode fragmentary semantic representations of the complex thoughts and intentions that underpin them. Such fragmentary semantic representations are the result of an automatic and unconscious process of linguistic decoding that lays out a preliminary logical structure upon which a more pragmatically (and thus contextually) developed version of the speaker's intended explicit-propositional message can be developed. The next section will show how a further range of propositional structures known as *implicatures* can be derived by inferentially processing an utterance's/text's explicit content in relation to further concepts and assumptions stored within encyclopaedic context. The main point to note is that much of an explicature's conceptual structure is provided by the logical form of the utterance, therefore creating a considerable semantic overlap between both items. The process of implicature-construction though, proceeds via inferential processes alone. What this means is that the conceptual content of the explicature merely acts as evidence for a given implicature or set of implicatures. Neither logical forms, nor explicatures, automatically encode conceptual components pertaining to further implicatures. They instead act as premises or inputs to further processes of inference, which work independently of linguistic processing, within the central systems of the human mind. When processed in relation to further pieces of information stored within *encyclopaedic context*, such inputs can be used to yield further contextually implied concepts and assumptions that represent the wider implicit import of the speaker's intended meaning.

2.3. Implicatures

It was mentioned in the previous section that as the explicit propositional form of an utterance is being formulated or developed[8], it inferentially interacts with contextual information in order to derive further assumptions known as *implicatures*. Consider the following exchange:

(9.) (a.) Peter: Would you drive a Mercedes?

(b.) Mary: I wouldn't drive any expensive car.

The explicature provided by Mary's response does not directly answer Peter's question, but rather provides access to his encyclopaedic information about expensive cars, which may well include the following assumption (Sperber and Wilson 1995:194):

(10.) A Mercedes is an expensive car.

When processed in the context of this assumption, Mary's response would likely produce the following contextual implication:

(11.) Mary wouldn't drive a Mercedes.

Mary's response has answered Peter's question indirectly, by making manifest a contextually implied answer. Intuitively, Peter, and indeed any communicator, would take it for granted that Mary must mean more than what she simply says or explicates, since humans, when engaging in canonical, face-to-face situations of discourse, tend to proceed within such exchanges with a common set of social and cognitive goals (shared by all interlocutors engaged within a specific discursive context). Therefore, it is mutually manifest that this implied answer is intentional: it is an implicature of her utterance (Sperber and Wilson 1995:194). Sperber and Wilson (1995:194-195) define implicatures as implications of an utterance's explicit propositional form which a speaker "manifestly intends" to communicate to his/her audience in the pursuit of relevance.

The above implicature, however, is only one of a range of contextually implied assumptions likely to be communicated by Mary's indirect response within an actual context of utterance. Mary's indirect answer provides Peter with immediate access to his contextual information about expensive cars, which may well include, amongst other things, the names of, and information pertaining to, other types of expensive car. It would be logical to assume, therefore, that if Mary would not drive a Mercedes, then she would not drive a Rolls Royce, a Cadillac, a Ferrari, and so on; all of which are, to some degree, intentionally supplied implications of her original utterance depending upon their level of accessibility, and thus the level of encouragement provided by Mary for their derivation. Peter may well even opt to extend the context even further by using the premise in (12a.) to derive the contextual assumption in (12b.):

(12.) (a). People who refuse to drive expensive cars disapprove of displays of

wealth.

(b.) Mary disapproves of displays of wealth.

Mary's indirect response in (9b.) thus opens up a number of possibilities of interpretation not available for the more direct: "I wouldn't drive a Mercedes" (Sperber and Wilson 1995:197); all of which are, to some degree, intentionally communicated due to the indirect nature of her original response.

As with explicatures, implicatures may range in strength (Sperber and Wilson 1995:199). The weaker the encouragement supplied by the speaker to derive a certain implicature (i.e. the less intentional), the weaker the implicatures are said to be (Sperber and Wilson 1995:199). The strongest possible implicatures are those most accessible to the hearer, as in (10.) and (11.), which the hearer can scarcely avoid recovering, and for which the speaker takes full responsibility. Strong implicatures are those assumptions which the hearer is strongly encouraged but not actually forced to derive: they include, for example, the notion that since Mary refuses to drive expensive cars she may also disapprove of displays of wealth. *Ceteris paribus*, the weaker the encouragement, and the wider the range of possibilities from which the hearer can choose, the weaker the implicatures (Sperber and Wilson 1995:199). Potentially, a point may be reached where the hearer receives such a minimal degree of encouragement to derive a particular set of implicatures that he or she takes full responsibility for their derivation. The cognitive-pragmatic nature of such weak implicatures will be examined in greater depth in section 2.6 when discussing relevance theory's specialised notion of a *poetic effect*.

Dynel (2012) argues that utterance interpretation unfolds in incremental stages in which the assumptions obtained from the processing of previous text segments form a contextual schema for the interpretation of succeeding segments (see also Yus 2013). Interestingly, during utterance interpretation, hearers often make anticipatory hypotheses and can derive implications even before the explicit proposition of the utterance has been fully developed. As Yus (2013:4) notes, the inferential tendency of communicators described here, has often been highlighted as significant for incongruity-resolution in humour, whereby hearers are often forced to backtrack when subsequent propositions within the text force the reader to reinterpret the humorous expression within an alternative contextual frame. More recently, Bolens (2018) argues that an inference process can be protracted, for example "when a narrative achieves relevance progressively, by increasing the manifestness of salient features incrementally". According to Uchida (1998), writers often exploit this characteristic for

literary effect. One such way involves using language to evoke the representation of an incongruous concept which cannot be fully disambiguated or resolved from either text or context alone, or a combination of the two, but requires subsequent explicit material within the text to achieve full semantic completion. The concept may derive its incongruity by impeding any one of the inferential subtasks involved in the pragmatic development of the text's explicit-propositional form, such as, reference assignment, disambiguation, or further processes of conceptual enrichment. Between first perceiving the incongruous concept and the subsequent explicit material, the reader is placed within a temporary state of cognitive suspense. During this state, the reader likely uses context to construct a range of potential propositional values for the incongruous concept, even though such a procedure may incur considerable processing costs. The writer is aware of this tendency and does not provide the reader with immediate access to the explicit cues necessary for understanding the full meaning of the expression. When the explicit cues are finally given, the reader is set free from his/her state of suspense, and returns to the original textual point, where the textual incongruity was initially perceived, able to reinterpret the original concept within a contextually enriched light.

Research has been conducted then which considers the effect that unusual uses of linguistic form can have upon the various pragmatic processes that underpin the comprehension/interpretation of utterances/texts. In the following section it will be discussed how for Sperber and Wilson (1987a, 1995) different syntactic arrangements of the same utterance inevitably lead to different mental organizations of its underlying logical form, and thus propositional structure. The present thesis will suggest that different visuospatial arrangements of written texts can completely affect how such texts are both perceived and processed by readers. Essentially, how a written piece of language appears on the page can alter the concepts and assumptions which it ultimately stirs up within the reader's mind.

2.4. Linguistic form and pragmatic processing

Sperber and Wilson (1987a:706) state that utterances are not processed as single units of meaning, but as structured strings of constituent concepts; each of these provides access to elements of conceptual information which, when combined and inferentially enriched from context, form more detailed propositional constructs. In relation to this notion, Sperber and Wilson explain how the syntactic form of an utterance can affect further pragmatic processing of its linguistically encoded content (Sperber and Wilson 1987a,

1995; see also, Wilson and Sperber 2012b); thus, two utterances with identical truth conditions, but with different word orders, can lead to very different contextual outcomes. Compare for instance:

(13.) Leo sold Peter a painting.

(14.) Peter bought a painting from Leo.

Sperber and Wilson argue that in the case of (13.) the hearer's expectation is that the utterance will be relevant in a context of information about Leo: for example, "if it were mutually manifest that Leo desperately needed money, a key implicature would be that he has just made some" (Sperber and Wilson 1987a:706). For (14.), they argue that the hearer's expectation is that the utterance will be relevant in a context of information relating to Peter: for example, "if it were mutually manifest that Peter did not care for Leo's painting but knew he needed money, the utterance would implicate that Peter behaved generously" (Sperber and Wilson 1987a:706). Both background implications, *Leo desperately needs money* and *Peter does not care for Leo's painting*, are mutually manifest to both speaker and hearer to equal degrees prior to the utterance being articulated. That is, *ceteris paribus*, both implications are equally accessible and capable of being derived by both interlocutors when processing the relevance of any potential modifications, linguistic or otherwise, to their mutual cognitive environment. Both utterances clearly contain different logical and syntactic structures, but essentially report on the same event: Leo sold a painting to Peter/Peter bought a painting from Leo. Since both encode the exact same event, they carry identical truth conditions: in both scenarios someone sold a painting and someone bought that painting; and in each case, the seller was *Leo* and the buyer was *Peter*.

However, although the basic truth-conditions are identical across both contexts of utterance, both achieve wider degrees of relevance by processing the idea of Leo selling a painting and Peter purchasing it in relation to different contextual backgrounds. These contextual backgrounds are made available through the initial syntactic elements of both utterances: *Leo* in (13.), and *Peter* in (14.). Sperber and Wilson (1987a:706) state that given that utterances have "constituent structure, internal order, and focal stress and are processed over time", optimally relevant utterances aim to make their effort-saving background implications available as early as possible, in order to achieve contextual effects for no unjustifiable expenditures of processing effort. Speakers communicating within face-to-face interactions will choose linguistic arrangements that

allow their fellow interlocutors to access the most useful contextual information as quickly and easily as possible. For both (13.) and (14.), the most useful information might be either Leo's shortage of money or Peter's dislike of Leo's artistic abilities. The speaker would have to make a judgement, based on various factors relating to the overall communicative context, about which line of processing would proffer the most useful cognitive benefits to all those involved.

A preliminary consideration of the present thesis is that the rudimentary visuospatial arrangement of linguistic material can affect the way it is fundamentally perceived, and then processed within a further contextual light. The nature of this process will be worked out in relation to the phenomenon of short line-length when reviewing the wider cognitive-stylistics literature relating to visuospatial form and pragmatic processing, and in relation to the psycholinguistics phenomenon of lexical and encyclopaedic activation, at various stages throughout Chapter 4. Focusing on the phenomenon of line divisions for the time being, it can be said that such divisions often cause the text's linguistic content to be represented at a cognitive level within a relatively more fragmented fashion, which often promotes higher levels of inferential activity and gives rise to a wider and weaker range of explicit-propositional values. Essentially, this hypothesis will be worked out in more detail at various points throughout Chapter 4, before being explored directly in relation to William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) imagist poem, 'This Is Just to Say', within Chapter 5 (see section 5.7 for the full text). The basic idea, however, is that line divisions can encode visuospatial breaks within the text's developing linguistic structure which encourage readers to pause briefly before moving on to the following line structures that lie beyond the line divisions in question. During these pauses, a transitory processing phase of a *non-spontaneous* inferential nature (Furlong 1996, 2014) occurs, wherein readers are able to make a series of anticipatory hypotheses pertaining to the text's developing logical form and propositional structure; again, as it develops beyond the line divisions in question. Such anticipatory hypotheses give rise to a range of propositional values pertaining to the text's ongoing explicit structure, which may well combine to achieve poetic effects that are short-lived yet provide the text with a distinctive and peculiar ad hoc conceptual component at the pragmatic level of explicature. Although most of these preliminary propositional values will be cancelled out when the reader progresses beyond the line divisions in question, their conceptual content will remain manifest/salient to at least some degree within the background of the reader's cognitive environment, which as a result may impact upon the way that the rest of the text's actual

linguistic and propositional content is constructed, and furthermore interpreted within a wider contextual sense, as the reading develops.

The above remarks made by Sperber and Wilson then, make it clear that the sequencing of an utterance's basic linguistic structure will directly affect the way that its fundamental conceptual content is processed and made use of within a contextual capacity. Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) posit the term *poetic effect* for the peculiar effect of an utterance which communicates most of its relevance through a wide range of weak implicatures. Crucially the input to pragmatic processing which prompts the derivation of such poetic effects is always triggered via some stylistically pronounced linguistic feature e.g. through a repeated lexical item, syntactic form, a piece of alliteration, and so on. However, the idea that poetic effects can be generated by experimenting with the visuospatial presentation of texts, to my knowledge, does not seem to have been explored within the framework of relevance theory. Sperber and Wilson's above remarks concern the effects of linguistic form (i.e. lexical content, constituent structure and phonological form) on pragmatic processing; the present thesis, however, argues that pragmatic processes are also sensitive to a range of visuospatial elements, which provide inputs of a rawer perceptual nature.

Section 2.6 focuses directly on the specialised cognitive-pragmatic phenomenon of *poetic effects* (a phenomenon which hinges on the relevance-theoretic concept of *weak communication*[9]). The original formulation of *poetic effects* is devised predominantly in relation to a cognitive-pragmatic account of the rhetorical device known as epizeuxis (see Sperber and Wilson 1995:219-222). This account explores a range of linguistic examples featuring the device; in particular, it shows how different instances of lexical repetition employed within a range of utterances lead to an array of specialised cognitive-pragmatic effects. Sperber and Wilson (1995:220) suggest that some of these effects may be accounted for by appealing to specific and straightforward principles of semantic or pragmatic interpretation, whereas others seem to require a much more original and complex inferential account. Their cognitive-pragmatic account of epizeuxis and their specialised notion of a *poetic effect* are dealt with in the following two sections.

2.5. Epizeuxis

Epizeuxis is the term used to describe the immediate repetition of a word or phrase within a sentence/utterance (Pilkington 1994:154). Sperber and Wilson (1995:219) consider the stylistic effects of *epizeuxis* in the following examples:

(15.) (a.) *Here's a red sock*, *here's a red sock*, here's a blue sock.

(b.) We went for a *long*, *long* walk.

(c.) There were *houses*, *houses* everywhere.

(d.) I shall *never*, *never* smoke again.

(e.) There's *a fox*, *a fox* in the garden.

(f.) My childhood days are *gone*, *gone*.

Intuitively, we can envisage contexts in which (15a.) conveys the idea that there are two red socks; (15b.) that the speaker and an acquaintance went for a *very* long walk; (15c.) that within a given location the speaker saw *many* houses; (15d.) that the speaker will definitely *never* smoke again; (15e.) that there is a fox in the garden and that the speaker is particularly excited about this fact; and (15f.) that the speaker is feeling nostalgic and even mildly distressed about the disappearance of his or her bygone youth (Sperber and Wison 1995:219). As an overall definition, Guijarro (2005) argues that repetition may be used generally as a type of exaggeration or elaboration; however, the effects of repetition demonstrated in the above utterances are somewhat varied. For example, they may be displayed to some degree in the propositional content of the utterance (as in 15a-c), in the degree of commitment the speaker expresses towards that propositional content (as in 15d), or in some other manifestation of the speaker's attitude (as in 15e-f) (Sperber and Wilson 1995:219; Blakemore 2008:45; Ribeiro 2013:110).

Sperber and Wilson (1995:220) suggest that this variation could be accounted for by setting up specific principles of "semantic" or "pragmatic interpretation". Such principles would be, for example, that the first two repeated scalar adjectival phrases would mean *very*, the first two repeated plural noun phrases would mean *many*, and so on. However, for (15e.), and especially (15f.), it is difficult to envisage propositional paraphrases that would sufficiently capture the semantic essence of the epizeuxis; that is, neither "There's a *very* fox in the garden", nor "My childhood days have *many* gone", provide satisfactory reformulations of either sentential form. Perhaps this is because both utterances when experienced within actual contexts of utterance seem to capture certain non-propositional effects which relate to the speaker's mental or emotional state that are unfortunately lost under such acts of paraphrase (Sperber and Wilson 1995:220). A further possibility would be to show that the effects of repetition might follow from more general psychological principles – perhaps from some

universal set of cognitive strategies geared towards providing a set mental response in relation to all types of input to central processes that demonstrate repetitive features. Aside from the fact that (15e.) and (15f.) present particular problems, Sperber and Wilson (1995:220) argue that this approach is difficult to uphold when considered in relation to stimuli of a rawer perceptual nature: for example, on the face of it, it is difficult to explain how the sight of two sheep, or a flock of sheep, could be taken as a more emotionally moving or more poignant version of a single sheep.

Relevance theory provides a potential resolution to such semantic and pragmatic difficulties, as the above theorists explain:

> Within our framework, the task of the hearer faced with these utterances is to reconcile the fact that a certain expression has been repeated with the assumption that optimal relevance has been aimed at. Clearly, the extra linguistic processing effort incurred must be outweighed by some increase in contextual effects triggered by the repetition itself. The different interpretations of [(15a-f.)] simply illustrate the different ways in which such an increase can be achieved (Sperber and Wilson 1995:220).

The theorists explain that optimally relevant interpretations for each of (15a-c) might proceed along the following lines:

> With [(15a.)] it would be consistent with the principle of relevance to assume that the two occurrences of 'Here's a red sock' refer to numerically distinct objects: hence [(15a.)] is naturally understood as meaning that there are two red socks. With [(15b.)] it would be consistent with the principle of relevance to assume that the speaker wanted to indicate that the walk was longer than the hearer would otherwise have thought: in other words, that it was a very long walk. With [(15c.)] it would be consistent with the principle of relevance to assume that the speaker wanted to indicate that there were more houses than the hearer would otherwise have thought: in other words, that there were a great many houses. In each of these cases the repetition modifies the propositional form and hence the explicatures of the utterance, and achieves extra contextual effects thereby (Sperber and Wilson 1995:220).

However, Sperber and Wilson point out that none of these lines of interpretation are available for (15d.):

> Here it would be consistent with the principle of relevance to assume that the speaker attaches a higher confirmation value to the assumption expressed than the hearer would otherwise have thought. Realising that her utterance will be sceptically received, she repeats the word 'never', the likely target of the scepticism, to convince the hearer that she means what she says. In other words, 'never, never' is here similar in import to 'definitely never', and reflects the speaker's degree of commitment to the assumption expressed. This strengthens the explicature and all its contextual implications, thereby

> increasing the contextual effects of the utterance (Sperber and Wilson 1995:220-221).

As Sperber and Wilson contend (1995:221), similar processing strategies do not work with (15e.) and (15f.), since no increase in contextual effect is likely to be achieved either by enriching the propositional form, or by strengthening the implicatures. What Sperber and Wilson (1995:221) suggest is that in the case of both utterances, the repetition generates an increase in contextual effects by encouraging the hearer to extend the context and thereby derive a range of further implicatures. In (15e.), the repetition neither communicates that there are several foxes, nor strengthens the assumption that there is a single fox present in the garden. Rather, the hearer receives encouragement to explore his/her contextual knowledge for "fox" to greater lengths, with the expectation that the extra effort needed to process the extra material (both in a lexical and contextual sense) will result in granting the fox's presence in the garden a greater degree of relevance than the hearer would have instinctively realised were the utterance to have been delivered minus the lexical repetition (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:221).

Similarly, as Sperber and Wilson (1995:221) remark, the repetition in (15f.) cannot be assumed to communicate merely that the speaker's childhood days are longer gone, or more definitely gone, than the hearer might otherwise have thought; therefore, if a satisfactory level of relevance is to be achieved, then the repeated lexical item must be interpreted by the hearer as a trigger to inferentially process the utterance's explicit content in relation to a relatively greater amount of contextual material, again deriving further implicatures (Sperber and Wilson 1995:221).

There is a key difference between the type of contextual expansion and range of implicatures derived in relation to (15e.) and (15f.). Paying particular attention to the fact that there is a fox in the garden, and remembering some key facts about foxes generally, is likely to cause the derivation of a few, strongly communicated contextual implications of a rather finite and predictable semantic trend e.g. the dustbins may be ransacked, the chickens are in danger, and so on. These strong implications are likely to be considered as *strong implicatures* of the utterance, because they are highly accessible to the hearer and encourage a relatively shallow expansion of context: therefore, the speaker takes a considerable degree of responsibility for their derivation. However, such strongly communicated assumptions cannot be said to follow from the processing of (15f.), as will be demonstrated and discussed in the next section, in relation to Sperber and Wilson's specialised cognitive-pragmatic notion of a *poetic effect*.

2.6. Poetic effects

The main idea to be explored throughout the thesis is that peculiar or stylistically pronounced elements of visuospatial form may provide inputs to pragmatic processing which can stimulate the derivation of what Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) describe within their specialised relevance-theoretic framework as *poetic effects*. However, before exploring this idea further, it is necessary to define their notion of a *poetic effect* in more detail.

The previous section suggested that example (15f.) achieves relevance via a more specialized or creative expansion of context, which gives rise to a wide array of *weak implicatures*. The hearer of (15f.) is prompted to be imaginative in his or her search through context, and is provided with less guidance by the speaker as to what it might mean for the speaker to be past his or her best years (Sperber and Wilson 1995:221). As a result of communicating by way of this utterance, the hearer has in mind a set of assumptions which become manifest to varying degrees, as Sperber and Wilson suggest in the following remarks:

> When the communicator makes strongly manifest her informative intention to make some particular assumption strongly manifest, then that assumption is strongly communicated [...] When the communicator's intention is to increase simultaneously the manifestness of a wide range of assumptions, so that her intention concerning each of these assumptions is weakly manifest, then each of them is weakly communicated (Sperber and Wilson 1995:221).

What Sperber and Wilson are suggesting then, is that different utterances contain varying forms of linguistic style, which increase the manifestness of equally varying ranges of assumptions. Some linguistic utterances will greatly increase the manifestness of a small range of assumptions – perhaps even a single assumption – whilst others will marginally increase the manifestness of a wide range of assumptions. In the former case, the range of assumptions will be small enough to help the hearer to form a fairly fixed and precise representation of the speaker's intended meaning (communicated by way of the utterance in question), since the hearer has less assumptions to choose from when constructing his or her representation of that meaning. In the latter case, however, the range of meanings to choose from when constructing this representation will be considerably more extensive. *Ceteris paribus*, the greater the range derived, the weaker the communicated effects are said to be, and the more responsibility is handed over to the hearer for their derivation.

Looking more closely at the above expression, compare the following two

utterances:

(15f.) My childhood days are *gone*, *gone*.

(16.) My childhood days are *gone*.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1995:221-222), (15f.) differs from (16.) because it has more implicatures; that is, more contextual effects which receive more encouragement to be derived from the speaker. To justify the repetition of "gone", the hearer must think of all the implicatures which the speaker could logically intend him/her to derive from the same utterance minus the repetition, and then come to the conclusion that there is still a range of further effects which the speaker intends the hearer to derive from the repetition itself (Sperber and Wilson 1995:221-222). Implicatures are contextual assumptions or implications which a speaker, intending his/her utterance to be manifestly relevant, manifestly intends to make manifest to the hearer (Sperber and Wilson 1995:194-195). As mentioned in section 2.3, some implicatures are made so strongly manifest that the hearer can scarcely avoid recovering them, whilst others are made less strongly manifest. The less accessible (or in relevance-theoretic terms, less manifest) such implicatures are to the hearer, the weaker they are said to be communicated by the speaker; therefore, the hearer takes a greater share of the responsibility for their derivation. Sperber and Wilson describe the peculiar effect of an utterance which achieves most of its relevance through a wide array of weak implicatures as a *poetic effect* (1995:222).

The theorists argue that poetic effects do not add entirely new assumptions which are strongly manifest within the speaker and hearer's mutual cognitive environment but affect this environment by marginally increasing the manifestness of a great many assumptions (Sperber and Wilson 1995:224). In terms of (15f.), the hearer sees the repetition as an invitation to consider the strongly manifest assumption that the speaker's childhood days are gone in relation to more concepts and assumptions stored within encyclopaedic context than he or she may have otherwise done had the utterance been delivered minus the repetition. The hearer cannot be sure exactly which concepts and assumptions the speaker intended him/her to consider in relation to the new information presented by the utterance, due to the lack of explicit prompting within the utterance itself. However, the extra concepts and assumptions are all likely to communicate a common feeling or attitude towards the strongly manifest assumption that the speaker's childhood days are gone; that is, in this case, sadness, or even

nostalgia. Poetic effects then, create common impressions, rather than common knowledge, and succeed in conveying a sense of affective, rather than cognitive mutuality between the speaker and hearer (Sperber and Wilson 1995:224).

Although poetic utterances derive most of their relevance through the communication of wide arrays of weak implicatures, the process by which a poetic effect is communicated involves a peculiar effect which is essentially *of* the utterance (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222). As Utsumi (2002, 2005) argues, poetic effects are formulated when a noticeable incongruity, or inconsistency, is perceived within some aspect of a linguistic expression's propositional form early within the comprehension process, leading to increased processing effort, before being rewarded by a rich interpretation which is characterised by a range of diffuse meanings (Utsumi 2005:152). In relation to an utterance such as (15f.), the hearer's task is to reconcile the fact that a certain linguistic item within the utterance has been repeated, but with the notion that an optimally relevant cognitive state is still intended by the speaker. The extra processing costs incurred for directly processing the repetition itself should be offset by an increase in contextual effects, with the crucial point being that the increased contextual derivation is triggered linguistically; that is, by the repetition itself[10].

Therefore, the peculiarity is at once split between something peculiar to the explicit form and content of the utterance itself and its wider implicit import generated entirely from context. Despite Sperber and Wilson's redefinition of the saying-implicating distinction, the explicit side of the process underpinning the communication of poetic effects was sparsely theorised in several manifestations of their original framework (see Sperber and Wilson 1987a, 1995). Research conducted predominantly by Robyn Carston (1996b, 2000, 2002a, 2004, 2008, 2010b, c, 2013, 2016) into the pragmatic processes determining explicature-construction, and in particular into the phenomenon known as *ad hoc concept construction*, has provided valuable theoretical insights into this formerly underdeveloped pragmatic aspect of the poetic effects phenomenon. The degree to which Carston's notion of lexical concept adjustment can be used to shed light on the explicit side of the *poetic effects* is considered in greater detail in section 4.3 of the present thesis.

For Sperber and Wilson then, the affective and impressionistic cognitive state that pertains to the communication of a poetic effect is made up of an essentially wide array of minute cognitive (and thus propositional) effects. However, Forceville (2009:5) points out that human cognition also comprises of emotional and attitudinal states, in addition to material that is propositional in nature. Forceville (2009:5) adds that emotion

is part of cognition and that the notion of a "cognitive effect" must be assumed to include emotions. Therefore, when uttering (15f.) a speaker may not only intend to communicate a wide array of assumptions relating to his/her agedness, or lack of youth, but also a range of emotional and attitudinal mental states which most likely possesses an imagistic and sensorimotor aspect that evokes the raw feeling of melancholic nostalgia that the speaker feels towards the notion that he is, so to speak, past his best years. Pilkington (1989; 2000) refers to this phenomenon as evocation or qualia: that is, the qualitative feeling or emotional state that the poetic effect's conceptual content evokes in the hearer, which is somehow built into, yet separate to the utterance's explicatures and implicatures (in addition, see Carston 2010c) for the distinction between two approaches to metaphor: propositional and imagistic). Pilkington (2000:153) also posits the existence of non-propositional phenomenal memory stores for "qualitative property memories" and "iconic" or "echoic" (perceptual) memories that are either contained within the existing encyclopaedic entry or contained within a separate "phenomenal" entry at a particular conceptual address. Such research suggests that there are conflicting views as to what constitutes the essential cognitive quality of such poetic effects. With this in mind, the approach capable of providing the most accurate depiction of the overall phenomenon could well be one that is based upon the idea that poetic effects are made up of complex amalgams of propositional, emotional, imagistic and sensorimotor elements that combine to give poetic effects their specialised aesthetic status and peculiar experiential quality. However, although for obvious reasons very appealing, such an approach would also spread the focus of any thesis across too broad a range of theoretical stances, which would dilute the theoretical rigour attained from pursuing a greater understanding of the *poetic* process at large from the perspective of any one stance alone. For this reason, the present thesis takes what might be best described as a standard propositional approach to the poetic effects of short line-length and line divisions.

2.7. Summary

Chapter 2 has sought to outline the cognitive and communicative foundations of relevance theory, which are based upon the *Cognitive* and *Communicative Principles of relevance*, and the concepts of *maximal* and *optimal relevance*, respectively. The chapter has also sketched the difference between explicit and implicit communication, and has considered how an utterance's linguistic form can impact upon further

pragmatic processing of its linguistically encoded content, and thus upon the range of further contextual effects which it prompts the reader to derive, before finishing in the last section with a detailed account of the specialised relevance-theoretic notion of *poetic effects* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222).

Although further insights into the *poetic effects principle* have been offered by a range of researchers, it is the cognitive-pragmatics expert, Adrian Pilkington, who has by far amassed the largest contribution to the study of *poetic effects* from within the framework of relevance theory (Pilkington 1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2001). His insights into the poetic process culminate in his seminal publication, *Poetic Effects* (2000), which still to this day remains the single most thorough contribution to the literature in this area. Pilkington (2000:131) states that a wide range of verse features that are typically used in poetry (metre, metrical variation, alliteration, rhyme, line-length, stichic and strophic organisation, etc.) slow down the reader's perception of the text's lexical content, which leads to lengthier activation and exploration of the content's associated encyclopaedic material, during which a host of extra contextual effects can be achieved – many of which will be deemed to be *poetic* in nature. Although by mentioning line-length Pilkington (2000:131) hints at the idea of poetic effects being generated via visuospatial means, he limits his investigation of poetic form to the topics of metrical variation, rhyme and alliteration. With this in mind, section 4.4 discusses Pilkington's (2000) insights into the phenomenon of lexical and encyclopaedic activation further, before section 4.5 considers the idea that short line-length leads to lengthier forms of perception of a text's linguistic material, which results in longer activation of its associated lexical and encyclopaedic material, and thus the derivation of additional lines of contextual processing.

Prior to such aims, however, Chapter 3 begins with a general review of some of the main ways that the relevance-theoretic framework has been applied to the study of literature, before looking at how difficult or complex poetry has been handled from a general cognitive-stylistics perspective. The chapter finishes by examining how the processing of such complex poetic forms might be accounted for from a specialised relevance-theoretic perspective.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. Relevance theory has inspired work in relation to a range of different topics, some of which include: bridging (Matsui 1992; Wilson and Matsui 1998; Matsui

2000; Wilson and Matsui 2012) and bridging anaphora (Wu 2013); modularity and the architecture of the mind (Carston 1988b, 1989, 1996a, 1997, 2002c; Sperber 1994; Sperber and Wilson 2002; Carston 2006; Capone 2011); speech acts (Sperber and Wilson 1995; Reboul 2001; Ireri et al. 2015); disambiguation (Sperber and Wilson 1995, pp. 183-193; Demeure 2010); politeness/impoliteness (Escandell Vidal 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Culpeper 2005; Chen 2014); translation (Gutt 1989, 1991, 2010; Díaz-Pérez 2014); pseudo-imperatives (Clark 1989, 1993); music (Downes 1994; Acotto and Radicioni 2012); humour (Yus 2008a, 2012; Dynel 2012; Yus 2016); and irony (Wilson and Sperber 1992; Sperber and Wilson 1998b; Giora 1998; Wilson 2006; Zhao 2009a, b; Wilson and Sperber 2012a). Relevance theory also has helped to shape the field of experimental pragmatics (Jorgensen, Miller and Sperber 1984; Sperber, Cara and Girotto 1995; van der Henst, Carles and Sperber 2002; Chevallier, Noveck, Happé and Wilson 2011; van der Henst and Sperber 2012; Noveck and Sperber 2012; Sperber and Origgi 2012), which looks to test systematic pragmatic theories in relation to the sophisticated experimental methodologies developed within the subdiscipline known as psycholinguistics (Sperber and Noveck 2004:1).

2. According to Banks (2018:132), a similar point is observed by Cave and Wilson (2018b:12-13), who argue that "the distinctiveness of many literary texts […] as communicative acts might be captured in terms of an overt linguistic or logical difficulty which rewards interpretive effort and invites sustained processing".

3. The explicature communicated by a given utterance is defined in relevance-theoretic terms as an assumption/proposition *U* which is *explicit* by virtue of it being a development of a logical form (semantic representation) encoded by *U* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:182; Carston 2016:198).

4. The phenomenon of ad hoc concept construction has been applied to the study of a wide range of phenomena, such as: metaphor (Carston 2002a:349-357, 2002b; Wilson and Carston 2006, 2007; Carston 2010 b, c; Daham 2011; Sperber and Wilson 2012b); zeugma (Solska 2008, 2010); joking (Yus 2008a); polysemy (Higashimori 1994, 1996; Frisson 2009; Falkum 2007, 2009, 2011, 2015); journalistic texts (Ifantidou 2009); and metonymy (Rebollar 2015) – to name just a few.

5. The approach to the explicit content of an utterance described here, which states that such content is largely underdetermined by the linguistically encoded meaning and that its recovery involves a substantial element of pragmatic inference, is defined within the pragmatics literature as *contextualist* in nature (Recanati 2004; Sperber and Wilson 2012a:3). Sperber and Wilson (2012a:2-3) follow Recanati (2004) in contrasting *contextualism* with the *literalist* approach adopted implicitly by Grice and explicitly by John Searle (1969:43), in which the output of decoding is normally a sense that is close to being fully propositional, so that only reference assignment is needed to determine what is said, and the main role of inference in comprehension is to recover what is implicated.

6. For example, Wharton (2009) develops an account of nonverbal behaviours in general, while Forceville (1996, 2005, 2009, 2014) develops an account of how pictures are understood (see also Yus 2008a, 2009b).

7. The table shown in (8.) has been reprinted by kind permission of John Benjamins Publishing Company: https://benjamins.com/catalog/cilt.29.

8. A central view of relevance-theoretic pragmatics is that explicatures and implicatures are developed through a process known as *mutual parallel adjustment*, with the explicit content of an utterance being adjusted or enriched through a complex series of multidirectional, inferential steps, in which tentative hypotheses about contextual assumptions, explicatures and contextual implications are gradually adjusted in order to yield an overall interpretation which is both inferentially sound and satisfies the hearer's expectations of relevance (Carston 2010a:22). The explicature derived is (to at least some extent) the result of backwards inference processes which are receptive to the hearer's preliminary, yet ongoing hypotheses, concerning the contextual implications intentionally communicated by the speaker via way of a given utterance. The relevance formulated by such contextual implications also plays a defining role in the generation of any *ad hoc conceptual* elements of the utterance's explicit propositional form. For further details of the way in which

this process works, see: Wilson and Sperber (2002b); Rosa Vega Moreno (2005, 2007); Wilson and Carston (2007).

9. For further discussion of the specialised notion of *weak communication* within the relevance-theoretic stylistics literature, see: Blakemore (1992, 1993, 1994, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2014); Constable (1998); Pilkington (1989, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2001); Ribeiro (2013); Utsumi (2002, 2005); Vande Wiele (2016).

10. On the other hand, Vande Wiele (2016:56) states that not all figurative expressions trigger the derivation of wide arrays of weak implicatures, and therefore, *poetic effects*. Instead, some have a relatively stable or "fixed" interpretation that is "conveyed through an explicature or through a strong implicature". In addition, Dogan (1992) has considered the idea that poetic effects often involve the communication of wide arrays of *weak explicatures*, in addition to weak implicatures. Following on from Dogan's (1992) original insights, his idea has only been addressed on a rather limited basis throughout the vast relevance-theoretic literature (Carston (1996b:28); Arai (2007, 2008); Clark (2013a, b); and Forceville and Clark (2014)). For a brief discussion of Dogan's (1992) ideas pertaining to the phenomenon of poetic effects communicated as arrays of weak explicatures, see section 4.3 of the present thesis.

3. Relevance theory and literature

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 includes a thorough examination of how relevance theory has been applied specifically to the study of literature and literary interpretations. The main aim of the chapter is to review some of the key insights and developments made within the field of relevance theory and literature, since the cognitive-pragmatic theory's original creation (Sperber and Wilson 1986a).

Noted as seminal contributions to the literature in this area, are Pilkington's (2000) *Poetic Effects*, and Chapman and Clark's (2014) *Pragmatic Literary Stylistics*; both of these texts receive a strong level of focus, because they contain key theoretical insights into how the framework of relevance theory can be used to gain an enriched understanding of the different cognitive and communicative intricacies underpinning the act of literary interpretation. The chapter also considers some of the most recent relevance-theoretic approaches to the study of literature, which are moving into an area of cognitive science known as *embodied cognition*, before looking directly at Uchida's (1998) notion of a linguistic difficulty within a given text creating a cognitive state which she refers to as *cognitive suspense*.

The final sections of the chapter deal directly with the notion of difficult or complex poetic texts: firstly, in relation to the general field of cognitive stylistics; and secondly, in relation to how the processing of such texts might be handled within the framework of relevance theory. The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate how the types of texts that make up the dataset explored within Chapters 5 and 6 have been handled from both general cognitive-stylistic and specialised relevance-theoretic perspectives, in order to enrich the cognitive-pragmatic analysis conducted within the present thesis. The overall conclusion drawn from the final sections of the current chapter is that relevance theory should be applied to poetry which really tests the limits of our perceptual and inferential capabilities, and therefore, in doing so offers the most innovative insights into the distinct nature of the literary/poetic process at large.

3.2. Relevance theory and stylistics: a general overview

In order to provide some context for the literature review that follows, it is worth returning to the main hypotheses stated within the opening chapter as forming the main basis for the overall thesis. These hypotheses state that the deliberate (and thus *ostensive*/*communicative*) use of short line-length and line divisions can (for expert literary readers) lead to levels of cognitive-pragmatic processing deemed to be both *non-spontaneous* (Furlong 1996, 2014) and *poetic* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222) within the specialised framework of relevance theory. The basic argument to be explored throughout the current thesis is that short line-length leads to longer perception of the text's lexical material, which leads to increased lexical and encyclopaedic activation, and consequently deeper levels of contextual processing. The notion of lexical activation will be explored from a specialised relevance-theoretic perspective, firstly in relation to remarks made by Caink (2014) within the current section of this chapter, and secondly in relation to remarks made by Pilkington (2000) in section 4.4 of the following chapter.

Line endings though, perceptually encode (in a rudimentary perceptual rather than specialised linguistic capacity) visuospatial gaps which fall at particular points within the text's incrementally developing linguistic structure; that is, in terms of how this structure is presented to the reader upon the page. These gaps can cause the text's linguistically encoded content to be constructed/represented, if only in a momentary/temporary sense, as a relatively wider range of relatively more fragmented logical structures within the mind, which as inputs to further processes of pragmatic enrichment cause a much more indeterminate range of propositional forms, both at an explicit and implicit level, to be derived. Essentially, such gaps signify where readers should pause and momentarily consider how the text's ongoing linguistic structure develops beyond the visuospatial gaps encoded by individual line endings, upon an anticipatory-hypothetical and thus *non-spontaneous inferential* (Furlong 1996, 2014) basis. The result of this process, again if only in a temporary sense, is that both the text's explicit structure and wider implicit import is formulated within the mind as a relatively wider/weaker range of propositional structures, which in relevance-theoretic terms might well be characterised as *poetic* in nature. Further within the current section, this idea will be linked to pragmatic literary stylistic research conducted by MacMahon (2014b) and remarks predominantly based around the concepts of relevance theory by Uchida (1998).

Since its inception (Sperber and Wilson 1986a), many scholars have attempted to use relevance theory to shed light upon the cognitive and communicative intricacies involved in the interpretation of complex literary texts. Although a few *Relevance*-inspired stylistics papers appeared sporadically during the 1980s (in particular, see: Richards 1985; Reboul 1987; Downes 1989; Pilkington 1989), the main interest in the potential scope of relevance theory's literary application stemmed from a newly formed sub-discipline beginning in the early 1990s, which Green (1997:133) refers to as "relevance stylistics"[1]. Early publications within this field sought to apply the pragmatics of relevance theory to the analysis of literary phenomena and promised fruitful developments for the application of a stylistics approach to the reading, interpretation and evaluation of literary texts. Clark (1996), for example, argues that relevance theory can provide insights into the genuine qualitative effects that formal textual arrangements can, in reality, have upon readers by concentrating on the actual "inferences readers might make", rather than on "approaches to stylistic analysis, such as counting the frequency of phrases of a certain type", which Clark argues "risk putting analysts to unnecessary effort, by making them discover facts about the linguistic expressions which do not contribute in a significant way to overall interpretations" (Clark 1996:167). Clark (1996) views relevance theory as capable of bridging the gap between the abstract principles and methods associated with linguistics and poetics and the highly nuanced and idiosyncratic reading strategies employed by readers in actual interpretive contexts.

Some years before Clark's account, Kiparsky (1987) tried to resolve the deficiencies associated with the *poetics* framework famously postulated by Jakobson (1960), suggesting that if it were applied with "a more adequate semiotics, say along the lines of Sperber and Wilson (1986)", more rigorous and insightful textual readings would be produced (Kiparsky 1987: 186-7). The problem unfortunately, as Green (1997:133) points out, is that never has an approach to the study of literature and literary communication been equally strong on both sides of the semiotics and poetics equation. Relevance theory is perhaps that more adequate semiotic approach called for by theorists such as Kiparsky and Clark, but there has been disagreement between scholars concerning the quality of the types of literary readings that relevance theory has been used to elicit. For example, Green (1997:134) actually goes as far as to suggest that relevance theory cannot possibly tell us "what" a text means, but only "how" it means, and therefore, "should not be used to produce readings of literary texts at all, but should remain as a communicative meta-theory". Green's remarks are reminiscent of

Culler's (1975:36) pronouncement concerning the role of linguistics generally, in which he asserts that linguistics is "not hermeneutic" and therefore cannot be used as a procedure for discovering "what" a given linguistic sequence "means" or for producing "new" and hitherto hidden interpretations of it. Instead, the fundamental task of linguistics is "to render as explicit as possible the conventions responsible for the production of attested effects" (Culler 1975:35-36); that is, to elucidate the nature of the underlying system which makes linguistic events and their meanings possible.

Returning to Green's (1997:134) above remarks, what at first seems like an inherent weakness of the relevance-theoretic framework is in fact the very area from which it draws its methodological strength and explanatory rigour. To argue that relevance theory "should remain as a communicative meta-theory", when applied within either a standard communicative or specialised literary context, is in no way damning to the application of the theory as a methodological framework/tool, but merely determines its proper application and to a large extent predicts or at least delineates the type of programme that such a framework/tool may involve, and thus the nature of the analysis and to some extent the types of results that such an analysis is likely to produce. In fact, what Green and other critics of the literary application of relevance theory (see in particular, Toolan 1992, 1996, 1998, 1999) may have been reacting to were remarks such as the following made by Sperber and Wilson (1995:224), which state that if you look at the "affective effects" generated by poetic utterances through what they refer to as the "microscope of relevance theory" then you are able to see "a wide array of minute cognitive effects". It may well seem as though Sperber and Wilson are suggesting that relevance theory is able to unearth or discover new and interesting content residing below the surface of poetic types of utterance, but this would be a misreading of their above remarks and indeed their whole model for poetic effects generated through certain acts of linguistic style. Rather than acting as a tool for generating new and interesting meanings from poetic phenomena encountered within standard communicative scenarios and specialised literary contexts alike, relevance theory provides new and interesting cognitive-pragmatic insights into *how* peculiar elements of textual structure make the existing meanings of complex poetic texts and discourse possible in the first place. It is with this observation in mind that the present thesis aims to use the cognitive-pragmatic framework of relevance theory to account for *how* poetic levels of processing can be achieved or generated through the manipulation of visuospatial form in complex textual formulations.

Arguably, the work of relevance theorist Adrian Pilkington (1994, 2000) goes some way towards achieving the unified approach that Kiparsky was calling for in 1987. Not only is his research the most successful advancement of Sperber and Wilson's original insights into the phenomenon of *poetic effects*, but it constitutes the most thorough investigation into the distinct cognitive-pragmatic effects of rhyme, alliteration and metre, from a specialised relevance-theoretic perspective, to the present day. His major insight is that rhyming and alliterative words may facilitate longer lexical and encyclopaedic activation, which encourages a wider and more imaginative expansion of context, and thus a relatively wider array of relatively weaker contextual effects. The notion of deeper forms of lexical and encyclopaedic activation being brought about by what might be best described as elements of poetic form is an important idea that will be discussed extensively throughout the present thesis. The thesis will argue that the visuospatial phenomenon of short line-length, for example, can generate increased levels of lexical and encyclopaedic activation, and thus deeper forms of cognitive-pragmatic processing of a given text's linguistically encoded content. This hypothesis, in addition to the one pertaining to the potential poetic effects of line divisions, will be presented in much more detail within sections 4.5-4.9, before being discussed directly in relation to an actual dataset throughout Chapters 5-7.

In more recent years within the general stylistics community renewed interest has been directed towards bringing together and exploring the possible convergences between pragmatics and stylistics (Caink 2012; Chapman 2012, 2014; Nahajec 2014; Panagiotidou 2014; Peplow 2014; Warner 2014). Such literature presents developments within a newly-formed field referred to by Chapman and Clark (2014) as "pragmatic literary stylistics", which aims to understand and explain how readings, interpretations and evaluations of literary texts "arise, develop and spread" (Chapman and Clark 2014:6). Specific relevance-theoretic contributions to this field include: Caink (2014); Clark (2012, 2014); Furlong (2012, 2014); MacMahon (2012, 2014a, 2014b); and Schuldiner (2014). In particular, Caink (2014) develops the idea posited by both Furlong (1996:126-127) and Pilkington (2000:ch.5) that lexical repetition within a literary text may encourage the reader to access the repeated item's associated encyclopaedic information for a second time, thus strengthening any assumptions and inferences constructed by the reader on the first occurrence of the repeated item.

Furthermore, Caink (2014:18) suggests that when a lexical item (or group of items) is repeated a number of times, a point may be reached where rather than strengthening information constructed upon the first occurrence of the repeated item, the

reader may be encouraged to add to the original information by accessing other associations of the repeated word or phrase. Therefore, multiple repetitions which make references to actions, events, characters and their attributes, or any other states within the textual world, may encourage multiple weak inferences (*poetic effects* in relevance-theoretic terms) about specific aspects of such states.

For example, the repetition of the lexical item, "letters," in the following extract from W. H. Auden's famous poem, 'The Night Mail' (Auden and Isherwood 2019:422-423), and the multiple references that it makes to different types of correspondence sent by different individuals, may encourage multiple weak inferences relating to the vast number of letters that the mail train is required to deliver, as well as the breadth of the population reliant on the service that it provides:

(17.) Letters with holiday snaps to enlarge in,
Letters with faces scrawled in the margin,
Letters from uncles, cousins, and aunts,
Letters to Scotland from the South of France,
Letters of condolence to Highlands and Lowlands

In classic poetics terminology, Auden's use of repetition constitutes the device of *anaphora*, wherein the initial item of a syntactic structure is repeated over multiple lines for rhetorical effect. Using relevance theory, we can say that the trope leads to increased activation of the lexical and encyclopaedic entries for "Letters", during which a wider range of concepts and assumptions stored within those entries become marginally more salient, and thus capable of generating further contextual effects in relation to the text's explicit content. Since the rhetorical effect is spread over several lines, the repeated activation may give rise to what might be best described as an *extended poetic effect*. Looking at the process in more detail, we can say that multiple activations of the lexical entry for "Letters" encourage multiple activations of the associated encyclopaedic entry, which allows associations to be entertained between a wide and diverse range of concepts and assumptions stored within the cognitive domain in question. Each time the encyclopaedic entry for "Letters" is accessed and explored, the reader can delve deeper into his or her contextual stores for that particular item, because the entry remains partially active from previous activations occurring at earlier textual points.

The concept of lexical activation is important in relation to the present thesis – particularly in respect of the central hypothesis relating to the potential cognitive-pragmatic effects of short line-length. The hypothesis states that short line-length may trigger stronger forms of perception of the text's lexical material, which may lead to

longer forms of lexical and encyclopaedic activation at a further cognitive level. When it comes to the interpretation of difficult/complex poetic texts, expert readers may take such prolonged levels of perception/activation as an invitation to engage in relatively deeper levels of contextual processing of the text's linguistically encoded content, potentially leading to the derivation of a wide range of additional contextual effects which are considered *poetic* within the framework of relevance theory. However, where the process differs from the one featuring within Caink (2014), and indeed Pilkington (2000), is that the input which stimulates the relatively prolonged levels of lexical/encyclopaedic activation is of a purely visuospatial rather than complex linguistic nature.

Caink (2014:18) argues that further repetitions of the same lexical material later within a given literary text may encourage the accessing of a wider range of concepts and assumptions stored within the encyclopaedic-contextual entry/entries associated with the repeated lexical material. Caink (2014:18) adds that the repetitions may "gradually encourage non-spontaneous inferences and these inferences will contribute to and may adapt a reader's 'global inferences' concerning the [text] as the reading progresses (Clark 1996)". In relation to Auden's text, Caink's (2014:20) analysis may suggest that the first use of the repeated lexeme triggers the reader to access the item's associated encyclopaedic material, thus signalling a first reference to the letters and their senders. In relation to Auden's text then, weak assumptions relating to the breadth and scale of the delivery process and the part that it plays in the lives of so many different people become marginally more salient within the reader's cognitive environment. Each time the word gets repeated, these concepts and assumptions are accessed within the reader's encyclopaedic-contextual resources, thus becoming more cognitively salient as a result. Caink gives the following comment in relation to a different literary text:

> the second and third repetitions may be sufficient in itself for the reader to infer an intended significance, if this was not the case at the second repetition. The reader may seek to derive some relevance from this fact, in association with the already accessed knowledge about the lexeme. The cognitive effort involved will give rise to further cognitive effects ('relevance') (Caink 2014:19).

Therefore, in relation to Auden's text, the strengthened sense of the breadth of the delivery process is emphasized in the fourth repetition of the lexeme as a result of the specific mentioning of distinct geographical locations which mark reference points on the train's lengthy journey i.e. Scotland and Southern France. The fifth repetition of the

lexeme features a further semantic repetition corresponding to the propositional content of the previous line: that is, “Scotland” metonymically relates to “Highlands”, and the “South of France” to “Lowlands”. The total effect is to encourage a more prolonged association of certain concepts and assumptions within the same contextual space, in order to derive a wide range of weak contextual effects and a sense of affective mutuality, rather than a few strong assumptions and a high sense of cognitive mutuality, between Auden and his audience.

Therefore, Caink’s remarks are based upon the idea that lexical repetition in literary texts can lead to the strengthening of assumptions within the reader’s mind which are activated when first reading a lexical item that will be eventually repeated at subsequent points throughout the text. Furthermore, if an item is repeated enough times throughout a text, or section of text, the fact that the writer is deliberately repeating an item becomes a new piece of highly salient information in its own right to be combined with the reader’s current beliefs and assumptions relating to the repeated lexical item in question. Such multiple acts of repetition may constitute an implicit instruction for the reader to widen the context in relation to which these beliefs and assumptions are processed, thereby triggering the derivation of a range of further contextual effects/implicatures (Caink 2014:18). The repeated use of short line-length and the tactical use of line divisions may work in a similar way. Multiple acts of using such visuospatial elements to effectively slow down the reader’s perception of the text’s lexical material may ostensively communicate that the writer wants the reader to pay more attention to the text’s linguistically encoded content than is perhaps usual; that is, to process it within a wider contextual capacity, and therefore derive a range of additional propositional forms and contextual effects, which may well be wide-ranging and *weak* enough to be considered *poetic* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222) in nature.

Furthermore, other approaches exist, within the pragmatic literary stylistics literature, which seem to shed interesting light upon the main ideas offered within the present thesis. In relation to such approaches, it can be argued that although early relevance-theoretic literary perspectives were mainly focused on the inferential processes that characterise literary phenomena, many recent programmes of research in this area have adopted a more rigorous poetics. Clark (2012), for instance, argues that minimalistic writing styles might be understood as a formal means of minimising the degree of guidance given to readers for progressing down “specific inferential paths and so make accessible a wider range of relatively weak implicatures” (Clark 2012:156). He also suggests that by removing certain elements of textual guidance the possibility of

deriving specific sets of weak implicatures may be eliminated (Clark 2012:157). Thus, textual omissions may be a formal device utilized by the writer to intentionally manipulate the contexts chosen by readers when inferentially constructing textual interpretations. The writer can never have total control over such processes, but perhaps formal-linguistic omissions at least offer a loose degree of contextual manipulation. The idea that poetic effects communicate most of their relevance through wide arrays of weak implicatures (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222) is often taken as axiomatic, however, the idea that poetic effects may also be communicated along weakly explicit lines is also considered sporadically across the relevance-theoretic literature by a smattering of scholars (most notably by Dogan 1992, 2005; see also: Carston 1996b:28; Arai 2007:6-7, 2008; Clark 2013a:214; Forceville and Clark 2014); some of which will be discussed further within section 4.3 of the present thesis.

A further successful attempt to unite the predominantly inferentially focused framework of relevance theory with a rigorous formalist-based poetics features in MacMahon (2014b). MacMahon uses the framework of relevance theory, which she argues "prioritises the interaction of decoded linguistic form with context" (MacMahon 2014b:90), to explore the role of syntax in the construction of character and voice provided by the different levels of narrative in the following extract from the beginning of A. S. Byatt's novel *The Children's Book* (the extract is actually the second sentence of the novel):

(18.) The Prince had died in 1861, and had seen only the beginnings of his ambitious project for a gathering of museums in which the British craftsmen could study the best examples of design (Byatt 2009:3, in MacMahon 2014b:90).

MacMahon notes the formal complexity of the language, particularly, its syntax. The sentence as a whole functions as a *compound sentence*, with the second section containing a large and complex noun phrase: "the beginnings of his ambitious project for a gathering of museums in which the British craftsmen could study the best examples of design" (MacMahon 2014b:97). Within the syntactic structure we see multiple phrases embedded within further phrasal structures and near the end of the overall grammatical unit the embedding of a subordinate clausal structure ("in which the British craftsmen could study the best examples of design") within a noun phrase.

MacMahon (2014b:98) observes that an almost identical propositional content could have been expressed in a less complex grammatical structure, like the following:

(19.) The prince had died in 1861. He had seen only the beginnings of his ambitious project. This project was for a gathering of museums. British craftsmen would be able to study the best examples of design in these museums.

MacMahon (2014b:98) argues that this "loading of the noun phrase" allows for a wide range of interrelated semantic information to be compressed into a single syntactic constituent. She adds that "heavy" and "complex" noun phrases are a common feature of many texts and are a predominant focus of critical discourse analysis. Analysts working within this field describe them as nominalisations, which work by transforming assertions that fall across a number of syntactic constituents into nominal phrasal structures that are contained within and thus restricted to an individual constituent element. According to Fairclough (2003:13), this process makes the semantic content of such nominal phrasal structures much harder to challenge than if their semantic content were arranged across a range of constituent elements (MacMahon 2014b:98). In Byatt's text, MacMahon (2014b:98) notes that the effect is one commonly used at the opening of novels, in which "material presented as presupposed draws the reader into affecting a position of knowledge of the fictional world". Furthermore, the nominalisation may be said to present information in a way which functions as what Blakemore and Carston (2005:574-576) refer to as a "processing unit", which is considered as one complete unit of meaning, rather than broken down into separate fragments (MacMahon 2014b:98).

The visuospatial characteristics pertaining to line divisions may function within a similar capacity. The perceptible gaps/pauses constituted by certain line divisions may impact upon how the logical/syntactic relations between the words of the text are construed and interpreted in real time reading. As was stated within the opening chapter of the present thesis, Yus (2009b:153) argues that both linguistically and perceptually encoded inputs can activate information within the respective modules of the brain, in order to yield items of decontextualized conceptual material, which in themselves can act as inputs to further processes of pragmatic enrichment that obtain fully contextualized (and thus *relevant*) interpretations of the original verbal or visual input (i.e. irrespective of their original representational formats).

Based upon these remarks, the present thesis builds from the hypothesis that the tactical placement of line divisions can cause the text's linguistically encoded content to be arranged into a relatively wider and more fragmented range of logical forms. When undergoing further processes of pragmatic enrichment, these relatively more fragmented (i.e. less semantically developed) logical forms introduce a much higher level of indeterminacy into the inferential aspect of explicature-construction. The

process leads to the derivation of a relatively wider, and thus weaker, range of propositional structures; that is, when compared with texts that are arranged within a relatively less visuospatially fragmented manner. Essentially, readers perceive the designed separation of integral syntactic units upon the page, generated by the placement of certain line divisions, as the visuospatial equivalents of deliberate pauses for effect. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995:205), hearers construct anticipatory hypotheses about the overall structure of an utterance based on what they have already heard. For example, they might not merely identify each word and tentatively assign to it a syntactic category but use their knowledge of its lexical properties and syntactic co-occurrence restrictions to predict the syntactic categories of up and coming words or phrases appearing further down the syntagmatic chain. Given this fact, the pauses generated by particular line divisions act as perceptual prompts (most likely functioning via the *perceptual module* of the brain) for readers to use their inferential mechanisms to effectively 'jump ahead' and derive a range of preliminary hypotheses pertaining to how the text's logical and propositional structure is likely to develop beyond the line divisions in question. A further way of thinking about this phenomenon might be to regard such visuospatial gaps/pauses as injecting brief cognitive windows of inferential opportunity into the reader's live construction of the text's incrementally developing logical form and propositional content; that is, during his or her real time reading of the text. These windows are filled with additional levels of *non-spontaneous* (Furlong 1996, 2014) inferential processing of the text's linguistically encoded content. This results in the derivation of additional cognitive effects of both an explicitly and implicitly derived nature, which are triggered directly as a result of the text's peculiar visuospatial structure. Rather than conveying a determinate message, the *non-spontaneous* levels inferential processing encouraged by the gaps/pauses generated by certain line divisions can create a diffuse impression or communicate a wide array of weak explicatures/implicatures, which are thus classified as *poetic* within the specialised framework of relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222; see also: Dogan 1992; and Wilson and Wharton 2006:1570). This idea will be explored further within sections 4.6 and 4.9, before being discussed directly in relation to William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) famous imagist poem, 'This Is Just to Say', within sections 5.5-5.8 of the present thesis (see section 5.7 for the full text).

The work carried out by MacMahon and other scholars working within this area may be indicative of an attempt to form an integrated approach to literary analysis, which is weighted equally on the linguistic and inferential sides of the phenomenon.

However, the most recent relevance-theoretic approaches to the study of literature are moving into an area of cognitive science known as 'embodied cognition' which "treats the body beyond the brain as playing a crucial cognitive role" and starts from the assumption that "human cognition is organic and has evolved biologically" (Cave and Wilson 2018b:18). Those adopting this approach accept that language is deeply interwoven with sensorimotor processing and experience, and that natural languages still resonate with associations and memories of the physical contexts and activities through which various conceptual components and syntactic operations underpinning such language-systems were acquired initially in early life (Cave and Wilson 2018b:18-19). Therefore, as Cave and Wilson (2018b:19) point out, this approach distances itself from the view of language influenced by the work of Saussure, which argues that linguistic signs are made up of arbitrary and conventional signifier-signified relations, which confine our experience of the natural world to a disconnected, artificial, and linguistically-mediated reality.

Cave and Wilson (2018b:19) state that strong sensorimotor effects are especially evident in poetic forms of expression (whether prose or verse), which involve linguistic formulations such as "unexpected collocation", and conceptual strategies such as "figurative extension" (which should be taken to mean metaphorical processing), that reinforce what the theorists refer to as "situationally acquired resonances", or what they elsewhere refer to as 'procedural' memories: that is, pre-reflective memory stores that contain recorded essences of the situational nuances that characterised fundamental aspects of our earliest cognitive development. Many of the contributors to this newly formed approach spend time addressing its relevance to the reading and analysis of literary works, and above all, its compatibility with the essential tenets of relevance theory (see the collection of papers in Cave and Wilson 2018a). Cave and Wilson explain that what has emerged from such considerations is a consensus that relevance theory recognizes the role of the body in cognition and communication, and furthermore:

> that it is concerned with the cognitive and communicative effects of both verbal and non-verbal acts; and that it accepts that communicative acts are often laden with features which trigger sensorimotor or affective responses (or both) in the hearer (Cave and Wilson 2018b:19).

Bolens, a fellow contributor to the relevance-embodied cognition approach to literature, observes that:

> Perceptual simulations are an important aspect of embodied cognition and kinesic analysis in literature. They are dynamic cognitive processes, which reactivate in the reader a type of knowledge that is sensory (derived from sight, hearing, touch, taste, or smell), motor (kinesic, kinaesthetic, proprioceptive), and introspective (pertaining to emotions and mental states) (Bolens 2018:57).

Building upon this notion, Banks (2018:129) states that "relevance theory scrutinizes acts of communication which 'show' as much as they mean, [and] allows for a consideration of how texts engage our bodies", whilst Kenny (2018:82) argues that writers communicate not just an assumption relating to some aspect of the textual world, but an embodied experiencing of it which effects "a perceptual simulation based on embodied memories". This notion links to ideas expressed by Pilkington (2000:Ch.5), who discusses the possibility that conceptual addresses, relating to particular lexical items, in addition to entries of a lexical, logical and encyclopaedic nature, may contain a further type of entry known as a phenomenal memory store. A typical phenomenal entry will contain material of a more imagistic, sensorimotor and emotional, rather than propositional quality, and will therefore evoke a more embodied or experiential version of a given conceptual item. Such phenomenal material might evoke the actual raw feelings and emotions associated with the conceptual item in question, rather than the representation of such ideas in propositional terms. In fact, short line-length, in addition to other elements relating to a text's visuospatial form, could be a way of activating such material to greater degrees. It might be the case that this type of entry would not usually be activated, or at least not activated to such great depths, if the textual formulation were perceived in a less visuospatially fragmented manner. Such visuospatial fragmentation could therefore cause deeper forms of perception of the text's lexical content, during which more time could be granted to exploring its wider conceptual extension – in particular, to its phenomenal-conceptual components.

A methodology of this nature would be grounded within the embodied cognition approach to relevance-theoretic literary analysis discussed above. However, the present thesis presents more of what might be regarded as a propositional, rather than phenomenal or imagistic approach to the poetic effects of short line-length; for this reason, the latter approach lies beyond the intended scope of the present thesis. It considers the idea that short line-length acts as a kind of magnifying device for perception, which causes elements of a given text's linguistic content to undergo deeper forms of contextual processing, thus leading to an array of additional contextual effects,

which are stimulated as a direct result of the visuospatially fragmented nature of short line-length (this idea will be discussed in greater detail throughout sections 4.5 and 4.8).

Continuing along the 'embodied cognition approach' to relevance theory and literature, Banks (2018:132) suggests that the distinctiveness of many literary texts might be captured in terms of an "overt linguistic or logical difficulty which rewards interpretive effort and invites sustained processing" (in addition, see Cave and Wilson 2018b:12-13). Such remarks are perhaps reminiscent of Uchida's (1998) much earlier relevance-theoretic account of the way that authors often manipulate the pragmatic procedures of reference assignment, disambiguation and enrichment to obtain what she refers to as *retroactive contextual effects*. Uchida (1998:163) states that in actual textual arrangements, particularly those of a literary nature, authors often use linguistic style in order to constrain the ease with which readers can perform these sub-tasks in order to arrive at full-fledged propositional representations of the text's semantic content. Such forms of stylistic complexity often lead to a whole range of additional, relatively weaker contextual effects, which act as a reward for the increased mental effort demanded of the readers. As was stated within section 2.1 of the present thesis, many expert literary readers are both aware of and derive enjoyment from the fact that in order to be fully understood complex literary texts generally require the expenditure of greater levels of processing effort on the part of their audiences. Such readers are willing to invest the extra processing effort because they assume that their effort will be rewarded with a whole host of additional contextual effects; therefore, the ends well and truly justify the means. For Uchida (1998), the notion of the employment of overt linguistic difficulties leading to what are in both cognitive and communicative terms more costly, yet richer and more poetic forms of contextual processing of the text's linguistically encoded content, to a significant degree seems capable of accounting for the specialised aesthetic value of many forms of literary communication/complex literary texts within specialised relevance-theoretic terms.

It is on the back of such remarks that the present thesis argues that the tactical placement of line divisions in poetic texts can encode perceptual gaps/pauses, which can interfere with how readers construct the incrementally developing logical and propositional structures of those texts during real time scanning. Such gaps/pauses temporarily occlude readers from perceiving up and coming textual elements situated beyond the gaps/pauses encoded by the specific line divisions in question. This occlusion temporarily prevents readers from constructing a representation of the text's content, as it develops beyond the respective line divisions, within a linguistically

guided sense, which as a result causes the text's logical and propositional structure to be held within a temporary state of indeterminacy. Some readers may choose to interpret the visuospatial gaps/pauses encoded by certain line divisions in an almost procedural capacity; that is, as instructions from the writer to use their inferential mechanisms to effectively 'jump ahead' when formulating a cognitive representation of the text's logical and propositional structure, in a manner which would be described within the lexical pragmatics literature as linguistically unguided/pragmatically free in nature (Recanati 1993; Carston 2016). Essentially, such readers attempt to enrich the text's incomplete or fragmentary logical and propositional status, upon an anticipatory-hypothetical (and thus *non-spontaneous inferential*) basis, with additional material retrieved from context. The textual feature which gives rise to this process, however, is of a basic visuospatial (and therefore, perceptual), rather than complex linguistic nature. The result (to be explored throughout multiple sections of the following two chapters) may well involve a process in which *poetic effects* are primarily communicated at the pragmatic level of 'what is said', as arrays of *weak explicatures*. Essentially, if this hypothesis is correct, then the intentional disruption of how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page, which the tactical placement of particular line divisions effectively constitutes, introduces a relatively greater degree of (*non-spontaneous*) inferential activity into the process of determining the explicit content of the text, than would have been the case, had the text been arranged within a relatively less visuospatially fragmented form. Furthermore, although such visuospatial fragmentation incurs greater processing costs, such increases are offset due to the derivation of a relatively higher contextual yield, thus maintaining a state of *optimal relevance*. Therefore, although the writer is essentially making it more difficult for the reader to perceive and construct a logical blueprint for the text's more pragmatically developed conceptual form, the levels of indeterminacy that the visuospatial fragmentation injects into the rudimentary decoding and further pragmatic enrichment of the text's explicit-propositional content may give rise to a *wider* and *weaker*, and thus more *poetic* array of cognitive-pragmatic effects.

In respect of this hypothesis, it could be argued that in theory there is nothing preventing readers from perceiving the various segments of a text in whichever sequence they see fit. That is, they could intentionally skip ahead to further textual points, or when reading an individual line, inadvertently cast a glance to a following line structure, thus potentially cancelling out any additional cognitive effects derived off the back of the text's visuospatially fragmented arrangement. However, human

communication per se is fraught with all manner of potential ambiguities, misfires and misinterpretations; therefore, although a realistic possibility, such premature or forward-thinking acts of reading are no different to saying that somebody might read the last paragraph of a whodunit and find out who the murderer is, which of course will impact on their understanding and enjoyment of the thriller, but will in no way detract away from the fact that the thriller has been carefully designed without such an eventuality in mind. The theoretical approach adopted within the present thesis aims to account for cases which involve expert types of reading, in which aspects pertaining to certain texts' deliberately crafted visuospatial structures can trigger a range of additional cognitive-pragmatic effects in their own right, and which, therefore, are well and truly attributed to the informative intentions of their writers. Since the account offered is of a relevance-theoretic nature, all other reading methods/interpretive strategies, which fail to view such visuospatial elements within this light, lie beyond the scope of the present thesis and are as a result disregarded.

The opening chapter of the present thesis briefly referred to literary/poetic texts that cognitive stylisticians often describe as "difficult" or "obscure" (Yaron 2002, 2008), and literary critics as "writerly" rather than "readerly" (Roland Barthes 1974). The next section turns directly to the notion of poetic difficulty, as it is envisaged within the general cognitive-stylistics literature. It aims to suggest possible ways that certain insights from this area could shed light upon certain aspects of the relevance-theoretic notion of poetic effects, so that the latter can perhaps deal with the notion of poetic difficulty to a more rigorous degree.

3.3. Processing 'difficult' poetry: a cognitive-stylistic approach

Multiple attempts have been made to use the relevance-theoretic notion of *poetic effects* to account for peculiar elements of linguistic style occurring within complex forms of literary/poetic discourse (Pilkington 2000; Ribeiro 2013; Alonso 2014); however, the manner in which such complex (or 'difficult') forms of literature are processed by 'expert' readers (see section 2.1) has also been studied by a range of different scholars working within the general field of cognitive-stylistics. These approaches describe the act of processing 'difficult' literary/poetic texts from a range of theoretical perspectives, which share obvious commonalities, but also subtle differences, with how the processing of such texts (as well as *poetic* processing generally) is envisaged within the cognitive-pragmatics framework of relevance theory. The aim of this section, therefore, is to provide an overview of how the processing of 'difficult' literary/poetic texts has

been studied and thus accounted for by other scholars working outside the specialised parameters of relevance theory, and how such approaches might complement, or at least link to, certain aspects of the *poetic effects* principle.

According to Castiglione (2017:100), the rise of critical studies on "difficulty" is homologous to the rise of Modernism (see also: Diepeveen 2003; and Castiglione 2013). In an earlier paper, Castiglione (2013) provides a range of stylistic analyses which focus on poems by modernist authors utilising a wide range of rhetorical devices: for example, Stevens (see Keyser 1980), Pound (see Brooke-Rose 1976), Thomas (see Leech 1969; Short 1996), cummings (see Fowler 1971; Fairley 1980; Short 1996; Burke 2007), and Hill (see Toolan 1993). Castiglione (2013:116) argues that the systematic cataloguing of the formal features of difficult modernist poetry has only been attempted upon a very sporadic basis within the cognitive-stylistics literature (for example, see Adamson 1999). However, in Castiglione (2017:102), he rightly points out that Dillon (1978) offers a rigorous account of these formal features in relation to such literary figures as: Spenser, Wordsworth, Faulkner, James and Stevens. During his study, Dillon (1978) investigates the potential processing difficulties thrown up by a range of formal effects, such as, amongst others: the splitting of coordinate noun structures, the combination of semantically disparate coordinate noun phrases, dislocated phrasal components leading to a source of misperception through premature closure of larger phrasal structures, multiple coordinate conjuncts, and long and complex intervening semantic material causing delayed perception of the main verb.

Various other scholars have emphasized the role of disjointed syntactic structures in suppressing or constraining the reader's interpretation of difficult poetic forms (Perloff 1985; Quartermain 1992; Lopez 2006; Mellors 2005; Derrida 1992; Bowie 1978). Amongst such structures, Middleton (2010:645) includes: *fragmentation*, *disjunction* and *torn/unfinished sentences*. Castiglione (2013:117) argues that when causing poetic difficulty, syntax is generally ambiguous, contorted or incomplete. Often difficult syntactic forms of the types just mentioned allow for multiple routes of syntactic parsing (Castiglione 2013:118), and consequently for what Dillon (1978:24) terms *garden-path interpretations*. Castiglione (2013:119) reports that difficult poetic forms often demonstrate juxtaposition techniques which blur the grammatical relations between syntactic elements, severely constraining syntactic parsing and semantic decoding to the extent that each syntactic element is suspended within a state of grammatical indeterminacy. In relevance-theoretic terms, it could be said that such grammatical indeterminacy leads to processing gaps appearing within the text's logical

structure, which cause a range of incomplete representations of the text's explicit-propositional structure to be formed.

Castiglione (2013:123-126) also discusses the notion of what van Dijk (1980) terms "violation of selection restriction", Leech (1969) "mistaken selection", and Quartermain (1992) and Lopez (2006) "substitution", in which "a given syntactic position is filled with a unit [that is] semantically extraneous to its context" (Castiglione 2013:123). The process mentioned here is set up at a phrasal level in which highly unusual collocates that do not seem to share common or relatable semantic boundaries, or conventions of usage, at either a common experiential, or culturally significant level, are syntagmatically aligned within a particular textual space (Castiglione 2013:125). From a relevance-theoretic point of view, one might argue that there is a distinct lack of contextual material which can be utilized to formulate enough propositional forms – at either an explicitly or implicitly communicated level – to justify their syntagmatic alignment.

Yaron (2008:142) states that difficult poetic texts do not "explicitly present all the links that form [their] continuity", and that the reading process is "a cognitive activity that consists of constructing representations of elements in the text". Difficulty arises when particular features of the text block or disrupt the automatic, rapid construction of such representations; that is, when "structures of knowledge" (or stored contextual information in relevance-theoretic terms) that are accessible to the reader demonstrate a low level of correspondence to the linguistic material afforded by the text. Various scholars have proposed theories for how readers go about constructing representations of such texts; one such example is van Dijk and Kintsch's (1983) *situation* model of text processing. Yaron (2008:142) notes that through this model, the theorists claim that the physical situation in which the text is set in some way activates a vast domain of knowledge, which will come into play during the reading process, and will provide connections between the various textual elements, even in implicit cases where coherence between propositions, existing at different levels of representation, is not explicitly signalled (for an earlier version of this model, see Kintsch and van Dijk 1978).

The *situation* model developed by van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) resembles a similar framework presented by Sanford and Garrod (1981), which is based on the activation of complex structures known as *scenarios*. Similar mental entities for conceptualizing our experience of the world include *scripts* (Schank & Abelson 1977), *frames* (Fillmore & Atkins 1993), *mental models* (Johnson-Laird 1983), and *idealized*

cognitive models (Lakoff 1987). All these terms share subtle differences, but all broadly refer to the same phenomenon. Yaron (2008) states that scenarios are "representations of situations" that are derived from an individual's implicit knowledge of prior situations regarding a particular scenario, rather than from explicit textual elements:

> Whether the connections are explicit or implicit, if the source links material that has been processed and that which is being processed, continued reading is possible. If this condition is not fulfilled, the reader searches in memory for material that has already been processed and can provide the connection or that activates inferences (Yaron 2008:143).

Through their model, Sanford and Garrod (1981) suggest that inferential activity is triggered when the process of connecting new information received from the text with information in short-term memory is delayed. In relevance-theoretic terms, this model would suggest that there needs to be a link between encyclopaedic context and the new information received from the text, for inferences to be generated and for optimal relevance to be upheld. If this link is affected by complex textual form, then the interplay between new textual information and old contextual information may be prevented from taking place.

In their aforementioned model of text processing, van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) argue that during text comprehension new information derived from the text is stored at three separate yet related levels of representation: *surface*, *semantic* and *situational*. The first involves exact replication of the linguistic material presented in the text. Further research suggests that readers forget textual material represented at the surface level quickly (in particular, see: Kintsch and Monk 1972; Sachs 1974; Graesser and Mandler 1975; and Kintsch et al. 1990). Loss of this surface level representation is supported by a secondary stage of representation, during which the reader reformulates or paraphrases the initial material afforded by the text's linguistically encoded content into a further semantic representation. Yaron (2002:160) notes that the newly represented linguistic material will be closer to the reader's own linguistic tendencies and knowledge; furthermore, it will be structured independently of the original linguistic version presented within the text. The situational level also involves a level of representation which is not directly encoded by the original linguistic material within the text. However, Yaron (2002) argues that the text must contain either an explicit or implicit reference to an element of the situation. For instance, Yaron (2002:160) provides the example of a given text containing either an explicit or implicit reference to a waiter, thereby initiating an overall understanding of the text's linguistic material by

embedding it within a pre-established field of knowledge based within the cognitive schema for a restaurant situation. The pre-established field of knowledge provides a level of understanding that the text does not. In short, a text is processed in accordance with how well the original linguistic material can be integrated into such pre-established fields of knowledge. Research though, indicates that this process of integration is hindered when dealing with difficult poetic texts; that is, the processing of difficult poetry involves processes which are, to some discernible degree, deficient at the situational level of representation. This idea is reinforced by research conducted by Zwaan (1993), which reveals that literary texts are typically more text-oriented than they are situation-oriented. For example, after comparing the processing of literary texts to the processing of newspaper texts, Zwaan (1993) concludes that readers of the former have stronger surface representations of the text's linguistic material than readers of the latter. In particular, it is shown that readers tend to pay more attention to literary techniques – such as metaphors – in literary, than in non-literary texts (see also, Zwaan 1991, 1994, and Gibbs et al. 1991), perhaps as a way of attempting to establish an overarching schema in relation to which the text's linguistic material can be understood, and as a way of resolving the deficiencies presented at the situational level of representation.

Yaron (2002:138) further argues that the process by which readers draw impressions from difficult poetic texts is achieved in a fragmentary and isolated fashion. What this seems to mean is that the process of understanding individual units of the text's semantic structure in relation to preceding and following textual elements does not always take place, which therefore leads to a distinct lack of textual coherence that promotes a high level of disparity at a further cognitive-pragmatic level. Yaron (2002:159) suggests that difficult texts reduce the reader's capacity for producing what she refers to as "automatic inferences": that is, inferences which are inevitable and made immediately. In a later paper, she defines her notion of a "difficult" poem in the following way:

> *A poem is considered difficult if the representation constructed by the reader is defective. Such defective representation is produced when some or all of the potential obstacles in the text, intentional or unintentional, become effective obstacles in the domains of language and/or coherence and/or the world referred to. This means that they disrupt construction of the representation* (Yaron 2008:146 – italics used by Yaron).

Yaron (2008:146) adds that once generated, the "difficulty effect" may lead the reader to develop "alternative ways of reading", which provide ways of overcoming the disruptive textual obstacles to which she refers. This may well call for types of processing which go beyond conventional cognitive and communicative parameters and precepts. Yaron (2002) reports on research she compiled into the different ways that expert readers process difficult poetic texts, displaying extremely complex forms, as opposed to non-difficult poetic texts, displaying little to no formal complexity. Her results prove convincingly that such formal complexity, which leads to difficulty in poetic terms, causes the reader to ignore ordinary or conventional units of expression, in favour of resonant and strange semantic elements. From a relevance-theoretic perspective, this process might involve difficult elements linking to a low level of further conceptual material stored within encyclopaedic context. A cognitive/contextual state would likely ensue, in which high levels of processing effort are expended for levels of contextual derivation, which in other more conventional communicative scenarios would be considered low enough to be working outside of the conventional parameters of *optimal relevance*. In more specialised contexts of discourse, however – for example, that of difficult text processing – readers might not only expect, but even derive pleasure from the process of expending levels of processing effort that in other communicative contexts would be viewed as both unnecessary and unjustifiable; therefore, the process of investing processing effort almost for-its-own-sake, so to speak, might well define a distinct portion of the aesthetic value of such difficult or obscure poetic texts.

Her results also prove that textual clarity weakens the conspicuousness of resonant and strange material, causing such material to blend into the background of intelligibility (Yaron 2002:148). Essentially then, non-difficult poetry promotes reading strategies which seek out textual elements that play a vital role in building up a representation of the world or situation within the text; that is, elements which build up a situation model that is based on a coherent and common-sense version of reality are seen as primary. Such interpretations, as a result, involve low levels of processing effort, because they linearly construct representations of a universe which is internally sourced from representations afforded by the linguistically encoded content of the text. Difficult poetic texts though, will often involve much greater expenditures of processing effort, because they tend to delineate the construction of representations. They also tend to map across a range of conceptual domains of a more disparately related type, causing the derivation of many disparately related contextual effects, rather than a globally

coherent contextualized set, whose coherence arises from a given unity in relation to a particular scenario or situation modelled within the text.

The result of these findings is that non-difficult poetry is processed according to the principle of linearity, whereas difficult poetry is processed according to conspicuousness and intelligibility. Certain words in difficult poetic texts guide the reader more by their "cultural charge" than by the sequential (or contiguous) place they hold within the text (Yaron 2002:151). The reader of difficult poems approaches such words by "extrinsic means"; that is, via their knowledge of the (semantic and symbolic) significance of these words across a range of other texts (Yaron 2002:151).

The main idea presented in this section is that linguistic structure can be utilised by the writer in order to disrupt or constrain the reader's ability to construct a semantically coherent version of the text's fundamental propositional content. For some scholars (see in particular: Green 1993, 1997, 1998, 2001; Toolan 1992, 1996, 1998, 1999; Alonso 2014), a major failing of the relevance-theoretic approach to literary analysis has been its inability to acknowledge the fact that the true appreciation of complex literary structure requires the utilization of expert types of reading procedure, which by their very nature involve both high levels of processing effort, and rejections of automatic or spontaneous-inferential responses to textual formulations. With such remarks in-mind, the next section explores Alonso's (2014) application of the relevance-theoretic model to a visuospatially and linguistically complex poetic text, which strays considerably from standard or expected patterns of coherence, and thus requires a set of processing strategies which to some degree lie beyond the conventional parameters of the relevance-guided comprehension heuristic (see section 2.1 of the present thesis). The section is aimed at showing that there is more to the communication of poetic effects when considered within the context of difficult literary texts than the notion of weak implicature and complex linguistic structure alone.

3.4. Processing 'difficult' poetry: a relevance-theoretic approach

The types of poetic phenomena discussed so far within the thesis generate their poetic value at a predominantly linguistic rather than visuospatial level. Such phenomena also tend to allow the reader to derive a range of weak implicatures in relation to an otherwise highly determinate propositional state existing at the pragmatic level of what is said/explicated. The poetic effects communicated by (15f.) (see section 2.6), and to a lesser yet still significant degree by (17.) (see section 3.2), include as part of their linguistic structures certain stylistically pronounced features which contribute

semantically vague and propositionally superfluous elements to their logical and explicit-propositional forms. Such components communicate a range of additional weak implicatures that utterances/texts of a linguistically less complex nature may fail to communicate. However, in the case of (15f.) and (17.), the poetic effects are triggered by linguistic items which feature as minimal components of their logical and propositional structures; hence the idea of a range of weak implicatures, which essentially constitute the cognitive-pragmatic nature of the poetic expressions in question, being communicated in relation to an otherwise highly determinate explicit-propositional state.

However, in addition to *poetic* forms of communication being triggered in relation to minimal components of linguistic structure, such effects can also feature far more prominently at the pragmatic level of what is said. In this case, formal-linguistic complexity features throughout more of the utterance's/text's constituent linguistic (and, therefore, logical and propositional) structure, causing higher levels of indeterminacy to be introduced into the inferential aspects of explicature-construction. The levels of indeterminacy, which essentially characterise the *poetic* quality of expressions such as (15f.) and (17.), in other, more formally complex arrangements, can feature far more heavily at an explicit-propositional level, thus leading to a phenomenon in which poetic effects are communicated primarily as wide arrays of weak explicatures.

Therefore, it should be noted that complex poetic texts often "hide, misplace, or delay the linguistic clues which make the information they convey coherent by normal comprehension standards" (Alonso 2014:1). Generally, the formal style of a complex poetic text is manipulated in order to constrain the reader's comprehension of the text's internal coherence beyond a point which is considered standard in non-literary/non-poetic frames of utterance. It seems logical to assume from an objective stance that greater and more creative manipulations of the formal-linguistic relations within any text will yield more creative ways of masking the "linguistic clues" for uncovering the distinct manner in which the text's internal meaning is intended to be conveyed by the writer, thus posing a range of specialised processing issues for readers.

Alonso (2014) remarks upon a method posited by Yaron (2002), in which the levels of complexity in different poems can be measured in terms of the degree to which they follow or deviate from "standard rules of coherence". According to Alonso (2014:6), Yaron's research suggests that when dealing with poems which do not present the "expected linear organization of information", readers apply an interpretation strategy based on "delinearity":

> Delinearity acts in place of global comprehension and interferes with the possibilities of real meaning reconstruction as it forces readers to focus on the conspicuous words and broken structures of the verses, which they attempt to reproduce but are mostly unable to understand and, therefore, paraphrase (Alonso 2014:6).

The process of delinearity is employed by skilled literary readers when dealing with complex literary texts involving nuanced linguistic form and structure. Comprehension of such texts is not achieved in the conventional sense because such interpretive delinearity directly occludes a global and expected level of textual coherence, thus posing special problems for integration of the linguistically encoded content, pertaining to such conspicuous and broken textual structures, with old information stored within encyclopaedic context. What this implies is that complex patterns of linguistic form, by making use of unexpected sequences of information, affect the reader's ability to interpret the various individual elements of the text's propositional structure in a coherent and global-textual sense. That is, individual textual elements that form constituents of the text's overall propositional content will fail to cohere in a unified textual sense, in order to form an overall global context or theme, in relation to which the wider relevance of the text can be determined. Readers will find their interpretations proceeding along a series of extremely confined local textual moments, which can only focus-in on the conspicuous and broken textual elements in an isolated and incongruently related fashion.

Poems which deviate considerably from "standard rules of coherence" are what Yaron (2002) terms as "incomprehensible" in nature. Alonso states that in the case of such poems:

> non-expert readers […] often miss the writer's implicated meaning, because the surface clues which guide the readers' search for relevance turn out to be hiding the author's coherence code, which, only in some cases, is revealed at the end of the discourse, and then not necessarily overtly (Alonso 2014:3).

The "surface clues", to which Alonso refers, relate to certain elements of the text's linguistically encoded content. Such clues are meant to act as guides or blueprints for helping readers to derive enough explicitly and implicitly communicated propositional constructs to justify the degree of processing effort required for their derivation. However, with many complex poetic forms this is not the case. The way that such texts are arranged linguistically often gives rise to a range of preliminary conceptual

structures that as inputs are deficient for stimulating the further processes of pragmatic enrichment that essentially allow readers to arrive at a deeper understanding of their intended meaning.

In order to explicate this notion, take the following complex poem by highly experimental and innovative poet, e. e. cummings (1991:396)[2]:

(20.)

r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r
who
a)s w(e loo)k
upnowgath
PPEGORHRASS
eringint(o-
aThe):l
eA
!p:
S a
(r
rIvInG .gRrEaPsPhOs)
to
rea(be)rran(com)gi(e)ngly
,grasshopper;

To general readers, this poem may well seem like an incomprehensible cluttering of unrelated graphemes; however, Alonso (2014) notes that the key to understanding the poem's internal structure is revealed in the final line, which once reached allows the reader to comprehend "the reality of the composition", wherein the real-life movements of the grasshopper may be recreated through a series of visuospatial leaps from one textual segment of meaning to the next, in what becomes the reader's retrospective search for a regular pattern of coherence (Alonso 2014:2). What initially seems like an arbitrary and disordered smattering of graphic symbols suddenly attains a higher level of coherence when processed through the global contextual frame initialised in the final line: grasshopper, who, as we look, now upgathering into the grasshopper, leaps, arriving to become, rearrangingly, a grasshopper. Alonso sums up the process as follows:

> E. E. Cummings generates his own coherence model, visual and linguistic, through a system of language decomposition which has become classic in his writing. He does not prevent his readers being able to reorganize the surface level of his poetic proposal however, and introduces a clue at the end (the self-explanatory, middle-of-discourse punctuated, last line) to help them re-establish verbal linearity, necessary to construct a mental representation of the propositional text content (Alonso 2014:12).

The clue to establishing verbal linearity and for constructing a mental representation of the text's propositional content is deliberately placed in the final line of the poem. This particular structural aspect of cummings's text though, overtly contravenes the "linguistic-structure based thesis" (Alonso, 2014:3) posited by Sperber and Wilson (1995:216) (also postulated by Giora 1997), which states that sentence topics are "generally unstressed syntactic constituents occurring early in the utterance, whose function [...] is to give access to encyclopaedic information which the speaker regards as crucial to the interpretation process". It should be noted, however, that Sperber and Wilson are applying the notion of early topic assignment at a sentential rather than textual level. However, in one sense, many texts can be viewed merely as collections of sentences; therefore, if a given text roughly concerns a certain topic, then it would be fair to assume that Sperber and Wilson's assertion would suggest that text topics should generally occur early within the text in order "to give access to encyclopaedic information which the speaker regards as crucial to the interpretation process". The topic of cummings's text, however, is placed at the end of the poem; therefore, access to crucial encyclopaedic information relating to this topic is restricted by this particular stylistic choice. The text's surface structure is manipulated in order to extend processing effort considerably, by denying the reader access to the very thing holding the key to the coherence of the text until the very final line. Placing the topic of the poem at the beginning would provide earlier access to the key for mapping a coherent path through the internal structure of the text. It would also significantly reduce the number of preliminary garden-path interpretations entertained before settling upon the correct interpretation intended by the author.

Delaying access to this topic causes a whole range of fragmentary and disparately related logical and propositional forms to be constructed which do not relate in any kind of meaningful way to the propositional content constructed by the reader on a retroactive basis, once access to the text's centralised topic has been established at the end of the poem. This semi-hidden element offers the reader a coherent and rearranged version of the first line, which then acts as a catalyst for uncovering the rest of the poem's internal coherence. Without the rearranged item, however, a reference point, in relation to which the coherence of the rest of the text can be gaged, is not possible. An interpretation of this text begins to be formed when the reader starts to read and thus process the first line of the text; however, prior to reading the final line this interpretation consists of a range of false starts. A number of lexical items, "who", "The", "ran" and so on, provide partial propositional elements, sporadically placed

amongst the seemingly random cluttering of nonsensical graphemes; however, with no clear and overriding theme or topic to act as a background context for further processing of the fragmentary propositional constituents, the following interpretation remains fragmentary from an initial decoding, and enriched contextual perspective. The effect of withholding crucial contextual information until the very last line of the text works to extend processing effort considerably, but with little contextual benefit for the reader.

Leading up to the final line of the poem, when the general topic/theme of the poem suddenly becomes apparent, there are a few lexical items which upon a first reading appear randomly dispersed across the text's unfolding structure. These items seem to tease the reader with a partial and fleeting sense of linguistic and propositional clarity; however, the logical forms encoded by the text's lexical material can only be used to unlock deeper elements of the text's propositional structure once the reader gains access to the final constituent of the poem. Upon a first reading of the text, the further propositional potentialities of these logical forms are concealed by several stylistically pronounced textual features, such as: broken syntactic arrangements, strange anagrammatic forms, smatterings of apparently random, yet bizarre, acts of punctuation, and so on. The stylistic peculiarity of the text acts to mask the text's propositional content, which can only be truly established once the overarching topic/theme for the poem has been provided within the final line. Therefore, before achieving an adequate representation of the poem's general propositional structure, readers will likely engage in a fair amount of fruitless processing (i.e. of a perceptual, linguistic/logical, and inferential nature). Many readers, of a 'non-expert' status, may well give up and deem such processing as an unjustifiable expenditure of their mental resources. 'Expert' readers, on the other hand, persevere with the broken syntax and peculiar visuospatial design, and although difficult and costly, may enjoy the surprise effect and the retroactive cognitive effects inevitably triggered via the final line of the poem (for further details on the distinction between *expert* and *non-expert* poetic readers, see 2.1 of the present thesis).

Essentially, cummings's poem goes against the aforementioned idea posited by Sperber and Wilson (1995:216), which argues that sentence/text topics are encoded by initial constituents of the text's linguistic structure, in order to provide access to crucial encyclopaedic information as early as possible within the overall interpretation process. However, not only does cummings place the key element for unlocking the poem's internal coherence at the very end of the poem, he also uses a highly irregular syntactic and visuospatial design to eradicate the possibility that the reader will arrive at, by use

of his/her own inferential ingenuity, a satisfactory interpretation of the text's fundamental propositional content via any of the text's linguistic components that feature prior to the final line of the poem. However, expert readers will still likely use those early textual components in order to attempt to construct some form of interpretation of the text's basic propositional content and wider contextual effects. This process will give rise to a wide array of weak explicatures and implicatures, some of which may even prove useful for helping readers to reconstruct the text's propositional structure retrospectively, once they have gained access to the coherence clue situated upon the final line. Even if not directly relevant to the text's actual intended message, it is highly likely that their conceptual material will still remain manifest within the readers' cognitive environments to at least some degree, thus providing a relatively richer background context, in relation to which elements of the text's linguistically encoded content may be able to be processed to derive further contextual effects (albeit of an extremely vague and impressionistic character), once the coherence clue has allowed readers to construct this content upon a second reading. This essentially provides an opportunity for a relatively higher propositional-contextual yield to be formulated that acts to offset and even reward the increased processing effort that the drawing of such preliminary inferences inevitably incurs, thus maintaining the balance of *optimal relevance*.

3.5. Moving forwards

The next chapter moves on to the idea that *poetic effects* may well be triggered at a very basic perceptual level. The hypothesis suggests that something of the visuospatial nature of many texts might make them intrinsically predisposed to deriving *poetic* levels of processing in expert literary readers. Before concentrating on outlining this hypothesis though, a hitherto much neglected area of relevance-theoretic pragmatics – namely the phenomenon of poetic effects communicated as *weak explicatures* – will be discussed in detail.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. For early contributions to the relevance-theoretic stylistics programme, see: Pilkington (1990, 1991a, b, 1992, 1994, 1996); Trotter (1992); Blakemore (1993, 1994); Fabb (1995, 1997); Clark (1996); MacMahon (1996); Furlong (1996); and Meyer (1997).

2. ‘r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r’. Copyright 1935, ©1963, 1991 by Trustees for the E. E. Cummings Trust. Copyright © 1978 by George James Firmage, from COMPLETE POEMS: 1904-1962 by E. E. Cummings, edited by George J. Firmage. Used by permission of Liveright Publishing Corporation.

4. Visuospatial form and poetic effects

4.1. Introduction

The main aim of Chapter 4 is to develop the central hypotheses of the overall thesis: both of which are built upon the idea that *poetic* levels of processing, and therefore, the communication of *poetic effects* (in the specialised relevance-theoretic sense of the term: see section 2.6) can be derived from inputs to pragmatic processing that are visuospatial/perceptual in nature.

The first of these hypotheses relates to the visuospatial phenomenon of short line-length. Appealing to further research, conducted from both empirical cognitive-stylistic (Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014), and specialised relevance-theoretic (Pilkington 2000) perspectives, it will be argued that the use of short line-length can increase the reader's perception of the text's linguistic material, and therefore, processing of the semantic content encoded by this material significantly, which might reach *poetic* levels for readers of an *expert* nature. This research will be explored further within section 4.4, and the hypothesis explained in full within section 4.5. The idea will then be briefly discussed within section 4.8 in relation to a non-literary piece of text which has been rearranged so that its constituent structure is unravelled over a relatively larger range of relatively shorter line units.

The second hypothesis relates to the use of line divisions. The idea states that such divisions may often be used to intentionally disrupt how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page. Some readers may view the visuospatial disruption of syntax, generated by particular line divisions, as the visuospatial equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect', which warrants a considerable degree of further inferential processing, and thus a distinct communicational 'reward' primarily at an explicit-propositional level. In most cases, this 'reward' will manifest itself as *poetic effects* primarily communicated, and *non-spontaneously* derived (Furlong 1996, 2014), as wide arrays of *weak explicatures* that function as anticipatory-hypothetical extensions of the text's semantically and grammatically incomplete status, pre-line division, as it were. The key thing to note is that such *weak explicatures* are developments of logical forms encoded by the text, as perceived within a momentarily incomplete and fragmentary light, pre-line division as it were, rather than as separately derived sets of

implicated effects functioning independently of the text's main explicit-propositional content. The *poetic effects* achieved in the former manner, therefore, primarily communicate their poetic quality at the pragmatic level of 'what is said', rather than 'implicated'. This idea is built from research (discussed throughout section 4.3) conducted into the inherent indeterminacy, and therefore *poetic* capabilities of language functioning at the former of these pragmatic levels. It will be explained in more detail within section 4.6 and 4.9.

Section 2.2 of the present thesis provides a brief relevance-theoretic account of the general notion of *explicature*. However, missing from this account are precise details relating to the idea that, just like with implicatures, explicatures are explicit to a greater or lesser degree (Sperber and Wilson 1995:182). Since the present thesis claims that the notion is vital for gaining an understanding of the potential *poetic effects* of line divisions, the following section provides a general account of the phenomenon of *weak explicit communication*. Section 4.3 then proceeds to explore instances of the relevance-theoretic stylistics literature where the communication of poetic effects has been analysed along weakly explicit lines.

4.2. Weak explicit communication

As stated within section 2.3, Sperber and Wilson (1995:194-195) define *implicatures* as implications of an utterance's explicit propositional form which a speaker "manifestly intends" to communicate to his/her audience in the pursuit of relevance. As a counterpart to the notion of *implicature*, Sperber and Wilson (1995:182) posit the parallel phenomenon of *explicature*. While *explicatures* are to some extent similar to Grice's (1961: 127–8, 1975, 1989:22-40) notion of 'what is said', they also differ radically from it, since often the Gricean concept is conceived of along purely semantic lines, whereas explicatures are seen as being derived through a combination of linguistically decoded and pragmatically inferred conceptual features. Carston (2000, 2016) states that a key aspect to the derivation of an explicature, is that it may involve the process of *free enrichment*, which means that part of its propositional content is filled by conceptual material that is inferred through pragmatic means alone; that is, totally free from linguistic control or guidance. She adds that a further unconventional characteristic of an explicature, at least in respect of recent accounts of explicit communication, is that the conceptual format of the propositional structure expressed by the explicature might be quite different to the conceptual format encoded by the lexical items that make up the logical form of the actual sentence uttered (Carston 2000:3).

As noted by Carston, the concepts encoded by the language system constitute only a small portion of the range of concepts that the human mind can represent and perform computations upon, and thus communicate to other language-users:

> Lexically encoded meaning often serves as just a clue or pointer to the concept the speaker has in mind, but the relevance-based comprehension strategy is such that an addressee is usually able to figure out from the lexical concept and other contextual clues what the intended concept is (Carston 2000:3).

On this account then, there most likely will be a significant gap between the logical form encoded by the sentential arrangement utilized by the speaker and the explicature constructed by the hearer (Carston 2000:3). The larger the gap between such constructs, the weaker the explicature is said to be. In relation to this notion, Wilson and Sperber give the following remarks:

> Identifying the explicature of an utterance involves a certain amount of inference. The inference is non-demonstrative, and draws on background knowledge, so the hearer must always take some degree of responsibility for how it comes out. How much responsibility he has to take, and hence how indeterminate the explicature is, varies from utterance to utterance. Explicatures can be weaker or stronger, depending on the degree of indeterminacy introduced by the inferential aspect of comprehension (Wilson and Sperber 2000:249).

Explicatures then, may be weaker or stronger depending upon the relative degrees of linguistic decoding and pragmatic processing used to develop their propositional forms. Therefore, the more an explicature's conceptual content is encoded by an utterance's logical form, the stronger the explicature; on the other hand, the more it is pragmatically inferred from context, the weaker it is said to be.

In order to illustrate this idea, Wilson and Sperber (2000:249) provide an example of a possible exchange between two interlocutors referred to as Alan Jones and Lisa. Alan Jones asks Lisa the following question: "Do you want to join us for supper?"; for which we are provided with four possible answers that Lisa could potentially provide in response, as shown in (21.) below:

(21.) (a.) *Lisa*: No, thanks. I've eaten.
(b.) *Lisa*: No, thanks. I've already eaten supper.
(c.) *Lisa*: No, thanks. I've already eaten tonight.
(d.) *Lisa*: No, thanks. I've already eaten supper tonight.

The above theorists state that in order to understand the explicit content of (21a-d.), a certain amount of inference, and hence a certain degree of indeterminacy, is involved in

each case. Although the same explicature – that Lisa has eaten SUPPER that evening – is arrived at inferentially in all four versions of her response, there is a clear sense in which it is weaker in (21a.) than in either (21b.) or (21c.), and considerably stronger in (21d.), as Wilson and Sperber further discuss:

> The strength of an explicature varies with the degree of indeterminacy resulting from the inferential aspect of the recovery of explicatures. In particular, *ceteris paribus*, the more distant from any of its lexicalised senses is the concept conveyed by use of a word in a given utterance, the weaker the explicature will be (Wilson and Sperber 2000:250).

When the explicature of an utterance is quite strong, one of its particular senses will be encoded to a relatively large degree by the utterance's logical form; therefore, the greater the degree of linguistic encoding, the lower the degree of pragmatic enrichment needed to construct the conceptual structure of the utterance's explicature. Thus, the extent to which recovery of the explicature's conceptual structure is linguistically guided determines its level of communicative strength. Similarly, the less the explicit content is encoded by the linguistic structure, the more open to interpretation the process becomes. As a result, the less linguistically guided the process is, the higher the level of indeterminacy introduced into the inferential phase of the overall process, leading to the derivation of a relatively wider and weaker range of explicatures.

Therefore, many utterances derive logical forms which provide very little guidance for the further inferential processes governing the determination of their wider propositional values. When the guidance provided by a given logical form is scanty, the number of ways that context can be brought to bear in order to enrich its preliminary conceptual structure is amplified. This triggers a level of uncertainty in the way that the hearer is intended to proceed with his or her pragmatic interpretation of the utterance's propositional content. Rather than a single or small set of determinate values, such low levels of linguistic guidance give rise to a relatively indeterminate range of relatively *weaker* propositional forms/explicatures. As Clark (2013a:214) points out, the fact that some stimuli (as in the case of linguistic expressions of a poetic/metaphorical nature) "give rise to a range of weak explicatures means, in turn, that they give rise to a range of **weak implicatures**" (bold text in original). The indeterminacy pertaining to a range of weak explicatures then, acts as an indeterminate input to the additional stages of inference involved in the construction of implicatures. A relatively more expansive range of explicatures is, of course, bound to trigger a relatively wider (and thus more indeterminate) range of items within context, which can then act as implicated premises

within further processes of inferential deduction to derive a range of further inferential conclusions (Sperber and Wilson 1995:195). The key difference between weak explicatures and weak implicatures, however, is that weak explicatures are propositional structures which consist of combinations of linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual features, whereas weak implicatures are propositional structures which consist entirely of the latter (Sperber and Wilson 1995:182). Weak explicatures are formed through a process of pragmatic enrichment, in which further conceptual material derived from context effectively maps onto and thus modifies elements of the utterance's/text's linguistically encoded content. Weak implicatures, on the other hand, consist of separate propositional structures, which are deduced from the completed explicatures of the utterance/text and further concepts and assumptions stored within encyclopaedic context (Sperber and Wilson 1995:195).

The next section will explore instances within the relevance-theoretic stylistics literature where the communication of poetic effects has been analysed along weakly explicit lines, focusing in particular on Carston's notion of *ad hoc concepts*, which feature in the case of many metaphorical utterances and give rise to unusual semantic features termed within the related literature as *emergent properties* (Banks 2018:133; also see: Vego Moreno 2005; Wilson and Carston 2006; Pilkington 2010; Clark 2013b). The section will then consider briefly how other theories from within the general cognitive-linguistics literature, such as *conceptual metaphor theory* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and *mental spaces* and *conceptual blending* (Fauconnier and Turner 1994, 2003), relate to the phenomenon of ad hoc concepts and metaphor-construction. The section will conclude by focusing on Arai's (2008) distinction between *poetic effects* and *poetic ellipsis*. The distinction will be discussed in full below; however briefly, the former involves omission of some propositions in a series of the speaker's utterances that she assumes the hearer, based on the principle of relevance, can infer as implicatures, whereas the latter involves omission of some constituents of the speaker's utterance that she assumes the hearer can infer through the processes of saturation and free-pragmatic enrichment, again based upon the principle of relevance (Arai 2008:348).

4.3. The poetic effect of weak explicature

Although Sperber and Wilson (2012a) provide a thorough account of the notion of weak explicature in its general, non-literary manifestation, the idea that poetic effects can be communicated along weakly explicit, in addition to weakly implicit lines of inference,

does not appear in this updated version of their original relevance-theoretic framework. A plethora of research exists which investigates the phenomenon of poetic effects being communicated as wide arrays of weak implicatures (see in particular, the work of relevance theorist Adrian Pilkington: 1989, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2010); however, the notion that poetic effects can be communicated as wide arrays of *weak explicatures* has, by comparison, only been briefly considered by what might be best described as a smattering of scholars.

Both Carston (1996b:28) and Clark (2013a:214) entertain the notion that poetic effects may be derived through the use of weak explicature, but in each instance the possibility is only mentioned in passing reference. Elsewhere Clark (2013b:166-168) examines the notion in more detail, stating that it is "possible for poetic effects to be derived because an utterance gives rise to a wide range of possible explicatures leaving the addressee unsure about which ones are intended". Dogan (1992) provides the earliest research into the idea that poetic effects can be achieved via a rich inferential process occurring at a propositional level. He considers a range of examples in short poems and epigrams where aspects of explicatures, in particular the referents of pronouns, are intended by the text's creator to be vague and indeterminate, therefore giving rise to a range of propositional fragments, or incomplete propositional structures, which do not get developed into full-fledged propositional forms.

However, despite direct links between weak explicature and poetic effects remaining sporadic within the relevance-theoretic literature, an extremely influential approach to the inherent indeterminacy of explicatures, which most certainly is relevant within a literary capacity, is expounded in Carston's (1996b, 2002a, 2010c, d, 2016) work on *ad hoc concept construction*[1]. According to her theory, a full-fledged interpretation of the metaphorical utterance, "Robert is a bulldozer", requires the construction of an *ad hoc* concept BULLDOZER*. The inferential enrichment process which is central to the construction of this *ad hoc* concept will lead to the development of an indeterminate spread of weakly communicated concepts and assumptions, as Sperber and Wilson (1995) suggest in the following remarks:

> [Robert is a bulldozer] is a fairly conventional metaphor whose interpretation involves bringing together the encyclopaedic entries for *Robert* and *bulldozer*, which do not normally come together in a subject-predicate relationship […] Here there is no single strong implicature that comes to mind, but rather a slightly weaker, less determinate range having to do with Robert's persistence, obstinacy, insensitivity and refusal to be deflected (Sperber and Wilson 1995:236).

Carston (2002a:350) points out, however, that bulldozers are not persistent, obstinate, insensitive and so on, in the same way that people often are. The newly derived *ad hoc* concept will constitute a simultaneously narrowed and loosened version of the lexically encoded concept for "bulldozer". It will be narrowed in the sense that it retains certain abstract qualities to do with power, being an unstoppable force, causing immense damage, lacking in emotions or humanity, and so on, whilst omitting many of the purely physical or concrete characteristics of bulldozers (e.g. made of metal, distinct shape and size, large manmade object/machine, etc.). It will be loosened in the sense that it will contain a range of unconventional semantic elements, connoting a range of ideas similar to those listed above by Sperber and Wilson (1995:236). Such additional semantic elements, known within the lexical pragmatics literature as *emergent properties*, are attributable to the "metaphor topic [*Robert*] but are not stored as part of our representation of the metaphor vehicle [*Bulldozer*]" (Banks 2018:133; also see: Vego Moreno 2005; Wilson and Carston 2006; Pilkington 2010; Clark 2013b). The important thing to add is that hearers might not identify one definite *ad hoc concept*, as Carston (2002a) suggests in the following remarks:

> There may be quite a range of subtly different concepts licensed by an utterance of, for instance, "Robert is a bulldozer" […] No specific one is strongly communicated and the hearer's construction of any one of them is good enough for the communication to have succeeded (Carston 2002a:358).

Banks (2018:134) further states that whilst we can easily infer the intended meanings of fairly standard ad hoc conceptual expressions, such as the clichéd Robert-bulldozer metaphor above, "more creative poetic images require a more extensive gloss to capture what emerges and how it does so". On this notion, Carston (2010c) suggests that while many conversational, prosaic and even conventionalised metaphors seem fairly amenable to explicit paraphrase, others are highly wrought, extended over a length of text and possess a more evocative imagistic element that expresses a feeling, sensation or impression, rather than a more or less definite propositional content. Irrespective of whether we are dealing with a small-scale or extended, or conventionalised or poetic ad hoc conceptual case, the important thing to note is that the ad hoc concept forms part of the explicit content of the utterance, and that ad hoc conceptuality adds a distinctly weak and thus *poetic* element to the pragmatic level of 'what is said', rather than implicated. In more specific terms, Carston states that ad hoc concepts are formed when

lexically encoded content is adjusted by a backwards inference process in response to particular hypothesized implicatures (Carston 2010c:302). The implicatures precede full formation of the utterance's propositional form, and then part of the sense of the hypothesized implicatures maps back onto and adjusts part of the lexically encoded content to form an ad hoc conceptual element within the explicit content of the utterance[2].

In addition to Carston's notion of ad hoc conceptuality, it is also important to mention that there are other theories available for shedding light on the phenomenon of metaphor-construction. For example, within the framework referred to as *conceptual metaphor theory*, which arose from the pioneering work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the concepts encoded by the lexical elements "Robert" and "Bulldozer" in the above utterance would be analysed as linking to two stable conceptual domains: the metaphorical aspect or structure being characterised as a systematic mapping or relationship between those domains (Gibbons and Whiteley 2018:205). Linguistic and conceptual material from the *source* domain of BULLDOZER is used to represent a situation in the *target* domain of ROBERT, or ROBERT'S PERSONALITY/BEHAVIOUR. Specific elements of the source and target domains are selected through a combination of the source language used (BULLDOZER) and the relevant conceptual metaphor that creates a *mapping* which tells us how semantic or conceptual elements in the two domains correspond with one another. In the above metaphorical construction, contextual information, which involves an inanimate yet destructive machine, is lined-up with contextual items concerning characteristic traits of human behaviour. Generally, one might say that conventional types of metaphorical structure exist and are, to an extent, encoded and fixed within our general understanding of the world, in which the domains for machines and human behaviour have come to form a conventional metaphorical alignment (take for example, the following familiar utterance: "*X* is a machine"; where *X* refers to a particular individual). Thanks to this stereotypical mapping, concepts pertaining to the inanimate, yet powerful, and unremitting nature of machinery can easily find clear counterparts in the conceptual material linking to human behaviour and personality traits. Thus, such conceptual metaphors, which are principled and established, provide us with the necessary apparatus to easily understand a range of unusal utterances like the one above.

The metaphorical construction contained within the utterance "Robert is a bull-dozer" may also involve a simple case of what Fauconnier and Turner (1994, 2003) re-fer to as conceptual *blending*. During this process two inputs which share a common

conceptual structure get linked by a cross-space mapping and projected selectively onto a blended mental space (Fauconnier and Turner 2003:59). One of the basic elements of the framework is that conceptual blending is described and studied scientifically in terms of integration networks. Fauconnier and Turner (2003:60) state that in its most rudimentary form, a conceptual integration network contains four connected mental spaces: two partially matched input spaces, a generic space where structure common to both inputs is handled or processed, and the blended space containing the overall conceptual output. They add that the process allows further conceptual features to emerge within the blended space. The whole process is very similar to the way relevance theory accounts for the derivation of contextual implications. The framework states that such contextual effects consist of entirely new assumptions, which are not deducible from either new information received from an external source (i.e. an utterance), or old contextual information alone (Carston 1988b:58; Sperber and Wilson 1995:109; Carston 2002a:44). Thus, conceptual blends help to derive emergent conceptual features or elements, which can only be derived through a synthesis of conceptual material from both input spaces, rather than from concepts originating within a single space.

Fauconnier and Turner (2003: 60) further posit the existence of different types of conceptual blend which work through different types of integration networks: for example, *simplexes* are formed when one input consists of a frame and the other consists of specific elements, whereas *mirrors* contain a common organizing frame that is shared by all spaces in the network. In the case of the "Robert is a bulldozer" utterance, a newly derived conceptual blend emerges from inputs that at first sight seem to clash and differ fundamentally in content and topology. In Fauconnier's and Turner's framework, the network would constitute what the theorists refer to as a *double-scope*. *Double-scope blending* can resolve such inconsistencies between apparently incongruous inputs, functioning as a highly powerful source of human creativity (Fauconnier and Turner 2003:60). The overall process certainly appears to share latent parallels with the kind of conceptual synthesis involved in the phenomenon of *ad hoc concept construction* posited by Carston. Both *double-scope blending* and *ad-hoc concept construction* involve bringing together material from seemingly disparate conceptual domains, in order to form a range of subtly different conceptual elements that somehow captures the poetic expressivity of the utterance's metaphorical tenor. The theorists state that the concepts that combine to create the conceptual blend are projected selectively onto the blended conceptual space. This could well mean guided or mandated by some underlying pragmatic principle or heuristic, such as the one based within the pragmatics framework of

relevance theory (see section 2.1 for further details). Furthermore, it perhaps features as one way in which the frameworks of *relevance theory* and *conceptual blending theory* may be aligned within future programmes of research – although such considerations lie beyond the limited scope of the present thesis.

It is clear then that various theorists view indeterminacy as functioning at both the explicit and implicit levels of utterance comprehension. Arai (2007:6-7; 2008) has contributed important research which sheds further light on the inherent indeterminacy of explicit communication: in the later work, the theorist attempts to account for "the value of shortness" of Japanese poetic forms, such as the Haiku (Arai 2008:347). Furthermore, she introduces the notion of poetic ellipsis, in an attempt to explain why shorter forms of literature often tell us as much as, if not more than, the longer forms. Arai (2008) distinguishes between the following two types of ellipsis:

> Ellipsis Type A:
>
> *The ellipsis of the constituents of an explicature*. To omit some constituents of the speaker's utterance that she assumes that the hearer can infer in the course of his pragmatic enrichment (saturation and free enrichment), based on the principle of relevance.
>
> Ellipsis Type B:
>
> *The ellipsis of one of the propositions in a series of utterances*. To omit some propositions in a series of the speaker's utterances that she assumes that the hearer can infer as implicature in the course of his inference, based on the principle of relevance (Arai 2008:348).

In addition, Arai states the following:

> Type A ellipsis is that which is called syntactic ellipsis in syntax and other faculties of linguistics. In relevance theory, when we only focus on the explicature of an utterance, the ellipsis is defined as Type A. However, when we consider the implicature of an utterance, another type of ellipsis, the ellipsis of whole sentences in the series of utterances, is identified as type B (Arai 2008:349).

In order to explicate the difference between these two types of ellipsis, consider the communicative exchanges in (22.) and (23.):

(22.) A: Do you like dogs?
B: Yes, I do [like dogs]

(23.) A: (To John in bed, asleep) Get up, John! It's a fine day. [We can go fishing.] Get ready.

Arai (2008:349) notes that the square-bracketed items in (22.) are omitted by speaker A when delivering his or her utterance, and furthermore that they function as "syntactic ellipsis", in which A expects B to recover omitted parts of the utterance via the process of saturation; that is, through his or her knowledge of syntax. In relation to (23.), Arai explains that the whole sentence, "We can go fishing", is omitted, and that John recovers this sentence as an implicature (Arai 2008:349). Specifically, it is a contextual implication derived by inferentially processing A's explicature, "It's a fine day", in relation to some old piece of information held within John's encyclopaedic-contextual resources – perhaps regarding plans the pair made to go fishing the day before, weather permitting of course – therefore, functioning as an example of type B ellipsis. Arai (2008:349) states that "Poetic effects are produced when the speaker (writer) uses a special case of type B ellipsis, on the other hand, the effects of poetic ellipsis are generated in a special case of type A ellipsis", and that although writers often do not directly express any of their feelings in their writings, a reader can somehow understand a writer's attitude towards the content of his or her text through the communication of weak implicatures (Arai, 2008:350). However, Arai (2008:351) also introduces the notion of "weak explicatures" and cites Wilson and Sperber's (2000:249) notion of explicature-strength being determined by the degree of indeterminacy introduced into the inferential aspect of explicature-construction.

In order to explicate this notion further, Arai (2008:352) cites the following two poetic cases:

(24.) No sweet without sweat.

(25.) Oh, holy,
Green leaves, young leaves,
Light of the sun.

The explicature for (24.) is recovered far more easily than it is in the case of (25.), because as Arai (2008:353) suggests, "Haiku is designed to have many weak explicatures by omitting many constituents of a sentence". Arai (2008:354) argues that the effects of *poetic ellipsis* are contrastive with *poetic effects*, because in the case of the former, speakers provide multiple weak explicatures to their utterances by omitting various parts of their sentential structures. Arai (2008:355) states that there are no definite or indefinite articles in Japanese language and adds that Haiku frequently mirrors this by often omitting any demonstratives. Arai (2008:358) approves of this tendency of Haiku and argues that the recovery of many weak explicatures must be part

of the "appreciation" of some literature. What this suggests is that (24.) has many weak implicatures, which are inferred entirely from context, and that (25.) has many weak implicatures, and in addition many weak explicatures, which are left highly indeterminate through the process of poetic ellipsis. We have no problem identifying the explicature of (24.), however the lexical items, "sweet" and "sweat", demonstrate phonological correspondence that fails to achieve meaning at the level of explicature, but communicates poetically via an array of additional weak implicatures. In the case of (25.), however, many constituents of the text's syntax are omitted from the textual formulation. As a result, weakness and indeterminacy of expression are communicated both explicitly and implicitly, thus, according to Arai (2008), creating poetic effects at two distinct pragmatic levels.

Arai (2008:354) adds that in Haiku it is impossible to describe everything about the object or scene being referred to within the world of the text. As a result, syntactic elements (such as preposition particles, auxiliary verbs, even verbs generally) which do not prevent the reader from recovering the explicature of the Haiku are omitted. Thus, Haikus often feature fragmentary grammatical constructions, in which only lexical items that are central to the interpretation process (such as noun phrases) are left in (Arai 2008:354). Tom Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' is a poetic text which experiments to extreme levels with the poetic device of ellipsis (see Appendix, *Figure 1*, for a scanned version of the full text). However, the ellipsis does not seem to be employed within the text according to a tangible system, whereby syntactic elements which are important to the interpretation process are left in. Instead, the reader's grasp of the text's explicit-propositional content is severely hindered by the poet's use of linguistically irregular constructions which promote an overall sense of propositional and conceptual disparity. Although propositional content and wider contextual effect are thought to be worked out through a process of mutual parallel adjustment (Wilson and Sperber 2002b; Rosa Vega Moreno 2005, 2007; Wilson and Carston 2007), there is still a sense in which a text's explicit content works as a preliminary conceptual starting-point, or structure, from which more implicitly geared forms of inferential enrichment can be built. A key characteristic of Raworth's text is that extreme levels of indeterminacy are experienced at an explicit, as well as implicit level, which makes it difficult to formulate a clear sense of the text's wider implicit import due to the fact that it is so difficult to initially work out what is communicated at a rudimentary logical and propositional level (Raworth's text will be explored further throughout Chapter 5).

The central aim of the thesis is to explore the idea that *poetic effects* can be visuospatially triggered via the use of short line-length and line divisions. Before considering the distinct manner in which this process may be achieved, the next section reviews a range of empirical research conducted within the field of cognitive-stylistics, which indicates that a text's visuospatial presentation directly affects the manner in which that text is read and interpreted by readers.

4.4. Visuospatial form and pragmatic processing

During the reading and interpretation of a poetic text an important role is played by the perception of its visuospatial presentation (Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014:5). A range of empirically sourced research, which adds further credence to this view, will be discussed throughout this section.

Castiglione (2017) presents the results of an experiment in which he used reading times as a measure of the processing effort demanded by 'difficult' poems (in addition, see Castiglione 2015). His overall thesis is built on the psycholinguistic assumption posited by Sanford and Emmott (2012:50) which states that the time spent reading a particular region of a text provides an indication of its level of processing difficulty. His study includes reading time data (in milliseconds) per line for six poems, which interestingly reveals that the lines that took the longest to read were in fact the shortest. Although Castiglione (2017) argues that there are many variables that can have an impact on processing time, such as: simple or complex vocabulary, word length, number of adjacent stresses, markedness of clause boundaries, and punctuation; these results indeed seem to provide some evidence for the idea that shorter units of line-length, during real time reading of the text, lead to prolonged perception of the lines' lexical content. The present thesis suggests that such increased perception of this content allows its associated encyclopaedic-contextual material to remain active for relatively longer periods of time; as a result, this can provide opportunities for deeper levels of contextual processing to occur in relation to the text's linguistically encoded content, from which a whole host of additional contextual effects could potentially ensue.

Therefore, the research in this area suggests that line-length indeed seems to have some bearing upon reading times associated with particular texts. In a slightly different yet related sense, Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014:5) suggest that readers notice foregrounded elements of poetry and often remember texts better when they are

visuospatially presented as poems (in addition, see van Peer 1986 and Hanauer 1996, 1998). Hanauer (2001; in Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014) posits two potential explanations for this effect: 1.) readers may use the visuospatial presentation as a visual frame to recall the surface structure; 2.) the visuospatial presentation may activate a genre specific processing. Zwann (1991, 1994) provides evidence for the latter of these conclusions, demonstrating significant differences in reading times and surface representations between texts presented as newspaper articles and those presented as poems. According to Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014), this second explanation is further supported by Fisher et al. (2003), who compare eye tracking data obtained from participants when reading genuine poems in their original formats and when arranged into prose-form. Slower reading rates, longer fixations, and shorter progressions and longer regressions are reported for the poems when presented in their original formats, rather than when made to resemble prose.

Based on this literature, Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) conducted a range of reading experiments expecting to find longer fixations and more regressions for fragments presented as poetry compared to prose. They note that the previous literature in this area only deals with reading behaviour at a global level: therefore, only reporting on more general measures, such as reading rate and average number of fixations (Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014:6). However, the study conducted by Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) used precise stimuli, "where each word that occurs in a poetic format [was] compared to the identical word appearing in a prose setting", thereby allowing the theorists to "investigate whether there are specific differences in reading processes between poetry without and with enjambment" (Koops van 't Jagt at al. 2014:6).

Koops van 't Jagt et al (2014:6) report that through an event-related potential (ERP) study on the processing of commas, Steinhauer and Friederici (2001) provide evidence that commas serve as visual cues for increases in processing effort. They state that the act of perceiving the "visual boundaries in written text seems to involve the same processes as the perception of prosodic boundaries in spoken language" (Koops van 't Jagt et al 2014:6). Also reported is a study by Brouwer et al. (2012) which suggests that these processes are indeed identical: thus reflecting "the effort invested in integrating information across words or phrases, which they assume is more intense at clause and sentence boundaries in both written and spoken language processing" (Koops van 't Jagt et al 2014:6).

In standard cases of enjambment, the prosodic boundary created by a line ending conflicts with the syntactic unit. Tsur (1998) conducts research on the reading

aloud of poetry by actors, which shows that readers realise both continuing and separating cues when they encounter instances of enjambment. Koops van 't Jagt et al (2014:6) posit that if readers do the same during silent readings of poetry, then there may be "longer end-of-line reading times […] in prospective enjambments compared to prose and poetry without enjambment". Alternatively, they also consider the possibility that syntactically incomplete enjambments may well involve shorter processing times at line-endings, because the syntactic incompleteness might "pull the reader to the next line". Furthermore, they suggest that because syntactically complete enjambments resemble sections of poetry without enjambments at line endings then "one would expect readers to treat them similarly to poetry without enjambment, at least at the line end" (Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014:6).

Reading time data obtained by Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) suggests that readers seem to spend more time reading the regions, which are proximally located to where the enjambments fall, perhaps serving as an indication that deeper forms of processing are bestowed upon the lexical content within those areas. Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) reveal that the increased reading times are typically experienced in relation to the penultimate, rather than final word of a given line, perhaps indicating that readers are in some way anticipating or preparing for the syntactic and semantic break caused by the impending enjambment. The increased reading time may demonstrate uncertainty in readers about how they are to interpret the semantic and syntactic material post-break. Parafoveal processing is defined in the related literature (see Rayner 1998) as the ability of readers, whilst fixating on an individual word within a linguistic string, to pre-process the beginning letters (and sometimes the whole form) of the next parafoveally available word. Therefore, readers may become instinctively aware through their parafoveal viewing that the line ending will come prior to the line's semantic and syntactic content reaching completion. A further idea is that perception of the line's linguistic material could suddenly intensify because readers become parafoveally aware of the fact that the line's endpoint will introduce a momentary gap, or break, in perception of the text's lexical material, and further processing of its linguistically encoded content. The present thesis therefore hypothesises that characteristics pertaining to a given text's visuospatial form/arrangement (e.g. line-length, line endings, and so on) may fall within the range of elements able to be captured by such parafoveal viewing.

During a further experiment, Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) used poetic material that did not originally contain enjambments. Texts were used to create a series of poetic fragments, each of which contained artificially constructed enjambments. As is the case with their first experiment, their data reveals the effects of enjambment pre-line break, suggesting that information from the final word was available parafoveally to the reader at the penultimate word of the line structure (Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014:20). The results also reveal that poetic fragments containing retrospective enjambment (syntactically complete) took longer to process than those without at the actual endpoint of the line. Importantly, however, results for the prospective enjambments (syntactically incomplete) fail to show this effect. The theorists posit that this could suggest the following:

> whenever it is possible to interpret the fragment, readers will do so, leading to longer reading times due to integration; when the fragment is syntactically incomplete, however, as with prospective enjambment, there is no evidence for such integrative processing (Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014:20).

Therefore, the two experiments reported, at the very least, show that poetry is almost certainly processed differently from prose and that different types of formal-linguistic effects, such as enjambment in this case, give rise to different modes of processing (Koops van 't Jagt et al. 2014:20).

A key component of the theoretical model put forward within the present thesis rests upon the idea that short line-length and line divisions, as forms of textual fragmentation, can be used in texts to affect how readers go about forming basic mental representations and wider contextual developments of such texts' linguistically encoded content. A further study conducted by Emmott et al. (2006) shows the extent to which text fragmentation is often used by writers as a foregrounding device (Mukařovský 1964) aimed at capturing the attention of readers of narratives. Specifically, their research examines "whether changes to the usual sentence and paragraph formatting of narrative texts can change the readers' alertness to details in texts" (Emmott et al. 2006:2). They state that "Sentence fragments and mini-paragraphs often appear to draw attention to the information they contain by segmenting off specific pieces of information from the rest of the text" (Emmott et al. 2006:4). The research conducted by Emmott et al. (2006) draws consistently upon the distinction between *shallow* and *deep* levels of

processing. Emmott et al's. (2006:4) general argument is that readers often do not fully engage with specific words in a text leading them to form incomplete semantic representations of what they read and undertake shallow levels of processing. Furthermore, Emmott et al. (2006:19) add that shallow levels of processing can be increased "by embedding information in subordinate clauses", thus making particular elements of the text's propositional content less visible. However, Emmott et al. (2006) suggest that fragmentation isolates items that would otherwise have occurred within larger grammatical structures. Depth of processing research (Erickson and Mattson 1981; Barton and Sanford 1993; Sanford 2002; Sanford and Sturt 2002) reveals that embedding encourages shallower processing in readers, probably since embedded semantic information is presupposed, and thus inarguable. On the other hand, deeper levels of processing may be activated when an item that would have otherwise appeared as part of a larger structure is isolated as a separate fragment (Emmott et al. 2006:20). Emmott et al. (2006) use statistical analysis to measure and compare the difference between their participants' detection rates of certain items when embedded within larger grammatical structures and when situated as stand-alone text fragments. Through this analysis they conclude that items are processed more carefully and deeply when they appear within the latter of these visuospatial contexts (Emmott et al. 2006:23).

Another concept from the literature within this area, which helps to shed light on the relationship between visuospatial form and pragmatic processing, is the notion of *lexical activation*. The phenomenon stems from the field of psycholinguistics and involves the study of how words (either written-read, or spoken-heard), manage to trigger the activation of the corresponding lexical entries and their associated encyclopaedic material within an individual's mental architecture. The basic idea is that when perceived and represented any word does not just activate the conceptual address in relation to which it directly corresponds, but activates a range of similarly related items and their associated encyclopaedic material, thus giving rise to the phenomenon known as *spread activation of lexical* access (Stemberger 1985; Roelofs 1992; and MacMahon 2007).

Pilkington (2000) explores the cognitive-pragmatic effects of particular types of poetic device in relation to this phenomenon. He suggests that rhyme, for example, which generally combines phonetically identical material with strong stress, facilitates faster activation of the rhyming words' lexical entries and deeper exploration of their

associated encyclopaedic-contextual material (Pilkington 2000:138). Essentially, the process of accessing the lexical and encyclopaedic material relating to the second word in a rhyming pair is often made easier, due to the likelihood that this material will have been partially activated when the initial word of the rhyming pair was perceived and activated at an earlier textual point. When the second word of a rhyming pair is directly perceived at the later textual point, the process may work in reverse, whereby activation of the second word to some degree reactivates the conceptual address of the first word.

Looking at this process in more detail, Pilkington (2000:139) suggests that when perceiving the first word of a rhyming pair, both the first and second word may be simultaneously activated, rather than merely the first word in isolation (however, it should be noted that activation of the conceptual material pertaining to the second rhyming word will be of an indirect and weaker nature). Although activation of the second rhyming word fades significantly as the spread of activation reduces and settles over the intended target word, it might be the case that the word is still active enough by the time it is perceived in its own right at the proceeding textual point (e.g. on the next line) to facilitate easier and quicker accessing of the word's associated encyclopaedic material. Furthermore, the process may allow more time with decreased effort for exploring the encyclopaedic material more extensively in the pursuit of additional contextual effects.

Pilkington's (2000:138) fundamental argument is that sound patterning devices, such as rhyme and alliteration, utilise the natural tendency of our input systems (when perceiving individual words) to spread activate the lexical entries relating to groups of related lexical items, rather than the individual items to which the actual target words directly correspond. By using items which phonologically correspond to items featuring at earlier textual points, and which therefore quite possibly will have been partially spread activated by those earlier items, easier and prolonged activation of both their lexical entries can be achieved. Furthermore, the prolonged activation of each lexical entry will result in the increased activation of its associated encyclopaedic entry, which can lead to a range of concepts and assumptions which share similar semantic values, stored within each of the encyclopaedic entries in question, to simultaneously become marginally more salient within the reader's cognitive environment. This phenomenon can result in the construction of assumptions formed from conceptual material retrieved and combined from the conceptual domains linking to both phonologically corresponding lexical items.

An instance of lexical activation then provides access to a range of conceptual domains rather than a sole address. Addresses which contain lexical entries that provide the best fit or correspondence to the external stimulus (word) will receive the greatest activation (Pilkington 2000:139), but a given word activates a range of similar sounding items within the mental lexicon to varying degrees, depending upon how phonologically similar they are to the actual target word. Furthermore, Pilkington (2000:137) states that iambic lines typically end with strong stress, thus making the line ending a significant extra punctuation device. The natural pause that such metrical variation creates causes the reader to perceive the items located at each line ending for increased periods of time. During such intervals the lexical and encyclopaedic entries of such items will also be activated and explored for longer periods of time and within a more contextually expansive manner.

Therefore, both Pilkington (2000) and Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) suggest that line endings involve an intensified form of perception and a deeper level of processing as a result. Although Pilkington (2000) attributes this phenomenon to the strong stress used within certain metrical patterns falling in line with line endings, Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) take an approach which is of a more rudimentary perceptual nature. The present thesis argues that short line-length can lead to longer fixation upon the text's linguistic material, which as a result can lead to longer periods of lexical and encyclopaedic activation, and thus more *poetic* forms of inferential processing. However, the thesis also argues that line divisions/breaks, largely irrespective of actual line-length, can cause integral units of the text's syntactic structure to be partitioned upon the page in particular ways. The visuospatial arrangement of written text directly affects the manner in which particular elements of its linguistically encoded content are processed in a further inferential (and contextual) manner. Both hypotheses will be discussed further within the next two sections, before being discussed separately in relation to a piece of modified non-literary text within sections 4.8-4.9.

4.5. Hypothesis 1: short line-length

During the last section, it was discussed how linguistic perception is a gateway to lexical activation, which consequently provides access to further contextual material stored within the associated encyclopaedic entry (Pilkington 2000). Essentially then, the present thesis posits that increased perception of a given textual component (a word or phrase, for example) necessarily increases the amount of time that its corresponding

lexical entry and associated encyclopaedic content are activated, and thus made available for further contextual exploration, within the mind. The longer this material is made available to the reader, the longer he or she 'can' consider the various concepts and assumptions that make up the wider context of the textual component in question. The type of extended contextual exploration which the increased levels of perception/ lexical activation encourage may be said to involve what Furlong (1996, 2014) refers to as a *non-spontaneous* form of inferential processing/interpretation. This type of interpretation involves readers inferentially processing the text's explicit-propositional content in relation to a much wider range of concepts and assumptions stored within encyclopaedic-context, than would be necessary or expected in communicative contexts of a non-literary nature. Such processing involves readers going well beyond the most obvious or easily accessible implicatures, in order to get to those which require readers to adopt a more imaginative and speculative approach to their exploration of the text's wider contextual possibilities, and for the derivation of which they take near total responsibility. Although both time consuming, and costly in terms of processing effort, *non-spontaneous* inferential processing causes a broad and potentially diverse range of concepts and assumptions to become marginally more salient within the readers' minds, thus rewarding them with an array of additional cognitive effects of a weakly implicit, and therefore specialised *poetic* nature.

The thesis argues that short line-length may achieve poetic effects, because of the impact that the visuospatial fragmentation has upon the reader's inferential determination of the text's wider contextual implications. The use of relatively shorter lines then, leads to a relatively longer form of fixation upon the text's lexical material, which leads to a relatively deeper level of processing of this material's linguistically encoded content; that is, as a direct result of the use of visuospatial form. This notion allows a further hypothesis to be formed, which posits the idea that short line-length causes a relatively greater proportion of the text's lexical material to be arranged either directly within, or in a proximal relation to, an *optimal zone of lexical and encyclopaedic activation* posited as being placed towards the end of each line.

Essentially, it could be argued that the peculiar perceptual encoding of short units of line-length functions almost as a magnifying device for perception, which causes the reader to fixate upon a greater range of linguistic material to relatively greater degrees than would have been the case had the text been arranged within a relatively less visuospatially fragmented manner. This process leads to a more

contextually expansive form of inferential processing, from which an array of additional, relatively weaker cognitive effects can follow.

Looking at the phenomenon in more detail, we can say that when approaching a line's endpoint, readers through use of their parafoveal viewing (Rayner 1998; see previous section for definition of parafoveal viewing) perceive the up and coming line ending as presenting a temporary gap or break within their perception of the text's lexical material. The gap/break exists within the transitory phase in which readers, using a prototypical left to right scanning technique, arrive at the end of one line, and then shift their attention back over to the left hand side of the text in a diagonal fashion, in order to reinitiate their perception and processing of the text's incrementally developing linguistic structure at the start point of the following line. Using this technique, when the reader moves from one line to the next, the transition is not merely visuospatial in nature. A line's linguistic structure could be left within an unfinished state at its endpoint, meaning that the reader effectively has to join together two logical structures in the mind, each pertaining to either line unit featuring at each end of the transitional processing stage brought on by a given line ending. However, even if grammatically and semantically complete, the linguistically encoded content of each line provides some level of context for the processing of the line directly following it, which itself provides a preliminary context for the next line, and so on and so forth. It stands to reason, therefore, that when the reader is approaching the endpoint of a given line, his or her perception of the text's lexical material will increase, as he or she will want to ensure that the connection between the lines, whether of a linguistic or contextual nature, is completed as quickly and efficiently as possible; that is, with no occlusion standing in the way of the scanning procedure's ongoing continuation. In order for this to occur, in the case of either type of connection, it would be advantageous for the conceptual addresses, relating to the linguistic material featuring at the initial line's endpoint, to be in a state of high activation when the reader arrives at the start point of the following line. The reader will be aware implicitly of the need to achieve adequate levels of activation of the necessary psychological components, resulting in the textual items, in relation to which they correspond, receiving a relatively deeper form of perception.

Essentially, therefore, longer fixation times are experienced in relation to lexical material falling at line endings. Every line unit, depending upon its length, has an interval, which starts at the beginning of the line's structure, during which the reader's perception of the line's linguistic material is at its shallowest, since the gap in

perception and processing, instigated by the impending line ending, has not yet been captured by parafoveal viewing. The exact size of this interval is quite likely different for all readers. However, generally, the shorter the line's length, the shorter the interval; therefore, shorter units of line-length cause the ratio of *shallow* (pre-onset of parafoveal awareness) to *deep* (post-onset of parafoveal awareness) processing of the line's linguistic content to be inversely affected in favour of the consequent of these two terms.

A key element of the current hypothesis rests upon the idea that if a text makes use of units of line-length which are short enough, in a sustained manner, or in other words across the entire text, then the aforementioned intervals between pre- and post-onset of parafoveal awareness will decrease to a point where the reader is very nearly always within a state of parafoveal awareness of the perceptual gaps and breaks in processing that are created by each and every line ending. In other words, the reader will always be in a state of anticipation that a line ending, and thus processing gap, is coming up within the text's developing structure (both visuospatially and linguistically), which means that the text will be perceived and processed far more closely and carefully, than compared with texts which utilise relatively longer units of line-length.

Further implications of this hypothesis will be discussed within section 4.7 of the present thesis, but for now a potential question which could be raised is whether it is possible for some readers of complex poetry to reach a surfeit point in terms of cognitive processing; that is, if so much of the text is in the optimal positions (line endings), then does the level of engagement decrease? I would imagine that this is possible if the additional processing encouraged fails to achieve additional contextual benefits, and therefore fails to be processed in an optimally relevant fashion. However, if readers enjoy and are committed to exploring the various contextual possibilities of the linguistically encoded elements that are pushed into an optimal level of perception by the use of short line-length, then it seems questionable that 'expert' poetic readers would fail to achieve a satisfactory range of additional contextual effects, and therefore that a surfeit point would ever be reached.

A further issue could also be that although the unconventionally short line units might seem deviant at first glance, the extremity and duration of the repetition (that is, when applied across an entire text) could perhaps mean that it quickly loses the attention of readers, causing them to stop processing each line's linguistically encoded content to a relatively deeper contextual, and thus potentially *poetic* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222) level. This could indeed be a potential criticism to the argument

pertaining to the *poetic* potential of the extended lexical repetition in Auden's (1936) 'Night Mail', discussed in section 3.2 of the present thesis. Remarks provided by Gibbons and Whiteley (2018:24), albeit in relation to a separate literary case, suggest that this may well be the case because the concept of "newness is important in foregrounding and capturing attention", otherwise a pattern quickly becomes part of the textual background, and thus may fail to stimulate the deeper levels of lexical and encyclopaedic activation central to the notion stipulated by hypothesis 1. This may well be the case for sustained forms of linguistic repetition, such as the one applied within Auden's text, which effectively draw the reader's attention towards the same linguistically encoded elements that link to the same conceptual structures within the mind, however it may not be the case for sustained or prolonged forms of repetition of a visuospatial nature, such as the repeated use of short units of line-length. This may be the case because the perceptual characteristics of short line-length contribute to the *packaging*, rather than to the *content* of the text's linguistically encoded message (Wilson and Wharton 2006:1560; House 1990, 2006). The actual item which is repeated in the sustained use of short line-length is of an entirely visuospatial, and thus perceptual, rather than linguistically encoded nature; in other words, it is *procedural*, rather than *conceptual*. Therefore, at a *conceptual* level, there is always something *new* to the repeated effect: a new/different concept, or group of concepts, is magnified and 'zoomed-in-on' so to speak via the perceptual effects of the short line structure. Therefore, the point is that it is making the reader notice something different each time, so *conceptually* speaking there is nothing for the reader to effectively 'get used to'. The procedural nature of the effect contributes to *how* the text is read, and thus processed, rather than to *what* is effectively there in a linguistically encoded sense.

Therefore, short line-length effectively involves deeper levels of perception of the text's lexical content, which trigger lengthier levels of activation of its corresponding lexical and encyclopaedic entries within the mind. However, such increased lexical/encyclopaedic activation is cast within a completely different light when utilised and thus interpreted within specialised literary contexts. An extra level of significance, determined by certain conventions pertaining to the literary genre itself, is attached to the text's micro-level visuospatial characteristics (i.e. its use of short line-length), which triggers readers to take advantage of the relatively lengthier activation times and engage in what were referred to at the beginning of this section as *non-spontaneous* forms of inferential processing (Furlong 1996, 2014) of the text's explicit-propositional content. Such processing calls for a relatively higher level of ingenuity, on

the part of readers, when forming a wider interpretation of the text's relevance; however, the more sustained levels of inference, and the inevitable processing costs which they incur, are rewarded with additional arrays of *weakly* communicated contextual effects, which combine to form common impressions and degrees of affective mutuality between the writer and the audience, which Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) describe as *poetic* in nature.

Therefore, a key point which should be stressed is that the use of short line-length triggers relatively deeper forms of perception of the text's fundamental lexical content, and thus relatively longer forms of activation of its corresponding lexical and encyclopaedic entries within the mind. Short line-length is utilised within other textual types of a non-literary nature, such as children's bedtime stories, newspaper articles, and so on, and the effects upon fixation times and lexical/encyclopaedic activation may well be constant across such texts. However, it is only within specialised literary contexts that the visuospatial elements such as line-length and line divisions are granted with an extra level of significance via the text's literary status that activates in them a special level of procedural encoding which instructs the reader to engage with the text in a *non-spontaneous* and *poetic* fashion. In relevance-theoretic terms, this additional level of literary significance allows the rudimentary perceptual and cognitive effects of the text's visuospatial characteristics to function within an *ostensive-inferential* and thus full-fledged communicative capacity, albeit within a procedural rather than conceptual sense.

Of course, the hypothesis presented within this section would assume that reading or scanning of the text proceeds in a linear fashion, which for many poetic cases that experiment with page layout to encourage reading strategies of a multidirectional nature, is often not the case. This idea, as well as any issues that it poses for the current hypothesis, are considered further in section 5.2 in relation to remarks made by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) concerning the meaning values attached to different types of visuospatial-textual layout. Although the theorists argue that many texts offer readers multiple options for traversing the textual space, as it were (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006:208), they also point out that writing and reading directionality (e.g. from right to left or from left to right, from top to bottom, etc.) is determined on a predominantly cultural level (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006:4). A purely Anglocentric view of this phenomenon, therefore, would assume a cultural bias towards a linear, left to right reading procedure, which pulls against, and therefore resists, alternative scanning procedures that are motivated by experimentation with visuospatial compositionality. It

will be discussed within 5.3 how such visuospatial experimentation combines and works with these culturally applied factors to produce a type of reading and interpretation that falls in line with the hypothesis just discussed.

4.6. Hypothesis 2: line divisions

The thesis also argues for a second hypothesis, which states that line divisions can derive *poetic effects* in their own right, and largely irrespective of actual line-length/distance. The items of perceptual information encoded by line divisions contribute their own unique inputs to pragmatic processing which are non-linguistic in nature but impact upon the reader's live construction of the text's developing logical and propositional structure. As discussed in section 2.4, Sperber and Wilson (1987a, 1995) suggest that utterances are not processed as single units of meaning, but as structured strings of constituent concepts, each of which provides access to conceptual information stored within the linguistic module of the brain, which once enriched with further information retrieved from context, form more detailed propositional constructs. Furthermore, the above theorists argue that when processing an individual word within a larger linguistic structure (i.e. an utterance, or text), an individual will use his or her knowledge of the word's lexical properties and syntactic co-occurrence restrictions to predict, on an anticipatory-hypothetical basis, up and coming sections of the utterance's/text's developing logical and propositional structure. With such ideas in mind, the present thesis argues that line divisions can be aptly placed to intentionally disrupt how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page. The visuospatial disruption of syntax generated by certain line divisions introduces a momentary gap into the reader's live construction of the text's incrementally developing syntactic and logical form, which in turn injects a momentary sense of indeterminacy into further inferential development of its propositional structure. When used in this manner, the present thesis posits that line divisions can function as visuospatial/perceptual prompts for inference to hypothetically enrich the text's fragmentary and incomplete logical and propositional status, as perceived pre-line ending. This leads to a range of anticipatory-hypothetical propositions being derived upon what Furlong (1996, 2014) refers to as a *non-spontaneous* inferential level, which precedes perception of the text's actual logical and propositional structure, as it develops within the next line.

The inferential development that is triggered by the line ending leads to several pragmatic extensions of the text's momentarily incomplete logical and propositional status. One important thing to note, is that although it involves a considerable degree of (*non-spontaneous*) inference, the process is to some extent linguistically guided, since inference develops the existing explicit-propositional content of the text (albeit within an anticipatory-hypothetical sense), rather than derives a separate and functionally independent set of cognitive-pragmatic effects. The range and weakness of these hypothetical propositional structures will be determined by the state of the line's linguistic structure when the visuospatial break encoded by the line division impacts upon its development, and therefore, the level of *explicitness* (see section 4.2) achieved by the linguistically encoded content of the lexical material situated prior to the line division. This will consequently affect the degree of indeterminacy introduced into the inferential development of its propositional form during the hypothetical processing phase prompted by the line division, which in turn will determine the range and level of *weakness* of the resulting cognitive effects. Different uses of line breaks/divisions will involve varying levels of explicitness, and thus varying levels of determinacy/indeterminacy, consequently leading to varying ranges of derived effects which differ in their relative levels of communicative *strength-weakness*.

The present thesis aims to demonstrate – firstly, within section 4.9, in relation to a piece of non-literary text, and then within sections 5.5-5.8 in relation to William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) famous imagist poem, 'This Is Just to Say' – how line divisions, when placed at particular points within the text's constituent syntactic structure, can encourage the reader to develop many weak propositions pertaining to the text's actual explicit content, as it develops beyond the visuospatial/perceptual gaps encoded by particular line divisions. Such a phenomenon leads to instances whereby the text's peculiar visuospatial design achieves *poetic effects* through the communication of arrays of *weak explicatures*.

The last two sections have argued that short line-length and line divisions achieve poetic effects in two mutually exclusive manners. The former generates a type of poetic effect which is of a pragmatically free nature and gives rise to a wide array of weak implicatures which are functionally independent of the text's logical form and propositional content; the latter achieves poetic effects which are still determined heavily by inference, but in a manner which is far more linguistically guided, due to the derived effects being inferential developments of the text's logical form.

The following section explores further implications of the first hypothesis,

which states that short line-length may lead to the derivation of poetic effects, before section 4.8 attempts to demonstrate the phenomenon in relation to a piece of text taken from a non-literary source.

4.7. The *poetic effects* of short line-length: further implications

It seems clear then that short line-length can lead to deeper levels of perception of a text's lexical material and perhaps deeper levels of processing of its linguistically encoded content. The last section explained how such deeper levels of perception/processing can lead to deeper lexical and encyclopaedic activation/exploration, which allows a relatively wider range of concepts and assumptions to become marginally more salient within the reader's cognitive environment, from which a range of additional contextual effects can follow. However, whether those additional effects meet the criteria for being considered genuinely *poetic* in nature is slightly more complex.

All ostensive acts of communication convey a range of implicatures, all of which differ in terms of the *strength* with which they are said to be communicated (Sperber and Wilson 1995:199). Communicative strength is determined by the level of encouragement the reader is given for the derivation of a particular implicature or set of implicatures. The strongest implicatures are those which the audience can scarcely avoid recovering, and for the derivation of which the communicator takes full responsibility. The very weakest implicatures are those for which the audience must do a bit more contextual digging in order to uncover, and for the derivation of which the audience takes near total responsibility. Even with very weak implicatures the communicator still takes some responsibility for their derivation, since it is his or her act of ostensive communication which has made them relatively more salient within the audience's cognitive environment; however, such implicatures derive their weakness by the very fact that there is a range of alternative effects which would be derived prior to them since they function as more obvious interpretations of the communicator's intended import. This is not to say that an audience cannot deliberately go for a vaguer or communicatively weaker interpretation than would ordinarily be anticipated. In fact, this is exactly the way many readers are trained to read literary texts; that is, go for the most ambiguous, stubborn or obscure interpretation possible (Green 2001). However, weaker interpretations take the most processing effort to derive; therefore, in respect of the *communicative principle of relevance* (see section 2.1), communicators and

audiences alike tend to go for the easiest and most accessible interpretations possible, at least within canonical frames of utterance.

Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) argue that a *poetic effect* involves the peculiar effect of an utterance which derives most of its relevance through a wide array of *weak implicatures*. These weak implicatures do not constitute a fixed and determinate range of cognitive-pragmatic effects, but rather simultaneously convey a wide range of subtly different concepts and assumptions, which combine to create an overall impression, feeling or attitude. One could well question then, the likelihood of the deeper levels of perception and processing generated by short line-length leading to the derivation of poetic effects. In response to this challenge, it could be argued that although short line-length does not inevitably lead to the derivation of poetic effects across all cases – therefore, stipulating that it is not necessarily the case that there is something intrinsically *poetic* to the visuospatial design of short line-length – short line-length does lead to relatively deeper forms of perception and processing, which at least 'encourages' the reader to expand the context in relation to which the text's propositional content is processed to some degree.

In addition, and in relation to such challenges, further questions can be posed. For example, how wide ranging and communicatively weak in nature does the range of implicatures have to be in order to achieve an 'array' which attains *poetic* value? Are the criteria for the size and weakness of that range different for different readers; that is, is what is *poetic* (in weakly implicit terms) to one reader, decidedly *non-poetic* to another? How long does the perception have to take place for and how deep does the processing have to go (and effectively, how weak and wide-ranging do the ensuing implicatures have to be) in order to generate *poetic* levels of processing? In short, where are the boundaries to be drawn, and the cognitive-pragmatic parameters set, for the communication of *poetic effects* to be achieved?

Unfortunately, there simply is not enough scope to explore all these questions fully within the present thesis, but an overall answer might start by arguing that it depends upon whether you look at the communication of poetic effects within an absolute or relative sense. An absolute view of the phenomenon would envisage the existence of a communicative threshold, determined by range and weakness, which any set of implicatures would have to pass over or meet with in order to qualify as poetic in nature. A relative view of the phenomenon would see poetic effects and poetic communication as existing or functioning along a continuum or cline, in which case, since all ostensive stimuli communicate a range of implicatures to a range of different

degrees, all implicatures are at least to some extent *poetic* in nature. If we do look at poetic effects within this latter sense, then since short line-length does generate deeper levels of perception and processing, it does lead to the communication of implicatures which are at least to some extent relatively more poetic than their longer lined counterparts. In this case, the extent to which the reader explores context when forming his or her interpretation of the text would determine the level of poeticity achieved; that is, at least within the cognitive-pragmatic sense envisaged within relevance theory.

However, even when viewed in the former sense, in which case derived effects either achieve poetic status or not, short line-length could still lead to the derivation of poetic effects, because it could well make some readers explore context to an extremely lengthy degree, which would enable them to quite easily generate poetic effects. Other readers, however, may take it as less of a prompt to explore context to relatively deeper degrees, therefore leading to a comparatively shallower level of processing, and to a smaller and less *poetic* range of implicatures. Everyone's set of cognitive-pragmatic parameters for the generation of poetic effects is likely to be quite different, so it may completely depend upon the context of reading, as well as on the fact that some readers may be more preconditioned to go for weaker ranges of implicatures, and thus more susceptible to poetic lines of processing, than others.

Short line-length at least makes it more likely that these relatively more poetic levels of processing will take place. It is not the case that short line-length intrinsically generates such types of processing, but rather that it intrinsically leads to relatively 'deeper' levels of perception and processing which can potentially lead to wide arrays of weak implicatures, and thus to the derivation of poetic effects. However, these additional implicatures will be highly ad hoc and idiosyncratic in nature; that is, they will differ between readers and contexts of interpretation quite considerably.

However, the effect that short line-length has upon perception acts as a very broad-ranging and open-ended input to pragmatic processing. The input is generated along visuospatial lines and is, therefore, entirely perceptual in nature: it does not contribute anything of a linguistic nature – not even within a semantically vague or propositionally superfluous sense – to the text's logical structure or propositional structure; therefore, it does not encode information that can directly gain access to, and thus directly stimulate, further information stored within the linguistic module of the brain. The input that short line-length contributes to pragmatic processing works within a rudimentary perceptual, rather than linguistically encoded capacity. It functions as a basic perceptual trigger for the reader to process the text's linguistic content within a

relatively more contextually expansive light. The range of implicatures derived as a result, and therefore the level of communicative weakness, which determines whether it qualifies as genuinely poetic in nature, is down to the individual reader, and his or her own unique susceptibility for responding to the visuospatial peculiarity in such a way as to generate poetic effects. It also depends upon the context of interpretation i.e. literary text or plain prose; poem or novel; traditional or experimental poetic text; and so on. Therefore, the range of implicatures derived as a direct result of the use of short line-length will stem from a highly ad hoc and idiosyncratic range of encyclopaedic-contextual items, which will probably differ considerably from one individual reader to the next, therefore functioning upon a communicatively loose and impressionist basis. In the right circumstances then, short line-length may trigger the reader to explore his or her contextual resources in order to derive an array of weakly manifest concepts and assumptions, which seems to provide even the most banal and hackneyed of linguistic compositions with a vaguely indeterminate and peculiar ad hoc conceptual quality of a distinctly *poetic* nature.

The following section attempts to demonstrate the idea that short line-length may lead to the derivation of poetic effects in relation to a piece of text taken from a non-literary source. The extract in question is rearranged so that its constituent structure is unravelled over a relatively larger range of line structures of a much shorter length; that is, relative to the units of line-length pertaining to its original visuospatial presentation.

4.8. Poetic effects derived via short line-length

In section 4.4, parafoveal processing is defined as the ability of readers, whilst fixating on an individual word within a linguistic string, to pre-process the beginning letters (and sometimes the whole form) of the next parafoveally available word (Rayner 1998). It was also suggested that a text's visuospatial characteristics may fall within the range of elements able to be captured by such parafoveal viewing. With this in mind, one of the main ideas presented within section 4.5 is that during a conventional syntagmatic (left to right) reading procedure, the reader's parafoveal viewing of each line's up and coming endpoint acts to intensify perception/processing of the text's linguistic material, which falls post-onset of such parafoveal viewing. This parafoveal perception causes an awareness or anticipation of the inevitable (albeit temporary) break in the reader's perception of the text's lexical material. In response, perception of the text's content

pre-line break intensifies in order to generate an *optimal* level of *lexical* and *encyclopaedic activation*, in order to ensure that linguistic and contextual assimilation between the two lines is achieved as effectively as possible; that is, once the visuospatial transition from one line's endpoint to another line's start point has been undertaken.

Following on from this view, it can be argued that texts which utilise short line-length succeed in arranging a greater amount of their linguistic material within a proximal relation to the *optimal zone of lexical/encyclopaedic activation* in question; that is, when compared with texts which utilise relatively longer units of line-length. (28a.)[3], below, shows a brief section of text, which originates from a non-literary source, and which displays relatively longer units of line-length than a typical poetic text. In (28b.), the same section of text is rearranged into a series of lines of a much shorter nature. It was noted in section 4.5 that the use of short line-length triggers relatively deeper forms of perception of the text's fundamental lexical content, and thus relatively longer forms of activation of its corresponding lexical and encyclopaedic entries within the mind. It was also argued that the use of short line-length is a visuospatial phenomenon used within both literary and non-literary texts alike, and that the effects upon fixation times and levels of lexical/encyclopaedic activation may well be constant across all texts in which short line-length is a feature. However, it was also pointed out that it is only within specialised literary contexts that the visuospatial characteristics pertaining to short units of line-length are granted with an extra level of significance via the text's literary status that activates in those visuospatial characteristics a special level of procedural encoding, which instructs the reader to inferentially process the text's explicit content within a *non-spontaneous* and thus *poetic* fashion.

Therefore, the potential for *non-spontaneous* forms of inference, and thus the derivation of *poetic effects*, is fundamentally present within the visuospatial characteristics pertaining to any text which contains short line-length, but the procedural instruction for the reader to take advantage of the relatively longer lexical/encyclopaedic activation times, which short line-length naturally generates, is instilled or triggered via the text's specialised generic classification as literary in nature. As the famous experiments conducted by Culler (1975) and Fish (1980) both demonstrate however (see Chapter 1 of the present thesis), it is possible to simulate the type of specialised significance granted by a text's literary classification, and thus force the additional level of procedural encoding into a given text's visuospatial

characteristics, which then gets readers looking at the text with what Fish (1980:326) refers to as "poetry seeing-eyes"; that is, with a level of attention and focus which aims to bring out the indeterminacy which readers already 'know' to be there within the text's content (Fish 1980:327).

With such ideas in mind, the analysis that follows (28a.) and (28b.) below, aims to show how, once attended to in the specialised manner to which Fish (1980:326-327) refers, and thus bestowed with the specialised level of procedural encoding which is triggered by the text's holistic or macro-level classification (albeit in a 'simulated' way), changes to the text's visuospatial layout can lead to levels of lexical, and more importantly, encyclopaedic activation, which if taken advantage of within what Furlong (1996, 2014) refers to as a *non-spontaneous* inferential manner may lead to the generation of specialised *poetic effects* of a visuospatially triggered nature.

(27a.) AA Breakdown Cover doesn't just take care of your car; it gives you access to AA rewards – a great rewards programme that gives you lots of choice.

(27b.) AA Breakdown Cover
doesn't just take care
of your car;
it gives you
access
to AA rewards –
a great rewards
programme
that gives you
lots of choice.

The visuospatial arrangement in (27b.), which features a greater number of much shorter line units than the one used in (27a.), distributes a greater portion of the text's lexical content either directly within, or in a close relation to, the aforementioned *optimal zone of lexical/encyclopaedic activation*, which the last few sections have argued is caused by anticipation of the impending gap in perception/processing instigated by the visuospatial break occurring at each successive line ending. Following data obtained from a series of live eye tracking experiments conducted by Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) (see section 4.4), which suggests that perception of the text's lexical content increases somewhere near towards the penultimate word of a given line, we can clearly see how different visuospatial arrangements of the same linguistic material, such as those displayed within (27a.) and (27b.), have a direct effect upon how much of this content is arranged either pre- or post-onset of the point at which perception is suddenly

increased due to parafoveal viewing. A further element of this hypothesis is that different levels of perception inevitably cause different levels of lexical and encyclopaedic activation, and thus pragmatic processing as a result.

By using the notion that perception is at its highest point when reaching the penultimate word of any line, it can be estimated that the last two words constitute its *optimal zone of lexical/encyclopaedic activation*. With this notion in mind, it can be roughly assumed that in (27a.) only 14.29% of the text's total linguistic material is arranged within this optimal zone. This means that very little of the text's linguistically encoded content receives relatively prolonged or deeper levels of processing, at least in the manner described within the present thesis. On the other hand, in (27b.), 64.29% of the linguistic material is arranged in relation to the aforementioned optimal zone, which means that a much larger proportion of the text is perceived and processed to a relatively deeper degree/level. The rearranged perceptual aspect achieved in (27b.) works in a rudimentary foregrounding capacity; that is, it functions almost as a magnifying device for perception, which causes the reader to zoom-in on certain elements of the text to relatively greater degrees, than is achieved in the case of (27a.). The distinct perceptual encoding of the short line-length in (27b.) prompts the reader to engage in closer inspection of a greater range of linguistic material, which leads to lengthier lexical and encyclopaedic activation as a result. This process causes the text's explicit content to undergo a more contextually expansive form of pragmatic processing, from which an array of additional cognitive effects of a relatively weaker implicit nature can be achieved. Therefore, the visuospatial layout contributes a peculiar perceptual element to our fundamental representation of the text's content, which triggers relatively weaker forms of interpretation to follow.

As mentioned within the last section, the range and relative *weakness* of these additional cognitive effects will be determined upon an extremely ad hoc and idiosyncratic basis, which will vary greatly between different contexts of interpretation, and between individual readers. The inputs to pragmatic processing constituted by short line-length encourage the reader to expand the context in relation to which he or she processes the text's linguistically encoded content, to at least some degree. For some readers, this could be to a shallow and determinate level, which involves relatively large increases to the salience of a fairly small and fixed range of concepts and assumptions within their cognitive environments. A range of further cognitive effects of an implicit nature will undoubtedly follow as a result, but whether this range is wide ranging or

weak enough to constitute the necessary cognitive-pragmatic requirements to be considered genuinely *poetic* in nature is, as was discussed within the previous section, highly debatable.

For other readers, however, the effects of this input may be of a far more vague and indeterminate nature, resulting in very slight increases to the salience of a wide range of concepts and assumptions within his or her cognitive environment. These concepts and assumptions would then combine to form an overall impression, feeling, or attitude, which links in a very loose and indeterminate sense to the text's explicit-propositional content. Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) describe such an effect as *poetic* in nature. The impressionistic nature of the extra effects largely overshadows the explicit message conveyed by the text's linguistic content, which itself becomes an almost secondary element of the text's cognitive-pragmatic effect, and thus communicational force. It could well be the case that the effect is only able to be registered spontaneously, when the reader is experiencing the poem in the moment, as it were; the effect, therefore, will be completely lost within a non-spontaneous state of reflection (Sperber and Wilson 1995:220). The level of further pragmatic processing, and thus relative range and weakness of the resulting cognitive effects, are highly variable and probabilistic in nature, because the short line-length does not contribute anything to the text's linguistically encoded content or further explicature – not even in a semantically vague or propositionally superfluous sense – therefore, the short line-length invites further pragmatic processing of a completely linguistically unguided nature. Consequently, the reader becomes fully responsible for the route that this further processing takes. However, it may be this highly probabilistic and linguistically unguided aspect of short line-length as an input to pragmatic processing, which, in the correct circumstances, provides the optimal cognitive-pragmatic conditions for the derivation of *poetic effects*. The analysis of (27b.) which follows is an attempt to describe the types of effects that may follow when short line-length constitutes this type of input to pragmatic processing.

For example, in (27b.), the placing of the noun phrase, "AA Breakdown cover", upon its own individual line causes most of the phrase's linguistic content to fall within the *optimal zone of lexical/encyclopaedic activation*. This then leads to lengthier perception of those items, which leads to increased activation of their lexical and encyclopaedic entries at a further cognitive level. On the other hand, in (27a.), none of this lexical content falls within this region, thus receiving a much shallower level of processing as a result. The extra perception and processing of these items, which is caused

by the visuospatial arrangement in (27b.), may give rise to a whole range of implicatures that are not derived in relation to the text's original visuospatial format. For instance, concepts and assumptions relating to the actual process or nature of a real-life breakdown (e.g. common causes of a breakdown, being stranded, being in a situation of danger, etc.); specific breakdowns which readers may have actually experienced; emergencies of other natures (involving vehicles and those of a more general type) that readers have either experienced or are able to consider hypothetically (and perhaps even the idea of being covered, or not being covered, against such potential breakdowns/accidents); may all become marginally more salient as a direct result of the newly arranged visuospatial form of the text. These marginally more salient conceptual features may then connect inferentially with certain aspects of the text's explicit content to derive an array of additional implicatures, which are made weakly manifest via the perceptual quirkiness of the text's visuospatial design.

A potential challenge to this idea could well be that the same range of further implicatures are derivable from the noun phrase in respect of the visuospatial arrangement in (27a.), which of course they are. However, the level of increased perception generated by the short line-length that acts as an input to further pragmatic processing which encourages the reader to derive the implicatures in question is missing from the visuospatial arrangement displayed within (27a.). The reader is less likely to draw these additional effects because his or her perception is less drawn to the linguistic items and thus conceptual material from which their derivation is achieved. The reader's attention is more likely to be drawn to the idea of AA Breakdown Cover giving you access to the AA rewards system, rather than to the idea or nature of Breakdown Cover (or the general sense of these linguistic items) in and of itself. Therefore, the wider implications of what Breakdown Cover means to the individual reader, in and of itself (in terms of his/her own unique background of contextual knowledge), are more likely to be entertained in the case of (27b.) because the short line structure brings renewed interest or focus to the linguistic items which provide access to their derivation.

In addition, the idea that the AA is a caring company may be brought to the forefront of our attention as a direct result of the short line structure utilised within the second line. From this idea, a relatively wider and weaker range of implicatures to do with the AA's general trustworthiness, reliability and honesty as a company are also made marginally more manifest within the reader's wider cognitive environment. Again, none of these concepts or assumptions is activated to a greater or lesser degree than any of the others within the total range. This helps to communicate an overall

feeling or impression which is reminiscent of a wide range of related concepts to do with trustworthiness and the like, rather than a distinct and determinate set of propositional values. Furthermore, the short line structure used in lines four and nine brings deeper focus to the idea of the AA "giving you" something, which gives rise to further implicatures relating to the idea of providing a service, doing someone a favour, going out of your way for someone, and so on. Such implicatures could then give rise to further implicatures of an even weaker nature to do with generousness, value for money, and so on.

Another similar effect is achieved in relation to line seven, in which the reader's perception is drawn to the adjective "great" which allows the reader to focus on the idea of *greatness* separately and in greater detail before moving on to the main part of the assertion (i.e. that the AA offers a great rewards programme). The extra focus given to the concept of *greatness* will then give rise to an additional range of weak implicatures to do with skilfulness, aptitude, and general positivity. Again, a potential challenge against this idea could be that these effects are also derivable from the arrangement used within (27a.); and of course, they may well be. However, their derivation is far more likely generated because of the input to pragmatic processing provided by the visuospatial design utilised within (27a.).

Short line-length then, can be viewed as a form of *weakly implicit communication*, which demands a relatively higher level of basic perceptual, and deeper inferential processing effort, that gives rise to a relatively wider and weaker range of implicatures. Furthermore, it can be argued that the increased processing effort is offset due to the derivation of a relatively higher contextual yield, thus maintaining a state of *optimal relevance* (see 2.1).

The central tenet of this hypothesis is that short line-length contributes a peculiar perceptual element to our fundamental representation of the text's content, which triggers relatively deeper forms of processing that may well lead to the generation of *poetic effects* for certain readers. The following section temporarily leaves aside this hypothesis and instead seeks further validation for the second hypothesis expressed within section 4.6, which states that *line divisions* can be used to intentionally disrupt how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page, thereby deriving *poetic effects* at the level of *explicature-construction*.

4.9. Poetic effects derived via line divisions

Section 4.6 states that line divisions, when placed at particular points within a given text's syntactic structure, can encourage readers to consider the text's semantic content within a relatively more linguistically and propositionally indeterminate, and therefore, *poetic* light. Such a phenomenon involves the text's visuospatial form achieving *poetic effects* through an array of weak *explicatures*. This section aims to provide a brief demonstration of this idea.

The text in (28.), below, is a modified version of the opening line of text presented within (27a.) in section 4.8. It has been modified so that the line division deliberately falls at a point within the text, whereby the change to the reader's visuospatial perception of the text's developing syntactic and logical form may well instigate what Furlong (1996, 2014) refers to as *non-spontaneous* forms of inference, and thus the derivation of specialised *poetic effects* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222):

(28.) AA Breakdown Cover doesn't just take care of
your car;

The opening line ends at a point in which the text's constituent syntactic structure is logically marked at some underlying conceptual level as requiring further semantic and grammatical complementation; that is, the subject ("AA Breakdown Cover") and verb ("doesn't just take care of") combination does not form a semantically and grammatically independent unit in and of itself. A direct object indicating the thing which is effectively taken care of is required in order for such independence to be achieved. The object which complements the verb turns out to be "your car", which we are given access to at the very beginning of the following line. However, the placing of the line division between verb and object introduces a momentary gap into our perception/construction of the text's developing syntactic and logical form, which introduces a momentary sense of indeterminacy into further inferential development of the text's explicit-propositional content. The momentarily incomplete status of the text's structure at the line division places the reader within a temporary state of cognitive suspense regarding how the text's logical and propositional structure is likely to 'pan-out', as it were, beyond the line division in question. Of course, the reader needs only to visuospatially traverse over to the start point of the following line in order to break free from this state of suspense. However, this process undoubtedly takes time, during which a momentary gap is experienced within the reader's perception and processing of the text's incrementally developing constituent structure, during which inference can make

tentative estimations as to the possible ways that the text's logical form and propositional content are likely to develop as the text unfolds beyond the line division.

The duration of this gap, and thus the amount of provisional inferential development achieved, depends upon the extent to which the individual reader perceives the designed separation of integral syntactic units upon the page, brought about by the visuospatial gap that the line division generates, as an intentionally supplied stylistic element, which is capable of providing some level of input to pragmatic processing and thus generating further cognitive effects in its own right. Some readers may fail to interpret the line division in this way at all, instead skirting across to the following line's start point quite quickly, and thus leaving little, if any, scope for such further lines of processing. In this case, the input to pragmatic processing generated by the line division would probably not achieve a level of inference, and thus a range of preliminary propositional forms, *weak* enough to be considered properly *poetic* in nature. Others though, may interpret the visuospatial disruption of syntax generated by the line divisions as a kind of visuospatial equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect', which warrants a considerable degree of further inferential processing, and thus a distinct communicational 'reward', primarily at an explicit-propositional level. In the case of (28.), this 'reward' will manifest itself as a wide array of *non-spontaneously* derived *weak explicatures* that function as anticipatory-hypothetical extensions of the opening line's momentarily incomplete semantic and grammatical status.

Furthermore, although the writer is essentially making it more difficult for the reader to perceive and construct a logical blueprint for the text's more pragmatically developed conceptual form, the fragmentation achieved by the line division gives rise to a *wider* and *weaker*, and thus more *poetic*, array of propositional forms; therefore, the increased processing effort is offset due to the higher propositional derivation, thus maintaining a state of *optimal relevance* (see 2.1).

The key thing to note with the poetic effect generated visuospatially in respect of the line division utilised within (28.), is that the weak propositions that are derived as a result of the overall process are *explicit* in nature (see Sperber and Wilson 1995:182). They are developments of the logical form encoded by the text, as perceived within a momentarily incomplete and fragmentary light, pre-line division. They are not separately derived sets of implicated effects, which function independently of the text's main explicit-propositional content. Therefore, the poetic effects achieved in this manner communicate their poetic quality at the pragmatic level of *explicature* rather than *implicature*.

Due to limited space, the actual content of the poetic effects generated in relation to the visuospatial peculiarity in (28.) will not be covered in this section. Instead, the aim of the section has been to discuss the 'process' by which the deliberate placement of line divisions within the text might lead to derivation of poetic effects for certain readers. However, it can be argued that just like with poetic effects generated linguistically, such as in the case of "My childhood days are gone, gone" (discussed at length within section 2.6), the reader interprets the syntactic and logical gap generated by the line division as a trigger to consider the line's linguistically encoded content in relation to a relatively wider range of encyclopaedic-contextual material than he or she would have otherwise done had the line's logical form been presented within a less visuospatially fragmented manner, which gives rise to an additional array of weak propositional forms. These propositional forms combine to create a common impression, which succeeds in communicating a sense of affective mutuality between writer and reader (Sperber and Wilson 1995:224).

4.10. Hypotheses moving forward

As discussed at length within section 2.6, Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) posit the term *poetic effect* for the peculiar effect of an utterance which achieves most of its *relevance* through a wide range of *weak implicatures*. Crucially, the input to pragmatic processing which prompts the derivation of a *poetic effect* is achieved via some stylistically pronounced linguistic feature (e.g. a repeated lexical item, a peculiar syntactic form, a piece of alliteration and so on; for further discussion, see Pilkington 2000); however, what has never been explored to any great extent within the framework of relevance theory is the idea that *poetic effects* can be generated by peculiar aspects of visuospatial form.

With this in mind, both short line-length and line divisions introduce a peculiar perceptual element into the reader's live construction and representation of the text's logical form and propositional content, which are both capable of generating *poetic effects* in their own right. However, during each phenomenon something different is happening, both in terms of how the *poetic effects* are triggered at a rudimentary visuospatial level, and in terms of how the *poetic effects* are represented within a further cognitive-pragmatic manifestation. The basic argument moving forwards is that short line-length creates *poetic effects* because of the impact that its visuospatial brevity has upon the reader's inferential determination of the text's wider contextual implications. On the other hand, line divisions can be used to intentionally disrupt how the text's

constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page, which acts as a kind of visuospatial equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect' that warrants a considerable degree of further inferential processing which provides a distinct communicational 'reward' primarily at an explicit-propositional level.

Both ideas have been explored to some degree throughout the last three sections of the current chapter. In the next two chapters, both ideas will be explored further in relation to three separate texts. The poetic effects of line-length will be discussed in relation to Tom Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' throughout sections 5.3-5.4 and in relation to Andrew Crozier's (1999:43) 'Driftwood and' Seacoal in section 6.2. The poetic effects of line divisions will be discussed in relation to William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) 'This Is Just to Say' during sections 5.5-5.8, and in relation to 'Driftwood and Seacoal' within section 6.3[4].

Notes to Chapter 4

1. Carston (2010c:297-298) sets out two broad positions on the nature of metaphor-construction: the proposition view (Bergmann 1982; Sperber and Wison 1986b, 2008; Searle 1993; Glucksberg 2001; Carston 2002a; Hills 1997; Stern 2001; Wearing 2006) and the image view (Davidson 1978/1984; Black 1979; Levin 1993; Moran 1989; Reimer 2001; Camp 2008). As reported in Carston (2010c:298), Davies (1982) cites Davidson (1978/1984) to be the main advocate of the image approach. According to Davidson, metaphor evokes certain responses, in particular, mental images, rather than communicates a cognitive content, thus bringing to our attention "aspects of the topic that we might not otherwise notice, by provoking us or nudging us to 'see' the topic in a new or unusual way" (Carston 2010c:298). In processing 'Robert is a bulldozer', the image approach might argue that we picture Robert smashing into objects and people in a particularly destructive manner, or even imagine him as a half human, half machinelike creature. Exponents of the proposition view maintain that a speaker who uses language metaphorically may indirectly communicate a propositional content (Carston 2010c:298). Carston (2010c:299) notes that the overall stance often shared by the proposition theorists is that this content is communicated indirectly, as an implicature (or implicatures) of the metaphorical utterance, and that the proposition literally expressed is merely a vehicle through

which the implicated speaker-meaning is communicated. Furthermore, all such proponents of the propositional approach acknowledge what Carston (2010c:299) refers to as the "rich open-endedness of metaphoric interpretation, the indeterminacy of the speaker's intention […] and the indefinite range of the implications that might be recovered". In this sense, the proposition approach may seem to resemble Davidson's position. However, Davidson (1978/1984:262-263) himself comments that much of what a metaphor calls to our attention is non-propositional in nature and that the literal content of a metaphor evokes not a set of propositional concepts that combine to form a part linguistically-encoded and part pragmatically-enriched cognitive-content, but rather an image or set of images through which we envisage one thing as another (e.g. Robert as a bulldozer) (Carston 2010c:299).

2. It should be noted that Carston posits a secondary processing strategy for unusual or extended metaphors, during which the expression's linguistically encoded concepts are related to a close enough extent that they semantically prime and reinforce each other, considerably raising activation levels and prompting "a slower, more global appraisal of the literal meaning of the whole" that takes over from any process of metaphorical adjustment of concepts (Carston 2010c:297; for further discussion see Carston and Wearing 2011; Banks 2018:134-135; Chesters 2018).

3. The text was part of some literature I received in 2016 when becoming a member of the renowned UK breakdown cover provider known as the AA (or Automobile Association). It was selected entirely at random; therefore, any small extract of text, from any source, would have likely sufficed for the experiment conducted within this section of the chapter.

4. For Tom Raworth's (1999:199-202), 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion', see Appendix, *Figure 1*; for William Carlos Williams's (1986:372), 'This Is Just to Say', see section 5.7; for Andrew Crozier's (1999:43), 'Drift-wood and Seacoal', see Appendix, *Figure 3*.

5. Poetic analysis: 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion'

5.1. Introduction

According to Forceville (2014:2), although claiming to hold for all forms of communication, relevance theory has mainly been applied to its spoken, verbal varieties. A similar trend also applies with uses of the relevance-theoretic model aimed specifically at explaining *poetic* forms of communication. For instance, both Sperber and Wilson (1995) in their original outline, and Pilkington (2000) in his comprehensive appraisal of the *poetic effects* phenomenon, use examples of poetic effects which are triggered through the use of stylistically pronounced elements of linguistic form, such as: repeated lexical items, peculiar syntactic arrangements, pieces of alliteration, and so on. However, the present thesis argues that poetic effects are also capable of being derived from stylistic features which are of a more rudimentary perceptual nature: for example, through visuospatial elements, such as short units of line-length and actual line divisions – an idea which is yet to be explored at length within the framework of relevance theory.

The approach to *poetic effects* adopted within the present thesis then could be described as *multimodal* in nature. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996:183) define multimodal texts as those "whose meanings are realized through more than one semiotic mode". Although arriving at a straightforward definition for the concept of 'mode' often proves difficult (for a review of the controversy surrounding the notion of 'mode', in reference to the related literature in this area, see Gibbons 2012:8-11), Forceville (2014:1) cites the following as potentially contributing to the list of possible modes: written language, spoken language, visuals, music, sound, gestures, olfaction, and touch. Furthermore, Gibbons (2012:2) (although referring specifically to the study of novels) includes "Unusual textual layouts and page design" in the list of formal features that consistently appear in multimodal types of literary text.

Consequently, it can be observed that many poetic texts, although mostly operating within the written language mode, offer a level of meaning of a non-arbitrary type through their visuospatial design, thus presenting an interesting intermediary case, in which the boundary between the written and visual modes is blurred. Many poets

play around with the visuospatial characteristics of their texts, in order to generate meaning of a motivated rather than arbitrary nature. It was demonstrated in section 3.4 of the present thesis, in relation to cummings's (1991:396) highly irregular poetic composition, 'r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r', how such tactics of motivated visual design introduce a multimodal character to poetic textual structures. This character transcends the prototypical symbolic function of language and enters into the non-arbitrary realms of index and icon, in which the material forms of words point to the nature of, or represent through similarity, the real-world entities which they denote (Pierce 1932; see Sebeok 1994:11 for an in depth account of Pierce's semiological approach; see also Ekman and Friesen 1969).

Therefore, the present thesis focuses on how the rudimentary perceptual information pertaining to short line-length and line divisions, which functions within the visual mode, can affect the representation and further pragmatic adjustment of the more specialised linguistic information pertaining to the written forms of words, which functions within the written language mode. The main hypothesis is that texts which employ certain stylistically pronounced elements of visuospatial form (such as short units of line-length, or the tactical use of line divisions) can lead to a complex textual amalgam of the visual and written language modes, therefore triggering the derivation of a range of propositional forms and contextual effects (many of a weakly explicit/implicit, and therefore *poetic* nature), which would not have been derived had the texts been arranged within a less perceptually and pragmatically impactful manner.

This idea will form the basis for the rest of the textual analysis that follows within the remaining three chapters. However, before discussing these texts to any great depth, a brief overview of the current chapter is necessary in order to provide a general picture of its overall aims. The main objective of the chapter is to further explore the ideas presented within hypothesis 1 (see section 4.5) and hypothesis 2 (see section 4.6) in relation to two visuospatially distinct poetic texts. Hypothesis 1 states that short line-length can create *poetic effects* because of the impact that the visuospatial brevity of short line-length has upon the reader's inferential determination of the text's wider contextual implications. Hypothesis 2 posits the idea that line divisions can be used to intentionally disrupt how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page, which acts as a kind of visuospatial equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect' that warrants a considerable degree of further inferential processing and provides a distinct communicational 'reward', primarily at an explicit-propositional level. Both of these ideas will be further explored throughout this chapter: in sections 5.3-5.4,

hypothesis 1 will be discussed in relation to Tom Raworth's (1999:199-202) highly paratactic text, 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' (see Appendix, *Figure 1*, for a scanned version of the full text); in section 5.5-5.8, hypothesis 2 will be discussed in relation to William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) pithy and metapoetic text, 'This Is Just to Say' (see section 5.7 for the full text). The textual analysis conducted throughout this chapter will lead to an enriched understanding of the theoretical model posited within the present thesis which aims to explain how the distinct visuospatial characteristics of a text can impact upon the mental construction, and further pragmatic enrichment, of its linguistically encoded content.

5.2. Poems chosen for analysis and rationale

The poems chosen for analysis (over Chapters 5 and 6), along with the order in which they will be discussed, are given below:

- Tom Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' (see sections 5.3-5.4);
- William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) 'This Is Just to Say' (see sections 5.5-5.8);
- Andrew Crozier's (1999:43) 'Driftwood and Seacoal' (see Chapter 6).

Raworth's and Crozier's texts are included in the anthology, *Other: British and Irish Poetry since 1970*. The anthology is edited by Richard Caddel and Peter Quartermain (1999), who were key figures in the *British Poetry Revival*: a somewhat clandestine poetic movement that took place in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. The two poems from this anthology are difficult postmodernist texts, which the editors of the anthology argue "disrupt [the reader's] automatic response to language by making language itself the source of experience in the poem" (Caddel and Quartermain, 1999:xxvii). These poems stand in opposition to typical mainstream poetic texts, since they provide a *more* active reading experience, and to the untrained, non-expert reader may appear "fragmented and incomplete", or be unsatisfying because they shun "reaching conclusions or adumbrating a wholeness of vision" (Caddel and Quartermain, 1999:xx). Therefore, both Raworth's and Crozier's textual forms could be said to display what Terblanche (2004) refers to as the conventional postmodernist predisposition for emphasising "the abyss between text and reference, which erases the referent and confines language to the funhouse" (Terblanche 2004:243; see also Hurst 2007:139). Rotella (1998:67) writes that Raworth's text contains "a sonic joy-ride of one- to three-

word lines that bristle with pixilated narrative". Elsewhere, Zaleski (2000:73) describes Raworth's language as being composed of a series of "paratactically split-screened moments", for example: "slow/ low/ thump/ long/ flame/ dry/ flash bur/ just/ move/ tree browns/ to south/ our horse/ white/ no trace/ of action/ in memory/ and fear"; and refers to his varied use of "extreme forms". The notion of extreme forms is perhaps the defining concept which links all three texts in the chosen dataset – the analysis of which aims to provide rich insights into both the relevance theory literary-pragmatics programme and the formal and cognitive complexities of aesthetic experience at large. As a prose poem, Andrew Crozier's (1999:43) 'Driftwood and Seacoal' directly contrasts with the other poems chosen for discussion. The visuospatial characteristics of prose poetry, in addition to how such characteristics impact upon the central hypotheses of the present thesis, will be discussed in more detail within section 6.2 (for Crozier's full poem, see *Figure 3* of the Appendix).

The other poem selected, 'This Is Just to Say', was written by William Carlos Williams in 1934 during the Modernist literary era. Unlike the other texts selected for analysis, it has most certainly taken its place within the literary canon; testament to this is the amount of critical responses to the poem compared to the other two. According to Atashi (2016:54), Williams's "involvement in and fascination with the ordinary life" is clear from the poetics on offer within this text, as it could be argued that the poem mimics a mundane note left somewhere to be discovered by a friend or loved one, or that it takes the form of a found poem. The text fits with Williams's insistence on "simple understandable poetry" (Atashi 2016:55); it is perhaps for this reason that the imagery within the poem is decidedly precise and clear, and the language sharp and succinct. Such qualities are indicative of Williams's preoccupation for renouncing "poetic diction in favor of the unpoetic" (Atashi 2016:54), thus for some critics setting him apart from other poets who adopt "god-like vantage points" (Atashi 2016:54; see also Breslin 1967)[1].

In terms of the subject-matter, some critics view the poem as a serious inquiry into the nature of forgiveness; more often though others espy the playful sensuality of a long-standing couple (Michaelson 2008:95). A particularly radical interpretation of the poem is offered by Fisher-Wirth (1996), who suggests that the poem is not about sensuality but rather about sexuality devoid of love. Michaelson (2008:96) continues with this line of interpretation when arguing that the poem "has more depth and beauty if one recognizes the sexual symbolism of the plums":

> In my view, the poem is about sex in a loving, long-term relationship. The casualness of the phrase, "This Is Just to Say," is a charming, light segue into the man's sharing of his deep and loving feelings for the woman. The man had sex the night before with his beloved; her "plums" were luscious. Plums are soft, juicy, and sweet. They conjure up the image of her area of sexual excitement (Michaelson 2008:96).

Atashi (2016:62), on the other hand, focuses on Williams's fascination with everyday objects, many of them categorized as the "pure products of America," such as refrigerators and automobiles. This fascination gives rise to an ideological significance in 'This Is Just to Say', which relates to the mass production and consumer culture of post-First World War America:

> After the First World War, widespread use of electricity and mass production of technological house appliances, like refrigerator, naturally brought about a change of eating habits in the American people. The coldness of the plum in the poem is a luxury of modernism provided by the icebox. The poem ends with the adjective "cold" as if the final confession and justification of the speaker's transgression is due to the irresistible function of the electronic device—the icebox—and not to the natural sweetness of the plum itself. The pleasure provided by the machine overtakes the pleasure provided by the natural fruit (Atashi 2016:62).

However, despite such artistic motivations, in the end, it is the ability to generate poetic effects through a stylistically distinct visuospatial design, rather than through linguistically dense textual features, which makes this poem apt for discussion within the present thesis. The poem stands as an artistic experiment, coincidentally demonstrating the pragmatically indeterminate and thus decidedly *poetic* nature of even the most banal and prosaic of linguistic arrangements.

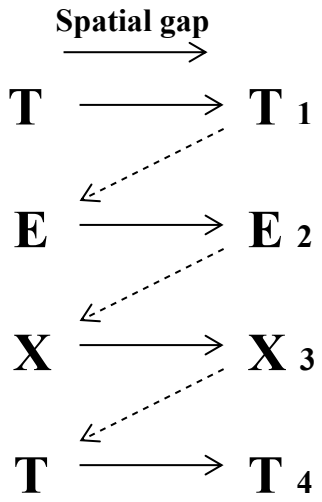
Williams's poem will be explored further in relation to hypothesis 2 (see section 4.6) during sections 5.5-5.8 of the present thesis. The next section, however, will consider the general visuospatial complexity of Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion', before the hypothesis pertaining to the cognitive-pragmatic effects of short line-length (see section 4.5 and sections 4.7-4.8) will be discussed further in relation to various extracts from Raworth's text in section 5.4.

5.3. The poetic effect of visuospatial text fragmentation

As stated within section 5.2, this section will consider the general visuospatial complexity of Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone

Distortion' (see Appendix, *Figure 1*, for a scanned version of the full text). The text makes use of a centrally placed spatial gap, running right through the text and making available multiple syntagmatic progressions, which the reader can choose from when navigating his or her path through the poem, thus encouraging multiple constructions of the text's propositional content. The various syntagmatic progressions that can be taken through this poem are shown below in diagrams (29-31.):

(29.) **Progression 1**



This first progression demonstrates the conventional reading strategy that English language users adopt upon a first reading of any text; that is, start with the initial line at the top of the text, scan lexical content from left to right, and move through lines contiguously until the entire text has been scanned in this fashion. The large, bold, capitalized text represents the actual words of the poem; the arrows represent the direction that the syntagmatic progression takes; and the small, bold numbers on the furthest right side of the diagram represent divisions between lines. The alternation between arrows with solid lines and ones with dashed lines is done merely for visual clarity, rather than for making a particular theoretical point. Read in this way, the reader will perceive the text's linguistic material as being situated over a particularly fragmented visuospatial context. This context sometimes consists of single words, which are separated by the large visuospatial gap running right through the poem, thus implying a sense of lexical and conceptual disparity in relation to any of the neighbouring items within the text's syntagmatic progression. Due to this spatial gap, if the reader progresses through the poem in the manner demonstrated in (29.), then in terms of page-space each line could be considered to be relatively long. However, in

terms of lexical content each line could be described as relatively short, sometimes consisting of only two words.

Take for example the opening line of the poem:

slow clear

Lines can be termed as short or long due to the number of words they contain, the space they take up on the page, or both of these things. If read according to **Progression 1**, the text displays lines which are considered long because of the relatively large spaces that relatively small sets of words are made to take up on the page. The spatial gap imposed between the two lexical items of the opening line (and indeed all the lines of the text) causes a slower progression through the text than would have otherwise been the case had the words been arranged directly next to one another. Although visuospatially speaking the lines can be described as relatively long, the space in fact provides longer forms of lexical and encyclopaedic activation to be triggered in relation to the text's linguistically encoded content. However, this effect is achieved at a rudimentary perceptual, rather than complex linguistic level. The reader's parafoveal viewing of the spatial gap triggers longer fixation times in relation to the text's linguistic material falling post-onset of this parafoveal viewing. The process works in the same way to the one that research discussed within section 4.4 by Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014) suggests occurs towards the endpoint of any conventional poetic line that lacks the kind of pronounced visuospatial gap as the one featured within Raworth's text. When experienced within the context of a complex poetic text, readers take the longer forms of perception and increased lexical/encyclopaedic activation generated by the text's fragmented visuospatial structure as procedural prompts (albeit in a rudimentary perceptual, rather than complex linguistic sense) to interpret the text within a *non-spontaneous* light (Furlong 1996, 2014). This procedure involves processing the text's linguistically encoded content in relation to a wide range of conceptual items stored within encyclopaedic-context in a relatively unguided and often highly imaginative manner. The process often leads to the derivation of wide arrays of *weak* cognitive effects deemed *poetic* within the framework of relevance theory.

Given the linguistically sparse and thus propositionally indeterminate nature of Raworth's opening line (given above), such *non-spontaneous* levels of processing could give rise to cognitive effects which are inferentially derived in relation to material relating to the opening line's linguistically encoded content in conjunction with explicit

material encoded within the text's title, thus producing a wide array of *weak cognitive effects* which are to some extent captured by the following set of implicit statements:

- Time is a process which passes by slowly;
- Time is a long and drawn out process;
- Time is clear;
- Time is simple;
- Time lacks form and detail;
- Time is a sparsely structured entity;
- Time is indeterminate/vague/impressionistic;
- Time is made up of fragments;
- Time is a fractured process;
- Time is broken;
- Time is mysterious/puzzling/enigmatic/confusing.

Of course, the process of *non-spontaneously* interpreting any text is a highly imaginative and thus largely unguided one, in which the major share of the responsibility for the type of contextual exploration produced is handed over to the reader. Consequently, the derived results of this level of "sustained" (Clark 2009:183) and "exhaustive" (Furlong 2014:78) inferential processing of the text's explicit material are perhaps often highly ad hoc and variable in nature; that is, when viewed across different readers, and thus different contexts of interpretation. Nevertheless, the above range serves as a rough guide to the types of *weak* cognitive effects perhaps available, when prompted by the text's distinct visuospatial characteristics to delve into the *non-spontaneous* and thus *poetic* realms of literary interpretation in relation to this portion of the text.

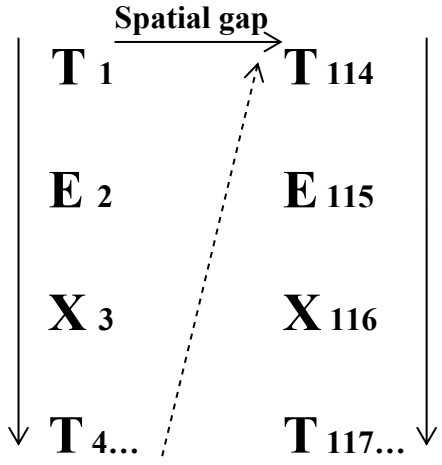
Therefore, rather than functioning as mere guides or signposts for perception, elements of visuospatial form (such as short units of line-length and large spatial gaps) can act as forms of ostensive stimuli, in their own right, which can prompt readers to derive additional cognitive effects. Although this process requires readers to expend an increased level of processing effort, a state of *optimal relevance* is maintained due to a relative increase in the range of cognitive-pragmatic effects derived as a result. The idea that *poetic effects* can be triggered by peculiar items of *linguistic form* is nothing new, but the idea that elements of visuospatial form (e.g. spatial gaps, line-length, and so on)

may also achieve a range of weakly communicated cognitive effects offers a new aspect to Sperber and Wilson's (1995:222) *poetic effects* principle.

Before continuing with the analysis of Raworth's text, a potential criticism of the approach adopted within this section should be addressed. This criticism is based upon the idea that Raworth's choice of textual arrangement is so unconventional that it in fact fails to be perceived as being arranged onto the page into line-like structures by some readers. The idea arises from the notion that all readers likely have a set of implicit parameters by which they gage their expectations of what is considered a permissible level of textual fragmentation and what essentially constitutes a 'line' of text. Perhaps there is a point for some readers, at which levels of text-formation become so disjointed that the various fragments of language, which make up the poem, fall below an implicitly judged, yet decisive, minimum visuospatial level, at which point the textual units cease to qualify as 'lines'. However, this level likely varies considerably across different readers, which means that some readers might process the textual units as lines, whilst others may not. Therefore, although this method of interpretation is a realistic possibility, it does not overrule or debunk the hypothesis presently under discussion. It merely points out the fact that complex literary texts are capable of being read and interpreted in a number of different ways. The hypothesis presently under discussion works for a range of syntagmatic progressions through the text and explains how *poetic effects* are able to be derived when the reader perceives the text as consisting of very small/short line units.

A further way of visuospatially progressing through the text is demonstrated below in diagram (30.):

(30.) **Progression 2**



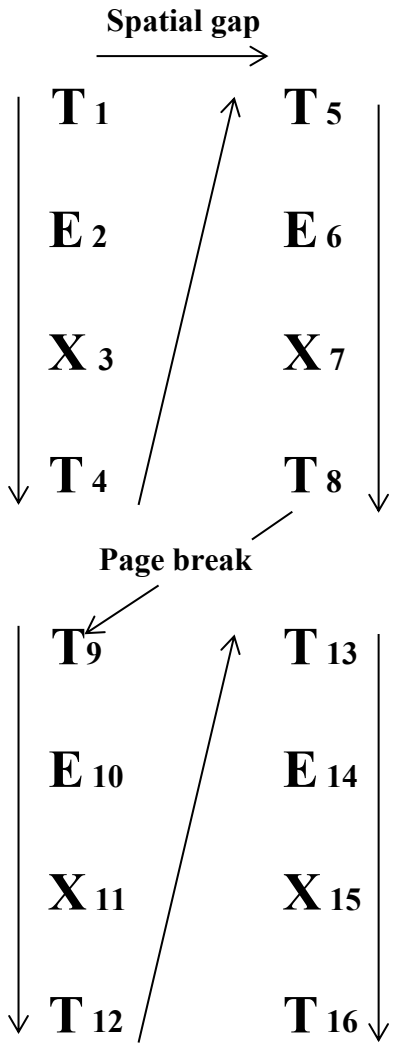
The large, bold, capitalized text, running vertically through the diagram, represents the actual words of the poem. The small numbers to the right of this text represent the line numbers, and the longest arrows (both solid and dotted lines) represent the reader's progression through the poem. The shortest arrow at the top of the diagram demonstrates the relatively large spatial gap in between the two columns of text. This diagram represents the fact that Raworth's poem can be read as being one syntagmatic progression, which is organized visuospatially as two overlapping columns of text (in terms of on the page). One column runs on the left-hand-side of the pages onto which this poem is printed, and one column runs on the right of those pages. The reader proceeds through the poem, reading vertically through the column of text on the left of the page, until he or she reaches the last item within that column on the last page onto which it is printed; within *Other* (Caddel and Quartermain 1999) this would be "reflection". The reader then goes back to the first page onto which the beginning of the text is printed and progresses with his or her reading by beginning with the first item of the right-hand-side column, which is the word "clear". The reader proceeds through the poem, reading vertically through the right-hand column printed onto each successive page, until he or she reaches the last items within that column on the last page onto which it is printed; within *Other*, this would be "in waves".

A similar progression is also possible, as shown in diagram (31.), below. The progression involves the reader zigzagging from the bottom of the left-hand column of text on one page to the top of the right-hand column of text located on the same page, and when reaching the bottom of this column of text turning the page and beginning with the lexical items at the top of the left-hand column of text on that subsequent page. It should be noted that the diagram in (31.) does not capture this process in full, but merely serves as a general representation of the overall scanning procedure pertaining to **Progression 3**. A fuller understanding of where exactly the reader is prompted to make each zigzag across Raworth's actual poem can be ascertained from viewing the scanned version of the poem in the Appendix (see *Figure 1*).

Therefore, **Progression 2** involves one large zigzag which covers the whole of the text, whereas **Progression 3** involves multiple zigzags which are determined by text falling across multiple pages at varying intervals. The exact points from which these zigzags take place are of course determined by the positions that different editors choose to start the poem off from upon the page. This would create variation in respect of how the text is distributed across the total range of pages that it takes up, which would consequently lead to the reader being prompted to zigzag across the columns of

text at different textual points (again, for a fuller understanding of how this process occurs within Caddel and Quartermain 1999, see *Figure 1* within the Appendix).

(31.) **Progression 3**



Progression 3 is probably the most likely progression taken through the poem, since it is the default method by which we read newspaper articles and other types of text with columns. Thus, when faced with the text's unconventional graphology, readers are likely to cling to familiar reading procedures, in the hope that such levels of familiarity will proffer an expectable and congruent set of textual relations, which combine to form a standard pattern of textual coherence. **Progression 2** is the least likely progression to be taken through the poem, since it is not usually a natural tendency of any reader to turn over to a subsequent page before reading all the words printed on that page; nor is it usual to then have to go back to that page once the last page that the poem is printed

on has been reached. There is no indication that Raworth requires the page breaks to come at particular textual points; thus in theory, if the entire text were to be presented upon a single page, this would then eliminate the presence of page breaks intermittently falling at regular points throughout the poem, and would make **Progression 2** unviable as a potential syntagmatic route to be taken through the text.

Visuospatial form, therefore, is utilized within this text in order to suggest a range of syntagmatic progressions and different reading directions that the reader can choose from when navigating a path through the poem's lexical content. When following any one of these progressions, the reader will perceive the text's content as being arranged over a visuospatial context which consists of units of line-length that are relatively short in nature; that is, when considered in terms of lexical content. The next section will argue that **Progressions 2** and **3** involve units of line-length which are considerably shorter than those for **Progression 1**; however, the important point to stress here is that in the case of each progression the text is arranged over a series of relatively short line structures. This feature has a direct effect upon how the linguistic information of the text is fundamentally perceived and processed in the case of each progression. As discussed within section 4.5, longer fixation times are experienced in relation to linguistic material falling at line endings. Every line unit, depending upon its length, has an interval, which starts at the beginning of the line's structure, during which the reader's perception of the line's linguistic information is at its shallowest since the gap in perception and processing, instigated by the impending line ending, has not yet been captured by parafoveal viewing. The exact size of this interval is quite likely different for all readers; however, generally speaking, the shorter the line's length, the shorter the interval. With this in mind, shorter units of line-length cause the ratio of *shallow* (pre-onset of parafoveal awareness) to *deep* (post-onset of parafoveal awareness) processing of the line's linguistic content to be inversely affected in favour of the consequent of these two terms.

When readers become parafoveally aware of the gap in perception/processing caused by a line's approaching endpoint, a deeper level of perception/processing is instigated in relation to the lexical material/linguistically encoded content featuring post-onset of this point. However, in **Progression 1**, the reader becomes parafoveally aware of two distinct forms of occlusion to his or her perception and processing of the text's lexical material, produced by two types of visuospatial element. One is created by each successive line ending, and one is achieved, on multiple occasions, by the large spatial gap running through the centre of the poem. Thus, when reading according to

Progression 1, deeper perception/processing of the text's lexical material/linguistically encoded content is instigated at two separate points within any given line of the text. Since the effect caused by the spatial gap to perception/processing is very similar (if not identical) to the effect caused by line endings, what the present thesis considers as one individual unit could in fact be viewed as two separate line structures. When viewed in this way, the separate structures would be shown to contain identical line-length figures (in terms of words per line) to those demonstrated within **Progressions 2** and **3**, and the effects on perception/processing would be just as pronounced for all three progressions. The contention to be made at this point, therefore, is that whichever way the reader chooses to read Raworth's text, the intervals between shallow and deep processing will always be considerably small/short in nature, and furthermore that the ratio between both will be inversely affected in favour of the latter term.

It was argued in section 4.5 that deeper perception of linguistic material leads to increased activation of its lexical and encyclopaedic entries. It was then argued that such increased lexical/encyclopaedic activation can act as a trigger for pragmatic processing to be extended to levels deemed *poetic* in nature. The important thing to note, however, is that such processing is determined primarily by a peculiarity inherent to the text's visuospatial layout, rather than its linguistic form. The next section will explore the potential *poetic effects* of the deeper forms of perception/processing caused by short line-length in relation to several extracts from Raworth's text.

5.4. Poetic effects and short line-length

As discussed at length within section 2.6, Sperber and Wilson (1995:217-224) look at the ways in which unusual arrangements of linguistic form, such as repeated lexical items and peculiar syntactic structures, can lead to the derivation of particular types of cognitive-pragmatic processing – some of which will involve the derivation of *poetic effects*. They do not consider, however, the idea that items of visuospatial form, such as line-length, spatial gaps, typographic style and so on, can also act as inputs to pragmatic processing capable of deriving such *poetic effects*. An implication of this idea is that such visuospatial elements, irrespective of the degree to which a text's linguistic material displays different forms of linguistic patterning, can affect how that content is both registered by the visual input system and inferentially enriched by further pragmatic processing.

The present thesis argues that short line-length per se will lead to longer forms of perception, and thus to longer forms of lexical and encyclopaedic activation, across

all generic and discursive contexts. The reader, if he or she chooses to do so, could use this increased activation/access time to explore his or her encyclopaedic-contextual resources to a relatively deeper level, thus raising the cognitive salience of a relatively wider range of concepts and assumptions stored at an encyclopaedic-contextual level, which could then be used to inferentially derive a relatively wider and weaker range of implicatures in relation to the text's explicit-propositional content.

Such encyclopaedic-contextual exploration is the very thing needed to bring about the derivation of *poetic effects*. However, within certain interpretive contexts, such as the reading of a standard newspaper article, a restaurant menu, a children's bedtime story and so on, readers do not feel compelled to take advantage of the longer encyclopaedic activation times encouraged by short units of line-length. This is because the extra processing effort which such contextual exploration essentially incurs would be seen as an unnecessary use of processing resources, since it is the communicative, rather than poetic function, which is dominant within such generic/discursive contexts (Jakobson 1960; see also Mukařovský 1964). Within such contexts, and thus in relation to certain types of text of a non-literary nature, even with the extra cognitive effects that such deeper contextual exploration can produce, such extended processing, almost for its own sake as it were, is not seen as one of the rules of the game, but rather is viewed as a direct contravention of the *Communicative Principle of Relevance*. The parameters of this principle, however, seem to be relaxed or at least modified when it comes to the interpretation of texts of a literary nature, since one of the conventions governing specialised literary interpretation is that readers often opt for the most difficult, stubborn, vague and obscure message/interpretation possible, and expect to invest heightened levels of processing effort (Green 2001). Despite the almost inevitable cognitive effects derived as a result, in other non-literary contexts of interpretation, such increased processing would be regarded as both cognitively and communicatively unviable (Cave 2018:167).

In relation to such remarks, the present thesis posits that all types of text (whether of a literary or non-literary nature) which employ the use of short line-length, involve relatively increased levels of lexical activation. However, when encountered within non-literary contexts, the use of short line-length lacks an extra level of procedural encoding (albeit of a rudimentary perceptual, rather than complex linguistic type), which comes into play within specialised literary contexts. Within both contexts, the increased levels of lexical activation, which the use of short line-length generates, simultaneously allow the lexical material's associated encyclopaedic content to remain

active for relatively increased amounts of time; however, the latter comes with an additional layer of significance, stipulated by certain conventions pertaining to the literary genre itself, which instructs the reader to take advantage of the relatively increased levels of encyclopaedic activation, by engaging in *non-spontaneous* forms of inferential processing of the text's linguistically encoded content (Furlong 1996, 2014), in order to derive a wide range of relatively weaker cognitive effects, which may be deemed to attain *poetic* value within the specialised framework of relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222).

Clark (2009:183) refers to such *non-spontaneous* forms of processing as "the kind of sustained explicit inferential processing involved in developing literary interpretations"; therefore, literary readers often spend considerable time constructing their interpretations of particular texts, during which the explicit-propositional content is processed at length to attain a deeper and more contextually "exhaustive" (Furlong 2014:78) interpretation of its wider *relevance*. That is, the text's explicit-propositional material is processed in relation to a more extensive range of encyclopaedic-contextual material, in order to give rise to a much more imaginative and varied array of cognitive effects, than would be either tolerable or necessary for other textual types/communicative contexts that require more *spontaneous* forms of inferential processing (for a related perspective, see Wilson's 2011, 2018 distinctions between *comprehension* and *interpretation*, and *internal* and *external relevance*; for more on both of these distinctions, see Scott 2019).

Therefore, following Furlong's terminology, we need to engage in the act of *non-spontaneous interpretation* in order to allow the effects of short line-length to be fully realised. As was mentioned above, the levels of increased lexical activation stimulated by short line-length are present across all textual types/interpretive contexts, however, they only achieve a more thorough and "exhaustive" (Furlong 2014:78) exploration of encyclopaedic context, and therefore a deeper and more non-spontaneous level of processing, when experienced within specialised literary contexts, which possess the aforementioned extra level of procedural encoding attached to certain elements of their micro-textual visuospatial form (i.e. short units of line-length, and the like). Therefore, short line-length is capable of triggering a general level of increased lexical activation, in a spontaneous communicative sense; however, it is also capable of taking a much more prominent role within the communicative process, by instructing the reader to engage in forms of interpretation which are of a *non-spontaneous*, and in many cases genuinely *poetic* nature.

Therefore, short line-length affects perceptual processing in a manner which is stable across all types of text and across all contexts or modes of interpretation; however, the distinct nature of the type of input that short line-length will provide to further pragmatic processing is unique to the rules or conventions of interpretation governed by the type of discourse or genre which a text fits into or is subsumed within. What is in relation to other textual forms and modes of interpretation regarded as superfluous and even wasteful, when experienced in relation to a complex poem for example, is seen as a genuine cognitive and communicative reward, which derives the greatest proportion of its *relevance* from the large sense of affective mutuality that the impressionistic value of a wide range of *weak implicatures* conveys between the writer and reader.

Before continuing with the analysis of Raworth's text, a potential criticism of the hypothesis pertaining to the poetic effects of short line-length adopted within the present thesis should be addressed. This criticism is based upon the idea that some readers, due to the relatively lengthy nature of Raworth's poem, may become accustomed to the unusually short line-length after a certain period of time, thus causing perception/processing to actually speed up, and leading to decreased levels of lexical/encyclopaedic activation and decreased levels of contextual exploration. Supposing some readers were able to establish the unconventionally short line-length as the norm within the text, then theoretically they could choose to perceive the text's lexical material in a more vertically-oriented fashion, potentially cancelling out the deeper levels of perception/processing instigated post-onset of their parafoveal awareness of the inevitable processing gaps occurring at line endings. The vertically oriented manner of this form of perception would involve readers either deliberately or inadvertently glancing down to the following line structures, and as a result becoming prematurely aware of up and coming sections of the text's linguistically encoded content. The argument is that this would effectively diminish the processing uncertainty which parafoveal awareness of prospective line endings usually triggers in more horizontally oriented forms of textual perception. The overall effect would be that poetic effects might be less able to be derived at a fundamentally visuospatial level, at least in the distinct manner detailed within the present thesis.

This phenomenon may well be a very plausible eventuality for some skilled literary readers, however, the point at which the switch occurs, and at which the deeper forms of perception/processing decreases would vary considerably from one individual reader to the next. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that some readers could

actually switch between the two continually throughout the text, or that some readers even resist the urge to switch their perception because they view slower and more detailed forms of processing as an essential component of the literary/poetic experience. Without conscious awareness of the fact, therefore, such readers may be reacting to the fact that such accelerated types of perception and processing may hinder a text's ability to use its fundamental visuospatial form to communicate meaning in a specialised *poetic* sense. Some readers, however, may see it as a way of resolving difficulty and navigating a more coherent path through the text – thus, opting to generate poetic effects solely from other elements of the text's linguistic form.

The full nature of such potential reading quirks, as well as the implications for the ideas set out within the present thesis, are perhaps only fully discernible from further live reader-response testing. The outlook, however, is by no means pessimistic. Some readers might process most (if not all) of the text in the manner outlined within this chapter, whereas for others the extent to which the fragmented visuospatial form impacts upon their processing of the textual content may be minimal. Such considerations offer a potentially fruitful range of directions for future research projects.

A basic tenet of formalism rests on the notion of the *foregrounding* of various stylistically pronounced textual features, whether of a syntactic, lexical-semantic, phonological, or subtler pragmatic nature, in order to surprise the reader "into a fresh awareness of, and sensitivity to, the linguistic medium which is normally taken for granted as an 'automatized' background of communication" (Leech and Short 1981:28). The concept of stylistic deviation is a fundamental principle of the literary school of thought known as Russian Formalism. During the 1920s and 1930s when the school of thought was at its height, a group of eminent linguists, philologists and literary critics, such as Roman Jakobson, Jan Mukařovský and René Wellek, to name just a few, worked collectively to study the distinct set of linguistic features which gives literature its own unique structure, as opposed to other forms of language, both written and spoken (for further details on Russian Formalism, see: Matejka and Pomorska eds. 1971; Eagleton 1996:1-14; and Rivkin and Ryan eds. 1998:3-70). Mukařovský (1964:18) states that stylistic deviance involves the "esthetically intentional distortion of the linguistic components of the work", or in other words "the intentional violation of the norm of the standard". The "norm of the standard" refers to normative linguistic usage, which Mukařovský (1964:19) states *automatizes* or conventionalizes language to the extent that "its users no longer perceive its expressive or aesthetic potential" (Hussein 2012:4: see also Shklozsky 1965). For Mukařovský (1964), stylistically

pronounced linguistic features can be used to make readers experience language in new and surprising ways; that is, as "consciously executed", and thus fully *deautomatized* acts of linguistic perception (Mukařovský 1964:19). The nature of "poetic language" is that it serves to draw attention to its own material form and density, "for its own sake" as it were; that is, it acts not in "the services of communication" but in the foregrounding of "the act of expression, the act of speech itself" (Mukařovský 1964:19; see also Jakobson 1960).

However, deviation itself can be established in relation to various norms, and in relation to multiple points of textual reference (Hussein 2012:4). Any act of deviation involves a kind of tension between those norms which are *internal* to the text, thus achieving a striking stylistic effect against a norm which is established within the remainder of the poem in which the deviation occurs, and those ones which are *external* to the text, achieving such stylistic effects against some norm which lies beyond the textual parameters in which the deviation is situated (Levin 1965:226, Cluysenaar, 1976: 134, Hussein 2012:4-5).

Thus, the idea arising out of this distinction, particularly in relation to Raworth's text, is that the poem may well achieve a noticeably deviant stylistic effect against an externally established norm, since Raworth's poem may be said to contain extremely short lines, when compared with data obtained from poems of a more typical visuospatial nature (see data for one hundred typical poems in *Figure 2* of the Appendix), but fails to achieve the same level of stylistic deviation in relation to the textual parameters of the poem itself. This is because extremely short line-length is invariably applied across the whole text; thus, any given line stylistically coheres with, rather than deviates away from, the visuospatial norm internally established within the poem itself. When looking at the poem at an overall visuospatial (or graphological) level, the text might generate a very general, or macro-textual *poetic effect*, but during the actual reading process might develop its own internal pattern of coherence, thus causing the reader to speed up his/her reading of the text, rather than pause on various textual elements. Such internally developed coherence patterns would lead to shallower levels of processing and stronger types of contextual effects, thus creating a cognitive environment which is somewhat contrary to the one deemed *poetic* within a relevance-theoretic manifestation (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222).

It could be that for internal deviation to occur at a visuospatial level within Raworth's poem, the internal coherence pattern established by the text's visuospatial form would have to be disturbed or interrupted in some manner, in order to create a

noticeably deviant feature capable of surprising the reader into what Leech and Short (1982:28) describe as the "fresh awareness of, and sensitivity to, the linguistic medium", which normally functions as an inactive or "automatized" communicational element. For example, such a disturbance could come in the form of a longer line unit which would stylistically stand out against the visuospatial norm set up within the rest of the text, thus achieving a specialised poetic effect through visuospatial means.

The idea then is that texts which demonstrate high levels of external deviation, if the source of the external deviation is invariably applied across the whole text, can simultaneously exhibit a fairly low level of internal deviation that involves a less deautomatized textual effect, wherein the reader might fail to perceive the expressive or aesthetic potential of the unconventionally short line units. Texts which demonstrate fairly low levels of internal deviation fail to draw increased attention to their basic form and deeper processing of the semantic content conveyed by such form. Readers establish a pattern of internal coherence to help them process the text in a more unified, rather than disparate and fragmented fashion, during which their reading actually speeds up because they get used to the short line-length. However, live reader-response testing conducted within the wider cognitive-stylistics discipline (see section 4.4) provides strong evidence for slower perception times invariably falling towards the ends of lines pertaining to various textual fragments. This would perhaps indicate that any levels of internal coherence, developed after establishing extremely short line-length as the norm within the poem, may not be able to fully diminish the effects that the present thesis stipulates Raworth's use of short line-length has upon the reader's perception/processing of the text, thus leaving some potential for *poetic effects* being derived as a result of short line-length.

In order to focus upon the different ways that short line-length may affect the reader's perception/processing of Raworth's complex poetic text, the table presented in (32.), below, displays figures for **Progressions 1**, **2** and **3** for different aspects of line-length present within each progression – including most and least words per line (hereafter WPL) and average WPL. **Progression 1** sees a syntagmatic development through the text which runs backwards and forwards across the relatively large spatial gap running centrally through the whole of the poem; for this reason, line-lengths occurring within this progression could be seen as significantly longer than those occurring within the other two progressions. The figures for **Progression 1**, shown in (32.), are those derived when the lexical content positioned on either side of the spatial gap is perceived as belonging to the same line, rather than two separate line structures.

(32.) **Line-length figures for Raworth's text**

	Most WPL	**Frequency**	**Least WPL**	**Frequency**	**Average WPL**
Progression 1	6	1	2	46	3.87
Progression 2	4	1	1	144	1.93
Progression 3	4	1	1	144	1.93

However, as pointed out towards the end of the last section, the line structures belonging to **Progression 1** could be viewed in the latter sense. Again, this would mean that the effects on perception/processing would be just as pronounced for all three progressions; however, regardless of which progression the reader chooses, the intervals between parafoveal and non-parafoveal awareness of the perceptual/processing gaps, brought on by a text's line endings, will always be relatively small/short in nature, and will therefore always lead to relatively deeper forms of perception/processing. Since **Progressions 2** and **3** straightforwardly involve the shortest units of line-length of all three, the rest of the analysis will focus on those progressions in isolation. As can be seen from the above table, **Progressions 2** and **3** have identical figures for line-length, in terms of both actual word content and page space. The different syntagmatic progressions contain an identical number of lines, which are equal in terms of both spatial length and lexical content; the only difference is how the reader navigates through those lines. However, when considered against most other poems, all three progressions display units of line-length that would be considered extremely short in nature.

In order to gain a clearer picture of just how unconventionally short the line units are within Raworth's poem, the above figures can be compared to similar line-length data for one hundred further poems displayed within *Figure 2* of the Appendix section. All these poems, written by a range of critically acclaimed, contemporary writers (such as Carol Ann Duffy, Simon Armitage and Ted Hughes), have been taken from a single collection entitled *100 Prized Poems: Twenty-five years of Forward Books* (2016). The first point to note is that although the texts that make up this dataset contain a number of striking visuospatial effects (including different variations of line-length), in the case of all the texts the arrangements of visuospatial form are not deviant enough to generate multiple syntagmatic progressions which readers must choose from when navigating their way through the poem's content. Thus, upon a first reading of

each text, most readers will adopt a reading strategy which involves the type of conventional syntagmatic progression that is demonstrated in **Progression 1**; hence, the inclusion of a single set of data entries for each poem.

There are in fact three poems within the total dataset that demonstrate a lower average WPL figure than Raworth's text; however, this statistic only applies when Raworth's poem is read according to **Progression 1**. The lowest average WPL featured across all the poems is 3.4, held by Kwame Dawes's poem 'New Neighbours', which is 1.47 WPL more than the same figure generated from Raworth's text, when read according to either **Progression 2** or **3**. The largest average WPL figure contained within the dataset is 12.43, displayed by Jacob Sam-La Rose's 'After Lazerdrome, McDonalds, Peckham Rye', which is over six times as large as the average WPL displayed by Raworth's text. The vast majority of the poems are made up of considerably longer lines than Raworth's poem, as the figure of 7.18 for the average WPL across all texts within the dataset clearly demonstrates; with this figure being almost twice as large as the one attained from Raworth's text when read according to **Progression 1**, and over three and a half times as large as those attained when read according to **Progressions 2** and **3**. Therefore, what this random sampling reveals is just how unconventionally short the lines are within Raworth's visuospatially experimental text[2].

Consider the following extract from Raworth's poem:

(33.) meet
mister
metaphor
shoot it
from cold
words
used out
give
space
silence
slide
those fibres
of my love
for vanity
disfigures me
why cold
if ay
reflection

Choosing to read the text according to either **Progression 2** or **3** causes individual lines within the textual progression to be extremely short or small, both in a visuospatial sense, and in terms of lexical content. Occurring only once, the most WPL is 3, whereas, occurring a total of 9 times, the least WPL is 1. The other 6 lines contain 2 WPL, making an average of 1.55 WPL across the entire extract, which is actually very close to the text as a whole; that is, if read according to either **Progressions 2** or **3**. The most important fact, however, is that half of the lines contain only one lexical item.

As previously stated, line-length can become short enough to the extent that it causes the reader to almost always be within a state of parafoveal awareness of the prospective gaps in perception/processing occurring in relation to the line endings of a given poem. The effect is that most of the text's lexical material/linguistically encoded content is perceived/processed by readers to a relatively deeper level, which necessarily leads to the content's associated encyclopaedic-contextual material being made available for relatively longer periods of time, during which readers are prompted to engage in *non-spontaneous* levels of inferential processing (Furlong 1996, 2014) when exploring the wider contextual possibilities of the text's explicit-propositional content – the results of such levels of processing being an array of *weakly* communicated *poetic effects* of a visuospatially triggered nature.

On the other hand, longer lines lead to more of the text's lexical material/linguistically encoded content being perceived/processed to a relatively shallower degree. This is because the use of longer lines leads to a greater proportion of the textual content falling prior to activation of parafoveal awareness of the prospective gaps in perception/processing occurring in relation to the text's line endings. Therefore, the longer a given line is, the more the ratio of *shallow* to *deep* processing is increased in favour of the antecedent of these two terms. This means that longer lines create longer intervals between pre- and post-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the prospective gaps in perception/processing occurring in relation to the text's line endings. It also means that longer lines feature reduced levels of lexical and encyclopaedic activation, and thus less encouragement (at least in a visuospatial sense) for the reader to engage in the deeper, more imaginative forms of contextual exploration that characterise the type of *non-spontaneous thought* (Furlong 1996, 2014) so integral to the act of literary interpretation, and indeed to the derivation of *poetic effects*.

The following modified extracts (my bold text used for emphasis – DP), shown in (34a.) and (34b.), are taken from Raworth's poem in order to demonstrate this phenomenon:

(34a.) **meet**
mister
metaphor
shoot it
from cold
words
used out
give
space
silence
slide
those fibres
of **my love**
for vanity
disfigures me
why cold
if ay
reflection

(34b.) meet mister metaphor shoot it from **cold words**
used out give space silence slide those fibres of **my love**
for vanity disfigures me why cold if **ay reflection**

In both (34a.) and (34b.), bold text loosely represents the potential range of the increased perception/processing brought on by parafoveal awareness of each line's endpoint. The arrangement shown in (34a.) has much shorter lines than the one displayed in (34b.), thus inversely increasing the ratio of *shallow* to *deep* processing in favour of the latter term. In fact, such deeper forms of perception/processing could be experienced in relation to 96.43% (perhaps even the whole) of the text's lexical content in (34a.), due to the extreme shortness of the lines. However, due to the relatively longer nature of its lines, it can be estimated that a mere 21.43% of the total lexical content in (34b.) receives a relatively deeper level of perception/processing triggered by readers' parafoveal awareness of the lines' endpoints. In relation to (34a.), the consequence of this deeper perceptual awareness in the reader is that more of the text's lexical and encyclopaedic content will remain active within his/her cognitive resources for a relatively greater amount of time, encouraging him/her to delve into the *non-spontaneous* (Furlong 1996, 2014) realms of literary interpretation, which involve deeper and more imaginative forms of contextual exploration, and thereby offer the opportunity for the derivation of *poetic effects* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222), in relation to more sections of the text's explicit-propositional content.

In relation to the extract shown in (34a.), above, some of the most prominent *poetic effects* may consist of wide arrays of *weak cognitive effects*, which cannot be

pinned down in exact terms, but the general flavour of which may be captured to some extent within the following set of implicit ideas – some of which, it may be noted, display a distinct metapoetic nature:

- The concept of "meet", which usually implies *togetherness*, is at odds with the visuospatially fragmented nature of the text;
- Titles such as "mister" are meaningless constructs arbitrarily applied to people via artificial societal conventions;
- In isolation, metaphor is a vague and perhaps even empty conceptual construct; it draws conceptuality from other conceptual entities within the mind;
- Some words are used to produce tired and laboured metaphorical expressions;
- Some words have no life/no meaning;
- Linguistic form is arbitrarily related to meaning;
- Tired and laboured metaphorical expressions can leave you cold or have little emotional effect/appeal;
- Tired/conventional metaphor should be avoided/eradicated;
- Conventional metaphorical use is an act of violence upon language;
- Words should be allowed to produce meaning independently and in isolation from other words;
- Give the page-space "silence"; give it room to breathe; do not fill it up with words; allow such "space" to create a meaning all of its own;
- The speaker/poet is in love; the love is complex/made up of multiple strands or levels;
- Vanity ruins positive qualities in a person;
- The speaker/poet is questioning/is confused by his/her (or perhaps someone else's) "cold" and emotionless personality traits;
- The poem serves as a way for the speaker/poet to *reflect* upon such traits.

Such effects are derived due to *non-spontaneous* levels of inference making a great many concepts and assumptions marginally more manifest within encyclopaedic context. These concepts and assumptions can then come into inferential contact with the text's explicit-propositional material in order to derive a wide array of further *weakly*

communicated cognitive effects, deemed *poetic* within the framework of relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222). An important point to note however, is that the above cognitive effects may also be derivable in relation to (34b.), but that in (34a.) the instruction or trigger to engage in the *non-spontaneous* forms of interpretation which essentially bring about their derivation is to a significant degree procedurally encoded by the perceptual effects generated by the text's distinct visuospatial characteristics: hence the idea posited within the present thesis pertaining to *poetic effects* of a *visuospatially generated* nature.

The visuospatial characteristics displayed within (34a.) place particular segments of the text's linguistic structure within the aforementioned *optimal perceptual zones* which fall post-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the text's line endings. Such placement guides the reader's perceptual fixation in particular directions, and thus increases activation of particular lexical and encyclopaedic material which would not have undergone such levels of activation in other less visuospatially fragmented contexts, such as the one demonstrated in (34b.). This process opens up particular routes of contextual exploration which activate the distinct range of concepts and assumptions necessary for deriving the above set of *weak implicatures*. The word "mister", for example, is placed within the aforementioned *optimal perceptual zone*, thus bringing it into increased perception and allowing its corresponding lexical and encyclopaedic entries to undergo increased levels of activation. The text's literary significance combines with the perceptual effects created by the text's visuospatial characteristics in order to trigger *non-spontaneous* levels of processing, thus making the derivation of the weak cognitive effects pertaining to the lexical item "mister" far more likely in the case of (34a.) than in the longer-lined formation displayed in (34b.).

Therefore, readers are able to use the lengthier activation times necessarily generated by Raworth's use of short line-length to inferentially process particular segments of the text's explicit-propositional content in relation to the various concepts and assumptions within encyclopaedic-context required to make the weak propositional forms listed above come into fruition within their cognitive resources. Furthermore, it can be argued that the poem's literary classification comes with an inbuilt procedural instruction to deal with the text's explicit-propositional content within a *non-spontaneous inferential* capacity, but that the text's use of short line-length perceptually encodes procedural instructions for which segments of the text's content should be explored within the relatively more contextually expansive manner pertaining to such *non-spontaneous* levels of processing; that is, by placing certain lexical items within the

optimal perceptual zones which the present thesis posits occur post-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the text's line endings. Therefore, there are two types of procedural instruction occurring here: one of a rudimentary perceptual type encoded by the text's distinct visuospatial characteristics; and one of a more specialised nature triggered by the text's literary significance.

The estimated figures listed above, as pertaining to the optimal textual regions for undergoing relatively deeper forms of perception and processing, have been posited in relation to insights made by Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014; see section 4.4 of the present thesis) whilst carrying out research into the effects that line-length variation can have upon reading times, and as a result, depth of processing. The main insight which they posit that influenced determination of the above figures is that readers, when directly fixating upon and thus processing a given lexical item, can use their parafoveal vision to capture and pre-process words and other visuospatial elements located immediately adjacent to the lexical item in direct perception (see also Rayner 1998). The present thesis contends that line endings are thus included in the range of visuospatial elements capable of being captured by such parafoveal perception. The idea then is that line endings become parafoveally perceptible, when readers are directly focusing upon the penultimate word of a given line unit; therefore, texts which employ extremely short units of line-length cause high levels of their lexical material to fall within the regions where such heightened levels of perception/processing (prompted by readers' parafoveal perception of line endings) occur.

Essentially, short units of line-length allow increased perception/processing to be bestowed upon textual elements which, if displayed within relatively longer lines, would be perceived/processed to a shallower extent. For example, in (34a.), the alliterative string of lexical items: "meet", "mister" and "metaphor"; is arranged over a series of three short lines, whereas in (34b.) the string is arranged within a single line unit. In the latter case, the whole of the string is placed within a region of the line that falls well before the onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the line's up and coming endpoint. The effect is that the whole sequence receives a much shallower level of perception/processing and less lexical/encyclopaedic activation within cognitive resources. The reader is less likely to process these items within the contextually "exhaustive", and thus *non-spontaneous inferential* manner that for relevance theory is so integral to specialised acts of literary interpretation (Clark 2009:183; Furlong 2014:78), which will also lead to less chance of their explicit-propositional forms being used to derive *poetic effects* – at least in a visuospatially-generated sense.

However, when arranged upon their own individual, separate lines, as shown within (34a.), the reader can focus on each item of the string separately and in greater detail before moving on to the next in the series of items. The deeper perception of these items allows their associated lexical and encyclopaedic entries to be activated for relatively longer periods of time, than when arranged upon the same line, as in the case of (34b.). Again, the lengthier activation of this lexical/encyclopaedic material encourages relatively deeper forms of contextual exploration. This allows a greater range of concepts and assumptions to become marginally more salient within encyclopaedic context, and thus to become more capable of inferentially interacting with the propositional content of the text, in order to derive a further range of *weak* effects, such as those listed above in relation to (34a.). The result is a richer and more complex contextual output for this section of the text brought about by visuospatial form.

The deeper this contextual exploration goes, the less obvious, and thus less textually prompted, the ensuing interpretation will be. Sperber and Wilson (1995:199) state that: "Eventually, […] a point is reached at which the hearer [and indeed the reader] receives no encouragement at all to supply any particular premise and conclusion, and he takes the entire responsibility for supplying them himself". Shorter lines cause *deeper* perception and thus longer lexical/encyclopaedic activation, whereas longer lines cause *shallower* perception and thus shorter lexical/encyclopaedic activation. The latter encourage narrower and more guided contextual explorations when interpreting the wider import of the text, and derive a smaller and more determinate range of contextual effects; furthermore, they stay within the parameters of *spontaneous-inferential processing* (Furlong 1996, 2014) and most probably cannot be regarded as *poetic* in nature. The former encourage wider and less guided contextual explorations when interpreting the wider relevance of the text. As already noted, expanded contextual exploration leads to a relatively wider range of concepts and assumptions becoming more salient within the reader's cognitive environment, which can then be processed in relation to the text's explicit-propositional content in order to derive a relatively wider and weaker range of further contextual effects. However, the degree to which context is explored within a *non-spontaneous inferential* capacity, and whether such exploration reaches levels deemed *poetic* in nature, is to a large extent determined by the individual reader.

Essentially then, visuospatially arranging a body of text into a greater range of relatively shorter lines will affect the reader's perception/processing of the text's lexical

material/linguistically encoded content in a manner which is fixed and stable across all textual forms and interpretive contexts. In literary contexts, however, such effects on basic perception/processing will be taken by some readers as invitations to consider the text's wider import within a contextually richer and more inferentially indeterminate light; that is, than they most likely would have done had the text consisted of relatively longer lines and been produced/received within a non-literary context.

The visuospatial nature of short line-length affects perception of the text's linguistic material in a way which leads to lengthier activation of its lexical and encyclopaedic entries stored at a psychological level. One of the conventions pertaining to specialised acts of literary interpretation, particularly those produced in relation to poetic texts, is that readers are expected to read such texts as communicatively vague and abstruse in nature: that is, to go well beyond the obvious and venture into the realms of *non-spontaneous* and *poetic* ways of thinking. The effect that short line-length has upon lexical/encyclopaedic activation then lends itself naturally to the exploratory nature of literary interpretation. The interpretive process that underpins the literary experience is to some extent facilitated by the effects that short line-length has upon activation of the text's associated encyclopaedic material. The interpretive procedure central to literary processing is *contextual* in nature: it involves a relatively *deeper* exploration of the reader's encyclopaedic-contextual resources than other forms of linguistic communication. Of course, the reader is free to explore context to a relatively deeper level even in the absence of short units of line-length within a text which purports to be literary/poetic in nature, and indeed he or she should do, if responding to the text in the distinct manner stipulated by the codes and conventions of the literary genre itself. However, a text produced with short units of line-length aids and thus further encourages this process through its basic visuospatial form. It is almost as though the very arrangement of the text upon the page acts as the initial input to pragmatic processing (within a rudimentary perceptual sense) for the derivation of poetic effects, in a similar manner to the way that such effects are triggered by stylistically pronounced linguistic features within Sperber and Wilson's (1995) standard model of the *poetic effects* phenomenon. Literary interpretations require deeper explorations of *context*: the use of short line-length helps to facilitate this process further.

Returning to the different arrangements of the extract taken from Raworth's text, displayed within (34a.) and (34b.), it could be argued that the use of relatively longer units of line-length in (34b.) also makes certain semantic and syntactic relations

within the extract's basic structure and content more visible, so that the reader is encouraged to consider such content within a much more logically structured and thus propositionally determinate manner. In the case of the expression, "Meet mister metaphor", the syntactic and semantic unity between the lexical items that make up the expression is more noticeable when the entire expression is situated upon a single line (as is the case in (34b.)). However, when arranged over multiple one-word lines, rather than forming one interrelating syntactic and semantic unit, each lexical item may trigger its own disconnected logical and propositional fragment to be formed within the reader's mind, which consequently introduces a relatively higher level of inferential indeterminacy into further contextual processing of this portion of the text.

A similar effect is also experienced in relation to the expression, "shoot it from cold words", which falls across three separate lines in the original textual arrangement displayed within (34a.). The visuospatial form encourages a much freer reading of the expression, than is the case when the expression is arranged upon a single line. For example, the reader may question whether it is the case that something is being shot from "cold" or shot from "cold words". With the longer lined formation displayed within (34b.), such a choice does not exist, and the reader is forced to interpret the expression's propositional structure within the latter manifestation.

In fact, the longer formation in (34b.) throws up a further interesting processing difficulty. Placing the lexical item "words" on the same line as "cold" creates a sense of syntactic closure, in which the whole line takes on a feeling of syntactic and thus propositional completeness. This sense of completeness causes syntactic segregation of the item "used out". In the original formulation, the reader would probably interpret "used out" as acting within an adjectival capacity, and thus as a postmodifier within a single noun phrase consisting of itself and the head word "words". However, in the longer-lined example, the propositional completeness of the first line, in its rearranged form, encourages syntactic closure at the ending of the line. In such a case the item is suspended and becomes propositionally superfluous because it fails to enter into any kind of syntactic relationship with any successive items within the extract. Thus, propositional completeness, in one sense, leads to propositional disparity in another.

Even the act of assigning reference (albeit in an extremely loose sense) to the expression "mister metaphor" is easier for readers when the items are arranged upon the same line. Raworth uses short line-length here, because he is probably aware that "mister metaphor" is not a conventional referring expression, and thus brings together encyclopaedic entries probably never before entertained by most readers (even those

readers of an expert status; see section 2.1) within a subject-predicate relationship. Because they form an extremely unusual expression, their referential status is very likely overlooked by readers due to the visuospatial arrangement employed by Raworth. Many readers may well interpret the expression in an entirely dislocated logical sense; that is, with the conceptual material that each item linguistically encodes being situated within its own individual, separate and fragmented logical structure within the mind. This would lead to each item's encyclopaedic material being explored through three distinct and separate acts of contextualisation, rather than through one unified process of contextual enrichment. Again, the result would be the derivation of a relatively wider and thus weaker (and perhaps *poetic*) range of cognitive effects, such as ones relating to the following subset of those listed above in relation to (34a.):

- The concept of "meet", which usually implies *togetherness*, is at odds with the visuospatially fragmented nature of the text.
- Titles such as "mister" are meaningless constructs arbitrarily applied to people via artificial conventions pertaining to the society in which they live.
- In isolation, metaphor is a vague and perhaps even empty conceptual construct; it draws conceptuality from other conceptual entities within the mind.

It could be argued that Raworth's use of visuospatial form breaks-up and repackages a linguistic element already in possession of an innovative figurative quality, thereby emphasising the defamiliarizing effects already inherent within the text's linguistic characteristics, in order to increase their poetic value even further.

A basic parsing of the extract from Raworth's text displayed within (34a.) and (34b.) would seem to reveal a range of loosely-related phrasal structures, which fail to form a consistent level of coherence at an overall syntactic level, for example: "meet", "mister metaphor", "shoot it", "from cold words", "used out", "give", "space", "silence", "slide", "those fibres", "of my love", "for vanity", "disfigures me", "why cold", "if ay reflection". However, some of these phrasal structures can be linked to form grammatically complete clausal structures in their own right (albeit ones of a semantically vague nature), all of which form imperative sentence forms, consisting of a single independent clause, for example:

(35.) *meet+mister metaphor = verb+object*

shoot+it+from cold words = verb+object+adjunct

give+space+silence = verb+indirect object+direct object

Such grammatical unity, however, is far more noticeable in the case of (34b.), since each one is perceived as less visuospatially fragmented, than in the case of (34a.). The effect of the short line structure displayed within the original textual manifestation in (34a.) is to hide the above syntactic relations, and thus to minimise the sense of grammatical and semantic coherence that such relations promote within the text's explicit structure. In (34a.), many of the above phrasal structures are either situated upon individual lines, or partitioned across multiple lines, thus encouraging the reader to perceive individual constituents of their syntactic forms to a relatively deeper level. This leads to increased activation of the items' associated encyclopaedic content which encourages the reader to engage in a more contextually expansive form of further inferential processing of their basic propositional forms (than would have been the case had the text been arranged over a series of relatively longer lines), thus creating the potential for *poetic* levels of processing in the reader.

Discussion of 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' concludes at this point within the thesis (some of the main details of the discussion will be returned to briefly within section 7.2) with the observation that it may well be impossible to know for certain without further empirical testing which way most readers would choose to read and thus interpret Raworth's text. This is certainly a potential direction for future research, however, for the time being, the seminal conclusion arising from this discussion asserts that the manner in which the poet decides to lay out his or her text upon the page has a significant effect upon how readers fundamentally perceive and inferentially develop a text's linguistic material/linguistically encoded content. The remaining section of this chapter will contain detailed analysis of William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) famous imagist poem, 'This is Just to Say'. The analysis will be conducted in relation to a further hypothesis (see hypothesis 2 in section 4.6) which is based upon the effects that line divisions can have upon the reader's construction of a text's logical and propositional form.

5.5. Poetic effects and line divisions

As discussed at length throughout previous sections of the present chapter, hypothesis 1 (see section 4.5) is based upon the idea that *poetic effects* are capable of being generated

from short units of line-length because readers take advantage of the impact that deeper perception of the text's linguistic material has upon activation times for its associated lexical and encyclopaedic entries. The remainder of the chapter will argue that line divisions can often provide the necessary input to pragmatic processing for the derivation of *poetic effects*, by introducing designed separation of integral syntactic units on the page, which acts almost as a visuospatial equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect' that creates a considerable degree of further inferential processing, and constitutes a distinct communicational 'reward' primarily at an explicit-propositional level.

The other important thing to note at this stage is that the *poetic effects* generated visuospatially in respect of the latter phenomenon are of a *weakly explicit* nature: that is, they are developments of the logical forms encoded by the text, and not separately derived sets of implicated effects, which function independently of the text's main explicit-propositional content. Such *poetic effects*, therefore, communicate their poetic quality at the pragmatic level of *explicature* rather than *implicature* (see sections 4.6 and 4.9 for more details). This idea will be explored directly throughout sections 5.6-5.8; however, the remainder of this section combines further discussion of the hypothesis with related ideas arising from the relevant literature in this area.

Banks (2018), for example, looks at a small extract from Mary Oliver's poem 'Mindful', which she argues contains a simile construction (shown in (36.), below) that is at once both familiar and striking:

(36.) like a needle

in the haystack
of light.

The striking element of the device comes from the writer's decision to visuospatially unravel the simile over a succession of short lines which are spread across two stanzas. Banks (2018:143) argues that this choice encourages readers to consider each of its constituents in greater detail before moving on to the following one, and to explore "any image suggested by the words up to that point without yet taking into account what comes next". In other words, readers might first imagine being "like a needle" before later incorporating other concepts associated with "the haystack of light". Essentially, Oliver visuospatially deconstructs the simile in order to emphasize, and invite us to consider, each of its defining conceptual components, "needle", "haystack", and "light", separately, and within greater contextual detail.

As previously stated, line divisions can be used to create visuospatially encoded gaps which fall at particular points within the reader's live perception and construction of the text's basic propositional structure. These gaps can lead to temporary processing phases, which involve the cognitive representation of momentarily incomplete or fragmented logical and propositional forms. During these temporary processing phases, inferential processing attempts to develop the text's momentarily incomplete logical and propositional status. This leads to a series of propositional forms being provisionally developed as possible pragmatic extensions of the text's unfinished form. The idea rests upon the notion that a given line division may cause a significant proportion of the linguistic material that provides access to the line's developing propositional structure to be situated upon a successive line unit, and thus to be temporarily imperceptible to the reader. Such temporary imperception encourages the reader to make a series of anticipatory hypotheses pertaining to its ongoing or developing logical and propositional status.

The range and relative *strength-weakness* of these hypotheses will be affected by two interrelating factors: the state of the line's linguistic structure when the line division impacts upon its development, and therefore the level of *explicitness* (see section 4.2) achieved by the line's linguistically encoded content prior to the line division; and as a consequence of the first factor, the degree of indeterminacy that such levels of linguistic encoding introduce into the inferential development of the line's propositional form during the hypothetical processing phase prompted by the line division. Different uses of line divisions will involve varying levels of explicitness-indeterminacy, leading to varying ranges of derived effects which differ in their relative levels of communicative *strength-weakness*.

Both Forceville et al. (2014) and Yus (2008b) work with similar hypotheses, but within the context of comic strips rather than poetry. Forceville et al. (2014:495) briefly comment that within comic strips enjambment-like divisions can be exploited for surprise effect within different speech balloons (or even different parts of a non-symmetrical balloon) originating from the same speaker. Yus (2008b:3) argues that comic strip authors often play around with page layout: for example, using the so-called *meta-panels* which form the basic unit for sequencing the story in very innovative ways, thus prompting additional levels of inferential processing. Yus adds that comic strip writers often play around with readers' expectations of conventional directions of reading (e.g. left-to-right, top-to-bottom), in order to achieve additional or striking effects which again demand further inferential processing, and perhaps more

significantly states that "the fact that the page on the left and the page on the right are simultaneously present in front of the reader can have consequences on how the story is processed and the amount of inference devoted to each panel within these pages" (Yus 2008b:3). Therefore, in a similar manner to the one envisaged by Yus (2008b), the present thesis argues that line divisions can be used to introduce a supplementary level of inference into the reader's live construction of the text's rudimentary propositional form, which involves this form being preliminarily represented as a relatively *wider* and *weaker* range of explicatures.

Yus (2008b) reports that Barber (2002) mentions one example of how the panels in two successive pages can be inferred differently depending on which page they are found (odd number or even number):

> On the first page the author uses sixteen small panels to depict how a villain is ready to chop a woman's head off with a guillotine: tension is built up by the close-cropped images. The reader wonders what will happen next. Of course, by turning the page, the reader sees how a superhero comes to the rescue in the nick of time, smashing a window inside a panel which takes up the whole page. This is indeed effective, but only if the first page is odd and the second is even. If these two pages were laid out in the opposite arrangement, the tension would have diminished, because the reader would have inevitably noticed the page on the right first (the smashed window, the hero), since that image is much bigger and more dynamic, drawing attention to itself immediately (Yus 2008b:3).

In the context of poetry, placing line divisions at particular points within the text's linguistic structure can build up similar levels of tension, surprise and expectation within the reader. Placing a line division midway through an individual linguistic constituent (within a phrasal structure, for example), or even in between two interrelating components of a larger clausal unit, can cause the reader to wonder about how the text's linguistic structure, and thus its semantic content, will develop beyond the line division and into the following line; or as Yus says, it makes the reader wonder "what will happen next".

Building on this point, Yus (2008b:3n3) quotes Will Eisner, who states the following:

> pages are the constant in comic book narration […] Keep in mind that when the reader turns the page a pause occurs. This permits a change of time, shift of scene, an opportunity to control the reader's focus. Here one deals with retention as well as attention. The page as well as the panel must therefore be addressed as a unit of containment although it too is merely a part of the whole comprised by the story itself (Will Eisner, reported in Duncan 2000).

It is fair to say that, excepting epic poetry, most poems are quite short in nature, and that often their entire content spans only a single page. In poems of this nature then, page transitions do not figure within the perception/construction of the text's semantic content. The essential units of containment for most poems could be seen as individual lines. When readers arrive at the endpoint of a given line, a pause occurs which is similar to the one experienced when readers turn the page of a comic book. Readers perceive this pause as perceptually encoding a visuospatial gap within their perception, and thus within their construction of the text's linguistic and propositional structure. Therefore, line endings/divisions, as well as the pauses/gaps which they inevitably introduce into readers' perception/processing of the text's lexical material, allow brief opportunities for inference to intervene within this process, consequently directing the audience's interpretation of the text's basic propositional content and wider import in particular ways.

The hypothesis discussed within this section will be explored in detail in relation to William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) famous imagist poem, 'This is Just to Say', within section 5.7; however, firstly, the way in which the relationship between linguistic form and pragmatic processing is envisaged within earlier manifestations of the relevance-theoretic programme will be discussed in order to contextualize the general cognitive-pragmatic foundations upon which this hypothesis is based.

5.6. Linguistic form and pragmatic interpretation

As discussed within section 2.4, Sperber and Wilson (1987a:706) state that the sentential forms that give rise to utterances are not interpreted as single units of meaning – that is, in one go so to speak – but are represented as structured strings of constituent concepts. These constituents make up logical forms: structured sets of conceptual material which form the blueprints for more contextually developed steps of inferential-deductive processing. The conceptual information contained within a logical form is encoded within the rudimentary linguistic units of the sentence uttered. It provides access to richer, more detailed contextual information stored at particular conceptual addresses.

Furthermore, Sperber and Wilson (1987a, 1995) argue that syntactic form directly affects the sequencing of the various conceptual constituents that are combined to form an utterance's logical form. The sequencing of an utterance's basic linguistic content, and thus conceptual form, has a significant impact upon how the utterance's

meaning will be processed in a wider contextual sense. Thus, two utterances with the same truth-conditional content, but which differ somewhat in their syntactic structure, can lead to the construction of different contexts and, therefore, to the derivation of different contextual effects (Sperber and Wilson 1987a:706).

Sperber and Wilson (1987a:706) use the following two utterances as a demonstration of this idea:

(13.) Leo sold Peter a painting.

(14.) Peter bought a painting from Leo.

The hearer of (13.) will expect the utterance to be relevant in relation to a context of information about Leo. For example, supposing it were mutually manifest that Leo urgently needed money to pay off a debt, a central implicature might be that he has just made some. On the other hand, the hearer of (14.) will expect the utterance to be relevant in relation to a background context relating to Peter. For example, if it were mutually manifest that Peter did not care for Leo's painting or even art in general, but knew he needed money, a key implicature would be that Peter behaved generously. This does not mean, however, that the implicature pertaining to Peter's generosity could not be derived in relation to (13.), or that the one relating to Leo's money troubles could not be derived in relation to (14.). In other words, although both utterances have the same truth-conditions, and the hearer could in theory derive the same contextual implications from either one, each utterance utilizes the syntactic arrangement of its linguistic components to organise the hearer's efforts differently, which means that not all of the implications are implicated to the same degree or strength by each utterance (Sperber and Wilson 1987a:706).

Therefore, Sperber and Wilson (1987a, 1995) stipulate a natural linkage between linguistic form and pragmatic processing. In particular, they argue that the syntactic and phonological organisation of an utterance directly affects the way it is processed within an inferential capacity. The present thesis considers the idea that the visuospatial layout of a text's linguistic material is also capable of affecting its further pragmatic processing in particular ways. Specifically, it is suggested that when readers arrive at a given line ending/division, they experience a pause/gap within their perception/construction of the text's logical and propositional structure. Such pauses/gaps introduce a supplementary level of inference into the reader's live

construction of the text's rudimentary propositional content, which involves this content being preliminarily represented as a relatively *wider* and *weaker* range of explicatures.

Utterances are perceived and thus processed by hearers over particular stretches of time. This means that some of the constitutive concepts that link to the linguistic characteristics of such utterances can be accessed before others (Sperber and Wilson 1995:204). In terms of a written text, the writer's chosen style of visuospatial form can affect the reader's access to the conceptual material that the text's linguistic material stimulates at a cognitive level. Essentially, line divisions can be utilised to intentionally disrupt how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page, which has a direct effect upon how the text's fundamental logical form, and thus its more pragmatically developed propositional structure, is constructed/represented within the mind.

The perceptual information encoded by particular line divisions may be interpreted by some readers as invitations to pause momentarily upon certain elements of the text's syntax, and thus certain elements of its linguistically encoded content, during which such components can be processed within a more contextually expansive manner. When pausing, readers are able to draw inferences which relate to the possible ways that the text's logical and propositional structure might develop beyond the visuospatial gaps created by the line divisions. Everything occurring within the lines prior to the pauses/divisions will be held within a temporarily incomplete or fragmentary logical and propositional structure within the readers' minds; readers will use their inferential capabilities to pragmatically extend these incomplete or fragmentary logical and propositional structures upon an anticipatory-hypothetical basis. This process will lead to the derivation of a range preliminary logical and propositional forms being derived as possible pragmatic extensions of the text's momentarily incomplete structure; that is, as it is perceived during the pauses experienced in relation to given line divisions. Different readers of course may choose to pause for different lengths of time, and thus engage in variant levels of further inferential processing. Certain readers will enter into what Furlong (1996, 2014) refers to as *non-spontaneous* forms of interpretation, which will thus be sufficient for deriving sets of further *explicatures* that are wide ranging and *weak* enough to be classified as *poetic* in nature. Others though may pause for less time and thus engage in shallower or more *spontaneous* (Furlong 1996, 2014) forms of inferential processing, whilst some readers may fail to interpret the line divisions as triggering any additional levels of inferential processing at all.

The *poetic* capabilities of this phenomenon will be explored in more detail in relation to William Carlos Williams's (1986:372) famous imagist poem, 'This Is Just to Say', within the following section of the thesis.

5.7. 'This Is Just to Say'

A further element of hypothesis 2 states that although the use of visuospatial fragmentation essentially makes it more difficult to mentally construct the text's explicit-propositional content, the levels of indeterminacy that the use of such fragmentation injects into the rudimentary decoding and further pragmatic enrichment of the text often give rise to wider arrays of relatively weaker explicatures, which in many cases achieve *poetic* value.

The overall hypothesis will now be explored directly in relation to Williams's (1986:372) classic imagist poem, 'This is Just to Say', given in full below:

(37.) This Is Just to Say

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

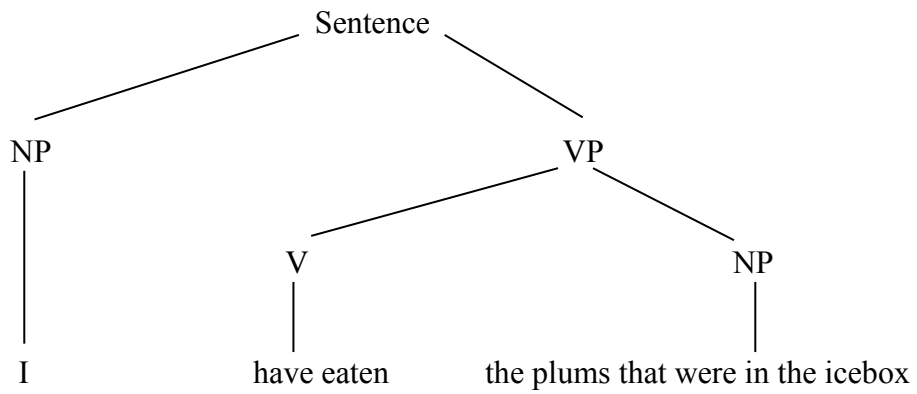
Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold[3]

As discussed in section 2.4, during the initial stages of utterance interpretation, in order for contextual effects to be achieved at the smallest processing cost, hearers make anticipatory hypotheses and derive implications even before the explicit-propositional content of the utterance has been fully developed. Sperber and Wilson (1995:205) assume that logical forms, like syntactic forms, are made up of different syntactic labels or slots. Different syntactic labels relate to distinct syntactic categories, which in-turn act as variables over different types of phrasal structure. Thus, *NP* acts as a variable over noun phrases, *VP* over verb phrases, and so on. Similarly, logical labels relate to a distinct and fixed range of logical categories, which in turn act as variables over

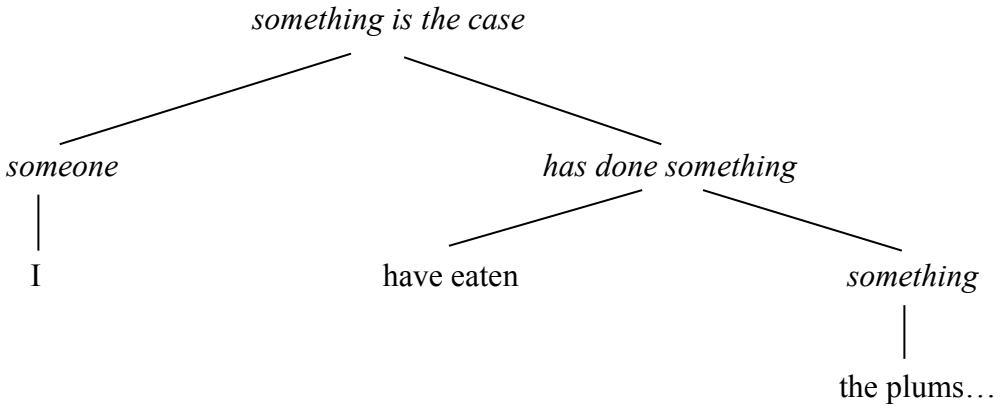
different types of conceptual representation, perhaps forming part of the essential mental apparatus that individuals use for constructing and representing the underlying meaning of any utterance. Sperber and Wilson (1995:205) use the pro-forms of English to represent them: therefore, *someone* is a variable over conceptual representations of people, *something* over conceptual representations of things, *do something* over conceptual representations of actions, and so on.

Following a methodology posited by Sperber and Wilson (1995:205), the syntactic structure and logical form of Williams's first stanza are given below in diagrams (38a) and (38b.):

(38a.)



(38b.)



A propositional representation of the fact that the speaker has eaten all the plums that were in the icebox would then carry the information: that someone has eaten something; that someone has eaten the plums that were in the icebox; that I have eaten something; that I have done something; and so on.

Again, following Sperber and Wilson's (1995:206) analysis of propositional form and structure, although there need not necessarily be an exact correspondence, there is a clear sense in which the logical category labels semantically represent and correspond to syntactic category labels of natural language. Therefore, a reader who has

made the anticipatory syntactic hypothesis that the words "I have eaten" will be followed by a noun phrase can, by semantically interpreting this anticipatory syntactic information, derive the anticipatory logical hypothesis, "I have eaten *something*". Sperber and Wilson (1995:206) see such hypotheses as playing a crucial role in the overall process of utterance interpretation – particularly, within the various pragmatic processes involved in the inferential enrichment of any semantically incomplete or manifestly vague words or phrases.

Thus, line divisions, when placed at particular points within a text's syntactic structure, can take advantage of the reader's natural tendency to use his or her knowledge of the lexical properties and parsing possibilities of individual syntactic elements to predict on an anticipatory-hypothetical basis up and coming sections of the text's incrementally developing logical and propositional form; that is, even before the explicit forms of those up and coming sections have been perceived or processed. The process involves dispersing integral syntactic units over multiple line structures, and thus over a relatively larger visuospatial context/distance. Consequently, this affects the way that the semantic content of these syntactic units is made to interact with further concepts and assumptions stored within encyclopaedic context. The visuospatial disbursement of the text's syntax caused by certain line divisions effectively leads to the derivation of a range of fragmented or incomplete logical and propositional structures, which provide relatively more indeterminate inputs into the further pragmatic processes involved in explicature-construction. Articulated in another fashion, it can be said that line divisions encode visuospatial gaps within the readers' perception, and thus representation/construction, of the text's fundamental syntactic/logical and propositional structure. During these gaps, readers are encouraged to make a range of further inferential estimations pertaining to the text's developing propositional content; that is, as it develops beyond the temporary phases of imperception generated by particular line divisions. Of course, such estimations are part of our natural tendency to strive for *optimal relevance*. However, writers often use line divisions to take advantage of this tendency, by using them to manipulate the spatio-temporal manner in which readers gain access to the full range of syntactic and logical constituents needed to construct a full-fledged logical and propositional representation of the text's content.

Line divisions then encode brief processing gaps within the reader's incrementally developing construction of the text's logical and propositional structure. During these processing gaps, readers make a series of inferential estimations as to the text's developing syntactic and logical form and its more pragmatically developed

propositional content; that is, in relation to how such form/content is likely to develop beyond the line divisions in question. The longer readers choose to pause before moving beyond the processing gaps encoded by particular line divisions, the more time there is allowed for the temporarily fragmented logical and propositional structure of the text to undergo further processes of pragmatic extension (albeit upon a preliminary or anticipatory-hypothetical basis) via further conceptual material retrieved from context.

A further consequence of this anticipatory-hypothetical process is that any preliminarily derived propositional forms may well be used to stimulate further derivation of what Sperber and Wilson (1995:108) refer to as *contextual effects*. Such effects are derived through further processes of inference, which take as conjoined input the full-fledged explicit-propositional form of a given utterance or textual segment, and further conceptual material retrieved from encyclopaedic context. The types of effect achievable include the strengthening and contradicting of old items of context, and the introduction of entirely new pieces of information which combine with an individual's existing contextual knowledge to derive a range of further propositional elements. The latter type of effect forms what Sperber and Wilson (1995:108) refer to as a *contextual implication*, in which newly presented information is seen as "adding to, and interacting with, information drawn from an existing representation of the world", in order to derive further pieces of new information that could only be derived through a synthesis of new and existing information, rather than attained from either source alone. The syntactic and logical separation introduced by some line divisions encourages readers to make anticipatory hypotheses pertaining to a line's ongoing propositional structure, which then opens-up particular domains of their encyclopaedic-contextual resources. The processing gaps encoded by certain line divisions will of course fall in relation to particular elements of the text's content, and thus allow the process of anticipatory hypothesis formation to proceed from specific points within the text's incrementally developing logical and propositional structure. The state of the text's linguistic structure when the pause/gap instigated by a given line division takes effect will determine the level of indeterminacy introduced into the inferential processes involved within the anticipatory-hypothetical construction of the text's ongoing propositional structure. Due to their anticipatory-hypothetical status, the preliminarily developed propositional forms will be deemed as communicatively *weak* in nature. The deeper the individual reader goes with his or her anticipatory-hypothetical interpretation of the text, the wider and weaker the range of derived propositional forms will be. If this range is both wide and

weak enough, then the effect will constitute an instance whereby *poetic effects* are primarily derived at the pragmatic level of *explicature*.

Within a recent relevance-theoretic article, Cave (2018:180) briefly considers the notion that poetic texts often utilise line variation and stanzaic divisions to impose breaks "at unexpected and apparently arbitrary moments" within the text's constituent syntactic structure and logical form (for example, one stanza ends in the middle of a sentence), which leads to the text's constituent structure being perceived as fragmentary, or "unfinished" in nature. Poetic lines can be composed so that the syntactic and logical structure of the text is visuospatially arranged upon the page in particular ways. End stopped lines, for example, may signal a completed logical or syntactic sequence, whereas lines in which the endpoint comes midway through an individual phrasal structure, or in between two clausal components, may cause such sequences to be entertained as two separate cognitive structures – that is, spliced, as it were, with an albeit momentary yet effective degree of logical indeterminacy at both ends of the intersected syntactic forms.

Such indeterminacy inevitably demands higher levels of inferential activity from the reader. The more experimental writers are with their use of line divisions, the more visuospatially fragmented the reader's perception of the text's linguistic material potentially becomes, and thus the more that content may be represented as a series of syntactically and logically disjointed structures within the mind. Effectively, line divisions can be tactically placed in order to introduce gaps into the reader's cognitive sequencing of the text's syntactic and logical form, which introduce higher levels of inferential indeterminacy into further development of the text's explicit-propositional structure, thus allowing for a wider and richer range of explicatures (perhaps of a *poetic* nature) to be derived as a result. Consequently, this may then encourage the reader to engage in a more contextually expansive, and thus *non-spontaneous* (Furlong 1996, 2014) form of inferential processing, when forming a wider interpretation of the text at an implicit level – perhaps even leading to *poetic effects* being derived at both pragmatic levels.

The present thesis argues that line divisions can be placed at particular points within a text in order to deliberately separate individual syntactic elements upon the page. These elements are integral for allowing the reader to construct a set of basic logical forms, from which the text's more pragmatically developed propositional content can be developed. However, line divisions often intersect, and therefore visuospatially disrupt, the spatio-temporal manner in which various syntactic

components of the text's constituent structure are perceived by the visual input system, and thus represented logically within the mind. Such disruptions can cause elements which are integral for deriving key aspects of the text's propositional content to be temporarily imperceptible to the reader, thus causing such content to be briefly represented as a range of incomplete or fragmentary logical and propositional structures. The tactical placement of line divisions at key sections within the text's constituent syntactic and logical structure can achieve levels of suspense in the reader. This suspense is experienced in relation to the processing gaps which such line divisions can often introduce into the reader's real time construction of the text's basic logical form and more contextually developed propositional content. The processing gaps promote extra inferential processes to be triggered in relation to those sections of the text's logical and propositional structure, which the tactical placement of line divisions actively disrupts upon the page and within the mind. The gaps are visuospatial in nature, and therefore contribute peculiar perceptual elements which are perceived and represented alongside the linguistically encoded content of the text. Because of their rudimentary perceptual character, such elements are of course unable to form direct syntactic or logical relations with the linguistically encoded content of the text; however, their basic perceptual character still encodes a cognitive element, capable of providing some form of input to further pragmatic processing, and thus the manner in which the text's linguistically encoded content is enriched at a further inferential level. It may well be the case that the processing gaps afforded by the text's fragmented visuospatial structure encode empty cognitive slots to be contextually filled in a similar manner to the way that semantically vague or manifestly ambiguous linguistic components, such as pronouns and deictic phrases, convey meaning that from a relevance-theoretic perspective is often described as *procedural* rather than *conceptual* in nature (for more on the distinction between *conceptual* and *procedural encoding*, see Blakemore 1987). Although such cognitive elements cannot enter into a direct relation with the text's linguistic structure, the semantic material retrieved from context, which is used to complete the empty slots/units in question, can be used to inferentially enhance the semantic material afforded by the text, leading to a richer and more diverse range of propositional forms.

Therefore, the visuospatial fragmentation of linguistic structure, often generated by line divisions, contributes its own special type of perceptual input to pragmatic processing. This input consists of processing gaps that cause extra processes of inferential enrichment to be triggered in relation to the text's linguistically encoded

content. The gaps are perceived and thus represented alongside the text's incrementally developing syntactic and logical structure. They trigger the derivation of a range of further propositions that are potentially cancellable when readers proceed beyond the line divisions and continue their ongoing construction of the text's developing syntactic and logical structure. These gaps cause brief windows of linguistic and propositional incompleteness to be formulated, which primarily feed into the inferential aspect governing the reader's construction of the *explicit* structure of the text. During these brief windows, inferential processing can consider the wider propositional possibilities of the text: that is, inferential mechanisms effectively jump ahead and formulate a range of anticipatory-hypothetical logical and propositional structures that the incomplete linguistic structures could be used to derive. When the reader proceeds to the following line, the window of cognitive uncertainty is closed, and the lexical and semantic ambiguity posed by the incomplete linguistic structure is resolved.

Essentially, this section has argued that there is a whole host of additional, relatively weaker propositional forms derived alongside the main explicit content of the text, which are forced into the reader's cognitive environment via the use of line divisions. Even though the salience of these additional effects will fade significantly as the reader reads on, their conceptual material will remain manifest within the reader's cognitive environment to at least some degree, therefore contributing to a richer background context in relation to which the rest of the poem's explicit content and implicit import can be processed. This allows the distinct layout of the text to contribute a peculiar perceptual element to our fundamental representation of its content, which may trigger *non-spontaneous* forms of inference (Furlong 1996, 2014), and thus *weaker* forms of communication deemed *poetic* within the specialised framework of relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222). Furthermore, although the writer is essentially making it more difficult for the reader to perceive and construct a logical blueprint for the text's more pragmatically developed conceptual form, the increased processing effort is offset due to the derivation of a relatively higher contextual yield, thus conforming to the *communicative principle of relevance*. The phenomenon may constitute what some relevance theorists have observed as the distinctiveness of many literary texts, which features "an overt linguistic or logical difficulty which rewards interpretive effort and invites sustained processing effort" (Banks 2018:132; see also Cave and Wilson 2018b:12-13). However, in the case of line divisions, the difficulty is introduced into our construction of the text's basic conceptual content through the visuospatial context over which that content is perceived, rather than through a stylistic

complexity or peculiarity that is generated at a more linguistically based level (e.g. in terms of syntactic, phonological, lexical-semantic patterning, and the like).

The next section will explore the extra inferential activity that line divisions can generate in the reader in more detail, and in relation to certain portions of William Carlos Williams's text that involve the types of visuospatially triggered processing in question.

5.8. Visuospatial form as a trigger for further processes of pragmatic enrichment

The previous section broadly explored the idea that line divisions can often be used by writers to encode distinct perceptual elements, which trigger additional levels of inference to be introduced into our construction and representation of certain elements of the text's fundamental propositional value.

For example, the opening clause of Williams's text, "I have eaten the plums", is arranged over a two-lined visuospatial context, which causes a peculiar perceptual element to be experienced alongside the underlying conceptual form encoded by the opening clause's linguistic content. It is almost as though this perceptual element pervades or intrudes into the reader's mental construction of the clause's basic logical structure, therefore causing its further propositional content to be developed within a relatively more linguistically and pragmatically indeterminate light. The added perceptual element encoded by the visuospatially fragmented nature of Williams's text encourages the reader to represent the opening line's semantic content within a relatively more indeterminate light; that is, as giving rise to a relatively wider range of relatively weaker explicatures. In essence, the perceptual element contributes a further, linguistically empty, and thus semantically variable, cognitive unit or slot, which is positioned alongside the linguistically encoded items that make up the opening line's syntactic and logical structure. This further cognitive unit/slot can be filled or completed with a range of further semantic material retrieved pragmatically from context in order to derive a number of preliminary propositional forms, for example: "*I have eaten [something/at some time/with someone/somewhere/in a certain manner/ etc.]*". Although the anticipatory-hypothetical extensions of the line are achieved via pragmatic means, the process is to some extent linguistically-guided through a process known as saturation (Recanati 1993; Carston 2016; Depraetere and Salkie 2017), since the constituent verb element is logically marked at some underlying conceptual level as

being capable of being complemented by further constituent elements conveying varying semantic components.

The same phenomenon is also triggered in relation to the subordinate clause arranged over the last two lines of the first stanza: “that were in/ the icebox”. Again, the clause is arranged over a two-lined visuospatial context, which causes a peculiar perceptual element to be perceived and represented alongside the underlying conceptual form pertaining to the clause’s constituent structure. However, rather than being placed in between two separate constituents of the text’s structure, the peculiar perceptual element features within an individual constituent element of the clause’s structure; that is, within the adverbial element, “in the icebox”. As a result, the added perceptual element acts to separate the various linguistic components featuring within the adverbial element in question. Specifically, the line division falls in between the prepositional (“in”) and the noun (“the icebox”) elements that combine to form the overall constituent. Again, the perceptual element contributes a further linguistically empty and thus semantically variable cognitive slot or unit, which can be filled/completed pragmatically from context in a number of different ways, in order to derive several preliminary propositional forms, for example: “*that were in [some place/some state/etc.]*”.

The decision to spread the adverbial element across two separate lines may also prompt the reader to engage in closer inspection of its central conceptual component, “icebox”, thus leading to a deeper and more contextually expansive form of inferential enrichment of the adverbial element’s linguistically encoded content. However, what is important to note is that rather than further inferential processing of the text’s linguistically encoded content being triggered via some stylistically pronounced feature of the text’s linguistic design, it is the text’s visuospatial peculiarity alone which acts upon our rudimentary cognitive representation of such content, in order to prompt the relatively deeper levels of processing in question.

The effects of this phenomenon may be even more pronounced when integral syntactic units are separated across larger stanzaic boundaries, as they are in the case of the subordinate clause, “and which you were probably saving for breakfast”, which is placed within the second stanza away from the main clausal structure, “I have eaten the plums that were in the icebox”, in relation to which it is grammatically dependent. This feature of the text places even more visuospatial distance between the integral syntactic units in question, thus leading to relatively higher levels of logical fragmentation being experienced at a rudimentary cognitive level, which consequently introduces relatively

higher levels of indeterminacy into the inferential aspect involved in determining the text's more pragmatically developed explicit-propositional form.

The subordinate clausal structure is partitioned across four separate lines which make up the entire second stanza:

(39.) and which/ you were probably/ saving/ for breakfast

Again, the line divisions fall at particular points within the stanza's constituent syntactic structure. They cause the text's linguistically encoded content to be arranged into a series of relatively more fragmented logical structures within the reader's mind. The most prominent example of this phenomenon is the placing of a line division in the middle of the verb element, "were probably/ saving", which functions to bring a whole new level of attention to the adverbial component, "probably". This word would have most likely lacked such scrutiny had the verb element been arranged over a single line, as one might argue that the word "saving", rather than the adverbial element, would ordinarily receive the most attention since it carries the major share of the entire unit's conceptual force. The visuospatial structure of the text, however, directs the reader's attention away from this central conceptual component and encourages him/her to process the less integral adverbial element within a far more contextually expansive manner, thus leading to an additional array of *weakly communicated* cognitive effects (the conceptual characteristics of which are discussed in further detail, below, in relation to the notion of *ad hoc conceptuality*).

Similarly, within the last three lines of the poem, the writer's choice to unravel the complex adjectival structure, "they were *delicious*/ so *sweet*/ and so *cold*", over a series of three short lines helps to focus our attention on each of the central conceptual elements, "delicious", "sweet", and "cold", separately and in greater detail, before moving on to the next in the series of constituent items. Again, the input to pragmatic processing which triggers this process is of a rudimentary perceptual, rather than complex linguistic nature.

In the second line of the poem, the phrase, "the plums", conventionally implies the existence of a single, unique referent which is mutually manifest to both addresser and addressee. By placing this phrase upon the second line, Williams inserts a distinct visuospatial gap into the reader's real time scanning of the poem, and thus his/her live construction of the text's constituent logical structure and pragmatically developed propositional content. This gap causes the reader to pause briefly before moving on to the second line where he or she will immediately perceive the phrase, "the plums". By

placing the phrase upon its own individual line, the fact that it is "*the*" plums rather than "*some*" plums or just "*plums*" is pushed into the forefront of the reader's attention so that this distinct referential nature becomes the focally stressed element of the overall constituent. This focus upon the definite article's referential attributes causes a range of further conceptual items to be implied, and thus made manifest within the reader's overall cognitive environment to a much stronger degree than would have been the case had the phrase, "the plums", been included within the opening line. Such conceptual items might include: "The plums that are known to us both"; "The special plums"; "The plums that you were saving"; "The plums that were not meant to be eaten yet"; and so on. It is also likely that by becoming far more salient within the reader's cognitive environment such conceptual items will interact with further items of the linguistically encoded content and further items of context, as the reader progresses through the text. Furthermore, such interactions will derive a range of additional contextual effects which will communicate a relatively higher degree of *relevance*. The key thing to add, however, is that these additional conceptual items (as well as any further contextual effects derived as the reading develops) are made far more cognitively prominent as a direct result of the text's distinct visuospatial characteristics.

What is noticeable about Williams's chosen visuospatial organisation is that many of the syntactic constituents that provide access to the poem's underlying logical form are arranged over a series of visuospatially fragmented structures. This makes the constituent conceptual structure of the overall text far more noticeable and prone to extra processes of inferential development, than would have been encouraged, had the text's content been arranged over a less disjointed visuospatial context. For example, it has already been pointed out that the subordinate clausal structure that features in the second stanza of the poem (and which/ you were probably/ saving/ for breakfast) is spread across each of the four lines that make up the overall stanzaic unit. This arrangement encourages readers to consider the semantic content suggested by each constituent component in greater detail and within a logical form/structure (if only for a brief, transitory period) which does not yet contain the conceptual material of up and coming elements of the text's linguistically encoded content. The effect could well be one in which readers pause on the central conceptual item of each constituent element (PROBABLY, SAVING, BREAKFAST), causing the lexically encoded concepts to be pragmatically adjusted so that they are looser, richer, or in some discernible way different to their prototypical conceptual forms.

As a result, the fragmented visuospatial style of this text might be said to add a *weak* or *poetic* element into the reader's construction of the text's explicit-propositional content. However, such weak/poetic elements are not triggered by some strange or peculiar element of the text's linguistic structure, but by some distinct element of the text's visuospatial form which conveys information of a rawer perceptual form. The fragmented nature of the text's line structures visuospatially encodes a peculiar perceptual element, which causes the lexically encoded material to be perceived in a slower, more careful, and more cognitively indeterminate manner. This could lead to formation of a series of *ad hoc concepts* (PROBABLY*, SAVING*, BREAKFAST*), rather than, or in addition to, the lexically encoded conceptual structure of the text[4].

Following Carston's (1996b, 2002a, 2010b, c, 2016) theory of *ad hoc conceptuality* presented in 4.3, it could be argued that the inferential enrichment process which is central to the construction of the *ad hoc concept* PROBABLY* leads to the development of an indeterminate spread of weakly communicated concepts and assumptions that loosely relates in some manner to feelings experienced by the speaker in relation to their decision to eat the plums (e.g. sheepishness, embarrassment, shame, the need for exoneration; or perhaps even open rebellion or disproval against being prohibited from eating "the plums" in the first place). The semantic content of this newly derived *ad hoc concept*, therefore, extends far beyond, and even conflicts with, the semantic material encoded by the actual lexical concept PROBABLY. Many of the semantic features contained within the ad hoc conceptual spread license a range of subtly different concepts and assumptions which suggest the converse of the idea that the speaker is uncertain as to whether the plums were actually being saved and should not have been eaten; furthermore, the reader's construction of any one of them is sufficient for the utterance to successfully communicate in an ironic, and decidedly *poetic* fashion. A key point, however, is that if the text's lexical content were to be arranged within a relatively less visuospatially fragmented manner, then many of these peculiar ad hoc conceptual features would likely fail to emerge, and as a result the text would take on a less *poetic* quality at an explicit-propositional level.

The fragmented visuospatial context utilised within Williams's text increases processing effort at the levels of perception, representation and inference. However, the increased mental effort incurred will lead to a range of additional cognitive effects being derived as a result of the extra inferential activity. Such effects will inevitably reward the reader's increased effort, and thus redress the balance of *optimal relevance*. As discussed within section 2.1, literary communication requires that the writer maintain

the right level of interpretive difficulty to satisfy the reader's aesthetic requirements, whilst enabling him/her to derive enough cognitive effects to be worth the effort in the first place. The aim then, is to achieve an *optimal* balance between *effort* and *effects*, given the complex needs and requirements of writer and reader and the conventions of literary production and interpretation set by the genre itself. The notion of *optimal relevance*, therefore, is one of the key cognitive-pragmatic elements that the framework of relevance theory brings to the analysis of line divisions within the present thesis.

The language of this poem could be described as precise and clear, even ordinary and simplistic in the eyes of readers who expect poems and poetic language per se to be crammed full of all manner of tropes and linguistic patterns. The poem stands as a pragmatic experiment, demonstrating the defamiliarizing effect of truncated visuospatial structure, which helps to point out the pragmatically ambiguous and thus subtly *poetic* nature of even the most prosaic and banal of linguistic arrangements. We are effectively allowed to peer through the syntagmatic cracks of Williams's chosen linguistic content and zoom-in on individual lexical elements beyond expected levels, thus making their fundamental semantic forms and wider contextual extensions seem strange and pragmatically open-ended.

5.9. The poetic effect of short line-length and line divisions: a summary

The overall argument of this chapter is that *non-spontaneous* forms of interpretation (Furlong 1996, 2014) are capable of being triggered by certain elements of a poetic text's distinctive visuospatial characteristics i.e. its sustained use of short line-length and its tactical placement of line divisions. Such *non-spontaneous* levels of inferential processing effectively reward readers with arrays of *weakly* communicated cognitive effects, which combine to form common impressions and degrees of affective mutuality between the writer and the audience, which Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) describe as *poetic* in nature. The key thing which sets these hypotheses apart however is that short line-length achieve forms of *non-spontaneous interpretation* and thus the derivation of *poetic effects* at the pragmatic level of *implicature*, whereas line divisions achieve such effects at the level of *explicature*.

The next chapter will analyse a poetic text which consists of relatively lengthier textual lines, and which therefore contains far less fragmentation at an overall visuospatial level than the poems analysed thus far. The aim is to demonstrate that the text's use of visuospatial form will cause much shallower forms of

perception/processing in the reader, thus leading to less *poetic* forms of interpretation as a result.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. From an ostensive-inferential perspective, 'This Is Just to Say' can be seen to contain two sets of ostensive act, and two forms of *relevance*. Firstly, there is the 'lower level' ostensive act of communication between the creator of the note and its intended recipient within the world of the poem, which creates an *internal* level of relevance that adds to our contextual knowledge about what is happening within that text-internal world; secondly, there is the 'higher level' ostensive act of communication between the poem's actual creator and the reader, which creates a level of relevance that is *external* to the poem's content, and thus enables us to reconsider and update the contextual knowledge that relates to our own world and to our own lives (for further detailed discussion of the distinction between *external* and *internal relevance*, see Wilson 2011, 2018; and Scott 2019). Another useful distinction made within relevance theory that could contribute to our understanding of literary texts is one made between *comprehension* and *interpretation* (Wilson 2011, 2018; Scott 2019). According to Wilson (2018:189), *comprehension* is "the process of recognizing the intended import of an ostensive act", while *interpretation* "includes the broader process of drawing one's own conclusions as part of the overall search for relevance". What Wilson means is that although readers will undoubtedly draw a considerable amount of propositions and further contextual implications that the writer intended to communicate as part of the ostensive act, when it comes to literary interpretations, many readers will extend their contextual searches and derive a potentially wide range of further concepts and assumptions in order to satisfy their own requirements for *optimal* relevance, which in reality may extend far beyond anything the writer could have conceivably predicted. Therefore, we could argue that it is at the level of *interpretation* where Williams's poem achieves the majority of its contextual effects, and thus *relevance*; that is, if the ostensive act, which is produced through the writer showing us what is in reality a 'lower level' ostensive act that for us achieves a very low level of *internal* relevance, is going to justify our decision to pay attention to it in the first place. Cave and Wilson sum this idea up neatly in the following remarks:

> the production of a work of literature is an ostensive act which raises expectations of relevance, whether through its linguistic register or its generic framing: it seeks to convince the reader that something valuable is being expressed, perhaps all the more so because it is free from the criterion of immediate, practical relevance. It *remains* relevant, one might say; its very function is to achieve a higher-order relevance which can inflect the cognitive environment of future readers in unexpected ways (Cave and Wilson 2018b:15).

2. When determining what constitutes a word, I have taken an entirely visuospatial approach. Lexically and semantically, what I have measured as constituting a single word might in fact constitute less than one word. Likewise, what I have measured as multiple words may actually constitute single packets of meaning, thus functioning as individual words from a lexical-semantic perspective. The boundaries between different lexical and phrasal structures are not always seamless. Some words, although made up of multiple visuospatial units, in fact only encode individual semantic packets i.e. single lexical-semantic structures. Not all compound or complex lexical-semantic structures are always visuospatially marked in an overt manner. Thus, when collecting my WPL data, I have concentrated solely on visibly recognisable markers of lexical-semantic structure: that is, typographical spacing when determining word divisions, and hyphenated expressions when determining compound and complex word constructions. However, this decision does not affect the results obtained to any meaningful degree since the line-length data that this methodology has produced still pertains to the visuospatial distribution of lexical content at some level; the data still necessarily relates to how the underlying logical form of the text is fundamentally perceived and represented at a rudimentary cognitive level.

3. ‘This Is Just to Say’ by William Carlos Williams, from THE COLLECTED POEMS: VOLUME I, 1909-1939 © 1938 by New Directions Publishing Corp. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.

4. A further argument, which the limited word count of the present thesis prevents from being explored at length, could be that the perceptual information encoded by the visuospatial form of short line-length combines with the linguistically

encoded content to form what De Brabanter (2010:200) refers to as "composite signals": that is, signs or signals that consist of linguistic information, and non-linguistic information which is of a more basic perceptual nature. The perceptual information carried by such signals may bypass the information stored within the linguistic module of the brain and instead gain access to what Pilkington (2000:153) refers to as *phenomenal memory stores*, which contribute peculiar, non-propositional elements to the comprehension process. These non-propositional elements combine with the lexically encoded material when fed into the central processing system, and when inferentially processed produce an array of emergent semantic properties that contributes a strange ad hoc conceptual quality to the propositional form of the text.

6. Poetic analysis: 'Driftwood and Seacoal'

6.1. Introduction

The main tenet of the present thesis is that the various elements pertaining to a poem's visuospatial form, such as short line-length, line divisions, spatial gaps and so on, can affect the manner in which the text is both read, and processed at a deeper cognitive level. The thesis posits two hypotheses: one relating to short line-length, and one relating to actual line divisions. The first of these states that short line-length leads to increased perception of the text's lexical content, by placing the vast majority of this content within a region that is located post-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the lines' endpoints. Such increased perception leads to lengthier activation of the lexical and encyclopaedic material that such content links to within the mind, which may encourage *non-spontaneous* forms of inferential processing and thus *poetic* arrays of weak implicatures to be derived as a direct result of the visuospatially truncated nature of short line-length.

The second hypothesis states that line divisions can be tactically placed at particular points within a text in order to intentionally disrupt how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page. Such disruptions have consequences for how the text's linguistically encoded content is arranged into a preliminary set of logical structures within the reader's mind ready to be fed into the pragmatic processor to undergo further processes of inferential enrichment. The idea is that line divisions can cause the reader to formulate a range of sub-propositional structures, or propositional fragments, which again trigger *non-spontaneous* forms of inference, but communicate *poetic effects* as wide arrays of *weak explicatures* rather than *weak implicatures* (which the present thesis argues in respect of hypothesis 1, in relation to the use of short line-length).

The overarching argument of the overall thesis, therefore, is that poetic effects are capable of being generated from elements of rudimentary visuospatial form, which is an idea that does not seem to have been previously explored at length within the framework of relevance theory. The present chapter seeks further validation for this hypothesis in relation to a further text: Andrew Crozier's 'Driftwood and Seacoal'; however, due to the fact that Crozier's text is a prose poem, its inclusion and discussion within the present chapter is conducted in relation to an important caveat (for a version

of the full poem, in which line divisions are positioned in the same places that they are in *Other* 1999:43, see Appendix, *Figure 3*). In prose poems, at a micro-textual level, neither line-length, nor line divisions, are deliberately utilised by writers in order to create particular effects upon perception/processing. This is the case because prose poems are organised upon the page according to a set of default visuospatial conventions that relate to all prose texts, rather than according to motivated visuospatial designs that have been carefully crafted by writers to achieve distinct communicational effects[1].

Despite the unmotivated (micro-level) visuospatial design of Crozier's text, the following section will discuss how its distinct visuospatial characteristics still affect the reader's real-time scanning and thus perception of the text's language in particular ways, from which a particular type of cognitive-pragmatic processing may be said to arise; albeit, one which arises minus the communicative intentions of the text's creator. The main argument developed is that prose-poetic texts make use of a default visuospatial form which automatically arranges the vast majority of the text's linguistic material within areas that fall pre-onset of the readers' parafoveal awareness of the text's line endings. This necessarily triggers relatively decreased levels of activation of the material's corresponding lexical and encyclopaedic content within the mind, thus stimulating a default processing strategy that involves shallower levels of contextual exploration of a more *spontaneous inferential* type, and which provides a cognitive state that is the converse of the one required for the derivation of visuospatially generated *poetic effects*. The main purpose of this chapter then is to show that through adoption of the prose-poetic form, Crozier removes not only the overt communicative intentionality, but also the specialised perceptual effects from his text's micro-level visuospatial design (that is, at an individual line level) which within specialised literary contexts act as procedural prompts to engage in *non-spontaneous* forms of inferential processing, and as a result provide opportunities for deriving *poetic effects* of a visuospatially generated nature. It could be argued then that Crozier's use of the prose-poetic style produces an effect that is the exact opposite of the one produced by the visuospatial characteristics pertaining to Raworth's text discussed in Chapter 5, as well as other 'conventional' poetic forms of both a metrical and free verse variety.

Furthermore, the chapter will consider a visuospatially rearranged form of Crozier's opening line in order to simulate how line divisions can be tactically placed in order to visuospatially trigger further cognitive-pragmatic effects of a manifestly *poetic* nature, thus providing further discussion of the poetic effects of line divisions – an idea

which was also discussed throughout Chapter 5, but in relation to Williams's (1986:372) 'This Is Just To Say'. Therefore, despite its prosaic status, 'Driftwood and Seacoal' acts as a deviant poetic case which to a substantial degree still proves my hypotheses pertaining to the general cognitive-pragmatic effects, and more specialised *poetic* capabilities, of both short line-length (see section 4.5) and line divisions (see section 4.6).

Prior to these aims though, the following section begins by discussing the visuospatial characteristics of prose poetry generally, before considering their cognitive and communicative impact in direct relation to Crozier's text.

6.2. 'Driftwood and Seacoal' as a prose poem

In formal verse (poetry with a set meter and rhyme scheme) and blank verse (unrhymed poetry with a set meter) the poem's meter determines the placement of each line division, and thus the length of each line, by stipulating that all lines within a given poetic composition contain a certain number of syllables. In free verse (poetry without any specific meter or rhyme scheme), line-length and line divisions are determined by the poet's desire to create a particular cadence, or to place more emphasis on certain words by inserting more space around them (as in the case of the poems discussed so far throughout the thesis). It is often the use of line-length and line divisions which gives the aforementioned types of poetry their distinct and instantly recognizable poetic quality; that is, recognizable as being distinct from prose, which it has already been mentioned does not use line-length or line divisions in the same way. It is for this reason that the line is often considered to be the fundamental unit of poetry, and line divisions the markers of these units[2].

Writers commonly use line divisions and line-length to determine the speed at which readers are encouraged to read through and thus process the language of their texts. Therefore, the present thesis has argued that both short line-length and line divisions can slow readers down considerably and encourage them to pay careful attention to particular aspects of the text's linguistic construction. It has also been argued that in the right context such visuospatial components can trigger readers to engage in *non-spontaneous* forms of inferential processing (Furlong 1996, 2014) which consequently give rise to cognitive-pragmatic effects deemed *poetic* within a specialised relevance-theoretic sense (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222).

However, there is a whole range of poetic writing, known as *prose poetry*, which does not use line-length or line divisions in the same way as either the

aforementioned metrical and free verse varieties mentioned briefly above, or the texts discussed in detail within the previous chapter. Although actively named as poems by their creators, and often published in anthologies alongside other poetic compositions, prose poems lack the metrical and rhythmical qualities of their formal, blank and free verse counterparts. Therefore, rather than being made up of lines (at least in a 'standard' poetic sense), the fundamental unit of prose texts (poetic and otherwise) is the paragraph, which gives them a decidedly 'unpoetic' visuospatial appearance and character. Despite such features, one argument in favour of prose poems belonging to the genre of poetry is that they frequently exhibit many of the rhetorical tropes and literary devices (e.g. metaphor, imagery, repetition, complex and fragmented syntax, sound patterning, and so on) typically associated with poetry; furthermore, they often demonstrate poetry's inclination for utilising language which draws attention to its own material form and density, "for its own sake" as it were, rather than for serving any practical communicative role or function (Mukařovský 1964:19; see also Jakobson 1960).

Moreover, writers of such prose poetry do not deliberately choose to use lines of a certain length, or to end the lines at a particular place upon the page. Instead, such choices are left to the individual publisher; they are standard rather than deviant, and arbitrary rather than motivated. The difference between poetry and prose is summed up neatly in the following remarks by Huff (2018):

> poetry is visibly distinct from prose because its lines are sundered before the page's natural end, at clearly calculated points. Poems are dialogues between the presence that is the text and the absence that is the white space revealed.
>
> In contrast, where a line ends in a prose piece is arbitrarily dictated by a page's margins. Hence why "prose poems," which don't utilize line breaks, are qualified by the word "prose." Every prose line runs blindly towards the brink, and once it bumps its head against the uniform white space of the margin (in LTR and RTL scripts), it starts again on the next line, replicating this headlong trajectory over and over until you have pages filled with blocks of text offset by only smidgen indents. Prose flows, but it doesn't care where it goes (Huff 2018: *Discover Literature*).

Therefore, prose poets do not meaningfully use relatively longer forms of line-length, or acts of line division, in order to deliberately impact upon their readers' perceptual or inferential mechanisms in particular ways. Again, such factors are a natural, yet unintended corollary of the default visuospatial format applied by the text's publisher. Any effects upon perception and cognitive-pragmatic processing that are generated by prose poetry are thus devoid of the overt communicative intentionality that often

accompanies similar effects achieved visuospatially in the case of standard poetic verse. It cannot be argued that prose poets deliberately employ either 'long' line-length, or line divisions, in order to create particular effects upon perception/processing. This is the case because prose poems are organised upon the page according to a default set of visuospatial conventions that pertain to all prose-style publications, rather than according to motivated visuospatial designs that have been carefully crafted by writers to achieve distinct communicational effects.

One such instance of this phenomenon can be viewed in relation Andrew Crozier's (1999:43) 'Driftwood and Seacoal' (see Appendix, *Figure 3*, for a complete version of the text). Due to the fact that this text is a prose poem, and is thus formed into paragraphs rather than lines, individual constituents of the text's lexical structure are perceived less attentively and thus processed far more shallowly, than in the case of texts that are broken into lines. Although the text is in one sense made up of lines of a relatively longer nature to the texts discussed so far within the thesis, this characteristic of the text's visuospatial design is not intentionally applied by Crozier in order to deliberately affect the reader's real time scanning of the poem's language, or the manner in which the linguistically encoded content of the poem is handled at a further cognitive-pragmatic level. The absence of such intentionality in respect of the poem's visuospatial design removes the (ostensive) communicative nature of the perceptual effects generated by the text's lineal characteristics, since all decisions pertaining to these characteristics (e.g. number/length/division of lines) are effectively handed over to the publisher.

The lineal features of the text's fundamental visuospatial form, however, do have an effect upon the reader's real-time scanning, and thus perception/processing of the text's language. As with all prose texts, the vast majority of the lexical material in Crozier's poem is situated pre-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the lines' endpoints, which means that the ratio of *shallow* to *deep* processing of the lines' linguistic content is massively affected in favour of the antecedent of these two terms. Since they do not employ lines in a conventional poetic sense (that is, in terms of both length and divisions) prose texts (poetic and otherwise), by their very nature, engage the reader's visual input system(s), and thus the perceptual module of the brain, in ways that are completely distinct from the ways that such processes are generated by relatively more visuospatially fragmented textual forms. However, the rudimentary perceptual characteristics of prosaic-visuospatial structures, as well as their more advanced cognitive-pragmatic effects, are both delivered by the publisher, and thus

received by the reader, in a fashion that is devoid of any overt communicative intentionality on the part of the writer; at least at the micro-textual level.

Crozier's text then adheres to the visuospatial default of prosaic forms of writing: a preselected option adopted by publishers when no alternative is specified by the text's creator. Therefore, the reading/processing strategy mentioned above (involving a relatively higher ratio of *shallow* to *deep* processing than non-prosaic poetic forms) is also the default established by the reader's perceptual and inferential mechanisms, since no alternative strategy is triggered by the text's micro-textual visuospatial design, which means that such micro-textual characteristics are not utilised by the writer to achieve particular communicative effects.

In the other texts discussed within the thesis so far, and indeed most poems, both the use of line-length and the use of line divisions are determined by the poet rather than the publisher. Such visuospatial characteristics are arranged in order to create a particular rhythm or to make the reader pause on certain sections of the text's lexical content, therefore inviting more careful consideration of their conceptual forms. It was shown in section 5.4 how Raworth's text is broken up into many extremely short lineal constructions. As a result, it was argued that most of the text is arranged post-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the gaps in perception/processing experienced in relation to the lines' endpoints. The general idea then is that shorter lines help to focus the reader's attention upon a larger proportion of the text's content, which enables the conceptual entries that link to such content to be more rigorously explored, than would have been the case, had such content been arranged over relatively longer line progressions. On the other hand, the visuospatial characteristics of Crozier's text, as a prose poem, invite a quicker and less disjointed form of perception of the text's total lexical content. Thus, perception is spread equally over each separate paragraph which makes up the overall text, rather than being concentrated upon particular sections of individual lines.

Because 'Driftwood and Seacoal' is not made up of lines in the conventional poetic sense, the main idea formulated is that its default visuospatial characteristics trigger a default perceptual and inferential processing strategy in the reader. The visuospatial structure of the text is not utilised by Crozier in order to prompt lengthier perception of its lexical content. This process consequently leads to relatively decreased levels of lexical and encyclopaedic activation, from which less contextual material can be inferentially processed in order to derive additional contextual effects. The overall effect is that the text does not communicate poetically in a visuospatially triggered

sense; that is, in the manner evinced by the hypothesis pertaining to short line-length posited within the present thesis.

However, before moving on, it should be noted that whilst the micro-textual visuospatial characteristics of Crozier's poem do not function communicatively, at a macro-textual level, it would not be accurate to say that Crozier does not achieve any (intended) communicative effect by use of the prose poem form, since (for a poem) this form is wilfully un-poetic. In other words, readers may still search for reasons why Crozier has decided not to use a 'conventional' poetic layout. If this were a plain piece of prose then the text's visuospatial form would fail to 'intentionally' communicate any effects at either a micro- or macro-textual level, however, since it purports to be poetic in nature, there surely are some effects intended at the latter of these two levels. Therefore, one could make the distinction between macro- and micro-level effects. Although there may be fewer effects intentionally generated at an individual line level in Crozier's poem, there are most likely effects achieved at the macro-level for the reader, pertaining to why Crozier decided to choose the prose poem form. These macro-level effects may well achieve *poetic* value (in a specialised relevance-theoretic sense) since there does not seem to be a single and definite answer for why Crozier opted for the prose poem form. This perhaps suggests that Crozier was aiming to communicate a *poetic* array of concepts and assumptions which combine to form an overall impression, rather than a single or small (and thus determinate) range of cognitive-pragmatic effects. If we did try to pin down the effect in more explicit terms, it could be argued that the array of concepts and assumptions loosely relates to the notion of implicitly rejecting or challenging the conventional poetic practice of using fragmented visuospatial form to intentionally communicate particular effects at the micro-textual level. In this sense, the prose poem form would be used to make an implicit statement about the use of visuospatial form in poetry. Perhaps the poet's intended message is that visuospatial fragmentation has now become, or is in danger of becoming tired and overfamiliar, so he is challenging or even outright rejecting this practice via use of the prose poem form. If this interpretation is taken to be the case, then perhaps readers are meant to read the poem in a prose-like manner as a way of altering their usual response to poetry thereby making the experience different and unfamiliar.

In conclusion, although this section has briefly mentioned line divisions, it has primarily focused upon the notion of line-length in relation to Crozier's text. Therefore, the following section aims to redress the balance, by looking at a visuospatially rearranged form of Crozier's opening line in order to hypothetically consider how line

divisions can be used to 'intentionally' trigger cognitive-pragmatic effects of a manifestly *poetic* nature within the reader.

6.3. Line divisions in 'Driftwood and Seacoal'

A key hypothesis of the thesis rests upon the idea that line divisions can be used to affect the way the text's syntactic structure is visuospatially laid out upon the page. Line divisions can cause visuospatial gaps to fall at integral points within this structure, consequently affecting the way the text's linguistically encoded content is arranged into a preliminary set of logical structures, before being enriched at a further cognitive-pragmatic level within the mind. The visuospatial gaps can cause readers to pause briefly on the lexical material located at the ends of particular lines. Such pauses prompt momentary processing gaps within the reader's incrementally developing construction of the text's logical and propositional form. The gaps are filled with instances of increased inferential activity in which readers can construct a series of anticipatory hypotheses pertaining to the text's prospective logical structure and propositional content, as they develop beyond the processing gaps. Thus, the levels of visuospatial fragmentation that line divisions often introduce into the text can open-up various elements of its linguistically encoded content to additional processes of *non-spontaneous* (Furlong 1996, 2014) inferential enrichment, which would have been absent, had the text been arranged within a less visuospatially fragmented manner.

However, in line with the main argument posited within the previous section, as a prose poem 'Driftwood and Seacoal' cannot be said to include line divisions of an intentionally designed nature. It is not the case that the text does not contain line divisions per se, but that rather than ending "at clearly calculated points", the lines are made to run on "blindly towards the brink [of the] uniform white space of the margin"; that is, they "flow", but do not necessarily care where they "go", so to speak (Huff 2018). With this notion in mind, it is still possible that the default visuospatial characteristics of Crozier's text could lead to particular elements of its syntactic structure being laid out upon the page in ways which could affect the manner in which the text's linguistic content is processed within a wider inferential sense, perhaps even leading to the derivation of *poetic effects* for some readers. Such arrangements and the effects which they derive though would be accidental and unmotivated offshoots of the text's default visuospatial design, coincidentally and uncommunicatively attributed to the text's publisher, rather than Crozier himself. Furthermore, even if such arrangements

of syntax did fortuitously arise from the text's default visuospatial structure, because of the expert reader's awareness of the text's status as prose poem, it is perhaps unlikely that such readers would consciously search for, and thus consider, the *relevance* of such arrangements in the first place (see section 2.1 for more on Sperber and Wilson's 1995 technical notion of *relevance*).

Despite this fact, various rearranged forms of Crozier's text can be used to hypothetically consider how line divisions could be intentionally utilised in order to visuospatially trigger additional cognitive-pragmatic effects within the reader. One such example can be demonstrated in relation to the text's opening line:

(40.) These men are on their feet, not all day long, when they may be on their knees

Firstly, a schematic for the line's basic propositional structure can be sketched in the following manner:

(41.) *Some individuals* *are being described* *as exhibiting a particular state*
(These men) (are) (on their feet)

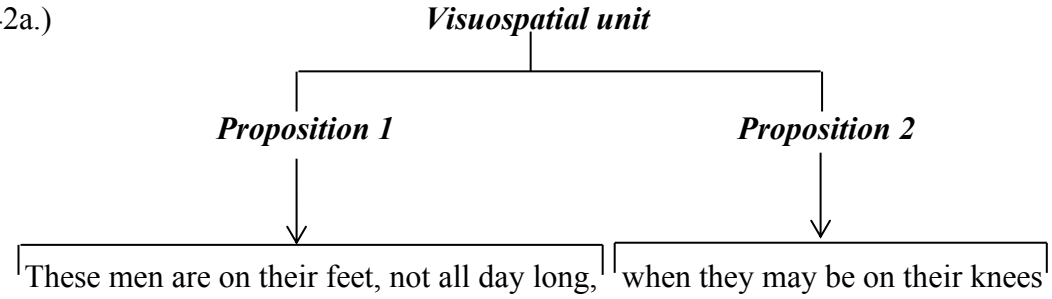
not for a particular period of time *during which they may exhibit a further state*
(not all day long,) (when they may be on their knees)

Upon investigation, the above schematic reveals a complex propositional structure, in which two separate propositions are embedded within a single textual unit. It seems logical to conceive of the boundary between these propositional structures as coinciding with the obvious syntactic division between the main clausal (These men are on their feet not all day) and subordinate clausal (when they may be on their knees) structures of the overall segment of text. The propositional content held within the main element of the syntactic unit can be paraphrased as something resembling the idea that the men in question are not on their feet all day. This content consists of a determinate semantic expression and a complete propositional structure in and of itself. The idea of a group of individuals not being on their feet all day is propositionally independent, just as the accompanying syntactic realisation of the expression is grammatically independent of the surrounding syntactic units. The further idea that the men are also on their knees for a certain portion of the day constitutes a separate propositional value, which is embedded within a more complex grammatical structure/propositional framework. This larger structure/framework seems to hide its separate grammatical/propositional value somewhat; that is, the information presented within the second proposition achieves its

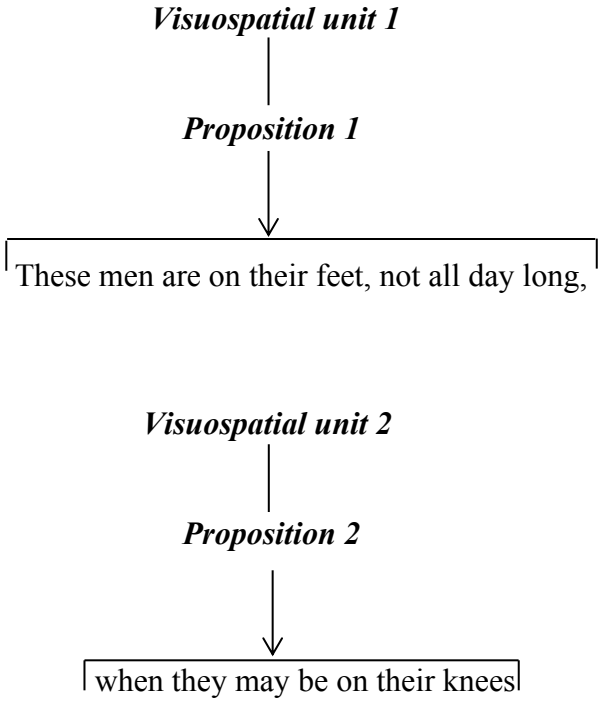
propositional value in respect of the overall framework, rather than achieving such value in its own right, which it may have otherwise done, had the information been segmented away from the rest of the proposition within a separate visuospatial unit.

Therefore, there are effectively two ideas here: 1.) that the men are not on their feet all day long; 2.) that the men are on their knees for certain periods of the day. This notion is illustrated to some degree in (42a) and (42b.), below:

(42a.)



(42b.)



As can be seen from (42a.), longer line progressions lead to fewer visuospatial segregations of both the text-segment's syntactic structure and the propositional content which it partly constructs. In the case of the first visuospatial progression, more of the text's syntactic structure is compacted into a single, unimpeded visuospatial unit, which means that neither **Proposition 1** nor **Proposition 2** get the chance to be constructed,

and thus processed in relation to encyclopaedic context, in their own right as it were, but rather achieve *relevance* (contextual effects – see section 2.1) as a single propositional unit. In (42b.), however, it can be argued that line divisions are effectively used to disrupt the way the text's syntactic structure is visuospatially arranged upon the page, potentially leading to particular cognitive-pragmatic effects for some readers.

One such example is perhaps achieved through the intentional disruption of the visuospatial arrangement of the main and subordinate clausal structures in (42b.). In (42b.) this disruption of syntactic structure is more likely to cause the reader to pause upon the final constituents of **Proposition 1**, and before moving on to the following line use his/her knowledge of those constituents' lexical properties and syntactic co-occurrence restrictions to predict on an anticipatory-hypothetical basis possible ways that the syntactic and thus propositional structure of the text might develop within the following line. Before perceiving the linguistic items pertaining to **Proposition 2**, the reader could well be forgiven for predicting, on the strength of **Proposition 1**, that the semantic content of the following line will develop within a more positive light. For example, possible implicatures which come to mind as a result of the idea of the men not being on their feet all day are that the men may get some respite, that their task is not so arduous, that they work hard but there is some reward at the end of it all, and so on. Such implicatures, all of which connote a distinct level of optimism pertaining to the men introduced in **Proposition 1**, will determine the nature of the reader's anticipatory-hypotheses relating to the text's ongoing explicit structure, as it develops beyond the line division in (42b.) that is. These implicatures will be cancelled out, however, and the preliminarily derived logical and propositional forms regarded as garden path interpretations, when the reader processes the actual semantic content contained within **Proposition 2**. This semantic content, of course, is not particularly positive, since during the period of relief implicated via **Proposition 1**, the men are not shown to be at rest at all but are depicted as likely being on their knees. The overall impression of optimism/positivity implicitly conveyed via **Proposition 1**, therefore, is suddenly replaced by one of pessimism and negativity. The effect is one in which the reader is temporarily hopeful for the men and thus goes down one line of processing only to have the rug effectively pulled from under his or her feet, as it were. In other words, the reader's initial interpretation of the text is turned on its head; the surprising effect of **Proposition 2** gives rise to an array of additional *weak implicatures* that communicates an impression of hopelessness, and even cruelty and unfairness, pertaining to the situation that the men find themselves within.

However, due to the truncated visuospatial design, the additional lines of processing, and thus the overall poetic effect, are more likely to transpire in the case of (42b.) than in (42a). In (42a.) the further implicatures about the men will remain manifestly derivable elements of the reader's cognitive environment, but their salience within that cognitive environment will not be raised sufficiently enough by the text's visuospatial form to effect a full-fledged garden path interpretation in the reader, thus eradicating the additional *poetic effect* that is derived as a result.

On the other hand, when both propositions are arranged upon separate lines, as demonstrated in (42b.), the visuospatial gap imposed by the line division invites the extra inferential extensions of **Proposition 1** to become highly salient within the reader's cognitive environment. This process occurs due to the reader pausing more on the final constituents of the line which encode the basic idea of the men "not" being on their feet all day long. This then gives the reader more chance to explore the extra ideas (such as those listed above) that this particular semantic element of the overall propositional form can generate through further forms of pragmatic enrichment, some of which will be used to predict the semantic content of the text's ongoing propositional form as it develops within the next line.

When looking at the actual content of the second line, many of the extra ideas listed above will be regarded as garden path interpretations and thus cancelled out, since the second line rather ironically communicates the idea that although the men are "not" on their feet all day long, their work often drives them to their knees; thus, the sense of hope and positivity communicated by the preceding line functions in a rather short-lived and bitter-sweet capacity. It could be argued that the extra contextual effects give the reader a momentary yet false sense of hope for the men's lives within the context of the information presented within **Proposition 1**. When the reader arrives at **Proposition 2**, this sense of hope is suddenly snatched away, making the reader sympathise and share in their plight even further. The visuospatial gap encoded by the line ending effects a pause in the reader, which increases the level of surprise, and thus the effect of the irony, since during this pause he or she can consider the positive implications of **Proposition 1** to a much greater degree than in the case of (42a.), thereby, significantly increasing the *poetic effect* of the line.

In conclusion, the rearranged (micro-textual) visuospatial form of Crozier's opening line, as demonstrated above in (42b.), serves to show how line divisions might be used in order to encourage *non-spontaneous* forms of inference (Furlong 1996, 2014) which perhaps give rise to *poetic effects* (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222); that is, if

structured (at a micro-textual level) more in line with the formal conventions of poetic verse rather than the default visuospatial characteristics of poetic prose, and thus attributed to the communicative intentions of the writer rather than the publisher. In the case of prose poetry, the process of constructing the logical and propositional structure of the text is relatively less disjointed, than it is in the case of poetic verse. The process involves the text's linguistic structure being arranged upon the page with fewer pauses and visuospatial gaps being used to effectively break up the text's syntactic structure, which as a result has a direct effect upon the distinct manner in which the text's linguistic content is represented within the reader's mind, and consequently the way that it is processed at a further cognitive-pragmatic level.

6.4. Summary

This chapter has sought further validation for the central tenet of the overall thesis, which states that poetic effects are capable of being generated from rudimentary elements of visuospatial form (line-length, line divisions, spatial gaps, and so on), in addition to stylistically pronounced linguistic items (e.g. syntactic structure, lexical repetition, phonological patterning, and so on). Such validation has been conducted in relation to Andrew Crozier's (1999:43) prose poem 'Driftwood and Seacoal'. As a prose poem, however, Crozier's text is structured according to paragraph rather than line formation. Consequently, in section 6.1, it was stated that the communicative intentionality often attributed to the visuospatial characteristics of verse poems cannot be applied in the same manner to the (micro-textual) visuospatial characteristics of Crozier's text.

In verse poetry, line-length/divisions are often determined by the poem's meter, or by the writer's desire to disrupt the visuospatial arrangement of the text's syntax, in order to encourage readers to pay more careful attention to particular aspects of the poem's linguistic construction. However, as was stated in section 6.2, writers of prose poetry do not deliberately choose to use lines of a certain length, or to end the lines at particular places upon the page. Instead, such choices (related to the text's micro-textual visuospatial form) are left to the individual publisher; they are standard rather than deviant, arbitrary rather than motivated. Therefore, prose poets do not meaningfully use relatively longer forms of line-length, or individual instances of line division, in order to deliberately impact upon their readers' perceptual or inferential mechanisms in particular ways. Any effects upon perception and cognitive-pragmatic processing that are generated by prose poetry at a micro-textual level are thus devoid of

the overt communicative intentionality that often accompanies similar effects achieved visuospatially in the case of standard poetic verse. This is the case because prose poems are organised upon the page according to a default set of visuospatial conventions that pertain to all prose-style publications, rather than according to motivated visuospatial designs that have been carefully crafted by writers to achieve distinct communicational effects of a micro-textual nature. Nonetheless, the default visuospatial design of Crozier's text, although not directly attributable to the poet himself, does still affect the reader's real-time scanning and thus perception of the text's language, from which a particular type of cognitive-pragmatic processing may be said to arise.

Prose texts automatically trigger a default perceptual strategy in readers which leads to such texts being scanned far more quickly than their verse form counterparts. This leads to shorter fixations upon the text's lexical content which causes its associated lexical and encyclopaedic entries to be activated for much shorter periods of time, thus leaving less opportunity for additional lines of contextual processing to be achieved as a result. As with all prose poetry, within Crozier's text, the vast majority of the text's lexical material is situated pre-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the lines' endpoints, which means that the ratio of *shallow* to *deep* processing of the lines' linguistic content is massively affected in favour of the antecedent of these two terms. This scenario is the exact opposite of the one occurring in relation to the poetic texts discussed so far within the thesis. It is important to reiterate, however, that the shallower levels of perception and processing which are experienced in relation to Crozier's poem are an automatic and preselected default of all prose writing (poetic and otherwise).

Furthermore, despite the unmotivated nature of Crozier's (micro-textual) visuospatial design, section 6.3 looked at a visuospatially rearranged form of Crozier's opening line in order to hypothetically consider and thus simulate how line divisions can be tactically placed in order to 'intentionally' trigger cognitive-pragmatic effects of a manifestly *poetic* nature within the reader.

In conclusion, for the purposes of the present thesis, and when considered in relation to the other poems discussed elsewhere within the thesis, 'Driftwood and Seacoal' acts as a deviant poetic case which despite its prosaic status, to a substantial degree still proves my hypotheses pertaining to the general cognitive-pragmatic effects, and more specialised *poetic* capabilities, of both short line-length (see section 4.5) and line divisions (see section 4.6).

Notes to Chapter 6

1. I have obtained a further published version of ‘Driftwood and Seacoal’ (Crozier 1985) and it is indeed the case that the poem is presented differently across different publications.

2. It should be noted that many of the insights as well as the definitions of formal, blank and free verse poetry given in the opening paragraph to this section are taken from Bergman (2017).

7. Concluding remarks

7.1. Poetic effects and visuospatial form: a relevance-theoretic perspective

Sperber and Wilson (1995:222) posit the term *poetic effect* for the peculiar effect of an utterance which communicates the majority of its *relevance* through an array of weak implicatures. With this term in mind, the thesis began by stating that the input to pragmatic processing which prompts the derivation of such poetic effects is conventionally triggered via some stylistically pronounced feature of a text's linguistic design (e.g. through a repeated lexical item, a peculiar syntactic form, a piece of alliteration, and so on). However, I have argued that the perceptual effects generated by both short units of line-length and line divisions are also capable of generating a range of further cognitive-pragmatic effects – many of which will be weakly explicit and implicit, and therefore, *poetic* in nature.

The main hypotheses pertaining to this claim were worked out in some detail within sections 4.5-4.9 before being explored more rigorously in relation to an actual poetic dataset within Chapters 5 and 6. In order to illustrate and recap on the main points arising out of this analysis, it is worth considering a further poem.

The chosen poem, 'An English Sampler', was written by Fred D'Aguiar (1999:51-52), a poet, novelist and playwright born in London of Guyanese parents and raised in Guyana. At the heart of the poem there is a collection of terms which creates a combined sense of fragmentation, inability, inaction and loss (e.g. "caves in", "losing", "disintegrate", "can't climb", "we won't", "fall", "broken", "won't see"), which it could be argued reflect the sense of dislocation that the writer felt when leaving Guyana at the age of 12 and returning to the highly politicised atmosphere of the British black community of the 1960s and 70s (The Poetry Archive, no date). Like many of the poems included within Caddel and Quartermain's (1996) experimentalist collection, D'Aguiar's text is permeated by a sense of otherness and duality formed through dichotomies in the language between, amongst other things: belonging/misplacement; safety/danger; hope/pessimism. The poem uses an unusual layout in the sense that alternating lines are positioned so that their initial points are aligned somewhere near to the mid-sections of the immediately previous lines. Thus, the feeling of fragmentation and incongruity conveyed by a significant proportion of the text's lexis is matched by a similar sense of disunity in the poem's visuospatial design.

The next section will consider the lines of processing generated through the text's visuospatial arrangement within respect of the main hypotheses explored throughout the thesis so far.

7.2. A poem to consider

The chosen poem for this section will not be analysed in detail but will be used to illustrate some of the key points pertaining to the general cognitive-pragmatic effects and further poetic potential of short line-length and line divisions from the specialised perspective of relevance theory. The poem is given in full below[1]:

(43.) **An English Sampler**

A roof caves in,
into a yard,
a yard losing
its roof, a high
walled yard, we call
this yard our country.

We're safe in there
until we find
ourselves dodging
blocks of concrete
that disintegrate
on impact on concrete.

We can't climb those
walls, we won't be
valiant and
try, not in the
company of
such young people.

So in assessment
we praise youth,
the resilience
thereof, the way
they are prepared
to fall and bounce

right back up again
while we ruminate
on possible
pitfalls that
await us and
befall us anyway.

To youth for showing
how to walk away
from the knock on
effect of the
knock on the head
or to the heart

or broken bones.
This is England,
though it could be
anywhere. We are
not herders but
teachers. We mend

the bones and soothe
the broken heads,
tell those big hearts
the hurt will lessen.
The roof we crossed
to get this far

threatened to cave
in under us
even as we crawled
along shadows
judged to be steel
rafters, in pairs,

scraping our bellies,
hands and knees on
anti-climb paint
and praying that
those kids, our kids
won't see us now.

A central hypothesis of the thesis hinges on the idea that (at a micro-textual level) short line-length causes the reader to perceive a high proportion of the text's linguistic material within a slower and more deliberate manner than is the case with lengthier line units, since much more of this content is situated within an area which the thesis has referred to as post-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the text's line endings. Research discussed within section 4.4 indicates that such awareness is triggered somewhere around the penultimate word of each successive line within a given text. The intensified state of perception that short line-length generates causes the content's associated encyclopaedic material to be made available within the reader's cognitive environment for relatively longer periods of time. Within specialised literary contexts, readers can take such extended periods of lexical/encyclopaedic activation as procedural

prompts to engage in forms of what Furlong (1996, 2014) refers to as *non-spontaneous interpretation*, which involve a more sustained and "exhaustive" (Furlong 2014:78) level of inferential processing when considering the wider contextual possibilities of the text's explicit-propositional material. The reward for such levels of processing, and the inevitable processing costs which they incur, is often a torrent of additional cognitive effects of a manifestly vague and indeterminate, and thus *poetic* nature (Sperber and Wilson 1995:222 – see section 2.6 of the present thesis).

However, the thesis has also stated that this might not always be the case for all types of text/discourse which employ the use of short line-length (in particular, see sections 4.5, 4.8 and 5.4 of the present thesis). For example, it is likely that the perceptual effects of short line-length are interpreted as properly communicative in nature when experienced in relation to literary texts, but that they are not viewed within this capacity when experienced within texts and types of interpretation of a non-literary nature, therefore making them prone to achieving *poetic effects* in the former, but not so likely in the latter. It was also stated that different readers have differing abilities and preferences for responding to the perceptual effects of short line-length, therefore again making some individuals more able/willing to delve into the realms of *non-spontaneous inferential* thought in order to achieve *poetic* levels of processing. With these ideas in mind, the thesis has pointed out that it is not that short line-length intrinsically generates poetic levels of processing across all contexts of interpretation/discourse, but rather that it intrinsically leads to deeper levels of perception and processing, which can 'potentially' lead to wide arrays of weak implicatures. Therefore, the visuospatial phenomenon of short line-length contributes its own distinct input to pragmatic processing which can generate a range of further cognitive-pragmatic effects, but the exact nature of those effects may well be determined by a range of further contextual factors.

D'Aguiar's above poem consists of an average of 3.3 WPL, which judging by the comparative figures gained from both Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' and Williams's (1986:372) 'This Is Just to Say', and the figures pertaining to the conventional poetic texts listed within *Figure 2* of the Appendix section, means that this poem may be deemed to consist of fairly short lines. For example, depending upon which progression the reader takes through the poem, Raworth's (1999:199-202) 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' has an average of either 3.87 or 1.93 WPL. On the other hand, Williams's text has an average of 2.5 WPL, and the texts which make up the conventional poetic dataset listed within

Figure 2 of the Appendix section have an average of 7.23 WPL. The relative brevity of the lines within D'Aguiar's poem will cause a fairly substantial amount of the text's content to be situated within the zone for increased perceptual/activation falling post-onset of the reader's parafoveal awareness of the text's line endings. The idea is that line endings cause a momentary occlusion to the reader's incrementally developing and textually guided construction of the lines' ongoing logical and propositional structures. During real time scanning of a poetic text, readers become parafoveally aware of up and coming line endings, and thus of the temporary occlusions that these line endings cause within their perception/processing of the text's linguistic content. Consequently, their perception of the linguistic material falling post-onset of such parafoveal awareness is intensified in order to ensure that transitions between lines (often encoding two interrelating sections of the text's logical and propositional structures) is achieved as smoothly as possible. Increased perception of the text's linguistic material allows the associated encyclopaedic material to remain active for longer periods which encourages lengthier contextual processing of the text's rudimentary propositional content, during which a whole host of additional contextual effects can be derived. This hypothesis is an attempt to formulate a cognitive-pragmatic account of the peculiar poetic effects of many highly fragmented textual forms from a rudimentary perceptual, rather than complex linguistic perspective.

If the area for increased perception/processing is loosely estimated to cover the last two words of each line, then in relation to the D'Aguiar's above text, which excluding the title contains a total of 198 words running over 60 lines, a total of 60.61% of the poem's entire content can be said to be situated in relation to the area for increased perception/processing in question. Although this figure is not as high as the related figure obtained from Raworth's text of 98.15% in section 5.4 (that is, when read according to **Progressions 2** and **3**; see section 5.3), it is still the case that a fairly substantial amount of D'Aguiar's text is placed within the region pertaining to the increased perception/processing triggered when the reader becomes aware of up and coming line endings through parafoveal viewing. This argument is further strengthened if the figure gaged from D'Aguiar's text is considered in relation to similar data taken from the conventional poetic dataset listed within *Figure 2* of the Appendix. Duffy's 'Valentine', for example, arguably the most visuospatially innovative of all the texts listed, displays the relative figure of 40.71%.

The fact that what might be best described as *visuospatially generated poetic effects* are just one component within the literary or poetic process at large should be

reiterated. However, it is argued within the present thesis that a range of visuospatial elements (e.g. line-length, spatial gaps, line divisions, and so on) affect the way that texts are read and interpreted. When considered within the framework of relevance theory, the analysis of such elements can provide insights into the way that we read and experience poetry from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective.

Additionally, the jagged structure of D'Aguiar's poem has interesting consequences for how the increased perceptual zone comes into play for deriving visuospatially generated poetic effects. Every other line is pushed across the page so that its endpoint aligns more closely with the endpoint of the previous line. This means that the reader's gaze does not have to travel as far in order to perceive the initial elements of the repositioned line, which could in one sense mean that reading time is speeded up, and that the text is perceived/processed to a shallower degree. However, the jagged visuospatial structure also means that the reader's gaze also does not travel to the expected textual point when perceiving the initial parts of each repositioned line. When going to the area where the following line would usually be expected to begin, the reader first perceives a blank space, which causes not only a break in perception but also a break in processing. This break could create a slight jarring effect within the reader's mental construction of the logical and propositional structure of the text, which could result in him/her temporarily forgetting the logical and propositional structure pertaining to the previous line's endpoint. This may prompt the reader to glance backwards and thus perceive the last line's endpoint a second time, but more importantly it may trigger slower and more careful perception/processing of the current line's start point, as the reader attempts to re-establish coherence between the logical and propositional structures pertaining to both line units. Consequently, this would cause increased perception/processing to fall, not only in relation to each line's endpoint, but also in relation to the start point of each repositioned line. The result is that the unconventional visuospatial form of the text is utilised in order to invite greater perception/processing of even more of the text's linguistic material. This leads to increased activation of a greater range of the associated lexical and encyclopaedic material within the mind and causes a wider and weaker array of additional contextual effects to be derived in relation to more sections of the text's explicit-propositional content.

Before moving on, I will return briefly to the idea first introduced within the opening chapter, and then worked out in further detail within section 6.2, which stated that *poetic effects* may be generated at a macro-textual level. It could be argued that the

overall visuospatial design of D'Aguiar's poem creates its own holistic effect which arguably contributes to the reader's experience and interpretation through the communication of a *poetic* array of concepts and assumptions, all of which may relate in some loose way to the poem's jagged and uneven visuospatial structure. These concepts and assumptions may combine to form the impression that there is some power coercing the words into uncomfortable and ill-fitting compartments or structures independent of their meaning and meaningful connections with other words. Again, as with visuospatially generated poetic effects occurring at an individual line (and thus micro-textual) level, this would suggest that the visuospatial design of the whole poem is an ostensive-inferential phenomenon in its own right, thus constituting an act of 'showing', rather than 'telling'. The macro-level visuospatial design of the poem, therefore, takes on a meaning of its own in the reader's experience of engaging with the poem.

A further hypothesis of the thesis states that the tactical placement of line divisions can cause the text's constituent syntactic structure to be arranged upon the page, and therefore constructed/represented within a cognitive manifestation, in a relatively more fragmented fashion. Line divisions themselves perceptually encode visuospatial gaps within the text's syntagmatic development, in relation to which (within poetic contexts) readers are encouraged to pause briefly before moving on to the following line structures. Often a line division will be placed in order to intentionally disrupt how the text's constituent syntactic structure is laid out upon the page, constituting a kind of visuospatial equivalent of a deliberate 'pause for effect', which triggers a considerable degree of further (*non-spontaneous*) inferential processing that achieves a distinct communicational 'reward' primarily at an explicit-propositional level. The general idea is that the gaps/pauses generated by such line divisions place the reader within a momentary state of cognitive-pragmatic suspense in respect of how the text's content will develop beyond the divisions/breaks in question. Using his or her inferential mechanisms, the reader makes a series of anticipatory hypotheses pertaining to the text's ongoing logical and propositional status, which derive a range of provisional *weak explicatures*. Whether the effect of the range of explicatures derived in relation to a single line division is wide/weak enough to be classified as genuinely *poetic* in nature may well vary between individual readers, however the present thesis contends that such an effect is achievable. However, if line divisions are employed in order to introduce levels of visuospatial (and therefore logical and propositional) fragmentation consistently throughout a text's developing syntactic structure, then the

combined effect is likely to establish a level of poeticity within a cumulative and therefore holistic sense, which will support/complement (and perhaps in some way emphasise or intensify) the affective strength of the more conventionally triggered poetic effects; that is, those generated via more conventional linguistic means.

In order to explore this hypothesis further, take for example the opening two lines of D'Aguiar's above poem:

A roof caves in,
into a yard,

Although the two lines can be parsed and represented as forming a single clausal structure, and thus propositional expression, the fact that this clausal/propositional unit has been arranged over two lines involves the deliberate visuospatial separation of the subject-predicate ("A roof caves in") and adverbial elements ("into a yard") that form the overall expression. As a result, such visuospatial separation of the expression's integral syntactic units could cause the opening two lines to be developed into two separate, and thus relatively more fragmented logical and propositional structures within the mind. Dillon (1978) introduces the notion of line endings causing phrasal boundaries to be misperceived when a single phrasal structure is split across two lines, as is perhaps the case with Milton's decision to arrange the head word ("the Fruit") and its postmodification ("Of that Forbidden Tree") upon two separate lines within the following extract from his epic poem 'Paradise Lost':

(44.) Of Mans First Disobedience and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree …

The line ending introduces a visuospatial break which forces "premature closure" (Dillon 1978:7) of the phrasal structure and the propositional content that it derives. The reader thus perceives the overall phrasal unit as two separate structures – each of which leads to an incomplete or fragmentary logical and thus propositional form. In respect of D'Aguiar's opening lines, the misperception and premature closure, as well as the resulting propositional fragmentation that it causes, functions at a clausal rather than phrasal level; however, the type of phrasal dislocation and premature closure that Dillon expounds can be seen elsewhere within D'Aguiar's text, such as in lines 4 and 5:

its roof, a high
walled yard, we call

Here the compound adjective, “high walled”, which is acting as a premodifer within the larger noun phrase to which it belongs, “a high/ walled yard”, is split across two lines. The line ending comes in between each individual element of the adjectival unit, forcing premature syntactic closure at the word “high”, and causing, if only in a momentary sense, the overall unit to be arranged into two separate and relatively more fragmented logical structures which give rise to a relatively wider and thus weaker range of explicatures in relation to this section of the text. The effect of this segregation of the words, “a high”, is that the line division encourages the reader to perceive them as forming a completed phrasal structure, in which case the word “high” may be entertained in its nounal rather than adjectival form. In this case, the reader will be expecting the proceeding linguistic items falling after the line division to feature a predicate element to supplement the already completed (or at least perceived/misperceived to be completed) subject component, “a high”, rather than material that extends the subject. Based upon such expectations, the reader may begin to derive a range of anticipatory hypotheses pertaining to the text’s ongoing explicit structure, before the lexical material contained within the following line has even been perceived.

However, readers possess a vast range of conceptual items within their encyclopaedic-contextual resources which are capable of fulfilling the role of predicate, and thus pragmatically extending, upon an anticipatory-hypothetical basis, the line’s incomplete or fragmentary logical and propositional structure. The result may be the communication of an array of weak explicatures so wide-ranging in number that paradoxically it may be impossible to experience the overall effect as anything other than a general feeling or attitude in relation to this section of the text, otherwise we risk destroying the overall effect through elimination of its “intentional vagueness” (Sperber and Wilson 1995:56), which it could be argued is the very thing that provides it with its defining poetic quality in the first place.

With such ideas in mind, the total range of weak explicatures might be best described as giving rise to a general feeling or impression which somehow extends or reflects the notably positive and elevated emotional qualities associated with the semantic content encoded by the noun phrase, “a high”. Although such preliminary interpretations pertaining to the text’s ongoing logical and propositional status are resolved when readers move on to the following line, these anticipatory hypotheses will remain salient to some degree within their cognitive environments, thus impacting upon how they entertain the propositional form and wider contextual effects pertaining to

further sections of the text – albeit in an extremely weak, yet characteristically *poetic* sense.

A similar effect can also be said to occur at a lexical level on lines 3 and 4 of stanza 6:

> from the knock on
> effect of the

In these lines the idiomatic noun phrase, "knock on effect", may be temporarily misperceived as relating to a series of smaller phrasal structures. The visuospatial gap generated by the line division could cause the reader to perceive the preposition, "on", as initialising a separate adverbial element aimed at providing further information relating to the location in which the separate noun phrase, "the knock", is occurring; or it could cause the reader to perceive the words "the knock on" as forming a truncated version of the larger idiomatic phrase "the knock on effect", which denotes roughly the same semantic content. In this latter case, the word, "effect", would form a separate phrasal structure, and as a result of the visuospatial gap generated by the line division, may be granted renewed focus and the ability to achieve a propositional status independently from the rest of the idiomatic phrase to which it may be said to belong. In this way, the visuospatial fragmentation that tactical placement of line divisions often creates is a method of opening up the text's basic linguistic structure to new types of perception, and new lines of inferential processing; as a result, the linguistically encoded content is formulated as an input to further pragmatic processing within a different light and the propositional effects achieved may be richer and more diffuse in nature.

Propositional fragmentation then is perceived at multiple syntactic levels throughout the entire text via the visuospatial separation of integral syntactic units upon the page generated by tactical placement of line divisions. In relevance-theoretic terms, such visuospatial separation can cause the text's propositional structure to be derived as a relatively larger and weaker set of explicatures, than would have been the case had the text been arranged within a less visuospatially fragmented manner. Line divisions may limit the amount of linguistic guidance provided for developing the logical and propositional structure of a given line, since a significant proportion of the line's logical and propositional structure is situated upon a successive line and is thus temporarily imperceptible to the reader. Such temporary imperception allows the reader to make a series of anticipatory or preliminary hypotheses pertaining to its ongoing or developing

logical and propositional status. Furthermore, the segregating of individual chunks of the text's propositional content, which are to some degree encoded by distinct elements of its linguistic structure (e.g. lexical items, phrase groupings, clausal structures, and so on), invites increased attention to be paid to developing the contextual implications of the propositional units in question. Such deeper exploration of the text's wider contextual effects naturally raises the potential for the communication of *poetic effects* – the innovation of the present thesis being manifest in the idea that the input to pragmatic processing which prompts the derivation of such effects can be of a rudimentary perceptual, as well as complex linguistic nature. Again, this is not an attempt to reduce the notion of literary value or complexity to a narrow visuospatial act, but simply an attempt to explain how one element within what seems to be an intricate matrix of interrelating effects contributes to the multifaceted nature of literariness, specifically in relation to the cognitive-pragmatic framework of relevance theory.

7.3. Future aims

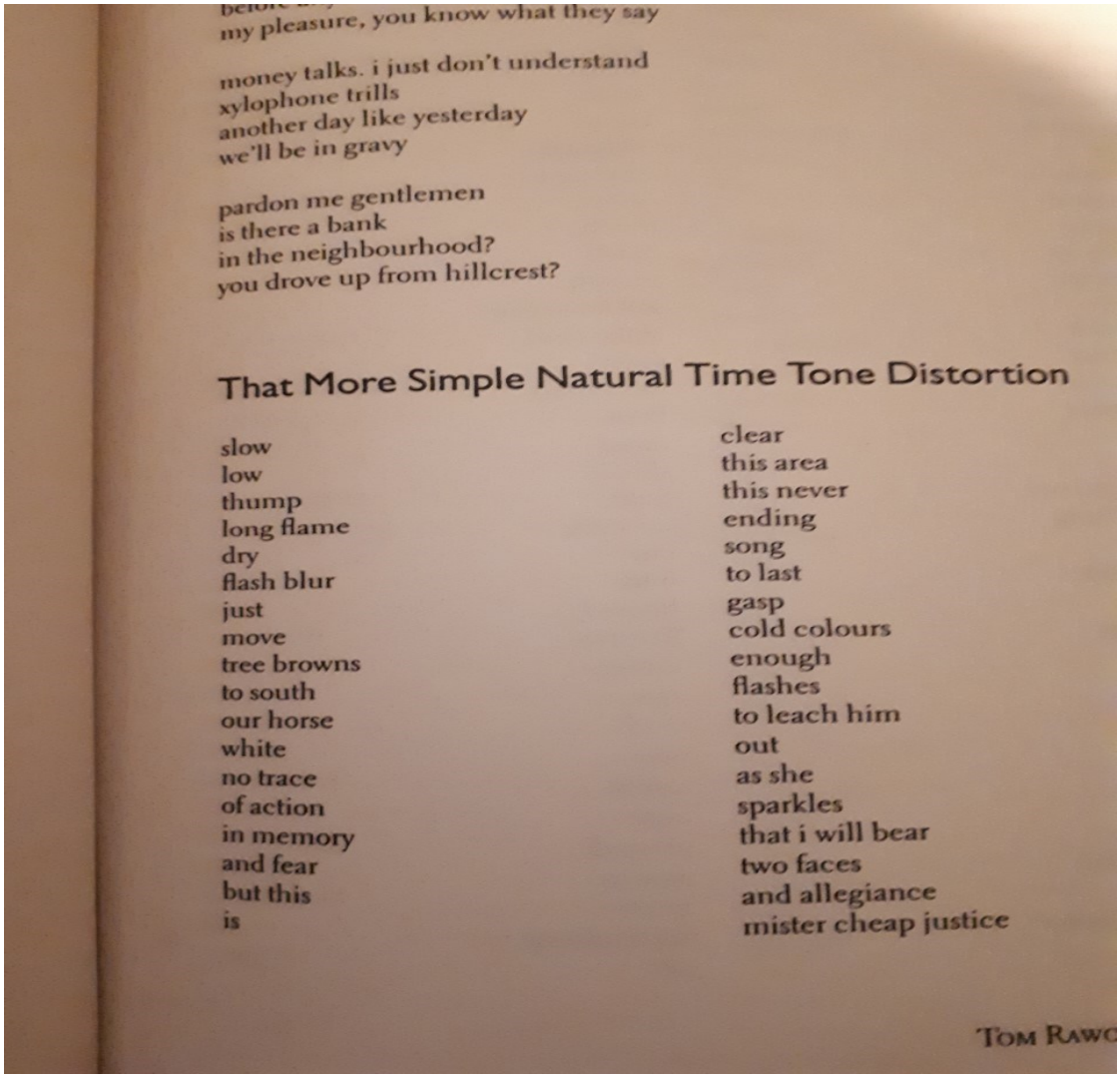
Overall, the thesis has proposed an account of the effects of short line-length and line divisions from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective grounded mainly within the framework of relevance theory. As is traditionally the case with many cognitive-pragmatic accounts of literary/poetic style, its major proposals remain largely theoretical in nature. Other than for purposes of tradition, I have chosen to adhere to this method of research, because I wanted to focus on developing and outlining the theoretical stance put forward within the present thesis to an explanatorily rigorous level prior to engaging in an empirical study that would validate or falsify its conclusions. The next step, however, will be to seek such empirical validation for my main hypotheses through live reader-response testing, in order to investigate the actual effects that short line-length and line divisions can have upon the range and quality of the *explicatures* and *implicatures* derived by actual readers. The testing will go a long way towards further validating the research provided within the present thesis, and will no doubt lead to a range of further insights and developments into the many cognitive-pragmatic and formal-linguistic intricacies that combine to shape the unique and specialised nature of the literary/poetic process at large.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Used by permission of Penguin Random House UK.

Appendix

Figure 1[1]



my pleasure, you know what they say

money talks. i just don't understand
xylophone trills
another day like yesterday
we'll be in gravy

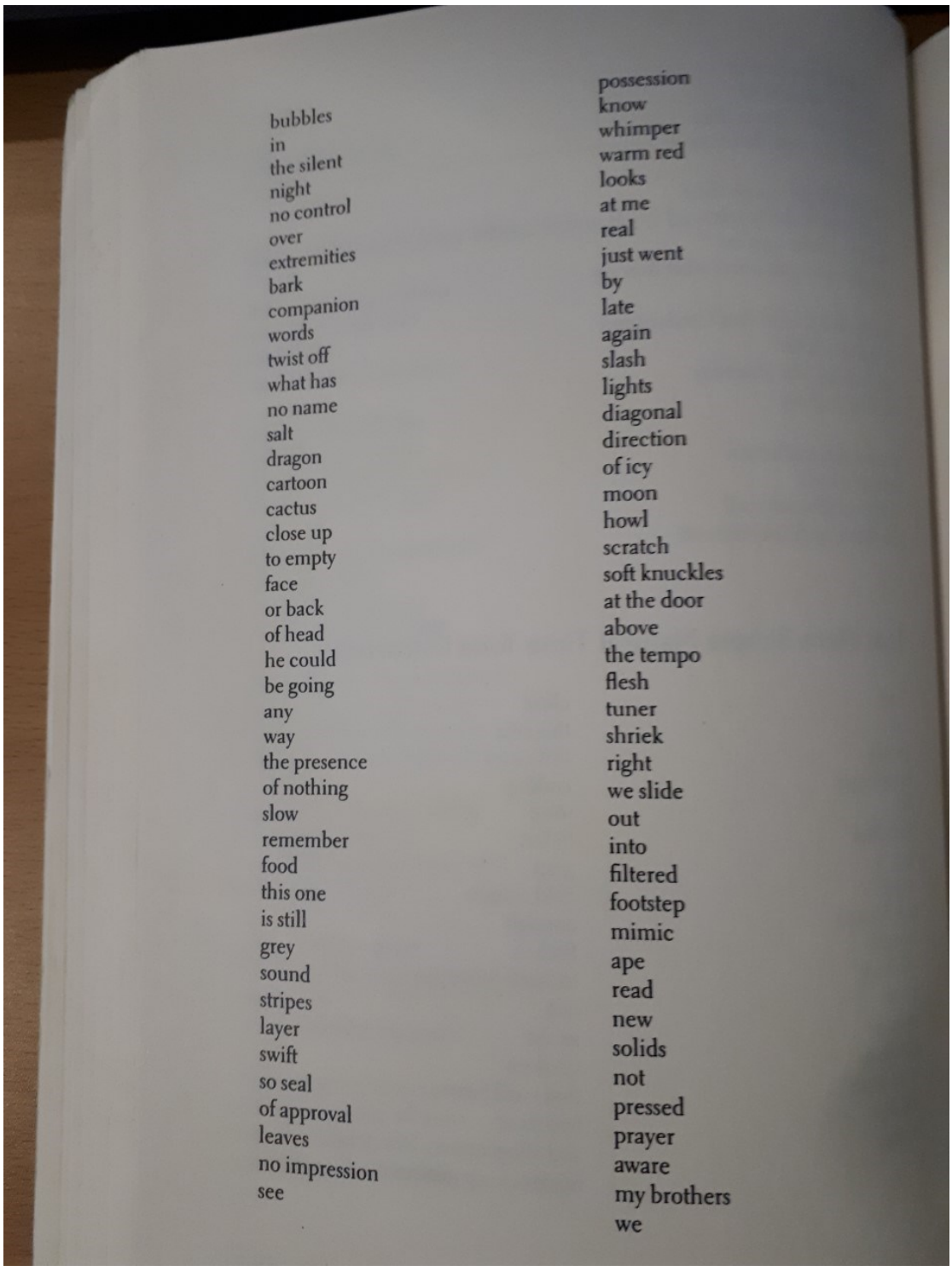
pardon me gentlemen
is there a bank
in the neighbourhood?
you drove up from hillcrest?

That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion

slow
low
thump
long flame
dry
flash blur
just
move
tree browns
to south
our horse
white
no trace
of action
in memory
and fear
but this
is

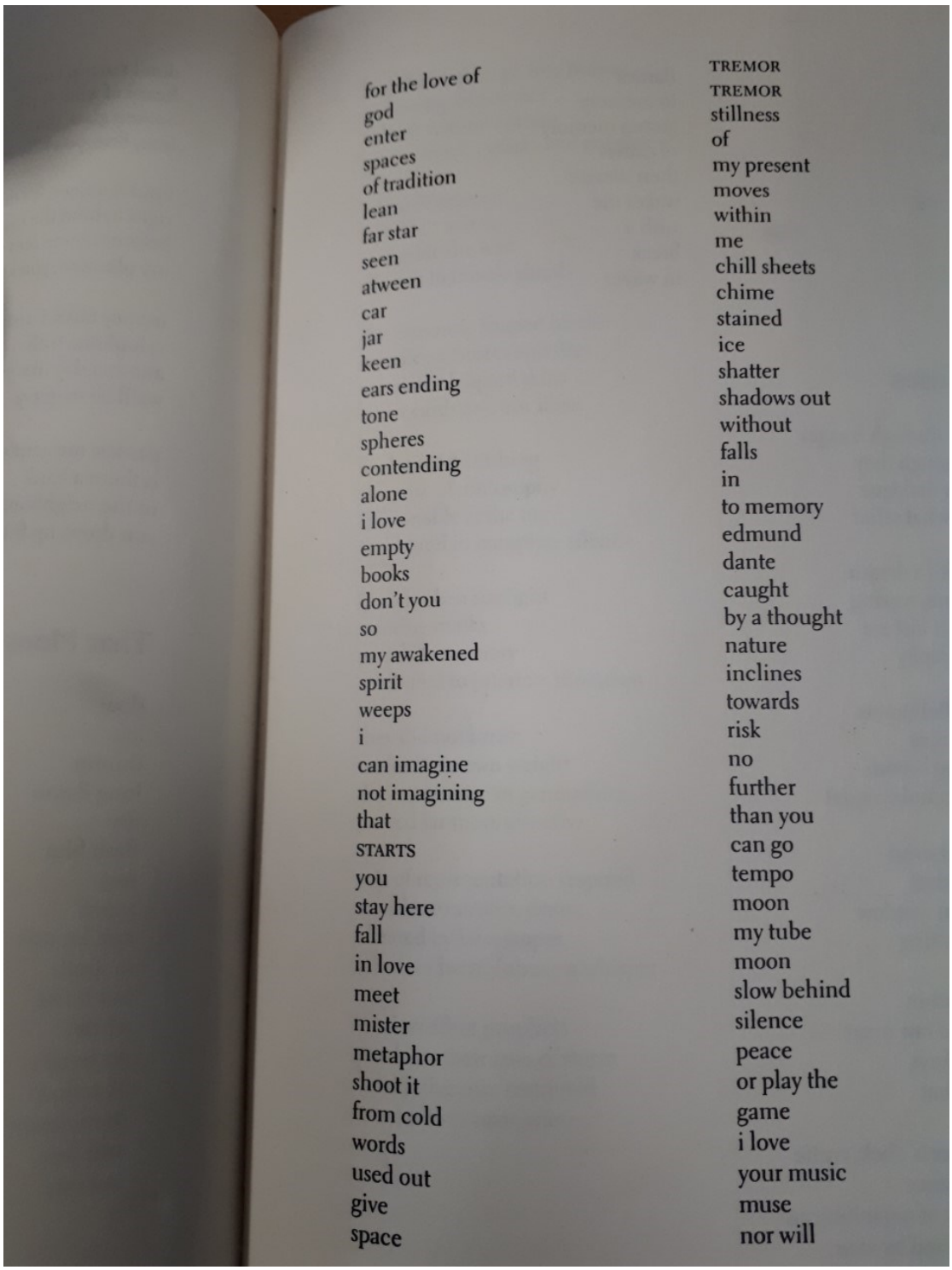
clear
this area
this never
ending
song
to last
gasp
cold colours
enough
flashes
to leach him
out
as she
sparkles
that i will bear
two faces
and allegiance
mister cheap justice

TOM RAWC



bubbles
in
the silent
night
no control
over
extremities
bark
companion
words
twist off
what has
no name
salt
dragon
cartoon
cactus
close up
to empty
face
or back
of head
he could
be going
any
way
the presence
of nothing
slow
remember
food
this one
is still
grey
sound
stripes
layer
swift
so seal
of approval
leaves
no impression
see

possession
know
whimper
warm red
looks
at me
real
just went
by
late
again
slash
lights
diagonal
direction
of icy
moon
howl
scratch
soft knuckles
at the door
above
the tempo
flesh
tuner
shriek
right
we slide
out
into
filtered
footstep
mimic
ape
read
new
solids
not
pressed
prayer
aware
my brothers
we



for the love of
god
enter
spaces
of tradition
lean
far star
seen
atween
car
jar
keen
ears ending
tone
spheres
contending
alone
i love
empty
books
don't you
so
my awakened
spirit
weeps
i
can imagine
not imagining
that
STARTS
you
stay here
fall
in love
meet
mister
metaphor
shoot it
from cold
words
used out
give
space

TREMOR
TREMOR
stillness
of
my present
moves
within
me
chill sheets
chime
stained
ice
shatter
shadows out
without
falls
in
to memory
edmund
dante
caught
by a thought
nature
inclines
towards
risk
no
further
than you
can go
tempo
moon
my tube
moon
slow behind
silence
peace
or play the
game
i love
your music
muse
nor will

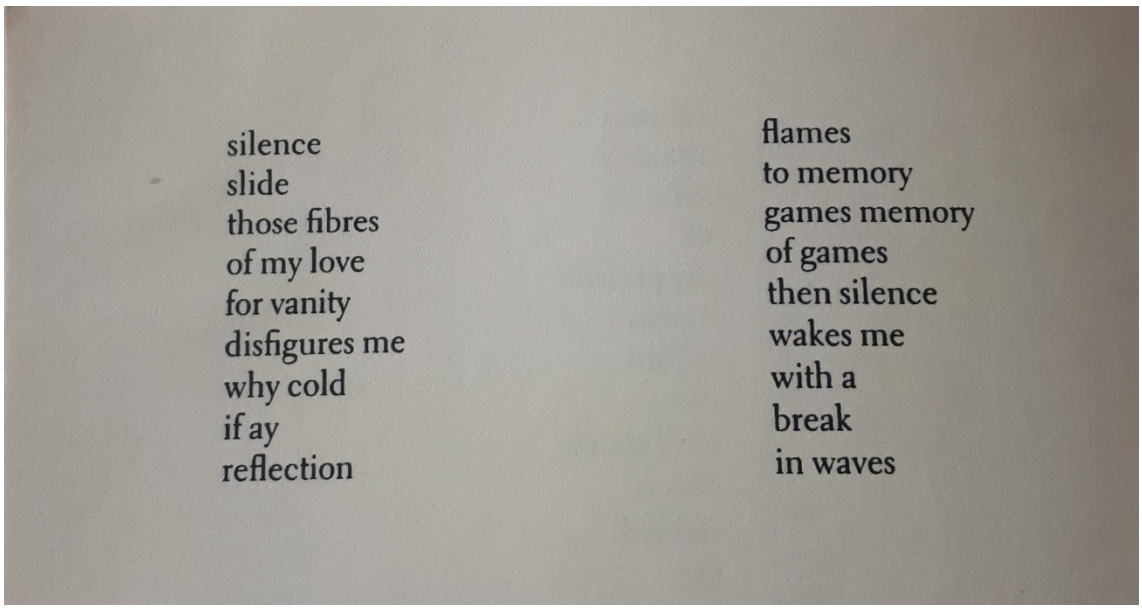

silence
slide
those fibres
of my love
for vanity
disfigures me
why cold
if ay
reflection
flames
to memory
games memory
of games
then silence
wakes me
with a
break
in waves

Figure 2

Line-length figures for traditional texts – figures excluding poems' titles

	Most WPL	**Frequency**	**Least WPL**	**Frequency**	**Average WPL**
'Manifesto' by Allan Crosbie	10	6	6	11	7.69
'Two Cures for Love' by Wendy Clarke	9	1	8	1	8.5
'Anorexic' by Gillian Clarke	7	3	2	2	4.41
'Alibi' by Ciaran Carson	13	1	2	2	7.26
'God's Justice' by Anne Carson	13	1	3	1	7.39
'Stalker' by Vahni Capildeo	7	5	1	1	5.28
'Eight Ways Of Looking At Lakes' by Matthew Caley	12	2	1	1	7.9
'History' by John Burnside	10	2	1	5	5.09
'Derry' by Colette Bryce	10	2	3	1	6.85
'*from* Agoue' by Kamau Brathwaite	12	1	1	14	4.02
'Waving' by Pat Boran	13	1	5	1	8.41
'Inheritance' by Eavan Boland	13	2	2	1	7.96
'Monogamy' by Kate Bingham	11	2	4	4	6.90
'Nailmaking' by Liz Berry	11	1	3	1	6.88
'Letter to Husband' by Emily Berry	13	1	6	3	8.55
'Burying the Ancestors' by Judi Benson	14	1	2	1	7.48
'Breastfeeding' by Fiona Benson	6	4	2	4	4.05
'On a Bird Dead in the Road' by George Barker	13	1	9	1	10.25

'Material' by Ros Barber	8	4	4	6	5.97
'What Every Girl Should Know About Marriage' by Mona Arshi	11	1	3	1	7.44
'The Sari' by Moniza Alvi	7	3	1	2	4.41
'Valentine' by Carol Ann Duffy	8	3	1	2	4.91
'War Poetry' by Kate Clanchy	10	1	5	1	7.39
'Poundland' by Simon Armitage	14	1	5	1	8.59
'Flounders' by Ted Hughes	12	1	3	1	7.64
'Please can I have a man' by Selima Hill	11	1	4	4	7.43
'Ferrari' by Robert Crawford	10	2	4	1	7.2
'Tame' by Sarah Howe	14	2	2	1	8.98
'Liverpool disappears for a billionth of a second' by Paul Farley	10	3	5	1	7.33
'Its face' by Imtiaz Dharker	10	1	3	1	5.5
'The politics of' by Sean O'Brien	9	3	5	2	7.36
'New Neighbours' by Kwame Dawes	8	1	1	1	3.4
'My Flu' by Michael Donaghy	12	3	6	1	9.05
'Turning into Men Again' by Tishani Doshi	12	1	3	1	7.46
'No. 3 *from* **Uses for the Thames'** by Jane Draycott	7	2	3	1	4.92
'The Lammas Hireling' by Ian Duhig	10	3	7	3	8.38
'To my nine-year-old self' by Helen Dunmore	12	1	4	2	7.78

'Atlas' by UA Fanthorpe	10	1	4	1	6.94
'Judith' by Vicki Feaver	9	1	3	1	6.10
'Recension Day' by Duncan Forbes	7	2	3	2	5.29
'Cooking with Blood' by Linda France	10	2	4.5	2	7.32
'The Ornamental Hermit' by Matthew Francis	11	4	6	1	8.88
'Three Ways to a Silk Shirt' by Pamela Gillilan	9	2	2	1	6.06
'Bulletin from The Daily Mail'	11	2	6	1	8.69
'The Uncles' by John Goodby	12	3	6	2	9.03
'A World Where News Travelled Slowly' by Lavinia Greenlaw	10	4	6	3	7.88
'Lament' by Thom Gunn	10	12	1	1	7.63
'Definitions' by Jen Hadfield	13	6	2	13	8.56
'A Cold Coming' Tony Harrison	8	24	3	2	6.18
'The Curator' David Harsent	14	1	6	1	9.9
'The Blackbird of Glanmore' by Seamus Heaney	8	2	3	2	5.2
'The Price' by Stuart Henson	9	3	6	3	7.57
'Smirr' by WN Herbert	10	3	6	1	8.07
'*from* The Orchards of Syon' by Geoffrey Hill	8	3	4	4	5.96
'XVII Correspondences: Aphorisms Regarding Impatience' by Ellen Hinsey	12	2	1	1	5.69

'Holding Court' by Clive James	10	5	4	1	8.28
'Speirin' by Kathleen Jamie	7	2	1	1	4.17
'Effects' by Alan Jenkins	13	1	5	2	8.32
'Mi Revalueshanary Fren' by Linton Kwesi Johnson	11	1	1	16	4.90
'Late Love' by Jackie Kay	10	3	6	3	7.65
'The Swarm' by Mimi Khalvati	14	1	9	1	11.06
'The Hierarchy of Sheep – a report from my brother' by John Kinsella	10	4	1	4	6.73
'Epistle XXXIX' by August Kleinzahler	14	2	8	1	12
'To a Nightingale' by RF Langley	7	2	3	3	5.02
'Stones' by James Lasdun	10	3	3	1	6.69
'Cloudberries' by Michael Longley	9	1	2	1	5.91
'Dance Class' by Hannah Lowe	10	1	5	1	7.86
'Yeah Yeah Yeah' by Roddy Lumsden	10	2	8	4	8.92
'Death in Bangor' by Derek Mahon	11	2	2	1	7.45
'The Byelaws' by Glyn Maxwell	10	1	5	1	7.2
'The Way Things Are' Roger McGough	11	6	3	1	8.05
'Home Thoughts' by Jamie McKendrick	11	1	5	1	8.47
'in which the cartographer asks for directions' by Kei Miller	12.5	1	4	2	9.67
'The Coal Jetty' by Sinéad Morrissey	6	4	2	7	3.77

'Wire' by Paul Muldoon	15	1	2	2	7.48
'The Shield-Scales of Heraldry' by Les Murray	8	4	4	4	6.09
'Look We Have Coming to Dover!' by Daljit Nagra	11	2	2	1	7.07
'A Greyhound in the Evening after a Long Day of Rain' by Alice Oswald	11	2	1	2	6.44
'Nil Nil' by Don Paterson	12	2	2	1	7.47
'Thinking of England' by Clare Pollard	13	2	1	1	7.96
'Last Words' by Peter Porter	8	4	5	1	6.72
'Envying Owen Beattie' by Sheenagh Pugh	8	2	2	2	5.38
'The new therapist specializes' by Claudia Rankine	13	1	6	1	10.13
'Listening for lost people' by Denise Riley	11	2	7	4	8.71
'Pika' by Michael Symmons Roberts	8	1	4	2	5.55
'At Roane Head' by Robin Robertson	12	1	2	2	6.70
'After Lazerdrome, McDonalds, Peckham Rye' by Jacob Sam-La Rose	14	1	3	1	12.43
'Voice' by Ann Sansom	11	1	3	1	7.3
'Striking Distance' by Carole Satyamurti	10	4	5	5	7.33
'Vegetable Love' by Jo Shapcott	10	1	4	2	6.78

'Old Horse, New Tricks' by Owen Sheers	9	2	4	3	6.5
'Outgrown' by Penelope Shuttle	12	1	5	1	9.5
'Actually, yes' by George Szirtes	10	7	4	1	8
'Thirteen' by Kate Tempest	13	1	2	1	7.83
'Geriatric' by RS Thomas	8	1	3	9	4.43
'White Egrets' by Derek Walcott	10	1	5	1	8
'The Tree Position' by Lucy Anne Watt	16	1	1	1	9.65
'Joy' by Hugo Williams	5	5	3	1	4.33
'Man to Man' Benjamin Zephaniah	7	2	1	2	3.5
xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	**xxxxxxxxxx**	**xxxxxxxxxxxx**	**xxxxxxxxxxxxx**	**Avg WPL across all texts**	7.18

Figure 3

Driftwood and Seacoal

These men are on their feet, not all day long, when they may be on their knees or sitting on their backsides for all I know, but charactteristically and most visibly they are upright, resting or in slow motion, entire and self-contained in their activity, relentlessly static. They have overcoats and caps, and the set of their heads to their shoulders, an inflexible terseness about the neck, recurring in the way the cap flattens and spreads the skull, and the overcoat's abrupt hem straightens across a stiffness behind the knee, wraps them in mistaken identity, never close enough to make apology necessary. There is something rigid between the collar bones and the scalp, between the way the knot of the tie lies against the throat and the forehead dissappears beneath the headband, as though the regularity of the features is worn like an alibi. I am not where you place me. I am going down the road leading from the council estate, I am standing on the foreshore, but who you took me for must, you now realise, be miles away from where you thought you just recognised him.

What forgiveness in renewal of such error! You return as them. Stopped short again, face to face with your type, squared off from his surroundings in which I was a passer-by, I keep forgetting that you can't be here. Forgetting the vagrancy of the moment, the distances and waiting, whatever was expected, as his figure appraoches, rather flat, the weight carried down the length of the spine, short legs holding the ground beneath their feet, I am out of this place, pulled together in the passage of time. Old enough, these men must be, as if belonging anywhere was now a pointless question. Why, still there of course, as long as I can remember, looking in front of them, they're like this, wherever you are. Their memories are longer still, it shows in the hang of the coat, like a box to put things in in, and the low heels of tightly knotted shoes. Years of another life, of weather in the streets and the air indoors, the hours of work, the regularity of habits, when all choices are the same, the cut of the coat, the peak of the cap, and the colour of the shoes, the size of the collars, the taste in ties, the pullover and braces, determined footsteps of a steady descent, bearing it all back.

I see the difference in them, collecting from the confused after-image of wishful thinking, their presence diminished to the daily scale, going about some known business. Out for a walk will do, in these surroundings, not calling for a nod of even passing acknowledgement: people live round here. They look the same. They look out against the same earth or sea or sky, the most incommunictaive of languages, speechless theatres of space, the machinery of gods. No answering back, no resonant echo, but speak for yourself. Your early history is legend, the fit of your build, the gait from the past, O never-forgotten! Those massed identities, spread one way and another, banked and scattered in new neighbourhoods. I hold them like your bearing in me, between a beacon and the showy stars, looking along the pebbles on the beach. So others in us, if, not therefore not, but also, go separately together.[2]

Notes to appendix

1. 'That More Simple Natural Time Tone Distortion' by Tom Raworth, *Collected Poems*, Carcanet Press Ltd. Reprinted by permission of Carcanet Press Ltd. I

would also like to thank Wesleyan University Press for kindly granting me permission to use the scanned version of the full poem included here in the Appendix.

2. Published by kind permission of the Estate of Andrew Crozier**.**

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