

Metonymy

Semantic, pragmatic, cognitive and stylistic perspectives

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Declaration

**I declare that this thesis was composed by myself and is my own unaided work.
Parts of it have been published elsewhere in a revised version.**

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Abstract

The present research is concerned to define metonymy and discuss its functions in discourse. The theoretical background to the research is pluralist, including semantic, pragmatic, cognitive and stylistic approaches. Different theories are shown to account for conventional and creative realisations of metonymy in everyday discourse, as well as its functions in literary texts.

Metonymy is traditionally described in rhetoric and poetics as a figure of speech but the scope of the term has been extended. It is used to describe a means of structuring narrative discourse (Jakobson 1956), and a generalised cognitive mechanism (Lakoff 1987). Recent claims that metonymy is itself a universally valid explanatory principle, based on the evidence of psycholinguistic experiments (Gibbs 1994), lead to consideration of how metonymy affects semantic and syntactic features of language.

The thesis considers typological descriptions and explanations of metonymy in terms of general semantic relationships such as part for whole and cause for effect. Metonymy, traditionally a property of noun phrases, is shown to be present in different word categories and at different levels of discourse. Contiguity, a general principle on which metonymic relationships are based, is revised to include contiguity between physical entities and in their perception and interpretation. Metonymy as a naming and referring mechanism is shown to be a shortening device with cohesive functions, related to ellipsis. Contextualisation is reviewed and theories of domain are presented. Referentiality is reconsidered with respect to the effects of metonymy. The thesis investigates whether principled distinctions may be made between metonymy and metaphor, and discusses the functions of metonymy in symbolic language. Arguments for its metafunctions in narrative structure are presented, taking into account the presence of metonymy at word, phrase and sentence levels. A new way of analysing narrative through metonymy is proposed, and illustrated from literary works.

Abbreviations used in this thesis

RP	William Golding: <i>Rites of Passage</i>
CQ	William Golding: <i>Close Quarters</i>
FDB	William Golding: <i>Fire Down Below</i>
VL	Susan Sontag: <i>The Volcano Lover</i>
SS	Toni Morrison: <i>Song of Solomon</i>
OED	Oxford English Dictionary

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CHAPTER 0. INTRODUCTION.

0.1 Aims of the research.

The aim of the research described in this thesis is to give a descriptive and explanatory account of metonymy. Metonymy is a figure of speech in which a substitution between terms, or a change of name, is motivated by an existing relationship. Metonymy is also called a figure of thought because it expresses a number of general relational principles on which linguistic expressions are based.

The motivation for starting this research was that relatively little attention has been paid to metonymy in comparison with the very extensive literature on metaphor. The general principles underlying metonymy are well-known. These are substitution of one name for another on the basis of contiguity of entities in a defined context; reductive or elliptical expression; double referentiality of a single term; inference of implied meaning. However, although there is a long rhetorical and poetical tradition of describing tropes, metonymy was at a disadvantage with respect to metaphor until Jakobson (1956) argued for a bipolar theory of language based on metaphor and metonymy, and Lakoff (1987) described metonymic models as a fundamental way of thinking.

A further motivation was that no single approach to metonymy seemed adequate to account for its different realisations at different levels. The thesis will therefore adopt a pluralist approach, considering critically a number of theories but limiting their potential applications. It also questions whether principled links can be made between the theories and whether a superordinate category exists, also called metonymy, which is itself an explanatory principle in the relationship between thought and language.

The research takes into account examples of metonymy in everyday speech, and narrows the scope of its enquiry into written discourse to reports in the Press, advertising and narrative. Metonymy at word, phrase, sentence and text levels is pervasive in both factual reports and literature where it is seen to be a potential interface between writer and reader. A particular interest in narrative has motivated an examination of metonymy as a metanarrative device

accounting for some general features of text structure. Through metonymy, narrative fiction is linked to experience of the real-life world. It thus permits us to understand the way a narrative is experienced, and adds to the range of tools available for literary stylistics analysis.

A further point of departure for this consideration of metonymy resides in the problems of making clear distinctions between literal and figurative language, and the effects of change on the boundaries between creative and conventional use of metonymy.

0.2 Literal and figurative language.

Whether there is any clear-cut distinction between literal and figurative language is controversial. In a dictionary definition (OED 1989), *literal* is applied to the etymological or relatively primary meaning of a word, or to the sense expressed by the actual wording of a passage as distinguished from any metaphorical or merely suggested meaning. Figurative language is the expression of a secondary meaning to a word, and not interpreted by conventional wisdom as to what is true or false, although it may be real. So the *mouth* is literally a part of the body, while the *mouth of a river* is a figurative or metaphorical expression. Similarly, *house* is a dwelling place, but *House of Commons* is a metonymic expression in which *House* stands for the institution of Parliament, or Members of Parliament, rather than its location.

This study is also concerned with the position of metonymy with respect to metaphor, but argues against the assumption that metaphorical is synonymous with figurative. If literal is said to be fundamentally different from figurative, literal meaning might be assumed to be a criterion against which figurative language is found deviant (Bartsch 1987, Searle 1975). This view is seen in lexical entries in dictionaries, which usually place the literal meaning of a word before any figurative meanings, however common. *Crown* is primarily the object placed on a monarch's head at a coronation; it is secondarily a metonymy for the power of the monarch. Encyclopaedias, however, take into account all the ways in which a term is used, both literally and figuratively. Any definition of rule-violation depends on the principles of normal conceptual classifications of the world. One of the interesting aspects of studies of

tropes, especially metaphor and metonymy, is that since researchers have started empirical studies (Ortony 1979) the basis for 'normal language' has been questioned. The most controversial claim is that tropes are figures of thought with cognitive aspects, representing inner mind processes as well as having distinctive outer linguistic expressions. Figurative language is itself a normal use of language, on an equal basis with literal language.

The terms literal and figurative correspond to two philosophical standpoints (Ortony (1993: 2-3). The philosophical position underpinning literal language tends towards the search for an objectivist view of reality, characterised by taking literal language as the norm. Figures of speech are then violations of rules, mere ornaments, deviant, and non-scientific. A constructivist position, on the other hand, represents figurative language as going beyond information given, interacting with previous knowledge and context to produce imaginative development of meanings. It is an essential component of language, a creative activity which is normal in human linguistic behaviour. The present thesis will argue on the basis of this second view that metonymy is a creative activity of language and thought.

Further, while Lakoff (1987) admits the existence of some objective reality, Gibbs (1994) questions whether there is such a thing as objective definition of meaning. Literal meaning has to be seen as a default condition. In support of this he cites the difference between the dictionary and the encyclopaedia as a source of meaning. The former seeks to give objective definitions as far as possible; the latter adds to these all that is known about an entity. For example, *horse* is definable as an animal with four legs; but knowledge of *horse* includes human interactions with horse for work and pleasure, with appropriate extensions of meaning including poetic and idiomatic non-literal extensions (*to flog a dead horse*). In reality, they co-exist in the shared perception of meaning.

0.3 Creative and conventional language.

The distinction between literal and figurative cannot be equated with conventional and creative. Some figurative expressions have lost their creative force, becoming conventionalised; new expressions, perhaps with an ephemeral referent, are constantly being created both to describe and interpret the world. Highly referential in nature, metonymy is

nearly literal in some ways. Yet some kinds of metonymy especially those which lend themselves to further metaphorical extension belong in the domain of the imagination and are not conventional. Links between experience of the world and personal imagination have blurred boundaries and the meaning of an expression depends on the context in which it is used. Figurative language is said to belong in the realm of the imagination, the untrue and the unverifiable. The position of metonymy is in this respect interesting because it is always grounded in experiential reality. But conventional container-for-contained metonymies such as *The kettle is boiling* cannot be literally true because it is water, not the kettle, which boils. The boiling water is real, true, and verifiable and the substitution of *kettle* for *water* does not alter the fact. Figurative language can therefore be conventional (Lakoff 1986).

0.4 Tropes and stylistics.

A stylistician dealing with literary text, however, feels no need to justify the existence of figures of speech. Studies of figurative language in literature can be situated in this respect. The aesthetic pleasure of figures of speech, attested over the centuries, is sufficient reason for these figurative expressions to be studied. Literature is a rich territory for examples of the ways in which authors use figurative language. Style reveals the workings of the author's imagination, and the use of figures is a means of identifying the author's particular style of writing. Literature exists, tropes exist, therefore like other linguistic forms they have value and validity. This does not imply that figurative language is a mark only of poetry. Figurative language is used in all genres as well as in advertising and journalistic prose, and very frequently in everyday speech. In this respect, any theory of linguistic communication plays down the differences between literal and figurative, because all communication is subject to the same processes of recognition, understanding, comprehension and appreciation.

Metonymy has been called a master trope alongside metaphor and irony, but the term 'metaphorical' is loosely used as a synonym for both metaphor and metonymy. In this use metaphor is a superordinate in which other tropes such as metonymy, synecdoche, metalepsis and many others are included. There are a number of theoretical positions: the first gives metonymy due consideration as one of the master tropes along with metaphor, synecdoche and irony. Secondly, the superordinate concept is metaphor, of which metonymy is a less

central or peripheral part. Thirdly, metonymy may be as important as metaphor or possibly more so with respect to mental processes. Fourthly, metonymy is a figure like metaphor but less creative, and a means of explaining language processes. Metonymy is often thought to be less important than metaphor because it seems less figurative, nearer to a directly meaningful representation of reality. In reality, there is a cline or continuum of meaning and expression which leads the two distinct figures to hybridise, giving many intermediate examples which are not always easily classifiable (Dirven 1993).

These various points of view motivate the interest of the present research. For some purposes within literary criticism and communication theory there may seem to be little reason for separating metonymy from metaphor, since it is feasible to classify them together as figurative expressions with similar referential functions in poetry and rhetoric. But to reject the particular validity and value of metonymy, and to underestimate its place in thought and language, is to ignore information available as a tool in the pursuit of knowledge.

0.5 Approaches to the research.

In the field of interest constituted by metonymy, it has been necessary to limit the number of areas of enquiry. Various attempts going back to Classical writers like Quintilian and the author of *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* describe metonymy by means of category inventories, creating typologies which list existing metonymies and against which new ones may be judged (Gibbons 1767, Fontanier 1828, Schofer and Rice 1977, Norrick 1981, Bonhomme 1987). The disadvantage of a lexical approach is that it focuses attention on linguistic forms. These descriptions do not necessarily explain either underlying principles or the meaning of metonymy in its particular context of use.

Three further perspectives will be considered. In synchronic studies of meaning, metonymy is placed within a semantically based classification of word meanings (Cruse 1986, Nash 1989). A more relevant approach for the present research is to treat metonymy as a trope which can be based on relational principles: part and whole, container and contents, cause and effect, act and major participants, possessor and possessions, experience and convention (Norrick 1981). It has been shown in the field of diachronic semantics that metonymy plays an important role in motivating change of meaning (Blank 1996, McMahon 1994, Ullmann

1962). It is therefore a cognitive link between different entities and a reason for language change as new realisations of the relational principles emerge in language use.

In considering the question of why and how metonymic expressions are used, I consider some theories which move towards the boundaries of semantics and pragmatics, using metonymy as an explanatory principle. Within the frame of a cognitive approach to language, metonymy becomes a pragmatic strategy (Dirven 1993) or as interpretive language use, a means of achieving maximum cognitive effects for least effort (Sperber & Wilson 1986). Metonymy is a link between conceptual spaces (Fauconnier 1985) and therefore important to understanding variations in grammar such as infringement of syntactical restrictions governing subject-verb coordination, agrammatical anaphors, change of gender and singular-plural marking, and the creation of verbs by denominalisation. More controversially, a new class of illocutionary metonymy has been suggested as a potential explanation for Indirect Speech Acts (Panther & Thornburg 1996). These theories have been related to the general principles of contiguity, referentiality and unity of conceptual domain.

The notion that poetic language is pervasive in everyday discourse, confirmed by empirical observation (Pollio *et al.* 1977), widened the view of what is 'poetic language'. Far from being an exceptional and difficult kind of language, poetic language is a normal way of thinking and expressing thoughts (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). It includes both abstract and non-abstract referents. This has led to the claim that all mind processes are poetic in some way and hence to a claim that metonymic models of thought are fundamental and universal (Lakoff 1987, Gibbs 1994). This research narrowed the field of linguistic data by considering contemporary spoken and written discourse.

This raises the question of whether we need to differentiate not only between poetic and literal language, but also between fact and fiction. While Searle (1975) argues that fiction is logically different from fact, Gerrig (1993) supports a psychological argument: whether a narrative is factual (cf. Labov 1972) or fictional, it is experienced in similar ways. On this basis I have analysed metonymic expressions in different genres and from different cultures, including everyday speech, Press reports and narrative fiction. The philosophical question of whether fiction is less valid because it is untrue is less important for this research than the presence of metonymy in various genres of oral and written discourse. In the process of

narrowing the field of data for this research, I have chosen to make particular reference to the use of metonymy in narrative. Of special interest is the function of metonymy known through the world of everyday experience in the understanding of narrative set in an unknown world, where it plays a complex role both in the coherence and the interpretation of the text.

The use of metonymy in literature is both similar to and different from its use in short everyday communications. The analysis of metonymy at word, phrase and sentence levels accounts for some stylistic features of narrative (Riffaterre 1990). Through multiple referentiality this type of metonymy has special functions for the cohesion of longer discourse. But we also need the notion that metanarrative metonymy is a means of linking the various parts of a narrative, and forwarding the development of a text (Jakobson 1956, Hillis Miller 1985, Werth 1994). In this framework, metonymic thought processes can provide links between a world known through experience, and the world represented in the text (Pankhurst 1996, 1997).

The remaining question which arises from the research is whether the types of metonymy discussed are linked. They all depend on interpreting, through an inferential bridging process, the divergence between apparent and true referents, within the context shared by author/speaker, reader/hearer and text/utterance. The links may occur in metonymic processes which underpin comprehension of everyday language and those used in the understanding of written text, both factual and fictional. The thesis proposes that meaning carried by metonymy both as trope and as discourse is greater than ornamental effect, and that metonymy plays a particularly important role in the construction and comprehension of narrative.

0.6 Plan of the thesis.

The thesis consists of three sections. The first two chapters are concerned with historical and semantic approaches to metonymy. The next four chapters are devoted to discussion of the linguistic and cognitive relationships with which metonymy is connected. The last three chapters consider the distinction between metonymy and metaphor, the formation of linguistic symbols, and the structures of narrative fiction.

Chapter 1 reviews the principal literature on metonymy and the important new dimensions given to the term by Jakobson (1956) and Lakoff (1987). Starting with definitions of figures of speech by Plato and Aristotle, the thesis examines the neo-classical typologies of metonymy in poetry and rhetoric (Gibbons 1767, Fontanier 1828). It discusses the inadequacy of descriptive taxonomies as an explanation of the principles on which metonymy is grounded. The innovative theories of Jakobson (1956) and Lakoff (1987) redefine metonymy as a thought process with importance in cognition as well as linguistic expression. More controversial extensions of the term to include fundamental thought processes verified through empirical evidence (Gibbs 1994) and its reduction to a form of interpretive language use (Sperber and Wilson 1986) are also considered.

Chapter 2 presents an approach to metonymy in terms of semantics. I discuss whether Lyons' (1977) classification of nominals into orders of entities explains the mechanisms which convert nouns and noun phrases into conventional metonymies. The separation between part-whole relationships called synecdoche and cause-effect relations called metonymy is considered. Starting from canonical examples, I discuss the nature of the semantic relationships in a number of currently used metonymies. The importance of conventional and creative metonymy is evaluated.

The next chapters focus on linguistic and cognitive principles. Chapter 3 examines the concept of contiguity and its function in metonymic transfers of meaning. After considering whether metonymy and contiguity are necessarily co-present, I discuss Jakobson's theory of contiguity in the light of further development by Dirven (1993) of metonymy as a mental strategy. Constraints on contiguity in some contexts are discussed. It is seen as a physical state but one which leads through perception and interpretation to a metonymic relationship. Chapter 4 examines the claim that metonymic use of language is a form of ellipsis. The sense of metonymy is revised in terms of semantic implication (Quirk 1985) and its function as a reductive and cohesive device in text (Genette 1972, Halliday & Hasan 1976). Chapter 5 considers metonymy as a mechanism which enables co-reference to two or more referents. Referentiality extends from the referents of a noun phrase to its role in textual cohesion, its effects on grammar, the way in which referents are identified, and the importance of inference in identifying referents. The changing nature of an established referent, used in literary text in order to structure the narrative, is illustrated. Chapter 6 compares domain with other

definitions of context (semantic field, schema, script, scenario). In the light of Langacker's (1987) and Lakoff & Turner's (1989) theories domain is seen to be an important way of defining metonymy and distinguishing it from metaphor. Unity of domain provides the necessary contextualisation for inferential understanding.

Chapter 7 extends the argument about whether it is possible to differentiate in a principled and consistent way between metonymy and metaphor. Starting from the idea that between them there is a common stock of figurativity, differences in linguistic realisations are discussed in terms of categorisation theories. Despite differences, metaphor is frequently grounded in metonymy and the two figures are seen to interact both in linguistic expressions (Goossens 1990) and in the structure of narrative (Lodge 1977). Chapter 8 discusses whether metonymy can be considered to play a role in the creation of linguistic symbols. In the light of cultural diversity, the limitations of metonymy as an account of the formation of symbols (Bonhomme 1987, Eco 1979) are balanced by its strengths. The presence of metonymically formed symbols across cultures and in life as well as literature is evidence of the ubiquity of metonymic thought. Chapter 9 demonstrates through literary illustrations the functions of metonymy in the structure of narrative. Stylistic effects such as the creation of humour, irony and parody both in episodes and throughout a text are confirmed. It is shown to have an important function as a focalising device for the understanding and interpretation of meaning, relating the fictional to the real world.

Chapter 10 concludes the thesis and proposes further research into metonymy.

Chapter 1: An Overview of Theories of Metonymy.

1.1 Introduction.

This chapter is an overview of existing approaches to metonymy with relevance to the present study. In the course of the following chapters I shall return to those theories which have particular application for the different aspects of metonymy that I shall be considering.

Traditional approaches to rhetoric and poetics limit the scope of metonymy to its character as a trope, a variety of figurative language. Modern theories in the fields of cognitive psychology, pragmatics and stylistics assume that metonymy is a phenomenon of thought as well as language. The differences between the old and new theories can be summed up as studies of the linguistic product in contrast to studies of principles and processes in its use. In addition, there is some divergence between areas of study which use metonymy as an explanatory semantic principle, such as studies of diachronic language change, and those which explain metonymy in terms of more general cognitive principles such as the perception of contiguity, part-whole and cause-effect relations. Literary criticism stands somewhere between these. Metonymy has a referring function in text, is an explanation for narrative structure and a means for understanding and appreciating the meaning of a text.

1.1.1 Rhetoric and poetics in Ancient Greece.

The traditional view of tropes, deriving from ancient writings, assumes that they are linguistic devices. Plato first coined the term 'metonymy' i.e. the fact that words and their meanings change, as one of the four signs of arbitrariness. The others were 'homonymy' or 'polysemy,' when the same sequence of phonemes may be associated with two or more unrelated meanings; 'polyonymy' or 'isotrophy', the existence of synonyms; and 'nonymy' the non-existence of single words for simple or familiar ideas (Plato: *Cratylus*, adapted from Householder 1995).

Aristotle however named metaphor as the dominant trope of Rhetoric, or prose discourse, and Poetry.

Metaphor consists in giving a thing a name that belongs to something else, the transference being either from genus to species, from species to genus, or from species to species or on grounds of analogy.

(*Poetics* 1457b, in Preminger & Brogan 1993)

Aristotle's four types of metaphor include relationships which are now assigned to metonymy and synecdoche. Metaphor is a relationship on grounds of analogy, and has acquired superordinate status as a term for all figurative language. Synecdoche is now considered to be so closely related to metonymy that the two cannot be clearly distinguished (Ruwet 1975, Nash 1989). It relates specifically part of an entity to the whole, as in *species for genus* and vice-versa.

Metonymy was later defined as: '*denominatio est quae ab rebus propinquis et finitimis trahit orationem, qua possit intellegi res quae non suo vocabulo sit appellata*' (Anon. 'Cicero': *Ad C. Herennium* IV, 32) i.e. as a substitution of words on the grounds of a close relation existing between entities. This definition has persisted up to the present day. Ullmann (1962: 218) wrote that metonymy 'arises between words already related to each other.' The relationship derives from contiguity, which may be in the perceived world or in the process of perception or interpretation (Norrick 1981). Preminger & Brogan (1993: 144) sum this up in defining metonymy as a 'figure in which one word is substituted for another on the basis of some material, causal and conceptual relation'.

While it is not the object of this thesis to compare definitions of metonymy in detail, I shall consider some historical as well as some contemporary studies.

1.1.2 Neo-classical theories.

Interest in tropes in the eighteenth century led neo-classical rhetoricians such as Gibbons (1767) to offer rhetorically-based definitions in terms which echo the Ancients. Metaphor, or the analogy relationship, was considered to be the most useful trope for the purpose of adding aesthetic value to discourse. Metaphor is separate from metonymy, which is now defined in general terms as a renaming process:

A Metonymy is a trope in which one name is put for another, for which it may be allowed to stand by reason of some relation or coherence between them.

(Gibbons 1767: 66).

Within this categorisation, Gibbons allows four classes of metonymy. These are cause for effect (*hand for writing*); effect for cause (there is *death in the pot*); subject for adjunct (he has *a good heart*); adjunct for subject (set *thine house* in order). Extension of simple metonymy into metalepsis takes place through the multiplying of degrees of meaning within the same figurative expression:

Under the metonymy we may consider the Metalepsis, of which it may frequently either more or less consist; but [...] it is very far-fetched and uncommonly multiplied, being two or more tropes contained under the same word, so that gradations or intervening senses come between the word that is expressed and the thing designed by it.

(Gibbons 1767: 69)

In the phrase *In Caesar there are many Mariuses*, the name Marius is 'put for any ambitious or turbulent person by synecdoche or antonomasia, and again by a metonymy of cause for the ill effects of such a temper to the public' (*ibid.*)

Synecdoche is limited to a small number of specified relations:

[It is] a trope which puts the name of a whole for a part, or the name of a part for the whole; a general name for a particular under that general, or a particular for the general.

(Gibbons 1767: 71)

Gibbons includes in synecdoche the use of a plural for a singular number and the singular for the plural (*man* for men), the use of a certain number for an uncertain number (*ten thousand* for many), and the naming figure, antonomasia, as in *the city* for London. The significance of part for whole relationships will be developed in chapter 2 below.

The general importance of tropes is summed up thus:

.... either for *necessity*, *emphasis* or *decency*. For *necessity* when we have not proper words to declare our thoughts; for *emphasis* when the proper words we have are not so comprehensive and significant; for *decency* when plain language would give offence and distaste to the reader (Gibbons 1767: 20, author's italics).

1.1.2.1 Metonymy in satirical verse: *The Dunciad*.

The neo-classical use of tropes, in particular metonymy, was more than a linguistic ornament in spite of claims for its poetic functions.

Though a Metonymy may not be so necessary as the Metaphor, nor take such a wide compass, yet it is a trope of very great use and extent. It gives a vast scope and liberty to the fancy; it both adorns and invigorates our style. (Gibbons 1767 [1969]: 70).

Tropes served various linguistic and social purposes such as striking rhetorical effect, or disguise of true referents. In contemporary essays, narrative and satirical verse indirect reference of the kind allowed by metonymic substitution reflected the need to avoid dangerous overt criticism of the State. A contemporary reader who shared knowledge of the poet's contextual references would understand the implied meaning of the metonymy in these lines:

May you, my Cam and Isis, preach it long
The Divine Right of Kings to govern wrong.

(Alexander Pope (1728): *The Dunciad*)

Here, *Cam and Isis*, the rivers of Cambridge and Oxford respectively, stand for the Universities, whose scholars were free to criticise the monarchy in a way not open to all dissenting writers of the period. Pope effectively uses the names to hide his own opinion of the monarchic system of absolute power. The use of an elegant trope to convey meaning adds a neat turn of phrase to the poetic effects and protects the poet from the risky consequences of making direct references to political issues of the day. The multiple reference made possible by metonymy is exploited by the poet to hide his point, but readers sharing the social and political context of the eighteenth century would identify the true referent without difficulty.

The use of metonymy to convey satirical intention is still productive. Even in contexts where criticism of power is an accepted democratic principle, it is a conventional means of shortening descriptions with some 'hidden' affective intention. This can be seen in the transfer of a person's name (a part for whole transfer) to the policies of their political followers (by cause for effect), often by addition of the morpheme *-ite*: *Thatcherite*, *Blairite*.

1.1.3 The Nineteenth Century: Romanticism and Realism.

In this section I shall discuss a nineteenth century theory of tropes with respect to metonymy, and compare the relative importance of metonymy for poetry and prose fiction of the period. The nineteenth century, although revising general philosophies of language in the light of new ideologies, did not question the truth of classical definitions of tropes based on logical relationships between terms.

1.1.3.1 Fontanier's typology of tropes.

The French rhetorician Fontanier ([1827],1968) like Gibbons, defines tropes as stylistic deviations from simple, everyday expressions:

Les formes, les traits ou les tours plus ou moins remarquables, et d'un effet plus ou moins heureux, par lesquels le Discours, dans l'expression des idées, des pensées ou des sentiments, s'éloigne plus ou moins de ce qui en eût été l'expression simple et commune.
(Fontanier [1827] 1968: 64)

Along with the cautious *plus ou moins* with which Fontanier approached the difference between figurative and literal language, he proposed that metonymy works because of the existence of an undefined relationship between terms. The examples are grouped into eight categories rather than Gibbons' four, but the general principles remain.

1. Cause for effect, divided into six sub-classes: divine and supreme cause (*Jupiter* for *air*); active, intelligent, moral cause (*brush* for *painter*); occasional cause (the character *Phèdre* for the play *Phèdre*); natural cause (*sun* for *heat*); abstract and metaphysical cause (*charity* for acts *deriving from charity*).
2. Effect for cause (*joy* for *child*).
3. Container for contained (*France* for *its inhabitants*).
4. Location of a thing for itself (*Bordeaux* for *wine produced there*).
5. Sign of a thing for the thing itself (*crown* for *king*).
6. The physical for the moral (*heart* for *courage*).
7. Master or patron of a thing for the thing itself (*St. Denis* for *the church of that name*).
8. Thing for the person associated with it (*horses* for *horsemen*).

(Fontanier [1827] 1968: 79-86)

Additionally, Fontanier separates synecdoche from metonymy, since it depends on the principle of *connexion*: contact or contiguity. Like metonymy, it designates one object by the

name of another but the two objects in the synecdoche form a whole, linked by a stable bond. There are seven kinds of synecdoche in Fontanier's scheme:

1. Part for the whole (*head* for *person*, *sail* for *boat*)
2. Material for the thing (*steel* for *sword*, *brass* for *trumpet*)
3. Singular for plural (*man* for *men*)
4. Genus for species (*animal* for *horse*)
5. Species for the genus (*roses* for *flowers*)
6. The abstract for the concrete (anger for *an angry person*)
7. Common name for a proper name and proper noun for another proper noun
(*tyrant* for *Nero*, *Alexander* for *Louis XIV*)

(Fontanier [1827] 1968: 87-93)

Fontanier's classification of metonymy and synecdoche, although minutely detailed, is no more than a descriptive listing of expressions culled from literary sources. Like Gibbons, Fontanier does not consider metonymy to be anything other than a rhetorical device. His separation of seven different types of synecdoche raises the point of whether this division is valid, and the debate over whether synecdoche is a separate trope from metonymy, or part of it, continues (Seto 1996). The question of tautologies illustrates the change of opinion over the separate identity of synecdoche. Expressions of the type *Le singe sera toujours le singe* and *Boys will be boys* were called double synecdoches by Fontanier, but have been further analysed by Bonhomme (1987) and Gibbs (1994) as metonymy. Lakoff (1987) also assumes that the part-whole relationship is metonymy. From this point, I shall conform to current usage and treat synecdoche as a type of metonymy, albeit an important one.

1.1.3.2 Metonymy in poetry: Tennyson's *Ulysses*.

Generally speaking, the use of tropes by writers, and their study by critical analysts, changed in the course of the nineteenth century. The Classical use of tropes as decorative elements of language was succeeded by the early years of that century by a Romantic view which saw all language as metaphoric (see e.g. Coleridge 1824) and later, symbolic. The apogee of creative writing was poetry, highly metaphoric in style. There are examples of metonymy to be found in poetry, but the fundamental purpose of romantic poetry was less to represent the real world than to stretch it by means of imaginative metaphors.

On the other hand, the co-presence of metaphor and metonymy as in Tennyson's *Ulysses* leads to a rich series of poetic effects:

I am become a name
For always roaming with a hungry heart.
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least but honoured of them all.

(Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1842): *Ulysses*: 11-15)

A brief analysis of these lines shows the rich effects of combining tropes. The initial transformation *I am become a name* is a metonymic transfer of a person's qualities and all knowledge about him into his name, which stands for his reputation. The phrase *hungry heart* compounds metaphoric intention (*hungry* transferred to the non-literal sense of desire) and metonymy of physical part of the body for a non-physical concept (*heart* for feelings). A series of metonymic references (*cities - manners - climates - councils - governments*) stand for the different States visited during Ulysses' travels. These travels taken as a whole form a metaphor which conceptualises life as a journey, often cited as a canonical example of the theme of the Wanderer. The effect is to transfer Ulysses' experience of the world from adventurous travel to the more general personal and poetic domain of quest. *Ulysses* stands metonymically for the archetypal adventurer, lured by another metaphorical journey. The poem continues:

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.

(*Ulysses*.: 18-20)

The lines contain a metonymic view of the hero, who represents the whole of experience (*a part of all that I have met*) within a metaphor for life. Experience has limitless possibilities, and in the metaphor of light gleaming through an archway the reader is transported from the physical to the imaginative world of the infinite.

1.1.4 The Revival of Rhetoric.

Until revisions by Norrick (1981) and Bonhomme (1987), Fontanier's typology stood as the canon of trope classification in the study of Rhetoric, with some redefinitions. One of the

chief issues of the day, which I shall not discuss, led by the Groupe de Liège (1970) was whether synecdoche was not only separate from metonymy but also the only master trope. Apart from Esnault's (1925) work on metonymic motivation in transfer of meaning, many discussions of metonymy are based on post-Saussurean theories of semiotics (Culler 1976, Eco 1979, Jakobson 1960) and semantics (Henry 1970, Le Guern 1973, Norrick 1981) and their application to literary criticism (Culler 1976, 1981, Genette 1972, Lodge 1977). A different approach, one of the most influential for later metonymy studies, is found in Jakobson's (1956) theory of language as metaphor or metonymy, which will be discussed in Section 2 below.

1.1.4.1 Metonymy in semantic theory: Henry, Le Guern.

Henry (1971) and Le Guern (1973) propose semantically grounded theories which are limited to the instantiation of metonymy in the noun phrase, with referential and poetic effects. Both however move towards the view that figures of speech are also figures of thought and attach importance to the psychological plausibility of their examples and arguments.

Henry argues for the approach that metonymy involves a transfer between semic fields (Greimas 1966) which is necessary if functions of the trope are to be understood fully. Metonymy is seen as a mental operation, in which the author chooses one unit (sème) of a semic cell and matches it in a contextually meaningful way to another because both terms contain common elements with respect to their meaning. He regards both metonymy and synecdoche as '*figures de contiguïté*' i.e. they are concepts of mental operation and representation, used in conjunction with each other for special linguistic effects in literature. This signals a move away from regarding tropes as purely linguistic phenomena and towards psycholinguistic considerations such as interpretative process.

Le Guern (1973) has much in common with Henry. He also analyses both metaphor and metonymy with Greimas' (1966) system of semic fields. Like Henry, he claims that metaphor is poetic in its scope, metonymy referential. Le Guern, following Esnault, views metonymy as an elliptic expression: 'La métonymie n'ouvre pas de chemins nouveaux comme l'intuition métaphorique; mais brûlant des étapes de chemins trop connus, elle raccourcit des distances

pour faciliter la rapide intuition de choses déjà connues' (Esnault 1925: 31). Metonymy as a kind of ellipsis is a short-cut between referents in given contexts (e.g. *give me a beer* means *give me the contents of a glass of beer* in a metonymy of contained-for-container). He draws attention to the importance of the multiple referentiality of words (like *blood*) which lead to the creation of richly poetic imagery through extension into metaphor, a point developed by Goossens (1990) and Dirven (1993) and discussed in Chapter 5 (below).

The problem with the theories of Henry and Le Guern is that for them, metonymy is still an inferior trope to metaphor because it is referential rather than imaginative. The move from metonymy as a rhetorical and poetic ornament to metonymy as an explanatory cognitive principle was limited by the choice of data from literary texts which favour metaphorical expressions. The next stage in the move to extending the perception of metonymy came out of semiotic theory.

1.1.5 Tropes and semiotic theory.

New typologies of metonymy (Schofer & Rice 1977, Norrick 1981) did not depart greatly from the traditional classifications of the earlier writers, although strongly influenced by semiotics. Schofer & Rice redefined tropes by means of a system based on the logical principles of rhetoric, with some modification in the light of their value as signs, while Norrick describes types of metonymy as a set of regular indexical semantic relations.

1.1.5.1 The master tropes revis(it)ed: Schofer and Rice.

A revision of metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche in the light of semiotic theory (Schofer & Rice 1977) is based on Fontanier's classification of tropes. Within the same assumption of text-based meaning, Schofer and Rice propose a reorganisation of the fundamental principles of the four 'master' tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony). Three notions are fundamental to the process by which tropes are created and understood - semantic features, contexts and referents. These are summed up in a general definition of tropes:

Semantic transposition from a sign *in praesentia* to a sign *in absentia* and (1) based on the perception of a relationship between one or more semantic features of each

signified, (2) marked by the semantic incompatibility of microcontext and the macrocontext, (3) motivated by a referential relationship of resemblance or causality or inclusion or opposition.

(Schofer & Rice 1977: 133-4)

All tropes express a process, or movement, from message to linguistic code, and all depend on there being a referential link between the semantic features of the selected terms. By *semantic incompatibility* is meant the gap between the literal and the implied meanings of the referents, when they are encountered in different contexts or are understood from different world-views. The third point of the theory defines four motivations which create the four traditional tropes. Metaphor is grounded in a principle of resemblance, metonymy in causality, synecdoche in inclusion, irony in opposition. This account of tropes advocates that metonymy should be the name of the cause-for-effect relationship, synecdoche the name of the part-for-whole.

The scheme is complicated by maintaining the difference between metonymy and synecdoche, and does not appear to offer any explanatory advantages over Gibbons' or Fontanier's classifications. Schofer and Rice's definitions, strictly logical as they are, do not take into account the aesthetic pleasure created by the striking poetic effects of tropes, or the use of figurative language to disguise the intended referent. Importance is placed on the role of context, but they do not question how tropes interact with each other in discourse or what importance can be attached to contextual effects in the process of understanding.

1.1.5.2 Regular semantic relations: Norrick.

Norrick (1981) proposes a categorisation of types of metonymy in eighteen classes, most of them reversible, and corresponding to metonymic principles which motivate regular semantic relations. Unlike Schofer and Rice's typology, this scheme treats synecdoche as part of the more general class called metonymy. There are a number of broad principles (cause-for-effect, part-for-whole) under which other semantic relations are classified into groups.

A. Cause-effect

1. Cause-effect: fire and heat.
2. Producer-artefact: author and book.
3. Natural source-natural product: chicken (animal) and chicken (meat).
4. Instrument-product: violin and sound of music.

B. Acts and major participants (extensions of cause and effect)

5. Object-act: nail and the act of hammering.
 6. Instrument-act: pen and the act of writing.
 7. Agent-act: baker and the act of baking.
 8. Agent-instrument: driver and car.
- C. Part-whole
9. Part-whole: a sail and a ship.
 10. Act-complex act: heating liquid and distilling it.
 11. Central factor-institution: the stage and the theatre as institution.
 12. Container-content: a wine-glass and wine.
 13. Locality-occupant: a city and its residents.
 14. Costume-wearer: army uniform and a soldier.
- D. Experience-convention
15. Experience-convention: sensation of cold and a low temperature.
 16. Manifestation-definition: car moving fast and a car capable of high speed.
- E. Possessor-possession
17. Possessor-possession: a rich person and wealth.
 18. Office holder-office: person serving as president, and office of president.
- (Norrick 1981: 28-29, adapted).

Thus, Norrick's classifications elaborate on the major groups identified by Gibbons and Fontanier. All depend on contiguity relationships, provided contiguity is seen as not only physical but inherent in perception and interpretation. The importance of the theory is that it justifies using metonymy as a descriptive term for many mental processes which infer cause from effect, part from whole, and vice-versa, and generalise from individual experience. This means that metonymy need no longer be seen as uniquely occurring in noun phrases, since it expresses a principle which can also be seen in verbs (cf. Clark & Clark 1979). It also offers an explanation for diachronic shifts of meaning studied by historical semanticists (Bartsch 1987, Blank 1996).

Let us consider an example of metonymic shifts in the extension of meaning within and across word categories. Clothes and clothier are linked by a produced-producer principle which allows the substitution of other associated concepts and terms. So a name can stand for the clothier - *She wears Hartnell*. Subordinate terms for clothes such as suit, dress, or the materials from which they are made are also possible substitutions by contiguity: *I'll take the blue silk*. The actual garment can 'name' the wearer: *The Fame T-shirt went into the house where Mozart was born* (Fry 1994: 1). A stative verb can stand for the relationship because of another contiguity perceived between wearer and garment: he was *clothed* in clerical robes,

she was *dressed* in blue silk. The transfers between nouns and verbs are metonymically motivated by the set of general principles listed above.

These principles also go some way to accounting for the description of discourse structure as metonymic (Jakobson 1956), because of the 'all-pervasive influence of contiguity relations' (Norrick 1981: 41). The link between one-word metonymies and discursal metonymy is through contiguity of events, places and persons within the narrative.

1.1.6 A pragmatics-based typology: Bonhomme.

Bonhomme justifies his typology of metonymy by extending discussion of metonymy to functions of context, analysing semantically-based typologies from a pragmatic perspective and including syntactic features associated with metonymy.

1. Metonymy is divisible into three broad types - stative, dynamic and mixed. Within these types, the traditional classification of metonymy by cause-for-effect, part-for-whole etc. is respected.
2. Importance is placed on linguistic and socio-cultural contextual factors, fixed schemas of knowledge known as '*cotopies*', which enable comprehension and identification of intended referents.
3. Metonymy in text has important pragmatic functions, and is therefore more than a question of semantics.
4. Metonymy has grammatical effects, such as changes in the logical gender of determiners, anaphoric pronouns, and verb agreements (cf. Fauconnier 1985).

Bonhomme's arguments are illustrated by a considerable extension of the type and range of data available as evidence of contemporary metonymy. Distinguishing between types of metonymy on the basis of the work of Fontanier, but including synecdoche in metonymy, he moves away from purely literary examples to modern fiction and factual reporting in the Press. Evidence from corpora of spoken and written discourse suggests that metonymy is used both conventionally and creatively, like metaphor and has autonomous status as a trope.

1.2 Jakobson's bipolar theory of language.

Twentieth century theories of tropes, influenced by semiotics, linguistics and cognitive psychology, tried to redefine them in terms of semantic relationships and rhetorical functions. At the same time, the work of Jakobson was a springboard for the reconsideration of metaphor and metonymy. Since the publication of Jakobson's bipolar theory of language, attempts have been made to redefine the relationship between figurative and literal language. Questions have been asked about the borderline between semantics and pragmatics, the role of syntax in determining figurative interpretations, the distinction between metaphor and metonymy, and the importance of metonymy as a basic mental process. In this respect the work of Lakoff & Johnson (1980) also marked the start of many new directions taken by the study of figurative language (see Section 1.3 below).

This section will outline Jakobson's bipolar theory of language as presented in his (1956) paper *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances*. Further development of Jakobson's theory in the field of literary criticism by Genette (1972) and Lodge (1977), and in the light of cognitive strategies by Dirven (1993), will be considered in later chapters. The work of Jakobson is widely seen as bridging the gap between traditional rhetoric and poetics on the one hand, and general cognitive principles on the other. By means of his trope-based theory of language he draws implications for the structuring of prose in terms of metonymy, and poetry in terms of metaphor.

In this theory, metaphor and metonymy define the nature of discourse. As an extension of his observations of aphasic disturbances, and within a Saussurean binary approach to language, Jakobson gives special emphasis to the opposition between 'combination' and 'contexture' on the one hand, and 'selection' and 'substitution' on the other. Combination of terms, within a contexture, takes place spatially and temporally in present time for the speaker, in contiguity on the syntagmatic axis. This is described as metonymic. Selection of terms, and their substitution for each other, takes place at some spatio-temporal distance from the speech act, and on the paradigmatic axis. This is metaphoric. The theory treats synecdoche as a kind of metonymy, used in the provision of richly detailed description.

Jakobson suggests that a further essential mechanism, internal to the linguistic code, is a 'bridging mechanism' in space and time if the addresser and addressee, participants in a speech act, are to understand each other. To this inferencing process Jakobson adds the notion that contiguity between the participants of any speech event is essential to the successful transmission of the message. This proposal is an important trigger for the study of contiguity, which becomes a key concept in understanding metonymy (Henry 1971, Le Guern 1973) but which has been considerably modified in stylistics (Genette 1972, Eco 1979). The importance of Jakobson's theory is that he defined 'contiguity' in cognitive and linguistic terms and extended the concept to include contiguity in discourse (see Chapter 3.2 below).

Jakobson admits that despite personal preferences, most people use both metaphor and metonymy in their spoken and written discourse.

In normal verbal behaviour both processes are normally continually operative, but careful observation will reveal that under the influence of a cultural pattern, personality and verbal style, preference is given to one of the two processes over the other.
(Jakobson 1956: 76)

Whereas in the traditional sense of metonymy a term is substituted for another at word level, i.e. semantic contiguity and a common referent for the two terms is required, Jakobson suggests that relationships on the syntagmatic axis of language depend on a combination of syntactic and semantic contiguity. These combinations create metonymic discourse, and are said to mark a writer's individual style. He proposes that since metaphoric style depends on selection and transference of terms by a process of analogy, it is dominant in poetry, the literature of Romanticism and Symbolism, surrealist art, and drama. Metonymic style, on the other hand, depends on contiguity. In contrast to metaphor it is dominant in prose, Realist literature, Cubist art and film. Since it is not the aim of this research to discuss all the different realisations, I shall illustrate subsequent arguments from literature.

1.2.1 The influence of Jakobson's theory.

One of the consequences of the theory was re-analysis of literary structure. Metonymic discourse is not considered by rhetorical classifications of tropes, but it dominates the

structure of nineteenth century realist narrative fiction where metonymy is also used as a figure of speech. Authors such as Dickens, George Eliot, Flaubert, Maupassant, Tolstoy, Zola and Trollope were led by a desire to imitate reality. Their novels are marked by descriptions based on the part-for-whole principle, and by metonymic forwarding of the narrative as episodes move in contiguous units. The opening pages of *Bleak House* (Dickens 1853) - the famous description of London fog - are frequently cited as a paradigm of this type of discourse in fiction. The presence of metonymy is a meta-narrative element of text, as in Maupassant's (1886) short story *La Parure* (*The Necklace*) in which the presence of an apparently valuable necklace and the consequences of its loss structure the entire narrative. Jakobson's theory of metaphor and metonymy has generated more specific studies in the fields of stylistics and poetics (Genette 1972, Lodge 1977).

Metonymic discourse is a fundamental organising structure for providing information about time, place and characters, i.e. the necessary context for the events of the narrative (Hillis Miller 1985), and stylistic features such as humour or irony (Riffaterre 1982). Metonymy is able to transfer reference to the physical (i.e. houses, clothing, and the characters' features) into the non-physical world of ideas through its extended referentiality (Bonhomme 1987, Jakobson 1956, Riffaterre 1990). Although close to literal, factual representation, this type of metonymic framework stands for the author's view of a fictional world which is understood through its relation of contiguity to the experiential world. The elements of the discourse are also in contiguity with each other.

Jakobson's theory has been criticised (Bredin 1984a) on the grounds that it over-extends the scope of metonymy, which moves from being a single-word trope grounded in contiguity to a name for a special kind of discourse. Lakoff & Turner (1989) propose that metaphor and metonymy are frequently co-present with literal language in everyday discourse as well as literature. A more general criticism is that literal expressions such as exchanges of factual information cannot be excluded from a general theory of language. Discussion of the importance of contiguity in metonymic relations, and the extent of its field of application, will be continued in Chapter 4 below.

1.3. Cognitive Approaches to Metonymy.

Metonymy has increased both in scope and explanatory importance in the course of the twentieth century. New emphasis has been given to the importance of underlying cognitive processes, with the result that its meaning has stretched away from typologies of semantic relationships. Cognitive linguists (represented in e.g. Paprotté & Dirven 1985, Ortony 1993, Gibbs 1994) have claimed that metaphor and metonymy are both widespread, indeed pervasive, processes which underpin many linguistic realisations. Metonymy, although less easily perceived, is as important as metaphor in being a poetic way of thinking and conceptualising. The shift of focus from product to process is accompanied by the study of metonymy in other word categories besides noun phrases (cf. Norrick, 1.1.5.2, above).

I shall review two different approaches. Lakoff and his associates have developed the theory that linguistic realisations represent thought, so metonymy like metaphor is a basic conceptual mechanism. I shall also discuss a general theory of communication, Relevance Theory, which makes fewer claims for the importance of metonymy, regarding it only as a type of interpretive language use.

1.3.1 A general theory of language and thought: Lakoff.

Lakoff and his co-authors (see e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1986, 1987, 1992, Lakoff & Turner 1989) consider that metonymy, like metaphor, is a basic conceptual mechanism fundamental to human thought processes. Their theories are grounded in a Piagetian or Gestalt view of cognition, in which metaphoric and metonymic concepts have an important role to play in categorisations and in linguistic expressions of the schemas which structure understanding. Literal language exists, since we know of the existence of some entities that can be verified objectively as either true or false, but literal language is no longer the norm against which all figurative 'deviations' are measured. Conventional thinking is summed up thus:

The sacred status of literal meaning is no secret. The literal is typically viewed as the main concern of the study of semantics; all else is taken as secondary and peripheral.

It is the literal that is assumed to give us our grip on meaningfulness, on factuality, on straight talk, and on reason. The non-literal is seen from this perspective as dispensable - a matter of indirectness, exaggeration, embellishment, interpretation, metaphor. The literal, the classical story, is the indispensable sacred rock that forms the bulk of our language and thought. (Lakoff 1986: 292)

Lakoff goes on to claim that the concept 'literal' is based on an over-simplified theory of language, based on belief in objective reality. The term 'literal' cannot be used unequivocally to contrast with 'metaphorical'. Instead, he proposes new distinctions. Language used to talk about some domain is not necessarily subject to 'true or false' conditions. Because of the existence of absolutely conventional metaphors, which in use have acquired meanings both as dead metaphors (*the foot of the bed*) and as conceptual metaphors (*Life is a Journey*), true/false criteria for the identification of literal language can also be used of non-literal expressions. 'Conventional' language, contrasting with creative poetical embellishment, is different from 'non-metaphorical' or 'directly meaningful' language.

This new distinction opens the way to Lakoff's conclusion, that we cannot always say that literal is distinct from metaphorical, and therefore literal cannot be an inviolable norm by which all language is judged. Study of scientific language has shown this distinction. Literal language has been associated with science, yet many scientific theories are couched in metaphorical terms. A metaphorical expression such as *A resistor is a narrow gate* can be a conventional way of talking about a given subject and thus be either true or false (Gentner & Gentner 1982).

1.3.1.1 Metonymy as product and as process.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) discuss metonymy, as they discuss other figures of speech, from the basic principle that tropes belong to a cognitive domain before they are realised in a linguistic code. Identifying referents is a fundamental part of our general cognitive processes, hence the importance of metonymic ways of thinking. When using a word in a conventional metonymy such as place for people (*Wall Street is in a panic*), the identification of the referent for Wall Street as the financial centre of New York, and the people who work there, is important for communication. Metaphor and metonymy form a series of image schemas which structure our

thinking (Lakoff 1987), but metonymy has a more specific focus than metaphor and is primarily referential rather than poetic.

In common with other theorists, Lakoff & Johnson adopt a wide basic definition of metonymy: using one entity to refer to another that is related to it (1980: 35), which resembles earlier definitions in terms of tropes, and Norrick's semantic relationships. They consider synecdoche as a special case of metonymy, where the part stands for the whole, and list seven common types of metonymy, based on principles similar to other typologies, with examples from everyday American English. These are:

1. Part for the whole (Get your *butt* over here).
2. Producer for product (I'll have a *Löwenbrau*).
3. Object used for user (The *gun* he hired wanted fifty grand).
4. Controller for controlled (*A Mercedes* rear-ended *me*).
5. Institution for people responsible (You'll never get the *university* to agree to that).
6. The place for the institution (*Wall Street* is in a panic).
7. The place for the event (*Watergate* changed our politics).

(Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 38-9)

If this typology is compared with those of Gibbons, Fontanier, Schofer & Rice, Norrick or Bonhomme, it can be seen that the fundamental principle of substitution of one term for another is respected, and that the types are grouped in a pattern similar to that found in works of rhetoric, i.e. by semantic relations. Other examples increase the number of types, because reverse substitutions are also common.

Further analysis shows that more than one trope may be seen in one expression (metalepsis). The expression *A Mercedes rear-ended me* suggests that the speaker is referring to a car-accident. It is a part-for-whole or a producer-for-product metonymy if the name Mercedes stands for the output of a manufacturer, a cause for effect metonymy where Mercedes contributes to the speaker's image of Mercedes cars. There is also a whole for the part metonymy where the referent *me*, the whole person, replaces the part of the person designated as a car-driver, and a contained-for-container metonymy because *me* stands for the car as well as the person.

While it is not productive to compare and contrast typologies of metonymies on the basis of what has been included, Lakoff & Johnson's classification is less complete and satisfactory

than Norrick's. But they extend the field of reference of their studies from regular semantic relations to a theory of general patterns of cognition observable in linguistic realisations of thought.

If metonymy is a referring mechanism grounded in experience, and a systematic way of organising thoughts and actions in terms of concepts, it is not a deviation from language but an intrinsic part of it. The example of the metonymy 'face for the person' as in *There are quite a few new faces here today* demonstrates that in our culture, 'metonymic concepts are part of the ordinary, everyday way we think and act as well as talk' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 37). One function of this type of metonymy is to identify a person by their most salient feature, the one by which interpersonal recognition is normally structured. A more general type is called special, symbolic metonymy, in Norrick's terms a relationship between experience and convention. The example of the dove standing for the Holy Spirit in the Christian religion shows that metonymic links exist between coherent metaphorical systems such as those that characterise religion and culture, and everyday experience. In their view, this bridging function of metonymy is the basis of our inferential understanding of some complex systems of ideas.

1.3.1.2 Metonymic models.

Many of these preliminary ideas are more fully developed and illustrated in the research programmes generated by Lakoff's theories. At the level of fundamental principles, Lakoff (1987) assigned category status to metonymic models, one of the types of Idealised Cognitive Models which underpin thought. Metonymy is seen as the important part-for-whole relationship, as for example is demonstrated by the cluster model 'mother' (1987: 74-76). In this example, a number of substitutions motivated by metonymy lead to the single term 'mother' being a superordinate concept including genetic motherhood, nurturance, marital status and genealogy. He demonstrates that recognition of a part for whole relationship as between *mother* and each of its various meanings governs understanding of lexicalised concepts. On this basis, Lakoff claims that we understand a whole group of concepts in terms of single members of the group.

I shall not comment further here on the arguments for and against the relative importance of metonymic models of cognition as a means of categorising experience. Nevertheless, this theory adds considerable importance to the scope of metonymy. It has been supported by empirical investigations of the way in which metaphor and metonymy, in relation to literal language, are understood (Gibbs 1994, Steen 1994). The theory has implications for the interpretation of change of meaning and for literature as well as real life (Lakoff & Turner 1989).

1.3.1.3 Domains and referential conventions.

A distinction made between metonymy and metaphor in terms of domain theory is an important part of the discussion of metonymy in literary criticism (Lakoff & Turner 1989), where domain is understood to be a unitary conceptual structure. In Lakoff & Turner's theory metonymies interact with metaphors but they remain different (cf. Goossens 1990). Metaphor works by transfer between two conceptual domains, mapping a whole schematic structure on to another and matching the logic of the source domain with the logic of the target domain. Metonymy functions within one conceptual domain; one entity in the schema is referred to by another entity in the same schema (Lakoff & Turner 1989: 100-106). This distinction depends on the proposal that all cognitive processes are based on image-schemas which organise the way in which we view the world and enable mappings (or projections) to transfer one concept on to another. That is not to say that every time someone uses a figure of speech they self-consciously work through a series of domains and decide whether a metaphor or a metonymy is a more appropriate expression of thought, since thought processes occur instinctively and with great speed (Marlsen-Wilson & Tyler 1980).

Some of the strong claims of this theory are still controversial. One is the claim that metonymic processes are independent of culturally-generated constraints, another that metonymy occurs in verbs and prepositions as well as in noun phrases. A third is that language is primarily based on concrete experiences, which necessarily precede abstract ideas. The insights afforded into cognitive processing enable a new approach to how narrative is interpreted. Enhancement of the cognitive status of metonymy underlies a number of questions such as the comparison of metonymy with literal language and with metaphor, and

the question of whether our response to metonymy will vary in different contexts and according to whether it is novel or conventionalised.

Before going on to discuss a pragmatic analysis of the nature of language processing, I shall consider the development of Lakoff's ideas by Gibbs (1994), and the influence of his empirical investigations on the status of the argument that figurative thought is 'one of the main mechanisms through which we comprehend abstract concepts and perform abstract reasoning' (Gibbs 1994: 17).

1.3.2 Metonymic processing and poetic cognition: Gibbs.

Gibbs categorises metonymy as normal language, not a figure requiring special processes to be understood. Metonymy constitutes one of the primary ways through which we refer to people, events and situations and thus reflects a particular mode of thought. It also has a cognitive function because it underlies many kinds of reasoning and 'allows people to draw inferences about what speakers and writers mean in discourse' (Gibbs 1994: 321). In his theory of the poetics of mind, which separates the cognitive process from its linguistic product, metonymy and metaphor are based on the experiential structure of life. This extends the conventional meaning of 'poetic' (i.e. literary) to the relationship between thought and language. Metonymy and metaphor are general processes, both producing a variety of realisations. Using evidence of how they occur and how they are processed in language, he claims that there is wide use of figurative language in such diverse fields as science, law, anthropology and the arts.

Gibbs makes a further hypothesis that mind has an inherently poetic structure, because of the ease with which figurative or poetic language is used and understood. He proposes that:

[people] can comprehend metonymic statements without having to create any new senses or meanings for those descriptions and may create novel senses for metonymic referential terms during the on-line processing of those innovative expressions.

(Gibbs 1994.: 338-9)

Thus, metonymy is a matter of selecting the appropriate sense from among those already known, but it is also sense-creation and in that respect novel rather than conventional. Apparent violations of the conversational principle of truthfulness (Grice 1975) are readily understood if the context is known. People understand the utterance *John fired the tuxedo for dropping the tray* (1994: 337), despite the need to create a new meaning for the word *tuxedo*: ‘person wearing a tuxedo’.

What is new about this approach is that Gibbs used empirical psychological experiments (e.g. Gibbs and co-workers 1983, 1990, 1992 *inter alia*) to confirm his hypotheses about the ways in which poetic structures, in particular metaphor and metonymy, are understood. He claims that many aspects of word meaning are motivated by figurative schemes of thought, but ‘figurative language does not require special cognitive processes to be produced and understood’ (*ibid.*: 17). Evidence of this is found in the speed with which we process apparently agrammatical anaphoric reference (Fauconnier 1994, Gernsbacher 1991). They are categorised not as poetic or rhetorical ornaments of style but as means of assisting inference. In a statement such as *The ulcer in room 10 needs his medication*, the agrammaticality of using *his* to refer to *ulcer* is allowed in the insider discourse of a hospital, where a person is unambiguously referred to by the name of their illness. Assessments of motivation or recognition of the figurative element are not needed in everyday language, where the terms are used spontaneously. Effects are achieved and inferences made without the reader self-consciously analysing the text as metonymic.

One of the questions raised by this theory is whether figurative language use is a universal found in different cultures (Durham and Fernandez 1991). Another is the scalar aspect of metonymy which moves between poetic (figurative) use and referential (more literal) uses. These may correspond to creative and conventional uses of metonymy discussed in Chapter 2.3 below.

1.3.3 Relevance Theory: Sperber & Wilson.

The last theory of cognition reviewed here attaches much less importance to figurative language than do the theories of Lakoff and Gibbs. Relevance Theory explains all language in

terms of processing activity, and proposes that communication is a cost-effective procedure, giving maximum cognitive effects for minimal effort. The principles of relevance, said to hold true for all communication, state that:

- (1) Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance and
 - (2) Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.
- (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 260)

Literal language is the norm by which figurative language is measured. In this frame, metaphor, hyperbole, synecdoche and metonymy are intermediate cases between untruthful and truthful utterances. They are subvarieties of 'loose talk' i.e. expressions which are not literally true but pragmatically acceptable (Sperber & Wilson 1986b). Their effects are described by the term 'poetic effect' which is 'the peculiar effect of an utterance which achieves most of its relevance through a wide array of weak implicatures' (Sperber & Wilson 1986a: 222). Figurative language is seen as a form of expression which is potentially difficult to process and therefore less relevant in communication. This is clearly not true of metonymy, which is a reductive device, a short-cut to reference and a way of extending the meaning of a word.

In a later development of Relevance Theory, metonymy is not treated according to semantic principles (cf. Norrick 1981) or in terms of contiguity (Jakobson 1956). It is taken as a kind of interpretive language use with a strong referential function which can lead to novel forms, and is a means of extending reference outside normal use. Additionally, it is a way of identifying a person or thing in a given context by means of one salient property which acts as a new 'name' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Papafragou 1996a). The metonymy of using part of the person to identify the whole as in *Where's the Brain now that we need him?* is explained as an appropriate way of identifying a person in a given context, by a process which assumes the validity of the first relevant interpretation of *Brain*. This extends to metonymy the salience theory of metaphor (Ortony, in Ortony 1993: 349-355).

A Relevance Theory perspective asks why we use metonymy at all except to produce a novel naming for a person or entity. Metonymy as an explanatory principle seems to be no more than a means of economising processing effort. For example, to say *The Times is here* with the meaning that *The reporter from The Times newspaper is here* obviously achieves the

same result for less processing. The same metonymic reference also maximises information given about the person who has arrived. The referent of *The Times* is a person whose professional activity requires conceptual identity with an employer.

Relevance Theory provides a pragmatic account of why metonymy is formed. It gives no privileged place to figurative expression or thought processes, because figurative and literal language may both be adequately explained simply as overt acts of communication. Although understanding, comprehension and recognition of non-literal language may happen quickly (thereby satisfying Sperber & Wilson's minimal effort requirement), appreciation of the effects of figurative language may depend on extension of available time (Gibbs 1992) and by implication be worth the extra effort. This is potentially important in the area of longer, literary text where a metonymy or metaphor is developed as one of the unifying factors of the text. Salience and speed of understanding applies to the first instance of its use, but every recontextualisation of a metonymy requires a more complex effort of re-interpretation, which entails the reduction of contextual effects. When repetition of a device in a narrative builds up more effects with each reiteration, however, different degrees of processing effort detract from the apparent simplicity of Relevance Theory (cf. Goatly (1997) for a discussion of similar effects of metaphor in different genres).

1.4. Summary.

To sum up, traditional theories of metonymy as a poetic and rhetorical device start by defining it in relationship as a trope to metaphor and synecdoche. Rhetoricians are concerned almost entirely with new classifications of tropes on the basis of logical relationships between terms. They give only very conventional, single-phrase examples of metaphor and metonymy.

A second point of discussion is whether attempts to find a new theory of tropes are independent of a theory of metonymic structure in text. Jakobson's *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances* was instrumental in reinstating metonymy on the agenda of linguistic and literary criticism, whence it had been swept by poetic metaphor. His influence extends into literary criticism and interest in text-based theories of interpretation. Post-Jakobsonian developments in the field of metaphor and metonymy developed aspects of the theory with respect to literary and stylistic criticism. Its application to literature (Genette

1972, Lodge 1977) with critical examination of longer metaphoric and metonymic discourse characterising a number of texts and authors, leads to the question of whether metonymy has meta-narrative functions in longer narrative texts (see Chapter 9 below).

Cognitive and pragmatic theories, reflecting a view of communication which emphasises process as much as product emphasise that contextualisation is a crucial element of interpretation. A different emphasis with respect to the pragmatic effects of figurative language, considered to be similar to those of literal language, gives rise to some questions concerning the general validity of a Relevance Theory approach to metonymy when it is used as a recontextualising device in long narratives. Discussion of differences between semantic and pragmatic interpretations of figurative language, and the consequences for the realisation of grammatical forms, has been extensively developed. Explanations of the grammar changes engendered by the use of metonymic reference will be discussed in further chapters with respect to the arguments of Bonhomme 1987, Fauconnier 1985, Fillmore 1985, Gibbs 1994 and Nunberg 1978.

In this section I have attempted to give a general theoretical perspective to the study of metonymy. I have reviewed the development of rhetorical descriptions and theories, but moved towards cognitive theories of understanding tropes and a pragmatic approach to the process of interpretation. I shall not attempt to emulate the typologies of metonymy already established (Gibbons 1727, Fontanier 1827, Schofer & Rice 1977, Norrick 1981, Bonhomme 1987), but intend to discuss some of the principles which characterise metonymy, for example ellipsis, contextualisation, referentiality and contiguity. It is at the level of these principles that links can be seen between metonymy as a semantic relationship and metonymy as a mental process. A certain number of general principles of metonymy have emerged. If there is relatively little literature to review, it is because for a very long time metonymy attracted less interest than metaphor. This position is now changing, but much of the literature is specific to certain aspects of metonymy and will be presented in the appropriate chapters of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2. SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVES.

2.1 Synecdoche and metonymy.

As a starting point for the diverse realisations of metonymy, the definition ‘a figure in which one word is substituted for another on the basis of a material, causal or conceptual relationship’ (Preminger & Brogan 1993: 144, see Chapter 1.1.1 above) is wide enough to include synecdoche. In this chapter I shall treat synecdoche and metonymy in the light of general semantic relations (Norrick 1981) and cognitive models (Lakoff 1987) as parts of one larger class of figurative language, called metonymy. I shall also evaluate the theory of orders of entities as an account of metonymy (Lyons 1977).

Differences between metonymy and synecdoche can be seen as a problem meriting close attention and detailed taxonomies (Seto 1996). The problem with this approach is that it remains within the field of semantic perspectives and accounts only for formal linguistic realisations in various types of noun phrases. For the purposes of cognitive models of understanding it is possible to simplify the issue by calling synecdoche a special case of metonymy, where the part stands for the whole (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Although this allows us to focus on how tropes are used and interpreted in cognition, it misses the detailed analysis of relational principles. There is confusion in this area, because of the potential distinction between metonymy and synecdoche, but also the further distinction between figurative and non-figurative when general relationships of part-whole and cause-effect are in question.

2.1.1 Part-whole relations.

In terms of lexical semantics (Cruse 1986: 136-180), part-whole relations are divided into meronymies (or partonomies) relating entities such as arm, forearm, hand and finger to each other, and taxonymies (*sic*) relating categories or classes such as animal, sheep or horse. Meronymy is based on physical contiguity between entities, while taxonymy is based on mental representations of the different kinds of entities. These organisational groups are a

means of describing relations which apply generally to substitutions of part for whole and vice-versa, both figurative and non-figurative. The cognitive move into a figurative conceptualisation requires the relationship to be given a specified context in which the name of one entity can be used to refer to another. In the literal sense, *arm* cannot be substituted for *body* because the terms have different denotations, but in a figurative sense it can, as in *We need a strong arm to lean on in times of trouble*.

There are several arguments for the separate status of synecdoche as a trope. Different underlying principles (of inclusion for synecdoche and causality for metonymy) lead to taxonomies of two different classes of trope (Schofer & Rice 1977, Seto 1996). Additionally, synecdoche is said to be more limited in its scope and physical rather than abstract, as in the substitution of *sail* for *ship* in *There's a sail entering harbour* (Ruwet 1975). It has also been called the relationship of species to genus and vice-versa (Seto 1996), and proved logically to be the basis of both metonymy and metaphor (Groupe MU 1969). In terms of non-physical cognitive models, the term metonymy includes part-whole relations:

a part (a subcategory or member or submodel) stands for the whole category - in reasoning, recognition, etc. Within the theory of cognitive models, such cases are represented by metonymic models. (Lakoff 1987: 79)

By stretching the referring mechanism called metonymy to cover examples of synecdoche, the rhetoricians' argument about how to separate them is avoided, but descriptions of their effects and functions are less specific. For the purposes of this research, however, I shall follow Lakoff in calling the part-whole relation, traditionally synecdoche, a kind of metonymy.

2.1.2 Cause-effect relations.

Cause-effect is one of the fundamental principles of relationship between entities and its general scope is too wide to discuss in this thesis. In Norrick's classification of metonymic principles, it is subdivided into eight classes (see Chapter 1.1.4.2 above) but for the instances to be figurative there must be some contextual constraint. Canonical examples of metonymy cited in textbooks of rhetoric (Gibbons 1767, Fontanier [1827] 1968, Nash 1989) give substitutions of the type *hand* for *writing*, where a cause stands for the effect, but the

relationship has various extensions to source-product relations between agent-instrument, producer-artefact, instrument-product, object-action or agent-action.

A productive extension of the principle is seen in the possessor-possessed relation, where the *crown* can stand for the monarch or the *scythe* for a peasant. When the contextual intention is to communicate an abstract concept, equality in death, the literal sense of possession moves into the figurative sense so that ownership of a crown is the effect of being a king. The traditional association of a monarch with ceremonial signs of power is expressed rhetorically in:

Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor humble scythe and spade.

James Shirley: *The Contention of Ajax and Achilles* (1659).

Sceptre and *crown* are used to represent the monarch, because in a ceremonial context they are the most salient signs of his wealth and position. The objects also stand for the power vested in the monarch because of a conceptual link formed by contiguity between the person, his powerful functions and the outward tokens of those functions. This primary relationship is one of possessor and possession, made more complex by the contextual elaboration that wealth or poverty cause power or powerlessness. The verse goes on to extend the metonymy to the signs of a poor farm labourer's condition, *scythe and spade*, the tokens of his work and his powerlessness. Clearly, there is on the surface no absolute requirement that these physical signs of high or low estate be taken other than literally. Rather, it is their association with the metaphorical uses of *dust* and *equal*, within the contextual conventions of 17th century poetry, which leads to a figurative interpretation. The poet links kings to peasants in *dust*, which is a conventional metaphor for death, and evokes the general metaphor 'death the great leveller' to criticise implicitly the ruler of the day. The result is a turn of phrase whose meaning is both clearly inferable and on the surface ambiguous enough to protect the poet from accusations of treason. The chain of substitutions of persons, objects and abstract concepts gives rich rhetorical and poetic effects.

The problem about this example is that it gives misleading impressions about the function of metonymy, using it only for stylistic purposes. It does however demonstrate that metonymy

often entails the expression of an attitude, in a succinct or hidden form, interpretable through inference in given contexts. It also shows that the originally creative use of metonymy was, at the time of writing, conventionalised in reference both to monarch and peasant, but that the reference to peasants by means of *scythe* and *spade* now requires some historical exegesis.

2.1.3. Metonymic transfer in the light of orders of entities.

General principles of semantic relationship account for the formation of both creative and conventionalised metonymies. The question is, might other theories do so just as well? Limiting the present discussion to metonymy in noun phrases, I shall consider whether a theory of orders of entities accounts for metonymy realised in noun phrases.

Lyons (1977: 438-448) defines subclasses of nominals in terms of three orders. First order entities have relatively constant properties, are located in three-dimensional space at any point in time, and are observable. Second order entities are events, processes, or states of affairs located in time but not necessarily linked to a spatial location. Third order entities are abstract, propositions outside space and time, but not necessarily the same as abstract nouns. Nominals can be nouns and pronouns, noun phrases or noun clauses i.e. units which function as nouns. Distinctions between the three orders are illustrated by the *man* (first order, spatial) who enters *manhood* at the age of 18 (second order, temporal). If we say *He thinks he is a man* the clause *he is a man* is a third order abstract entity.

Within the spatial first order entities there is a hierarchy of persons, animals and things. This order offers many possibilities for metonymic relationships, although inclusion in it is not necessarily the only condition for metonymy which has to be structured by relational principles. A large number of metonymic relationships can be created in appropriate contexts. This order of entities allows many conventional metonymic substitutions with references to material entities such as parts of the body for persons (*Lend me a hand there*); objects for persons (*Sceptre and crown*); container for contained (*The kettle is boiling*); producer for product (*He's bought a Picasso*); place for persons (*Scotland won the match*). The question of links between the substitutions is resolved if contiguity is seen to be a conceptual as well as a physical part of the relationship. This order also allows the conversion of nouns to

adjectives (*Red in this corner, blue in the other*), metonymic insofar as the linguistic part stands for the whole.

There is a class of polysemous nouns which can be first, second or third order entities and are very productive of figures of speech. The class contains important parts of the body and natural phenomena such as *heart, hand, head, tongue, light, heat, fire, earth, wind, water, colour*. To illustrate briefly, *heart* is first order when the referent is the organ of the body (*the heart pumps blood*); second order when it refers to a state of mind (*they have had a change of heart*), and third order when it refers to an abstract idea (*The Heart of Darkness*). These nouns give rise to many potential metonymies and metaphors (see Kövecses & Szabo 1995) because they refer on the one hand to persons, things and objects that are first order entities, and on the other to temporal or abstract second and third order entities.

Lyons suggests some grammatical consequences of transfer of denotation in his example *This typewriter has bad intentions*. Within first order entities, Lyons (442-3, footnote) calls transfer from a thing to a person a weak kind of personification, not metonymy. Whilst an explanation in terms of personification is admissible, the example is better analysed as exemplifying a metonymic relation between agent and instrument, which allows us to refer to the person by means of the object. Anaphoric reference by means of either *who* or *which* is cited, i.e. *The typewriter which has bad intentions* and *the typewriter who has bad intentions* and specifies whether the intended referent is animate or not. The question of the acceptability of agrammatical anaphors when metonymy is present is discussed in Chapter 5.2.2.1 below.

These explanations are misleading because the term metonymy has been extended to include grammatical forms other than nominals. Verbal substitutions such as the large class of denominalisations like *jet - to jet* (Clark & Clark 1979) and speech acts such as *they giggled for they said while also giggling* (Goossens 1990) require further investigation. A theory based on nominals would not cover the illocutionary type of metonymy (Panther & Thornburg 1995) which occurs in Indirect Speech Acts. Metonymy is a mental strategy (Dirven 1993), a property of the mind as well as the word (Croft 1993, Gibbs 1994, Lakoff 1987). Another difficulty is that a theory based on entities cannot account for metonymy as an organising principle of text (Jakobson 1956, Lodge 1977). To sum up, the categorisation into first, second or third order entities is valuable because it explains transfer within the

same category in lexical terms. The chief disadvantage of using the theory is its limitation to noun phrase types of metonymy. A theory based on relational principles such as part-whole or cause-effect gives a more detailed account of why metonymic expressions are in productive use.

2.2 Metonymy in frequent use.

Metonymy as a descriptive label can be justified in virtue of the very general principle that substitution takes place when two entities or concepts are associated within a single domain of experience or knowledge. I shall analyse a number of examples found in contemporary discourse, in relation to types described in the literature. The assumption is that although examples of metonymy have changed to reflect socio-cultural and linguistic changes, the principles underlying metonymic substitutions have remained constant. This means that differentiation between them requires a system of general relational principles, both part-whole and cause-effect being included in a wider set. All the examples discussed below can be seen as transfers of meaning between nouns, involving changes in their participant roles within a sentence. None of the metonymies can exist without a suitable predication giving the whole utterance its metonymic force. The analysis of these metonymies is subject to contextual constraints, schemas and domains, among them the expectations and existing knowledge of speaker and hearer. Metonymic substitution is highly reductionist and can take novel forms, which raises the question of the distinction between creative and conventional language. Additionally, the use of metonymy often carries communication of attitudinal factors inherent in the speaker's intentions.

This list of examples is not intended to be an exhaustive typology, but represents a number of common types of metonymy as identified by Bonhomme (1987) and Norrick (1981). Some of the examples represent more than one type of semantic relation.

2.2.1 Examples and analysis.

2.2.1.1 Relations between part and whole.

In computing terminology, the monitor displays information which can be printed as in the use of *screen* to mean the part of the whole work which is currently displayed:

Print screen

This can also be understood as an example of the container for content relationship. It does not however have hidden implications of attitude to the relationship like those which motivate expressions where a costume stands for the whole appearance of its wearer, such as:

Watch the bomber jacket.

Shared knowledge of the meaning attached to style of dress enables rapid interpretation of the intended referent. The implication that the speaker wants to communicate an attitude such as admiration or fear of the wearer of the jacket is accessed inferentially from shared beliefs about the significance of clothing, which is a salient feature of personal presentation and by implication a person's professional status or ideology. There is, nevertheless, a risk that the hearer will misunderstand the disguised implication and Press reports such as the following offer explanatory comments in parentheses:

It was the hot weather on a beautiful but bracing coastline that drew "textiles" - as swimming costume wearers are known to naturists - on to a lonely stretch of beach at Ross Links. (Martin Wainwright, *The Guardian*, 31/7/96).

Hospital schemas where a patient is referred to by the name of the illness also motivate this type of metonymy:

The ulcer in room 10 needs his medication now.

If the general context is known and its elements are both predictable and salient for the speaker and hearer, figurativity is low in comparison with the apparent literalness of the utterance. A degree of figurative ambiguity of meaning can be introduced but metonymic substitution takes place without necessarily any addition of attitude:

We could do with some fresh blood.

The expression is not used in its literal sense (as it might be in a hospital treatment room) but means that new people are required to revitalise an organisation. Because blood is a vital and essential part of the human organism, it can be used to stand for the whole, and for the person.

2.2.1.2 Acts and major participants in the acts.

This class of relationship enables substitution between acts and major participants in the acts, as in:

I picked up a fare.

Schiffrin (1994) analysed this example in terms of a relationship between agent and action, since *fare* is what someone pays for a cabby's service. The person who pays is referred to by the act of payment. Personal characteristics are relatively unimportant, but the expectation of payment for a service motivates the use of *fare* for a fare-paying passenger who is the major participant in the action.

Instances of metonymy in which the possessor of something is substituted for the object possessed belong to a large group of examples. In a café a waiter may ask a customer:

Are you the tomato omelette?

There is an apparent clash in the identification of *you* with the inanimate *tomato omelette*, which is resolved by seeing the context in terms of schematic relationships between the concept of paying for food in a restaurant, the actual food served, and the customer. The object possessed (food) is moved from one possessor to another as it is prepared and eaten, and the context allows identification of the object with its owner. All of them participate in the action schema of ordering and serving food.

2.2.1.3 Possessor and possessed.

The general relation between possessor and possession allows the formation of metonymy between an office-holder and the office held. In current political reporting in the media, one of the most commonly used types of metonymic expression is the substitution of the name of a place for the office-holder exercising power within it, as:

The White House has refused to comment.

The White House is widely known to be not only the residence of the U.S. President, but the place of his office, from which powerful statements are issued on behalf of the U.S. Government. The substitution is marked by an extension of meaning in the predication. *Refused* is normally constrained by the need for an animate subject, so we understand that a non-literal interpretation of *The White House* is intended. Thus, the locative substitutes for the agent of power. An extension of this is transferring the power of the state to the name of the President:

Clinton sends troops against Saddam.

Here, there is no apparent infraction of the predication constraints for a personal name; *sends* is governed by an animate subject, *Clinton*. But the concept expressed by *to send troops against Saddam* is the prerogative (in a democracy) of a government, so *Clinton* means not only the person of the President but his executive power to act for the State. The same transfer between office-holder and office justifies *Saddam* as a metonymic substitution for the state of Iraq, within the general principle of possession.

2.2.1.4 Cause and effect.

Within the wide class of metonymy of cause and effect, producer and artefact are transferred in the metonymic use of the name of an author or creative artist for what has been created, as:

I have read quite a bit of Dickens.

This substitution of the name of the author for the works is effective as communication only in the case of well-known authors whose names and importance figure in a widely held system of traditional assumptions and knowledge. By extension, this type of metonymy can be found in a limited environment such as a student common room, where one student of Applied Linguistics may ask another:

Have you done your Chomsky?

In this instance, the substitution of *Chomsky* for his works is extended to include assignments set on these works. The speaker wishes to communicate that the author's name carries a certain importance in the domain of personal study as well as in the wider domain of linguistics theory and invokes recognition of cause and effect to do so.

The current trend to assess value in the field of artistic achievement by economic criteria is communicated by metonymic substitution of the name of the artist for the object created in predications with *buy* or *sell*.

Has he really bought a Picasso?

The referent of *Picasso* is a work by the artist. Additionally, the use of the artist's name is thought to express astonishment at the wealth or good taste of the buyer. This common awareness of attitudes of admiration and importance attached to a name has been creatively exploited in novel advertising.

Would you call a Picasso second-hand?

The true referent is not the artist's work, but a used Mercedes-Benz car. The implication of the use of the metonymic *Picasso* is that owning a Mercedes, even second-hand, is as economically prestigious as owning a valuable painting by Picasso, and that the car itself is a work of art comparable to a picture by Picasso. The implied meaning of the metonymy *Picasso* is changed by the modifier *second-hand*, not normally applied to pictures which are resold but always to used cars.

Metonymies of instrument for agent, and instrument for product, can combine within the general class of cause and effect relations. The name of an instrument is substituted for its player, or for the effects of the playing, in the domain of music, as:

The strings played superbly.

Strings are the salient parts of those instruments that make up the string section of an orchestra, so by a chain of metonymies they can stand for the players in this section. The string is part of the violin, which is the cause of the sound effect. The field of reference here is music but examples are also found in sport, and in other schemas where the object has become, albeit temporarily, the most salient feature of the person holding or playing it and can therefore have a referring function as in:

He's a real fast racquet.

Area of production may be metonymically substituted for product, as in:

We'll have the Bordeaux.

The potential problem for hearers is that they may not know that *Bordeaux* is a major wine-producing area of France, and that the referent is a type of wine. The intended communication may therefore fail for lack of shared knowledge. The use of this type of metonymy in the creation of double or multiple reference may have the intention of hiding an implication

known only to the speaker and hearer, perhaps that Bordeaux is thought to be good quality wine.

2.3 Conventional and creative language.

Some of these examples have become conventional and are interpreted rapidly. Others are creative uses of language, particularly those which Gibbons would have called metalepsis, i.e. which combine relational principles in one expression (cf. *Would you call a Picasso second-hand?*). When metonymies become so familiar that they appear to lose their original figurative force, they are treated as literal expressions, which convey meaning directly, as for example:

The kettle is boiling.

Kettle, as container of the water, stands for the contents, because the word denotes specifically a container for water which is to be heated. Other metonymies have an ephemeral existence which is closely linked to their context of use and disappears quickly from discourse:

To a House, a Press Gallery and probably a nation already bored with the detail of Scott and interested only in the possibility of sin, disgrace and resignation
(*The Times*, 7/2/96)

In this example, several examples of metonymy as a referring mechanism occur for rhetorical effect. There are three degrees of conventionality here. Through the relation of place and occupant, *House* has become the standard way of referring to the members of the House of Commons, and *Press Gallery* to the reporters seated there. More conventionally, *sin*, *disgrace* and *resignation* are all general concepts used to replace specific acts (implied cause for effect). *Scott* is however an ephemeral reference to a specific report written by Scott and published in 1996, whose referent is unlikely to be common knowledge once its immediacy has gone.

If a context remains widely understood, metonymy which has been created and understood within it will remain in frequent use, as is the case with the substitution of names of places for the power exercised at that place. It has been noted that although metonymic processes are universal cognitive processes, the products are often coloured and conditioned by the culture of their origin and the time of their creation (Gibbs, personal communication). Over time, the metonymies which keep their figurative sense are those associated with some universal natural feature which is also a lexicalised concept. For example, to be *all ears and eyes* denotes hearing and sight by substitution of the relevant body part for the whole faculty. Ears and eyes are part-for-whole substitutions in terms of external features, and cause-for-effect substitutions in the frame of sensorial functions.

The final example is controversial but analysis yields a metonymic interpretation of a phrase which originated as a novel expression and has become a conventional one.

Small is beautiful.

The interpretative problem here is how to define the single conceptual domain required if metonymy is the correct explanation. The substitution of *small* for a context-specific noun phrase such as small products, small firms, small plans, small pictures etc. works in virtue of a nominalisation of the adjective, with a generalising effect. A general association through size is present when *small* is the descriptor for any one of a number of entities or concepts, whose common salient feature is smallness rather than, say, huge global importance or great wealth. If we consider that the domain is constituted cognitively by smallness rather than industry or agriculture or a political system, i.e. by conversion of an adjective rather than ellipsis of a noun, we envisage a single domain within which the general has been substituted for the specific.

Underlying these examples is the principle that metonymy has primarily a referential function but that it is formed by a conceptual process as much as a linguistic one (Lakoff 1987, Dirven 1993) and that the ability to create new metonymies, allowing older ones either to disappear or move to the 'perimeters of literal meaning' (Traugott 1985: 18) is pervasive.

2.4 Summary.

This preliminary overview has discussed whether metonymy can be explained by general relational principles by considering an example of metonymy used for rhetorical purposes, and analysing a number of examples of everyday uses of metonymy in current discourse. The existence of both creative and conventional metonymy was noted. Lyons' theory of orders of entities was considered, and shown to provide a partial account of metonymic transfer. Other elements in accounting for the formal features of metonymy are the selection of salient features of a concept or an entity; the function of predications in the sentence; and the shared knowledge and beliefs of participants in the communication process.

The next chapters will discuss some general underlying principles perceived through this discussion in greater detail - contiguity, ellipsis, domain and referentiality.

CHAPTER 3. CONTIGUITY IN RELATION TO METONYMY.

3.1 Introduction.

This chapter describes, analyses and illustrates the concept of contiguity in metonymy. Hume (1748) named it as one of the three principles of connection between ideas, the other two being resemblance, and cause-and-effect. Contiguity is used to explain some kinds of semantic relationships, when a gap between meanings is very small. It is used to describe nearness or juxtaposition, or co-presence within a physical or conceptual frame of some kind. So it may be a physical state of affairs, expressing spatio-temporal closeness between objects which are not necessarily related through metonymy, such as inventories which list objects, people or abstract ideas without there being a relationship between them other than co-presence in a given context or membership of a superordinate list.

3.1.1 Contiguity in association with metonymy.

Contiguity is a factor in distinguishing metonymy (and synecdoche) from the other master tropes, metaphor and irony, which are grounded in resemblance and opposition respectively. The term is not found in Dumarsais (1730), Gibbons (1767), or Fontanier (1828). For these authors, metonymy is a trope formed by substituting an object or entity for another which is already in some kind of relation with it i.e. they are found within the same physical or mental context. The term contiguity was used in association with metonymy by Roudet (1921: 690) who defines metonymy as '*changements résultant d'une association par contiguïté entre les idées*'. This suggests a wider definition of contiguity than the physical nearness of objects.

3.1.2 Linguistic and conceptual aspects of contiguity.

Physical objects in space, events in time and propositions in the mind can be substituted for each other in regular semantic relationships (Lyons 1977, Norrick 1981). On the basis of contiguity physical juxtaposition can be transferred to a relation between the physical and the abstract. In this sense, the physical and abstract are contiguous if found within a single domain, provided the domain is known to have both qualities, so that transfer between them is a relatively simple mental process. If journalists mention Downing Street, they are as likely to mean the political activity which goes on there, or the power of politicians, as the geographical location. The move between physical and abstract connotations can, however, in certain linguistic contexts, become a move between two unrelated domains and hence metaphor.

3.2. Jakobson's theory of contiguity.

In Jakobson's (1956) theory of the nature of language, metonymy is a contiguity relationship, a syntagmatic feature of language. Contiguity was identified by Jakobson as one of the underlying fundamental principles of the metonymic as opposed to the metaphoric relationship between expressions. His use of the terminology covers semantic, verbal, spatial and temporal contiguity; it is an 'external relation uniting the constituents of a sentence, on the syntagmatic axis, forwarding prose' (1956: 68-69). Whereas in the traditional sense of metonymy the name of an attribute, or some other closely related thing, is substituted at word level, i.e. only semantic contiguity or relationship is required, Jakobson makes an important claim in saying that relationships on the syntagmatic axis of language depend on the combination of syntactic and semantic contiguity within a context (or in other terms, a frame or schema of some kind). These combinations create metonymic discourse, which extends the 'contiguity relationship' from syntactic and semantic organisation to an organising principle for text.

3.2.1 Modifications of contiguity theory.

Discussions of Jakobson's theory have taken different directions. Henry attempted to merge the tropes metonymy and metaphor through the concept of contiguity: 'La seule figure fondamentale est la contiguïté: au premier degré elle se réalise en métonymie ou en synecdoque et s'épanouit en métaphore' (1971: 69) but this confuses the notion that contiguity underlies metonymy with the observation that metonymy often extends into metaphor (cf. Goossens 1990).

Bredin (1984a) dismisses the theories from the logical point of view as inadequately defined, and uses this criticism to offer his own definition of metonymic relations between terms. Dirven (1993) takes up the theory that metaphor and metonymy are strategies used in extending meaning, and examines them from a cognitive linguistic viewpoint, showing that Jakobson's insight into metonymic language is justified but that further redefinitions of metonymy may be made. Jakobson's importance, as Dirven recognises, lies in the fact that he was beginning the process of redefining metonymy as a cognitive rather than a linguistic phenomenon. Lodge (1977) argues that far from being separate types of language which function as markers for separate literary genres, as Jakobson claimed, metaphor and metonymy are frequently co-present in both prose and poetry with enriching effects for both. Other applications in the fields of film criticism and psychoanalysis are listed in Bohn (1984).

3.2.1.1 The contiguity concept more rigorously defined: Bredin.

In discussing Jakobson's *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances*, Bredin (1984a) attempts to give the notions of similarity and contiguity fields of reference in cognitive processes. His argument is that Jakobson's linguistic theory is inadequate for the scope envisaged for it because Jakobson proposed only two organising principles for language, which then became principles for organising all experience. Bredin's pragmatic and logical view is that the world is too complex for this theory to be an adequate explanatory principle.



At the level of linguistic organisation, Bredin accepts that the principles of similarity and substitution of words (metaphoric) are linked in normal discourse. He finds it more difficult to accept links between combination and contiguity (metonymic). Claiming that Jakobson's definition of contiguity is too limited, he argues that the linguistic concept called contiguity is not a suitable description for syntagmatic relations if the sense moves beyond the grammatical form. If we include logical, acoustic, and emotive relations in 'syntagmatic', difficulties arise, since these are extra-linguistic contiguities. They concern contextual relations between speaker and listener, speaker and referent, or listener and referent.

Bredin concludes that the combinatory processes involved in the formation of metaphor and metonymy are similar, although there is a distinction between the linguistic realisations of the figures. Both metaphor and metonymy are generated by close and equal co-operation of selection and combination processes. This seems to imply that metaphor and metonymy work together in language on an equal basis, and not with one or the other dominant as Jakobson claimed.

This approach extends Jakobson's account of the general principles underpinning metonymy, admitting the importance of metonymy in thought processes as well as in language. 'From a modest study of language disorder, it blossoms into an interpretative schema of immense scope, elegance and simplicity' (1984a: 95). The proposal that metaphor and metonymy have much in common, and represent different points on a continuum of literal and figurative value rather than two completely discrete categories of language, is very widely admitted as valid. The discussion is taken further in the argument by Dirven (1993) that metaphor and metonymy can be seen as mental strategies in communication.

3.2.2 Syntagm and contiguity: Dirven.

Although Jakobson's claims about the fundamental nature of language attracted criticism, one of the consequences of the paper on aphasia was to give new scope to the term metonymy. It has shifted from the one-word substitutions of rhetorical theory in two ways: metonymy as discourse structure and metonymy as a thought process.

Dirven (1993) examines metonymy as a cognitive means of extending meaning. He uses Jakobson's theories as a springboard, in order to highlight the conceptualising powers of each of these strategies while critically evaluating Jakobson's concepts in the light of linguistic examples and Langacker's (1987) domain theory. Like Bredin, he examines Jakobson's 'syntagmatic principle', which is based on combination and contexture and exploits contiguity. But Dirven finds, on linguistic evidence, that there is not just one single type of syntagm. Rather, he distinguishes three types, each with different degrees of figurativity.

The first of these Dirven calls the traditional linguistic syntagm, linear in nature, so the metonymy must appear in a whole sentence. Dirven's example *different parts of the country* is not in itself metonymic, but put into a sentence can become so, as in *Different parts of the country don't necessarily mean the same thing when they use the same word*. This substitution of place for people is a typical metonymic relationship like locality-institution, institution-people, container-contained, producer-produced, part-whole and their converses. The basically cognitive character of metonymy is seen because metonymic interpretation results from the intended referent, not the surface expression. An important observation made by Dirven is that in this type of metonymy, there is no figurative meaning. Nor does the expression change its meaning, because the potential referents for *different parts of the country* move only between geographical and demographic domains, both parts of the whole domain *country*.

The next type of syntagm does involve a necessary and systematic change of domain of reference, and of meaning. It is illustrated by the changes in the meaning of the word *tea*, which has evolved from the name of a plant, to a drink made from its leaves, a meal and, in Holland, to being a euphemism for cannabis. This last substitution is called a conjunctive syntagm dependent on a sociocultural context without which it has no meaning. It still does not have a clearly marked figurative meaning since it remains within the domain of 'objects eaten or drunk' although it has moved beyond the part-whole relationship through a conventionalised renaming process.

The final type of syntagm is based on an inclusive system and always has a figurative meaning. The illustration here is *head*, which occurs in many idiomatic phrases such as *to keep one's head*, *lose one's head*, *have a good head for figures* and many other expressions.

The word occurs with different degrees of figurativity and different constraints on substitution between physical and mental domains.

Dirven claims to have modified the metonymic pole of Jakobson's bipolar theory of language by finding that there is more than one type of syntagm, and highlighting the important concept of figurativity as a distinguishing feature.

Metonyms may differ from one another in the degree of permanent change in meaning they undergo and in their non-figurative or figurative character. All this can only partially be accounted for by the syntagmatic principle itself.

(Dirven 1993: 10)

He therefore argues for a new definition of contiguity:

Contiguity in metonymy can be defined as the existence, side by side, of two domains (or two subdomains of one domain) and contiguity is constituted by a conceptual act rather than just 'given' in the objective environment.

(Dirven 1993: 14)

Dirven clarifies the concept of contiguity, pointing out that juxtaposition is a clear instance of contiguity but does not guarantee only one domain. Domains are to be understood in Langacker's sense, that is to say they may be grouped into super-domains or domain matrices. But Dirven claims that the existence of the domains in objective reality cannot be what constitutes figurativity. He prefers a cognitive explanation: 'Contiguity must be taken to mean 'conceptual contiguity' and we can have contiguity when we just 'see' contiguity between domains' (Dirven 1993: 14).

Dirven's analysis of mental strategies does not deal with the dimensions of the referential gap, i.e. the difference between the apparent semantic value of an expression and its intended meaning. He simply accepts that this exists. He proposes that the construct of 'conceptual distance' is a means of explaining degrees of figurativity and hence the differences between them. He distinguishes between figurative and non-figurative metonymy, because ignoring the distinction is the basis of many misconceptions of metonymy and of confusions between the rhetorical and the cognitive views of it.

3.2.3 Metonymic chains created by contiguity: Eco.

Dirven's idea that we 'see' contiguity between domains corresponds to Eco's (1979) 'intuitive grasp' of links or metonymic connections between entities within a cultural frame. Eco describes metonymic connections in terms of three types of contiguity which exist between given facts of experience. These are in the code (for example, the substitution of *crown* for king), in the co-text (for example the interchangeability of car and pistol in the sentence *out of the getaway car came some pistol shots; that car had to be silenced*) or in the culture-based referent. His examples are found in literature of a highly abstruse nature, not representative of everyday discourse. Puns in James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, depend on contiguity between two or more words. Elision of sounds creates complex punning chains of allusions such as *Jungfraud*. This word consists of Jung + young + Freud + fraud + jungfrau [virgin], and can therefore be construed as meaning a deceiving young woman. Eco's explanations depend on the underlying contiguity of cultural concepts in a frame defined by history of psychoanalysis (Jung, Freud) and European culture (*fraud*, *Jungfrau*). Disambiguation, however, requires knowledge of both English and German, of orthographies and of cultural references to psychoanalysis. This explicates some textual problems in Joyce's work, but very few readers have so much cultural knowledge. The chief criticism of Eco's viewpoint is that the unique poetic expressions used by Joyce are not satisfactory examples of typical language. They have remained interesting neologisms but not passed into conventional usage.

If we test Eco's explanations in a more banal context, a cultural frame can be constituted in a phrase like *Don't let the potatoes boil over* where metonymic usage allows substitution of *potatoes* for the water in which they are contained. If contiguity is a linguistic matter, the substitution of *potatoes* for the implied container would not be a matter of conceptual reference but of co-presence within a text, allowing substitution. But understanding requires knowledge of a contextual frame of cultural action. Culture here is defined in the anthropological sense of a set of customs regularly practised by a society, in this case the convention that potatoes are boiled in water to make them edible. On the evidence of this example of container-for-contained metonymy, Eco's requirement for co-presence in text would be the weakest condition for metonymic substitution, and his cultural frame

requirement the strongest. The 'metonymic chain' depends on knowledge of the cultural frame (see also Chapter 7.2.2.4 below, for another view of metonymic chains).

3.2.4 Contiguity in literature: Genette's interpretation of Proust.

In the field of literary criticism stimulated by Jakobson, Genette (1972) considers that metonymy is a figurative expression of cause and effect. Its field of action cannot be limited to purely spatial relations. He clarifies 'contiguity' by proposing that in the case of metonymy, it should be understood as a conceptual or semantic contiguity, logical rather than spatio-temporal, citing the canonical example *crown* for monarch. A crown is worn (occasionally) by a monarch, but the implicit conceptual link operating at an ideological level is more important than the visual image of the crowned ruler.

Extending this to literature and the use of imagery, Genette proposes that visual metaphors illustrate style, technique and imaginative vision in the work of Proust (*A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, 1913-1927). But this is achieved by the projection of analogy on to contiguity, of metaphor on to metonymy. According to Genette, Proust's style illustrates in prose fiction Jakobson's later (1960) position with regard to poetry. 'Ces métaphores visuelles ... illustrent parfaitement cette tendance fondamentale de l'écriture et de l'imagination proustiennes ... la projection du rapport analogique sur la relation de contiguïté.' (Genette 1972: 53). This echoes Jakobson's statement 'similarity is superinduced upon contiguity, and metonymy is slightly metaphorical and any metaphor has a metonymical tint' (Jakobson 1960: 370). Genette's study of Proust, like Lodge's study of post-modernist fiction, is concerned to address the differences between metonymy and metaphor in terms of the effects of contiguity and analogy on the form of the literary discourse (see also White 1988).

3.2.4.1 Contiguity of conceptual domains.

The next example illustrates contiguity between an abstract concept, and its physical representation in a portrait. The portrait, and hence the sitter, is thought to be evil. The points of view expressed depend on the separation of the properties of an object from the narrator's perception of that object and its connotations. Thus, the portrait is represented differently:

[Rickards, a police officer, is interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Jago, publicans, after the murder of Miss Robarts.]

Rickards said: 'We're interested in a portrait of Miss Robarts

Mrs. Jago said: '.... And I knew that it would bring bad luck. It was an evil picture if ever I saw one.'

[Jago] 'Things can't be evil. An inanimate object is neither good nor evil. Evil is what is done by people.'

'And what is thought by people, George, and that picture came out of evil thoughts, so I say that picture was evil.'

[Doris continues]

[....] suppose you get an instrument of torture, something used by the Gestapo. [....] I'd say that thing was evil. [....]

'You could say it was used for an evil purpose, Doris, that's different.

(P.D.James: *Devices and Desires*, 224-5)

There is one conceptual domain, the perception that a person can be evil, here shared by artist and spectator through the medium of the portrait. The artist, with thoughts about a person whom he perceives as evil, paints a portrait standing for both the evil person and his own thoughts. The spectator sees the picture and understands the non-verbal communication, but attributes the communication and the state of the artist's thoughts to the picture itself, and by implication to the person whose portrait it is, by metonymic transfer. There is a complex network rather than a chain of metonymies. The picture represents a number of elements from one sub-domain, an evil person, and includes the subject of the portrait and the quality of evil inferred from her facial expression. The other sub-domain contains the abstract concept of evil, the artist's knowledge of this and his depiction of it in the portrait. A new domain has all these elements and also includes the spectator's interpretation. The metonymic process of allowing one referent to stand for another, whether physical or abstract, shortens the conceptual distance between the domains and therefore between their constituents. So the portrait stands both for the evil force and for the person, but remains in itself an object. The physical aspects of the portrait are contiguous with its abstract implications if a new mental domain is defined to contain them both. Then the one can stand metonymically for the other.

3.2.5 Contiguity and historical semantics.

Contiguity in the frame of diachronic semantic change is based on more accessible data, usually single words or short phrases. It is not the intention of this thesis to discuss diachronic semantic change in great detail, only to provide more examples which may throw light on the question of contiguity as a motivation for change of meaning. Ullmann (1962) argued that semantic change is motivated by the search for logical relations and can be caused by a number of factors - linguistic, social, historical or psychological. In further discussion, McMahon (1994: 82-184) lists metonymy as one of four types of lexical creativity based on either similarity or contiguity. The first is based on a relationship of similarity in metaphor. The lowest part of both a person and a hill is *the foot*; people can have characteristics observed also in animals and be described as *catty* or *mulish*; meanings can shift from concrete to abstract like *grasp* which means to seize both physically and mentally. The second is described as folk etymology because of examples where similarity of sound leads to the amalgamation of form and meaning, as in the expression *Old Timers' Disease* for *Alzheimer's Disease*.

According to McMahon, two more types of creativity are motivated by contiguity. The first is ellipsis caused by the redundancy of one formal element in a string e.g. *navy* for *navy blue*, *a first* for *a first class degree* (analysable as metonymy of manifestation-for-definition in terms of Norrick 1981:64-65) because it depends on the relation between experiential and conventionalised knowledge. The second is metonymy in which products such as *jersey*, *calico* are named after the places in which they have been made, or after their inventor as in *wellingtons*. This fourth or metonymically motivated change is a development of the metonymy based on the contiguity perceived between clothes and wearer. It is still productive in various domains where contiguity within first-order entities produces a change of name. For example, *I'd like the white Burgundy* is being replaced by *I'd like the Chardonnay* as the wine trade highlights the type of grape used rather than the place of origin.

Blank (1996) considers whether contiguity in itself entails metonymic change of meaning within the frame of historical semantics. Using the theory of mappings between donor and target concepts (Lakoff 1987), he investigated the metonymic links giving rise to diachronic

changes in meaning of some common words. He argues that there are three dimensions to metonymy - spatial, temporal and causal, all based on a general principle of contiguity. Further metonymic expressions depend on specific relations of contiguity such as kinship, person-object, individual-group, part-whole relations, or an activity and its related phenomena. Co-presence in time and space is the pre-requisite for the relationship to be effective (cf. Bonhomme 1987). To this Blank adds the consideration of frames or domains of experience within which the contiguity relationship must function if a conceptual contiguity is to be explained as a metonymic process. For example, Latin *pecunia* (cattle as a kind of currency) became 'money' by a metonymic process, because money was substituted for the use of cattle within the single frame 'tokens of payment'.

3.2.5.1 Example: the changed meaning of *tattoo*.

Similar shifts in reference to those seen in Blank's example '*pecunia*' can be tested for current validity by considering the referents attached diachronically to *tattoo*, used both in a generic sense as a drumbeat, and specifically in Edinburgh for an annual event on the Castle Esplanade (The Military Tattoo). This example is one of many which show that a systematic relationship of contiguity can underpin the process of semantic change and that it can overlap with a relationship of similarity (Bartsch 1987, Dirven 1993).

The first use of *tattoo* (OED 1989) was in the domain of military activity in the seventeenth century. It was a signal made by beating a drum or a bugle call in the evening, for soldiers to return to their quarters in garrison or their tents in camp. It is found by transfer from the Dutch *taptoe* from 1644 onwards, i.e. during the Cromwellian Republic and the Civil War. It has an onomatopoeic source, since the word imitates a similar sound caused by the repeated, but discrete, actions of a player on his instrument. There is therefore a metonymic shift from sound to action within the domain of military signals which contain both sound and action. Contiguity and similarity both operate in this transfer of meaning.

Secondly, the term was extended to refer to a military entertainment consisting of an elaboration of the tattoo by extra music and performance of exercises by troops, generally at night and by torch or other artificial light (1742, 1904, 1907). This is still within the same

single donor domain of military activity, but targets the domain of entertainment metonymically by temporal extension. It is in this sense that the Edinburgh Military Tattoo is used, especially as it has now become a tourist show rather than having a strictly military function.

Thirdly, the term refers to a drumbeat in general. A further extension within the domain of sound led to its being understood as a beating or pulsation as of a drum, or the action of beating, thumping or rapping continuously on something as a means of raising an alarm or attracting attention (1688, 1872). The move from one domain to another is properly metaphoric, based on perceived similarity rather than contiguity. By analogy, the verb *tattoo* refers to the action of making the sound with feet or fingers. In this development, sound has become less salient than the action of beating. A further extension is in the phrase *Devil's tattoo*, used to signify idly tapping with the fingers upon a table or other object, in an irritated and irritating manner, as a sign of vexation or impatience (1803, 1855). This extension by metaphoric transfer changes the domain of reference from a physical to a mental frame of emotions or attitudes.

These senses of tattoo are not to be confused with the homonymic *tattoo* derived from Polynesian, Tahitian or Samoan languages (Bougainville 1771, Captain Cook 1769) which designates the act of marking a design in the skin with a needle so that it is indelible. In modern British youth culture, however, knowledge of the latter sense is more widespread, possibly because of social factors such as the decline of the importance of the Army, the rise in knowledge of other cultural practices and the influence of a fashion for body decoration.

This example confirms the proposal that conceptual contiguity is an extension of physical contiguity. It is a relationship between concepts within a cognitive frame, between a concept and the frame itself, or between two related frames. This gives a much wider scope for the principle of metonymy and enables it to be seen as a motivating process able to stand independently of physical context. The next section will discuss further the relationship between physical and non-physical meanings of contiguity.

3.3 Contiguity between physical and abstract entities.

3.3.1 Differences between synecdoche and metonymy revised.

Bearing in mind that both synecdoche and metonymy are based on relations of contiguity, the ability to distinguish between physical and abstract justified the rhetoricians' division between synecdoche, limited to physical domains, and metonymy, enabling transfer into the abstract. Taking Gibbons' examples (1767: 66-74), synecdoche of part-for-whole and whole-for-part substitutions include *head for man* and *man for body*; the general name is used for the particular: *bird for eagle*, and the particular for general: *by many we are to understand all*. In his discussion of metonymy, however, Gibbons notes that in the group of cause for effect relations, *hand* can be put for *writing*, i.e. first for the physical effect of using the hand, then the non-physical results of the act of writing.

3.3.1.1 Movement between literal and figurative usage: *house*.

Metonymy allows movement between contiguous physical and abstract categories or concepts by virtue of the relationship established primarily on the basis of contiguity between entities. An example of an apparently physical domain is the generic term *house*, a construction for living in. Parts of the house can stand synecdochically for the whole, in idioms such as *under my own roof*. The contiguity here is between roof and house, but also between the concept that a roof and therefore the whole house offers protection, and the abstract concept of house (and roof) as places of personal security. Another frequently used example depends on a similar process of selection:

He lives four doors along.

Doors stands metonymically for the physical location and also for the conceptual image of house, by the selection of a salient part for the whole. But *doors* cannot always be substituted as a synonym for *house* in more figurative contexts. The concept of house as shelter has been transferred to animals who do not build.

The snail carries his house with him.
The snail carries his roof with him.
*The snail carries his doors with him.

Roof is an acceptable substitute for house, and *doors* is not, because the salient quality of house highlighted in the case of the animal is shelter rather than access to a structure. As the contiguous concepts become increasingly abstract, asymmetry of substitution becomes more marked, as in the next examples in which figurative usages do not permit the substitution of the part of the house for the whole.

House is used in an abstract sense, by container for contained, to imply relative social status.

The Great Houses of England.

The apparently physical referent (large houses) carries a strong implication of wealth and social power attributable to the owner of a Great House. In a non-physical sense, *house* is also used to designate a family with reference to their line of descent, as in *The House of Windsor*.

The metonymic extension of house in these two phrases is by contiguity of the people with the place in which their power is based. On the other hand, the original knowledge that the holy man or priest literally lived in the temple or house of God has moved to a different domain, becoming in religious language a metaphor for holiness and eternal life:

I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever (The Bible: *Psalms* 23, 6).

By metonymic shift from container to contained, *house* also denotes the audience at a theatrical performance.

Widening of denotation by extension to another conceptual domain can be seen if we consider *house* in its denominalised verb form, which means to hold something physically, although in an abstract sense, to contain in the mind is metaphorical:

The room houses his collection of paintings.
Housed in a dream (Wordsworth: *Peele Castle*).

A number of idiomatic phrases have acquired their non-physical sense by a shift moving away from the physical concept contained in *house*:

To bring the house down.

This idiom moves metonymically from the meaning 'house = audience', by means of contiguity between the referent 'people in the audience' with the action of very loud applause from them, to a more generalised metaphor for loud approval from a group.

A fully metaphorical move is in idiomatic expressions of the type:

To set one's house in order.

The physical grounding of this idiom has moved by metaphoric extension of *house*, to mean one's affairs, and hence to reorganise a confused situation.

From these examples it can be seen that contiguity and metonymy, although closely connected, are not always interchangeable. Metonymy always requires some contiguity between either objects or concepts, but contiguity does not necessarily entail a metonymic relationship permitting substitution or renaming.

3.3.1.2 Metonymic motivation for naming places and people.

This section continues the discussion of the type of metonymy which exchanges the name of a place for either the people or the power associated with it. Another view of potential metonymic motivation behind the naming of places and people will be discussed in Chapter 9.5.1. With reference to Preminger & Brogan's (1993) definition of metonymy, examples of place-for-power metonymy demonstrate primarily the 'causal' condition of relationship, although they also contain some secondary meaning pertinent to 'conceptual' and 'material' relationships.

Contiguity is present in types of metonymy which substitute cause for effect and vice versa in names. The naming of places is sometimes motivated by the proximity of natural features (Redhill, Goose Bay) or salient features of the locality (Spa, Wells) where the function of the proper name is descriptive and provides distinctive yet economical naming, as is the case with some surnames (Jäkel 1996). This takes place at a near-literal level, whereas another use of place-names in metonymy is more figurative. This type of metonymy is often found in media reporting on current events. Its referent is not the origin of the name in question, but the multiple referents of that name when used. Typically, the name of a city (London), a district (The South of France) or a country (Italy) can refer to the physical entity, the population or any associated aspects within a defined domain of, say, politics or sport. The next example shows the function of contiguity in this complex type of metonymy.

The theme of political independence is relevant in Scotland and a newspaper article brings together events in Canada (elections in Quebec) with future elections in Scotland:

Quebec need never happen here (*The Scotsman*, 30/10/95).

This headline appears to focus on Canada, as the report refers explicitly to recent elections during which the independence of the province of Quebec was an issue. The metonymic substitution - *Quebec* for the implied full referent 'the acrimonious struggle over independence in Quebec province' - shortens by ellipsis the route to comprehension. The writer assumes that the reader will be familiar with the contexts of time and place, and share conceptualisations of the ways in which both Quebec and Scotland might achieve independence. Then economy of expression allows the covert communication of a number of implicatures, including in this case the assumption that the Scots would be clever enough to avoid difficulties experienced in Quebec. Contiguity operates at several levels. The name *Quebec* is contiguous both with the place, and with the event of elections i.e. in both space and time. Conceptually, contiguity exists between the concept of regional elections and the issues at stake during those elections. It also operates between the people's right to vote and the moment at which the vote takes place.

To sum up, contiguity is a pre-condition for metonymic relationships, which can in turn lead to metaphoric relationships by a process of perceiving similarity or analogy. These examples

support the theories proposed by Eco and Genette on the basis of literary texts, and by McMahon and Blank in the field of historical semantics.

3.4 Constraints on the contiguity relationship.

The discussion so far has shown that metonymy, as a principle of relationship by association, requires contiguity and that contiguity is itself a complex concept. In the next section I shall consider how the contiguity relationship is constrained in some contexts. The objective is to clarify the problem identified at the beginning of the chapter: when are contiguous entities in a metonymic relationship? The difference between syntactically organised co-text and a list of first-order entities is clearly that the list may be presented in any order, or focal position of items may change without affecting the whole. Sentences have less freedom in this respect; the contiguous elements of the string are only meaningful when in a certain order because this can determine the compositional meaning of the whole.

3.4.1 Grammatical constraints on substitution by contiguity.

Croft (1993) draws attention to the importance of the predication in determining the true referent of a noun used metonymically. Some sort of grammatical or syntagmatic context is necessary for the potential metonymy to function properly as a double or multiple reference. Croft's example (1993: 335) *Denmark shot down the Maastricht treaty* is a typical place-for-power metonymy, where the name of the country (Denmark) only has a metonymic multiple reference when it is placed in co-text with a suitable predication. The meaning of the whole determines the meaning of each part. The predication *shot down* preserves conceptual unity of domain in respect of the recognisable context, a European treaty.

Let us test this theory with an example. The frame referred to by substituting the name of the author for her work gives rise to very productive and conventional metonymy, as in:

Jane Austen is widely read.

The name *Jane Austen* is metonymic if the addressee understands that the domain 'author's name' includes the author and the work at the time of composition, after publication, ideas and subsequent fame, including current real time for the reader. Some inferential processing must be used, bridging the spatio-temporal distance between apparent and real referents. The contiguity resides within the domain represented by the name because of the inclusion of all of these elements, both historical and contemporary,

Changing the grammatical form from assertion to question, or changing the illocutionary force, does not alter its metonymic value:

Is Jane Austen still widely read?
Do we have to do Jane Austen?

In these examples the metonymic use of *Jane Austen* stands for the work of the author, or study of her writings, or a course set on her work. This does not imply that there is, at that moment, physical contiguity between the person and her books, or between her and students on the course. Metonymic substitution can allow the author's name to stand for her own works, for the content of a course on that author, or for a task set in an academic context. By implication, *Jane Austen* also stands for the book containing the works and for the work performed by the student:

Jane Austen is on the top shelf.
I've done the Jane Austen but not handed it in yet.

There are gaps in space and time between the referents, in that Jane Austen lived in England in the early nineteenth century while the time referred to by the verbs *is* and *I've done* is present. Space and time may be conceived in different ways. They can refer to the scene of the utterance, the space defined by the moment of speech, or the mental space shared by speaker and hearer of an utterance. Contiguity can exist within the boundaries of any of these spaces, or between one mental space and another (Fauconnier 1985). Physical spatio-temporal contiguity is not necessary because the effect of conceptual closeness, like physical closeness, is to speed up the process of understanding.

If the whole domain of Austen's works is placed within a larger domain, the study of literature at a University, the elements form part of a conceptual space bounded by study. They are contiguous with each other within this particular mental domain. Thus, the gaps can be closed by placing the referents within a larger, more complex domain, or a domain matrix. The conceptual effect is called domain highlighting because 'the metonymy makes primary a domain that is secondary in the literal meaning' (Croft 1993: 348), and involves a shift of reference. This shift can take place at any point in time or over any distance provided the common frame (that Jane Austen was a writer who is currently studied) is known.

3.4.1.1 The potential effect of syntactic variation: word order.

Croft's proposal can be extended with respect to raising a further question about the nature of syntactic contiguity. Do word order changes - fronting a different highlighted aspect of sentence meaning, for example, for different emphasis - change the metonymic force of a noun phrase, given that the metonymy may only be available within certain predications and that a metonymic shift of meaning takes place within a single recognised domain?

To consider the question of contiguity of word order and whether it affects metonymic substitution, let us consider some variant word orders containing this same name.

- a. Have you done your Jane Austen?
- b. Your Jane Austen, have you done it?
- c. What about Jane Austen? Done?
- d. Has John done his Jane Austen?
- e. Jane Austen describes English life.
- f. Jane Austen was an Englishwoman.
- g. Did Jane Austen write all her books in England?

In examples *a* to *d*, variations in word order within the structure of the verb phrase, which affect the topic prominence within the sentence, make no difference to the noun phrase metonymy of *Austen*. Example *e* is ambiguous - *Austen* may refer either to the author of the book in person, or to the book studied (metonymy of author for work). Examples *f* and *g* are not ambiguous, since the change of predication to complement the subject in *f*, and the anaphor *her* in *g* exclude ambiguity. Interpretation of examples *f* and *g* must give non-metonymic use, since the topic focus has shifted from the work to the author and the verbs are

not ambiguous. Therefore in this example the metonymic force depends not on the word order within the sentence, but on the predication of the noun phrase.

To sum up this argument, Austen is not a contemporary author so there is a considerable spatio-temporal distance between the writing of the books and their being read by a student of her work today. But the author, her works and the readers exist in contiguity relationship within a single mental domain or mental space (Fauconnier 1985). Metonymic use of the name *Jane Austen* shortens the conceptual distance between the linguistic forms and their interpretation, because of the common ground between speaker and hearer. According to Gibbs (1994) people infer meaning very rapidly provided there is recognised common ground between speaker and listener. This means that the semantic and referential gap between the meanings of the terms is not an obstacle to comprehension. The contiguity is in the mental context of encyclopaedic knowledge shared by speaker and hearer.

3.4.2 Does contiguity entail metonymy?

The conclusion reached is that contiguity, either physical or conceptual, has to exist as a prerequisite of a metonymic relation. But contiguity in itself does not necessarily entail metonymy, which brings us to the problem of whether the items in an inventory can be substituted metonymically for each other.

3.4.2.1 Physical contiguity without metonymy.

Contiguity of items within an inventory does not necessarily allow metonymic substitution of one for the other. The co-presence of items in a special type of inventory, a recipe, illustrates this point. When following recipes, it does not do to substitute salt for oil even though they may be contiguous in the recipe, on the kitchen table, in the mind of the cook and the finished dish, because two tablespoonsful of salt do not lead to the same results as two tablespoonfuls of oil. On the other hand, it is sometimes possible to substitute one ingredient for another if their tastes are close and if they are the same sort of thing e.g. basil for oregano. But these are not metonymic substitutions. Even though the herbs are two parts of the same whole for the

purposes of the recipe, they retain their specific qualities and remain, conceptually, different entities. The items are understood literally, within the domain of food preparation.

A more controversial question, whether metonymy is a sufficiently general process to be seen in other linguistic forms, leads to a brief discussion of new extensions of the applications of metonymy, in non-NP word and phrase categories.

3.4.3 Contiguity in non-NP realisations of metonymy.

Metonymy is a general, universal explanatory principle so it should motivate any word categories with referential aspects, including verbs and verb phrases. Most treatises on metonymy, however, consider it as a property of the noun phrase, often reduced to a single noun or pronoun. In canonical examples (cf. OED) the form is usually substitution of X for Y where X and Y are already associated, realised in substituted noun phrases such as *crown* for *monarch* or for *power of the monarch*. It occurs in tautologies such as *boys will be boys* where the second occurrence of the noun has a figurative sense (Bonhomme 1987, Gibbs 1994). A large number of near-literal metonymies are adjectival conversions with referring functions, used as a reductive device to highlight a specific salient property, as in *The barman cleared the empties*.

There is nevertheless a new and still controversial field in which the term metonymy is extended to certain types of verb phrases. A special case of metonymy is found in denominalised and eponymous verbs (Bartsch 1987, Clark & Clark 1979, Dirven 1996, Gibbs 1994). Denominalised verbs are extremely common and are generally created from words in frequent use where there is no existing verb. We cross the Atlantic by jet aeroplane, therefore we *jet* to Washington. Carpets are common floor coverings, therefore we *carpet* a room, or can be *carpeted* by our boss. Examination of a large corpus of examples by Clark & Clark (1979) allowed them to conclude that the formation of these verbs is a matter of semantic creativity. The denotations are contiguous in context to those of the corresponding noun although subject to some syntactical constraints. This productive feature of language is generated by the need for economy of expression and vividness. Eponymous verbs such as *to do a Napoleon* or *to out-Gorbachev Gorbachev* are another case of contextualised innovation

with a strong referring function, which can be accounted for by the metonymic principle of conceptual contiguity. Goossens (1990: 328) cites '*Oh dear,*' *she giggled*, '*I'd quite forgotten*' as a case of metonymy where the physical denotation of *giggled* in contiguity with the mental attitude behind the action lead to a metonymic verb of speech. This is not novel metonymy in linguistic form but the re-interpretation of a known linguistic form in the light of metonymic principles and the premise that metonymy is a general cognitive phenomenon. More controversially, the illocutionary force of an indirect speech act is a shift of reference which is motivated by metonymic principles of relationship (Panther & Thornburg 1995, 1996). A new class of metonymies, called illocutionary metonymies, is formed from examples such as *she can drive a car* where *can* has a number of implied meanings in different contexts. The evaluation of this extension of metonymy to modality is a new development which is outwith the scope of current research into the rhetorical and stylistic functions of metonymy.

3.5 Summary.

This chapter has discussed the validity of assumed links between the different forms of metonymy and the principle of contiguity. This principle is important to linguistic realisations of metonymy in different ways. If metonymy is treated as a referential relationship between terms, contiguity is the juxtaposition of meaning which enables a word or phrase to refer to more than one entity. Grammatical predications form a linguistic domain in which the figurativity of metonymy is understood by means of syntagmatic juxtaposition. If the relationship between entities is essentially cognitive, metonymy depends on the perception of contiguity between concepts within a domain. Contiguity in literary structures derives from the Jakobsonian theory of metonymic discourse in which elements of a text are linked by formal juxtaposition. I have argued that contiguity in literary text is also a matter of perception of links between concepts within a defined frame.

A more controversial claim is that metonymy exists outside the noun phrase as a cognitive component of denominalised and eponymous verbs. This problem can be resolved if contiguity is envisaged as both a linguistic and a conceptual relationship, which underlies the higher level relations, strategies or categories called metonymic. If metonymy is considered as a natural inferencing process with extra-linguistic dimensions, contiguity between parts of a

single conceptual domain explains why metonymic expressions enable speedy communication. Metonymy might explain why Indirect Speech Acts are easily understood, because the contiguity principle lies under some instances of modality in verb phrases.

CHAPTER 4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METONYMY AND ELLIPSIS.

4.1 Introduction.

Metonymy and ellipsis have been connected by those theorists of metonymy who see in the metonymic process of shortening something akin to the shortening device called ellipsis. The relationship between metonymy and ellipsis is not, however, entirely straightforward. There is certainly some degree of overlap between ellipsis and metonymy but I shall argue that they are independent of each other in linguistic expressions. This chapter will start by discussing the nature and functions of ellipsis, then consider whether the links found between ellipsis and metonymy in short linguistic expressions can be extended to longer texts.

There are at least two ways of defining ellipsis, either as a strictly grammatical linguistic feature or as a semantic feature. De Saussure (1915) called ellipsis an additional value, alerting the reader to the 'hidden' content which supplements the overt content of an ellipted proposition. Thus, a special kind of expression is created, which might be compared with the reduced forms of metonymic expressions. Both inferential processing and shared knowledge are required for interpreting ellipsis as for metonymy.

Ellipsis is a very general linguistic principle, so metonymy cannot constitute an adequate explanation for all cases of ellipsis. In fact, attempts to describe what is meant by metonymy or metonymic discourse use the term ellipsis rather loosely, relying on the expert reader's general knowledge of what it is thought to mean. If speed of communication is important, there seems little doubt that ellipsis is a well-motivated linguistic and conceptual shortcut, just as metonymy is. The question here is whether ellipsis is always present in metonymic expressions and whether ellipsis explains metonymy adequately.

4.1.1 The grounds for relating ellipsis and metonymy.

Three main lines of argument relating the two concepts emerge from the literature on metonymy.

1. Some theorists of metonymy (Esnault 1925, Henry 1970) use a 'shortening' concept similar to ellipsis to account for the communicative power of metonymy:

Metonymy does not open new paths like metaphorical intuition, but, taking too familiar paths in its stride, it shortens distances so as to facilitate the swift intuition of things known.
(Esnault, cited Leech 1969: 53)

Where there are two or more potential referents for the same word, one of which is not stated, metonymy acts as a shortcut to understanding. This explains both grammatical and semantic omissions, where understanding must work by implication. *Lion fails to roar on Europe* (*The Scotsman*, 5/2/97) is a shortened and easily understood way of saying *The British Prime minister who represents the British Lion, itself representing the erstwhile power of Britain, does not impress us with his policy on the subject of Europe*. The reverse account, that a metonymic function might explain why a particular ellipsis is used, is not considered by Esnault.

2. Theorists of grammar, on the other hand, do not consider that metonymy is the only explanation for the omission of words (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik 1985; see 2.1.1 below). It is only one of the ways in which linguistic form underdetermines meaning. Linguistic realisations of metonymy rely on the addressee understanding the unstated semantic link between the expression and its referents, whereas grammatical ellipsis relies on the replacement of a grammatically necessary constituent of the phrase or sentence.

3. Cognitive psychologists working in linguistics theory raise the question of how we understand the ellipted material without further explanatory expansion by the speaker. With respect to one of the cognitive theories, Relevance Theory, the shortening of linguistic form may be considered to lead to greater effects for less effort, which is typically true both of elliptical expressions and conventional metonymic reference. These effects are achieved by the selection of the most relevant interpretation of the utterance. In other theories (Fauconnier 1985, Gibbs 1994, Lakoff 1987) metonymic mechanisms in our thought processes are said to shorten conceptual distances. This accounts in a very general way for the speed with which figurative expressions and linguistically underdetermined formulations are understood. It

approaches the same conclusion as Esnault from the standpoint of a search for universal links between thought and language.

4.2 Grammatical ellipsis and metonymy.

4.2.1 Ellipsis as a syntactic feature.

In this chapter I shall use the term *ellipsis* and the verb form *ellipted* with respect to both grammatical and semantic features. Quirk *et al* (1985: 883), however, call only omission of grammatical constituents *ellipsis*. (*Elision* is preferred for phonological loss by aphaeresis but this is outwith the scope of this discussion). Since metonymy is considered to be a semantic relation between two terms, one of which is replaced by the other and must therefore be inferred from the reader's contextual or encyclopaedic knowledge, Quirk's term *semantic implication* or the omission of understood meaning will also be important in this discussion. The two linguistic phenomena share the motivation for reduction:

Whatever grounds there may be in any given case for expressing oneself with maximum explicitness, there are generally strong preferences for the most economical variants. Other things being equal, language users will follow the maxim 'reduce as much as possible'.
(Quirk *et al.*: 859-60)

4.2.1.1 Strict ellipsis and semantic implication.

In this discussion, ellipsis based on grammatical omissions, or strict ellipsis, is linked to the other type of ellipsis described as linguistic underdeterminacy, where meaning is recovered by means of semantic implication. The fundamental principle of the former is verbatim recoverability i.e. the missing words must be precisely recoverable in the same form. Strict ellipsis means that 'the insertion of the missing words results in a grammatical sentence with the same meaning as the original sentence' (Quirk *et al.*: 886). Thus, strict ellipsis occurs in the sentence:

He always wakes up earlier than I (+ wake up)

but not in:

He always wakes up earlier than me (*+ wake up)

which is ungrammatical when completed.

The second kind of ellipsis, semantic implication, is pervasive in cases where whole phrases are reduced or deleted, as in sentences in which part of the propositional content can be omitted if it is conventionally inferable. For example, the agent in a passive such as *He was arrested* is redundant since *by the police* is understood. Similarly, the object of some transitive verbs can be ellipted, after the pattern of *We always eat at seven* where the implied direct object *our evening meal* is redundant.

Another example confirms the hypothesis that the agent need not be syntactically encoded if the implicature is strong enough:

His affair could undermine his success and, it is being suggested, may even force him from office. (*The Scotsman*, 28/1/98)

In the phrase *it is being suggested* the ellipsis of the agent (by whom is it being suggested?) results in a degree of ambiguity. Grammatical ellipsis is combined with semantic implication, because the reader is left to infer the identity of the implied agent as well as replace the agentive phrase.

Metonymic usage cannot always be said to fit this definition, since the meaning is usually recovered by inference rather than by recovery of grammatical constituents. Sometimes, however, in the case of conventionalised metonymies the surface features appear to be a good fit for strict textual ellipsis.

I like reading novels by modern authors. At the moment, I'm reading Golding.

In this example, ellipsis works at two levels. The ellipted *novels by* in the second sentence is recoverable entirely, verbatim, from the first sentence and is therefore strict ellipsis. At the same time, the metonymic use of *Golding* to stand for his works depends on a kind of ellipsis which allows semantic implications. In this instance, the metonymic function is strengthened by end-focus, which serves to place emphasis on that particular author rather than on the fictional nature of his works.

Although De Saussure assigns a positive, value-adding role to ellipsis, Quirk *et al.* consider its function as the omission of items of low information value, easily understood from the context. Ellipsis in metonymy, although sometimes recognisable in its syntactic form, has a different function, deriving from semantic, contextual and stylistic considerations. If the ellipted words are inserted, the completed phrase may convey less meaning than the metonymic substitution, because the latter carries an important number of implications with respect to salience of the property chosen, relationships within the proposition and attitudes expressed. In the example *Lion fails to roar on Europe* the brevity of expression conveys adequately the headline writer's assumption that the use of a lion to represent Britain is known, that it caused disappointment by not roaring, and that the person called a lion is less than majestic. At the same time, the metonymic use of Europe (place for institution) permits the economy of means required by the headline.

4.2.1.2 Metonymy without ellipsis.

Some instances of metonymy do not appear to show any grammatical ellipsis at all, relying instead on direct substitution within the same word-category, typically the noun phrase. This is seen in the conventional substitution of container for contained, when the container has a function-specific name, such as *kettle*. In the case of *the kettle is boiling* metonymy is not realised through grammatical ellipsis because one noun is substituted for another on the basis that the inferred meaning of *kettle* in this expression is commonly available knowledge.

4.2.2 Double and multiple ellipsis.

If a sentence contains several instances of ellipsis, whether grammatical or by semantic implication, it is worth considering whether metonymy is present. Metonymies sometimes accompany ellipsis, particularly those in short political or commercial slogans both in the Press and in television advertising films.

You can in a Nissan.

The slogan is currently used in advertising a make of car. The referential metonymic relation between the noun *Nissan* and its assumed referent *car* is one of a productive and frequently used cause-for-effect type in which the specific name is substituted for the generic, or the name of the maker for the actual product. The metonymy formed by the substitution of producer for product may also acquire countability, as in *several Nissans*, or generic/specific determiners *Let's take the Nissan, let's buy a Nissan* without losing its metonymic force. Over time, nouns of this type can become common nouns, losing their metonymic origins and becoming linguistically akin to 'dead' metaphors like *the foot of the bed*. The transformation of a *Hoover vacuum cleaner* to the common noun *hoover*, meaning any vacuum cleaner, corresponds to nouns such as *mackintosh*, for a raincoat named after its inventor or brand names which have become common nouns like *sellotape* (see e.g. McMahon 1994:182-3). The case of the *Nissan* does not yet seem to be sufficiently generalised for this process to have taken place (and there is no guarantee that it will ever happen).

In this linguistic context, metonymy of the kind defined by Panther (1995) as illocutionary can be found combined with referential metonymy in the noun phrase. The verb phrase represented as *can* has two metonymically-motivated reductions. The first is the substitution of *can* for the implied future *will be able to*; this is an illocutionary metonymy where actual stands for potential. The second occurs when the slogan then ellipses the verbal complement of the auxiliary *can*, so that the reader is left to construct, by inferentially supplying a performative verb, the propositional content of what it is she can do - drive fast, park on a heap of sand, have fun with friends, travel anywhere in the world, feel different from everyone else, enjoy driving or do any of the other desirable things possible if one owns a smart modern car.

The prepositional phrase also contains two metonymic ellipses. The preposition 'in' is polysemous, because the meaning of 'in' as a static relation of place is extensible to a dynamic relationship of instrument (Taylor 1989: 128). The interpretation depends on the immediate linguistic domain, so if the elliptical verb phrase *you can* is expanded to *you can sit comfortably* there is a static relationship of place, whereas if the ellipsis is expanded to *park on a heap of sand* the instrument relationship becomes dominant and might be realised by *with a Nissan*. The second aspect of *in* is further extended by the metonymic substitution

of the preposition for an expression of condition, so that it stands for *if you drive*, an expression with dynamic implications.

Analysis of a short phrase by a complex series of potential substitutions places a burden of disambiguation on the addressee of the message, yet the implied meanings are in fact quickly and easily inferred on the basis of general knowledge of a schema called 'cars' and the part of it referring to the name of a car manufacturer. The question is whether a single part of this multiple ellipsis is responsible for the implicatures inferrable from the whole expression. There are a number of clues to the intended effects.

1. The end-focus or the stressed, message-bearing element of the sentence is on the metonymic ellipsis of the noun. *Nissan* as a metonymy for *Nissan car* is a conventionalised phrase whose meaning is easily available. It therefore involves relatively little processing effort to recover the implications of the short-cut, the extra information provided by *car* being unnecessary for the interpretation. The inclusion of a metonymic noun phrase entails extending the range of implied meanings.

2. *You can* is more problematic: you can what? Omission of the semantic argument arises from the assumption that it is redundant, or that there is some extra effect to be gained. By means of leaving open a number of inferential possibilities, the verbal ellipses (both of the full tensed form and of the predication complement after the modal operator) and the implied conditional of the preposition *in*, function as pointers to the speaker's intention. The motivation is to stimulate a number of context-bound responses from the recipient. In any of the possible interpretations, inferred meaning is supplemented by a visual context supplied in the advertisement, usually known to the targeted audience and already associated with the domain of driving. Similarly, the illocutionary force of the preposition does not need explicatory re-phrasing because in the 'car' schema the polysemy of 'in' is commonly available knowledge.

3. The combination of several kinds of ellipsis makes the linguistic slogan more powerful. The combined input of the metonymy and the ellipted linguistic forms facilitates understanding of different kinds of information by shortening the conceptual distance between them. Fauconnier & Turner (1996) propose an explanation in terms of 'Conceptual

Blending'. Input from different schemas or known frames of reference combine to form a new conceptualisation. In this case, the input comes from two domains, i.e. the domain *car ownership*, and the domain *enjoyment*. The two are linked in a new extension: how to enjoy oneself with a car. The new conceptualisation associates emotional experiences such as pleasure, excitement, and satisfaction with the act of driving a particular brand of car. Metonymy is important in shortening the conceptual distances between the domains, a function also of the reductive elements in the sentence.

Thus, there is agreement on the reductive nature of metonymy and its ability to speed up understanding and interpretation between Quirk *et al.*'s (1985) assumption that language users will reduce forms as much as possible, and Esnault's (1925) note that metonymic usage depends for effect on a kind of intuitive shortening.

4.3 Metonymy, ellipsis and semantic implication.

I shall now consider some further examples of metonymy in the light of these theories. Ellipsis is sometimes co-present with metonymy, sometimes not. For this purpose the definition of ellipsis, as above, will include deletion, reduction or omission of linguistic determinations of meaning, as well as grammatical ellipsis in the proper sense. In this discussion I shall consider some referential metonymies in noun phrases, ignoring for the moment any ellipses in the verb phrases within the expressions.

4.3.1 Ellipsis in metonymic constructions.

The ellipsis may lead to drastic shortening when, for example, a noun phrase with an adjectival qualifier is reduced to a noun with or without a determiner. Idiomatic expressions using body parts can be called elliptical if the wider definition, extending beyond strict grammatical ellipsis, is used. The context is not supplied by co-text but by shared cultural beliefs or knowledge. In these examples metonymy in the noun phrase leads to non-literal interpretation, although not all metonymies are clearly figurative.

The first example is a non-figurative part-for-whole substitution within the physical domain of the body, using an elliptical expression:

All hands on deck!

This metonymic noun phrase is independent of the ellipsis in the rest of the utterance, as is shown by an expansion of the phrase into *all sailors are to report at once to the deck*. The process of interpreting the substitution is speeded up by encyclopaedic knowledge of the referents and of the frames in which they most frequently occur. This ellipsis is a reduction of linguistic form motivated by the need for short but clear commands on board ship, giving rise to the omission of the finite verb *are to report* and the adverbial time phrase *at once*. By implication, some kind of emergency has occurred. Recovering meaning from the situation depends on a process of inference rather than strictly grammatical replacement. The expression has, however, become conventionalised so the potential need to recover the missing words and complete the full grammatical form of the utterance has been lost, since it is unnecessary information.

The *hands* are substituted for the entire physical presence of the persons and on board ships came to stand for the person, cf. *An old China hand* which refers to a person who has worked in China or on board a ship in the China trade. The frequently found idiomatic use of parts of the body to stand for the whole person is an example of conceptual metonymy, which is discussed by Kövecses & Szábo (1995) with respect to the many idiomatic expressions having to do with the human hand. A framework of knowledge referring to the common uses of *hand* standing for *activity* underpins specific idioms such as *give me a hand*, *that's a handy gadget*, while the use of *hands* to mean the crew of a ship refers to the need for many people to haul in ropes, hoist sails and perform the other manual tasks necessary in sailing-ships.

The next example uses the part-for-whole body metonymy in a different way, without there being any ellipsis other than a locative.

We need fresh blood.

The potential referent for *blood* depends on more novel contextual information. In a hospital treatment room, the statement may be taken literally if the process of blood transfusion is the context. In other contexts, *blood* stands metonymically for a person, and *we need fresh blood* means that different people with new ideas are required in the situation of action. The meaning of the idiom is recoverable without specifying the omitted concept, by substitution of part for whole, with the implication that the mental rather than the physical powers of new people are desired. This example, although using a part-for-whole substitution within the large domain of the person, is more figurative than *all hands on deck* and is open to more interpretations in different contexts.

This procedure does not account for highly figurative idiomatic phrases referring to hereditary personality traits such as:

He's got bad blood in him.
He's bled his parents white.
Blood is thicker than water.

These quasi-proverbial statements comment on the transmission of family characteristics with both negative and positive social consequences. The metonymic force works by substitution of cause-for-effect, where the effects are determined by predications and modifiers. Again, these are examples of substitution without ellipsis of the recoverable meaning.

Another way of accounting for the concept that 'blood' stands metonymically for life and hence for a person is by calling on inferencing processes rooted in the physical but moving towards the abstract through a chain of cognitive shifts. If 'ellipsis' or shortening in the sense of Esnault is considered in this light, it can be seen as a conceptual process rather than a matter of linguistic form. Following Lakoff (1987), a possible chain of semantic inference includes both metonymically and metaphorically motivated shifts, using the defining criterion that metonymy remains within one very large domain, human life.

The human body contains blood.
This blood is necessary for life.
Life is understood as being a strong force.
Blood therefore represents the life force of the body, by metonymic transfer.
Life force means the existence of a person.
Blood can therefore be substituted for life force by cause-for-effect extension.
Since a person necessarily has life force, 'blood' means a person.

Thus, *He's got bad blood in him* is understood in a schema 'inheritance of family traits' and may be placed in either a physical or a mental frame. The referent is an individual identified in terms of his family; *blood* stands for genetically transmitted elements of predisposition, with the strong implication that the predisposition is to antisocial behaviour. Transfer from the domain of physical blood is made through the attributive *bad* which can be used in both physical and mental domains. The hearer's existing conceptualisations enable him to understand the metonymy, with the result that the presence of grammatical ellipsis or reduction is outweighed by semantic implications.

4.3.2 Semantic implications and ambiguity.

Some examples of metonymic ellipsis, like omission of the agent, show that semantic implication can be used to create ambiguity, either accidentally or deliberately in making a special inference (Soon Peng Su 1994). Contextual and cultural information is needed if the referents are to be correctly identified.

I think a Madrassi would be nicer than a Kashmiri.

This remark was overheard in an Indian restaurant in Scotland where the speaker was referring to different ways of cooking chicken curry. Referential meaning may be assigned differently in another context, since Madras and Kashmir also produce types of material for saris (N. Sultana, personal communication). Thus, the ellipsis of a noun may prevent successful communication. In this case, ellipsis in the referential metonymy i.e. the omission of information which is deemed unnecessary in the given context, has introduced an element of risk into the communication of meaning. In comparison, the literal statement leaves no ambiguity although the style may be thought to be awkward and unnecessarily repetitious:

I think a curried chicken cooked in the Madrassi style would be nicer than a curried chicken cooked in the Kashmiri style.

Examples from longer text are less likely to be ambiguous because sufficient information is given in either co-text or context, unless deliberate stylistic effects are sought. But the next

example, an advertisement in London tube trains for Access and Visa credit cards, demonstrates deliberate ambiguity. This is created by ellipsis in a series of metonymic references to nationalities of the type found in utterances like *Shall we have a Chinese tonight?* where the reference is to Chinese food. The grammatical form opens the question of whether the names refer as nouns to persons of that nationality, or whether they are adjectivalised modifiers of other ellipted potential referents.

Over the next six months you might visit 5 Chinese, 8 Indians, 2 Greeks, 4 Italians, a couple of Americans, a Mexican and a chemist.

There is no apparent link between the first six items and the last item of the list, unless the reader either finds a contextual solution to the problem or asks the writer to replace the ellipted constituents of the sentence. The verb *visit* normally predicates a visit to a place or a person. Lack of context leads to invention of some plausible interpretation (Enkvist 1991). If the referent is assumed to be 'restaurant' the list becomes a series of metonymic references (name of place for characteristics of the place) to the different types of ethnic restaurant a Londoner might visit. The *chemist* stands for the pharmacy, the place where medication for indigestion is bought. At all of these places, payment with an Access or Visa card is acceptable. This schema - that in restaurants and chemists, for example, it is possible to pay by credit card - is a possible frame for the conceptual links between the items of the list and solves the apparent puzzle.

4.3.3 Referential shortcuts.

Omitted words, once recovered, change the implied meaning, as was shown in the analysis of the examples of *hands* and *blood* above. There is a common and very productive type of metonymy which substitutes the name of the maker or creator of something for the thing created, and is particularly pervasive in the context of artistic creation.

He's inherited a Van Gogh.

The hearer assumes that there is ellipsis of *a painting by* because the name Van Gogh refers to the painter. The grammatical change is that the head of the original post-modifying

prepositional phrase (by Van Gogh) becomes the head of the new noun phrase (Van Gogh) with a shift of emphasis from the work done to the painter himself. In a context where the financial value of paintings adds to the painter's artistic merit, the causal metonymic use of the name of the artist for the work (producer for produced) leads to the inference that there is something special in inheriting a painting by Van Gogh, that both the painting and its new owner, and possibly also the person from whom it was inherited, are exceptional and merit our attention. The effect is to attract attention to the statement in a way that a version without ellipsis does not. Nevertheless this is strict ellipsis in Quirk's sense since the missing words could be present in the immediate co-text in exactly the correct form.

I believe he's inherited a painting, a Van Gogh.

A strictly grammatical analysis does not explain why the metonymic use of a name is so frequently used as a short-cut for expressing attitudes. The explanation seems to lie in the conceptualisations or cognitive processes which allow inference to be made. It is presupposed that the speaker and hearer share connotations of material and aesthetic value.

4.4 Ellipsis in longer text.

This section will move from ellipsis realised in short phrases, grammatical ellipsis and semantic implications created through metonymy to metonymy as an organising principle of narrative text. I shall examine ellipsis with a view to showing that in this field too there is much in common between metonymy and ellipsis but that there are also differences between them.

4.4.1 Ellipsis as a stylistic feature of text.

In the stylistic analysis of narrative, ellipsis is used in a different sense from the grammatical and semantic implication discussed above and exemplified in phrases and sentences, although strict grammatical ellipsis and semantic implication may occur in episodes within longer text. The link between metonymy and ellipsis is that they are both typical realisations of a very

general 'stand-for' relationship, in which a gap stands for information inferrable by the reader.

4.4.1.1 Pace and temporal organisation.

Ellipsis is used for specific stylistic purposes in the story and the narrative, typically in slowing down or speeding up the pace of the narration; 'the maximum speed is *ellipsis* (omission), where zero textual space corresponds to some story duration' (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 53). Ellipsis takes the form of a break in temporal continuity (Genette 1972) or the apparent omission of a constituent element of a situation. In either case, Genette does not consider the motivation of use to be anything other than the demands of a narrative structure in terms of speed and duration of events. From the reader's point of view, bridging the semantic gap needs the same cognitive process as the one which enables speedy understanding of short phrases, that is to say, an inferential process of reconstruction, dependent on knowledge of context and co-text (Rimmon-Kenan 1983).

Ellipsis is normally marked for time by a phrase such as 'two years later', which enables the events to move forward to the next significant point in the narrative. The writer relies on the reader's memory of recent events or knowledge of a number of conventions or constructed categories, as is demonstrated by this example from a fictional narrative of manners. At this point in *Persuasion*, the Elliott family is considering when to go to Bath. Anne, who is unmarried, will need a chaperone, Lady Russell, who cannot go there as soon as she wishes, so Anne is invited to stay for a while with her married sister Mary.

This invitation of Mary's removed all Lady Russell's difficulties, and it was consequently soon settled that Anne should not go to Bath until Lady Russell took her, and that all the intervening time should be divided between Uppercross Cottage and Kellynch-lodge.

(Jane Austen: *Persuasion*, 61)

The scenario of 'planning a trip to Bath', enriched by the contemporary implication that an unmarried woman of good social standing required a chaperone, enables a number of narrative goals to be achieved, for example the necessary move of the heroine from her country home to the social whirl of Bath, and the strengthening of Lady Russell's importance in the development of the plot. The narrative is shortened by ellipsis of the detailed account,

recoverable from the earlier text, of what Lady Russell's difficulties were, the length of time described by *soon*, the exact period of time Anne should wait before going to Bath, and where that time should be spent. This type of ellipsis principally serves to advance the speed of the narration, within a framework which has already been constructed by preceding text. It is metonymic insofar as the ellipted text stands for a number of implicit constructs in the reader's mind, and is a generalising metonymy through which one episode represents the social conventions of an entire period.

4.4.1.2 Omission of part of the motivation in narrative development.

Ellipsis is also used in text in the rhetorical sense of 'omission of part of the argument'. This kind of ellipsis in narration has been analysed by Genette (1972), but from a different viewpoint to that of Halliday and Hasan (1976) for whom ellipsis or zero substitution functions as a cohesive device in text. For Genette the point of importance is not the grammatical form of expressions, but their function in the macro-text (i.e. the full text of the narrative), and this is extended to the ellipsis of expressions if it happens systematically. Although Genette's examples are taken from Proust's novel *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, the device is common, especially in narratives where suspense is created by ellipsis of some crucial information, logical reasoning or link between contiguous events or thoughts. In genres such as thrillers whose dénouement hinges on the exact role of a person or an object, information may be systematically ellipted or excluded until a certain point in the plot is reached. For example, a mediaeval instrument of torture, information about its functions and hidden uses in a family is slowly released until the picture is completed and the mystery of the crime solved (M. Walters: *The Scold's Bridle*).

This type of ellipsis does not require recovery of the missing linguistic item from the adjacent co-text. Instead, a conceptual link is created through a series of implicatures. It is a part-for-whole procedure in the sense that only part of the information is given, the rest is inferrable. The function of ellipsis as a meta-narrative element of text in this way is to shorten the distance or the time taken for understanding. It is motivated by the writer's desire to maintain a certain tension in the development of events, and therefore maintain the addressee's

attention, rather than delaying the next stage of the narrative by repeating known details when the object is recontextualised.

4.4.1.3 Ellipsis, metonymy and style.

Ellipsis whether nominal, verbal or clausal is an important stylistic device which circumvents the need for explicit repetition of the referent. It is here that the similarity of ellipsis and metonymy with respect to their reductive functions in linguistic expression can most clearly be seen. If we consider a frequently used metonymy such as the substitution of clothes for their wearers, a T-Shirt can stand for a certain type of person. It is not necessary to identify explicitly the personal referent by name or gender, as in the first line of *The Liar* (S. Fry, 1992) *The Fame T-Shirt went into the house where Mozart was born*. By inference we understand that *the person wearing a T-Shirt with the word Fame prominently printed on it went into the house where Mozart was born*. The shortened form is an attention-drawing way to trigger a number of contextual effects in the reader, who assumes that the person concerned is young, likes popular music (*Fame* is a musical comedy about success in show business) and is therefore a surprising visitor to Mozart's house. The relationship between the person and what his clothing implies is a cause-for-effect metonymy, i.e. there is no need to replace the phrase by a longer one. The presence of ellipsis and the presence of metonymy have the same function of transferring attention from the person to the clothes as a sign of identity (see Chapter 9 below).

4.4.1.4 Grammatical ellipsis as a stylistic feature.

A more overtly grammatical type of ellipsis can also be a stylistic feature of narrative and have thematic implications. In the opening pages of *Bleak House*, description of a London fog sets the geographic scene for the novel, with implicatures which will be developed at later stages of the narrative. Places and people are invaded by the meteorological phenomenon of fog, just as later the events in the Court of Chancery will be explicitly compared with it. Ellipsis of the tensed verb and the truncation of the present continuous form by omission of the auxiliary *is* creates strong focalisation on *fog* which will later be assigned the abstract value of obfuscation.

Fog everywhere. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out over the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck.

(Dickens: *Bleak House*, Ch.1)

The temporal function of the relationship between ellipsis and the narrative in this example is different from the first example of this section. It has the opposite effect - whereas Austen used ellipsis to speed up the pace of events, this is an example of ellipsis used for descriptive effect in a pause in the narrative. The paragraph is structured by the type of metonymy described by Jakobson as syntagmatic and a characteristic of realist prose, that is, the juxtaposition of parts of the whole. Its function is to extend the reader's time for reflection and facilitate his search for meaning by focalising a key concept which will later be extended into other domains.

4.4.2 Recovery of ellipted elements of the text.

I have discussed the effects achieved through the co-presence of ellipsis and metonymy, shown that some discourse is structured on the basis of grammatical ellipsis, and reviewed a number of elliptical expressions in the light of their metonymic implications. The next section focuses on the way in which ellipted elements in a text are recovered through 'insider' knowledge (cf. Dillon 1992) of Shakespearean productions and undergraduate life, and shows how the functions of ellipsis and metonymy coincide. In a humorous narrative of undergraduate life, a young man due to play the part of Hamlet in a student production is being instructed about how to dress for the part by his producer.

I wondered, later, what I should be wearing. 'You'll be dressed like you are. The typical undergraduate, growing up apologetically. That old tweed jacket with leather patches you've nearly grown out of will do. And a college scarf wound round your neck a few times. Oh, and don't forget your specs. Stick a bit of Elastoplast round them so they look as if you dropped them and forgot to get them repaired. You don't imagine you're going to camp about in doublet and hose, do you? Speaking the stuff as though it were *poetry*?'

(John Mortimer, *Dunster*, Ch. 3)

The producer's impatience with the conventional staging of *Hamlet* as a period piece, and her determination to bring the play into the present day, may be inferred from the highlighted details of the costume. Concepts about the way in which dress influences identity underpin the text, each referred to metonymically by substitution of the part for the whole. The 'insider' reader is aware that the referents are undergraduate dress (*tweed jacket, college scarf*) and Shakespearean court dress (*doublet and hose*). A considerable amount of general knowledge must be assumed if the implied meanings are to be understood: Shakespeare's importance, *Hamlet*, stage productions, undergraduates, the perceived value of poetic as opposed to prose diction on stage, the presentation of a 17th century play in modern dress. Shakespeare's hero is overtly identified with the modern student, played by the narrator (referent for both speaker *I* and addressee *you* in this extract) who is indeed a student of the type described metonymically by these clothes (*dressed like you are*). The reference to Elizabethan court dress often used in Shakespeare productions (*doublet and hose*) is an elliptical clue for the implied reader as well as the addressee in the text. It allows us to infer that the expected stage costume stands for different constructs of the hero of the play and here, by implication, of the student actor.

The characterisation of this narrator, in the immediate context of the novel, is highlighted in the choice of salient detail within the conceptual metonymy 'clothes stand for persons'. The pseudo-questions draw attention to the oblique elliptical reference, through the two types of costumes, showing that there is a clash between personal views of style in the theatrical realisation of the play. In this case, the metonymy and the ellipsis have coinciding cohesive functions, linking this episode to the rest of the narrative.

There are some advantages, such as economy, avoidance of redundancy or repetition, but the risks appear to be considerable. If an ellipsis is used instead of a fully expressed proposition, or an explicitly described series of events, there is a strong risk that the writer's intention will not be clear and more processing effort will be required. A second important factor for the reader is linked to shared knowledge. For example, the amount of effort required of the modern reader of 'historical' text, in terms of disambiguation and assignment of ellipted referents is significantly greater than that required by most contemporary texts. In this respect, shared knowledge of context is a crucial factor in recovering meaning.

4.5 Summary.

The question considered was whether metonymy and ellipsis are related since both are reductive devices. In this discussion, metonymy and ellipsis were understood to exist not only in phrases, but also in the organisation of description and pace in narrative. Thus, the traditional definition of metonymy as a referential noun phrase is extended, with implications for textual ellipsis. Metonymy and ellipsis come into association through semantic implication, which emphasises the importance of context for inferential understanding of items which have been omitted or reduced.

Despite common features and effects, metonymic shortening is not necessarily linked with ellipsis. In considering the potential links between metonymy and ellipsis it has become clear that no single account encompasses the different realisations at word, phrase, sentence or text levels. Accounts of ellipsis are based either on grammatical features (Quirk et al), text features (Halliday) or narrative structures (Genette, Rimmon-Kenan). While it is chiefly a formal mechanism which permits the omission of a redundant word or phrase within the sentence, or an element of plot or scene in narrative fiction, the type of ellipsis known as semantic implication shares with metonymy the cognitive principle of reduction. Metonymy results in a double reference encapsulated in a single term.

In the case of longer text, ellipsis is a formal stylistic feature which enables the reader to take a short cut to understanding, via existing or presupposed knowledge. In this respect, the ellipsis has an anaphoric referring function and is normally a cohesive device. This assumed knowledge permits the omission from the text of unnecessary or redundant information. Thus, ellipsis is part of a general phenomenon of omission, reduction or deletion. While a metonymic principle does not explain all ellipses, the claim that reduction is a valid explanatory principle for metonymy is strong.

CHAPTER 5: REFERENTIALITY IN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

5.1 The referentiality of figurative language.

The aim of this chapter is to examine referentiality in figurative language in general, then in metonymy, and demonstrate that the feature of double or multiple reference adds to the diversity of a narrative both in non-fictional and fictional texts. The question is whether in this respect metonymy constitutes a special case of figurative language, or whether it obeys general rules of referring (allowing for differences between literal and figurative language).

5.1.1 The pervasiveness of multiple reference.

The discussion in this chapter returns to the underlying distinctions between literal and figurative language discussed in Chapter 1. Referentiality in literal language with a single, unique referent enabling ease or clarity of communication is the traditional norm against which the referentiality of figurative language is measured. Since linguistic form usually underdetermines the range of meanings intended (Searle 1979) figurative expressions, like Indirect Speech Acts, can be considered to require a greater degree of inferencing than propositions whose truth or falsehood is evident. But in everyday speech and non-fictional writings as well as literary texts figurative expressions are pervasive and understood quickly and easily (Gibbs 1992, Pollio 1977, Steen 1994).

Figurative expressions are to be found in various units of discourse, at word, phrase, sentence, and text levels, being used for momentary illumination or illustration, or to underpin the structuring of a long narrative (Booth 1983, Werth 1994). The examples of various types of discourse in this chapter will show that multiple referentiality in figurative language, although it depends on general inferential processing, is not a block to communication of meaning.

5.1.2 Nouns with potential double reference.

Reference is the relationship between an expression and what it stands for on a particular occasion of use, not a property of the word itself (Lyons 1977). It is also described as a mental image of the referent, produced by the word (Wales 1989). A single word, normally unambiguously referential in its literal sense, may have multiple referents when it is used figuratively in its context of utterance. In referring to the parts of a vehicle, the word *wheel* is literally used to refer to one of the essential parts enabling forward movement. *Wheels* may also be used to stand metonymically for a whole vehicle of which they are a part:

I've got my wheels tonight.

A number of assumptions are made in recovering the referents of the word 'wheels'. The conceptual notion of movement, the enabling power of the wheel, means that an important part of a car, the wheels, can stand for the whole by the metonymic principle of contiguity. According to domain theory, the metonymic use of *wheels* to stand for means of transport is limited to a single physical domain and is not, as is sometimes assumed, a metaphor since this normally requires transfer between two domains (Lakoff & Turner 1989, Langacker 1987). A figurative phrase adds to the illocutionary force of the entire clause or sentence (Searle 1979), in this case through assumptions about how cars are constructed. The phrase is close to the literal meaning of *wheel*, but the mental image of the referent has both physical and conceptual components. The relationship between these components changes according to context of use as one becomes more salient than the other.

In another common usage, however, *wheel* has a metaphoric extension, since it refers not only to the concept of rotation, but also to an abstract schema:

The wheel of fortune decides our fate.

A wheel is seen to be an agent of movement including the concept of rotation which enables return to the point of departure. This is explained by Lakoff (1987) as an Idealised Cognitive Mechanism (ICM) or a fundamental image schema present in the cognitive process. It is a

metaphorical transfer because *wheel* and *fortune* refer to different domains. When placed in linguistic conjunction, the domains are linked by the concept of circular rather than forward movement. These examples suggest that reference is a relationship of a complex kind between words and the extra-linguistic reality they represent, involving both physical and abstract features.

A more complex example illustrates the difficulty of assigning reference in non-literal expressions. If we analyse an idiom such as *to pay on the nail*, we note that the physical referent of *nail* is lost. There is no intention to refer to an actual nail, and the derived meaning 'immediate payment' is not clear from the surface form of the expression. The prepositional phrase *on the nail* can be said to have two different potential referents. One is locative and literal, the other temporal and figurative and recognisable only in conjunction with *paid*. Since the distance between the literal and the figurative referents is large, both linguistic and cultural common ground is needed if the phrase is to be understood. In the absence of contextualisation in text, a phrase of this kind presents reference assignment problems (cf. Nunberg, Sag & Wasow 1994).

5.1.3 Metonymy and changes of referent.

5.1.3.1 Semantic gaps.

When figurative language use gives rise to double or multiple reference, the indeterminacy of meaning is sometimes characterised as a 'semantic gap', that is to say, a distinct difference between what is said and what is meant. In the example of *wheel*, the referent is sometimes a physical object which possesses the ability to rotate, sometimes an abstract concept associated with the power of rotation. This idea of semantic gap, implying conceptual distance between potential referents, seems not to fit with the metonymic notion of contiguity, a fundamental distinguishing principle if entities or concepts stand in a metonymic relationship to each other.

The existence of a semantic gap can be tested with an example of a container-for-contained metonymy.

- A. How much do you take?
- B. A glass now and then.

In the context of a discussion between doctor and patient about the latter's drinking habits, the intended referent in this exchange is not the glass, but its contents, by a metonymy which operates because container and contained are in contiguity to each other. A and B understand each other because they have in common a mental representation of the referents i.e. a glass and its contents. An additional assumption is that intake of alcohol can be measured by the frequency of drinking as well as the exact quantity taken. In other words, although there is an apparent gap between the meaning of *glass* and the meaning of *whisky*, the concept of drinking whisky from a glass is conceptually one frame within which the distance between glass and contents is small.

5.1.3.2 Conceptual distance and degrees of figurativity.

In the example discussed above, the conceptual distance or 'gap' between container and contained has been shortened by a higher level reference to the frame of drinking, putting the parts into contiguity with each other within the whole. Contiguity here is taken to mean conceptual contiguity, seen between domains as a result of construal of meaning in situations. Defining the semantic distance between referents in terms of figurativity, Dirven (1993; see Chapter 3 above) demonstrates that metonymy can be figurative or non-figurative. In his terms, the larger the distance between the referents, the more likely that the relationship will be fully figurative.

The linguistic frame for Dirven's analysis of contiguity and conceptual distance is the sentence in which the terms occur. He does not develop this theory by examining meta-narrative uses of metonymy or metaphor to underpin a text with a series of changing references with respect to one object. I discuss this potential extension of Dirven's theory below (section 4.1.2) with respect to the use of an earring in *Song of Solomon* (Morrison 1977) as an object which serves to structure the narrative progress of a character in the fiction. The earring however is not always conceptualised in the same way and its function changes in the course of the narrative. The result is that the distance between the original object and the figurative values it generates becomes greater as the narrative develops.

The next section will discuss some aspects of reference and the process of how reference is identified. I shall consider some theories which attempt to address specifically the problem of interpreting figurative language. This is not a complete review of the literature on reference, but a selection of those aspects of it which seem appropriate to the description and interpretation of metonymy and its functions in narrative fiction, and the processes of understanding by which it works.

5.2 Some aspects of reference in figurative language.

5.2.1 Introduction.

Semantically and pragmatically based theories, such as those discussed below, consider the attribution of reference in figurative language as a case of double, and therefore potentially ambiguous, referentiality. Disambiguation and comprehension, followed by interpretation, depend on a perceptual bridge being created in a context shared by speaker and hearer. For interpretation, the context of utterance is of particular importance because of the gap between apparent and real semantic values. The issue of the differences between spoken and written language will not be considered in respect of the application of these theories, examples being taken from both.

5.2.1.1 Processing literal and figurative language.

Underpinning the discussion is the question of whether there are significant differences between literal and figurative language processing. Searle (1979) argues that differences between sentence meaning and utterance meaning apply to figurative language just as much as to literal language, but goes on to claim that a reader understands the referent by passing first through its literal meaning then reaching the figurative meaning. Thus, it takes longer and is harder to assign the referential meaning of a figurative utterance.

This argument is, however, refuted by recent experimental evidence. Gibbs (1992) and Steen (1994) show that metaphorical sentences are processed just as quickly as literal sentences. There is no ground for assuming that literal meaning must be processed first, because doing

so would lengthen the time taken for the processing. Since the tests were based on commonly used or conventional metaphors, the question of how novel metaphors are processed remains unresolved. This experimental evidence does not destroy the argument that a figurative expression may acquire meaning primarily as part of the overall force of a speech act, but rather analyses the components of a speech act with respect to shared knowledge or 'common ground'.

Double referentiality is also considered by Bach & Harnish (1979), who argue that the speech act schema (in their terms, formed on the basis of a set of mutual contextual beliefs) applies to non-literal and indirect utterances as well as literal ones. Recognisable referents within a context are essential if the hearer is to make appropriate inferences about the speaker's meaning and intentions, in spite of indirect connections between what is said and what is meant. Thus, in the example given above, the use of 'wheel' with implied multiple referents is normal, and causes few problems if the reader shares at least some of the contextual beliefs of the writer, so that he is able to interpret the latter's intentions.

According to Gibbs (1994), the literal meaning of an expression is instantly rejected in favour of a figurative meaning, without explicit recognition that the phrase is special or deviant. Separate stages of processing start with recognition and comprehension, which are succeeded by interpretation and appreciation. The last stage, appreciation, requires time and it is here that Gibbs (1994: 115-119) claims that differences between literal and figurative language are important, for stylistic and aesthetic reasons proper to the speaker's or writer's intentions. There is no problem about whether the context is fictional or non-fictional because the question is one of response to any text. On the other hand, time taken is not the only way of measuring response, and there may be other variables affecting the process, such as level of education, cultural background, motivation or fatigue (Steen 1994). Since this thesis is concerned with figurative language in narrative I shall examine a fictional narrative text to illustrate further Gibbs' theory that processing happens in four stages: recognition, comprehension, interpretation and appreciation.

5.2.1.2 V. Seth: *A Suitable Boy*.

In the narrative of *A Suitable Boy*, Vikram Seth depicts a wide section of middle-class Indian society in the early fifties. The account includes many vignettes of Indian life, using objects and concepts which are familiar parts of the Indian scene, but extending their meaning beyond literal references to exploit a rich field of metaphorical and metonymic extensions. One of these is in the domain of transport. In the following passage, in which a former villager called Rashid is returning from his family home to the city where he lives, the usual means of reaching the station by bullock cart has been replaced by an ancient bus. Seth portrays the bullock's replacement, the old bus, in metaphoric language appropriate to a sick animal. He also describes the bus by selecting parts of the whole, a metonymic procedure. The initial processes of recognition and comprehension of the double referents are based on the common knowledge, that both animals and buses break down and require attention if they are to perform their task of transportation.

The bus was so ill that it kept collapsing every few minutes. It belonged to a potter who had made a spectacular change of profession - so spectacular in fact that he had got himself ostracised by his local caste-brethren until they found his bus indispensable for getting to the station. The potter drove it and tended it, fed and watered it, diagnosed its sneezes and false death-rattles, and coaxed its carcass along the road. Clouds of grey-blue smoke rose from the engine, raw oil leaked from its sump, the smell of burning rubber seared the air whenever it braked, and it punctured or blew a tyre every hour or two. The road, made of vertically laid bricks and little else, was cratered with holes, and the wheels had lost all memory of their shock-absorbers. Rasheed felt he was in danger of castration every few minutes. His knees kept knocking the man in front of him because the back boards of the seat were missing.

None of the regular passengers, however, thought there was any ground for complaint. This was far better and more convenient than a journey of two hours in a bullock-cart.

(V. Seth: *A Suitable Boy*. Ch. 10: 700)

Changes in the interpretation of the referent begin with *The potter drove it*. Until this point, *it* referred to an old bus. In the next sentence, the pronominal reference is still inanimate, but the verbs - tended, fed, watered, diagnosed, coaxed - communicate that the potter has to look after his bus as if it were an animal, perhaps a bullock which draws a cart in the Indian tradition. The verbs in the simple past tense indicate frequent action, confirming the reader's initial assumption that the potter's bus is treated by him in the same way as he had, in the

past, treated an ailing animal. The transfer leads to an ambiguity exploited by the author. The referent is still the bus, but we see the resemblance between the potter's attitudes to his bus and to his animals.

This suggested interpretation of the bus as animal achieved through the metaphoric verbs is challenged by the literal description of the physical problems of running it. In the next sentence, salience returns to the bus, an old vehicle with a number of serious mechanical defects. The lexis refers the reader to the failure of the engine, the sump, the brakes and the tyres, metonymic because each part of the whole is strung together with the others to represent the whole. The reader makes a new hypothesis - that *it* in the first sentence is not an animal, but the same *it* as in the second sentence. The two sentences appear on the surface to refer to two different entities, one animate, one inanimate. They are associated by the shared implicature of both, that the owner has trouble in getting the transport to keep moving despite his care and concern. The reader is deliberately misled by the double reference of the pronoun *it*, for humorous effect in this instance.

The author has used metaphoric and metonymic extensions and a combination of syntactic and semantic means to communicate the idea that any kind of modern mechanical transport, however difficult and dangerous, is better than the old animal-driven carts with which it is compared. He provides clues at the beginning and end of the section to assist the readers' interpretation - first *The bus* and last *a bullock cart*. Although a bus does not literally require feeding and watering, nor does a bullock have brakes and tyres, an implicit comparison between the two forms of transport is structured by the alternance of the contrasting lexical fields referring to a mechanical bus or an ailing animal, supported by the ambiguity of the referring pronouns. The referent of this text, the bus, is clearly identified as the topic from the point of view of Rasheed, who is an infrequent passenger. The description of the bus, however, demonstrates the ability of metonymy and metaphor in combination to change information given about the referent, and introduce new perspectives into a hitherto unambiguous interpretation. The final stage of the process, appreciation, brings the reader to admire not only the potter but the author's skill in referring to two entities at the same time.

5.2.2 Cohesion in text through reference.

The syntactic referring elements seen in the example discussed above can be analysed in terms of their functions in the cohesion of the text. Another explanation of reference is found in theories of grammar and text-linguistics which highlight the importance in text of references through linguistic features such as anaphoric pronouns, modality and tense (in addition to the means available of referring through semantic implications). Halliday & Hasan (1976) consider that this type of reference is an important means of cohesion. It requires evidence from text as well as semantic implicatures stored in the mental lexicon of the reader, or cognitive mechanisms activated by chains of associative meaning. The grammatical functions governing referentiality are instantiated in features such as determiners (articles, demonstratives, possessives), nouns and pronouns, adjectives, adverbs (time, place, manner), and conjunctives.

The problem in this account of referentiality for metonymy theory is that it is a general theory of the functions of word-categories. Whether the noun phrase and its determiners, modifiers and anaphora are literal or figurative is not an issue. So the theory does not help us to distinguish metonymy from any other kind of noun phrase reference, although as I shall show in the next section, it points to the importance of anaphors in constructing intended meaning, particularly in the use of personal and relative pronouns.

5.2.2.1 Synesis and its effects in text.

A particular problem of syntactic form, synesis, arises when an anaphoric pronoun is apparently ungrammatical. A common non-figurative example of synesis occurs in a pair of sentences where a plural pronoun stands for a singular noun phrase, or vice-versa, as in the following example where the plural *they* refers to a singular entity *Town Council*. Although this is recognised by grammarians (Fowler 1965, Quirk *et al* 1985) as acceptable usage, the reference is to an implied plural concept rather than the apparently singular collective noun *Council* which is being treated as a plural aggregate noun referring to persons (see e.g. Greenbaum & Quirk 1990: 93, 98).

The new *Town Council* is in difficulties.
They want a traffic-free zone in the city centre.

From the point of view of how the sentence is processed, experimental evidence (Gernsbacher 1991) shows that people rate sentences like these as more acceptable, and process them more quickly, than sentences with the grammatically correct anaphor 'it'. It is recognised that the singular entity *Town Council* stands for a conceptual set which is plural (people elected to the Council). Because the links between the whole and the part are known, we are able to construct missing information and substitute the parts (its members - *they*) for the whole (Town Council - *it*) in the pronominal anaphor.

Another form of synesis occurs when the usual gender contrast between animate and inanimate nouns is abandoned for pragmatic purposes. This feature has been seen (Fauconnier 1994, Gibbs 1994, Nunberg 1978) as a signal that polysemy or metonymy is present, and as an indicator of intended figurative interpretation. The personal or impersonal implications of *sandwich* and *his check* in the famous example *the ham sandwich left without paying his check* have been much discussed (see Nunberg, 1978, Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Warren 1996, among many discussions of the *ham sandwich* example). Generally, successful reference to a person via food is achieved by metonymically substituting the agent for the object used, the eaten for the eater, as in *Are you the cheese toastie?* Thus, the use of *his* to refer to the inanimate *sandwich* is justified on grounds of semantic implication, not correct syntax.

Fauconnier (1994: 3-6) develops Nunberg's (1978) theory of pragmatic reference within his own theory that reference is a type of connector between mental spaces. The links established between objects of a different nature are made for psychological, cultural or pragmatic reasons and allow reference to one object (target) in terms of another (trigger) which is conceptually linked to it. This linking has grammatical consequences in, for example, pronominalisations. As well as cases of anaphoric pronouns switching between singular and plural, or between animate and inanimate, relative pronouns and reflexive pronouns may be used agrammatically. This is demonstrated by Fauconnier in a series of examples. Firstly, pronouns are used to contrast personal and impersonal in referring to a meal:

The mushroom omelette was inedible. *It* was too salty.
The mushroom omelette left without paying *his* bill. *He* jumped into a taxi.
The mushroom omelette was using chopsticks. *He* must be skilful.

It confirms that the omelette is inanimate, while *he* is an acceptable anaphoric reference because omelette is understood as referring to the eater. With relative pronouns, *the omelette who left in a hurry* is more acceptable, although agrammatical, than the syntactically correct *the omelette which left in a hurry*. Secondly, in case such as the metonymic use of an author's name to refer also to his works, reflexivisation can be used to agree in gender with the 'trigger' determining the conceptualisation, but refer to the 'target' as in *Norman Mailer likes to read himself before going to sleep*. But where trigger and target are in a relationship of implying agent for object this becomes anomalous:

- *The mushroom omelette was eating *itself* with chopsticks.
- *The mushroom omelette was eating *himself* with chopsticks.

Itself is impossible if the antecedent is by implication animate; *himself* is logically impossible whether the antecedent is animate or inanimate.

Fauconnier's set of examples demonstrates that anaphors link the object and the person in a way which can emphasise either the animate or the inanimate. This way of referring gives a linguistic description of an object not in terms of its apparent but of its real referent. To some extent, where it is logically possible, it assists understanding because the anaphor clarifies the intention of the speaker. Occurrence of synesis may therefore be analysed by grammarians as a syntactic error, by pragmatics as a communicative strategy. Gibbs (1994) presents the psycholinguistic view that the synetic use of anaphors is easily understood because of our pervasive ability to think metonymically about various people, places, events and objects, where metonymy resides in a semantic relation between experience and conventional ways of expressing the experience (cf. Norrick 1981).

5.2.3 Disambiguation of reference: pragmatic perspectives.

The previous section raised the question of how the addressee reaches the interpretation which is intended by the writer. A number of theories have been proposed, but it is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss them in detail. Halliday & Hasan (1976) focus on linguistic features and functions of co-text, placing emphasis on memory of previous discourse. Brown & Yule (1983) suggest that interpretation is reached by a number of processes which are reference, presupposition, implicature and inference. Following Hymes (1964) they evaluate the importance for textual meaning of the participants, the topic, the setting, channel and code, message-form, event, key or evaluation, and purpose. Grice (1975) proposes the importance of implicatures, which are derived from propositional meaning, in a shared context where speaker and hearer adhere to the Conversational Principles of informativeness, truth, relevance and brevity. Relevance Theory (1995) moves the focus of referent-disambiguation away from the text and towards the speaker's intention of communicating rapidly, demanding minimal effort of the hearer. Although recognition, comprehension, and interpretation of non-literal language may happen quickly (thereby satisfying the general 'minimal effort' requirement), appreciation of the effect of the figurative language may take a long time (Gibbs 1994), and by implication be worth the extra effort. This is potentially important in fiction where metonymy or metaphor is developed as one of the unifying meta-narrative features of the text.

Pragmatic cognitive perspectives acknowledge that figurative language is interpretable in an environment defined by a known or shared mental context of some kind. Unlike text-based theories, they attempt to account for the interpretation process. Additionally, they propose that there is no need to go through literal meaning in order to reach figurative meaning. Relevance Theory claims specifically that rapid and effective disambiguation depends on optimal relevance of the utterance, which enables the hearer to assign reference in cases of double or multiple reference, where there is more than one candidate for meaning, or when all available interpretations fit the context and the Gricean criterion of truthfulness. When choice between possible referents is crucial, the hearer of an utterance stops at the first interpretation consistent with relevance, the one which gives the greatest cognitive effect for the least effort (Wilson 1992, Sperber & Wilson 1995).

A problem with this theory is whether the speaker can be sure that the hearer will interpret the intended meaning, rather than stop at the first interpretation as would be consistent with the principle of relevance. Wilson claims that the principle of Optimal Relevance ‘excludes the possibility that the hearer will be expected to recover, process and accept the wrong interpretation before lighting on the intended one’ (Wilson 1992:175). The question is whether this also applies to metonymic references where there are several possible contextualisations and interpretations of a single word, and it may be important to allow for more than one referent. Bearing in mind that linguistic complexity, accessibility of context and inferential effort are all part of the interpretation process, let us test this by analysing the metonymic phrase *Dublin in Chaos*, which has a number of accessible referents.

5.2.4 Example: *Dublin in Chaos*.

The need for an immediately available context to indicate the figurative force of a word is seen in this example, which is a newspaper headline (*Daily Telegraph*, 18/11/94). The metonymic use of a place-name for a salient feature of that place allows the writer to attract the readers’ attention, but shared knowledge of recent events in Ireland is necessary if the referent is to be successfully identified. *Dublin* has a retrievable referent, to some extent ready-made, and the reader will have a certain number of stored assumptions, potential common ground with the writer, which enable him to construct some initial hypotheses about the intended meaning of the phrase.

5.2.4.1 Possible interpretations of *Dublin*.

Let us say that the reader’s first hypothesis is that the word *Dublin* refers to a physical entity, the geographical site of a city, and is being used in this literally true sense. The interpretation moves from *Dublin* to *chaos* in a series of rapidly processed steps.

- 1.a. Dublin is a city.
- 1.b. Dublin is large, well-organised city with transport systems, traffic controls and an entire infrastructure dependent on electricity.
- 1.c. Therefore, if electricity has failed, city life will become chaotic.

Secondly, Dublin as a city is a well-defined social unit. The place-name is metonymically substituted for the inhabitants. At this point a number of social and cultural stereotypes emerge.

- 2.a The inhabitants of the city are volatile.
- 2.b. There could be social unrest.
- 2.c. The IRA might have planted a bomb in the city.
- 2.d The people are in turmoil.

Thirdly, since Dublin is known to be the capital city of the Irish Republic, *Dublin* as a political entity is understood by metonymic substitution of place for the power exercised at that place.

- 3 a. Dublin is the capital of the Irish Republic.
- 3.b. Dublin has a political as well as a social identity and organisation.
- 3.c. If the political organisation changes suddenly, confusion may result.
- 3.d. This could happen if the government falls.
- 3.e. There is a strong likelihood that the government has collapsed, leading a newspaper journalist to describe the confusion in the seat of political power as *chaos*.

In deciding which of the potential referents of the word *Dublin* is appropriate in this context, let us consider whether the four Gricean maxims can be fruitfully applied. The Conversational Principle states that communications should be true, informative, brief and relevant. These do not, however, enable us to decide why one referent rather than another is chosen, because all four of these principles fit all the hypothetical explanations. It is clearly true to say that *Dublin is in chaos*, that the reader is being informed of this, that the information is succinctly expressed and that it is relevant to the description of the state of affairs and to the interested reader. Therefore we have to seek further.

If we assume that no contextually shared knowledge is available, i.e. there are no immediate referents because the reader has no knowledge either of Ireland or the situation described then the relevance principle has worked negatively, and the reader will seek more information below the headline, or abandon the newspaper. If we assume that the only knowledge available to the reader is the general awareness that Dublin is a city the reader may choose an interpretation which has no relevance in the situation which the newspaper currently wishes to

highlight. But it may be satisfactory to the reader so he stops, having reached a position of optimal relevance to himself. It is, however, psychologically more plausible that a reader will seek to confirm his own assumptions. This search for correctness is not included in the principle of relevance, which privileges the first interpretation over a subsequent, potentially correct one matching the writer's intentions.

The hypotheses resolve themselves into a series of mutually supportive interpretative procedures with respect to the writer's intention. The purpose of the headline is to highlight that Dublin is a large city like others. It gives salience to the notion of chaos in a city, gives information about the Irish government, or arouses the potential reader's curiosity about the referent in order to sell more copies of the newspaper. The writer of the headline assists communication by textual elaboration in a sub-headline to *Dublin in Chaos as Reynolds Quits* and an explanatory first line to the leading paragraph: *Ireland faced fresh political turmoil last night after the Prime Minister, Mr. Albert Reynolds, resigned*, thus explicitly assisting the reader to reject alternative reference assignments in the context.

We might assume that the reader shares with the writer knowledge that the Irish Labour party has withdrawn from the Coalition and that the survival of the Government is threatened. The choice among the possible referents will then be less effortful, as it will lead to an immediate interpretation, new contextual effects, or new information. But it will still not necessarily be correct, the one the speaker intended. Confirmation has to be provided by further contextual knowledge which clearly identifies the referent as political power. The Relevance Theory position can be assessed against Lyons' (1977:181) distinction between 'correct' and 'successful' reference; the latter will enable the hearer to pick out the actual referent from the class of potential referents, provided the hearer has knowledge of context. Whilst apparently challenging a central issue of communication, i.e. correctness of reference assignment, the first relevant interpretation is the only one needed, because it is successful. If 'first' is redefined as 'immediate', it can be hypothesised that each moment of understanding is subsequently rejected in favour of the next one, yet built into the new relevant interpretation. This fragmentation of the interpretation process has not yet been investigated experimentally.

5.2.4.2 The effect of metonymy on interpretation.

In the light of this analysis, the question arises of why a writer uses metonymy instead of an immediately recoverable unambiguous expression such as 'The Irish government has fallen and as a result the political situation in the capital city is in a state of chaos because no one knows what is going to happen next'. Apart from the advantages (for headlines) of economy of style, the writer assumes that the ellipted information will be generally understood. The writer knows it will effect a communication faster, with economy of effort, and that the phrase has a dramatic, attention-catching style which is also salient in the context. The referent becomes clear when a number of steps are taken by the reader, whose problem is to work out which of the 'Dublin' schemas is the correct one in this context.

Assuming firstly that some contextually shared knowledge is available, i.e. the reader has knowledge of Ireland, then the first step is to assume that the only knowledge available to reader is the general awareness that Dublin is a city. He may then choose an interpretation which has no relevance in the situation which the newspaper currently wishes to highlight. This may be valid from the reader's point of view but it is easy to imagine circumstances where further effort leads to an interpretation matching the writer's intentions, as we shall see.

An alternative assumption might be that the reader shares a certain amount of knowledge with the writer, for example, that the Irish Labour party has withdrawn from the Coalition and that the survival of the Government is threatened. The choice among the possible referents will be less effortful, and will lead to an immediate interpretation with new contextual effects, or new information. Confirmation is provided by further contextual knowledge (the leading paragraph of the article) which clearly identifies the referent as political power represented metonymically by the name of the city. This confirms Gibbs' prediction that appreciation of the figurative effect may occur at a later stage in the process.

5.2.4.3 The process of reference assignment.

It is generally agreed that decisions as to reference assignment are founded on true, evidenced and informative grounds and achieved by retrieving an appropriate mental representation from memory by means of a short, plausible bridge. This bridge is constructed through some kind of shared knowledge which already exists between the participants. According to Sperber & Wilson (1986 and 1995), relative contextual salience of the possible referents is a cognitive factor going beyond semantic explanations. To these bases they add the idea that reference assignment is a process which is centred on rational expectations of relevance, through which the hearer is entitled to expect contextual effects from minimal processing effort. The reader, firstly, tests the most accessible information to see if it fits, and secondly, looks for another easily accessible meaning. Thus, the assignment of reference departs from a text-based solution and depends on the interaction between reader and writer, and the shared context which the reader explores.

We are still left with the problems created by an ellipted, figurative phrase. If there are two or more equally possible referents, the reader may or may not succeed in choosing correctly between them. This example demonstrates that in the case of a metonymic headline (*Dublin in Chaos*) importance has to be attached to inferential processes and shared knowledge, but interpretation of the writer's intentions, the product, is also important. The hearer must not be completely confused, or at a loss for a suitable referent, although he must be able to correct an initially wrong choice on the basis of further evidence.

5.3 Contextualisation.

5.3.1 Ephemeral and non-ephemeral contexts.

In the interpretation of metonymic meaning, understanding is facilitated or constrained by knowledge of the context in which the metonymy has been created and used especially if we consider a non-generalisable metonymy in a given domain, such as sport. In the case of a sentence such as *He's the fastest racquet in the Cup*, communication depends on the hearer being aware that tennis players use a racket, of the importance of speed when the ball hits the

racket, and the name of an important international tennis competition, the Davis Cup. Such metonymies of the object-for-agent, by which the instrument is given the attribute of the player, succeed only in a well-defined spatio-temporal or situational context known to the addressees. If the context disappears, recovery of meaning is a more difficult process.

'Context' is, however, usually more than ephemeral spatio-temporal reference. It is, in general terms 'the social and psychological world in which the language user operates at any given time (Levinson 1983: 1). In this light, it is a necessary condition for communication since 'there are no acts of communication without participants, intertexts, situations, paralanguage and substance (Cook 1992: 2). Pragmatic theories of reference assignment point out that reference must depend on our model of reality. Reference assignment can only be as good a fit as possible given the limitations of the text, the reader and their interaction. Whether we are analysing speech or writing or gesture, our interpretation depends on the availability of a context derived from 'all the things we know, believe, judge or understand to be the case in the world in which we live' (Leech & Short 1981: 125).

Ephemeral and non-ephemeral references can be found in the same text. This passage from a humorous novel exploits the non-ephemeral knowledge that it is possible to refer to a musician by the name of his instrument, using metonymic transfer of the agent from person to object (cf. *the violin played well*). The writer uses first a metaphor '*a flock of musicians*' to transfer people into the domain of birds or sheep. Then he uses metonymy to bring into ephemeral salience some consequences of professional activity, and the physical attributes of a group of people, with the intention of creating humour.

The advance guard of the company appeared, in the shape of a flock of musicians. They passed out of the stage door, first a couple of thirsty-looking flutes, then a group of violins, finally an oboe by himself with a scowl on his face. Oboes are always savage in captivity.

(P.G.Wodehouse: *Summer Lightning*, Ch.II)

Through the names of their instruments, reference to both persons and the effects of their being professional instrumentalists results in an apparently agrammatical ambiguity. The use of the anaphors 'himself' and 'him' in agreement with objects *flutes* and *oboe*, and the attributive phrases *thirsty-looking*, *with a scowl on his face* and *savage*, which are correctly restricted to human subjects, requires shared knowledge. By lexical implication, the *flock of*

musicians, including the oboe player, is a group of (wild) animals or birds. Playing in orchestras tames them, but creates bad feelings expressed by a human attribute *scowl on his face*. The metonymic extension of the instrument to refer to its player enables the reader to appreciate the pseudo-aphorism of the last sentence *oboes are always savage in captivity*. The assertion is in fact nonsensical unless we understand that *oboes* stands for oboe-players, and additionally attach to this the implication that oboists do not like the constraints of orchestra-playing.

Behind this is a further implication deriving from the visual appearance of a group of musicians leaving their work, dressed in black suits and therefore resembling birds in two ways - they produce musical sounds and their appearance is black. It would be difficult to access the speaker's frame of reference, and satirical intention, for *oboes are always savage in captivity* if cultural and social knowledge of wind instruments, bird song, and the visual effect of a group of black-clad musicians resembling black birds is not present in the frames permanently available to the readers.

5.3.2 Communication and reference to contextual knowledge.

Appropriate adjustments to the use of context are made by means of a principle of local interpretation which 'instructs the hearer not to construct a context any larger than he needs to arrive at an interpretation' (Brown and Yule 1983:59). Thus, communication comes from the speaker seeking to change the contextual environment of the hearer, while the hearer expects that this change will alter his knowledge, beliefs or expectations. This 'natural effort towards meaning' is attested by Enkvist's (1991) analysis of apparently formless 'poems', demonstrating that readers will attempt to find meaning even where none may be reasonably said to exist. The shared knowledge, beliefs or assumptions which together form the context for the utterance are accessible at different points. Firstly, a shared context is present to some extent before any communicative act can take place. Secondly, the context changes as the communication is made, because the hearer rapidly activates previous knowledge in the process of understanding the new. Thirdly, shared knowledge is both necessary for and the result of successful communication.

5.3.2.1 Accessing context.

Accessing contexts is a two-way process, involving speaker and hearer who share a joint responsibility, to achieve communication. In the case of the tennis example above, the speaker presupposes not only knowledge of the world of tennis, but enough interest in it (i.e. strong assumptions) for the statement to have immediate effect. Conversely, if context cannot be accessed, the act of communication is risky. For example, in over-abstruse references such as 'I'll go and consult my Figaro', the referent of *Figaro* is not the Paris daily newspaper but the speaker's hairdresser, with reference to the hero of *The Barber of Seville*, a hairdresser who dispenses useful advice (Beaumarchais 1775). In this example, the speaker has disguised the referent by a metonymic naming, making the hearer try harder, or if he thinks it is not worth the trouble, abandon the communication. The second course of action might be termed a negative relationship between hearer and context.

Thus, relationships between extra-linguistic cultural concepts, as well as co-textual referents, enable recognition of intended referents, but there is a risk of failure in situations where transfer between cultures is necessary. Cross-cultural transfer is particularly difficult in the framework of highly specialised situations such as the world of sport, or politics as discussed above. In the case of culture specific descriptions, the boundary of context limits the potential for reference assignment. For example, an Italian member of the Roman Catholic Church is accustomed to referring to any other church as Protestant. This leads, in Edinburgh, to confusion over the referent of a cathedral name. If a direction is given to *The Protestant Cathedral* the assumption made by a Scot ignorant of the Italian cultural context is that it refers to St. Giles, although the intention might have been to refer to St. Mary's Cathedral which is Episcopalian, not Protestant.

5.3.2.2 Reference made by inference.

The discussion in this chapter has relied implicitly on all readers and hearers being able to activate inferencing processes when provided with certain stimuli. The potential power of inference in disambiguating potential referents of metonymy can be seen if we consider an indirect speech act which includes a metonymy.

Here's the green anorak coming.

Substitution of an article of clothing for a person is a frequently-used metonymy. Its use is motivated in situations where it would be inappropriate to utter explicit opinions or comments on the subject, or where a degree of secrecy is advisable. We can imagine the context of situation as a café where Jill is communicating with John about Joe, who has just come in wearing his green anorak. They have noticed and exchanged opinions about him already so there is a degree of shared knowledge. They trust each other to tell the truth, share a secret code which gives brevity to their exchanges, and infer each other's intentions. In this case, Joe has attracted their attention for some reason. He may be charming or repulsive, but is not a close friend. His appearance possibly evokes admiration, expectancy or fear. All of this is understood by John through the reference to the green anorak, by an inferential process which depends on existing knowledge stored in memory and activated by the information that Joe is approaching. *The green anorak* is metonymic because it is a salient feature of Joe's identity as well as a means of highlighting Jill's attitudes towards him.

The inferential process of interpretation depends on John's ability to deduce what Jill intends from what she actually says. For relevance (in Sperber & Wilson's sense) to be achieved, the process is based on the principle of least effort for maximum effect. Further clues to rejecting the literal and simple declarative in favour of an Indirect Speech Act (cf. Panther & Thornburg 1996) are given by special effects of the syntax. These generated by the fronting of *Here*, the clefted verb, the illocutionary force of possible tonic stress on *coming*, as well as the selection of the garment's salient colour. So there are a number of shared contextual assumptions, paralinguistic as well as phonological, syntactically generated and lexical. By inferential processing, understanding is reached rapidly. The short narrative concludes as John and Jill compose themselves for the greeting ritual or take avoiding action. Blakemore (1992) sums up the inferential process as a holistic interaction between speaker and hearer during which a contextually important exchange of information is made in the minds of both. By holistic, in this case, we understand a linguistically based process triggered by phonological as well as syntactic and semantic elements of the text.

5.3.2.3 Referents and mental models.

Bridging inferences between memory and new stimuli use both explicit and implicit information to form a mental model. An important point for the recognition of referents is that phonological, syntactic, lexical and semantic triggers initiate the process of accessing memory (Marslen-Wilson & Tyler 1980). This is exemplified in a fictional text where the author exploits the phonological qualities of a river name for his thematic purpose of associating landscape with character. From the word 'river' a series of strong and weak contextual implicatures arise, from which the author selects those appropriate to a specific scenario. In this text, the highlighted aspect is the slowly flowing character of an East Anglian river, the Great Ouse, with the implication that it creates sluggishness in those who live on its banks.

The Great Ouse. Ouse. Say it. *Ouse*. Slowly. How else can you say it? A sound which exudes slowness. A sound which suggests the slow, sluggish, forever oozing thing it is. A sound which invokes quiet flux, minimum tempo: cool, impassive, unmoved motion. A sound which will calm even the hot blood racing in your veins. Ouse, Ouse, Oooooouse ...

(G. Swift: *Waterland*. Ch.15:142)

Some existing shared contextual knowledge will be confirmed, denied or extended by a written or spoken communication. Syntactically, the author's intentions are foregrounded by the short verbless phrases - *The Great Ouse. Ouse* - and attention being drawn to the name of the river by the imperative *say it*, metalinguistically addressed to the normally silent reader as well as to participants in the narrative. In this instance, it is implied that the river Ouse flows slowly, and that its water calms strong emotions (*hot blood*). Other lexical items confirm the semantic implications by alliteration of the sibilant *sound*, *slowness*, *impassive*, while through the oxymoron *unmoved motion* the assumption that rivers are characterised by onward movement is apparently questioned. The new implication is that the river has power over people, causing them to have similar characteristics - *cool*, *impassive*. The name is, by these linguistic means, made to describe, and to stand figuratively for, characteristics both of the river and the people living near it, but the effect of the name relies largely on existing mental representations of rivers.

5.3.2.4 Limitations of the context theories of reference.

A contextualisation principle does not in itself differentiate between metonymy and other forms of figurative or literal language use. In the example from *Waterland*, it could be argued that the river is a metaphor for human characteristics, since it occupies a different domain from human behaviour. What applies to both metonymy and metaphor is that the context of use identifies time, place, people and events with respect to the referent. It opens pathways to interpretation, through shared beliefs, and assumptions. The process of activation is triggered linguistically and hypotheses are confirmed with syntactic and semantic knowledge. The identification of the referents of figurative expressions is often exploited by writers, as we noted when discussing the headline *Dublin in Chaos*. In longer textual narrative the writer has space and time to recontextualise entities and their names, in ways which invite reinterpretation. In the next section I shall discuss examples of the way in which the identity of a referent is first established then changed, and for what functions.

5.4 Changes in referents in literary text.

A writer sometimes chooses to develop and change the referential value of a term even if the first accessible referent retains its validity. An initially literal use of a single word to denote an entity or concept can be developed into a complex series of figurative extensions which elaborate the original referent and add others. I suggest in the next section that the writer of narrative fiction may exploit figurative language, in this case a metonymy, progressively. Second and subsequent contextualisations may trigger the same processes of interpretation as the first, but they are no longer naive. Each reading redefines the referent in its new context, interacting with what is already known about it. Metonymy has special functions in this respect in fictional narrative (Riffaterre 1990).

I shall consider the way in which two authors (Virginia Woolf and Toni Morrison) develop and extend reference in narrative. A term which initially denotes a single identifiable object in the real as well as the fictional world acquires metonymic extensions to its meaning. Metaphoric extensions by transfers into different or abstract domains are also noted. The

two examples are linked by their referents being pieces of jewellery, although the first is realised in a single episode, the second functions in the event-structure of an entire narrative.

5.4.1 Expansion of reference through an object: the special case of jewellery.

The wearing of striking jewellery, as attested by anthropological evidence (Hoebel 1972), carries meaning over and above its decorative purpose. Jewellery in its various forms stands metonymically for the identity of the wearer, in the sense that a person may show his lifestyle, comparative wealth, religious or social significance through wearing a mayoral chain of office, a pectoral cross, a ring or a crown. This non-linguistic but overt communication extends across cultures, since many cultural groups use jewellery for identification of personal status. A writer, therefore, has available a common concept which enables the reader to access contexts of reference and extend the meaning of a single referent. By this means the reader has more immediate access to interpreting character, relationships, moral stance, or theme within the narrative.

5.4.1.1 Virginia Woolf: *To the Lighthouse*.

Woolf's writing tends to place greater emphasis on metaphor and on poetic qualities of style than on forwarding the narrative by metonymic means (in Jakobson's sense). I shall argue that the episode of Mrs. Ramsay's necklace shows that Woolf, in this case, contextualises elements of a relationship, and highlights some aspects of it, through using metonymy.

Some of the thematic material of *To the Lighthouse* has to do with the relationships within an upper-middle-class English family, the Ramsays. At this point in the account of a holiday spent by the sea, Mrs. Ramsay is dressing for dinner and allows two of her children, Rose and Jasper, to choose which necklace she is to wear. Her mind is preoccupied with other things - the dinner menu, her desire to please the principal guest William Bankes, the late return from an outing of other children and guests, the antics of the rooks outside the window. Her thoughts are divided between her identity and duties as a hostess, her reflections on nature and people, and her relationship to her daughter.

The social dress code shared by author, narrator and reader provides a frame within which Mrs. Ramsay, the children and the necklace are linked to each other. Briefly, the code required that a hostess change into evening dress, with jewellery, for a formal evening dinner. This contextualisation leads the reader away from perceiving the necklace only as a beautiful object.

But which was it to be? They had all the trays of her jewel-case open. The gold necklace, which was Italian, or the opal necklace, which Uncle James had brought her from India; or should she wear her amethysts?

'Choose, dearests, choose,' she said, hoping that they would make haste.

But she let them take their time to choose: she let Rose, particularly, take up this and then that, and hold her jewels against the black dress, for this little ceremony of choosing jewels, which was gone through every night, was what Rose liked best, she knew. She had some hidden reason of her own for attaching great importance to this choosing what her mother was going to wear. What was the reason, Mrs. Ramsay wondered, standing still to let her clasp the necklace she had chosen, divining, through her own past, some deep, some buried, some quite speechless feeling that one had for one's mother at Rose's age.

(V. Woolf. *To the Lighthouse*. Ch.16: 307)

The narrative does not move forward until the choice has been made. The pause allows the reader to evaluate the necklace on the basis of various assumptions and inferences. Metonymically, the object expresses the relation between possessor and possession, since it is one of several valuable necklaces which might have been selected both because of their beauty and to indicate social status. The act of choosing the necklace has a number of non-literal aspects. It is part of Mrs. Ramsay's outfit for the evening, thus standing for the whole self-image of the middle-class woman and associated with the social ritual of dressing for dinner. The reader is conscious of aesthetic pleasure in the objects (*gold opal amethysts*). The principal action of the scene, selecting the necklace, is controlled by Mrs. Ramsay, who allows Rose and Jasper to choose, showing the power of the mother over the children. The use of Free Indirect Thought gives access to Mrs. Ramsay's secret inner reflections and her explicit attribution of meaning: *.... divining, through her own past, some deep, some buried, some quite speechless feeling that one had for one's mother at Rose's age*.

The choosing of the necklace, foregrounded briefly among the other elements of the narrative, is a part of the presentation of one of the themes, Mrs. Ramsay's understanding of her

daughter Rose. Rose is thought by her mother to attach great importance to selecting the necklace: *was what Rose liked best, she knew*. The choice potentially creates an extension into another aspect of experience, the transmission of mutual affection between mother and daughter, represented by Rose's clasping the necklace as her mother stands still. The choice of Rose's preference rather than Jasper's encapsulates the mother's greater intuitive understanding of her daughter rather than her son. It echoes a recurrent theme in the novel, that Mrs. Ramsay understands women better than men.

The episode of the necklace can be said to give rise to two figurative interpretations. As a metonymy, the necklace stands for the wearer's taste in jewels but, metaphorically, for her social rank. It is a link between the mother's social and family roles. The necklace, once chosen, stands for an emotional link between the child and her mother. From the physical domain of the mother's evening dress, it transfers into the psychological domain of dependence, both domains here framed by the overall domain of the person. The reader finds clues in the co-text where the problem of reference to the characters' inner thoughts is solved by explanatory authorial comment: *(Rose) had some hidden reason of her own for attaching great importance to this choosing what her mother was to wear*.

The necklace and the act of choosing it, by juxtaposing Mrs. Ramsay's overt wishes and hidden feelings, becomes the clue by which the reader is encouraged to extend his interpretation. More effort is required than if the text simply read *Mrs. Ramsay allowed her children to choose a necklace and fasten it round her neck before dinner*. But a wider range of implications is accessed. These include handling or wearing a beautiful object, the social importance of formal dress for dinner, and by extension, the mutual devotion of a girl and her mother, with the memory of past experience triggered by the metonymic chain of thought.

The next example demonstrates the effects of using recontextualised metonymic referentiality through several episodes of a narrative (Pankhurst 1996).

5.4.1.2 Changes in reference through a narrative. Toni Morrison: *Song of Solomon*.

In the narrative of *Song of Solomon*, Toni Morrison recounts the life of a poor black woman in a Northern city of the USA, in this century, with flashbacks to past events in the history of her immediate family which has a curious name - Dead. She highlights a special earring at several points with a view to enhancing the myth constructed around the central character, Pilate. In doing so, she enables the reader who does not share knowledge or experience of the narrative's social context to access a world of experience represented by the object and shared by many cultures. The metonymy develops in each recontextualisation, becoming metaphor as personal and racial identity lose their physical location, and finally reverting to being no more than an object as Pilate dies.

Thematic material includes the importance of names in consciousness of personal identity, the oppression of blacks by whites, and of women by men. The narrative centres on an old black woman living marginalised to society, and the personal development of her nephew Macon (Milkman), a young black who leaves his Northern city life to search for his origins in the South. The passionate nature of relationships such as love, friendship and hatred, and the search for ethnic origins, is conveyed by a number of stylistic devices such as analeptic narration of past events, verbatim authentic dialogue, and a series of dramatic climaxes in events. Morrison uses a number of rhetorical devices including figurative language in the creation of verisimilitude.

A special earring, made and worn by a woman called Pilate, stands explicitly for her personal identity, and origin. Linguistically, it is realised as a noun phrase, often accompanied by definite determiners (*the earring, her earring*). Attributes showing its overt functions (*wonderful, bright, sparkling*) indicate that it is decorative, ostentatious, has the power through its brightness and sparkle of drawing attention to Pilate. This earring, like a phylactery, contains a special sacred word, her name. The fact that Pilate wears it enhances her role and status, altering the meaning of her poverty and marginalisation from society. Thus, it illustrates the move from literal to figurative, and by moving from one domain to another, from metonymic to metaphoric. The referent, apparently the same earring, is subject to change in the course of the narrative.

The earring is an essential part of Pilate's self-image, but it is also a focalising point for other characters' views of her. Her marginalised social status is visually represented by her shabby black clothing, her physical awkwardness. Her house and her means of subsistence (illicit wine-making) represent a very simple, even illegal way of life. When the young Macon III, nicknamed Milkman, who is the son of her estranged brother, is brought to see her by his friend Guitar she has an overwhelming effect on the boy. The earring, once seen, is a salient feature of an extraordinary woman:

As they came closer and saw the brass box dangling from her ear, Milkman knew that what with the earring, the orange and the angled black cloth, nothing - not the wisdom of his father or the caution of the world - could keep him from her.

(Song of Solomon: 36-38)

At this point in the narrative, the earring is no more than an object by which Pilate can be identified. The relationship between the boy and his aunt grows, and as it does so, the reader acquires more of its special history and significance.

When the relations between the protagonists have been established and some of the complex relationships narrated, Pilate's brother (Macon II) gives an account of the creation of the earring to his son Macon III. The brother and sister had been forced to abandon their father's farm when it is forcibly acquired by whites who kill their father. Pilate created the earring herself during a period of isolation when she and Macon II have been hidden for their own safety by a woman called Circe. It consists of a brass snuffbox which had belonged to her dead mother, containing a piece of paper on which her illiterate father (Macon I) had copied from the Bible the randomly-chosen name 'Pilate', the evidence of her ancestry and ethnic identity.

Before they left the farm she'd taken the scrap of brown paper with her name on it from the Bible, and after a long time trying to make up her mind between a snuffbox and a sunbonnet with blue ribbons on it, she took the little brass box that had belonged to her mother. Her miserable days in the mansion were spent planning how to make an earring out of the box which would house her name. She found a piece of wire but couldn't get it through. Finally, after much begging and whining, Circe got a Negro blacksmith to solder a bit of gold wire to the box. Pilate rubbed her ear until it was numb, burned the end of the wire, and punched it through her earlobe.

(Song of Solomon: 167).

At this stage, she is a child, but the reader cannot assume that the making of the earring is to be taken literally as a mere ornament. Her choice of earring rather than necklace or ring ensures that her name will remain attached to her body for as long as she chooses. The stay in the house, with its intertextual allusion to the stay of Ulysses and his sailors with the enchantress Circe, represents the exile and imprisonment of the two children, deprived of the Edenic environment of their original home. Pilate's action of creating the earring affirms her identity and her rebellion against powerlessness. Definite determiners used in phrases - '*the scrap of brown paper*' and '*the little brass box*' - indicate that even before the flight, the paper and the box had great significance and were family treasures, whereas an initially indefinite object, '*an earring*' is created out of them. The lexical association of '*planning*', '*begging*', '*whining*', together with the '*gold wire*' suggest that the box-earring will become a precious container for a unique treasure.

Pilate is identifiably different to all other people by the fact that she wears this single earring. As metonymy, in the relationship of physical and mental contiguity, it stands for her sense of family and ancestry, her love for her dead parents, her strangeness and her personal identity as a vivid, flamboyant character with strong self-will. The container represents metonymically the name written on the scrap of paper contained in it, and the wearer. It has therefore a number of referents, and the reader must choose which one is salient in contexts of use. I shall review the important episodes when the earring's figurative value contributes to the reader's interpretation of the event and the characters.

The significance of the earring is increased at special moments of the narrative, notably at critical moments for Pilate's family history. One such moment is at the funeral of Pilate's granddaughter, Hagar. Pilate bursts into the service shouting 'Mercy!' and asserts her right to express her grief in a traditional song. The dramatic effect of her entrance is highlighted through the viewpoint of the mortician who is overwhelmed by the authority and power of the earring.

She tilted her head and looked down. Her earring grazed her shoulder. Out of the total blackness of her clothes it blazed like a star. The mortician tried to approach her again, and moved closer, but when he saw her inky, berry-black lips, her cloudy, rainy eyes, the wonderful brass box hanging from her ear, he stepped back and looked at the floor.

(*Song of Solomon: 317*)

At this point, the earring acquires a number of new attributes which enhance its special prominence. It '*blazed like a star*', it is '*the wonderful brass box*' against a background of '*total blackness of her clothes*' and '*her inky, berry-black lips, her cloudy, rainy eyes*'. The focalisation of the earring moves the reader's attention away from her dramatic physical appearance, as she remembers the figurative significance already created, and revises the referent which the word 'earring' describes. From the metonymic relation of power of an older woman over a boy, the earring now has wider power, asserting the power of the matriarch at the moment of burial. At this point the reader in search of classification might well point out that the earring has moved into another, separate domain from the domain of the person, and has therefore become metaphor. In terms of poetic effects, the stage of appreciation has been reached.

The final recontextualisation is at the moment of Pilate's death. After Milkman has successfully found the family's original roots in Virginia, and has solved the mystery of the identity of Sing, Pilate's mother, Pilate buries the earring with her father Jake's bones on a hill-top. She buries the earring with the only thing he ever wrote on the grave, but it is stolen by a bird. The earring's special identity disappears, at the moment when Pilate herself dies, thus destroying the figurative value of the object which becomes an indefinite, devalued *something shiny*, a mere object whose special value is destroyed not by men but by chance.

'Should we put a rock or a cross on it?' Milkman asked.

Pilate shook her head. She reached up and yanked her earring from her ear, splitting the lobe. Then she made a little hole with her fingers and placed in it Sing's snuffbox with the single word Jake ever wrote Two of the birds circled round them. One dived into the new grave and scooped something shiny in its beak before it flew away.

(Song of Solomon: 335)

Analysis of *earring* in this narrative shows that the apparently unique literal referent of the word is extended through metonymic and potentially metaphoric elaboration so that it acquires additional meaning. At various points in the story, the reader recognises the earring in a context which is formed by previous mentions of it. The object acquires new significance in the narrative and has different functions. While remaining a shining brass box with a piece of paper in it, conceptualisations concerned with power, leadership, charismatic personality, and position in the family are added to the original referent. The earring is an outstanding

object in its own right, both by its form and its visual power complements the almost magical powers of the woman to heal and reconcile.

By using the object first in its literal sense, then figuratively, Morrison adds to its value as a cohesive device, a point of reference both for the representation of Pilate and the point of view of other characters who observe her. She is eventually murdered by the psychopathic Guitar, who hates her for her subservience to the police at the time when he and Macon II have been arrested. Notably, during this 'Uncle Tom' episode, the earring is not mentioned, she loses her normal dominating physique, she literally 'creeps' in order to save her nephew from further trouble.

Metaphoric development by transfer into the domain of personal power expands the power of the character. From a woman with rather strange personal characteristics she turns into a model of the condition of her race. The earring, with its multiple referential properties, enables us to reach the intended significance of the character. It becomes an important cognitive means by which we understand the life and passions of a poor black woman in the United States, which is not necessarily knowledge shared by all readers even within the same political culture.

5.5 Summary.

Starting with a general overview of reference with respect to figurative language, this chapter has examined some aspects of the double or multiple reference created by using metonymy. Contextualisation through concepts, beliefs or schemas is the key to achieving recognition and understanding, followed by interpretation and appreciation. In both everyday discourse and in literature, reference can be deliberately developed to give special effects. This has been shown to be a normal procedure in cases of ambiguous or multiple reference, whether the reader is dealing with literal or figurative language, with fictional or non-fictional texts, with spoken or written language.

In the case of metonymy, interpretation of a referent needs to include more than the initial attribution of reference. When a metonymic expression referring to an object or a concept is

recontextualised in a long narrative, a wider dimension of interpretation is added as the reader's knowledge becomes more complex. Each reinterpretation starts from a different basis because the referent acquires new significance, which accumulates but can be self-contradictory. The use of multiple referentiality through metonymy in the context of longer narratives is a strong and effective means of structuring a narrative fiction.

The next chapter will discuss and develop contextualisation and theory of domain with reference to metonymy.

CHAPTER 6. METONYMY, CONTEXTUALISATION AND THEORY OF DOMAINS.

6.1 Introduction.

In this chapter 'context' is used as a wide-ranging concept, a superordinate term for a number of other terms - field, frame schema, scenario, script and domain - which give more precise indications about how to define extra-linguistic features, background knowledge and beliefs and are useful in describing and analysing metonymy. After initially defining terms which are synonymous or partially synonymous with domain, I discuss the concept of domain and its importance for metonymy.

6.1.1 Context.

As was shown in Chapter 5 above, context includes many non-linguistic and para-linguistic elements such as knowledge of role and status, spatial and temporal location, the subject matter of the discourse and participants' beliefs. It also includes a number of linguistic features such as the level of formality in speech, style and register, and syntactic and semantic elements (Lyons 1977: 570-635). An example of the need for context in understanding potentially polysemous terms is the word *cross*, which can be noun, verb or adjective and used with different denotations in different situations of use, although links exist within its general domain of meaning. The general domain includes the concept of physical and mental intersection of entities or concepts, so the word can have many literal and non-literal referents.

- a. *When you vote, put a cross against the name of your preferred candidate.*
(Make a mark in the form of X).
- b. *The cross-roads was called Whipps Cross on the map.*
(Point where roads intersect like lines).
- c. *Cross the road at the lights.*
(Go from one side to the other, a moving line intersects with a fixed line).
- d. *She can't bear anyone to cross her.*
(She can't bear to be contradicted).
- e. *The little boy was cross with his sister.*
(He was annoyed with his sister).
- f. *The Saltire, or St. Andrew's Cross, is the flag of Scotland.*
(A symbolic sign like an X, with reference to the crucifixion of St. Andrew).

g. The dog is a cross between an Alsatian and a Labrador.

(Two different species of dog have been mated, their different genetic lines intersect).

In this set of examples, *a*, *b* and *c* show literal use of the intersecting lines of a cross in different contexts. The next two, *d* and *e*, are non-literal extensions of the concept. Example *f* refers to an emblem grounded in metonymy because of the association between a historical cross and its use on a flag; *g* is a metaphoric extension of intersection in the domain of dog-breeding. The notion of integrating semantic and contextual properties (Sperber & Wilson 1995), mutual contextual beliefs (Bach & Harnish 1979), or common ground (Gibbs 1994) underpins recognition and understanding of the referents. In the case of figurative language in particular, awareness of linguistic and cultural context is a crucial factor enabling appropriate interpretation and appreciation of an expression. In this discussion the focus will not be on the process of disambiguating referents through context as in Chapter 5, but on the nature of context itself as means towards understanding metonymy.

6.1.2 Fields and Frames.

6.1.2.1 Semantic fields.

In a semantic approach to language, it is usual to speak of the context for word meanings as a semantic field. A semantic field 'consists of a lexical field - that is, a set of lexemes or labels - which is applied to some content domain (a conceptual space, an experiential domain, or a practice)' (Lehrer & Kittay 1992: 3). Within this definition of semantic field, the 'set of lexemes or labels' is linguistic, while 'domain' is a cognitive concept, and refers to a non-physical experience of some kind rather than a lexical expression. The content domain supplies the concepts that are labelled by the lexical items.

The disadvantage of field theory is that it is limited to semantic considerations, claiming that words must be understood partly in relation to other words within a given content domain and in relationships of affinity and contrast to them. Thus, within the domain of food preparation, 'to understand the meaning of the verb to sauté requires that we understand its contrastive relation to deep fry, broil and boil and also to affective terms like cook and the syntagmatic relations to pan, pot and the many food items one might sauté' (ibid.: 4). In the case of cross, these relationships of affinity and contrast could include an alternative mark such as + or *,

moving along rather than intersecting a line, co-operative relationships, the other styles of emblematic crosses used on flags, pure-bred dogs.

Field theory has been used to explain linear metonymy which depends on the substitution of one term for another by a renaming process (Henry 1971). Following the semic cell theory of Greimas (1966), focalisation on salient features leads either to inclusion or deletion of some members of the semantic set. Metonymy is seen as a mental operation, in which the author chooses one unit (seme) of a semic cell, matches it in a contextually meaningful way to another term and makes a substitution of the one for the other possible.

6.1.2.2 Conceptual frames.

A frame is a conceptually-based organisational unit, wider than a lexical field, originally used in computer models of human text-processing (Minsky 1975). Organised knowledge of the world, which includes linguistic knowledge, is stored in memory in the form of data-structures of stereotyped elements, and a word's meaning is understood with reference to a structured background of experience, beliefs or practices. This means that the term 'frame' has wider cognitive aspects than 'semantic field', which is restricted to linguistic realisations and relations with other words in the same lexical or semantic field. The term 'frame' can also be used in a way which partially solves the problem of how to define schemas, since a frame can be constructed to unify disparate small and large schemas.

Frames are interpretative devices, functioning as a kind of interface, and created by or reflected in language. They are knowledge structures which hold together disparate elements of a communication and make them meaningful:

[They are] needed in describing the semantic contribution of individual lexical items and grammatical constructions, and in explaining the process of constructing the interpretation of a text out of the interpretation of its pieces.

(Fillmore 1985: 232)

The notion of frame accounts for different grammatical forms and word categories used, without breaking up the unity of the concept. In the case of *risk*, Fillmore & Atkins (1992) show that the conceptual meaning of risk remains throughout many grammatically different

instantiations, such as *run a risk*, *to risk*, and *risky*, and conclude that there is a general cognitive frame within which the linguistic realisations occur.

Frame networks build a cognitive foundation on which linguistic links or lexical fields can be constructed. While this applies to all language and does not necessarily entail metonymy, they are important constraints on metonymic substitution. Blank (1996) develops frame theory to account for concrete metonymies. Where substitution by contiguity takes place and when both terms are spatio-temporally co-present e.g. *wheels* for *car*, the two elements, *wheels* and *car*, are co-present in the same frame. Frames, as a cognitive foundation, also explain diachronic semantic change by a process of succession over time. Where there are not two words to allow for substitution, but one word whose meaning has changed over time such as the move in meaning from Latin *pecuniae* (cattle as a kind of currency) to English *pecuniary* (money), the ideas are contiguous within the frame of payment.

Returning to the example of *cross*, the cognitive frame for some of the various possible interpretations of *cross* in its contexts of use is defined initially by the intersection of two lines, or two linear entities such as roads. The concept of intersection can be transferred from two objects to a person and an object (*cross the road*) and from physical to abstract aspects of the person (*to be cross with someone*, *be crossed by someone*). This frame allows literal use, metonymic transfers based on the general principles of association outlined in Chapter 2 above, and figurative extensions (*the Saltire cross*, *a cross-bred dog*).

6.1.3 Schemas, scenarios and scripts.

The way in which background knowledge is organised and used in understanding meaning is also the basis for schemas, scenarios and scripts, terms which are used variously by different authors to refer to closely related theories of how understanding is explained. These terms refer to events and processes which take place within a frame and which may be expressed through associated lexicalisations.

6.1.3.1 Schemas.

Schemas, also referred to as schemata, are higher-level complex knowledge structures (Brown and Yule 1983, Cook 1994, Schank & Abelson 1977, Semino 1995, Shen 1991), organised background knowledge which leads us to expect or predict aspects of our interpretation of discourse. Knowledge of how a schema functions provides background assumptions which enable us to make sense of underlexicalised concepts or omissions within the particular schema referred to. If we know a 'hotel schema', we assume that at the end of a stay in a hotel we are expected to pay our account, and unless we are dishonest we will do so even if the hotel has omitted to tell us where, when and how the payment can take place. This produces metonymic expressions of the type *Room 205 wants her account now*. The schematisation of experience is part of frame theory, because it provides a more detailed structure for meaning. Within a frame defined by a city's architectural features, hotel might mean no more than a building. For guests, however, hotel represents a richly-structured schema containing beliefs about accommodation, food, service, people, furniture, socio-cultural traditions and behaviour. Within a schema, metonymic transfers of meaning are common, for example the use of food to refer to the eater (see Chapter 2.2.2.1 above).

6.1.3.2 Scenarios and scripts.

Scenario denotes an extended domain of reference used in interpreting written texts (Sanford & Garrod 1981). Knowledge of a situation-specific scenario facilitates the processing of information. If an advertisement aims to sell a package holiday, for example, the virtues of the product may be promoted within a scenario of a stay in an attractive hotel.

A script is episodic sequential knowledge, of events with an ordered sequence and at least one probable outcome. It refers to conceptual dependency networks rather than discrete units of discourse (Schank & Abelson 1977). Scripts are used to predict interpretation on the basis of conceptual rather than lexical expectation.

To sum up, the script of a stay in a hotel accounts for events in chronological sequence, and is contained within a larger unit, or scenario, of living while away from home. Together they contribute to creating a schema for hotels, possibly adding affective to cognitive components

of experience. This will all occur within a frame of travel, a general cognitive concept which is associated with a domain of personal experience.

6.2 Domain theories.

So far I have sketched definitions of terms which are rooted primarily in the spatio-temporal. The next topic, domain, is a defined area of experience or knowledge which enables us to conceptualise entities, and is primarily cognitive. It is a mental representation of a general nature, although the domain referred to may also have a closely defined physical presence. The next section will consider some theories of domain (Langacker 1987, Lakoff & Turner 1989) which have a bearing on how general metonymic principles are related to their different linguistic realisations, and suggest possible explanations of how metonymy is created and understood.

6.2.1 The importance of domains in cognition: Langacker's theory.

Domain is seen by Langacker as a highly complex concept which can be structures by means of frames and schemas. It is important in providing the content of word meaning. In his theory of encyclopaedic semantics he proposes that meaning is not the property of the word or phrase alone, i.e. linguistic, but composed of all the linguistic and extra-linguistic associations known to the addressee and available in the particular context of the utterance. Domain therefore has special importance in that it refers to wide cognitive areas of experience and knowledge:

A context for the characterisation of a semantic unit is referred to as a domain. Domains are necessarily cognitive entities: mental experiences, representational spaces, concepts or conceptual complexes. (Langacker 1987: 147)

In illustration, the domain *colour* may be characterised as having brightness, hue and saturation, while the domain *taste* may include the concepts of sweet, sour, bitter and spicy. A domain may be constrained by boundaries just as the domain *alphabet* has defined points of starting (A) and ending (Z). It may be called set of schemas because different parts of the domain have their own internal structures, forming clusters of sub-domains. These merge into

domain matrices. The canonical example of a domain matrix is *person*, which has many physical and non-physical subdomains.

Domain is more than the content of a lexical field, an experiential frame or a spatio-temporal scenario, script or schema. It is a defining structure in which meaning is situated and within which a number of cognitive processes take place. In Langacker's theory, the analysis of domains supports his claim for the encyclopaedic nature of meaning, and thus the many possible interpretations for a linguistic expression in different contexts:

Language is learned and used in context ... a given expression permits indefinitely many specific interpretations depending on the conceived situation to which it is applied.
(Langacker 1987: 55-7)

Langacker's example *banana* has a domain of reference which includes the morpheme, but also knowledge of shape, colour, taste, smell, edibility, nutritional values. To that can be added abstract knowledge about the parts of the world where bananas are grown, where they are low-cost food, how they are eaten and so on depending on the cultural context or the predication in which the word I used. All interpretation therefore depends on cognitive activity of some kind and is more than a property of the word *banana*.

6.2.1.1 An example of a structured domain: collection.

There is much common ground between domains and the other ways of organising experience discussed above. The concept that content domain contributes to meaning in a semantic field is extended when domain is also seen as wider than frame, schema, script and scenario. The differences between domain, frame and the other ways of providing a unifying context can be exemplified by the domain of collection. Within this domain, a museum is a sub-domain which acts as a frame; our knowledge about how museums work is a schema, activities in a particular museum are scenarios and scripts.

The concept expressed by museum is a complex domain. It is a place where relics of the past are stored and displayed but the word contains many other elements which add to the meaning of the term museum. These might include the nature of what is stored (art, natural history, ethnographic materials, science, technology); the size of the museum (large, small, public,

private); the layout of the objects (interactive, static in showcases); the opening hours and potential value for education and tourism; behind-the-scenes research activity by Curators; value as a place of study and learning; tea-room, shop; and others shared with different but related frames such as Art Gallery, Palace and Department Store.

Each of these may occur within frames which have salience according to the context. If the museum is seen in an educational context, the frame will contain teaching, schoolchildren, hands-on experiences, structured tasks and other learning activities. If the context is research and conservation of artefacts, the frame contains study, techniques for working on the treasures, artistic policy, conferences, lectures, an educated audience. There is also a public image frame which encapsulates the importance and functions of the museum, both within and outside its location. This may overlap with the architectural frame - the museum as a landmark, a fine building worthy of conservation in its own right.

As for metonymy, which is said to remain within one domain, a large national Museum such as the Royal Scottish Museum is part of a domain-matrix *museum* which represents the concept of housing a nation's art treasures for the purposes of study, research and pleasure. Another concept, of a large building to which the public has open access, is related on the basis of contiguity (co-presence) within the single domain, therefore metonymically. That does not mean to say that every domain produces a large number of potential metonymies, but that the possibility of doing so exists. In the domain *museum*, metonymy can be seen in phrases such as *I'm going to the Dinosaur Place* (metonymy by substituting a salient feature for all exhibits) or *I'll see you at Chambers Street* (transfer of street name to the name of a large building in the street).

6.2.2 Mapping and highlighting: Croft's analysis of linguistic domain.

Croft (1993) extends Langacker's discussion of domains into semantic composition at sentential level and offers an analysis of metaphor and metonymy grounded in linguistic domain. Linguistic or grammatical domains are units of meaning, conceptualised through syntagmatic features or predication. Metaphor and metonymy do not occur in isolation but are triggered in utterances by particular linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts. The importance of predication is seen when differentiating between metonymic and metaphoric

extensions of meaning. In a metonymy of place name for power, *Denmark shot down the Maastricht Treaty*, the reader does not know that the sentence is about a European summit not a military act unless the whole predication is taken into account during the processing of meaning. The interpretation of the individual words as metaphorical or metonymical is determined by the interpretation of the whole construction. Conceptual unity of domain is maintained by the role of semantic composition in creating figurative interpretations. In the many metonymies where the name of a place or a person is substituted for government or power, such as *France will hold a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty*, 'metonymy occurs by virtue of the collocation of the predicate and the noun, that is, the semantic composition of the two' (ibid.: 354). Without the predicate *will hold a referendum*, *France* would be a literal reference to the geographical entity.

Croft also extends Lakoff & Turner's (1989) domain-based distinctions between metaphor and metonymy. He considers that metaphor is a matter of domain mapping, in which one base domain is transferred to another. This does not create problems and fits with traditional as well as contemporary theories of metaphor. But metonymy is better defined as domain highlighting. By this he means that certain domains which are secondary in the literal use of the term are primary in the metonymic use because they are selected for their salience in the intended meaning. For example, in metonymies of writers-for-works such as *Proust is tough to read* the primary domain of *Proust* is person, the secondary is author, but the dominant domain in the context of this reference is author.

While working along the same lines as Goossens (1990) and Dirven (1985, 1993), Croft provides a different theoretical grounding for the separation of metonymy (domain highlighting) from metaphor (domain mapping) at sentence level. The next stage of this discussion is to examine an example in a literary narrative context and consider whether the concepts of domain mapping and domain highlighting can explain the interactions of metonymy and metaphor realised over a longer text. In the next section I shall discuss the example of 'armour' in the context of Golding's *A Sea Trilogy*. Moving between metonymy and metaphor in the structure of the narrative, it is a focalising element for the themes of ambition, friendship and protection.

6.3 A literary example of domain highlighting. Golding: *A Sea Trilogy*.

William Golding's *To the ends of the Earth: A Sea Trilogy* (1991) consists of *Rites of Passage* (1980) with the subsequent volumes *Close Quarters* (1987) and *Fire Down Below* (1989). The narrative takes the form of a pseudo-journal, written by a young aristocrat Edmund Talbot. It is the account of a voyage in a barely seaworthy old ship, carrying cargo and passengers to Australia in the early nineteenth century. The narrative continues until Talbot, after many vicissitudes, reaches Australia. Within this framework Golding makes frequent use of metonymy, together with metaphor and other tropes. This discussion considers the functions of metonymy in the reader's approach to a narrative which represents an unknown world, remote in space and time from present everyday experience.

In the third volume, *Fire Down Below* (referred to as *FDB*), Golding develops the theme of friendship concurrently with the protection of the hero/narrator Edmund Talbot from danger. Apart from the dangers inherent in the voyage, the hero's initial goal - and ostensibly the reason for his voyage - is to pursue a career in the government service in Australia. The parallel career path for his friend Lieutenant Charles Summers is to achieve the rank of past captain in the Royal Navy. Underpinning the friendship between them is the concept of mutual service in situations where each can exercise influence or power. The vehicle for expressing these themes is an exchange of clothing, a metonymic device extended by comparing the action to an exchange of armour. I shall discuss Golding's motivations for choosing this device, and the shifts of emphasis within its complex meaning.

6.3.1 Signs of war and friendship.

Armour has acquired multiple referents associated with the universal human phenomena of aggression and therefore may be associated with a conceptual domain of self-protection in both literal and figurative frames. Expressions related to the functions of armour are used extensively in discourse, in metaphor, metonymy and idioms such as to arm oneself for a moral, professional or verbal battle, to find a chink in someone's armour, to shield oneself against an enemy, to spearhead an initiative, to hit hard, to go at it full tilt, to spike his guns, to fire questions (cf. Lakoff 1987, Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

6.3.1.1 Primary and secondary domains of 'armour': protection and friendship.

Apart from the specific use of 'armour' as a type of protective clothing, as much in modern as ancient warfare, the word carries a wide range of connotations available in extensive and richly structured encyclopaedic knowledge. Historically, metal armour marked social differences because it was a costly gift for the young knight and a sign of the page's transition to manhood. The warrior whom it protected offered it as a gift to the Gods, or as a significant legacy to his favoured heir. Armour is part of many domains which includes 'protection of the person from physical danger', but in a number of different scenarios. These include both serious warfare and ludic activity, for example in children's dressing up games or adversarial sports.

Within the domain 'protection' one or more secondary domains can be highlighted, and extensions made by either metaphoric or metonymic processes. Armour is part of the whole physical image of the warrior, and also stands for another conceptual element, protection from aggressive behaviour in a generalised way. *To throw down the gauntlet* has a metaphorical connotation of making someone a challenge to engage in dispute or argument, but the idiom is grounded in the metonymy of using part of the armour to challenge someone to single combat which requires the whole armour to be donned. Thus, the domain aggressive behaviour is selected from the domain person and becomes a domain in its own right.

Another conceptual domain, friendship, is conventionally marked by an exchange of gifts, and wearing similar clothes or an exchange of clothes (Hoebel 1972). From this emerges the particular significance of the act of exchanging protective clothing as a means of expressing mutual esteem. If a gift is acknowledged as coming from one of the parties involved, there is an onus on the other to return the gift in some way. If the friends are not equally wealthy, the actual material value of the gift is of no importance. These are conceptual links made in real-life experience and transferred into the narrative as a gift of gold or bronze (*FDB: 29 et passim*).

6.3.1.2 Armour, friendship and protection as meta-narrative structures.

Out of this relationship between armour, friendship and clothing Golding creates the account of Talbot's friendship with Lieutenant Summers during the last stages of the voyage by recurring references to an exchange of armour. Underpinning this is Golding's development of the principle that clothing stands for its wearer (Norrick 1981), seen in the first volume of the Trilogy, *Rites of Passage*. The author establishes early in the text the need for protection against the weather, as Talbot buys oilskins, and against ridicule in Colley's obsessive need to be correctly dressed (Pankhurst 1997). A symmetrical extension in the final volume, *Fire Down Below*, is realised in Talbot's acquisition of sailors' clothes, and his return of the gift by enabling Charles' appointment as post captain with the right to add a single epaulette to his uniform. The historical time-situation of Talbot's voyage is during the Napoleonic wars. The ship is an old warship, but still equipped with guns and the ability to defend herself against enemies, and in the second part, *Close Quarters*, all is ready for a fight with the supposed enemy. The concept of being armed is therefore motivated by the background.

6.3.2 Armour in *Fire Down Below*: metonymy or metaphor?

6.3.2.1 Source: *The Iliad*.

The use of 'armour' has a number of specific structuring functions in *Fire Down Below*. Characterisation of Talbot and Summers develops through giving and receiving 'armour', which is an allegory of the moral basis for their friendship. In the plot, focalisation both on Charles' ambition for promotion, and the development of Talbot's mature character, is achieved by extensive references to the exchange of armour between Glaucus and Diomedes.

Let us exchange our armour so that everyone may know that our grandfathers' friendship has made friends of us. But Zeus the son of Chronos must have robbed Glaucus of his wits, for he exchanged with Diomedes golden armour for bronze, a hundred oxen's worth for the value of nine (Homer, *The Iliad*: 120-3. Trans. Rieu 1949).

Talbot is well-educated and has read Homer. He is aware of the allegorical value of the story of Glaucus and Diomedes who exchanged bronze armour for gold as a symbolic sign of friendship. The gift of armour is metonymic if armour and friendship are part of the same

domain, the interpersonal relationships between Talbot and Summers. Transition between metonymy and metaphor is effected if these are seen as two separate domains. I shall trace the development and extension of the metonymy into metaphor, in episodes of *Fire Down Below*.

6.3.2.2 Talbot as recipient of a gift.

The first relevant episode is Talbot's rainwater bath and his subsequent change of clothing, at a stage in the lengthy voyage when Talbot is in need of physical and mental refreshment and a new development of the plot is required. In gratitude for the change of mental and physical condition signalled by wearing a seaman's outfit, Talbot thanks his friend for the gift of fresh dry clothing with deliberate reference to the episode in Homer's *Iliad*, which has acquired new meaning for him. He first envisages sailors' clothing metonymically as a sign of personal re-identification, enabling him to shed his haughty manner and change his image. Metaphor emerges when the change is focalised by transferring *armour* into a different domain, friendship:

[Talbot] I have not been so moved by a man's kindness - it is exactly like the story of Glaucus and Diomedes in Homer. You know they exchanged armour - gold armour on the one side for bronze armour on the other - my dear fellow - I have promised you the bronze armour of my godfather's patronage - and you have given me gold!

(FDB: 29)

Talbot calls his godfather's patronage *bronze armour* and Charles' gift *gold*, because on the ship the relative power of the two men is different from on land. The reader's intuition, within the established metonymic understanding of non-literal functions of clothing, is that armour is used to signify a precious gift by means of a metaphor which expresses patronage as well as friendship.

In his later recontextualisations of this event, Talbot envisages the gift of a high ranking post to Charles metaphorically as either bronze or gold. He is unable to make up his mind about which of the gifts is more valuable than the other, since his judgements depend on his mood, the changing context of events, and personal doubts about the relationship with his friend:

I remembered Charles and his gift of the slops that I was wearing. I took down the *Iliad*, therefore, and read in book zeta the story of Glaucus and Diomedes. They had exchanged armour recklessly, it seemed, trading bronze armour for gold. I could not

decide whether my determination to see Charles promoted was gold or bronze - certainly, his care of me, getting me bathed and changed as if he were my old nurse, was gold in the circumstances! (FDB: 64)

At this point, the concept of armour is explicitly transferred from the cultural domain to Talbot's current situation. The actual substances from which the armour is made, gold or bronze, are described from now on in terms of relative values: gold in the circumstances.

6.3.2.3 Friendship in adversity.

The Glaucus and Diomedes theme is again recontextualised at a moment of crisis for Charles, when he has been rebuked by the Captain for 'obstructive behaviour' towards Lieutenant Benét's risky scheme for repairing the shoe of the foremast. Talbot offers him consolation and friendship in terms of the legend:

When you saved my reason by providing me with dry clothes - did you know I itch no longer? - I spoke of Glaucus and Diomedes. I doubt the story will have come your way any more than the parts of a mast or the niceties of stellar navigation have come mine. Well. There was a battle and in it these two enemies found they were related They stopped fighting and exchanged armour for remembrance. The gods took away their wits so they never noticed that bronze armour was being swapped for gold! I used to take that as no more than story for the sake of story - but do you know, Charles, I now understand it as a profound allegory of friendship! Friends will hand over anything that is needed and think nothing of it I think your gift of seaman's slops was golden armour! Now here is my bronze! The first ship that returns from Sydney Cove shall carry not just my journal in which you are described with such admiration but a letter to my godfather giving reasons and declaring that you deserve to be made 'post' on the spot! (FDB: 119)

Talbot has concluded that the legend is a *profound allegory of friendship*. As narrator he explains the allegory to a double audience - at one level to Charles, whose education has not been classical, and at another to the implied readers. This also structures a complex interplay between different fields of reference: the legend, the ship's world, and their comprehension.

6.3.2.4 The gift requited.

On arrival in Australia (FDB: 267-73), Talbot successfully argues for Charles' promotion to captain, and it is he who takes the paper with the order to Charles, who is working on the ship. The potential climactic effects are subverted by ironic comments on the appearance of the coveted distinction. By this point Talbot has fully realised that if the exchange of gifts between friends is seen as an allegory, bronze is as valuable as gold, but without the conceptual domain of mutual protection in danger, the gift loses its value:

I went with winged feet towards the ship, a Glaucus with a gift of gold or bronze A junior captain's status is signified by one epaulette worn on the right shoulder I bullied him until he consented to put on his single epaulette for me. As far as I was concerned it was an anticlimax. The wretched ornament had been so long in store it was permanently crumpled and the gilding turned to something suspiciously like brass. It looked as if a large bird, an eagle or a vulture, had mated from a mast on his shoulder. (FDB: 270-272)

The outward appearance of the epaulette like brass has a number of metonymically generated extensions to the basic schema. It communicates that Charles is less valuable than a full Captain. Although of exemplary character and practically adept as a seaman, he lacks the brilliant qualities which mark his rival, Benét. This reduction of gold to brass is the final authorial comment on Charles' character.

6.3.2.5 The closure of the narrative.

The metonymy-metaphor of the exchange of armour structures the closure of the narrative. After the end of the voyage, and with one of his goals achieved, dark feelings are dominant in Talbot. He seems to have no hope of achieving success either in politics or love. He realises that while he has achieved his goal of returning a 'golden' gift to Charles in the form of promotion, the friendship has apparently declined. Once again this is structured in terms of armour, in a metaphoric clause *wore my golden armour*:

.... I grieved for Charles, who wore my golden armour and was so sure of my affection that he ignored me. (FDB: 276)

Finally, Talbot in an impetuous act of bravery rushes to save Charles from the burning ship. He acts irrationally, failing to equip himself with any kind of protective clothing. This is the real climactic moment, confirming that Talbot no longer needs a metonymic or metaphorical convention to express his moral convictions, his esteem for a friend, or his own power. The action recalls the author's earlier generalising interventions, as in Summers' observation: *The uniform does not make the man* (RP: 154), and Talbot's *Gentlemen do not need a uniform to be recognised as such* (FDB: 30), which are confirmed in the hero's actions.

To sum up, in its metonymic function armour stands for protection from the physical and the psychological dangers Talbot encounters, highlighting one subdomain in the range of subdomains contained by the domain-matrix 'voyage'. They include, in the background frame of war, gold and bronze as signs of relative wealth and status, the disappearance of status in face of danger, recognition of friendship, gratitude, personal power in ship and on land. The concept of armour is then generalised into a metaphor, by mapping the domain of armour on to the domain of friendship.

6.4 Summary.

This chapter discussed the terms frame, field, script, scenario, schema and domain, which can be used in explaining the creation and interpretation of metonymy. The most important of these is domain, understood primarily as a cognitive category. A domain may be limited to a relatively restricted area of experience, or may be formed from groups of subdomains as a large domain-matrix. Connections between the linguistic expression of a conceptual metonymy take place within a single conceptual domain. The view that metonymy is a purely semantic phenomenon, or a renaming procedure, is superseded by the concept of cognitive domains.

The development of theory of domain (Croft 1993) in terms of linguistic domains confirms a number of earlier proposals for the application of domain theory to metonymy (Lakoff & Turner 1989, Langacker 1987). The conclusion is that metonymy is conceptually based. It is understood because of its predication in a sentence, and highlights one of the meanings of an expression while metaphor maps one meaning on to another. Metonymy and metaphor are however sometimes closely linked because of the conceptual proximity between their domains

of reference. The expression may therefore move between metonymy and metaphor. Examples are discussed from text in which understanding of the narrative is facilitated by recognition and recontextualisation of metonymy and metaphor, in terms of domain-matrices and subdomains. This chapter has approached the question of whether metonymy can be clearly differentiated from metaphor; the next will discuss other attempts to resolve this issue.

CHAPTER 7. METONYMY AND METAPHOR.

7.1 Introduction.

This chapter will discuss whether categorial distinctions between metaphor and metonymy can be established and attempt to assess the validity of potential distinctions in examples from non-fictional discourse and fictional narrative. The first question is whether subdivision of figurative language into different classes of tropes is justifiable with respect to metaphor and metonymy, and the second whether it is necessary.

There are principled distinctions both in the linguistic realisations of the tropes, and in the ways of understanding the world which underpin their formation, despite the many similarities which have led some to regard the differences as trivial. An analogy from horticulture might be apposite. It is possible to graft, for example, a white-flowering hawthorn on to a pink-flowering hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), with a stock common to both. But above a certain point in the trunk of the tree, one side will consistently produce pink flowers, the other white. There is much in common but there are also very clear differences which are systematically maintained. The common stock may be seen as an analogy for figures of speech or thought, the twin branching above the graft to represent metaphor and metonymy respectively.

7.1.1 Metonymy and metaphor: tropes and figures of thought.

Differences between metaphor and metonymy have not always been perceived as valid or principled, as was shown in Chapter 2 which I summarise briefly here. Aristotle uses metaphor as an umbrella term for all figurative language, in both poetic and rhetorical uses. This was developed by scholars concerned more with the stylistic effects of figurative language than with the processes of understanding or forming it, and who therefore focused on the product in text rather than the act of communication. These rhetoricians (e.g., Dumarsais 1737, Fontanier 1827, Gibbons 1767, Nash 1989) realised that the differences between metaphor and metonymy are complex in some contexts, but limited their analysis to semantic features, often only at the word or phrase level. Nevertheless, they gave metonymy and the more complex metalepsis their due place beside metaphor. The difference is generally

agreed to be that relationship through a principle of similarity is valid for metaphor and through a contiguity principle for metonymy.

In the middle of this century, interest was aroused in metonymy by recognising it as a fundamental part of language (Jakobson 1956). Theorists working in the field of metonymy (Groupe de Liège 1970, Henry 1971, Le Guern 1973) were still unconvinced of its value or frequency in everyday discourse, seeing both metaphor and metonymy as figures of rhetorical or poetic text, but giving pre-eminence to metaphor. Metaphor and metonymy are considered by Norrick (1981) to be based on iconic and indexical principles respectively, and to be important motivators of lexical relations. New steps were taken by Bonhomme (1987), who not only acknowledged independently the importance of thought processes and a pragmatic approach to tropes, but also took data from genres other than literature to support his arguments. If differences exist, in fact, they might be treated as a matter for the limited fields of rhetoric and literary criticism, or the differences might represent fundamentally different ways of relating thought to language.

Cognitive linguists took a fresh view which has been very productive of new research programmes (Lakoff and co-workers, 1980 onwards) showing that metonymic processes are as fundamental to human thinking as metaphoric processes, and that metonymy is frequently found in everyday as well as poetic language. The changes are contained in Lakoff and Turner's controversial claim that they are able to justify the importance of metonymy because the word 'metaphor' itself is subject to the general metonymy 'words stand for the concepts they express' (1989: 108). This approach reverses earlier claims (Coleridge 1824, Ricoeur 1975) that all language is metaphoric. One of the most important aspects of cognitive research is that theories have been verified through empirical experimental work by psycholinguists working with the methods of cognitive psychology (Clark 1983, Gerrig 1993, Gibbs 1994, Steen 1994). Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1986, 1995) proposes that all figurative language is interpretive language use. It is understood by the same principles as literal or descriptive language, i.e. in processing by which the greatest contextual effects are achieved for the least expenditure of effort. Thus, the focus of study of tropes moved from linguistic realisations to the cognitive processes behind them.

7.1.2 Differentiations and combinations.

The question raised by both rhetorical and processing-based theories is whether it is necessary to separate closely-related figures of speech, creating a class of figurative language called metonymy alongside metaphor. Metaphor and metonymy can be regarded as extension of meaning and treated together as one linguistic category usually called metaphor or non-literal language (cf. Lakoff's discussion of literal language, 1986). The names may be held not to represent independent categories, but sub-types of figurative language which express semantic and pragmatic relationships. The strongly referential aspect of metonymy is emphasised by Nunberg (1978, 1979) who treats it as part of the wider linguistic feature polysemy. This is not, however, a synonymous term for figurativity since all language is susceptible to widespread polysemy. In the practice of discourse analysts such as Schiffrin (1994), metonymic and metaphoric uses of expressions can be analysed in terms of the relationships expressed and not labelled at all.

On the other hand, there is evidence available that these are indeed different categories of language as well as different mental strategies for extending and enhancing the lexicon (Taylor 1989). The concept of domain plays an important role in distinguishing between metaphor and metonymy, with applications to syntax, semantics and pragmatics (Croft 1993, Lakoff & Turner 1989, Langacker 1987). Another possible view, which emphasises interrelationship and a common stock of figurativity, is that metonymy and metaphor are clearly distinct at either end of a continuum of examples (Dirven 1993), but share some features in a confusing way which leads to classification problems. Examples with shared intermediate features may be more frequent and more problematic than the 'pure' specimens whose identification is not in doubt. Other interrelationships between metaphor and metonymy have been investigated by Goossens (1990) with data from expressions of linguistic action, Durham & Fernandez (1991) in oral narrative of myth, Penley (1975) with respect to film criticism, Cook (1992) in the linguistic and visual fields of advertising.

A complex set of factors influences decisions about category-assignation. It is necessary to consider the linguistic or grammatical/syntactic forms, the semantic values and implications of the lexis, and pragmatic factors such as context of use. Whatever the source of data or the explanatory power claimed for a theory, the researcher into metonymy is always confronted

by another term, metaphor. The next sections will give more detailed consideration to the differences and the similarities between them, assuming that there are indeed two distinct but related categories.

Since I have already discussed similarity and contiguity as general principles of relationship (see Chapter 1 above), I propose to consider distinctions between metaphor and metonymy on the basis of three sets of criteria. They are formal linguistic realisations of figurative language, the functions of metonymy and metaphor in discourse and the potential gradability of both on a scale of figurativity.

7.1.2.1 Linguistic realisations of figurative language.

Metonymy has a referring function and all the canonical examples of metonymy in dictionaries and rhetorical works are contained in noun phrases such as crown for king, bottle for its contents, violin for violinist. Metaphor, on the other hand, with its expressive and poetic functions, is exemplified in a wider range of sentence constituents and word classes. The presence of metaphor in different linguistic categories such as noun, verb, adjective and preposition was shown by Brooke-Rose (1958), but the hypothesis that metonymy might also have an important role to play in realisations other than the noun phrase developed more recently (Lakoff 1987 on metonymic models of cognition, Panther & Thornburg 1995 on modality, Taylor 1989 on prepositions). At a higher organisational level, the importance of sentential features such as the relationship between the noun phrase and the verb phrase, and the use of anaphoric pronouns in determining the presence of figurative rather than literal intention has been demonstrated (Croft 1993, Fauconnier 1985 and cf. Lyons 1977).

The terms metaphor and metonymy are used loosely to describe poetic devices, but with a preference for metaphor which reflects its long dominance as a master trope. In a frequently used statement of the form *X is a metaphor for Y*, the word metaphor may include metonymy.

The water surfaces are a metaphor for the artist's perception of the world.
The kiln is a metaphor for people's experience.

Classifying the figure of speech is sometimes thought to depend on the general interpretation of the referents as primarily abstract or primarily physical. Nevertheless, abstract nouns and

concepts can be highly referential. In this case, the first example has a more figurative, abstract sense with referents in the world of the imagination. The second refers primarily to the physical presence of a building and only secondarily to its potential non-physical meaning, so the question arises of whether it should be properly called a conceptual metonymy for experience rather than a metaphor.

When the expression under consideration is part of a literary text, as in *The Kiln* (McIlvanney 1997), the author plays on a double allusion. The first, to the kiln as a conceptual construct, is properly metaphor. It depends on the similarity or comparison between the kiln as a place where bricks are made, and the location of the hero's childhood home where his ideas were formed. The second potential interpretation is that *kiln* refers to the specific site within the eponymous novel, and is therefore a metonymy standing for that part of the narrator's experience relating only to his work at the kiln.

7.1.2.2 The functions of metaphor and metonymy in discourse.

Apart from formal definitions of metaphor and metonymy, distinctions between them can be made on the basis of their functions in text or discourse. The stylistic effects of preferring metaphor to metonymy or vice-versa have been studied (e.g. Genette 1972, Lodge 1977) but little is known about the creative process which would lead to a preference for the one over the other, in spite of its being generally accepted, on the basis of textual analysis, that some writers and speakers have idiosyncratic preferences.

According to Low (1988) metaphoric competence in the writer becomes a matter of intended style, with a number of goals constraining the selection of literal or figurative language. These functions of metaphor may be psycholinguistic and give poetic effects. Metaphor in use (i.e. as a form of rhetoric) allows dramatisation and imagination, and the disguised expression of strong affective implications. Communication also depends on shared ability to interpret and manipulate multiple layering of meaning, and an interactive awareness of context.

The question is whether these are functions common to all figurative language generally or whether a new set is needed as a criterial distinction for metonymy. Many of these claims are also true of metonymy, as I have shown, but metaphor and metonymy differ in that metaphor

links two concepts, known as topic and vehicle (Richards 1936), a two-domain theory which is not valid for metonymy. Apart from this, a functional approach does not distinguish between metonymy and metaphor. Low has not considered the wider field of figurative language, concentrating instead on the differences between metaphor (in the Aristotelian generalised sense) and literal language. This pragmatic approach provides a good rationale for a research programme about metaphor in use, but it excludes consideration of how metonymies and metaphors are processed. For Low, there would be no point in distinguishing *X is a metaphor for Y* from *X is a metonymy for Y*.

7.1.2.3 Gradability of metonymy and metaphor on a continuum of figurativity.

Metaphor is a scalar language feature, with some realisations more metaphorical than others (Goatly 1997, Kittay 1987). Examples can be represented on a continuous scale rather than as a single unique category, or as five separate clines (Goatly 1997). These analyses of metaphor do not attempt to take up the problem of distinguishing between metaphor and metonymy, but just as there is a graded scale between literal and metonymic, there are degrees of difference between metonymy and metaphor (characterised as *metaphonomy* by Goossens 1990).

The concept of a continuum has been used by Dirven (1993; see Chapter 3.2.2 above) to account for the apparent overlap between metaphor, metonymy and literal language in linguistic expressions, on a scale defined by degrees of figurativity. The scale covers a range extending between the literal at one end, and the highly figurative (i.e. unquestionably metaphorical) at the other. For the continuum to be a fully satisfactory account of figurative language, a third dimension needs to be provided. This function is normally assumed by context (allowing for other conceptualisations of context such as schema or domain).

Dirven analyses metonymy into three different types corresponding to degrees of figurativity. *Linear* metonymies have become so familiar through frequent use that they have the status of literal propositions and are sometimes called the metonymic equivalent of 'dead metaphors'. *Conjunctive* metonymy shows systematic changes in meaning, moving towards figurativity; understanding of the metonymy depends on knowledge of a schema. *Inclusive* metonymy is always figurative. Expressions containing this kind of metonymy show that the distinction

between conceptual closeness and conceptual distance is a powerful criterion in accounting for the different levels of figurativity within metonymy:

The distance between the sense (physical image) and the reference (mental reality) is so great that we can no longer speak of juxtaposition, but that there is a conceptual 'leap' from one world to another world. (Dirven 1993: 9)

As the distance increases, figurative metonymy merges into metaphor. Despite this, there are potentially different communicative effects for metonymy and metaphor. The referential power of metonymy is more important than its figurative effect, whereas the opposite is true of metaphor. There is a large class of nouns denoting parts of the person which give rise to many figurative expressions. The class contains important parts of the body and natural phenomena such as *heart, hand, head, tongue, voice, light, heat, fire, earth, wind, water, colour*. Many metonymies and metaphors are formed from these terms because they refer on the one hand to persons, things and objects and on the other to events or states (Kövecses & Szábo 1995, Lyons 1977). Dirven's proposals may be applied to analysing the literal and figurative use of polysemous words such as *voice*.

Voice denotes in its literal sense the sound produced by the vocal organs of human beings, and also to the product of the vocal action:

She read the text in a clear voice.
The voice simply disappeared.

Metonymically, by means of substituting the part for the whole, *voice* can refer to a whole person:

There are new voices advocating change in our Constitution.

In this instance, the voices represent the people who speak out. This meaning is close to the literal meaning and is an example of a conventional or 'dead' metonymy.

Metaphorically, *voice* takes on a more abstract meaning in collocations such as:

The voice of conscience.
An authorial voice intervenes.

The noun *voice* is sometimes verbalised. Possible metonymic or metaphoric meaning is indicated by the respective predications of these two sentences:

It takes two months to voice a large organ.

They voiced their dissent by means of pamphlets.

In these examples, *voice* sometimes has a tenuous connection with the physical act of speech, and the expression is nearer metaphor than metonymy because of the greater distance between the referents within physical and mental activity. In cases like these, where it is not clear whether the context is one large domain or two separate domains, the notion of relative distance on a scale adds an extra criterion to that of domain.

Using the criterion of distance between the referents, to voice an organ means to make the organ produce sound, so it is close to the literal end of the continuum. To voice dissent abstracts the meaning away from the physical into non-physical ideas and is therefore nearer the figurative or metaphorical end of the scale. The potential third dimension, the context of use, is the deciding factor which limits the expression to metonymy or allows it to cross a category boundary into metaphor.

The next stage of this research is to consider whether category theory offers a solution to the question of whether metaphor and metonymy are two distinct classes of thought and language.

7.2 Category theory, metonymy, and metaphor.

7.2.1 Introduction.

The traditional defining criteria for both metonymy and metaphor as linguistic phenomena are based on classical theories of categorisation. Metonymy was considered to be recognisable by contiguity relationships. Likewise, linguistic expressions categorised as metaphor, were defined as belonging together in a relationship of analogy or similarity (Bredin 1984, Fontanier 1827, Gibbons 1767, Schofer & Rice 1977, Ullmann 1962). The inadequacy of this type of classification has been established in current theory of metaphor, which is extensible to metonymy.

The dispute concerns how metaphors should be categorised - as a purely linguistic phenomenon, as a more general communication phenomenon, or even more radically, à la Lakoff and Gibbs, as a phenomenon of thought and mental representation.
(Ortony 1993: 11)

In the next section I shall review some theories of classification and categorisation with respect to whether they are useful in determining the differences between metaphor and metonymy as general categories of thought and language.

7.2.2 Some theories of classes and categories.

Classification in general is not an end in itself but is made for certain purposes, to serve some need for organisation of information, and different classifications are required for different purposes (Gilmour & Walters 1963). The Linnaean (1753) model classifies large quantities of biological data for the scientific purpose of grouping plants and animals by their 'natural' features, with a view to more organised knowledge of the world but not by man's need of food or fire. Categorisation for the purpose of distinguishing entities by their properties was questioned by Wittgenstein (1958) who proposed a categorisation of concepts by family resemblance in its place. Labov (1973) and Rosch (1975) using linguistic, anthropological and psychological observations proposed the prototype theory of categorisation for socio-cultural purposes. In the psychological investigation of category formation and category assignment Barsalou (1983) developed information processing models, goal-oriented *ad hoc* categories which have the virtue of flexibility and are necessary for communication. In a context theory of category learning (Medin and Ross 1992) entities are assigned to categories by a process of feature-matching, the known standing as a model for the unknown. Lakoff (1987) argues that categorisations are grounded in cognition, and can be described as metonymic models, radial categories or Idealised Cognitive Models. Taylor (1989) considers linguistic categorisations to be outside classical theories because they are not constrained by fixed boundaries. Membership is not an all-or-nothing affair as some categories may be extended by metonymy and metaphor. Other theories of metaphor and metonymy suggest that the question of category assignment is best seen in a scalar perspective (Dirven 1993, see above; Goatly 1997, Kittay 1987).

7.2.2.1 Biological analogies.

In classical categorisations such as the Linnaean system for plant classification, categories are defined in terms of a conjunction of necessary and sufficient features, a fixed set which are described and subsequently function as a criterion against which potential category membership may be evaluated. Since category-defining features were held to be primitive and universal, all members of a category have equal status and shared features, regardless of context of use. For example, the non-expert might identify a flower as an orchid because of a characteristic petal colour, say, deep pink. This model of classification in terms of features which subsequently become criterial presupposes at least relative constancy of these features. But for the expert, colour is by no means a constant or infallible criterion. Nor is any other morphological feature, since it is difficult to measure or describe a population accurately and features change in environments affected by weather, soil conditions, or density of population. Whilst biological theories do not always transfer to linguistics, the existence of polysemous words confirms that context of use is important in deciding semantic value, word category and figurative status (Taylor 1989). Biological analogies such as wild orchid populations also provide justification for the idea of a continuum of types, which pass through intermediate hybrid features between clearly identified examples at either end of the range of hybrids.

7.2.2.2 Family resemblance categories and prototype categories.

In his famous discussion of the category 'games', Wittgenstein pointed out that category membership is determined not by any single feature but by variable combinations of salient features. Chess for example is not a sport but it is competitive; ping-pong is a competitive sport which does not require a team of players while football does; solitaire is non-competitive but an amusing pastime. The notion of relative salience of features is important for both metaphor and metonymy. The interplay of complex properties highlights the importance of conceptual salience, or the selection of features according to perceived importance in a given context. Some are more essential than others, some are shared by different categories, some possess greater salience in given contexts than others. It has been argued that salience motivates the choice of a metaphoric or metonymic expression but in view of the other potential relationships involved it cannot be claimed to be the only determining factor (Ortony 1993).

Prototype theory as developed by Rosch and her co-workers accounts for the salience of some features rather than others in the process of categorisation. It is possible to choose features which resemble each other, or those which are contiguous to each other. Rosch showed that there are basic prototypical levels of categorisation, that status is assigned on the basis of the perceived importance of features within a given environment or context. For example, in a north American cultural context, robin and eagle are prototypical birds, while penguin and ostrich are less central because they do not fly. Certain salient features determine the assignation of category, as in the Linnaean system, but some overlap between categories is allowable. Labov's (1973) experiment with cup, bowl and vase shows that objects are named differently according to their context of use, which is affected by the contents more than by the shape of the container. The problem with categorisation theories based on the physical world is that they are only partly relevant to the differences between metonymy and metaphor.

7.2.2.3 Identification by exemplars and *ad hoc* categories.

The perception of features is only part of what determines whether a speaker is using a term in its literal, metonymic or metaphorical sense. All classifications depend to some extent on whether the context is envisaged as a vertical hierarchy or a horizontal schema, diachronically or synchronically. If categories may be seen as vertical classifications of entities, schemas are fields of experience against which we evaluate and through which we experience certain things (Cook 1994). For example, the category 'TV studio' in British English overlaps with a variety of installations such as theatres, film studios and rehearsal rooms. A TV studio is specifically a place in which programmes are recorded for transmission. Schematically, the general public knows that if the intention is to record an interview or a discussion with a few people, the furnishings will be simple and the programme unrehearsed. If the intention is to record a comedy show, there will be a very complex technical rig and detailed rehearsal. Common to both may be a live audience which will have been trained to respond with apparent spontaneity.

The question is, how do we know that the physical space is a TV studio and not a theatre? One way of solving the problem is to compare the place with another which is already a known example of the category. Many kinds of learning depend on this 'exemplar categorisation' (Medin & Ross 1992). Thus, in deciding whether an expression is a metaphor or a simile, it is common to use the criterion that a simile contains the word 'like' and a metaphor does not. If we apply formal criteria to the distinction between metaphor and metonymy, we can test whether the process of exemplar learning enables us to identify a metaphor as distinct from a metonymy.

The problem with this method is that it does not allow for any consideration other than surface features and does not explain how the concepts were constructed in the first place. It works for predictable linguistic forms, such as one using a known concept like *blood*, but if we consider two examples of *blood*, both used figuratively, lexical choice alone is not a reliable indication of category.

E-mail is the life-blood of this company.

This expression can be called metaphor because two entities, *e-mail* and *blood*, have similar functions in an organism although they are not necessarily in juxtaposition. This follows the canonical metaphoric form of X is Y where X and Y are perceived as similar. But *blood* can also represent a metonymic relation:

We need some fresh blood in the company.

This example is metonymic because *blood* stands for life and therefore for a person, in a metonymic chain. In this case, X stands for Y to which it refers, X and Y being in association although not similar. But if for *blood* we substitute *tigers*, the lexical choice leads to a novel metaphor:

We need some fresh tigers in the company.

Decisions as to whether metonymy or metaphor is under consideration are governed by the constraints of specific situations. In this view, *blood* is apparently linguistically fixed, but conceptually it is not fixed and can therefore be assigned to either metaphor or metonymy.

Barsalou (1982) proposed that the problem of novel realisations of this kind can be solved by a theory of *ad hoc* categories. In searching for identification of an entity, the mental process creates a sense as well as recognising a known sense. This means that categories are unstable temporary structures, cancelled and altered rapidly if an initial hypothesis does not fit. Accordingly, *ad hoc* concepts need only be constructed when absolutely necessary for interpretation. The theory accommodates the need for rapid economic interpretation in a communication (Carston 1996, Sperber and Wilson 1995). Whether the expression is metonymic or metaphoric is less important than the general cognitive mechanism of sense creation; this type of category cannot provide means of differentiation at a more specific level.

7.2.2.4 Metonymic models and radial categories.

Lakoff (1987) proposed a new role for metonymy, in the kind of category called a metonymic model. Metonymic models of understanding are based on a cognitive process by which the part of something can stand for the whole, or the whole for the part. These are different from the metaphoric mind-processes which enable us to understand one kind of thing or experience in terms of something else of a different kind. This does not mean that all part-for-whole relations are metonymic, simply that the possibility exists. Lakoff also proposes a variation of continuum theory which allows for blurred boundaries between all kinds of categories. The various meanings of a polysemous word can be related through chains of meanings and form 'radial categories'. In these chains of meaning, any two members may be related, whereas those not adjacent may well have very little in common. The connections are motivated by a number of semantic or grammatical connections, as in the example of the polysemous preposition *over* (see also Taylor 1989).

This proposal differs from Eco's (1979) theory of metonymic chains (see Chapter 3.2.3 above) in being based on common everyday expressions rather than literary works, thus avoiding the need for highly specialised cultural knowledge. It can be criticised on the grounds that complex lexical networks are merely a formal account of word association, and lack criteria for distinguishing between metaphor and metonymy. The concept of a continuum of figurativity between literal, metonymic and metaphoric expressions, like that of a chain of meaning motivated by contiguity, offers pragmatic and psychological plausibility. But, echoing the biological principle of hybridisation seen in populations of wild orchids, it does not allow infallible or predictable distinctions to be made between metonymic and metaphorical expressions.

7.2.2.5 The inadequacy of category theories.

To sum up this review of category theory, it is not generally agreed that metaphor and metonymy are separate categories. For some, metonymy is an important category of thought as well as of language and different from metaphor, but for others both metonymy and metaphor are means of extending word meaning and therefore not fully independent categories, despite their useful functions. If we believe that a continuum based on gradual

differentiation is the best answer to differentiation, we cannot accept a classical theory of categorisation. Exemplar theory of categorisation appears to work well if the metaphor or metonymy takes a predictable linguistic form, but may not be able to differentiate between them in novel realisations. Prototype theory answers another need, that of identifying a typical example and marginal examples, while *ad hoc* constructs allow for novel realisations in new contexts. Metonymic models of thought describe how metonymy is created but do not account for its difference from metaphor. In a pragmatic perspective, categorisations on the basis only of linguistic forms are insufficient and do not adequately explain the differences. Two other approaches, domain mapping and perception of conceptual distance, seem to be more fruitful ways of distinguishing between metaphor and metonymy.

The next part of this discussion assumes that it is possible and desirable to differentiate meaningfully between metonymy and metaphor, and that writers intentionally choose one linguistic expression rather than another, thereby marking their personal style.

7.3. Metaphor and metonymy in narrative fiction.

A number of principled differences between metaphor and metonymy in literature can be established by means of the concept of domain mapping, the structuring of conceptual domains, and the presence or absence of analogies between the logical structures of the domains (Langacker 1987, see Chapter 6.2 above).

7.3.1 Domain theory in literature.

The differences between metaphor and metonymy were described by Lakoff & Turner in terms of mapping between two domains (metaphor) or mapping within a single domain (metonymy). In discussions of figurative language and of cognition, 'domain' is an important and persuasive means of differentiating between metonymy and metaphor. Building on Black (1962, 1979), who suggested that 'metaphor is [...] an instrument for drawing implications grounded in perceived analogies of structure between two subjects belonging to different domains' (1979: 32), Lakoff & Turner (1989) proposed a domain-based theory for distinguishing metaphor from metonymy in literature, described as follows (authors' italics):

In *metaphor*, there are two conceptual domains, and one is understood in terms of the other.

In *metaphor*, a whole schematic structure (with two or more entities) is mapped onto another whole schematic structure.

In *metaphor*, the logic of the source-domain structure is mapped onto the logic of the target-domain structure.

None of this is true in metonymy.

Metonymy involves only one conceptual domain. A metonymic mapping occurs within a single domain, not across domains.

Metonymy is used primarily for reference: via metonymy, one can refer to one entity in a schema by referring to another entity in the same schema.

In *metonymy*, one entity in a schema is taken as standing for one other entity in the same schema, or for the schema as a whole.

(Lakoff & Turner 1989: 103-4)

Metaphor and metonymy do, however, have some features in common:

Both are conceptual in nature. Both are mappings. Both can be conventionalised, that is, made part of our everyday conceptual system and thus used automatically, effortlessly and without conscious awareness. In both, linguistic expressions that name source elements of the mapping typically also name target elements. That is, both are means of extending the linguistic resources of a language.

(Lakoff & Turner 1989: 104)

Thus, according to Lakoff & Turner, linguistic features are backed by cognitive mappings. This theory distinguishes between domains and schemas, which are means of constructing domains. The fundamental differences and similarities between metaphor and metonymy depend on cognitive structures which are part of real world experience and therefore occur in many genres outside the scope of the current research. I shall consider a short example at sentence level before going on to consider whether this approach can be used to differentiate between the effects of metonymy and metaphor in fictional narrative. In order to do so, the research considers examples of narrative which are underpinned by a structural metaphor or metonymy, and in addition use figurative language to highlight important concepts.

7.3.1.1 *Museum* as metaphor and as metonymy.

In richly structured domain-matrices like *museum*, there is scope for extension of literal referents by metaphor and metonymy (see Chapter 6.2.1.1 above) but a problem with whether to describe the extensions in terms of metaphor or metonymy (cf. Goossens 1990). A common

and loose use of the word *metaphor* in the form *X is a metaphor for Y* shows that the distinction between metaphor and metonymy may be blurred if the salient aspect of the referent is not the domain as a whole, but one or other of its various sub-domains.

The V & A is a metaphor for Great Britain - old, crumbling at the edges and full of treasures.
(The Guardian 5/11/96)

The context in which this remark was made is a review of a television programme about the Victoria and Albert Museum. The building itself is in need of repair, but the referent is overtly extended to include two disparate conceptual domains: decay and the conservation of history. An evaluation of one specific museum in London depends therefore on three domains: architecture, expressed by a general conceptual schema of architectural problems with old buildings; decay through age; and the storage of valuable treasures. The V & A can be called a metaphor because of the mapping of two different domains on to each other: a building and Great Britain. The grounds of the mapping are that they are both old, in a state of disrepair, both contain treasures and both are considered to be matters for public concern. If however the parts of the whole are seen within a single conceptual domain, the state, there is metonymy. Part of one domain is mapped on to another part of the same domain (and hence highlighted) because of both physical and conceptual contiguity of the museum, its contents and its location.

If metonymy and metaphor are described in terms of domain mapping or domain highlighting, the principled distinction between them is available for further stylistic use and for new interpretations. In the next section the use of a single term in its literal, metonymic and metaphoric senses is seen to be a feature of a writer's style.

7.3.2 The recontextualisation of *naked* in a narrative.

This section of the chapter considers how the metonymic or metaphoric status of *naked* is used as a cohesive poetic device in a long narrative. Implicit reference derives from our knowledge that literal, metonymic and metaphoric meanings can be attributed in different contexts. The domain, or domain-matrix, in which *naked* has its primary meaning is 'person'; within it, *naked* can have a literal meaning. A metonymic meaning is given by mapping from one part of the domain to another part; and a metaphoric meaning if the part-domains are

sufficiently salient to constitute plausible domains in their own right (for example, when abstract meanings of *naked* are extended beyond the person to objects or to mankind in general).

7.3.2.1 *Naked* as an attribute of physical and abstract entities.

The meaning of *naked* is to be undressed, unclothed, nude or denuded, bare, stripped (OED). Literally, it is found with reference to people who are not wearing clothes. By extension, to see with the naked eye refers literally to vision without optical aids:

Mont Blanc could be seen with the naked eye.

The phrase *naked eye* can be used figuratively in the sense of something being highly evident:

That seems pretty clear even to the naked eye.

Another use of *naked* is less obviously literal. *A naked flame* means literally that a candle is unprotected, but with the implication that in different contexts it could provide light and heat, or be the cause of a dangerous explosion. In metonymic use, the qualities of a greedy person are transferred first to the abstract noun *greed*, then by metonymy which transfers a property of the person to the person. The attributive *naked* acquires the sense of ‘unconcealed’:

Naked greed was displayed.

The synonymy of ‘unconcealed’ can be further extended into abstract concepts. Metaphorically the use of *naked* means without help or without protection. When *naked* is used with an abstract noun, the physical meaning of unconcealed is mapped on to the non-physical concept contained in the noun in a metaphorical extension of meaning, as in:

They had to face the naked truth.

The *naked truth* refers metaphorically to a mental rather than a physical state, and by its abstract connotations is a mapping from the original physical domain of the body to the

domain of thought, then to the general domain of knowledge. The differences between domains in these examples can be seen by considering potential synonyms, which are not interchangeable.

Naked eye - unaided vision.

Naked flame - unprotected source of heat and light.

Naked truth - undistorted account of obvious events or opinions.

The terms *unaided* and *unprotected* can be used as nearly synonymous for *naked* in the phrases *naked eye* or *naked flame* respectively, but not for *naked truth*. Nor can *undistorted* be used with *eye* and *flame* without a change of reference to the solely physical.

The metaphoric values of *naked* can be encapsulated in expressions like *to stand naked* (usually *before one's God* or *before one's Maker*) which are based on the physical state of nakedness and refer to lack of protection. By allusion to the belief that death leads to the loss of all worldly wealth and power, this means to be stripped of honours, or dignity, or by extension in a secular context, be in a state of critical self-examination. The metaphorical value of *stand* is crucial to the interpretation of *naked* - to sit, jump, or run *naked* are phrases which do not entail metaphorical meanings. The stylistic effects of these different connotations of *naked* are discussed below with respect to their occurrence in *Rites of Passage*.

7.3.2.2 Colley's nakedness in *Rites of Passage*.

In the narrative framework of *A Sea Trilogy* (Golding 1991), characterisation is extended by various means. Among them is the term *naked*, considered in conjunction with a number of conceptual patterns established by the consistent highlighting of clothing at important moments of the narrative (Pankhurst 1997). Thus, the term is associated with the humiliation and subsequent death of Colley (*Rites of Passage*), the consequences of Talbot's injuries (*Close Quarters*), changes in Talbot's attitudes to his social position and finally the outcomes of Talbot's formative voyage (*Fire Down Below*). The three volumes of the trilogy will be referred to respectively as *RP*, *CQ* and *FDB*.

The framework of the narrative is that the hero, Talbot, undertakes a voyage to Australia where he has been appointed to the Administration. As the voyage progresses through many dangers and personal encounters with both the other passengers and the seamen, Talbot changes from an arrogant young man to one who has learned some humility through his experiences. At crucial moments of the narrative, essentially those where a lesson of some kind is learned by Talbot, *naked* is used - literally, metonymically and metaphorically - to describe the person or his state of mind, and to generalise. I shall examine recurrences of *naked* in *The Sea Trilogy* in the light of the interaction of metaphor and metonymy, and its importance for the reader's understanding of the text. The recontextualisations of the term used initially in its literal sense form a network of internal reference within the structure of the narrative (Riffaterre 1990). Its persuasive force depends in this case on both metaphoric and metonymic extensions. The word *naked* and its synonyms *unclothed*, *undressed*, are used in certain significant episodes of the narrative. At first the term is used in a literal sense to describe a person without clothes, but moves towards the abstract sense. The extent of its figurativity depends whether clothing is used literally or metonymically as a means of focusing on the character. References to a state of dress or undress occur more frequently in this narrative than in other historical novels describing the Royal Navy in the period of the Napoleonic Wars, which do not use reference to dress with such frequency, nor make so many figurative allusions to nakedness (cf. O'Brian: *Master and Commander*).

The central episode of *Rites of Passage* focuses on the events which lead to the death of the Rev. James Colley, a clergyman who is disgraced by being made drunk and appearing publicly in a state of undress. Colley is described as naked, or nearly so, twice. The first occasion, using the synonym *unclothed*, is at the rites of crossing the line when he is humiliated by the crew. In his own narrative of events, Colley is undressed, i.e. in only his shirt, and at his prayers when he is seized by two sailors dressed as demons, in a parody of the Last Judgement:

I cried out in answer to the dreadful summons "No, no, I am not in any way ready, I mean I am unclothed -".
(RP: 236)

We recognise one of Golding's puns: does Colley say *unclothed*, meaning without the cloth or clergy dress, or *unclothed* i.e. naked by societal standards, wearing only his night-clothes? The paronomasia constitutes an enrichment of the reference by deliberate ambiguity. The link

with the implicit metaphoric significance of nakedness, which can refer to both body and spirit, strengthens the reader's impression that Colley's value system is based as much on correct dress as on spirituality.

The second occasion is after his visit to the fo'castle. Colley's clothing is removed and he appears in a canvas shift, drunk, careless, 'silly' according to Talbot. After being humiliated by the seamen he appears naked i.e. improperly dressed on deck in full view of all the passengers for his final disgrace. In this episode, he is stripped in front of the ship's people and passengers of all his clothes except *a canvas shirt such as the common people wear* (RP: 116-117, 236). His near-nakedness can be analysed in terms of the clothes-stand-for-person type of metonymy, by reversal of what is normal because absence of clothes stands for lack of personal identification and lack of protection. Other effects are made by implicit contrast between nakedness and clothes as in the case of Talbot.

7.3.2.3 Talbot's nakedness: *Close Quarters* and *Fire Down Below*.

The episode in *Close Quarters* when Talbot climbs into the rigging in a delirium limits naked to a literal use. Normally bound by conventions, he can only go out on deck naked when he is ill, suffering from the effects of his head injuries and therefore freed from the normal constraints of socially acceptable behaviour (CQ: 134-5). The episode is recalled by Talbot during a later introspection in *Fire Down Below*. The metonymic move between a physical state of nakedness and a corresponding mental state of being unprotected is made into a generalisation:

A naked man is defenceless. He cannot run out naked onto a moon-drenched deck.
Not unless he is delirious. (FDB: 61)

On the other hand, he rejoices in his nakedness when he sheds his dirty, sticky clothes at the moment of his rainwater bath. The physical change renews his self-image:

"Compliments of the first lieutenant, sir!" It was a huge towel, rough as a rug and dry as a bone. Naked, I wrapped myself in it as I stepped out of the squelching pile of my clothes. I began to laugh, then whistle, towelling myself round, under, up and down, from hair to feet. Suddenly I was overcome with a great good humour and excitement! It looked very much like good-bye to my itching. It was like all those

childish occasions of "dressing up", of wearing a paper cocked hat and carrying a wooden sword.
(FDB: 26-27)

A process of abstraction and reflection leads away from the physical to a metonymic reflection on the incident:

By the time I was clothed in a complete costume I was wholly reconciled to the change. Of course, no man could be elegant in deportment when clad so! Such clothing would force on the wearer a decided casualness of behaviour. Indeed, I date my own escape from a certain unnatural stiffness and even hauteur from that very day.
(FDB: 27)

The change of clothing signals change in Talbot's personality and self-awareness, which has been happening over the duration of the voyage, but it does not mark the completion of change. By the time this episode is reached, Talbot has rejected the apparatus of English society, and the social need to be always 'correctly' dressed, but has not yet reached a state of enlightenment.

After the storm and the danger of ice have passed, Talbot becomes friendly with other passengers, the Prettimans, and has many discussions with them about their concept of Utopia, an ideal society. His thoughts are expressed in terms of losing the constraints given by protection, in abandoning *armour*:

Indeed there were times when it seemed to me that I threw off my upbringing as a man might let armour drop around him and stand naked, defenceless, but free!
(FDB: 209)

Naked is used here meaning 'without personal or social constraints', a metonymic extension because both social position and self-protection can be properties of the mind as well as physical entities. In the generalising context of *upbringing* and *free* the figurative sense of naked is stronger. In Lakoff's terms, the meaning has now moved so far as to become a mapping on to a different domain.

On reaching the end of the voyage, Talbot is cautious about assuming that a new life can begin. Nevertheless, he is able to judge the extent to which he has changed during his

formative voyage. The need to start afresh in a new country is expressed through the metaphorical use of naked by analogy with the native people of Australia:

It was in the driest and emptiest of interior illuminations that I saw myself at last for what I was, and what were my scanty resources. I got up, as it were, and stood erect on naked feet. (FDB: 282)

In this instance, the first analogy is between the dry, empty Australian landscape and the *interior illuminations*. *Naked feet* is an analogy to the Aborigines who walked with bare feet, but strengthened by using naked rather than *bare* to have a figurative meaning. Metaphorical mapping between the person and his circumstances assumes that these are different domains but with analogous structures.

Talbot's comment confirms the inferences already drawn from the reiterated focalisation on clothing in the narrative, and marks the completion of the transition from metonymy to metaphor. It started with the importance given by Colley and others to being correctly and completely dressed. In the episodes of the voyage freedom, symbolised by absence of clothes, is gradually achieved. The moves may be summarised as moving from literal to metonymic to metaphoric:

Full dress--->semi-dress--->unclothed---> nakedness (unclothed)--->naked (free from constraints) ---->freedom of thought--->fresh start.

The first examples use the word in its literal sense. Then there is a metonymic move from *clothed* to *unclothed* by simple contiguity within the domain of the person. Substitution of the synonymous *naked* gives a wider range of mental connotations than the physical sense of *unclothed*. The domain of clothing as literal description is mapped on to the concept of clothing as a constraint on freedom (cf. Golding, 1954: *Lord of the Flies*. Freedom is experienced by the boys after they have abandoned or lost their clothes).

Then the sense moves between the material and abstract senses of naked when the concept of an unclothed body comes to signify a state of mind. This is a metonymic mapping if the domain of person is understood as a domain-matrix, in which body and mind are contiguous parts. Then *naked* can stand for either a physical or a mental state. But in many expressions

(e.g. *To stand naked before the truth of one's condition*) the shift in meaning takes the attribute entirely into the mental domain, in which case the distance between the original physical sense and the new sense is great enough to justify calling the process a metaphorical mapping between two different domains whose logical structures resemble each other.

The function of the recontextualisations within the context of the narrative is to structure Talbot's psychological progress from being the naive observer of Colley's nakedness and shame, through his experience of physical freedom in the replacement of old clothes by sailor's clothes, to his new condition of being without any ideological or social support. Once landed in Australia he creates a new life. The initially metonymic concept of clothing representing the person, extended to include lack of clothing, is made increasingly non-physical as it expresses the hero's development.

7.4 Differentiating: what do we need to know?

The last question to be considered in this chapter is whether it is of any importance that we know whether we are dealing with metaphor or metonymy while we are in the process of understanding and interpreting literature. I make a distinction between literary narrative, and spoken discourse on the grounds that spoken discourse does not require the hearer to conduct a conscious analysis in the process of comprehension, whereas some literary genres do, especially if the scene is an unknown world. Literary narrative lends itself to longer periods of reflection with time available for the appreciation of poetic and rhetorical devices and the means by which effects have been achieved (Gibbs 1989). I shall consider a short example from humorous writing, and then an example used to underpin the structure of an entire narrative.

7.4.1 Rhetorical labels. Wodehouse: *Summer Lightning*.

Figurative language of a kind that is sometimes hard to assign to a single category is used extensively in humorous writing, where its unexpected dissonances with both literal and conventionally figurative expressions draw attention. The following example demonstrates that excessive analysis of an expression with a view to categorising it as metaphoric or

metonymic is counter-productive, requiring more processing effort than is merited by its effect.

At this moment, the laurel bush, which had hitherto not yet spoken, said 'Psst!'
(P.G.Wodehouse: *Summer Lightning*. Ch.1,11)

At first sight and outside its context in the narrative this incident presents a number of problems of interpretation and appreciation. Violation of semantic restrictions (on the subject allowed by the verb *speak*) does not really place this novel expression in a specific category of figurative language. *Bush* might be called a metaphoric use, were it not for the fact that a bush does not resemble a speaker in shape or speech ability. It might be argued that, despite the anaphoric relative *which*, *laurel bush* is implicitly personified by comparison with a speaker, but the conceptual distance between the concept of bush and the concept of speech is too wide for us to accept this as a normal type of personification.

For a metonymic reading the argument is more convincing. Somewhere contiguous to the bush, possibly inside it, there is a speaker and *laurel bush* stands unconventionally for this person. This is supported by the implied intertextual reference to the bush which spoke with the voice of God to Moses in the desert, even though the co-text here lacks the importance of that occasion. The voice is directed to the butler, who is reading a newspaper.

In the narrative development of this text, the phrase can also be explained by the principle of change of focaliser. As the butler's point of view is foregrounded, it seems to him that the bush has spoken, a hypothesis refuted by the apparition a few seconds later of a young man from the middle of the bush where he had been hiding. From point of view of the butler, the bush was the speaker. From the point of view of literal truth, it could not be. From the point of view of the author, it is a humorous metonymic substitution intended to communicate that someone is hidden in the bush.

The difficulty of assigning a category label to this example illustrates the point that rhetorical labels are intellectual problems for experts. The intended reader of a light humorous novel is unlikely to want to stop and puzzle out the answer, preferring to move rapidly on to what was actually said. It could be argued that for comprehension there is no need to identify the figure of speech - we simply categorise the expression as non-literal and look in the co-text

for an explanation. In this type of example, the single criterion of relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1995) accounts for different levels of interpretation by emphasising the receptivity of the addressee (the butler) to the intention of the speaker (the young man).

This example, a one-off expression used with a view to immediate humorous effects, and presenting a character in a ridiculous situation, subverts the notion that a text ought to possess narrative reliability. The risk in a humorous text is that the comic lacks verisimilitude (Riffaterre 1982) and farcical situation comedy does not make the text credible. The next example shows how a linguistic expression can be used both literally and as both metaphor and metonymy in the course of a long narrative to provide a reliable means of presenting different points of view within an inherently unreliable first-person narrative.

7.4.2 Structural metaphor with metonymy: voyage.

In the case of *A Sea Trilogy* a major thematic metaphor - the voyage as a journey through life - may be considered recontextualised in a way which confirms the importance of metonymy and metaphor in the structuring of narrative (Lodge 1977). A voyage can be understood as a metaphor with reference to myth (e.g. the voyage of the Argonauts for the Golden Fleece). In terms of Lakoff's account of basic conceptual metaphors, the concept that 'life is a journey' underpins many linguistic forms. All voyages and journeys are grounded in physical experiential reality, and it is not absolutely necessary to interpret any unique example as figurative although lessons may be learned from it (cf. the many accounts of adventurous journeys in the genre of travel literature). Golding's personal attitude towards using the concept of a voyage as a rhetorical and literary device, admitted in interview, is not entirely without irony at the expense of critical interpretation:

The voyage is always a convenient metaphor for life, isn't it?
(Baker 1982: 37)

The problematic aspect of calling Talbot's voyage to Australia a metaphor for life is echoed by the narrator as he ponders its meaning. It is possible but not necessary to interpret the voyage as a metaphor. Further consideration of the narrative will show that the voyage is understood by means of its metonymic structure, created by the hero's experiences, the ship, the dangers of the sea, and the hazards inherent in travelling from England to Australia.

The voyage can be taken literally, as a narrative of an adventure, resembling real life and following the genre of sea adventure stories, such as Melville's *Moby Dick*. The first-person narrative adds to this analysis by a subjective comment:

Oh that voyage towards which I had looked as a simple adventure! What ramifications it had, what effects on the mind, the nature, what excitement, what sad learning, what casual tragedies and painful comedies in our rendering old hulk! What shaming self-knowledge!
(FDB: 212)

The problem of how to interpret the voyage is put in a different voice offering another interpretation of the hero's self-narration, which might be thought more reliable. This point of view is put by Mrs. Prettiman, always the anti-Romantic voice of common sense in the text, who refuses to attribute any metaphorical value to the voyage:

The voyage has been a considerable part of your whole life, sir. Do not refine upon its nature. As I told you, it was not an Odyssey. It is no type, emblem, metaphor of the human condition. It is, or rather it was, what it was. A series of events.
(FDB: 275)

Talbot appears to confirm this point of view as he reflects on the meaning of the voyage:

No, indeed. It was no Odyssey, no paradigm, metaphor, analogue - it was the ridiculous sorrows of Edmund Talbot, whom life no longer spoiled as if he were its favoured child.
(FDB: 277)

The text supports the interpretation that the voyage is a set of adventures, but in the genre of the *Bildungsroman*, or account of a person's formative period. We are invited to consider a figurative interpretation which arises out of the apparently realistic account. Although the notion that the voyage has a general metaphorical meaning is rejected by the narrator, some particular figurative meaning remains as he moves away from the physical experience towards a more generalising abstract view of it.

The interest for our problem of differentiating between metaphor and metonymy lies in the way the voyage, or *sorrows* of Edmund Talbot (cf. Goethe: *Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers*), is structured in the narrative. It is part of a general social framework within which metonymic relationships operate (the ship) and has another frame within it (Talbot's

experience) which can potentially but not necessarily be extended by mapping on to the general metaphor that the voyage represents life.

7.4.2.1 Metonymic structure of the theme of society.

The central frame of the novel is the ship, which is the vehicle for the voyage in both literal and figurative senses, and at the same time represents a microcosm of society. The thematic material presented by means of the ship includes a critique of a hierarchical society, at the moment when its existence and order are threatened. The ship is a microcosm of society, with its structure of social classes, tyrants and rebels, injustices and pleasures.

The personal development of Talbot through his experiences enables him to keep his place in that society, albeit with changed perceptions, whereas outsiders such as Colley cannot make the transition from their original class status to the new one demanded by their professions. At the same time, this model of a tyrannical society, the Royal Navy vessel ruled by the Captain, is the scene for a clash between personal freedom and autocracy. Society is seen to be threatened by destructive forces, when the bestiality of men is unleashed by drunkenness (the humiliation of Colley in *Rites of Passage*), or by nature (storms throughout, the risks of ice and fire in *Fire Down Below*).

Thus, basic metaphors of voyage are structured by metonymic details describing the life and adventures of the ship and those who are aboard. These metonymies depend on juxtaposition within the frame *ship*, and they do not transfer into other related domains of voyage. Therefore the structuring is not metaphoric although some features of the narrative invite a metaphoric reading. In the case of this narrative, it is important that metaphor in the general sense of figurative meaning is recognised. Talbot's inner struggle over the significance of the voyage is intended to draw our attention to this.

7.5 Summary.

The first question asked was whether it is possible to distinguish in a consistent, principled and useful way between metonymy and metaphor. There is as yet no single theory which accommodates all the features pertinent to a distinction. Some theories of metaphor discard

the separate labels and prefer to use 'metaphor' as a general default term to include metonymy. Theories which allow for the blurring of category boundaries, such as the proposals in favour of a continuum based on the degree of conceptual distance between the referents, account for linguistic and cognitive features. One of the most plausible distinctions is made on the basis of domain mapping, but does not address the question of the different stylistic effects in literature of metonymy and metaphor.

The question of the usefulness of the distinction is also controversial. In terms of the linguistic structuring of a literary text, it is normal for an expert critic to distinguish between metonymy and metaphor, although clear distinctions are complicated by the two figures being frequently co-present in linguistic expressions. With respect to literary analysis, and the role of linguistic criticism in understanding narrative, it is clear that evaluation of style requires awareness of poetic and rhetorical devices. So the presence of metaphor and metonymy has effects on the general organisation of a fictional narrative, and our reaction to it.

CHAPTER 8. METONYMY AND THE FORMATION OF SYMBOLS.

8.1 A general overview of symbols.

An important linguistic area in which metonymy and metaphor both have formative functions is the formation of symbols. I shall introduce this chapter with a brief overview of symbols and symbolisation. I shall then consider the role of metonymy in the formation and motivation of symbols, and apply these theoretical points to examples in narrative fiction. How metonymy is linked to symbolic language and the limitations of metonymy in symbol formation will be discussed.

8.1.1 Symbols and reality: thought and understanding.

The term symbol is widely used in a great many fields and cultures, and in particular by many theorists of the connections between thought and language (see e.g. Barthes 1967, Eco 1984, Jung 1934, Lacan 1957, Lakoff 1987, Levi-Strauss 1964, Sperber 1975). There is no doubt of the existence of symbolic conceptualisations of reality, but there are two broad trends of thought. Within objective rationalist theories, thought consists of the manipulation of abstract symbols, which depend on classical categorisations and conventional correspondences with things in the external world. This objectivism is opposed by an experiential constructivist view of reality. The importance of symbolic thinking for experientialists is acknowledged by taking into account the imagination and its products in mental imagery and figurative language, such as metaphor and metonymy. The second view is relevant to the present discussion, but further consideration of philosophical views of thought and language with respect to symbolic thinking are outside its scope.

General theories of symbolic thought and language propose that recognition and understanding of figurative expressions take place easily in shared contexts (Gibbs 1994, Sperber & Wilson 1995). But there are other variable factors in interpretation, such as the purpose of the reader and the genre in which the symbol is used. A symbol may be used to attract attention in headlines and advertising (Cook 1992), or for aesthetic effect in poetry (Cirlot 1990), or as a means of expressing a myth or legend (Durham & Fernandez 1991), or in literary or rhetorical prose. Before discussing the particular function of metonymy in

symbol formation, I shall clarify some terms, because the general use of the word 'symbol' is misleadingly wide.

8.1.2 Symbol, emblem, allegory.

A symbol is 'a sign, visual or verbal, which stands for something else', such as a cross for Christianity, or within some cultures black garments for mourning (Wales 1989: 445). This representational function may be motivated by an existing association or relationship, so the notion of symbolic representation is very close to being a metonymic relationship. That is, it depends on mutual connection or contiguity, rather than on resemblance as in a metaphoric relationship. The Tudor Rose is a symbol for England, but by virtue of its connection with the origins of the Tudor monarchy rather than its resemblance to any individual King or Queen. The perception of similarity comes into symbol-formation when the behaviour of natural phenomena such as the weather is said to be symbolic of human behaviour (cf. The Pathetic Fallacy, by which for example rain is said to match sadness of spirit).

Ethnographic dictionaries and dictionaries of symbols (Cirlot 1990, Cooper 1978) give 'symbol' the function of expressing some direct experience of life or truth, which leads beyond itself, and thus differs from 'emblem' and 'allegory' which remain rooted in the actual world, although possibly embodying some symbolic experience. A distinction may be made between symbol in its wide sense, which includes abstract symbolic thinking, and the narrower sense of emblem, a concrete or linguistic realisation of thought, called in narrative allegory. This distinction between terms is blurred by the pervasive use of *symbol*, the superordinate verbal form *to symbolise* and the adjective *symbolic* rather than *emblematic* or *allegoric*. The role of metaphor and metonymy in the formation of these sub-categories of symbolic language will be considered with a view to investigating whether metonymy gives rise to emblems, while metaphor creates true symbols.

The term *tree*, apart from its literal denotation, is used with figurative but highly conventional meanings. The polysemous nature of *tree* is shown in its different contexts of use. Starting with the non-figurative, the visual depiction of a tree on road signs indicates a forest. In linguistics an abstract tree-shaped diagram is used to describe relationships between the constituents of a sentence. As an image of chronology, a genealogical tree is a symbolic

account of a family's history, and the tree of life symbolises the descent of mankind from earliest times. In literature and myth, a tree may symbolise figuratively values like strength and beauty, to the exclusion of the physical aspects of roots and branches. This example shows a series of moves from the literal referent by metonymic transfer to a visual emblem, and then by metaphoric transfer to a series of abstract ideas representing a different experiential domain.

Emblematic and symbolic representations may be given a narrative context called allegory, if their referents are identifiable with respect to the real world and narrated as a series of events matching a spiritual or mental narrative (e.g. John Bunyan: *The Pilgrim's Progress*; Albert Camus: *La Peste*). The nature of the referent must be seen as the decisive factor here in deciding on terminology. If the referent is a material entity, emblem is the correct term; if unconstrained and open to imaginative development, symbol; if developed systematically in a particular narrative, allegory.

A symbol *sensu stricto* is different from emblems, icons or diagrams which represent only physical entities (Eco 1984). True symbols are open-ended and their meanings are universally interpretable. Therefore true symbols are found in the elements (fire, water, earth, air), colours, and other natural phenomena which are not limited by their culturally-constrained realisations. This implies also that symbol has a metaphorical value, allowing access to unconstrained imaginative development. Eco (1984:130-63) bases his discussion of symbol on the assumption that a symbolic order or mode of thinking exists alongside the imaginary and the real (cf. Barthes, 1967: symbolic code). Symbols therefore are conventional expressions carrying an indirect meaning. Evidence for symbolic thought processes is shown through the use of imaginative thought, metaphor, metonymy and mental imagery.

8.1.2.1 Motivation and arbitrariness in the creation of a symbol.

The question of whether symbols and emblems are chosen arbitrarily or whether they are systematically motivated is relevant to the consideration of how symbols are created. The attribution of emblematic value to the colour of clothes is an apparently arbitrary choice. The colour black is thought to represent grief in Western culture, but mourning is indicated in

some cultures by wearing white clothes. Black garments in other contexts can be emblems of professional activity, or elegance, or simply be the colour chosen for an everyday outfit.

Other emblems, such as a cross for Christianity, have non-arbitrary motivation. The cross is highly specific to a religion and context dependent, but so widely recognised that it is generally referred to as a symbol of Christianity (see also Chapter 6 above). Various styles of cross (Croix de Lorraine, Maltese, Egyptian, St. Andrew's, Papal Cross) developed in different cultures are emblems of different branches of the Christian church. Symbolic and emblematic values are closely linked to cultures, and even when apparently arbitrary are open to change through fresh motivations of use. This all happens within the domain of *cross*, a matrix which allows also the symbolic use of *x* as a mathematical symbol, a sign that a response is incorrect, and as a mark used to stand for a name when an illiterate voter makes an electoral choice. *X* is also a letter of the alphabet. Alphabets, fundamentally linguistic devices used to organise experience of the world, were established on the metonymic relationship that the sign and the sound are parts of the whole, represented by the letter which stands for them. Whilst being part of a larger domain, the alphabet, the letter itself may constitute a sign of a rich conceptual domain matrix with multiple subdomains, both linguistic and visual.

8.1.2.2 An alphabet in narrative. Faulks: *A Fool's Alphabet*.

As an ordering device, an alphabet structures Faulks: *A Fool's Alphabet* (1992). In this narrative, normal chronological organisation of events is replaced by arranging place names which locate certain episodes of the hero's life in alphabetical order, without there being a systematic allegorical structure. As a rhetorical device it is metonymic, since the place name stands for a geographical location and also for a number of experiences which occurred there. 'The alphabet was the means by which a place became articulate' (Faulks 1992: 242). The question is whether the use of an alphabet in this way to call up the imagination and the encyclopaedic knowledge of the individual reader is symbolic for everyone. The letter *X* does not represent some universal concept, but only the town of Xianyang, unreliably since it is a transliteration from the Chinese. The focaliser, reflecting on the generality of experience, concludes: 'In your alphabet was contained the limits of your perception' (*ibid.*: 242). The letters function only as an inventory although the events listed contain abstract as well as

material components. Limits to their development are decided by their context of use. The example of letters of the alphabet confirms that emblems are grounded in metonymic transfer processes between different elements of thought about the world. Some symbols are based in the first instance on metonymic relationships but metaphoric relationships intervene and permit wider development in new contexts.

8.1.2.3 Metonymy and symbolic colours.

While the alphabet is used emblematically to stand for a limited number of contextually-bound concepts within a narrative, colours extend over more domains and are the subject of research, in the scientific field of optics, in Jungian psychology, in anthropology and in many artistic and literary fields. Colour symbolism is said to be universally used in art, liturgy, heraldry, alchemy and literature (Cirlot 1990, Pastoureau 1986), but the impact of anthropological research on colour names (Berlin and Kay 1969) means that 'universal' must be modified to mean 'within Western culture' which has a named, multi-hued colour system permitting rich symbolic development through colour reference. Colour becomes symbolic when the entity described changes to refer to wider concepts, e.g. the use of *red* to describe mental states such as anger, by analogy between the heat of anger and the colour of a fire. Colour is frequently the salient feature of an entity and used in naming, therefore metonymic (Geeraerts 1988). Although exact hue is not always a reliable criterion of identification, since it is affected by external factors such as light or heat, generic or focal colour terms are in wide use especially in the natural world e.g. two birds are differentiated by being Redshank or Greenshank, flowers by being Red Dead-nettle or White Dead-nettle (Verspoor 1996). This satisfies the criteria for metonymy, contiguity motivating an association between the salient part and the whole.

With respect to this discussion of metonymy and symbols, a number of questions arise as to the boundaries of literal colour description. Colours are descriptors, means of placing things in categories, but meaningless without their referent. The object with which a colour is associated provides the context of use and potential symbolism. In the case of *blue books* or *white papers*, phrases using the colours literally as descriptors co-exist with further holistic meanings, as special parliamentary documents in Britain. Where the figurative meaning starts depends on knowledge of context. The interpretation of colours is bound to specific contexts,

which can be defined as lexical or syntactic fields, as domains of knowledge, or as action-framing schemas. For example, if a prominent churchman expresses a political affiliation other than with the Conservative Party, he is likely to be dubbed *The Red Bishop* by association with the emblematic colour of International Socialism. If a colour is used predicatively, it normally only indicates the hue of an object or person, and the symbolic sense disappears as in *The Bishop is red*.

8.1.2.4 Metonymy and colour in a nineteenth century novel: *Le Rouge et Le Noir*.

The problematic area is illustrated by the title of Stendhal's novel *Le Rouge et le Noir*, which expresses initially the metonymic relationship between clothes and their wearer in the red uniform of the Army, and the black garb of clerics. Then the process of referral is complicated by adding to the schema associations between the colours, the clothing, the behaviour generally expected of soldiers and clerics, and the idiosyncratic behaviour of the hero, Julien, who is alternately priest and soldier. The boundaries of the clothing schema merge into other schemas, some of which are metaphoric. We are led from the emblematic point of departure, the colour of Julien's Army uniform, to the concept that the colour of the uniform is now a symbol of patriotism, and to a more complex representation of a young man's attitudes. The use of colours to symbolise thoughts and experiences opens up the initial emblem *red* to imaginative symbolic extensions including the contrasting *black* of the title. In the discussion of how the object came to be identified by a colour feature, metonymy is an acceptable account of the transfer from general perception to specific use, while metaphor accounts for the second series of transfers from specific to symbolic domains. Movement of the referent from one domain to another explains the expansion. These further examples show that a metonymic reference can have symbolic meaning within a defined schema, but not all identifiable examples of metonymy are symbolic.

The blurring of literal and figurative meanings seen in this example has raised a series of questions about metonymic symbolisation in narrative and the use of symbol in literature.

8.1.2.5 Colour symbolism as a poetic device in modern fiction: *Possession*.

The recurrent use of a poetic device in a narrative has a number of consequences for the understanding and interpretation of the narrative, which are associated with the nature of the device. Since colour is often understood as having strong symbolic implications, it can be concluded that the extensive use of colour in a fictional narrative will produce stylistic effects. When a network of colours is used to structure an entire narrative, the question of whether it is to be read as metonymic (emblematic) or metaphoric (symbolic) is particularly interesting.

The fictional narrative of *Possession* (1990) refers to three periods of time, all fictionalised but with some referents in the real world and real history. The twentieth century contains the story of Maud, Roland and their search for information relating to the (fictional) poets, Randolph Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte. The nineteenth-century lives of Ash and LaMotte contain references to Mediaeval Romances. Colours are important lexical features of the text, functioning in various ways of which one is to link the three periods of time. Byatt uses colour identification to present new characters and themes, and to unify the central characters, Maud and Christabel, across the time-gap of about a century. Colour symbolism can be seen in the presentation of all the principal characters.

The most salient colour in this narrative is green, both alone and in combination with other colours. The frequency of use is such that it cannot be ignored. Green is used in association with white and gold for Maud and Christabel, thus linking through colours symbolically associated with fertility two women who both wear green leather boots and green dresses, and have white-gold hair. The presentation of Maud is almost caricatural in selecting green as evidence of her natural power. She is described as *a green and white length*, has a green car, decorates her rooms in green and white, covers her yellow hair with a green-blue scarf. Christabel's grave and epitaph are presented as black, green and white, her memory is metaphorically described as green, flowers left on her grave are tied with a green ribbon. Going back to the nineteenth century experiences of Ash, important places such as Fontaine de Vaucluse and the countryside near Whitby are described in terms of nature imagery, green with flower colours. The symbolism is carried through to the closure which takes place in a green and white setting, as a new outcome is proposed.

Each character in the narrative is identified by emblematic colours. Mortimer Cropper drives a sinister black car and dresses in a crimson and black dressing gown, symbolic of the Victorian villain; the amorous Euan is a picture in scarlet and black; Roland, the academic, is neutral, grey and black as is Blackadder, the professor whose great virtue is his meticulous but unimaginative research methodology; Beatrice Nest, whose life has been largely an exercise in self-effacement and futility, is clad in pale blue, contrasting with Maud's assertive peacock-blue and green; Leonora, the aggressive American academic, is presented as *all yellow and orange*, then as *red in tooth and claw* i.e. in colours which symbolically convey her fierceness.

As Riffaterre (1990) pointed out, if we perceive the presence of a symbol in a narrative, we are making important links between fiction and the real world. This is relevant to this narrative. The novel can be read as a twentieth century tale, as a Victorian love story, or as a Mediaeval Romance. Metonymy is the referential basis of recognising the unity of the whole, through reiteration of colour salience. Colour constitutes links which 'attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us' (Byatt).

8.2 Metonymy and symbolic meaning.

I shall now turn to the specifically metonymic grounding of symbols proposed by Bonhomme (1987) in his discussion of symbols as examples of the pragmatic effects of metonymy.

8.2.1 The limitations of metonymy in the formation of linguistic symbols.

Bonhomme agrees that symbols (including emblems) only make sense if they are supported by a well-known context, in his terms a schema or *cotopie*. A symbol derived from metonymy represents complex physical and mental events by easily accessible points of reference. If the domain of symbol is factual, the boundary is defined with reference to a schema which lessens the importance of imaginative interpretations. Bonhomme concludes that the ability to suggest emblematic readings is a productive feature of metonymy, but metonymy itself has limitations caused by its strongly referential nature. He argues that any proposal of universal

value for symbols is based on metaphor, not metonymy, thus distinguishing between reference to the immediate and poetic development through the imagination.

Some symbols which are extensible within cultures through instrument for agent metonymy, like sword, scalpel, or pen, standing for their users or the users' profession. Schemas in the domain of human action permit the extension of an instrument into its functions, following a general pattern of metonymic substitution. *Pen* is used as a metonymic emblem of the profession of writer, and as a symbol for an author's power of description and composition as in:

Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery (Austen, *Mansfield Park*: 420).

Understanding the full referential meaning of *pens* depends on knowing that the pen, the instrument for writing, stands conventionally for the writer's professional activity. Although the term can be generalised from this author, the particular novel, or the socio-historical context to a certain extent, it depends on assumptions common in a literate culture. *Pen* then becomes a symbol of authorial activity in a wider sense when the contextual reference is extended by associations already present in our encyclopaedia.

Many emblematic expressions are localised, however, and do not easily extend out of their social or cultural context. Two examples show the difficulty of making generalisations or predictions from well-known types of metonymy. The phrase *white collar workers* is metonymic reference to a social class because a group of employees is identified by their style of clothing. The phrase has no emblematic value in cultures where this type of employee is unknown. In a schema bounded by leisure activities, a guide book mentions *estates given over to rod and gun* (Tomes 1992) where the phrase *rod and gun* refers to instruments for the sporting activities of estate owners. A more general symbolic use of *rod and gun*, extending beyond the instrument for agent substitution, requires a more general context such as survival (by hunting for food with rods and guns). Expressions derived from metonymy are essentially referring mechanisms, but it must be added that the process of referral is complex and can allow for further figurative development when contexts permit.

8.3 Symbol in legend and literature.

The aim of this section is to provide a theoretical justification for symbolic readings of text by a literary reader of prose fiction, the genre which is of interest to this thesis. I shall first, however, consider a field of research which does not specifically arise from criticism of narrative fiction but from anthropologists studying oral narration of legend. They provide evidence that metonymy is closely linked to metaphor in the verbalisation of narrative.

8.3.1 Symbols, domains and narration of legend.

The copresence of metonymy and metaphor in symbols, as in other kinds of language, can be explained through domain theory (Langacker 1987, Lakoff 1987, Gibbs 1994). The link between non-linguistic visual symbols, and the use of symbol in narrative, can also be explained in terms of domain theory. Understanding symbols may imply, like understanding metaphor or metonymy, understanding domains. If figurative language is a cognitive phenomenon, the requirements of contiguity for metonymy and resemblance for metaphor are found in the reader's perception of the context, and in the concepts rather than the linguistic forms.

8.3.1.1 Symbolic associations structured by metaphor and metonymy.

In this respect, anthropologists provide evidence of the need for a culture-based theory of cognition. Symbols do not make sense 'unless one recognises and accepts the structure of the source domain and is also willing to accept an understanding of the target in terms of that structure.' (Durham & Fernandez, 1991:197). Anthropological theory of symbols proposes that they work within a culture where the links between nature and mankind are part of shared beliefs. This means that the symbolic association between a large tree and a prominent or powerful person is understood without explanation. In the legend accounting for the birth of the Mali nation, natural elements such as tree, creeper, rock and rain are used symbolically to represent the establishment of power and the challenge to it:

“I am the mighty silk-cotton tree that looks from on high on the tops of other trees.”“And I, I am the strangling creeper that climbs to the top of the forest giant.”
(Niane 1965: 60 cited Durham & Fernandez, *op.cit.*:190)

The dominant metaphor which identifies the two rival warriors as a tree and a creeper respectively is structured by means of metonymy. Just as in reality a silk-cotton tree is taller than the others, and can be dominated by a creeper, the structure of the metaphor originates in the perception of contiguity between nature and man. The symbols are not arbitrary, but motivated by cultural models of perception. When symbol is extensively used in a myth or legend, it can be assumed that the reason for attribution of symbolic value is known to the listener or reader and explicit causal connections are not needed. For Culler (1975) this is also true of literary narrative.

8.3.2 Symbolic operations in text: Culler.

Culler's theory of symbol, in the frame of his general theory of poetics, is based on the assumption that 'in novels, most symbolic operations follow the models of metonymy or synecdoche, i.e. via contiguity or association' (1975: 225). This operation takes place within a known context, the literary text. The decision to make a symbolic reading of a poem or fiction is only possible if the reader is experienced and already has symbolic models, e.g. a banquet is a celebration, or a voyage stands for another kind of quest (*op.cit.*: 92-4). A reader, moreover, expects to recognise and share with the narrator a world which the symbol produces or to which it refers, thus justifying links with the mimetic or representational aspects of fiction. In symbolic representation, causal connections which are clearly present in the real world are absent, or insufficient to explain the importance of a detail in a text unless the symbolic use is supported by other elements. Culler observes that symbolic reading is possible only if the reader comes equipped with some knowledge.

8.3.3 The conjunction of metaphor and metonymy in symbol: Lodge.

Lodge (1977) suggests that symbols in literary text can be seen as linguistic realisations of the links between metonymy and metaphor. This supports his view that metonymy and metaphor coexist and are not, as Jakobson claimed, separate typological markers of prose and poetry. Metaphor and metonymy both work to convey symbolic meaning when contiguity

exists indirectly through different interpretations of the context. Discussing the opening imagery of *Bleak House* Lodge notes that there is no physical contiguity between the mud in the streets, the obfuscation caused by the courts with respect to money, and greed. The link between these components of a symbolic reading of *mud* is in the context, the City of London, devoted to making money, and the site of the mud. The mud comes therefore to symbolise the misery caused by greed.

Thus through the conceit 'accumulating at compound interest' the mud appears to be not merely an attribute of London in November but an attribute of its institutions; it becomes a kind of metaphorical metonymy or as we more commonly say, a symbol.

(Lodge 1977: 100)

If a symbol is called metonymic metaphor, the link between the real and the imaginary is highlighted. In Lodge's proposals symbols are a function of the linguistic expressions used and their semantic fields, acting together within a known context. Independently of anthropological research, Lodge has reached a similar conclusion that on analysis, symbol is structured by metonymy working within metaphor. Thus, emblem and symbol are closely linked to each other and sometimes overlap.

8.4 Symbolic language in literature.

In this section I shall discuss contrasting examples of symbols and emblems used in literary genres with the intention of demonstrating the interdependence of metaphor and metonymy. The first exemplifies the selection of potentially symbolic properties of the natural world in order to highlight a theme by a poet of the Symbolist Movement. The second explicitly rejects the concept of symbol in favour of emblem. In the third, symbols and emblems are used as complementary metanarrative devices. Interpretation is not, however, a feature solely of text but depends on the interaction between the text and the reader's cognitive environment.

8.4.1 Symbolism as a literary movement.

Metaphor rather than metonymy is closely linked with the Symbolist Movement in literature and art. This has led to confusion between symbol and metaphor and an assumption that all symbols are metaphoric on the mistaken grounds that metaphor is in the domain of the

imagination and metonymy in the domain of things. The identification of symbol with important metaphors is a mark of Romanticism, but is also an idiosyncratic stylistic feature. Symbolism as a predominantly nineteenth-century school of French poetical writing is characterised by symbolic conventions, the development of abstract thought and the metaphorical extension of reality through imagery. Baudelaire's sonnet, *Correspondances*, illustrates the universality of symbolic readings of the natural world by combining an image, in this case a forest, with a concept, that nature can be understood symbolically.

La nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laissent échapper parfois de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

(Baudelaire 1857: *Les Fleurs du Mal*)

Despite the temptation to read *forêts* as no more than an apt quantifying expression which indicated the poet's belief in the ubiquity of symbols, the 'forests' are initially a conceptualisation which moves metonymically from concrete to abstract, in a relationship between experience of the world and imaginative interpretation of it. The belief that nature can be symbolic is given a structured image in the phrase *forêts de symboles*. The 'forests' are not constrained by purely physical properties and expand metaphorically as the individual imagination wishes. In Symbolism, all objects in the real world can be symbols of other, non-physical concepts, so the structure and motivation of each individual symbol is different. Thus, metonymic structuring of metaphors is accommodated through cognition.

Further evidence of the reliance of metaphor on metonymy in examples from Proust's poetic novel *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (1913-1922) is shown by Genette (1972) and White (1988). Bearing in mind Culler's (1975) assertion that the novel is essentially referential, therefore metonymic, in nature, the next section will consider a novel in which the concept of symbolic representation is restricted to emblem.

8.4.2 Sontag: *The Volcano Lover*.

Some genres (e.g. lyric poetry as above) are more appropriate for highly symbolic readings than others, because of their poetic intention but symbols and emblems can be found in essentially referential narrative fiction. In *The Volcano Lover* (Sontag 1992) the volcano

Vesuvius is explicitly identified as an emblem of passion. It provides a precise location for the narrative and is an object of scientific interest for the central character, Sir William Hamilton, throughout the (fictional) account of his life as a diplomat in Naples at the end of the eighteenth century, and his two marriages. It is primarily a place where he collects specimens and observes the natural world. It is introduced first as a physical entity, but with metaphoric descriptions which change it into a fierce animal:

It's the mouth of a volcano. Yes, mouth; and lava tongue. A monstrous living body, both male and female. It emits, ejects. It is also an interior, an abyss. Something alive, that can die. Something inert, that becomes agitated now and then. Existing only intermittently. A constant menace. If predictable, usually not predicted [...] the slumbering giant that wakes. The lumbering giant who turns his attentions to you. King Kong. (VL: 5-6)

The analogy between a *volcano* and a *monstrous living body* creates a metaphor structured by metonymic details; a symbol if we follow Lodge. This first mention of *volcano* uses lexis which carry a number of connotations. *Mouth* and *tongue*, here used as conventional 'dead' metaphors, evoke the stories of dangerous monsters, giants or dragons, which are mythically associated with volcanoes, while *abyss* is used as a metaphor for fear and despair. The *slumbering giant* is another mythical or fairy-tale monster, and *King Kong*, a modern cinematographic version of an irrational threat to the well-being of the world, is associated with apocalyptic visions of death. These metaphors are linked by the apocalypse schema, a mental construct which appeals to the imagination. It is structured by contiguities, both physical and conceptual, between the different elements of the whole.

The volcano is also a means of putting feelings into imagery: 'Like passion, whose emblem it is, it can die' (VL: 7). Within this tale it represents the passions of Sir William, Emma and Admiral Lord Nelson. The abstract truth that passion exists moves into real events and specific people through the symbolic function of the volcano. At a later point in the development of the narrative, during reflections on the destruction caused by eruptions, the concept of emblem recurs. There is still, however, reference to only one volcano, Vesuvius:

The mountain is an emblem of all the forms of wholesome death; the deluge, the great conflagration (*sterminator Vesevo* as the great poet was to say) but also of survival, of human persistence. (VL: 112)

As well as this general symbolic significance, the volcano refers to several events. It is associated with the French Revolution, which erupts into the court life of Naples just as Vesuvius destroyed Pompeii; it represents the passions of Sir William for natural history, art, and his second wife Emma. Thus we are reminded that there are limits to the emblematic development of *volcano*. When Sontag says that the volcano is an emblem of passion, she may be construed as deliberately restricting the meaning of 'passion' to one man's strong feelings, because she has restricted the referent. If *volcano* refers only to Vesuvius and only in the context of this narrative, it is an emblem of Sir William Hamilton's life-experience. On his death-bed he is made to say that 'the volcano never did me any harm. Far from punishing me, it brought me only pleasure' (*VL*: 372).

If, on the other hand, the meaning of *volcano* is extended and generalised by encyclopaedic knowledge, it is a symbol of beauty, danger, passion and death. It links past, present and future time because Vesuvius has erupted, erupts in the narrative time, and will erupt again. A volcano in the generic sense can also be a symbol of the life forces of the earth, uncontrollable outpourings of dangerous matter or by transfer to the domain of ideas, of sedition or revolution, themes which are developed in the narrative. The events narrated, by contrast, are seen to be ephemeral and limited. Thus, volcano extends by symbolic associations beyond the immediate narration of a number of events in the late eighteenth century. The generalisation of the volcano as a powerful and dangerous natural force gives it a metaphorical extension which goes beyond a limited time and place, and relies on the similarity perceived between an eruption and a mental state.

Sontag presupposes readers who will be able to understand all the implications of her choice of the term emblem, and play with the notion of its symbolic or allegorical extension. Whether this text is read as emblematic or symbolic is a pragmatic decision by the actual reader, validated by knowledge of the potential range of meanings. Vesuvius is placed in a fictional context which develops both through a sustained metonymic link between nature and human presence and through a metaphor for emotions and behaviour.

8.4.3 Golding: *Lord of the Flies* and *A Sea Trilogy*.

While Sontag deliberately draws our attention to the volcano as emblem, Golding indicates more obliquely the potentially symbolic nature of his reconstructions of reality in fiction. The three novels of *A Sea Trilogy* can be read as yarns in the sea-story genre, depicting an unknown but possible world of experiences. But in admitting that there is 'a tendency in man's mind, man's nature, to make the universe in the image of his own mind' (Baker 1982: 131), Golding indicates that there are potentially symbolic meanings in the elements of his fictional universe. Some are formed from metonymy, some from metaphor.

There are many instances of symbols derived from objects, events and people in *Lord of the Flies* (1954). The most prominent is the conch shell found by Ralph and Piggy, which becomes the emblem of power-sharing in a democratic assembly. By a process of transfer, the meaning of the conch shell moves from its literal and metonymic grounding (object for agent), by metaphoric extension, becoming a symbol of leadership. If a boy is holding it, he has the right to speak and influence others. When the conch breaks at the moment of Piggy's death, the event marks symbolically the triumph of Jack's rule of force and tyranny. The emblematic value of the conch is destroyed as it is reduced to an object, nothing more than a broken sea-shell. The symbolic value however remains in our appreciation of the part it plays in the narrative.

In *A Sea Trilogy*, Colley, Talbot and the other principal characters are to some extent symbolic of their social and professional class, but in a very limited context bounded by the ship and the voyage. External appearance is an emblematic sign of mental as well as social condition (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Norrick 1981), so we understand that Colley's obsession with correct dress in *Rites of Passage* represents 'his being led astray by his own faith in the social pyramid' (Baker *op.cit.*: 164). The extended image of armour as an emblem for friendship structures the narration of Talbot's relationship with Charles Summers (see Chapter 6.3 above). The focus on their individuality does not permit a reading which has them represent mankind in general. This function is realised in the ship itself as a representation of society and a critique of social order (Crompton 1982, Boyd 1988). Given the long tradition in myth and literature of seeing a ship as a microcosm of society, it is difficult to avoid extending the metonymy (part for whole) of 'ship as emblem of the voyage'

to a fully symbolic interpretation. Golding himself admitted that 'a writer has a certain responsibility to deal with the problems of his own century' (Baker 1982: 169). The ship is a tyrannical society, organised as a strict hierarchy linked by a class system and obedience to discipline. If the voyage is 'a convenient metaphor for a life' as Golding suggests (Baker: *op.cit.*), the ship is a generalisable symbol within the domain of voyage.

8.5 Summary.

This chapter has presented evidence for and against the assumption that symbols are metaphoric in nature. A major question was terminology. To symbolise, or to add symbolic value to a meaning, covers emblem, allegory and symbol. This was resolved by adopting the criteria of imaginative extension (metaphor, symbol) and context-bound meaning (metonymy, emblem). True symbol is generalisable and interpretable in many different contexts, while emblem remains within one known set of knowledge or beliefs. Some symbols are grounded in metaphoric relationships, while others are metonymic in character. Metonymy becomes symbolic when its referent is not limited by a specifically physical context, so the kind of metonymy which tends most towards figurativity is most likely to acquire symbolic value. Metonymy assists the creation of linguistic symbols and the building up of symbolic structures which are important to thought processes and to their expression in narratives. There is some common ground between metonymically and metaphorically motivated symbols. Both are context dependent although to different extents. They are essentially cognitive processes instantiated in linguistic expressions such as noun phrases and idioms. Not all metaphors or metonymies become symbols, and the condition for symbolic reading is in the text or context of reference. Symbol is a way of relating the various senses of words to each other, linked to both metaphor and metonymy. Interpretation is reader-centred in the sense that not all readers will necessarily appreciate the intended symbolic value of an expression, and some might attribute symbolic value where none was intended.

CHAPTER 9. FUNCTIONS OF METONYMY IN NARRATIVE FICTION.

9.1 Introduction.

In previous chapters I addressed a number of questions: the underlying principles which permit the creation of metonymy, the distinctions between metonymy and metaphor, and the role of metonymy in linguistic symbolism. I shall now discuss applications of the theory of metonymy in narrative fiction. The research undertaken showed that with respect to the metaphor 'life is a voyage' in *A Sea Trilogy*, a general metaphor can be the support on which the themes and development of an entire narrative are built. A narrative may also be structured by the recontextualisations of a metonymy which may or may not develop into metaphor (Genette 1972, Henry 1970, Jakobson 1956, Lodge 1977, Riffaterre 1990). Metonymy can be used throughout the important developments of a narrative, that is to say, metonymy is present both in immediate lexical effects and as a general or macro-metonymy. The function which will be discussed in this chapter is its ability to permit access to an unknown world, by providing an interface between experience and fiction. Metonymy has special functions in the organisation of extensive narrative; its presence affects the perception of plot and structure, and it has further functions in characterising personae and identifying important thematic and stylistic elements.

9.1.1 Fiction and the real world.

There is a pervasive overlap between fiction and the real world insofar as some 'fiction' genres are clearly based on reality (e.g. biographical novels) and some real-life stories are imaginative to the point of falsehood (e.g. fishermen's yarns). Not all fiction can achieve the accolade of being called literature; jokes, light romantic fiction and television sitcoms illustrate fictionality without possessing the qualities which mark literary Classics. Nor is all literature fiction. Essays and sermons are non-fictional but are characterised by a rhetorical figurative style which is fundamentally literary. Some genres (e.g. detective fiction, science or fantasy fiction) vary in literary quality. Fictional narrative has been distinguished from non-fiction on the grounds of being indirect representation or a pretence of reality (Searle 1979). But Gerrig (1993) showed through psychological experiments that the reader's experience of a fictional world is closely related to experience of real life.

9.1.2 Metonymy as a means of entering an unknown world.

The proposal that metonymy is a means of understanding an unknown world is based on the assumption that cognitive metonymic processing is universal (Gibbs 1994). It is therefore available to the writer and reader of fiction as much as to the speaker and hearer of conversation, as an intrinsic part of communication. Although the process is not culture-bound, the products are necessarily contained within a frame which will be socially, culturally and historically conditioned. The question here is what happens to understanding if the reader is unfamiliar with the socio-cultural background to the text. Although cause-for-effect and part-for-whole relations are general (Norrick 1981), there are many examples of metonymies which are linked so closely in location and time with their referents that contextualisation is required. If there is a rugby match in Edinburgh, the question *Who are you for?* evokes the answer *I'm for Scotland* as an expression of support, and *Scotland* is a metonymy for the rugby team. In a context of travel, the same phrase may be the answer to the question *Where are you for?* and the answer *Scotland* will be a literal indication of place.

9.1.2.1 Example of metonymy in T. Morrison: *Jazz*.

An example from modern fiction illustrates the function of metonymy in communicating time, place and attitudes within the narrative techniques of a modern American novel (T. Morrison: *Jazz*) located in Harlem. Scene and characterisation are not familiar to those who have no personal experience of the socio-cultural background, yet the communication of this world is immediate. In *Jazz* (1992), Morrison uses metonymic details so that the reader can 'see and feel the paradox that the characters themselves see and hear, particularly the women' (Chadwick-Joshua 1995: 170). As the characters experience city life, they are disillusioned by the violent reality of urban living. Alice, a woman who clings to the social values of her upbringing, has a niece who is seduced, then killed by her lover. To compound the murder, the lover's wife Violet attacks the dead girl's body as it lies in its coffin. As Alice reflects on events, the dislocation of her thoughts and speech reflects her grief for her niece, and her rage at the reality of life. The dreams of the city as a 'Promised Land' have come to nothing.

The husband shot; the wife stabbed. Nothing. Nothing her niece did or tried could equal the violence done to her. And where there was violence wasn't there also vice?

Gambling. Cursing. A terrible and nasty closeness. Red dresses. Yellow shoes. And, of course, race music to urge them on. (Jazz: 79)

Within the frame of the focaliser's point of view structural elements are juxtaposed with typically metonymic organisation. Violence and vice are present as Alice's thoughts progress in a sequence of frames, each of which has a role in her conceptualisation of the City. The object of her hatred is violent behaviour (*shot, stabbed*) and vice (*gambling, cursing*). Sexual promiscuity is inferable from the effect-for-cause metonymy of *closeness* and the seductively bright colours of *red dresses and yellow shoes* worn to attract men. The whole is epitomised by *race music* (jazz) which is an integral part of the social and personal life styles of Harlem. Metonymy of part-for-whole extends through an implied cause-for-effect, as the music is said to urge them on. In this text there are conventional linear metonymies (*red dresses and yellow shoes* for promiscuous women) and a more figurative metonymy in *race music* for the driving force of violent behaviour.

Some narrative fiction depicts a world which is not well known to the actual reader, who therefore does not share important background knowledge with the writer, enabling them to interact with new contextual information. The reader cannot make reliable assumptions if for example understanding depends on knowing a particular ethnic or religious background, or historical events, or the cosmic spaces of fantasy and science fiction, which are contextualised in possible but as yet unknown worlds. It is, however, particularly interesting to consider the case of narratives set in worlds unknown to the actual reader.

Analysis of the functions of metonymy raises the question of whether figurative language is strictly literary. Noting that the presence of tropes in realist prose fiction constitutes a series of signs that the tale is imaginary, Riffaterre (1990) questions whether it would be possible otherwise to differentiate between verisimilitude (the imitation of truth in fictional discourse) and factual reporting of events, thus making the presence of tropes a special, literary phenomenon. It is now generally agreed that metaphor and metonymy are pervasive in everyday discourse as well as literature. Thus, they cannot be a special distinguishing marker of literary style.

9.2 Interaction between text and reader.

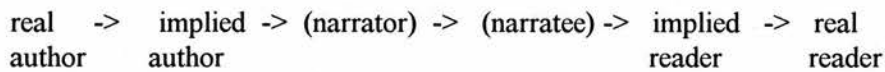
Narrative is definable as a succession of fictional or non-fictional events with a story, a text and a narration (Rimmon-Kenan 1983). It is usually structured in a way which allows understanding of the themes, plot and development of character. The type of narrative considered in this chapter is written, fictional and long enough to form a novel or short story. The theories of structure are therefore those discussed by Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Toolan (1988), rather than Propp's (1928) analysis of the structure of Russian folk-tales or Labov's (1972) analysis of natural narrative. I assume that the type of narrative under consideration has been constructed with a reader in mind (Chatman 1978, Eco 1979), and I shall treat potential response to the text (Iser 1972, Cook 1994) as an interaction between author, text and reader.

9.2.1 The dynamic nature of the reading process.

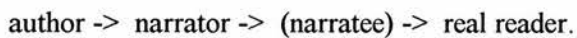
The long-standing debate over whether interpretation is generated by the text or by the reader, or by interaction between the two, has been addressed by a number of theories (Chatman 1978, Cook 1994, Eco 1979, Iser 1972, Rimmon-Kenan 1983, Toolan 1988). Iser called reading variously a creative process, an interrelation between past, present and future, a kaleidoscope of perspectives, preintentions, recollections, an imaginative process which fills in the gaps left by the text itself. From the creative process, which is reciprocity between author, text and reader, Eco constructs the Model Reader who 'is able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them' (1979: 7). At a minimal level, according to Eco, there are a number of shared competencies between author and reader - linguistic code, literary style, typography, and encyclopaedic knowledge. To this Rimmon-Kenan adds that the reading process is a dynamic interaction and the reader is more or less free to construct what has been left unwritten, although the reader's competence to do so is partially shaped by the text. Whatever the theory of readership adopted, it can be argued that a real reader exists, whether a specific individual or the collective readership of a period. On the other hand, for the author a reader might be a 'theoretical construct, implied or encoded in the text, representing the integration of data and the interpretative process 'invited' by the text' (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 119). To this should be

added the concept of previous knowledge existing in the reader's personal encyclopaedia and re-activated by the stimuli provided by the text (Fairley 1988).

Chatman (1978: 151) proposed a diagrammatic solution to the problem of how the author, the text and the reader are interrelated:



Many short novels and short stories exemplify this framework, notably those of Maupassant (e.g. *La Parure*, 1886), in which the implied author plays a narratorial role, framing the actual story with some introductory sentence which situates it in a context of personal knowledge. This account of the reading process was modified by Toolan (1988: 76-7) to:



Thus, Toolan rejects the constructs of implied author and implied reader on the grounds that neither has a real narrative role. The implied author is a 'back projection from decoding the text', and has no real part in the narrative. The implied reader is a version of the reader the author may have in mind and is therefore part of the frame, while the narratee is visible in the structure of the narrative. An example is the implied existence of a descendant in *Fire Down Below* to whom Talbot addresses his account of the voyage. Here the real author, Golding, has a narrator, Talbot, a narratee in the form of a supposed descendant of Talbot's, and a real reader. Another way of looking at the reading process is to see understanding as schema-dependent. Cook (1994) accounts for the interaction between author, text and reader in terms of schema refreshment. Readers represent the fictional world in terms of previous knowledge, which changes through the reading of texts.

The most important aspect of these theories from the point of view of this study of metonymy is the relationship between the writer and the reader through the text, and in particular the question of what is assumed as known. The reader has to construct viable hypotheses about what elements of the text mean, without being deflected by the apparent irrelevance of predictions made on the basis of 'real-life' or 'literary' worlds. One of the ways in which an author can solve the problem is by making a number of overt links between the known or

'real' world and the representation of an unknown world. Returning to the example of Pilate's earring, discussed in Chapter 7 above, we might want to predict that the existence of the earring will remain constant even when Pilate's world changes. This is only partly true - the object remains, but at the moment of Pilate's death the theft of the earring by birds signifies loss of personal power and hence an unresolved closure to the narrative. The reader is forced to make her own predictions, as in real life where the future is unknown.

9.2.2 Metonymy and the structure of narrative: theoretical perspectives.

There are several approaches to macro-metonymy, i.e. the consistent use of metonymy as a means of structuring a narrative. The first is Jakobson's claim that metonymy is a means of accounting for the formal structure of narrative and a sign of realism in literature. I shall also discuss the development of Jakobson's theory by Lodge (1977). The theories of Riffaterre (1982, 1990), although focusing on the text itself, analyse in greater detail the ways in which metonymy functions in narrative. To this I propose to add insights gained from a cognitive approach to metonymy which focuses on the reader's interpretation of text through shared experience.

9.2.2.1 The metonymic forwarding of narrative text.

Within his bi-polar theory of language, Jakobson (1956) claims that metonymy characterises realist prose (see Chapter 1). In this type of discourse an author does not instinctively use metaphor as the primary means of conveying meaning. Citing Tolstoy in exemplification, he proposes that 'the realistic author follows contiguous relationships, metonymically digressing from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time' (1956: 82). Prose is said to be 'forwarded essentially by contiguity in the sequence of events'. But the writer is 'fond of synecdochic details' (1956: 78) which lend verisimilitude to a narrative setting or personal characteristics.

The metonymic elements of written text are seen to belong to both narration of events and to description working at two levels. The first moves the text forward by the metonymic relation of contiguity, the second fills out the details of a given moment, using short-cuts or metonymic reductions and synecdoche (the part-for-whole principle) to convey the intended

meaning. The theory accounts very broadly for the development of a narrative, but it is based on formal features of text and does not analyse the role of contextualisations (schemas in Cook 1994), or the effects (cognitive or affective) on a reader's conceptual processing.

9.2.2.2 Metonymy and metaphor in modern fiction: Lodge.

Lodge develops Jakobson's theory with examples from twentieth century fiction. He claims that there are demonstrable combinations of the metaphoric and the metonymic modes even in modernist writing which is simultaneously symbolic in intention and concerned to imitate realist, vernacular traditions of story-telling, for example in the opening paragraph of Hemingway's short story *Another Country*, where special effects are achieved by the selective use of part-for-whole (synecdochic) detail to describe dead animals hanging in food shops in a street in Milan. In his analysis Lodge argues that metaphoric effects are produced by repetitions of words, grammatical structures and rhythmical patterns. These he calls metaphoric because they are based on similarities and form a network of analogous associations, particularly through play on words, used in different grammatical forms and lexical combinations. Metonymy, or in Lodge's terms 'selective deletion', structures the description by the principle of contiguity. For Lodge, the importance of Jakobson's theory lies in the power generated by the co-presence of metonymic structuring and metaphoric parallelism which go beyond literal meanings to create symbols of death and destruction out of objectively described dead animals. An apparently objective prose description, full of accurately observed detail, can in analysis be shown to be highly figurative.

Lodge's arguments support Jakobson's theory but also show its limitations. Unlike the interactive theories discussed above, this text-based theory takes little account of the potential effects of interaction with a reader. In spite of Jakobson's realisation that metonymy is a matter of cognition, there is still emphasis on the formal features of text rather than their effect outside the text.

9.2.2.3 The construction of narrative style: Riffaterre.

Riffaterre's theory of metonymy, as exemplified in his analysis of Flaubert's (1980) and Trollope's (1982) metonymies, and more generally in *Fictional Truth* (1990), modifies Jakobson's theory to give a detailed structure for examining the functions of metonymy in narrative prose fiction. Retaining its character as a figure defined by contiguity, but seen in a macro-context rather than within a short phrase, metonymy facilitates forward movement by a process of substituting details for each other as the narrative advances. It allows the reader to put into perspective descriptions of scene and characters, highlighting relevant details and linking them to the macro-text. While this critical analysis is applied to metonymy by Riffaterre, he does not claim that these functions are exclusive to metonymy. Rather, the presence of metonymy justifies the reader's looking beyond the surface meaning of a text to make inferences and interpretations different from those achieved through literal accounts of events, or through metaphors. Further claims are that some special effects such as humour, satire and parody can be created through part for whole, cause for effect, or agent for action substitutions and are metonymically grounded. Changes in the reader's perceptions of a character are focalised through the moves from external to internal characteristics, physical for abstract, which are motivated by general metonymic principles.

9.3 Narrative functions of metonymy.

9.3.1 Forward movement by contiguity.

Both Jakobson and Riffaterre acknowledge that narrative text can be forwarded by a process which is metonymic because it depends on spatio-temporal contiguity of events. Jakobson had in mind fictional worlds such as those created by Tolstoy, Dickens, and other nineteenth century writers who largely respected a chronologically arranged sequence of events, corresponding to real-time linear ordering. But in modern fiction where temporal sequencing is idiosyncratically interrupted by prolepsis and analepsis, narrative does not always move forward and temporal contiguity has to be defined differently.

An example of this is found in Muriel Spark: *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. The text framework provided by the analeptic retelling of the life of Sandie enables movement between

periods of time to take place with apparent contiguity within this character's experience, and with respect to her relations with the eponymous heroine. In the narrative, contiguity of events is guaranteed by their being placed in a domain defined by the focaliser's memory. Given the centrality of the character and the dominance of her point of view, the narrative is unified by contiguity within the domain of a single person's experience, thus preserving the metonymic nature of the structure despite the non-chronological ordering of experience.

9.3.2 Metonymic characterisation in Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*.

In addition to a spatio-temporal framework realised in the contiguity of events, fictional narrative requires characters with enough depth and credibility for a reader to understand them as authentic. Foregrounding the characteristics of fictional personae is part of the 'mock reality', defined by Leech & Short (1981: 85) which deals with credibility, authenticity, objectivity and vividness as well as verisimilitude. Metonymic presentation of character works by a kind of dispersion (cf. Jakobson, above) which is credible because of the contiguity between characters and their immediate co-textual environment.

In the novel, the trend has been to dissolve or disperse the image of a character into surrounding objects or to suggest a state of mind or the significance of a dramatic situation through physical details that invite certain deductions or inferences on the part of the reader. (Riffaterre 1982: 273)

Suggesting a state of mind through physical details substitutes a significant part for another part within the domain of the person. Zola's novel *Thérèse Raquin* has many instances of richly detailed realistic descriptions which present a character through the eyes of another, and at the same time provide pointers to the forward development of the tale. In this story, Laurent and his lover, Thérèse, murder the latter's husband Camille who is a childhood friend of Laurent. When Camille brings his friend Laurent home for the first time, Thérèse reflects:

[She] had never seen a real man before. Laurent, with his height and breadth and healthy colour, amazed her. It was with a kind of wonder that she took in his low forehead surmounted by a thick mop of black hair, full cheeks, red lips, and regular features - a handsome man in a full-blooded way. Her glance paused for a moment at his neck; it was broad and short, thick and powerful. Then she let her attention rest on his big hands, which he held open over his knees; the fingers were square and his clenched fist could easily have felled an ox. ... you could sense the hard, well-developed muscles beneath his clothes, the whole organism built of solid, firm flesh.

And Thérèse examined him with some curiosity, going from his fists to his face, and feeling a little thrill when her eyes rested on his bull neck.

(Zola: *Thérèse Raquin*, 52-3, translated Tancock)

The temporal sequence of events is focalised through contiguity in the experiences of one character. Thérèse *had never seen* implies her past history, just as *feeling a little thrill* predicts her future involvement with the man. The narratorial time of Thérèse's present situation and point of view contributes to the metonymic relation between the contiguous parts of her perception. She also perceives Laurent by means of a series of parts of his body, inferring his nature; this is common ground between her thought processes and the reader's. The physical presentation of *a real man*, a value judgement, derives from shared perception of the mental effects of *head, hands, muscles and flesh*. The sum of the parts becomes a token of a certain type of man.

The description, apparently literal, stands for something more when it reaches his *bull neck*. This physical feature acquires figurative value and great importance when recontextualised at crucial moments in the narrative. It will be Laurent's neck which Camille bites at the moment of being murdered, the neck which is recurrently painful during the development of Laurent and Thérèse's sexual relationship after the murder, finally the neck which is kissed by Thérèse in the melodramatic closure when the lovers die in front of Camille's mother. Lexical pointers to the importance of this encounter are the expressions of Thérèse's reactions (*amazed, with a kind of wonder, curiosity, thrill*) which invite us to imagine intriguing further developments in a new whole created by the union of Thérèse and Laurent. Thus, synecdochic details are placed in a general frame which moves the text from outer to inner characteristics, physical to mental perception, from the structure of this description to its place in the overall structure of the novel, and from the imagined to the 'real' world of the reader's experience.

9.3.3 Digressions within the text and the problems of the descriptive pause.

Jakobson observes (1956: 80, footnote) that the risk with a mass of description is that the reader, swamped with details, loses track of significance. Parts of the plot which are meant to be contiguous are separated from each other as the narrative shifts from one scene to another,

with ellipses, pauses, stretches and many details to distract the memory. This accounts for some of the reader's problems with a very long narrative.

9.3.3.1 Metonymy and the problem of amassing detail in very long texts.

In discussing *Bleak House*, Hillis Miller (1985) supports and develops Jakobson's theory, since he considers that metonymy is a basic (i.e. macro) structuring principle for this highly complex novel. To succeed in its narrative functions, metonymy has to be powerful enough to give meaning beyond the specific spatio-temporal context, perhaps through repeated foregrounding of an established concept. This concept can be related to internal and external personal characteristics, to scene and to the structure of the plot.

The narrative of *Bleak House* moves from scene to character to tale metonymically in a many-stranded plot which includes a Lawsuit in the Court of Chancery. An example is the link inferred by the reader between the character of Krook, the shady second-hand dealer, and the Lord Chancellor (pp. 98-107 esp. 101 *we both grub on in a muddle; et passim*). The first link is made through the dusty physical appearance of the two men and their professional preoccupation with great quantities of (albeit different) antiquities. Thus, the reader understands that there are similarities between one of the highest powers in the land and one of the most private and secretive citizens. The implicit comparison is the basis for the nefarious influence of each separately on the development of the plot, since each has power over the outcome of Carstone's lawsuit. It is complemented by the recognition that the person stands metonymically for other characteristics hidden under their veneer of age and dust. On the basis of personal characteristics of secretiveness and power, the concepts are generalised into a structural metonymy for secret power in society. All this is scattered through the narrative, recurring at points when the relationships established between the two are relevant to the Carstone sections of the plot.

9.3.3.2 Foregrounding of characteristics through metonymy.

Further confirmation of the claim that metonymy is extensively used in presentation of character through physical details which suggest a state of mind is found in other sub-plots of *Bleak House*. The heroine, Esther, encounters Mr. Skimpole who is a friend of her guardian

Mr. Jarndyce. The introduction of the new character is realised in the representation of the person by face and voice in a descriptive pause which distracts us from following the forward movement of the plot. The most salient physical features of Skimpole as they appear to Esther are focalised in her voice, then confirmed as mental properties by the character's own ironic self-judgement.

He was a bright little creature with a rather large head; but a delicate face and a sweet voice, and there was a perfect charm in him. All he said was so free from effort and spontaneous and was said with such a captivating gaiety that it was fascinating to hear him talk. Being of a more slender figure than Mr. Jarndyce, and having a richer complexion, with browner hair, he looked younger. Indeed, he had more the appearance, in all respects, of a damaged young man, than a well-preserved elderly one.
(Dickens: *Bleak House*, 118)

Esther's comment *damaged young man* confirms a move from static description of character to his enigmatic role in the plot. Physical descriptors (*bright, little*) move to abstract, through terms which could be attributes of character (*delicate, sweet, charm, spontaneous, captivating gaiety*). The metonymic intention of describing the external appearance and inferring the internal qualities, produced-for-producer, is confirmed by describing his whole character with one of its attributes (*damaged*). The metonymies function as a unifying factor, bringing Skimpole in one move into the complex story via Esther's perceptions, and motivating further involvement of this man in the plot. They trigger the reader's knowledge of similar human types, which enables a process of identification and role assignment to take place. The narrator allows Esther to sum up her impressions for the reader's assistance:

There was an easy negligence in his manner, and even in his dress ... which I could not separate from the idea of a romantic youth who had undergone some unique process of depreciation.
(*Bleak House*: 118)

Further information about Skimpole's nature is given in indirect discourse, reporting his self-deprecating remarks:

He must confess to two of the oldest infirmities in the world; one was, that he had no idea of time, the other, that he had no idea of money. In consequence of which he never kept an appointment, never could transact any business, and never knew the value of anything!
(*Bleak House*: 119)

Skimpole's self-deprecation parodies the material obsessions of society, which link time and money with *business* and *value* which are symbols of activity and success. His initially attractive presentation is in this way subverted by his self-mockery. We are persuaded that there is more than one way of reading Skimpole's character, because in the cognitive frames for both descriptions we recognise the relation of cause and effect known from the real world and recontextualised in the fiction.

Metonymy is used with the function of self-referential irony both with regard to Skimpole and inferentially to more general societal values, enabling the reader to understand Mr. Skimpole's relation to the theme of socially responsible behaviour. These *infirmities* are mental constructs which stand as tokens for the type. Mr. Skimpole represents metonymically romantic decay, the parasite aesthete with no positive social or moral value. He is the personification of irresponsibility, damaging to all his friends. His life is a recurring subtext in the narrative, whose contrastive function is to guide the reader to the high moral value seen in other characters, notably Esther. In the plot his negligent, exploitative attitude eventually contributes to the downfall of Richard Carstone, whom he misleads into pursuing a hopeless case in Chancery.

9.3.4 Metonymy in the creation of scene.

I have discussed and exemplified the function of metonymy in creating and establishing authenticity of character. Another important stylistic use of metonymy is for the creation of a scene which simultaneously informs us that a new episode of the plot is engaged, reminds us of its links with earlier episodes and enables us to predict new outcomes.

9.3.4.1 Bleak House: the house and snow.

A further example from *Bleak House* shows that a metonymic style, together with other devices, creates strong referential and poetic effects whose implications extend beyond the literal description of a house in snowy weather. The description of the house confirms the importance of a number of plot-motivating themes - the destructive power of natural forces, the disintegration of an apparently impermeable outer protection, the undermining of wealth

and social prominence. This part of the plot is concerned with Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock, whose great wealth is represented through their houses.

At this point in the text the focaliser is George Rouncewell, a family servant, who is patrolling Sir Leicester Dedlock's London mansion in the early hours of a snowy morning after Lady Dedlock's disgrace and flight. As Sir Leicester lies ill, the atmosphere is one of imminent catastrophe. George's observations link the gloomy scene with the theme of social disgrace. By evoking an earlier reference in the novel to the legend of a woman's death, premonitions of disaster anticipate the outcome.

There is no improvement in the weather. From the portico, from the eaves, from the parapet, from every ledge and post and pillar, drips the thawed snow. It has crept, as if for shelter, into the lintels of the great door - under it, into the corners of the windows, into every chink and crevice of retreat, and there wastes and dies. It is falling still; upon the roof, upon the skylight, even through the skylight, and drip, drip, drip, with the regularity of the Ghost's Walk, on the stone floor below.

Bleak House 58: 855)

The detail in this passage conveys a degree of authorial direction, in that the representation of the house is made through selection of visually prominent architectural features as parts for the whole. *Portico, eaves, parapet, ledge, post, pillar, great door*, all represent a huge mansion, enabling the reader to situate the immediate context within the novel and, for the present-day reader as for Dickens' nineteenth century assumed readership, with reference to a known world.

Several features, however, move us away from a literal and towards a figurative interpretation. The selection of details is neither random nor all-encompassing, only those external aspects most salient to the passer-by as signs of the wealth of the property. In the social context provided for the fictional world, as well as in the social structures known experientially to the implied reader, large houses with prominent architectural details suggest wealth and power. The owners may be considered to be invulnerable, protected by their house. The single domain 'house' contains all of these elements and many more which the author ignores for his present purposes. Those which have been chosen and used as the focalising device are metonymic in character, but form the basis of a potential metaphor

because through them the reader moves away from the physical domain into the theme of decaying power.

Along with the frames 'house for social status' and 'house as protection from disaster' is another complex frame, the thawing snow. In the opening pages of the novel, Dickens has offered an important clue to the reader that weather phenomena are to be interpreted as figurative signs by using *mud* and *fog* to characterise metonymically the City. Similarly, snow (as weather which may destroy the house as it infiltrates the physical structure) stands for forces and events in society which are figuratively attacking social structures. This raises the question of whether the house is a metaphor for the state of the aristocracy, attacked from without and about to decay. The argument would consider the physical properties of a house to be in a different domain of experience from its effects on the imagination. Even if this is correct, there is a strong counter-argument that the effects are linked with each other and that they constitute one large domain in the sense of Langacker's domain matrices.

The complexity of the figurative effects of this description extends to the personification of snow by means of the phrases *crept as if for shelter* and *wastes and dies*. We are reminded of our earlier fear that Lady Dedlock will meet this same fate, as indeed she does. This explanatory contextualisation is strengthened by the reference to Sir Leicester's other great house, Chesney Wold, with which the reader is already familiar. Its legend of a woman's death foretold by the sound of footsteps on the Ghost's Walk refers to Lady Dedlock. More poetic effects are made by synaesthesia (a sensation of another kind suggested by one experienced) linking the visual image to the sound of the relentless drips. A metaphorical reading is formed by means of inferences created by the metonymic presentation of the house.

The metonymic structure of the passage is based on using the principle of contiguity at more than one level. Firstly, connection with the rest of the novel is established through recalling the physical details of the house, and the effects of London weather, in this case thawing snow. These spatio-temporal features are extended through the metonymy of agent-and-action (conflated with cause-and-effect) into association within a known social code. A whole way of life, i.e. the wealthy society represented by the mansion, is threatened. Thus, metonymic discourse is the trigger for an expansion of meaning as we are led away from the known world into abstract values and mental images. Snow has both strong and weak implicatures; it

grounds analogies in the reality of physical experience and provides a clue for us to draw inferences, both about the fate of the house and the fate of its owners. Our awareness of the links between the ownership of the house, the destructive effects of the thawing snow, and the allusions to death, creates the necessary contextualisations and permits the narrative to advance. The readers' problem, selection and recall of important details, is solved by a combination of tropes and syntactic variations, but metonymy is the central organising device in their development.

9.3.4.2 Seth: *A Suitable Boy*.

Depiction of the whole through some of the parts is not restricted to nineteenth century realist prose. Metonymic descriptions of characters and scenes fill the pages of contemporary novels. The constructs of the fiction evoke referents in a reality known to the reader through experience, enabling the process of contextualisation and interpretation to take place. Seth's India of the early nineteen fifties, depicted in *A Suitable Boy*, is not necessarily a familiar environment for the late twentieth century reader, yet it seems to possess the characteristics of credibility, objectivity, authenticity, vividness and reality (Leech & Short 1981). The theme of a mother searching for a suitable husband for her daughter through her social connections is depicted in a series of encounters between families who live in Brahmpur and Calcutta. But these lives are also linked with other aspects of Indian society through contiguous places, times and events. Each of them (e.g. life in a wealthy Calcutta family, or in a poor Muslim village, or in the fictional city of Brahmpur) is rich with detail, and contributes to the structure and forward movement of the various threads of the narrative. These qualities are created by associative metonymic juxtapositions between the text and our experience, knowledge and beliefs about how families live.

An example of Seth's metonymic structuring is in the episode where Haresh, a dynamic young businessman, crosses a slum. The character and opinions of Haresh are seen in his reactions, in a contrast which leaves us to infer that Haresh has a vision of life very different from that of the slum-dwellers.

He clicked his tongue, not so much from disapproval as from annoyance that this should be the state of things. Illiteracy, poverty, indiscipline, dirt! It wasn't as if the people here didn't have potential. If he had his way and was given funds and labour,

he would have this neighbourhood on its feet in six months. Sanitation, drinking water, electricity, paving, civic sense - it was simply a question of making sensible decisions and having the requisite facilities to implement them.

(*A Suitable Boy*: 237)

This paragraph is a less overtly poetic text than Dickens' description of a house attacked by snow but there are a number of formal rhetorical effects. Slum life is characterised by abstract nouns (*illiteracy, poverty, indiscipline*) which substitute metonymically for the people Haresh sees as the cause of this state of affairs and are summed up in the non-abstract *dirt*. The alternative life is depicted by naming physical entities which would transform the slum into a neighbourhood on its feet (*sanitation, drinking water, electricity, paving*). In a neatly reversed rhetorical parallel with the first list, these are summed up by an abstract entity, *civic sense*. The question is why we think these physical and abstract entities are metonymically linked to each other rather than simply being parts of two inventories. A potential answer is found in Cook (1994). We possess knowledge of a schema called slums, and another called slum improvement which are common ground between us and Haresh. These schemas enable us to share knowledge or a conceptual domain with Haresh and hence to understand his thoughts. If we also take into account the relationship within the schemas of all the features mentioned, we conclude that the paragraph is structured metonymically so as to represent a whole by its parts and the causes by their effects.

9.4 Metonymic creation of special effects.

A different type of metonymy from those discussed in the last section is a stylistic element in the creation of special effects, such as humour, sometimes for local effect, sometimes recurring in different episodes and also acting as a means of structuring a narrative. The use of metonymy in these stylistic variations is motivated in this case by irony or the intention to parody. The generation of further textual development is then used to confirm or disconfirm inferences made about characters or outcomes. Apparently a feature of the text, this metonymy depends nevertheless on a general inferential process to create necessary links made between real-life experience and the fictional world. The linguistic underdetermination of the text requires some bridging or gap-filling, activated by the reader recognising double or multiple meaning.

9.4.1 The two facets of metonymic details.

Riffaterre concludes his discussion of Trollope's style by making a remark which is valid for other authors who use metonymy as a stylistic device.

His choice of metonymy as a favourite tool explains neatly how he can be at one and the same time an objective observer, faithfully depicting reality, and a satirical one, artfully distorting it. This is made possible by the two-faceted nature of the trope. On the one hand, metonymy focuses precisely on suggestive details. On the other, its reductive function makes the selfsame details (seen as substitutes rather than in their own rights) the words of the humorous discourse.

(Riffaterre 1982: 291)

Metonymy is the basic material on which mimesis is built. This, in fiction, is the attempt to make narrative represent a real or known world, and enable the writer to present a salient part of that world as it becomes important for the narrative. Interpretation will be completed by relying on the reader's inferencing procedures. Precision and colour are added to the text, through details which allow the reader to visualise the object or person described (cf. Morrison: *red dresses and yellow shoes*, cited above). The particular advantage of metonymy as a literary device comes, as Riffaterre points out and as I discussed in a previous chapter, from its dual referring function. This enables a bridge to be made between the apparently real, to be taken at face value, and the comment on the real provided by satire, wit or parody.

9.4.1.1 Humour in narrative.

Humour can be created in narrative, as it can be in drama, by many means. Verbal humour depending on play of words, situational humour, comedy of surprise, farce, and caricature are general categories realised in words, gestures, portraits and scenes. This discussion focuses on caricature as a form of humour which illustrates the metonymic-synecdochic style in fiction. Remarking on the danger that the presence of elements of comedy might damage implied verisimilitude, Riffaterre notes that 'the mimesis of reality coexists with a display of artifice' (1982: 274). In other words, the presence of caricature, itself highly referential, reinforces the power of description, uses it to comment on a character, yet does not destroy authenticity.

Among literary devices which make use of metonymy, description of persons and places has been discussed. One of these, Esther's description of Mr. Skimpole (see 3.3.2 above) is caricatural insofar as it highlights a number of features which might, visually, lend themselves to exaggeration, which is the mark of caricature. Portraits in the form of caricatures generally intend the reader to infer moral judgements about a character's behaviour from appearance. They bring together salient elements from different frames which blend conceptually into a new comic image (Fauconnier & Turner, 1996).

A question to be considered here is whether the presence of contiguous details can distinguish between literal description of a strange-looking person, and a caricatural description which provokes laughter. Bergson's classic treatise on comedy (*Le Rire*, 1902) proposes that there must be a perception of dislocation between the image and the event for comic effects to be activated. We laugh at a man slipping on a banana-skin and losing face if he has already been understood to be pompous and therefore undeserving of our sympathy. In cases of caricatural effects, this shows dislocation of the relationship between expectations of behaviour generated by the external appearance, and what actually happens. Because the spectator does not feel any identification with the person, the accident triggers laughter rather than sympathy. The details of personal appearance, presence of banana-skin and of spectators are contiguous within the spatio-temporal frame of the event. They are linked by perception of the man as pompous and the accident as comic in the mind of the spectator. Cognitive contiguity acts as a metonymic 'bridge' between socio-cultural expectations, and the reality of the situation.

Riffaterre (1982) persuasively argues from the example of Arabella French's false chignon in Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right*, commenting that the effectiveness of the trope depends on the sociolect (the assumptions and conventions of the society) in which it is framed. In this context, society understands that the quality of a woman's hair is crucial to her chances of success in finding a husband. Hence, Arabella's efforts to attract a man by a ridiculously obvious hairpiece characterise her as vain, stupid and unnatural, making people laugh at her and contrasting with the naturalness of the hair and demeanour of the heroine. All of these relationships and transfers take place within a general frame which enables us to understand the substitution of hair for personal attractiveness. Further examples show the function of metonymy in creating caricature.

9.4.2 Examples of caricature.

9.4.2.1 Evelyn Waugh: *The Loved One*.

he metonymic basis of caricature can be seen in the following extract from a humorous novel, where the voice of an 'insider' is depicting the unconventional 'outsider'. The scene of Waugh's novel *The Loved One* is California, satirised through the voice of an English expatriate who has transferred English social conventions, and the notion that they ought to be conserved, to America. The paragraph overtly caricatures its subject, a young Englishman, and at the same time covertly caricatures the focaliser.

We had a very unfortunate case a few years ago of a very decent young fellow - and a reasonably well-off one too - who came out as a scene designer. Clever chap but he went completely native - wore ready-made shoes and a belt instead of braces, went about without a tie, ate at drugstores. Even the accent began to take on a nasal quality. Then, if you'll believe it, he left the studio and opened a restaurant - an Italian one of course - with an Italian partner. Got cheated, of course, and the next thing he was behind a bar shaking cocktails. Did it with a flick of the wrist. Appalling business. (The Loved One: 8)

The *unfortunate case* is depicted in terms of his (acceptable) origins as *very decent, young, reasonably well off, clever*, professionally successful. These details are contrasted with the next description of this person - *went native, wore ready-made shoes and a belt instead of braces, without a tie, spoke nasally* (i.e. in an American accent) and his move to restaurant and bar work. At surface value, this is a caricature of the changes in an upper-class Englishman during his stay in Hollywood, with salience given in the description to clothes and speech, typical metonymic identifiers. The question is, how do we know it is a caricature and not a simple description of the man? The humour arises from the contrast between the implied relaxation of conventions by the young man, and the rigid social attitudes of the narrator in the latter's comments: *unfortunate, if you'll believe it, appalling business*. In this paragraph, two caricatures come together, contrasting the conventional (literal) and the unconventional (imaginative) and satirising social insistence on the value of 'correct' dress.

9.4.2.2 Golding: *A Sea Trilogy*.

Caricatural description is used in the characterisation of some of the ship's crew and passengers in *A Sea Trilogy*, notably in the depiction of the painter Brocklebank, a coarse and indecent drunkard. None of his adventures arouse the least sympathy despite the difficulties he shares with others on board. Called to the Captain's quarters to give an opinion on the cause of Colley's decline, he is depicted as obsessed by food and drink, in comic contrast to the rigid formal manners of the Captain, the easy confidence of Talbot and the business-like Summers (RP: 166-175). His greed and his gross personal habits remain caricatural throughout the *Sea Trilogy*, failing to engage sympathy even in the dangers of storm and ice because his behaviour is socially unacceptable.

A more engaging characterisation is partly caricatural, inducing humour, but partly a sincere portrait of a man who deserves sympathy. Talbot has a cabin servant called Wheeler, an unusually enterprising servant, described by *his sharp face and a bunch of white hair on either side of it a shining baldness* (RP: 4). Because of his ability to find out everything which occurs on board the ship, his character traits are explicitly expressed by physical attributes: *that man must have eyes and ears all over him* (RP: 258). When Wheeler disappears overboard, the relevant traits of his character, i.e. willingness to provide anything, and complete knowledge of what is going on, are explained: *Wheeler who knew so much and contrived so much* (CQ: 52). Talbot's diary recapitulates what is known of this servant:

Summers has just told me. The man has disappeared. He has fallen overboard. Wheeler! He has gone like a dream, with his puffs of white hair, and his shining baldness, his sanctified smile, his complete knowledge of everything that goes on in a ship, his paregoric, and his willingness to obtain for a gentleman anything in the wide, wide world, provided the gentleman pays for it! Wheeler, as the Captain put it, *all over ears and eyes!* (RP: 265, author's italics.)

The metonymy that organs of the senses (*ears and eyes*) stand for curiosity, a salient personality trait of this character, is inferred from the fundamental human experience of acquiring information. This is a blend of mental concepts: how to acquire information, how to use the results of inquisitiveness, how the social group interacts with and judges the individual. The case of Wheeler approaches caricature in terms of physical description, but moves away from it because the reader's sympathies are aroused by the presumed role he

plays in denouncing Colley's tormentors, and his two confrontations with death, by drowning and then suicide. In Bergson's terms, he then ceases to be a subject for laughter.

The last examples have in common the establishing of a character motivated by part for whole perceptions of a person. The next example moves from episodic character description towards the use of metonymy to create an entire text with parodic intentions. Metonymy can provide a macro-frame, used throughout a fictional narrative to create an authentic world (Werth 1994). In the case of detective fiction, the genre requires easy accessibility to knowledge and is marked by information gaps and paradoxes, leading to suspense as to the outcome of the criminal investigation. This is created by the ambiguities inherent in a metonymic view of what external characteristics represent, generated by the potential duality of referents.

9.4.3 Metonymy as parody. Dibdin: *Cabal*.

Dibdin's (1992) detective novel, *Cabal*, parodies the belief that external and partially perceived features of characters represent the truth about them. The novel presents the Italian fashion business, the police force and the detective-story genre in a way which is recognisable as authentic, yet it comments on them through a structural technique of constantly building up, then destroying, expectations that the perpetrator of the crimes can be identified by external appearance.

At the opening of the novel, descriptions highlight elements of the scene, and the faces, voices, gestures and clothes of the characters. The narrative is set initially in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome. The first descriptions of place and persons point to the author's meta-narrative intention, to subvert expectations of a credible if 'mock' reality and motivate suspense about the outcome of the plot.

Amplified both by the loudspeaker system and the sonorous acoustics of the great basilica, the celebrant's voice reverberated with suprahuman authority, seemingly unrelated to the diminutive figure beating his breast like a hammy tenor in some provincial opera house rather as though afternoon Mass were a dramatic spectacle laid on by the authorities in an attempt to bring this chilly monstrosity to life, a son et lumière event evoking the religious function it originally had (*Cabal*: 1)

The metonymic link between the priest and the image of an operatic fantasy is achieved by putting the two concepts into a schema described in the text as a dramatic spectacle, whose properties are to imitate reality without becoming reality. Characters are presented with complex details which leave us to infer that the external appearance sends a message of some kind to the spectator.

With her grey tweed coat, black tailored wool jacket, calf-length velvet skirt and the white silk scarf over her head, she looked like a designer version of the aged crones who constituted the majority of the congregation. But her lipstick, a blare of brilliant red only partially qualified by her cold blue eyes, sent a very different message.

(*Cabal*: 1-2)

The *very different message* contributes to the deconstruction of reality and of expectations that this will be a familiar world. The naive belief that appearance and reality might be identical is again subverted in the description of a powerful Archbishop:

This casual dress did not detract from the formidable air of authority and competence he radiated

(*Cabal*: 20)

Dibdin calls explicitly on the construct that appearance belies the truth as Zen, the detective, encounters the Vatican police chief:

A plump man with carefully permed silvery hair and a benign expression stood by a pine tree beside the path, watching them approach. Zen felt a surge of revulsion. He suddenly couldn't wait to get out of this place where even the chief of police looked like a parody of a kindly, absent-minded village priest.

(*Cabal*: 103)

When the villain of the story is introduced, he is exaggeratedly fashionable, the epitome of style in the Italian fashion industry. Falco is his trade name, a metonymic device frequently used in referring to a designer, his work, his company and its products (cf. *Redford wears Armani*):

His sleek, feral look jibed intriguingly with his boyish fair hair and the candour of his pale blue eyes. His movements were almost feminine in their suppleness, yet the look of breathtaking insolence with which he confronted the journalists could hardly have been more macho. "As for me, my clothes speak for me!" Especially in motion, the resulting flurry of activity was so distracting that you hardly noticed the man himself. "I am entirely my own creation! I am Falco!"

(*Cabal*: 137)

Every stage of the development of the plot is marked by metonymic description where external appearance seems to stand for the truth but is, in fact, misleading information offered both to the fictional detective and the reader. Only when closure is near are we allowed to guess that the villain disguises himself successfully as a woman. A further indication of the parodic intention of the novel is that in his fashion business, the real creator of Falco's designer clothes is a woman, who in a reversal of values dyes silk to make it look like denim.

In the closure to the narrative, Zen confronts the murderer Falco wearing a Papal mask as a Carnival disguise. The parody of metonymy is concluded with a reference to the truth behind the misleading episodes and descriptions. The framework which has misled at both narrative and meta-narrative levels is abandoned.

The intruder [Zen] laughed. "The Cabal doesn't exist." And he raised his mask like a visor. The effect was as stunning as the detonation of the grenade. Slack-jawed, pale, seemingly paralysed, Falcone just stared and stared. He, who had fooled everyone around him for so long, had now himself been made a fool of - and by a dowdy creep whose suits looked as though they were made by his mother! How was it possible? Why had it been permitted? The world had stopped making sense. (*Cabal*: 270)

As Falcone falls through the glass roof of the Galeria to his death the crowd think it is a charade or show. The last line of the book is a key to its parodic intention:

In the event, though, it turned out to be real. (*Cabal*: 276-77)

The author's choice of settings and characterisations in this novel presupposes that we can understand an unknown world through cognitive processes. In view of the large amount of metonymic inferencing required of us, we understand it in two ways, one direct and one oblique, which correspond to the double reference inherent in metonymy. The clothes-for-people relationship forms a macro-metonymy for the narrative; at the same time, we see that the clothes do not tell the truth about the people. It must be concluded that the authorial intention was to parody, by means of metonymy, the semiotic principle that external appearance, represented by clothes and gesture, is a reliable sign of truth (cf. Barthes, 1957).

9.5 Textual effects.

9.5.1 Text from names and nicknames.

It has already been noted (Chapter 3.3.1.2) that place-names can be used to substitute for concepts associated with the place, by metonymy of place-for-power. An extension of this principle constitutes an important function of metonymy in narrative fiction. Proper names may be used throughout a text to signal theme or character, by a process of association. This is typically found in nicknames which are semantically or phonetically close to a common word, and which can lead to the formation of a proper name. Riffaterre's example (Trollope: *Ralph the Heir*) is the name of Mr. Neefit, the breeches maker. The effect depends on a pun, motivated by the metonymy of profession-for-person in the name 'Neefit', since a breeches maker must fit his garments to the knees of his customers. The name stands for the man, his trade, his life and, because a fitting requires the tailor to kneel, a subservient attitude which motivates narrative development.

Riffaterre's analysis of the function of metonymic naming within Trollope's novels does not discuss how the readers derive this understanding, but according to Jäkel (1996) it is generalised in real-life naming where names relate the person to an identifying trade or location, such as Miller or Hill. This is also seen in the use of some names to stand metonymically for others in nicknames. Generation of concepts from names indicates metonymic displacement, from the original attribution of the name to an individual, to that person's characteristic behaviour. By this Jäkel means that the name represents something in addition to its obvious personal referent, since it proposes a relationship between two concepts. Characteristics are reflected through names or nicknames with the result that the names stand for abstract concepts and values like strength, social class, profession or wealth. Emblematic nicknames such as *The Iron Lady* characterise a whole political career in which a woman's public image is governed by the inherent strength of her convictions, and her appearance as a 'lady', having tastes in clothes, hairstyle and so on which mark her as being of the wealthy middle classes. In fiction, *Goldfinger* represents metonymically obsession with wealth. By attaching this name to the evil protagonist Fleming creates a world ruled by absolute power, and associates this power with the great wealth accrued by the eponymous villain of the novel. Many fictitious personae (cf. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*: Sir Toby

Belch, Malvolio; Dickens, *Bleak House*: Jellyby, Krook) have names which indicate behaviour, character or lifestyle, or another character's opinion of them.

Examples in Golding's *Sea Trilogy* assist the reader to visualise the characters by associating their names with physical characteristics or social behaviour. The physical height of Talbot, evoked by the first syllable of his name, is presented in a parodic quadrille performed by the ship's people for the entertainment at the ship's ball in *Close Quarters*. Talbot's account of the episode identifies one subject of the sailors' joke as Lady Helen, but fails to see that he is himself mocked in the form of *a stocky old man with one of the ship's boys sitting on his shoulders*.

It was the ship's people on the fo'castle. They were performing their own quadrille! It was, to put it baldly, a parody of ours! It was quite horridly skilful. [...] that young fellow in a sailcloth skirt who swooned, positively swooned past anyone he met, could be no-one but Lady Helen! There was also a stocky old man with one of the "ship's boys" sitting on his shoulders. Together they reached a considerable height and the rest of the company deferred to them ridiculously. (CQ: 125)

The episode exemplifies Golding's stylistic procedure. He presents external appearance as a means of prompting the reader's memory about personal characteristics, for Talbot is tall and arrogant. The name uses physical details, transfers them by means of paronomasia, and thus presents a different, authorial point of view to the reader.

9.5.2 Subtexts within a narrative.

Metonymic names which guide the reader's interpretation create multiple systems of subtexts in a narrative. Subtexts (Riffaterre 1982) are extensive components of the novel. They recur, overlapping with each other to form a network of information and allowing inferential interpretations to develop. Although they are less than the whole, their function is to show the significance of characters and point to the thematic unity of the work. In Jakobson's (1956) terms, this constitutes a bridging mechanism, for Levinson (1983) a process of inference, for Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) they bring relevant contextual effects. The typical subtext is clearly a meta-metonymy: 'a segment that could stand alone and be remembered as a passage representing the whole and representing the author' (Riffaterre 1982: 278). The subtexts may confirm or disconfirm the assumptions made by the reader's initial interpretation so they are

important to communication of meaning. Metonymic description forms part of the network of subtexts on which the description and the narrative are constructed.

9.5.2.1 Duras: *Moderato Cantabile*.

A subtext structure can be based on attitudes to food and drink and to textual episodes which depict meals. In *Moderato Cantabile* (Duras 1958), a subtext is formed through the heroine's attitudes to drinking wine and to a formal dinner. Her addiction to drinking red wine in a workers' café reinforces her sense of dislocation from her upper middle class life, presenting her as an accessible target for a workman's interest. Her refusal at a formal dinner party to eat elaborate dishes, prepared as signs of her husband's material prosperity, confirms her alienation from a bourgeois society in which women are bejewelled objects displayed, like decorated food, for men's appetites. These episodes carry thematic value as well as triggering further developments of plot. The subtext draws attention to the heroine's alienation from conventional society and motivates her physical isolation through her rejection of the possessor-possessed relationship.

9.5.2.2 Camus: *Le Renégat*.

Extensive use of a subtext in Camus' short story *Le Renégat*, is realised through a metonymy which extends into metaphor. The story relates the life of a fugitive waiting in the desert for the arrival of a replacement missionary, whom he wishes to kill. He does so, is caught and put to death. Within this story is embedded a long, confused, first-person account of how he, a boy from the Protestant Auvergne, became a Catholic priest, ran away from the seminary to pursue a vocation in the desert village of Taghâsa, was captured, tortured, and mutilated by having his tongue cut out. He undergoes a conversion to the pagan god, i.e. to the forces of evil. When the opportunity comes, he resolves to take his revenge, not on the cruel pagan Sorcerer but on his first masters, represented by the new missionary priest. The strangeness of this mutilation is strengthened by the unknown context, a remote village in Algeria. The apparent authenticity of the tale is further attacked by paradox and oxymoron in reference to the village which is called *une froide cité torride* (*Le Renégat*: 45). This fictional narrative presents conceptual difficulties to the reader unfamiliar with the Algerian desert and the life

of missionary priests, but the use of *tongue* creates an aid to interpretation because it is readily understood in terms of the non-fictional world.

The physical world and the world of moral ideas are inseparably interrelated in Camus' depiction of this man's condition, so the connotations of *tongue* enable the reader to appreciate that madness is induced by loss of physical and moral power. The polysemy and cross-cultural validity of *tongue* (translated from the French *langue* which has a similarly wide range of senses) widens the scope of its meanings. The tongue as organ of speech is generally transferred metonymically from the agent of speech to the language spoken, as for example in *the English tongue/la langue anglaise*. By further extension it has come also to mean the gift of speaking fluently and convincingly, as in *to speak in tongues* and to be *possessed of a golden tongue*. The loss of the tongue is therefore not only a mutilation of the body but loss of the power of oral self-expression. In the case of the focaliser, a priest whose power depends on oral skills, it stands for the worst disaster, loss of communication.

A series of collocations move between the literal and the figurative meaning of tongue, mouth or voice. Alienation, not only from the focaliser's role as missionary-priest but from his own person, leads to his mind being invaded by nameless voices:

Depuis qu'ils m'ont coupé la langue, une autre langue, je ne sais pas, marche sans arrêt dans mon crâne, quelque chose parle, ou quelqu'un qui se tait soudain et puis tout recommence.
(*Le Renégat*: 37)

Thus, the subtext of loss of speech is structured by metonymic connections between the physical organs of speech and the priest's mind. His mouth without the power of speech becomes an alien sterile place, *ce trou noir et desséché*, parallel to the other, literal *trou noir*, the house which is his prison. Conversely, he epitomises the sun as hole in the sky, silent like himself but a source of torturing heat:

le trou qu'il fait bouche comme la mienne volubile et qui vomit sans trêve des fleuves de flammes.
(*Le Renégat*: 50)

The focus changes to another function of the mouth (to vomit) before the metaphor *fleuves de flammes* changes the focus of the subtext again to the powerful image that speech can be compared to rivers of flame. The effect of these collocations in the field of tongue and mouth

extends metaphorically to the power of speech and contrastively to the sterility of a mouth deprived of its function. The fundamental power of communication represented by the collocations of voice, tongue and speech is reiterated when the priest-slave, hearing a voice in the desert, doubts internal as well as external reality:

Qui parle, personne, le ciel ne s'entrouvre pas, non, non, Dieu ne parle pas au désert,
d'où vient cette voix? Est-ce une autre langue en moi ou celui-ci toujours qui ne
veut pas mourir ?
(*Le Renégat*: 59)

The central character is at once possessed of the gift of communication through language - *langue/tongue* - yet unable to use it physically, thereby being deprived both of the power of speech in an alien world, and of power over other men. The inherent irony is that the single focaliser of the monologue creates unreliability for the reader because he is tongueless and has physically no voice apart from a meaningless *ra-ra*. In this contrast the use of metonymy to provide a structure for the metaphor of powerlessness, and the play on words and ideas facilitated by the multiple referentiality of *langue* reflect the constant duality of the concepts.

The irony of the situation goes beyond that of the mutilated priest, the speaker *par excellence*, deprived of his function. It extends to the writer/author's problem - how can he communicate ideas which remain silent, locked in like the renegade's? In this respect the story poses great problems for the reader who cannot believe in its literal truth and plausibility. We might normally seek points of reference in the world of our own experience, and in this text the chief subtext is the recontextualisation of *tongue/langue* in physical and abstract meanings. By using a familiar series of metonymic connections, that the tongue stands for the power of speech, the language spoken and hence communication of ideas, Camus succeeds in giving the reader access to the strange world of the priest in the desert. The function of this priest is then extended metaphorically to represent the general human problem of failed communication.

9.6 Metonymy as focalising device.

Up to this point, the discussion has centred on demonstrating the validity of Riffaterre's theory of metonymy in narrative structure. In this section I shall extend the discussion to metonymic organisation of lexis and text, and the ways in which they can provide a

framework for changes in focalisation and point of view within the narrative. This section turns to those which widen the narrator's view and hence present elements of plot, scene or character differently to the reader.

9.6.1 Facial features as metonymy.

The first example from *A Sea Trilogy* is not strictly a change of focaliser but a change of attitude within the focalising voice, giving different views of a character. This can be achieved by a number of means, such as change of scene, change of time, new events, or authorial reflections (Short 1996). Golding, however, frequently uses the concept identified by Lakoff & Johnson (1980), and widely known in anthropology (Hoebel 1972), that we recognise a person by their facial features and attribute characteristics to them as a result. In Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) the original conventional image of well-disciplined, uniformed choirboys is changed by face-painting, and the boys revert to a more primitive, savage type of behaviour: 'the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought' (*Lord of the Flies*: 191). The reader has to decide whether the first-person narration by Talbot is credible, given that Golding shows how unreliable Talbot's initial observations are. Talbot is a limited observer, an internal focaliser whose narration is subjective.

9.6.1.1 The unreliability of first impressions.

In the example which follows, the way in which perceptual change is presented is through Talbot's becoming aware of the meaning carried by another person's external features, and of the link between them and true characteristics. Not only is metonymy a semantic transfer motivated by the salience of a property in a given context (Papafragou 1996a) but the perceived salience can change. In this example, the first relevant meaning of facial features has to be revised in new contexts, with further effects. During the first part of the voyage, Talbot befriends one of the ship's officers, Deverel, who plays a large part in Talbot's ability to tolerate the difficult conditions of living on the ship. The basis for our understanding of Deverel includes the metonymic conceptualisation that appearance identifies the person (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). With the intention of showing his characteristics, he is described directly through the focaliser's eyes as well as through his own actions. Part-for-whole details are used to communicate a significant change in the character and his role, motivating

Talbot's rejection of his earlier assumptions, and also Deverel's disappearance from the narrative.

Furthermore, Talbot's own character develops during the voyage. He has at first assumed that what he sees is the truth, but he now admits to being mistaken. This point is illustrated in the contrast between Deverel's initial and subsequent effects on Talbot. Initially, Talbot has found Deverel to be an amusing companion, a young man of good family who shares the fun of pursuing women, especially Zenobia, and drinking. In the second part of the trilogy, *Close Quarters*, Deverel leaves an inexperienced midshipman, Willis, in charge of the wheel while he goes to the saloon for a drink. The ship is 'taken aback' - i.e. the direction of the sails is reversed in a squall, and the sails and masts sustain considerable damage (*CQ*: 17-26). In spite of a show of gallantry over plans for boarding a supposed enemy vessel (*CQ*: 39-50), he is in serious trouble for negligence and drunkenness. At this point Talbot realises that he has made some wrong assumptions. This man is far from the admirable friend he had hoped for. He understands through Deverel's facial features the essential weakness of his character. The observations fall into two parts - awareness of physical weakness is followed by the consequences for Deverel's character:

Deverel was no longer looking fierce. It was strange, but after all the devil-may-care actions of the last twenty-four hours it was as if a far less assured young man had appeared in the place of the one I knew. I saw now how although he was of more than average height he was of a slight build and lightly muscled. As for his face - I saw with astonishment that the forward-projecting sweep of his side-whiskers was an attempt of which he was quite possibly unaware to compensate for a weak and slightly receding chin. (*CQ*: 78)

Talbot's observations assume that the reader shares the understanding that facial features stand metonymically for personality traits. The assumption that physical characteristics identify the individual is conveyed by the juxtaposition of *a far less assured young man, slight build and lightly muscled a weak and slightly receding chin*. Talbot's change of opinion, which motivates this different view of Deverel, is itself signalled by his sense of discovery - strange and astonishment. The linguistic hedges - *as if... although ... as for ... an attempt ... quite possibly* - which suggest uncertainty are replaced by stronger conviction in the new interpretation of Deverel's side-whiskers *to compensate for a weak and slightly*

receding chin. The lexical field of physical features is extended, in a way which leads to greater understanding.

The various parts are summed up into a whole, through Talbot's reinterpretation of events in a more objective and knowledgeable focalising stance:

Gentleman Jack, the honourable Dashing Jack! It was a paroxysm of rage and, yes, fright that had given his right arm the momentary strength to sink his blade so deeply in the rail. Comprehension became so complete that I felt as lost and frightened as ever he had been. It is a dreadful thing to know too much. I saw that if it had not been for the support of his family name and an air which stemmed more from imitation than from worth, he might have been an ostler, a footman, a gentleman's gentleman!
(CQ: 78)

The details dominating the physical description of Deverel become metonymies of cause and effect. Talbot reinterprets the action of sinking a sword in the ship's rail as *rage* and *fright*, and in the light of a new contextual framework revises his opinion of Deverel's character. In this way Golding distances the reader from Talbot's earlier assumptions about the importance of external or inherited features, now known to be self-contradictory. The generic declarative *It is a dreadful thing to know too much* seems to be an authorial or gnomic comment, that it is better to know only part of the truth. It contains a metalinguistic reflection on the problems caused by a forced reinterpretation, an intellectual process which destroys the earlier intuitive feeling of liking and friendship. Talbot's remarks contradict, ironically in view of his self-esteem, the view that character is fixed by apparent social status or initial presentation. They also mark a stage of his personal development when his personal 'voice' is beginning to mature.

We can see at this point that Golding solves the problem of how to communicate Talbot's change of opinion and Deverel's removal from the narrative by changing the relative salience of Deverel's physical features. By triggering the metonymic process of perceiving another part of the whole i.e. the character of a person through the appearance, Deverel becomes more than a vignette of naval life or a convenient means of comparing Talbot with another young man of the same social class. The description of Deverel, if we take the context of this fictional narrative to be personal development, is less important than the way it marks stages

of Talbot's mental representations. Thereafter, the narrator/focaliser has a different evaluative stance towards the other characters.

9.6.1.2 Reversing expectations: the reliability of appearance as a sign.

This is seen in Talbot's descriptions of Benét and his adversarial involvement with him in *Close Quarters* and *Fire Down Below*. In contrast to Deverel, his replacement, Benét, is never the subject of such sympathy and such disappointment. Talbot remains sceptical about the real value of *blue eyes, pink cheeks, ruddy lips* (CQ: 174) and *yellow hair* (*passim*). He is a mystery, *a strange young man and a marine Adonis*, (CQ: 229) and suspicious to Talbot because of his French origins, ability to write poetry, friendship with the Captain and possible attractiveness to Talbot's sweetheart, Miss Chumley. His physical agility and good looks correspond to his high spirits, literary gifts and brilliant seamanship; both remain unaffected by storms and even the prospect of imminent death.

Metonymic description implies that there is a significant relationship between outer and inner person and is developed by Golding in a way which heightens the contrast between two characters (cf. Fowler 1977). While Deverel is described directly, Benét's characteristics are built up indirectly through his actions. He is nimble and sure-footed about the ship even in bad weather, has charmed the bad-tempered Captain, appears to be *the very personification of this bright air and wind and sea* (CQ: 260). We perceive his character by means of short descriptions of his normal behaviour, inferring with Talbot from the differences between Benét and the other officers that he is truly exceptional. This narratorial view does not change throughout the rest of the Trilogy, showing Talbot's consistently hostile feelings towards the lieutenant.

9.6.2 Change of focaliser in *Rites of Passage*.

The presentation of each character invites the reader to compare new with existing knowledge, and to activate more than one framework for each one presented. In this respect, a dual perspective on characters adds to the information available. The importance of a character may be assessed on this basis especially when the same story is told from two different narrators. Although neither is intrinsically reliable (they are both internal first-

person narrative accounts) they manipulate metonymic assumptions in focalising external details of appearance, which in turn motivate the reader's judgement of events.

9.6.2.1 Colley's position on board.

In *Rites of Passage* the Reverend Robert James Colley is presented both in direct description, and indirectly through the events in which he is the principal focus of action. Moreover, Talbot's account of events is replaced by Colley's own account. Discussing his own novel, Golding admitted that Colley is a 'silly ass, naïve rather than innocent' (Baker 1982:165). The author chose to highlight this naïveté through Colley's attitudes to dress, creating a context through which the reader is invited to consider his psychological inadequacy. There are three different versions of the episode, all using clothes to focus attention on Colley's characteristic behaviour. These are Colley's letter to his sister (first person narrative); Talbot's account in his diary (first person narrative with different focaliser); and Summers' brief comment on the consequences of the event (gnomic quasi-proverbial utterance). His graceless physical appearance (sunburn, oddly-shaped legs, smallness) and his lack of social know-how assign Colley to the rural lower class, who are emigrants in the fo'castle, not to the social group formed by the cabin passengers on the afterdeck. His dress, on the other hand, paradoxically indicates the educated cleric, whose social position was reinforced in the early nineteenth century by his established Anglican status. He is an outsider to both worlds, since neither accepts him.

Evidence of his isolation is given in his letter and his well-meant but self-destructive actions. Golding encodes the most critical incidents in language which highlights the socialising concept of being properly dressed for an occasion, and communicates that to choose the wrong dress is to expose oneself to ridicule. At a different narratorial level, this is also Talbot's view, one which does not change until he has himself been transformed by wearing 'seaman's slops'. Examples from *Rites of Passage* will show how and why the narrative of Colley's shame and death is focalised by means of metonymy, and why focus on clothing is a convincing device for displaying characterisations and foregrounding certain thematic issues.

9.6.2.2 Colley's version of the narrative.

The analeptically related narrative contained in Colley's letter to his sister, in which he retells events already known through Talbot, enables presentation of a second point of view (*RP*: 186-247). Talbot takes the letter from its hiding place in Colley's cabin, and incorporates it verbatim into his journal, ostensibly for his assumed reader, his godfather, to understand the true nature of Colley's problems. The device enables Golding to present a different voice, style of discourse and point of view from Talbot's version of events, and to fill a number of narrative gaps (e.g. what was happening on deck to involve the discharge of a gun while Talbot was seducing Zenobia, *RP*: 86).

The letter fills a number of gaps in the reader's knowledge of events. It also accounts for the fact that throughout his life on board, Colley is obsessed with the need for correct dress, even more self-consciously than Talbot is. A series of collocations illustrate particular aspects of the meaning of clothing. In the style of the eighteenth century, the various institutions of the state are referred to metonymically by elements of dress. The most notable is 'The Cloth' for the clergy by reference to the high quality woollen cloth from which clerical suits were made. This metonymy stands for the individual clergy, and for the Church as an Established institution within the State, with spiritual power. After the rites of passing the line, he concludes that *the true insult is to my cloth* (*RP*: 240) and demands an apology from the Captain. The substitution of *cloth* for priestly garments (material for product) and for priestly status (garment for power) is a double metonymy of the rhetorical type *metalepsis* (Gibbons 1767).

Colley refers variously to his clergyman's clothes as *garb*, *canonicals*, *raiment*, *the sartorial adornment of my calling*, and *the ornaments of the Spiritual Man* (*RP*: 223). The effect of the substitutions depends on understanding that each term has a number of associated conceptualisations. Although *garb* is simply dress, *canonicals* indicates the holy consecration of the priest committed to the canons or laws of the Church; *sartorial adornment* is ironical - sartorial is associated with elegant professional tailoring, and adornment with superficiality of a costume put on for show; *ornaments of the Spiritual Man* refers the reader to concept that priests put on special clothes as a sign of status. These one-word metonymic substitutions as short-cut descriptions were prevalent in the historical period Golding is imitating, as was an

obsession with the social importance of correct dress. As examples of standard rhetorical devices their effect is relatively small. The cumulative effect of a macro-metonymy based on clothing is, however, of great importance for the structuring of Colley's character and the development of the plot of this narrative (Pankhurst 1997).

Colley is aware of the ambiguity of his position on board. When surprised by Cumbershum and Deverel, he shouts '*I am unclothed*' (RP: 235), meaning that he cannot be seen in public without the signs of his status, *not a bare-headed clown but a man of God* (RP: 228). Before going to present himself to the Captain, an important occasion: *I attended to my clothes with more than usual care ...* (RP: 198). This is paralleled by the ceremonial clothing he wears when he demands and receives an apology from Captain Anderson (RP: 242-5). In contrast, Colley without clerical clothes is unable to stop Cumbershum and Deverel from fighting noisily outside his cabin (RP: 220). His dilemma is highlighted by physical discomfort. If he wears his *Cloth* to obtain the crew's respect, he is physically tortured by the equatorial heat and liable to be mistaken for one of the lower classes:

I could be, without the sartorial adornment of my calling, mistaken for an emigrant! I was debarred from intercourse with the ladies and gentlemen and had been given no opportunity than that first one of addressing the common people. Yet to endure that heat and moisture in a garb appropriate to the English countryside seemed impossible. (RP: 223)

With his self-confidence undermined by his ridiculously sunburned appearance, Colley is convinced of the value of his clothing and his need to be supported by the emblems of priesthood. He writes of:

... my own sense of unworthiness at having appeared before our people in a garb that was less than fitting. Indeed, these were the sort of men who needed a *uniform* - both one to wear and one to look up to! (RP: 246, author's italics)

He knows intuitively - and correctly - that he will be judged by his *uniform*, and without it his uncertain status and personal weakness will be seen. He attaches great importance to being unclothed, seeing it as the cause of his humiliating experience. The negative interaction between Colley and the rest of the ship has ambivalent results, because Colley attaches guilt to himself as well as to the other passengers and the sailors. The specific description of the sailors as *These were the sort of men who ...* moves from the insider group association of *our*

people to the distancing effect of *the sort of men* confirms that Colley perceives his position as an outsider. Awareness that he is nothing without his formal clothes, standing for his assumed authority, and the implied equivalence between his clerical dress and uniform, add force to this interpretation. After the unpleasant humiliations he suffers, he once again examines his attitudes and behaviour, blaming incorrect dress for his problem:

I saw at once that I had deceived myself entirely if I supposed that appearing in shirt and breeches and in this guise I should exert the authority inhering in my profession. Nay - are these not of all people those who judge a man by his uniform? My "uniform" as I must in all humility call it, must be sober black with the pure whiteness of bleached linen and bleached hair, the adornments of the Spiritual Man. To the officers and people of this ship, a clergyman without his bands and wig would be of no more account than a beggar. (RP: 225)

To judge a man by his uniform implies that the appearance is taken for the reality, in a social context where uniform is an important metonymic indicator of status. The irony is that dressing up for the part cannot disguise Colley's inadequacy or save him from victimisation. The phrase forms a link between the Navy and the Church, as it echoes the First Officer's summary of the episode: *The uniform does not make the man* (RP: 154).

A complex relationship of cause and effect extends to a general metonymy. The wearing of clerical dress identifies Colley, functioning as the cause as well as the outward sign of his own sense of identity. But the clothes are also the cause of another effect, the dislike of all the sailors for him, and their action to humiliate him. He deceives himself into thinking that proper dress will save him, not understanding that the effect is quite the opposite. Thus, metonymy is seen in the single word *Cloth*, and in its recurring use as a meta-narrative device.

9.6.2.3 Talbot's account of events.

Talbot has a rather different view of Colley's personal appearance and clothing. In Talbot's journal (RP: 104 ff.) Colley goes into the fo'castle. Talbot narrates the same events retold in Colley's letter. This account, apart from ironic use of exclamatory syntactic forms, presents the scene literally:

What was my astonishment to see the back view of Mr. Colley appear from beneath the afterdeck and proceed towards the people's part of the vessel! This in itself was astonishing enough, for he crossed the white line at the mainmast which delimits their approach to us unless by invitation or duty. But what was even more astonishing was that Colley was dressed in a positive delirium of ecclesiastical finery! That surplice, gown, hood, wig, cap looked quite simply silly under our vertical sun! He moved forward at a solemn pace as he might in a cathedral. The people who were lounging in the sun stood at once and I thought, with a somewhat sheepish air. Mr. Colley disappeared from my sight under the break of the fo'castle. (RP: 105)

The comments, intended for his godfather as reader of the journal, contain conventional assumptions on his part about the importance of external features. While clothing represents the professional or social status of the wearer, the existence of the white line which divides the ship into spaces for upper and lower classes is a metonymy of place representing division of power or authority. The fact that Colley crosses the white line is *astonishing enough* for Talbot, who by implication regards Colley as lacking the power and authority to do so. The evaluating comments quite *simply silly* and *as he might in a cathedral* express Talbot's condescension towards the parson. The same phrases indicate the imminent failure of Colley's attempt to use place and clothes to stand for the power and authority of the clergy. Within the frame, English clerical life and institutions, Colley's low self-esteem and sense of humiliation are to be remedied by re-identifying himself by his Cloth, the person by the external appearance.

Through the repetitions, we are asked to revise an opinion formed on the basis of Talbot's earlier account of the episode, in which Colley appears *quite simply silly*. Colley has wrongly assumed that his appearance in full clerical robes will change contempt into respect, and that he will have power. This process of metonymic reasoning, in which he unconsciously substitutes clothes for his self-identity as priest, does not protect him from the consequences of the sailors' rough treatment of him. As the rest of the ship's passengers watch, Colley loses his clothes, his dignity, and all hope of reasserting himself. At the same time, Talbot's disgust at the bestiality of the clergyman's behaviour communicates to the reader that Colley is not altogether sympathetic, that if he is humiliated he has brought it upon himself by naïvely attaching too much importance to his clothing as a means of self-assertion.

The description expands the fact that Colley is now semi-naked, in a styles which indicate through repetitions the dramatic importance of this scene as the climax to Colley's disgrace:

For now, like some pygmy Polyphemus, like whatever is at once strange and disgusting, the parson appeared in the left-hand doorway of the fo'castle. His ecclesiastical garment had gone, and the marks of his degree. His wig had gone - his very breeches, stockings and shoes had been taken from him. Some charitable soul had in pity, I supposed, supplied him with one of the loose canvas garments that the common people wear about the ship; and this, because of his diminutive stature, was sufficient to cover his loins. (RP: 116-7)

He is now seen dressed in a canvas shirt, evoking (with the earlier *delirium*) a straitjacket and madness. The removal of Colley's clothing represents the removal of any power he may have had on board. This extends the metonymy 'clothes for person' into the contiguous domain 'clothes for power', but with the effect of destroying earlier assumptions. Predictions he had made as to the outcome of wearing clerical dress are shown to be wrong.

The third account of Colley generalises the situation of the individual in social perspectives. Talbot and Summers discuss Colley, after trying in vain to rouse him from his bunk where he is determined to die. Summers explicitly alludes to misrepresentation of the wearer by seeing clerical dress as a misleading mark of profession, status or rank:

(Talbot) "He is a parson!"

(Summers) "The uniform does not make the man, sir. He is in despair, I believe."
(RP: 154)

This view of Colley opens a number of linguistic recontextualisations in support of the theme. Golding's presentation of the event focalises the concept that clothes represent the person, but the idea is subverted by Summers. This key to the interpretation of Colley's character calls on a number of linguistic and pragmatic contextualisations. The epigrammatic form of 'The uniform does not make the man' suggests a generic interpretation. By means of the negation, Golding questions general socio-cultural belief in the power of uniform, and its identifying and conserving functions in the class structure. At the same time, he implicitly highlights belief in the metonymic value of clerical dress. But the implicatures remain ambiguous - Summers could be using uniform here to make a specific comment on Colley, the outsider, whose failure is personal, social and professional.

In conclusion, the function of clothing in this text is that it stands for the personal identity of the character, but moves ambiguously between general and specific interpretations. Starting with conventional rhetorical devices such as *Cloth* for the clergy, it functions as a macro-metonymy because it dominates description and motivates action, combining descriptive detail with a metonymic frame for the forwarding of the narrative.

9.7 Summary.

In this chapter I have argued that the pervasiveness of metonymy in narrative text merits analysis. After recalling the types of metonymy which are instantiated in single words or short phrases, I considered the effects of metonymy in the structure of entire narratives. In the narratives under discussion, metonymies are developed in various ways. Riffaterre's theory that subtexts which facilitate understanding can be created by contiguity to the main text gives a special function to metonymy in relation to other stylistic elements. It facilitates stylistic effects such as humour, caricature and parody, and permits the development of both predictable and unpredictable outcomes. On the basis of the pervasive metonymic relationships in the development of a narrative, metonymy is a point of departure for the development of metaphor and symbol.

Metonymy is an important means of relating the text to the world which we already know. This is especially relevant to the imaginative reconstruction of worlds which were previously unknown to us, in genres such as historical or crime fiction. Metonymy can be understood as one of the possible interfaces between fiction and real life, therefore it also plays a role in the interaction between text and reader. By metonymy here I mean the term in its most general sense, including narrative organisation of text and thought processes shared by author and reader.

Metonymy as proposed by Jakobson and developed by Lodge is a means of forwarding narrative, and of creating scene and character by part for whole and cause for effect relations. When repeated or recontextualised it provides cognitive networks for interpretation within complex narratives where we risk losing our way in the plot because of the mass of details to be remembered. Metonymy as a meta-narrative device operates at different levels, at single moments and through recontextualisations both of words and experiences.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSIONS.

The research undertaken for this thesis considered metonymy from a number of perspectives, taking a wide view because metonymy lies on the borders between semantics, pragmatics, cognitive psychology and stylistics. Data was found in spoken and written genres, especially narrative fiction, with the aim of comparing different theoretical approaches to describing and explaining metonymy. Metonymic ways of thinking are ubiquitous although their scope is sometimes unrecognised. The interest of metonymy lies primarily in the complexity of its characteristics and functions, which the research has attempted to describe.

The starting point was found in the ancient studies of Rhetoric and Poetics, and in more recent attempts to follow them by classifying different types of metonymy into taxonomies. But metonymy is creative language, so new formulations whether ephemeral or longer-lasting rapidly invalidate any typology created on the basis of examples. Some metonymies become conventionalised, others disappear in the process of widening or narrowing denotations. Certainly, metonymy is one of the important agents of linguistic change.

This thesis accepts the validity of general relational principles and semantic theories of metonymy while claiming that they are too limited to account for all its realisations. The most convincing and best-known examples of metonymy are based on general semantic relationships such as part-whole, cause-effect, act-participants, possessor-possession, container-contained, or experience-convention. Since the purpose of this research was not to examine and reclassify the classical tropes in order to propose a new typology, the question of potential differences between synecdoche and metonymy, still a subject of academic debate, is avoided by considering synecdoche, or the part-whole relationship, as one type of metonymy. It was shown to have particular value in two areas: the selection of detail for description in narrative, and along with the cause and effect relationship as one of the general principles for the metonymic models by which we understand the world.

A semantic account is not sufficient because metonymy has consequences for syntax. Whether a reference is metonymic or not depends on the verbal predication attached to the noun phrase in which it is realised. The effects of metonymy on anaphoric pronouns and verbal concord mean that it gives rise to apparently agrammatical formulations which are in

such common usage that they are preferred to the strictly grammatical forms. It is an agent of syntactic variation as well as of semantic change, in both acting as a bridge between concepts within a syntactic and semantic frame.

From the pragmatic perspective, metonymy is a useful reductive device, akin although not identical to ellipsis. The selection of salient properties of an entity and hence metonymic reference permit rapid effective communication, because the salient feature can represent either a single or multiple referents, or may refer to a whole schema of events. Recognition and understanding require contextualisations, however brief, and a degree of shared encyclopaedic knowledge or common ground between the participants in a communication.

The meanings of the label 'metonymy' are widened by other considerations. While pragmatic theories of the function of metonymy in communication are valid for short examples, they do not fully account for metonymic effects in longer narrative, where stylistic and poetic considerations must be added to immediate communication of information. The most notable of these functions develops from the underlying principle of contiguity present in both the syntagmatic ordering of words within a sentence, and the ordering of text within a narrative. A further, more controversial extension of the concept has been developed through psycholinguistic and cognitive theories which consider thought to be structured by universal models of cognition, of which metonymy is one. Each of these types of metonymy is linked to the other by the presence of similar cognitive principles of contextualisation, contiguity and referentiality. The present research verifies that metonymy in noun or verb phrases is characterised by similar underlying relations to metonymy as a means of connecting and forwarding written texts and metonymy as a way perceiving the world.

Thus, metonymy is a complex phenomenon which can be examined from different theoretical perspectives. Theories of metonymy as language co-exist with theories of metonymy as an organisational procedure in the structuring of narrative and as mental process. Primarily, metonymy is a mental strategy. As a creative process, it is also an interface connecting thought to language and to the experienced world. In this sense metonymy is closely related to metaphor, and is the basis for the formation of some types of symbolic expression. There are, however, fundamental differences between metonymy and metaphor as was shown in this thesis through cognitive as well as semantic and pragmatic approaches to analysis. The

present research was motivated by interest in the pervasively fuzzy boundaries between literal and figurative language, between creative and conventional language use and between metaphor and metonymy. Whether considering the referential aspects of metonymy which tend towards the literal, or its more poetic and possibly metaphoric aspects, there are intermediate areas where construal depends on complex contextual factors. Categorical criteria are subject to nuanced shades of distinction which do not allow clear boundaries to be drawn. This is potentially advantageous in the analysis of idioms, neologisms and tautologies, where the existence of a continuum or cline of figurativity accommodates both literal and figurative interpretations. Although it is tempting to use metonymy as a universal explanatory principle we cannot simply transfer the theory that metaphor is ubiquitous into parallel claims for metonymy. This research has demonstrated that the one is as important as the other.

Stylistic approaches to metonymy include appreciation of the rhetorical and poetic effects of substituting one word or entity for another, and of its metanarrative functions in the structure of text. Metonymy was shown to be more than a formal device for linking elements of plot, scene and character in narrative fiction. Specific metonymies can be used repeatedly in a narrative, with recontextualisations which extend their original episodic significance to the metanarrative frame. This gives rise to a number of special cognitive effects which facilitate access to the narrative world, and are particularly valuable as a means of entering a world which was hitherto unknown to the reader. The present research has confirmed the power of metonymy as an organising principle in narrative structure, and a means for creating humour and parody by juxtaposing incongruities. It is a key to understanding because it permits us to relate mental representations of the literary world to those known from everyday experience. It therefore offers an additional means of analysing the structure of a narrative.

Suggestions for further research on metonymy reflect the different theoretical perspectives which have informed the present work, insofar as they are linguistic, pragmatic, cognitive and stylistic. They would seek data in different genres of spoken or written discourse and use both introspective and experimental methods. This pluralist approach is justified by the ubiquity of metonymy and the inadequacy of any single theory to account for all its facets.

Examination of metonymy in noun phrases has confirmed that a number of general relational principles motivate language use and language change in different contexts. Further research

might consider the part played by these principles in the formation of denominalised and eponymous verbs, tautologies and neologisms in languages other than English and French. The reasons for the active production of metonymies and their subsequent conventionalisation need further clarification, as do the changes in grammar brought about by metonymy in certain schemas.

A potentially fruitful field of research is the realisation of metonymic principles in different genres, languages and cultures. The present thesis has focused on reports and narrative, but by no means exhaustively, without exploring other genres such as science fiction, humour and political rhetoric. The question of whether metonymy motivates the choice of modality in Indirect Speech Acts has been raised and needs further investigation, using comparative methods to examine realisations in different languages. Although metonymic principles are said to be universal, demonstration of this from a number of different cultures or from children's acquisition of figurative language has not yet been undertaken.

Different methodologies adopted for research would also lead to interesting results. The development of figurative language use in children requires empirical observation techniques. The recognition and understanding of metonymy can be investigated by means of psycholinguistic experiments with a number of subjects, and appropriate statistical techniques. Of particular interest is research distinguishing between metonymy and metaphor in the areas of comprehension and appreciation, with the purpose of establishing whether and how metonymy is a distinct category. Finally, the presence of metonymy as a metanarrative device in literature and as a tool available for stylistic analysis opens many possibilities in the field of literature research and teaching.

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ARTICLE

Interpreting unknown worlds: functions of metonymic conceptualization in William Golding's *The Sea Trilogy*

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Abstract

William Golding's *Sea Trilogy* (1991) presents the reader with a number of problems, notably how to link the remote spatio-temporal location of the narrative with the author's explicit intention of commenting on present-day society. This article argues that the reader's task is facilitated by the use and frequent recontextualization of conventional metonymies. Metonymy is defined as a conceptual mechanism, extending beyond rhetorical one-word substitutions. In the particular case of this narrative, Golding continues a stylistic feature already noted in *Lord of the Flies* (1954), where changes in self-perception are marked by means of changes in outward appearance. A series of conceptual metonymies in *The Sea Trilogy*, functioning to highlight conventional beliefs, structures the development of an important episode and facilitates the reader's interpretation of thematic material.

Keywords: *conceptualization; conventional; Golding, William; interpretation; Lord of the Flies; metonymy; narrative; point of view; Rites of Passage; The Sea Trilogy*

1 Introduction

William Golding's *To the Ends of the Earth: A Sea Trilogy* (1991) consists of *Rites of Passage* (1980) with the subsequent volumes *Close Quarters* (1987) and *Fire Down Below* (1989).¹ The narrative takes the form of a pseudo-journal, written by a young aristocrat, Edmund Talbot. It is the account of a voyage in a barely seaworthy old ship, carrying cargo and passengers to Australia, in the early 19th century. Amongst the passengers is an Anglican clergyman, James Colley, educated but of humble rural origins. He is isolated from the crew and all the other passengers by his profession, which has changed his social status. He becomes the butt and victim of the sailors' cruel pranks, is publicly disgraced, and within a short time dies of shame. This episode forms the central core of the narrative of *Rites of Passage*. The narrative continues until Talbot, after many vicissitudes, reaches Australia. The voyage is envisaged by the author to be 'a convenient metaphor for a life' (Baker, 1982: 137) and as a 'black comedy with relevance to the present situation' (160). Within this framework Golding makes frequent use of metonymy, together with metaphor and other tropes, especially paronomasia. This article considers the functions of metonymy in the reader's approach to a narrative which represents an unknown world, remote from present everyday experience.

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For the reader, the intrinsic reliability of the central episode is threatened both in the tale written by the narrator/observer, Talbot, and the embedded first person narration of Colley himself. The location of events, and their character, are remote from normal experience for the readers. These are Talbot, who reads the letter Colley wrote for his sister; the assumed contemporary reader of Talbot's journal, i.e. his godfather, for whom he initially intends it; and the actual reader. The critical problem, then, is to consider the means by which Golding allows the various readers to access the microcosm of society represented on board the ship during the voyage. Commonplace metonymies, relating personal physical appearance to the character's aspirations, intentions and state of mind, are significant means of understanding and evaluating the necessary contextual information. Bypassing the need for lengthy explanations, metonymy, relying on conventional assumptions, influences the reader's decision about the veracity and reliability of the narration, insofar as it colours judgements of Colley's character and his 'outsider' status, both before and during the episode of his disgrace.

2 Metonymy as a means of communication

2.1 Extension of meaning

Metonymic processes are grounded in the general principle of relationship through contiguity (Fontanier, [1827] 1968; Schofer and Rice, 1977; Bredin, 1984; Bonhomme, 1987). This relationship is formed within a single material or conceptual domain (Preminger and Brogan, 1993). A traditional rhetorical approach to metonymy in text limits figurative meaning to word substitution. In Golding's text, this type of metonymy occurs as single-word substitutions, based on either physical or conceptual contiguity of the referents. Terms such as 'The Cloth' for the clergy, 'Aesculapius' for the study of medicine, or 'The Muse' for painting, lend some pseudo-authenticity to Golding's textual imitation of early 19th-century style.

A second important feature of metonymy is that, like metaphor, it allows for more than one referent, playing on conceptual ambiguities (Taylor, 1989). In many linguistic realizations of ambiguity, notably in non-literary genres like headlines, conventions require that instant comprehensibility be achieved in elliptical allusory style. Metonymic substitution enables the necessary widening of semantic scope. In current political reporting, for example, one of the most commonly used metonymies is the substitution of the name of a well-known place for some aspect of its current life. The headline 'Quebec need never happen here' (*The Scotsman*, 30 October 1995) implies discussion of the history of Canada, but the report refers explicitly to recent elections during which the independence of the province of Quebec was an issue. The metonymic substitution – 'Quebec' – for the implied full referent – 'the acrimonious struggle over independence in Quebec province' – shortens by ellipsis the route to comprehension. The writer assumes that the reader will be familiar with the

contexts of time and place, and share conceptualizations of the ways in which both Quebec and Scotland might achieve independence. Economy of expression allows the covert communication of a number of implicatures, including in this case the assumption that the Scots would be clever enough to avoid the difficulties experienced in Quebec. Golding makes similar use of multiple reference through naming, referring to different parts of the ship, for example the fo'castle, the masthead, as descriptions of places, but also metonymically to stand for the activities which go on there or the people who are lodged in them.

The effectiveness of metonymic substitutions depends on immediacy and availability of context, but some metonymies have more general validity than others. Although Golding has to take some pains to explain terms for oceanic areas such as 'The Doldrums', parts of the ship like 'bowsprit' and the maritime language 'Tarpaulin', he can refer to the concept of class barriers by a metonymy of place in which the physical stands for the abstract. A white line has been painted on the deck to separate the middle-class passengers' living quarters from those of the lower-class emigrants. In a later recontextualization (*Rites of Passage*: 274), the egalitarian Mr Prettiman and his fiancée 'pass on over the white line that separates the social orders'. Near the end of the voyage, the white line barrier between classes is washed away in a great storm, during which social differences have disappeared in the face of common danger. The line on the deck represents metonymically the concept of social separation (the reason for its existence) and is a recurring reference to the rigid structure of society, one of the major themes of the narrative.

2.2 Cognition and metonymy

In addition to the physical contiguity of place and people, contiguity of concepts gives rise to metonymies which enable the connection between abstract and physical aspects of a cognitive domain to be made rapidly and with certainty (Gibbs, 1994). Accordingly, metonymy may occur within any context of shared beliefs or experience, sociocultural or political (Genette, 1972; Eco, 1973), and its scope is extended to include reference within, for example, a society, an ideology, or a life. In this view, relationships between concepts are fundamentally metonymic, since contiguity occurs in the thought processes of the individual or in the cultural beliefs of the group. In *Fire Down Below*, Golding uses this type of metonymic relationship within cultural beliefs to structure the extensive treatment of the theme of friendship. The relationship between Talbot and Summers, the First Lieutenant of the ship, is strongly highlighted through metonymic reference to an exchange of clothing. Within the single domain of Talbot's personal culture, and in the context of the ship, it stands for an exchange of valuable gifts, hence the abstract connotation 'friendship', as in the legend of Glaucus and Diomedes, warriors who exchanged gold armour for bronze (Homer, 1949: 120–3). Although remote in time from the 19th century, the legend is part

of Talbot's classically-based culture and thus a valid relationship of contiguity between friendship, gifts and clothing exists within his personal beliefs.

In this series of complex references, metonymy is closely interwoven with metaphor. Metonymy and metaphor, however, although closely related to each other, differ with respect to the number of domains in which they function (Black, 1979; Goossens, 1990; Croft, 1993). Metaphor bridges two domains of experience, enabling transfer between domains which have hitherto been perceived and understood as separate, by a relation of analogy or resemblance. Metonymy, on the other hand, relates two elements of one domain, enabling inferential links to be made between material and abstract values of a term, but on the basis of contiguity. Another example, from *Close Quarters*, the second volume of *The Sea Trilogy*, is the representation of the ship as a theatre, which illustrates the complex referentiality of Golding's figurative style. The parodic 'people's quadrille', a 'play within the play' during the ball (*Close Quarters*: 125), demonstrates metonymically, by reference to clothes, physique and behaviour, how members of the crew view the passengers. The metonymic representation stands within a single domain, that of the ship's society. From the narrator's point of view, the ship can also be seen as a 'theatrical image' representing metaphorically a different domain from real life, although the one resembles the other (*Rites of Passage*: 109).

Cognitive theories of communication propose that metonymy is more than a form of words, or contiguous relationships within imposed sets of social or cultural beliefs. It is a basic conceptual mechanism which enables reference and understanding to take place, and therefore an important element of interpersonal communication. Metonymic concepts 'are part of the ordinary, everyday way we think and act as well as talk' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 37). With respect to the analysis of literature, Lakoff and Turner (1989) argue that metonymic mechanisms facilitate comprehension of the writer's intended meaning. To communicate novel or strange features of his fictional world, the writer manipulates familiar ways of perceiving the real world, which already exist in everyday experience and language. This function of metonymy, which gives realistic detail to the basic metaphor of the formative voyage, offers a viable explanation for the accessibility of Golding's narrative.²

3 Metonymic reference as a guide to understanding

3.1 Recognition of change in *Lord of the Flies*

In his first published novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954), Golding makes cognitive effects by using terms and concepts which are grounded in metonymic perceptions, especially with respect to the thematic significance of changing physical appearance. Generally, he relies on the convention that clothing or body decoration can be regarded as an important aspect of personal identification

(Hoebel, 1972; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). When the stranded boys are saved by the arrival of a ship, the rescuing officer's view of Jack reduced to 'a little boy who wore the remains of an extraordinary black cap on his red hair' (*Lord of the Flies*: 222) is an ironic echo of the initial identification of Jack wearing a choirboy's cloak, ruff and square black cap. These items have been presented as signs of his special status in the social hierarchy of the choir and in the eyes of the outside world. During the power struggle between the groups of boys, Jack transforms his face by painting it, recalling the practice of some primitive societies. We see Jack's face become a frightening mask which changes both his own and the others' behaviour. When the boys, led by Jack, decide to paint their faces for their pig-hunting, their self-perceptions are transformed. At this point in the narrative, the basic metonymy of identification by outward appearance supports the reader's ability to envisage 'the liberation into savagery that the concealing paint brought' (*Lord of the Flies*: 191).

Cognitive effects are confirmed by the sustained nature of the reference, thus underlining the dramatic nature of behavioural changes found when the boys begin to act without the constraints of social rules:

He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself, but at an awesome stranger.
 . . . his sinewy body held up a mask that drew their eyes and appalled them.
 He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling. He
 capered towards Bill and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack
 hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.

(*Lord of the Flies*: 69)

The change is a consequence, or possibly a confirmation, of primitive emotions hitherto hidden by social conventions. The metonymic substitution of one face for another implies an ironic dissociation from the boys' image as members of a choir, and a move towards a new attitude of association with less constrained behaviour.

3.2 Expression of attitude in *The Sea Trilogy*

Golding's creative exploitation of conventional representations is also a stylistic element in the later work under discussion here, *The Sea Trilogy*. After the episode of Colley's death (*Rites of Passage*), one of the passengers is recorded by the narrator as having distinct views about the universal values of appearance and its function in society. This woman, Miss Granham, metonymically called 'the ship's Minerva', has an authoritative voice. Her strong character and radical views about human nature, a shock to the conventional Talbot, are strongly implied in her attitudes to symbolic forms of personal decoration, which are metonymic means of understanding the individual's social or professional status:

I found that this woman, this handsome, cultivated maiden lady, holds views which would freeze the blood of the average citizen in his veins! She does *literally* make no distinction between the uniform worn by our officers, the woad with which our unpolished ancestors were said to paint themselves and the tattooing rife in the South Seas and perhaps on the mainland of Australia.
(*Rites of Passage*: 269)

Talbot's perceptions, conditioned by his narrow upper-class upbringing, lead him to believe that moral or psychological attributes are indisputably evident in choice of clothes. In *Miss Granham*, Golding presents a different voice, questioning the illusion that the narrator is necessarily a reliable witness to events. Both Talbot and *Miss Granham*, however, share with the reader a process of cognition constrained by assumptions and beliefs. According to Gibbs (1994: 320) 'people take one, easily perceived aspect of something to stand for the whole or for some other part of it'. This function of metonymy extends to the substitution of an item of clothing for the person wearing it. The identification of the person by style of dress requires a cognitive effort proportionate to the amount of contextual knowledge already available to the reader.

4 Metonymy in narrative structure

4.1 Functions of recontextualization

When the reader encounters problems in the interpretation of scene, character and plot, the ambiguity of reference allowed by metonymy entails special effects which act as clues. Riffaterre (1982) claims, with reference to realist writers such as Trollope and Flaubert, that if a conventional metonymy such as an item of jewellery or clothing, a facial expression or a recurring behaviour is used as a focalizing device at key moments or in particularly important episodes, then it acts as a prompt to the reader's memory, facilitating interpretation and evaluation. The use of concepts familiar to the reader as points of reference, or as a kind of cognitive guide, is recognized by Fowler (1977) as likely to ensure a reliable degree of understanding. This economical means of ensuring that the reader's interpretation will be fast and accurate is evident in *The Sea Trilogy*. In particular, Golding re-uses and recontextualizes metonymic reference to people by their dress at critical moments of the episode of Colley's disgrace and death.

4.2 The representation of the clergyman in *Rites of Passage*

In discussing *Rites of Passage*, Golding agreed with the suggestion that through Colley's 'dressing up in all of his priestly finery . . . the image is going to elicit some sort of respect, that the image itself will project some sort of authority' (Baker, 1982: 164). Rather than simply describing the clothes worn by Colley at

different points of his voyage, he uses this image to highlight moments in his disgrace. Similarly, in the third volume of the trilogy, *Fire Down Below*, Talbot's change into sailors' clothes marks his change of personal attitudes, his perception of himself and his progress towards more egalitarian behaviour. Talbot's self-image, however, unlike Colley's, is successfully changed by the transformation of his appearance:

By the time I was clothed in a complete costume I was wholly reconciled to the change. Of course, no man could be elegant in deportment when clad so! Such clothing would force on the wearer a decided casualness of behaviour. Indeed, I date my own escape from a certain unnatural stiffness and even *hauteur* from that very day.

(*Fire Down Below*: 27)

Metonymic reference to past events is a problematic means of communication when the actual reader can have only reported or historical knowledge of the environment. As an economic means of ensuring that readers interpret the markers of social status quickly and correctly, Golding highlights a generally valid conceptualization, that in certain situations change of clothing has meaning. These include loss of the clothing, acquisition of other clothes, impact of the change on the intradiegetic narrator, and associated changes of status or attitude. Golding's narrative foregrounds the relationship that is assumed to exist between image and real person, but may confirm or disconfirm its validity. Certain types of clothing are indicators of wealth or rank, their meaning contextualized in the environment of a specific episode, as when Captain Anderson wears his full-dress uniform to Colley's burial at sea. Confirming the belief that different outfits represent different roles in the real world, Golding's sailors are barefoot and stripped to the waist, his aristocrat has a greatcoat with three capes, his clergyman wears the conventional wig, gown and gaiters of the period. Underpinning the effects of these descriptions is the concept that change of clothing is understood to signal change of status. In the context of the voyage, social status is clearly presented both through the protagonist's introspections and the narrator's judgmental observations, which in turn prompt the reader's recognition of metonymic value in the description.

At critical moments of the narrative, self-presentation through dress is consistently highlighted in a significant way. When Colley confronts the Captain to demand an apology for his humiliation at the hands of the crew during the 'Crossing the Line' or 'badger bag' ceremony, he asks permission to visit the fo'castle. Underpinning Colley's motive is his conviction that the 'uniform' of the priest is as important as the Captain's as a visible statement of authority. He argues 'You have your uniform, Captain Anderson, and I have mine' (244) to justify his request to go down to the fo'castle in full clerical dress, with the intention of reasserting his own power and status. The narrative function is to trigger the events which lead to Colley's further humiliation, and death.

Significant recontextualizations of clothing as a metonymic representation of status are found throughout the narration of Colley's disgrace, both in his own and Talbot's versions of events. The narrative point of view contained in Colley's letter to his sister is dominated by the importance of maintaining correct appearances. Colley is obsessed by the need to wear his clerical dress and is shown to be an outsider in society, both on land and at sea. His attitudes confirm the metonymic importance of his 'uniform' as, stranded between social classes, he identifies his own dilemma. Without ecclesiastical clothes, he is unable to assume his role as priest. If he wears them, he is tortured by the strange world of tropical heat for which he is mentally and physically unprepared. His introspections combine the type of metonymy which indicates professional status through appearance, and the concept that clothing is a social indicator. As an outsider, Colley is intuitively convinced of his need to be supported by the emblems of priesthood, which link him with the middle-class passengers: 'I could be, without the sartorial adornment of my calling, mistaken for an emigrant! I was debarred from intercourse with the ladies and gentlemen' (*Rites of Passage*: 223).

At other points in his personal narration of events, this interpretation is reiterated. His reflections on his humiliating experience communicate his feelings through a series of metonymic mechanisms which function to shift responsibility to the outer appearance, away from personal inadequacy. 'Cloth' is a conventional metonymy standing for clerical clothes, so 'the true insult is to my cloth'. Colley assumes that uniform stands for the power of the individual: 'Had I then worn such apparel as I was now suited in, no one would have attempted . . .'. Colley's introspections move into his assumption that personal authority is defined by uniform: 'my own sense of unworthiness at having appeared before our people in a garb that was less than fitting. Indeed, these were the sort of men who needed a uniform – both one to wear and one to look up to!' (240–6). Colley's self-awareness develops as he writes of his failures and encodes his experience of ostracism in terms of appropriate dress. At the same time the reader's attitudes towards Colley undergo a shift, moving between sympathy and distancing, in proportion to the number of shared assumptions with respect to self-presentation.

Colley's status is finally destroyed when his clerical dress is removed in a central episode witnessed and narrated by Talbot. The account is structured in such a way as to focus attention on the clergyman's clothes, and the implications of changes of dress. Colley goes down to the fo'castle wearing his full clerical robes as he desired. The event highlights both the ridiculousness and folly of the action:

Colley was dressed in a positive delirium of ecclesiastical finery! That surplice, gown, hood, wig, cap looked quite simply silly under our vertical sun! He moved forward at a solemn pace as he might in a cathedral. The people who were lounging in the sun stood at once and I thought, with a somewhat sheepish air.

(*Rites of Passage*: 105)

Golding gives two different reactions to Colley. Talbot, seeing only the outer appearance, thinks nevertheless that Colley has gone mad: 'a positive delirium of ecclesiastical finery'. To him, Colley looks 'silly'. In contrast, the *people* react to what the clothes stand for, and stand up as they would in a church, as a sign of their respect for the passing of a fully-robed priest. Colley naively assumes that his appearance in full clerical robes will change contempt into respect. This 'uniform' does not protect him despite the travesty of English church-going behaviour, when the people stand on the entrance of the clergy. Colley's action is based on the presupposition that his self-assertion will succeed, but the account highlights his failure. In full view of the ship's society, Colley loses his clothes, his dignity, and all hope of reasserting himself. At the same time, Talbot's personal reaction of astonishment and disgust distances the reader from Colley. Colley is not altogether sympathetic: if he is humiliated he has brought it upon himself by attaching too much inappropriate importance to his clothing. Part of his humiliation is that he is stripped of his clerical robes and dressed in a canvas shirt suggesting a straitjacket:

His ecclesiastical garment had gone, and the marks of his degree. His wig had gone – his very breeches, stockings and shoes had been taken from him. Some charitable soul had in pity, I supposed, supplied him with one of the loose canvas garments that the common people wear about the ship; and this, because of his diminutive stature, was sufficient to cover his loins.

(*Rites of Passage*: 116–17)

This appearance represents metonymically Colley's alienation from society. Any power he thought he enjoyed as a clergyman is destroyed with the disappearance of his robes; since Colley now only wears a 'loose canvas garment', he is reduced to nothing. The reader is asked to share the point of view of Talbot, who invites us to watch what Colley is wearing, and to share his understanding that the canvas shirt stands metonymically for the clergyman's disgrace. Golding points the way to a potential interpretation by Colley's own references to his clerical dress in a context which has general cultural validity. Colley reflects: 'To the officers and people of this ship, a clergyman without his bands and wig would be of no more account than a beggar' (*Rites of Passage*: 225).

The cognitive importance of uniform is recontextualized when Talbot and the First Lieutenant, Summers, discuss Colley's retreat into mute despair. They have tried in vain to rouse him from his bunk, where he is determined to die. Talbot perceives Colley in terms of his profession, whereas the more perceptive Summers has seen beyond the professional clothing to the emotional condition of the man:

(Talbot) 'He is a parson!'

(Summers) 'The uniform does not make the man, sir. He is in despair I believe.'

(*Rites of Passage*: 154)

Golding's presentation of the event focalizes the concept that clothes represent the person, but the idea is subverted by Summers. This key to the interpretation of Colley's character calls on a number of linguistic and pragmatic contextualizations. The epigrammatic form of 'The uniform does not make the man' suggests a generic interpretation. By means of the negation, Golding questions general sociocultural belief in the power of uniform, and its identifying and conserving functions in the class structure. At the same time, he implicitly highlights belief in the metonymic value of clerical dress.

5 Conclusion

Golding uses metonymy in a number of ways to facilitate access to the narrative of *The Sea Trilogy*. Some instances of the trope are ornamental, conventional metonymies. He refers to the clergy, who wore good cloth suits, as 'The Cloth', and to the strong-minded Miss Granham as 'the ship's Minerva', the nickname standing for the qualities of the goddess. Additionally, he assumes the existence of a reader who, like the narrators Talbot and Colley, is aware of metonymic values associated with personal appearance. Recurring metonymic reference to uniform is a means, in this narrative, of identifying the profession and status of its wearer and presenting changes. The effects made by this referentiality depend on a thought process which recognizes that the clothes are more than descriptions, as much as on the metonymic substitution 'clothes for person'.

In recontextualizing the different references, Golding structures episodes, particularly in Colley's obsession with the importance of self-presentation through appropriate dress. In using this cognitive apparatus as a stylistic device, however, Golding sometimes appears perversely to contradict our first conclusions, introducing a different point of view from Lieutenant Summers, who denies the importance of uniform in evaluating human action. As the metonymic references are recontextualized in the narrative, nevertheless, the activation of metonymic processes remains a valid means of ensuring understanding, despite the remoteness in time and experience of Talbot's voyage, the incomprehensible rituals of shipboard life and the strange episode of Colley's disgrace and death.

Notes

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- 2 Another account of non-literal language, including metonymy, is based on relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 237-9) All figures of speech are accounted for by a principle of interpretative language use. (See Papafragou, 1996.)