

Metonymy and Intimacy

1. Introduction

A metonym is a figure with two terms, one of which prompts the other by a mental association. We can think of the two terms as a prompt and an association. The best-known form of metonym is part-for-whole: synecdoche. We have looked for the first clear example in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Here it is. The novel starts with Stepan Oblonsky who has been having an affair with his children's former French governess. His wife has found a note in the governess's hand and she confronts Stepan. Tolstoy writes that, instead of denying the charge, or justifying himself, or asking forgiveness, Stepan found that: »his face quite involuntarily [...] smiled all at once his habitual, kind and therefore stupid smile« (Tolstoy 2000, 3). This is a synecdoche. The first term is Stepan's smile. It's a part of, and a prompt towards, the second term, the association, which is Stepan's whole emotional state, by means of which we form an intuition of the sort of person he is.

In this essay we argue that metaphor and metonym are modes of thought. Metaphor (Lakoff/Turner 1989) and metonymy (Coulson/Oakley 1999; Lu/Liu 2009) have been discussed as primary scaffolds of mental coherence in fictional narratives. Although they can have shared functions of this kind, each has distinctive psychological properties. Metaphor is based on a mapping between mental domains. It is important for understanding how semantic meaning is made and extended (Gibbs 1990; Mithen 1996). Although a metaphor usually derives from language, its properties are based in a mode of thought that extends beyond the linguistic. For instance, understanding life as a game of chess does not depend on words; such a metaphorical mapping might just occur to one when confronted by a difficult situation. Metonymy is also important for meaning, but in a different way that is related to what psychologists call theory-of-mind – understanding others' beliefs, desires, and emotions – which has recently been recognized as central to fiction (Zunshine 2006). Metonymy, too, is best understood as a mode of thought, often derived from language, but based on patterns of association in other minds, sometimes in an intimate way. Papafragou (1996) has argued that the production or reception of metonyms need not depend on any previous actual association between its terms or their referents. Any concept can prompt any other

concept. The only thing standing between a metonym and its interpretation is the relationship between the writer and reader.

Most empirical research on metonymy has examined comprehension of metonyms in sentences designed specifically for particular experiments. In the current essay, by contrast, we raise an issue that is not easily amenable to this methodology. We propose a model of the role of metonymy in its potential to form relationships between readers (or audience members) and writers, narrators and characters in fictional narratives. Because none of these relationships is the same as a relationship with an actual person, psychologists call them parasocial relationships (Gardner/Knowles 2008). A relationship with a fictional character, an abstract entity, differs, of course, from what is possible with a real person. Characters, narrators and authors are nonetheless amenable to understanding in terms of theory-of-mind. Booth's (1961) idea of the implied author, manifested in what characters and narrators say and do, as well as in other choices the actual author makes in writing a piece of fiction, is one way thinking of the issue. Booth (1988) proposes that readers may feel more or less intimate with an implied author. We agree, and would add that a reader may also feel more or less intimate with a character or a narrator, or with an actual author known through biographies.

We start our analysis with Jakobson's (1956) proposal that metaphor and metonym are at the two poles of language. Metaphor is at the semantic pole: a *this* is a *that*. Metonym is at the syntactic pole: a *this* is juxtaposed with a *that*. To use Jakobson's idea to understand the workings of synecdoche, we note that in the world a part is usually juxtaposed with other parts that make up the whole, so that in language only the part need be mentioned as a prompt to invoke an association with the whole. Names can be brought under the rubric of synecdoche. The first noun of *Anna Karenina* is »families«. It prompts readers towards an association with the whole concept of family (of which, with the acquisition of language, the verbal name has become part). The idea presupposes knowledge shared between writer and reader. In cognitive science, Schank and Abelson (1977) have proposed the idea of scripts, widely known sequences of action, such as going to a restaurant. They point out that mention in a story of a part of script, for instance »He asked the waitress for coq au vin« (ibid., 45) can invoke the whole script, which typically includes entering a restaurant, sitting at a table, looking at a menu, ordering, eating the food when it comes, receiving a bill, paying, and so on. Although Schank and Abelson do not identify it as such, the invocation of a whole script by mentioning one of its parts is a synecdoche. At the same time, as Jakobson points out, metonymy extends much, much, further: many kinds of juxtaposition of words in a sentence, or of images in a film before and after an editorial cut, or of incidents in a novel, can have metonymic effects of prompting a mental association between them. Here, we discuss metonyms both of the part-for-whole kind (synecdoches) and simple juxtapositions.

In his book-length exposition of Jakobson's (1956) idea, Lodge (1977) explains how metaphor has been the principal mode of lyric poetry and theatre, whereas metonym has become the principal mode of prose fiction and cinema. For instance, in his poem, 'To his coy mistress', Marvell (1968) metaphorically imagines the exploration of his beloved's body as a discovery of the world. By contrast, a novelist or film-maker often introduces a character by a metonymic juxtaposition with possessions that prompt implications as to how the character lives. For instance, in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy's introduction of Stepan has him sleeping, not »in his wife's bedroom but in his study, on a morocco sofa« (1). Here, there is a prompt towards associations both of Stepan's displacement from his usual habits and of his comfortable upper-class life. Lodge has said (personal communication) that Jakobson's article about the poles of language was a revelation to him. As well as prompting him towards his 1977 book on modes of writing, it also prompted him towards his 1988 novel *Nice Work*, in which metaphorically a university is a factory, and in which metonymic juxtapositions (some very intimate) occur between a woman who is a university teacher of English and a man who is a factory owner.

2. Literary Examples of Metonyms

Gerrig (1993, 124–126) has argued that innovative language can mimic »the act of collaboration and draws the readers more strongly into the intimate environs of the narrative world«, and he provides nine examples of such language from fictional narratives. Although Gerrig does not describe them as such, all nine are metonyms. Among his examples are: Jan Morris's »hydrant children« who hang out near a burst fire hydrant during the hot days of summer, Julia Phillips's use of »Mario Andretti« as a verb for driving very fast, and Toni Morrison's use of the number »124« for a house and the spiritual beings who inhabit it. He notes: »It may be that certain authors [...] create a sense of intimacy with their readers specifically by modeling the experience of collaboration« (123). The purpose of the current article is to extend Gerrig's idea, by proposing that metonyms – specifically – can make for intimacy between the mind of the reader and the mind of literary character, narrator, or author (perhaps all three).

Figurative language (Gibbs/Gerrig 1989), and more specifically irony (Gibbs 1994), and metaphor (Cohen 1979) have been argued to be evidence of an ongoing intimate relationship between speakers. Readers of stories find ironic speech more humorous when they know that the speakers are close to each another (Pexman/Zvaigzne 2004), and readers judge characters to be more intimate if one of the characters uses a metaphor with another character than if they do not (Horton 2007). These results support the claim that people expect figurative speech to be used in intimate relationships. Booth (1988) proposed that for readers, implied authors and indeed books are best regarded as friends, and that metaphor can en-

hance the intimacy of this friendship. Our hypothesis derives from Booth's. It is that – even more than metaphor – metonymy can induce readers' feelings of intimacy with characters, narrators, authors and, indeed, books. Our essay is a psychological proposal of how and why this might be so. Let us now offer two examples of metonymy that are more extended than those we have offered above, and than those offered by Gerrig.

The first is another example from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. The novel's male protagonist, Count Vronsky, has gone to meet his mother, who is arriving in Moscow by train from St Petersburg. By chance, the novel's female protagonist, Anna Karenina, has travelled in the same compartment as Vronsky's mother. Stepan (mentioned in our first paragraph) is Anna's brother and he has telegraphed to ask her to come and intercede for him, with his angry wife. When the train arrives in the station, Vronsky boards it and goes to the compartment where his mother is. He is immediately attracted to Anna. In a brief conversation, she tells him that, all the way from St Petersburg, she and his mother have been talking: »I about my son, she about hers.« You were probably very bored by it, he said, catching at once, in mid-air, the ball of coquetry that she had thrown to him«. As Vronsky and his mother, and Anna and Stepan, walk along the platform, there is news that a watchman has been run over by a train as it was being shunted. Vronsky goes with Stepan to see what has happened. When they return, Stepan says that the man was a provider for a large family and that his wife, who was there, threw herself onto the body. »Can nothing be done for her?« asks Anna. Vronsky excuses himself for a moment and, as they are all leaving the station, the stationmaster comes up to him to ask why he has left 200 rubles. »For the widow,« Vronsky said, shrugging his shoulders. »I don't see any need to ask.« Anna gets into Stepan's carriage and sits down. As the carriage moves off, Stepan sees »that her lips were trembling and she could hardly keep back her tears.« He asks what the matter is, and she says: »It's a bad omen.« (Tolstoy 2000, 63–65)

In this scene Tolstoy offers two metonymic juxtapositions. One is the flirtation juxtaposed with the railwayman's death, the other is Anna's question juxtaposed with Vronsky's gift. We sense they are significant to Anna because at the end of the scene she is almost in tears. Tolstoy's metonyms invite readers into Anna's mind. She knows she has flirted with Vronsky. The prompt of this flirtation has become uncannily associated with the railway man's death. She knows, too, that her asking if nothing could be done for the widow has induced Vronsky to act at her behest. The prompt is Anna's question, and the association is the almost-secret collaboration between her and Vronsky, which has sexual significance because of their flirtation. She feels these juxtapositions as a presentiment. By means of them, and Anna's reaction, Tolstoy invites readers into an intimacy with Anna.

In Tolstoy's scene at the railway station, the metonyms enable us to enter into the mind of Anna and, behind her, into the minds of the narrator, and of the au-

thor. Anna's mind is lively and empathetic, a mind in which she is aware of her sexuality and her sense of disappointment in her stuffy husband, a mind in which her propriety causes her to be ashamed of herself. But just imagine if, instead of what he wrote, Tolstoy had offered us merely a description of Anna's mind as in the sentence we have written that precedes this one. It wouldn't work.

When we read *Anna Karenina*, we accept the metonymic invitations into Anna's mind and the associations this mind tends to make. In the mental model we construct of Anna we accept her sense that the railwayman's death is an omen. As well, if we are re-reading the book, we might reflect on how this scene at the station offers an insight into the mind of the author, because it foreshadows the whole novel.

From biographies, we know about Tolstoy's mind that he had a strong interest in sexuality. From an incident that seemed directly to lead to his proposal and marriage to Sofya Bers, we also know of his strong interest in the idea of intimate communication and collaboration between minds in sexual contexts. Here, from Wilson's biography of Tolstoy is part of the incident that led to Tolstoy's proposal to Sofya as recorded in her diary of 1862.

He [Tolstoy] brushed the games scores off the card table, took a piece of chalk and began writing. We were both very serious and excited. I followed his big red hand, and could feel all my powers of concentration and feeling focus on that bit of chalk and the hand that held it. We said nothing.

»y. y. & n. f. h. t. v. r. m. o. m. a. & i. f. h.«

»Your youth and need for happiness too vividly remind me of my age and incapacity for happiness.«

I read out. My heart was pounding, my temples were throbbing, my face was flushed—I was beyond all sense of time and reality; at that moment I felt capable of anything, of understanding everything, imagining the unimaginable.

(Wilson 1988, 193)

Now consider a second example, by Virginia Woolf from *To the Lighthouse* (1972). Minta and Paul are on the verge of engagement. They have been sitting on a beach, and Minta has lost her grandmother's brooch. She is desperate to find it. Earlier the reader has learned that Nancy, a sibling, had seen Paul and Minta »in each others' arms« and seen that they were »kissing probably.« The prompt of this metonym is the scene of two people on a beach, kissing. Its association is with the lost brooch. If one were to miss the metonym, one might think the brooch and the search for it are incidental to the story. But they're not. The brooch and Minta's insistence that she »would rather have lost anything than that!« suggest that the brooch is not all that Minta lost that afternoon at the beach. The brooch is not compared to Minta's virginity, as in metaphor. No explicit link between the brooch and Minta's virginity is ever made. The relationship between the two is oblique.

In Woolf's novel, we can imagine ourselves into Minta's mind, at the beach, searching into the evening for her brooch. We can experience her desperation.

We can feel the loss she must have felt that she would have to return home without the brooch her grandmother had given her. If we had, unlike Minta, read about the importance of transitional objects to our psychic life, we might then understand why the brooch suddenly took on such importance on that particular day. Just sympathizing with the character to the greatest extent we can, however, will not allow us fully to interpret the metonym, what it stands for, or how it functions in the fictional narrative and in our emotional response to it. The reader is strongly invited into identification with Minta and, at the same time perhaps, into an imagined exploration of the interpretive and emotional particularities of the writer. One may find oneself asking: »Why would this writer juxtapose these two things?« By imagining oneself into the author's milieu (physical, emotional, and intellectual), one has a better chance of discovering the relation between the two terms of the metonym and what that relation might mean for the writer, and indeed for one's own emotional response to the story.

We know from photographs that Virginia Woolf wore brooches. Moreover, a woman seems more likely than a man to associate a brooch, which is sometimes used to do up a blouse, with a woman's virginity. This reflection on who the author is and how she is likely to express herself cultivates the reader's sense of intimacy with her, because she may be seen as having gambled by trusting the reader to become engaged in the author's creation. Further: the reader may engage in self-reflection, either in creative metonymic terms borrowed from the writer or, even better, in creative metonymic terms that she or he discovers to be just right for her or his own experience. It is relevant, in this context, that Bortolussi/Dixon (2003) have found that identification with a fictional character is stronger when readers make inferences about the character's motivations than when they are told about these motivations in an explicit way.

We are not saying that one needs knowledge of an author to understand a metonym. Literary reading encourages interests in authors (a relational effect), and metonyms can encourage readers to make inferences that draw on their knowledge of an author's life and milieu, other works, letters, and so on. Lack of biographical information does not impede the understanding of most metonyms, but such information can enhance the reader's experience. The principle is that, like speakers, writers tend to express themselves in ways that they hope the other will understand, and this includes a sense of what might connect to what is in another mind.

Following Sperber/Wilson's (1986/1995) relevance principle, Papafragou argues that »the only constraint on the use of metonymy is its expected computability by the hearer. Thus it is natural for metonymy to be extremely context-dependent and idiosyncratic« (1996, 184). If one considers the finding that readers think about the author most when encountering textual ambiguity or particularly abstract passages (Flower 1987), the interpretive challenges that creative metonymy can pose should therefore lead to increased attention to the writer of the fictional narrative. Such attention to the author has been shown to enhance both the mean-

ingfulness ratings and the number of interpretations produced by readers (Gibbs/Kushner/Mills 1991).

Further, successfully recovering an obscure referent when confronted with a writer's metonym may allow one to feel part of a small community (even a community of two), partially sustained by linguistic distinctiveness (Bourhis/Giles 1977). One then has a new term that can be used within the community of persons familiar with a particular work of fiction. The writer uses metonyms, the meanings of which are not immediately accessible through a relatively simple comparative heuristic as in metaphor, and in so doing, enhances trust between reader and writer. The reader may thus come to feel known, understood, and trusted when she or he realizes that the writer of the metonym guessed and hoped that the reader's tenacity, patience, and insight would prompt associations comparable to the writer's own.

Let us now press our argument through three further stages.

3. The Hybrid Mind

The first stage, based on Clark (2006; 2008), is that the human mind is a hybrid with two mental processors that have different characteristics. The older processor is associative and intuitive. For some aspects of our relationships, it works much like the mental processor of our cousins the chimpanzees (De Waal 1982). It enables us to recognize other individuals, and remember something of our history with them, lets us know whether we can trust them. An example of the mind working in this way was found by Larocque and Oatley, who asked people to keep a diary record of the next occasion on which they had made a joint plan or arrangement that went wrong. Here is an instance that illustrates the associative processor at work.

One participant waited for a new colleague in one restaurant, while he sat for over an hour in a different location of the same chain of restaurants waiting for her. Our participant stated that the fact that he had »stood her up« would be at the back of her mind the next time she had dealings with him. She said this although, by her own account, he had been no more at fault than she.

(Larocque/Oatley 2006, 258)

The associative processor enables us to make mental models of others, and it has extensive memory. We can think of it as operating by parallel processing, and as learning by changing the strengths of neural connections (Hinton 2007). It also corresponds to one of the two kinds of cognitive operation found by cognitive researchers such as Stanovich (2004). It's the kind that works fast by intuitions and heuristics.

Sometime before 200.000 years ago, with the appearance of anatomically modern humans, when language was acquired (Henshilwood/Dubreuil 2009), a sec-

ond kind of processor came into being, with different characteristics. Its conclusions come to us sequentially as a conscious short-term working memory that has a restricted capacity, and deals with verbal objects and visual images. As Clark points out, this processor constitutes a new cognitive niche with the remarkable property that thoughts – verbal and imaged objects – can themselves become objects of thought, which we can change and rearrange. Although this second processor works slowly and sequentially, Johnson-Laird (2006) has shown that its deliberative, predominantly language-based, processing is computationally more powerful than associative processing. It can verbalize mental models. Its ability to do operations such as recursion means that we can make models of our models of the world, which is what objects of literary art are.

The mind is thus a hybrid of two processors. In the associative processor one piece of information can be associated with another, and on a larger scale, one idea with another. Note, too, that the mind's associative processor seems to prefer particularities, of the kind usually offered in metonyms, whereas the linguistic-sequential processor can also handle verbal abstractions such as syllogisms (Luria 1976). The linguistic-sequential processor enables both semantics and syntax: linguistic objects (such as words) can represent concepts, and sequential orderings of words grouped around verbs can offer up meanings which we can think about and share with others.

The task of the writer, we propose, is to create pathways from his or her associative processor to the deliberative-sequential processor: translations into words. To create a metonym, the writer draws on a connection between two intuitions in the associative processor, and offers a speech act, for instance a syntactic juxtaposition of two words, two phrases, or two ideas, which is externalized into a sequence on the page. For the reader of a literary story, the task is the reverse: to take in a language-based narrative and translate it into intuitions and experience. For a metonymic figure, this means one must take two terms of a syntax-based synecdoche or juxtaposition, and translate them into two items of intuition or experience, which are to be connected in the associative layer, in the creation of one's inner mental enactment of the story. Sometimes a reader may pay little attention to the verbal interface and may simply make the intuitive connections, which will have the form of *qualia* (raw feels) of the kind discussed by Searle (1992).

Oatley and Olson (2010) have argued that fiction requires the writer to offer cues to the imagination of the reader or audience member. Metonyms thus provide two kinds of cue. In synecdoche a part cues the imagination of a whole. In simple juxtaposition one element can cue an imaginative association with the other. Eisenstein's (1925) concept of montage in film (juxtaposition of shots of different kinds, and from different angles, based on a conceptual idea) was a discovery of this metonymic idea in cinema. Eisenstein's innovation was that, in a montage of shots, meaning that was not present in any of the shots alone would be generated by juxtapositions in the mind of the audience member. The most pervasive current

form of metonymy is probably in advertisements, which typically juxtapose a product with images of likability. To do this, in television for instance, advertisements can juxtapose cinematographic shots at rates as high as one a second. At the same time, the examples we have given (above) show that metonymy can also be critical to our understanding of profound literary works.

4. The Function of Consciousness

Intimacy between two people involves them being able to confide in each other, to say almost anything that comes consciously to mind, so that the other understands its significance, including its emotional significance (cf. Brown/Harris 1978). Usually, a jointly recognized context is the prompt and what is said is the association. This phenomenon thus links to the question of consciousness.

A recent proposal by Baumeister/Masicampo (2010) is that the function of consciousness is to maintain ongoing simulations of ourselves that inter-relate memories, current understandings of the social world, and evaluations of future actions, in a way that can be conveyed verbally to others. Conscious thought enables us to explain ourselves to others in conversation, as well as to ourselves as we compose our minds (metonymically) by associating one thing with another. Here's what Baumeister/Masicampo say:

The influence of conscious thought on behavior can be vitally helpful but is mostly indirect. Conscious simulation processes are useful for understanding the perspectives of social interaction partners, for exploring options in complex decisions, for replaying past events (both literally and counterfactually) so as to learn, and for facilitating participation in culture in other ways.

(Baumeister/Masicampo 2010, 945)

In an ingenious experiment on this issue, Galdi/Arcuri/Gawronski (2008) studied people's conscious thinking and their sub-consciously activated associations about a controversial proposal to enlarge a US military base near their city. Conscious beliefs were assessed by questionnaire on environmental, social, and economic consequences of the proposal. Associations were measured by an implicit association test in which people pressed buttons in response to pictures of the military base and to evaluative words. People's decisions were measured by them saying explicitly whether they were (a) in favour of the base's enlargement, (b) undecided, or (c) against the enlargement. Among the decided people, conscious thoughts predicted both their decision and their automatic associations one week later, but these people's automatic associations at first assessment did not predict their decision a week later. By contrast, among undecided participants, their conscious thoughts at first assessment did not predict their later decision, but their unconscious associations did predict their decision and also their conscious beliefs a week later. This study indicates that our conscious thoughts are affected by processes of

which we are not always aware and that conscious thoughts can work over the long term to affect the structure of our associative mind as we think about an issue, become aware of our emotions about it, and discuss it with others. Notice that changes of consciousness affect implicit associations: the same kinds of associations that are affected in metonymy.

For a long time fiction has been seen as augmenting the functions of consciousness. Baumeister/Masicampo's idea that consciousness is a continuous internal simulation gives us a good way of thinking about how fiction might have this property of augmentation. Fiction consists of crafted and externalized simulations (Oatley, 1999): twins of our internal simulations. Plays, novels, short stories, and films, can therefore be internalized by us readers and audience members to add to the construction of our own inner simulations.

Baumeister/Masicampo give an example of a use of consciousness in planning:

when one has a plane to catch tomorrow, one typically engages in a simulation that calculates backward from the plane's takeoff time, allowing for airport procedures, the trip to the airport, and perhaps the hotel checkout before that, so one knows at what time to commence the sequence of acts. All the information used for this simulation is already in the mind, so conducting the simulation does not bring in new information from the environment.
(Baumeister/Masicampo 2010, 955)

Oatley (2009) has called the mental device by which this kind of function is accomplished the planning processor. It's part of the linguistic-deliberative processor. It is based on a model of how the world works, and it offers the opportunity to arrange possible actions in the form of plans. When tracking the actions of a character in fiction, a reader or audience member uses this planning processor within his or her mental simulation of the fictional piece. When we pick up a novel, we temporarily put aside our own goals and plans, and insert those of a protagonist into our planning processor. In this act, we don't entirely give up our own selves. For instance we continue to evaluate characters' actions according to our own moral standards, and in dramatic irony we know something that a character does not. In identification with a character we are both ourselves and the character, in the same kind of way that a painting can be both pigments on a canvas and a girl with a pearl earring.

The act of comprehending language involves sensorimotor simulation (Glenberg/Kaschak 2002; Zwaan 2004). This holds also for reading stories (Zwaan/Rapp 2006; Speer/Reynolds/Swallow/Zacks 2009). In the context of stories, people sometimes speak of the experience of such simulation in terms of empathy or sympathy with a character. A writer thus gives readers information about a setting and a protagonist's goals, then starts readers off on a plan. Then the writer lets the reader know what happens, often including thoughts in the mind of the protagonist. We thus insert characters' patterns of conscious thought – including their mental associations – into our own mind.

A fiction writer elaborates pieces of consciousness and externalizes them onto a page in a form that can be internalized by a reader. Pieces of mind – sequences of consciousness with their associations between memories and future possibilities, between understanding what is happening and what can be said about it – can thus be passed from one person to another. Metonymy is a making of connections of these kinds, which can be passed to readers. As Stephen Draper (personal communication) said, telepathic transmission of thoughts wouldn't work because minds are too different from each other. Language, however, acts as an interface so that, with metonymies, intimate (telepathy-like?) communication can occur.

5. Attachment and Language Acquisition

A third stage in our argument is that metonyms may derive from an early childhood state in which one was cared for. Perhaps it is partly for this reason, which we may discern as arising from development in relation to a mother or other attachment person, that in intimacy there is a desire to disclose innermost aspects of the self to the other.

The process of understanding creative metonyms re-enacts that of language acquisition in which, typically, the infant internalizes the cognitive and emotional approach to people and objects from a caring mother or other attachment person. As defined earlier, a metonymic operation includes a »novel fixation of reference for an existing expression« (Papafragou 1996, 181). In infants' acquisition of language »the novel fixation of reference« is usually for an object or action to which child and caregiver mutually attend. Tomasello (1999, 97) has called such moments »joint attentional scenes«. They are »social interactions in which the child and the adult jointly attend to some third thing, and to one another's attention to that third thing, for some reasonably extended length of time« (ibid.). Often the adult might name the thing: »See, that fire engine.« (Recall that a name is a synecdoche: a part for the whole.)

Importantly, a joint attentional scene does not occur unless the two people are aware both of the object at hand and of each other (Tomasello 1995). Tomasello (1999) claims that such scenes are crucial for language acquisition in the first years of life. Toddlers' behaviour, he explains, suggests that they have made some critical inferences. The first is that »the child comes to see that there are many different ways of looking at the same situation; the child learns that the adult is choosing one way, as opposed to other possible ways, of symbolizing the referential scene« (120). Thus, in the course of infancy, the child often witnesses the naming and re-naming of familiar objects and actions by a cherished adult, through a process parallel to the »novel fixation of reference« operative in metonymy.

This attendant trust cultivates intimacy as the child seeks not simply to understand novel expressions but, as a number of psychologists propose (e.g., Bruner

1983; Nelson 1985; Tomasello 1992; Tomasello 1995b), to appreciate the particular perspective of the individual who produces them. Further, it is reasonable to hypothesize that toddlers who spend more time in joint attentional activities with their mothers experience greater feelings of attachment and intimacy toward her, and if the attachment model of development is right, toward other intimates in adulthood (Thompson 1999). Indeed, a host of positive feelings may be associated with learning a new word with the help of a cherished other: interest, surprise, anticipation, and pride. There is, then, a longstanding relationship in ontogeny between the belief that one is cared about and the multiply iterated process of reception of a »novel fixation of reference«. It is possible that creative metonyms in stories allow readers to re-enact the feelings of intimacy associated with learning ways to express experience, including the metonymic activity of naming things, in the early years of life.

A second process in Tomasello's model is »role-reversal imitation« (1999, 105) in which »the child's role and the adult's role in the joint attentional scene are both understood from an external point of view, and so they may be interchanged freely when the need arises« (ibid., 105). He notes:

The process of understanding communicative signals [as opposed to linguistic symbols] – as in chimpanzee and some prelinguistic infant gestural communication – is very different in that each participant understands its own role only, from its own inside perspective. (ibid., 106)

Twelve-to-eighteen-month-old children who spend more time in joint attentional activities with their mothers have larger vocabularies (Tomasello/Todd 1983), and early preschoolers who have experienced a new activity, such as visiting a museum, do not remember aspects of the experience unless they have been discussed concurrently with the mother (Tessler/Nelson 1994). The new words we are granted by an intimate other at this age allow us not only to describe our experience in language, but apparently, to experience it more fully in the first place.

This aspect of Tomasello's developmental theory allows us now to address the desire for self-disclosure that is integral to intimacy. By our argument, the intimacy of self-disclosure can also occur in reading a story rich in metonymy. The innovative metonym creates a temporal gap between the moment in which the reader reads the metonym and the moment in which she or he understands its referent and implications for the characters and story. The extended processing time that occurs with innovative expressions has been confirmed in neurophysiological studies (Giora 2007). In the metonymic gap there may grow a number of possibilities of meaning that may not only pertain to the characters and story, but, following Tomasello's »role-reversal imitation« model, apply to the reader and her power to depict herself and her experiences. Comprehending new metonyms may allow us, like the child learning language, to think more fully about our own experience, and even, perhaps, to experience it more fully in the first place.

6. The Suggestive in Literature

The Russian Formalists made a distinction between *fabula*, the chronological order of events in a story, and *syuzhet*, the way in which a writer presents these events, often in a different order than the events of the *fabula*. Brewer/Lichtenstein (1981) proposed a translation of these terms: *fabula* as event structure, and *syuzhet* as discourse structure, which is the set of speech acts that tell the reader, in a general way how to construct the story. Oatley (1999b) has proposed that there is a further aspect of stories that is not general but idiosyncratic, the association structure (also called the suggestion structure, Oatley 2010): the set of personal associations set off in the reader in an only partly conscious way. Metaphor can be thought of as indigenous to the discourse structure of stories, because it is processed by general procedures available widely in a language community. By contrast, metonymy tends to derive from the association structure; it is the very emblem of suggestiveness, and it functions in a personal and idiosyncratic way. Oatley's idea of an association (or suggestion) structure derived from an Indian tradition founded by Bharata (200 BCE), see Hogan (1996), in a line of thinking almost as old as Aristotle's *Poetics* (350 BCE). In this Indic tradition the central terms were *dhvani* (suggestion), and *rasa* (literary emotion).

Hogan (2003) has drawn on Indic poetics in his discussion of worldwide occurrence of prototypical stories such as the love story, the story of heroic anger and revenge, the story of suffering and sacrifice, each based on a particular *rasa* (literary emotion). Each *rasa* provides a context within which certain kinds of associations are made more easily than others. Most of the examples in our paper, here, have been from the *rasa* of love, the amorous.

While the Western tradition has tended to concentrate on Aristotle's *mimesis*, how a text can relate to the world (and has perhaps been drawn towards Jakobson's metaphorical pole of language), the Indic tradition has tended towards *dhvani* and the relation between writer and reader or audience member (and has perhaps been drawn towards metonymy). Here is an example from the literary theorist Abhinavagupta, who lived about 1000 years ago (Ingalls/Masson/Patwardhan 1990), of how suggestion (*dhvani*) can work (again based on the *rasa* of the amorous). In a play, a traveller has arrived at a house where he meets a young woman and her mother-in-law. The young woman's husband is away. An intuition of love passes between the young woman and the traveller, and she says this:

Mother-in-law sleeps here, I there:
 Look, traveller, while it is light.
 For at night when you cannot see
 You must not fall into my bed.
 (Ingalls/Masson/Patwardhan 1990, 98)

The verse works by *dhvani*. In the presence of her mother-in-law, by means of a prohibition, the young woman makes the traveller an invitation. Her suggestions are metonymic. One is the juxtaposition, »mother-in-law sleeps here, I there«. The association is to the idea that there is sufficient separation between the young woman's own space and that of her husband's mother. Second is a juxtaposition between light and night. Light is the occasion for events in the public sphere; the association with night implies privacy and intimacy. In the third metonym, »fall«, could mean tripping over, but it also prompts an association with other losses of voluntariness. A fourth metonym is »bed«, a place for sleep but associated with activities of a rather different kind. Hogan (1996) proposed the cognitive mechanism of priming to explain the *dhvani* (suggestiveness) of *rasa*-based stories. Using this principle the metonymic (associative) significance of »sleep«, »night«, »fall«, »bed«, are suggested because the audience member is primed – as we would say prompted – by the *rasa* of the amorous. The process is an intimate one. It only really works when we are willing to engage ourselves in the story, and allow its associations to resonate with remembered experiences and longings of our own.

7. Conclusion

Metonymy is a principal means by which intimacy can be achieved between a reader and writer. It is accomplished by a reader who is willing to recognize the prompts and to make some of the associations of the inner world of a character, a narrator, or a writer. It's a verbal means by which intimacy can be nurtured. The reason why readers are drawn to some works of literature but not others, and to some writers but not others, is still a puzzle. An understanding how the prompts and associations of metonymy can promote intimacy between readers and writers is a step towards solving it.

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