Selected Synecdochic Mechanisms in Prose[1]

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1. Theory of synecdoche

In stylistics synecdoche is usually dealt with in connection with metonymy, as they are both figures of contiguity. In fact, the former is often discussed as a subtype of the latter, though their mutual relationship is a complex one and there are also treatments that postulate analysing metonymy in terms of double synecdoche and thus assigning synecdoche the superior position (Todorov 1986). Although the relationship between the two tropes will not be the subject matter of this article, the fact that they are strongly interrelated ought to be kept in mind. For the needs of the present discussion we will adopt the view that the notion of metonymy encompasses synecdoche as well.

There are two kinds of contiguity relations that are basic for synecdoche:

1) between part and whole (part-whole),

2) between genus and species (genus-species).

The part-whole relationship may manifest itself in the following kinds of substitution:

a) part for whole (*pars pro toto*),

b) whole for part (*totum pro parte*).

The relationship between genus and species may be reflected in substituting:

c) genus for species,

1 This article is based on my unpublished MA thesis, *Metonymy in the Selected Samples of Modern English and American Poetry and Prose, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, 2003.*

d) species for genus.

These basic relations are not the only ones synecdoche may be based on. Okopień-Sławińska (1984), for instance, distinguishes the following kinds of synecdochic substitution in addition to the ones mentioned above:

E) material for object,

f) singular for plural,

g) definite number for indefinite number.

However, it is enough to recollect Jakobson's treatment of metaphor and metonymy to realise that these tropes can be viewed from a very broad perspective. Jakobson applies the terms 'metonymic' and 'metaphoric' not only to words or phrases, but to much longer stretches of texts, and even to whole genres. And thus, according to Jakobson prose is basically metonymic, while the main principle underlying poetry is metaphoric. As Mayenowa observes in her introduction to the Polish edition of a selection of Jakobson's essays (1989), this statement does not simply refer to the frequency with which metonymic or metaphoric expressions appear in a given text, but rather to the way it is structured as a whole. Indeed, in his remarks concerning the semantic development of discourse Jakobson points out that topics may be connected on the basis of their contiguity or their similarity, and he calls the first way metonymic and the other metaphorical. This suggests a much wider perspective than the one identifying as metonymic or metaphoric a text in which the two relationships must be crystallised in the form of visible tropes.

A major part of Jakobson's work concerns the role of metonymic and metaphoric processes in basic communication, and an important source of data for him is the studies of aphasia. He describes two major kinds of aphasia: the 'similarity disorder' and the 'contiguity disorder', and interprets their symptoms from the point of view of a linguist. Patients suffering from the 'similarity disorder' have problems with paradigmatic operations. As a result, they cannot think of definitions, heteronyms or synonyms of words. Still, they are able to use combinative strategies and their speech abounds in metonymies: they tend to substitute *fork* for *knife*, or *smoke* for *pipe*. On the other hand, the 'contiguity disorder' is characterised by the inability to perform syntagmatic operations. Therefore the communicative strategies that these patients can rely on will be based on similarity, that is on the use of synonyms and metaphors. The studies of aphasia illustrate the link between syntagmatic relations and metonymy as well as the connection between paradigmatic relations and metaphor.

When focusing specifically on synecdoche, Jakobson mentions cinema strategies such as close-ups (when the camera selects a particular part or detail of a per-

son or object) or deliberate presentations of a source of sound with the sound inaudible. Speech may also be heard when the speaker has already disappeared from view. In prose, he points to the use of synecdochic details.

Jakobson's theory together with the general categories he proposes has been applied in the study of literature by David Lodge (1976, 1977). It has also influenced the emergence of the class of macrotropes, that is semantic figures whose scope of operation is larger than a sentence. They are to be distinguished from microtropes, which are observable below the sentence-level (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczewska 2003).

Let us now concentrate on yet another perspective from which our subject matter may be viewed, namely on the cognitive one. According to cognitive linguists (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Ungerer and Schmid 1996), metonymy is first of all a mental phenomenon. It is one of the most fundamental mechanisms that help to organise our thinking processes, and therefore it finds a natural reflection in language – not only in ornamental, rhetorical style, but first of all in everyday speech. Therefore, within this approach the account of the way metonymy works will incorporate elements of the cognitive description of mental processes such as categorisation.

The starting point is the observation that what we can see around us consists of a variety of entities, all of them having different features, of which colour and shape are only the simplest and most obvious examples. Unless we are in a factory and look at a series of brand–new products of the same kind, everything we can see has at least some qualities which make it unique. In order to be able to recognise objects and organisms as familiar we must superimpose some structure upon the otherwise chaotic reality. This structuring of the incoming data is called categorisation and it leads to assigning items to various classes, called cognitive categories. Categories are mental concepts built around prototypes. A prototype is central to a category, because it is its "best" member – that is the most representative one. As we can see, category members can be rated as regards their "typicality" or "goodness". The more peripheral the member, the less typical it will be, as it may be well seen on the sample from Rosch's rating tests carried out in 1975. Rosch asked her informants (American college students) to arrange the listed members of ten various categories according to their typicality, and the results she obtained for the category WEAPON were as follows:

top eight: gun pistol, revolver, machine gun, rifle, switchblade, knife, dagger …
middle ranks: whip, ice pick, slingshot, fists, axe …
last five: foot, car, glass, screwdriver, shoes (after Ungerer and Schmid 1996: 13).

An important point which must be added here is that categories have no clear boundaries. This means that it is not possible to say exactly where one category ends and another begins – the borders between them are "fuzzy".

Categorisation enables us not only to recognise entities that we can see around us as belonging to familiar classes of organisms or objects. It is also in operation when we respond to language signs: when we hear the word *lamp*, it evokes the image of a lamp that we consider the most representative of the category. However, there is one reservation to be made here: usually the context will influence our choice of the best category member. Therefore, prototypes are said to be context-dependent. The term 'context' is to be distinguished from 'situation': the main difference between the two is that the former refers only to mental representation, whereas the latter is connected with the external reality. 'Situation' has been defined by Ungerer and Schmid (1996:46-47) as "the interaction between objects in the real world", and 'context' as "a cognitive representation of the interaction between the concepts", where the 'concepts' refer to the cognitive categories activated in the human mind by the incoming words. What must also be added is that one particular context triggers a string of associations: there are many contexts stored in the long-term memory and if any of them are relatable to the original one, the are activated as well. Such a group of interrelated contexts is called a cognitive model. Cognitive models can be expanded endlessly and, what is more, they can be in turn grouped into networks thanks to further associations.

To examine the way metonymy works, Lakoff (1987) uses the framework of idealised cognitive models (ICMs). The example of an ICM Lakoff gives is that of a week. This notion is easily identifiable as a sequence of seven days, each having its own name and a fixed position one after another. Together they form a whole. This model is, however, an idealised one. As Lakoff points out, there are no seven-day weeks in the objective reality. They exist only in the minds of human beings, and what is more – only within a certain cultural background, as there are cultures in which weeks have a different structure. The general principle formulated by Lakoff concerning the way metonymy operates within idealised cognitive models is as follows: "Given an ICM with some background condition (e.g. institutions are located in places), there is a 'stands for' relation that may hold between two elements A and B, such that one element of the ICM, B, may stand for another element A. In this case, B = the place and A = the institution. We will refer to such ICMs containing stands-for relations as metonymic models" (Lakoff 1987:78).

Lakoff observes that metonymy is a major source of prototype effects. This is not surprising if we remember that thinking in terms of prototypes involves focu-

sing on the "best member" of a category. If we hear the word *cat*, it is not possible for us to think of all kinds of cats we have seen or know to exist in the world. We tend to imagine a cat that we consider the most typical one, unless the context directs our thoughts towards a more specific representative of the feline family. Anyway, we tend to ignore the diversity of the category and focus on one part of it only, so what we are doing is substituting *pars pro toto*.

Lakoff discusses a very specific kind of prototype effects, namely those connected with social stereotypes. He demonstrates that such cases can be analysed in terms of metonymic models. To illustrate the way social stereotypes work, Lakoff presents the concept *mother*. It may be understood in a number of ways, for example as the person who gives birth to a child or the woman who raises a child. The second understanding of the word would cover adoptive mothers and stepmothers in addition to natural ones. *Mother* can also be understood as the wife of the father. Usually the context determines our choice of the prototype, for instance a sentence like:

3) She was adopted when she was two, and after twenty
years she set out to look for her real mother.

would suggest the first understanding as "the best example" of mother. There are, however, other factors which additionally influence our choices, and here we come to the role of social stereotypes. In our culture the image of the mother which prevails is that of a woman who stays at home, takes care of children and looks after the house. We can see this even more clearly if we think in turn of *a working mother*. As Lakoff observes, it is not just "a mother who happens to be working", but it is easily felt that the notion of the working mother stands in contrast with the housewife-mother. Yet another stereotype comes into play here – namely that of work. On the whole, work should be done in return for money and away from home, which excludes household activities.

By analysing social stereotypes we can see an example of how synecdoche works at the level of cognition: people may think of a category as a whole in terms of one of its members or one subcategory when it makes their knowledge of the world easier to organise. This metonymic strategy may not be revealed in language, and tends to be used only subconsciously.

There are also metonymic models whose characteristic feature is that they are explicitly reflected in language, and what is more they are bound to the language they belong to. These language-specific metonymies are like the one investigated by Rhodes (1977). Rhodes noticed that the speakers of Ojibwa, a Native American

language of central Canada, conventionally answered the questions about the way they reached a place by mentioning the embarkation point, like:

4) I stepped into a canoe. (after Lakoff 1987:78)

Of course, it is only one of the series of activities involved in travelling from one place to another. Lakoff (1987:78) presents the ICM of "going somewhere in a vehicle" as containing the following points:

Precondition: You have (or have access to) the vehicle.
Embarkation: You get into the vehicle and start it up.
Centre: You drive (row, fly, etc.) to your destination.
Finish: You park and get out.
End point: You are at your destination.

However, by mentioning only one part of this ICM the whole model can be evoked. In Ojibwa this part is the embarkation point. In English there is no such convention, and therefore no such consistency can be observed. Still, metonymy can work here in a similar way, only the speakers can choose the part of the ICM that they want to use, like in:

5a) I just stopped a Mercedes and jumped in!
(Embarkation)
5b) I rowed all the way to your camp. (Centre)
5c) I asked my father to give me a lift. (Precondition).

2. Textual mechanisms based on synecdoche

We may now proceed to a practical analysis of a handful of prose excerpts. There are synecdochic mechanisms to be traced in all of them, and apart from describing the exact nature of these mechanisms we are also going to focus on the function they have in each particular case.

Our first example is a sentence coming from *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. Oliver has just regained consciousness after several days of fever and is lying in bed:

> 6) [...] He soon fell into a gentle doze, from which he was awakened by the light of a candle: which, being brought near the bed, showed him a gentleman with a very large and loud-ticking gold watch in his hand, who felt his pulse, and said he was a great deal better. [...] (p. 96).

The doctor who comes to visit the boy is depicted as *a gentleman with a very large and loud-ticking gold watch in his hand*. The focus is on two selected synecdo-

chic details, that is the watch and the hand, of which the former is given definitely more attention: it is described in terms of its size, colour and the noises it produces, whereas the hand is only mentioned because of its contiguity with the watch.

The description as a whole is synecdochic by virtue of being focused on the two selected details of the doctor's appearance, but if we look more closely at the relationship between the person and the hand and compare it with the connection existing between the person and the watch, we will see that they are of a slightly different nature. The first case involves a link between a whole and its integral part (when considered as a lexical part-whole relation, it will be bound with inalienable possessives, cf. Lyons 1979), whereas in the second instance the object in focus is evidently a separable addition to the whole (cf. alienable possessives). Therefore, only the first relationship is in fact synecdochic, while the second one exemplifies a different kind of metonymic link, namely between a professional and one of his attributes. The watch may be treated as a characteristic object indicative of the man's role in the whole situation: we need to associate the watch with the function it has in this particular context and further on to identify its owner as a doctor. One more aspect which may be worth considering is the possibility that this particular element has been foregrounded here as the detail which, in the whole appearance of the stranger, has attracted the most of Oliver's attention.

A different kind of synecdochic depiction is exemplified by the next fragment of literary prose that we are going to quote. It comes from *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald. John T. Unger has just arrived at his friend's magnificent château and begins his visit there:

> 7) [. . .] Afterwards John remembered that first night as a daze of many colours, of quick sensory impressions, of music soft as a voice in love, and of the beauty of things, lights and shadows, and motions and faces. There was a white-haired man who stood drinking a many-hued cordial from a crystal thimble set on a golden stem. There was a girl with a flowery face, dressed like Titania with braided sapphires in her hair. There was a room where the solid, soft gold of the walls yielded to the pressure of his hand, and a room that was like a platonic conception of the ultimate prison - ceiling, floor, and all, it was lined with an unbroken mass of diamonds [...] (pp. 15-16).

Synecdoche as the basic mechanism governing the composition of this fragment serves to capture the way John feels, his amazement and fascination. It is to convey the sense of being exposed to a flood of impressions which he finds difficult to absorb. Therefore, the description consists of a mixture of fragmentary images: in the first sentence colours are mentioned without being ascribed to things, music appears with no indication of its source and faces without any information about their

owners. What follows resembles a series of photographs: human figures and places are shown for a moment and disappear, without even being placed exactly in space and time.

But a synecdochic portrayal of the world does not have to be connected with perception which is so subjective. It may also be employed to make the reader aware of how much the characters are able to hear or see in a very physical, objective sense. Let us look at another fragment of the same short story by Fitzgerald – John has just escaped from the château together with the two sisters of Percy Washington:

8) [...] It was long after four when he became aware of footsteps along the path they had lately followed, and he waited in breathless silence until the persons to whom they belonged had passed the vantage-point he occupied. [...] John waited until the steps had gone a safe distance up the mountain and were inaudible. Then he followed. [...] (p. 43).

What the character can perceive depends here not so much on his emotional state as on the objective conditions of the environment. These may include the amount of light, the level of noise and the presence of various physical obstacles that might interfere with his vision and hearing. In this particular case the whole scene is set at night, so John can see very little and this accounts for the presentation of events being evidently sound-oriented. Sounds are talked about, they are identified as footsteps, but the people who are walking remain invisible and unknown to us until John is able to see them at dawn. Synecdoche underlies the composition of the whole fragment, and it also motivates the metonymy that can be observed below the sentence-level: in the expression *the steps had gone a safe distance up the mountain*, *steps* stand for "people" as the sound for its source.

Let us now look at a scene from *Oliver Twist*:

9) [...] Oliver was awakened in the morning, by a loud kicking at the outside of the shop-door: which, before he could huddle on his clothes, was repeated, in an angry and impetuous manner, about twenty–five times. When he began to undo the chain, the legs desisted, and a voice began.
'Open the door, will yer?' cried the voice which belonged to the legs which had kicked at the door.
'I will, directly, sir,' replied Oliver: undoing the chain, and turning the key.
'I suppose yer the new boy, ain't yer?' said the voice through the key-hole.
'Yes, sir,' replied Oliver.
'How old are yer?' inquired the voice.
'Ten, sir, ' replied Oliver.
'Then I'll whoop yer when I get in', said the voice; [...] and having made this obliging promise, the voice began to whistle. [...] (p. 37).

The above fragment is governed by a similar principle as the previous one: the whole presentation is synedochic by virtue of being sound-oriented. This strategy has been employed in order to reflect the restrictions on Oliver's perception, which are again ascribable to objective factors, though of a different kind, namely to the existence of a tangible physical obstacle. The intruder behind the door remains invisible and his presence is manifested only by the description of the noises he makes. He is therefore being referred to mainly as *the voice*, though also as *the legs*, the latter being the source of the noises he makes when kicking.

Synecdoche employed in order to reflect a fragmentary perception caused by external factors is frequently accompanied by covert allusions to metonymic thinking: characters usually link what they can perceive with what remains hidden. This process is often only implied like in the two fragments quoted above – in 8) we understand that John is able to make some associations between the sounds and their source, but it is not pointed out directly. In 9) it is also evident that Oliver can link the noises with what is happening behind the door. It is even signalled by the way the synecdochic depiction of his 'visitor' is built: the reference to the intruder as *legs* departs from the otherwise sound-oriented method of presentation precisely because the boy can associate the sound with its immediate source. Still, the very fact of making these associations by Oliver is no more than implied.

It is, however, possible to find passages in which metonymic thinking comes into focus:

> 10) [. .] At last they heard the sound of slow shuffling footsteps approaching the door from the inside. It seemed, as the Mole remarked to the Rat, like someone walking in carpet slippers that were too large for him and down-at-heel; which was intelligent of Mole, because that was exactly what it was. There was the noise of a bolt shot back, and the door opened a few inches, enough to show a long snout and a pair of sleepy blinking eyes.
> 'Now, the *very* next time this happens,' said a gruff and suspicious voice, 'I shall be exceedingly angry' [...] (p. 55).

In the above fragment, coming from *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame, the Rat and the Mole are waiting at Mr Badger's door. The door, just like in the previous excerpt, is what obstructs their vision, only this time with the characters outside. The presence of this physical obstacle is again marked by making the whole fragment synecdochic. At first only sounds are described, because this is all the information the characters have about what may be happening inside. This is the moment when metonymic reasoning is focused on: we are told directly how the Mole interprets what he can hear and how successful his interpretation is. Then the

door is opened a bit so that it no longer fully obstructs the view, but still does not allow the characters to see everything. Therefore, the depiction of Mr Badger is fragmentary and focuses only on his snout, eyes and voice.

In order to see another explicit reference to metonymic thinking, let us come back to Fitzgerald's short story and to the moment when John is still on the way to the château. At a certain stage of his journey he is invited to get into a lavish and beautiful limousine:

> 11) [...]
> 'What a car!' cried John again, in amazement.
> 'This thing?' Percy laughed. 'Why, it's just an old junk we use for a station wagon.' [...]
> If the car was any indication of what John would see, he was prepared to be astonished indeed. [...] (p. 12).

What we find here is a direct statement concerning John's way of reasoning. However, the synecdochic quality of this fragment is different than in the previous examples: the character's perception is not interfered with in any way and his vision is not fragmentary in an obvious physical sense, but still he interprets what he can see as a part of a larger set of objects. His way of thinking is based on the awareness of the contiguity between the vehicle and the rest of the family property of the Washingtons. Additionally he forms associations by similarity – judging by the magnificence of the car, John anticipates the rest of the possessions to be of an equally high standard.

In another passage to be quoted we can also identify an underlying synecdochic mechanism, and this time it is accompanied by an unusually elaborate reference to metonymic thinking, including the introduction of the topic into the conversation between the characters. The fragment comes from *The Wind in the Willows* and the setting is the Wild Wood, just before visiting the Badger. The Rat and the Mole are both lost in the snow: desperate and tired, they come across a door-scraper. This fills the Rat with joy, which the Mole does not understand, and the Rat begins to dig and remove the snow in the vicinity.

> 12) [...] After some further toil his efforts were rewarded, and a very shabby door-mat lay exposed to view.
> 'There, what did I tell you?' exclaimed the Rat in great triumph.
> 'Absolutely nothing whatever,' replied the Mole, with perfect truthfulness. 'Well now,' he went on, 'you seem to have found another piece of domestic litter, done for and thrown away, and I suppose you're perfectly happy. [...] Can we *eat* a door-mat? Or sleep under a door-mat? [...]'
> 'Do-you-mean-to-say,' cried the excited Rat, 'that this door-mat doesn't *tell* you any-

thing?'
'Really, Rat,' said the Mole quite pettishly, 'I think we've had enough of this folly. Who ever heard of a door-mat *telling* any one anything? They simply don't do it. [...]'
'Now look here, you – you thick-headed beast [...]. Not another word, but scrape – scrape and scratch [...] if you want to sleep dry and warm tonight, for it's our last chance!' [...] (pp. 52-53).

Their efforts end in a success: they find a little door, which turns out to be the door leading to Mr Badger's underground house. The principle governing the presentation of the whole scene is similar to that observed in 9) and 10) – the snow may be said to be a physical obstacle interfering with the characters' vision. The way they perceive the surroundings is, however, not so evidently fragmentary as in the two examples mentioned: the door-scraper and the doormat are in no way inseparable from the door, although they are linked with it by what Jakobson would call spatial contiguity. The fact that the three objects do not constitute an integral whole is the reason why the Mole has no awareness of what he can see being incomplete. Still, although the physical proximity of the items in question cannot be taken for granted, it may be predicted with a high degree of probability thanks to associations by contiguity. Metonymic reasoning is the key issue in this fragment and it is crucial for the development of events, being the source of inspiration for the Rat in what he thinks and does. His first associations are evoked by the door-scraper, and they are confirmed at the moment when the doormat is found. Now he is certain somebody-'s house must be very near, which he conveys to the Mole in a way that is also metonymic, that is by describing the effects of finding a shelter. What is highlighted in the passage is the ability to reason metonymically as opposed to the lack of such abilities. This contrast is reflected in the conversation between the Rat and the Mole, in which the characters present two different interpretations of the same situation. Although he finally joins his friend in digging, the Mole remains reserved and fails to understand the reason of the Rat's excitement until the door is revealed. The reader is certainly expected to be more successful and to follow the Rat's line of thinking from the very beginning.

Let us now consider two examples of non-literary prose. The first one is a short article published in *Newsweek* (6 March 2000), entitled "Captain Underpants: Irreverence Rules". It concerns a series of books for children and the reasons of its growing popularity:

13) To understand the huge success of Dav Pilkey's Captain Underpants books for kids (3 million copies in print), go directly to page 28 of the fourth and most recent instalment, "Captain Underpants and the Perilous Plot of Professor Poopypants". Our heroes,

elementary-school students Harold and George, are in trouble when the principal catches them rearranging letters on the school sign. "Do you boys think that's funny???" "Well . . .yeah," the boys reply. "Don'tyou?" "NO," screams the principal. "I think it's rude and offensive!" "That's why it's funny," says George. And that's why 7-to 10--year-olds devour these irreverent novels about two potty-mouthed pranksters and their principal, whom the boys have hypnotized into thinking he's a superhero called Captain Underpants (*Newsweek*, 6 March 2000: 58).

In order to convey the reasons why the series has been so enthusiastically received by youngsters, the author relies on a strategy which is in its essence synecdochic, that is he describes one short episode, together with the cheeky dialogue it contains. It is clear that in this way he intends to present the series as a whole, rather than merely inform us that it contains this particular scene: we are provided with a *pars pro toto* and the expectation is that we should be able to make all the necessary inferences on this basis. The response that is expected from the readers of this article resembles to a significant extent the chain of associations formed by John T. Unger in 11): first of all, they are to establish the part-whole relationship thanks to reasoning by contiguity and secondly, they are to make predictions about the character of the other episodes through associations by similarity.

The next excerpt to quote contains the opening lines of an article entitled "A Little Nicotine Could Be Good For You":

14) Look: don't even think about using this as an excuse to keep smoking, OK? The subject is nicotine, not the toxic, carcinogenic source it's most often associated with, tobacco. [...] (*Newsweek*, 6 March 2000: 57).

Here, the author also predicts that certain associations are likely to be formed by his readers. Soon after appearing in the title, nicotine will probably be linked with tobacco, and tobacco with cigarettes or cigars. What constitutes this process is a chain of *pars-totum* associations. But if metonymic thinking was of help in the processing of the previous article, here it is not desirable at all: the author intends to focus on nicotine alone and does not want us to apply what he will say to tobacco and cigarettes. Therefore, he finds it necessary to openly discuss the possibility of such a misinterpretation and makes a very direct remark concerning the unwanted metonymic associations. In this way the synecdoche is spoken about but it does not exist as a factor influencing the processing of language – its potential existence has been noticed and stifled by an explicit comment.

Let us now come back to literary prose. The next excerpt we will consider comes again from *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*:

15) [...] He escaped from jail and caught the train for New York, where he sold a few medium-sized diamonds [...] (p. 20).

The synecdochic mechanism that can be observed in this fragment is of a different character than in any of the examples previously discussed. It necessitates an analysis in Lakoffian terms: catching the train for New York stands here for the whole journey to this destination by rail and is an excellent example of a substitution of the ICM of 'going somewhere in a vehicle' with one of its parts, namely with embarkation.

In the following fragment of *The Wind in the Willows* we find another instantiation of a similar principle:

16) [...] very shortly afterwards a terribly sleepy Mole had to be escorted upstairs by his considerate host, to the best bedroom, where he soon laid his head on his pillow in great peace and contentment [...] (p. 22).

Laying the head on the pillow stands for going to bed – a single stage of the event represents the event as a whole. This time the relevant ICM is not that of 'going somewhere in a vehicle', still the substitution operates according to the same principle. This metonymic mechanism is described by Radden and Kövecses (1999) as SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT, and the kind of ICM that allows for such a substitution as the Event ICM.

Let us now look for analogous examples in non-literary prose. The following excerpt comes from an article entitled "Don't Show Weakness", dealing with black Americans' approach to mental health and psychotherapy:

17) Dr. Alvin Poussaint remembers clearly a visit to the housing projects of Boston in the late 1960s. A public-health nurse had directed him to a woman in need of help. When he identified himself as a psychiatrist, says Poussaint, who is black, the woman refused to open her door [...] (*Newsweek*, 14 July 1997: 48).

Refusing to open the door stands for not letting the doctor in and ultimately for not accepting any help from him. Opening the door not only appears as a part of the whole ICM of accepting somebody's visit in one's house, but is also an external manifestation of the woman's negative attitude towards the psychiatrist, so we can additionally observe elements of the cause-and-effect relationship involved here.

Our next example will come from the introduction to an interview with Biljana Plavsic (the president of the Serb Republic in Bosnia), which is focused mainly on the story of her being arrested in Belgrade by the Serbian police:

18) [...] The next morning, after pressure from the international community, she was released and took an army helicopter back to her base in Banja Luka. [...] (*Newsweek*, 14 July 1997: 54).

Taking a helicopter to Banja Luka stands for the whole flight to this destination. What we have here is an instance of the ICM of "going somewhere in a vehicle" being substituted with the embarkation point.

Let us now look at a fragment of a report describing the attacks of Sankoh's soldiers on the U.N. peacekeepers in Sierra Leone:

19) [...] Winslow says the violence began after 10 fighters from Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front peacefully turned in their weapons. [...] (*Newsweek*, 15 May 2000: 33).

Turning in the weapons appears here instead of saying that the soldiers ceased to fight and gave themselves up to the peacekeepers: a subevent is substituted for the event as a whole.

The short sentence we are going to analyse now comes from an article about the British rock group Oasis ("Can Oasis Do It Again?")

20) [...] They bring people into stores. [...] (*Newsweek*, 6 March 2000: 58).

The intended meaning of this sentence is that a lot of people buy the group's records, and the underlying relationship of contiguity which can be identified here is between coming to a store and buying things: typically buying a record involves entering a shop as its initial stage.

One more example we are going to consider in connection with Event-ICMs is taken from an article entitled "Family pressed her to slow down" and concerning Margaret Thatcher's health problems. The sentence we will quote describes what she did after an operation:

21) [...] Although her arm was bandaged, the Prime Minister was back at her desk within hours. [...] (*The Independent*, 23 March 2002).

Being back at the desk stands here for returning to work. Additionally, the first part of the sentence contains a metonymic description of Margaret Thatcher's condition: a bandaged arm is an external manifestation of her not having yet recovered completely after the surgery.

When analysing instances of an event being referred to by mentioning one stage of it, Lakoff is not interested in the effects that employing such a mechanism might have in an aesthetic sense: from his perspective metonymy in language is viewed first of all as a manifestation of basic cognitive processes. Still, it seems that in

some of the passages quoted above speaking of an event in terms of one of its subevents may actually have a certain aesthetic effect on the reader. For instance, in 16) the phrase *laid his head on his pillow* stimulates our imagination more than *went to bed* or *retired* as it evokes an image which is more concrete. In 17), 19), 20) and 21) describing an event by mentioning one part of it only also results in building more concrete images and thus adding vividness to the text.

3. Conclusions

On the basis of the above analysis we can point out to several ways in which synecdochic mechanisms may function in prose. When looking at the literary excerpts we have examined, the first observation to be made is that macrotropic synecdochic presentations can be used as a means of signalling a particular point of view. Typically, they will be employed to reflect a restricted perception caused by the existence of some objective physical obstacles which interfere with a character's vision or hearing (cf. 8, 9, 10, 12). However, a fragmentary depiction of a scene may also signal the existence of some other, less tangible factors which can handicap a character's interaction with the environment, such as emotional states (cf. 7).

Synecdochic portrayals of the first type are frequently accompanied by references to metonymic thinking. They may be quite explicit remarks like the ones we have observed in 10) or 12), but the more usual ones seem to be the implicit hints to be seen in 8) or 9). Such allusions include, for instance, the information about a character's actions undertaken in response to what he has heard or seen. What is interesting, an implicit allusion to metonymic thinking may itself be based on synecdoche: in 9) referring to the intruder as *legs* is at the same time an element of a fragmentary description and an indication that a certain interpretation has been made by Oliver.

We have also seen synecdochic mechanisms employed for certain stylistic reasons in non-literary prose: in 13) the explanation of the reasons of the popularity of the book series about Captain Underpants, which rests on substituting *pars pro toto*, makes the text more vivid and more intriguing than a direct presentation of the series as a whole. It is so mainly because of the active involvement that is required of the reader for making the necessary inferences.

A stylistic effect consisting in adding vividness to a text can also be observed in at least some of the instantiations of Event ICMs being substituted with subevents (cf. e.g. 16 or 17).

Finally, let us mention 14) as a special case where a potential *pars pro toto* (*nicotine* for "tobacco") would have no other effect than misleading the reader and therefore it is followed by an explicit comment aimed at its neutralisation.

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Mechanizmy synekdochiczne w prozie

Synekdocha, klasyfikowana często jako rodzaj metonimii, jest figurą wykorzystującą relacje przyległości, zwłaszcza pomiędzy częścią a całością oraz gatunkiem a rodzajem. W tradycyjnej retoryce synekdocha polega na zastąpieniu jednego wyrażenia innym, przy czym rodzaj substytucji uwarunkowany jest leżącą u jego podłoża określoną relacją styczności.

Już jednak u Jakobsona spojrzenie na metonimię (w tym synekdochę) jest znacznie szersze: stosuje on termin *metonimiczny* na określenie nie tylko fraz, lecz również tekstów i całych gatunków literackich. Wskazuje też na synekdochiczny charakter niektórych strategii stosowanych w kinematografii, takich jak zbliżenia. Obserwacje poczynio-

ne przez Jakobsona miały wpływ na wyodrębnienie klasy makrotropów, czyli figur o zakresie wykraczającym poza domenę zdania.

W językoznawstwie kognitywnym metonimia, z synekdochą jako jej rodzajem, uważana jest za jeden z podstawowych mechanizmów rządzących procesami myślenia, znajdujący swoje odbicie w języku.

Analiza przytoczonych w artykule fragmentów tekstów pozwala dostrzec działające w nich mechanizmy synekdochiczne oraz ich znaczenie. I tak, w tekście literackim synekdochiczne prezentacje o charakterze makrotropowym mogą pełnić funkcję strategii służących sygnalizowaniu określonego punktu widzenia. Opisy tego typu oddają często ograniczenie percepcji spowodowane obiektywnymi czynnikami fizycznymi, a czasem również stanami emocjonalnymi. W pierwszym przypadku zawierają aluzje dotyczące myślenia metonimicznego. W tekstach nieliterackich strategie oparte na synekdosze pozwalają na osiągnięcie określonego efektu stylistycznego i podniesienie atrakcyjności przekazu słownego.