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Openness, Reflective Engagement, and Self-Altering Literary Reading

Abstract: Studies that assess modes of reading engagement indicate that open reflection within a distinctively expressive mode of reading engagement triggers not only embodied, enactive, and affective animation of the narrated world (Caracciolo, 2014) but also shifts in text- and self-understanding (Kuiken & Douglas, 2018; Menninghaus et al., 2019). There is gradually increasing clarity about the processes by which these modes of reading engagement – and their aesthetic effects (e. g., appreciation, being moved, sublime feeling) – are related to shifts in understanding. Contrasting formulations propose that (a) readers expand their sense of *possible selves* through engagement with fictional characters’ experiences (Slater et al., 2014); (b) readers’ response to formal and narrative features of the text motivates exploration of *alternative self-concepts* (Djikic & Oatley, 2014); and (c) readers’ receptive engagement with formal and narrative aspects of the text affords expressive enactment of metaphoric structures that reveal or disclose a self-relevant narrative world (Kuiken & Douglas, 2018). Related studies (e. g., Tangerås, 2018) suggest that self-altering literary reading is especially likely to occur during life crises. In continuing evaluation of these models, researchers rely on experimental studies of variations in reader traits, experimental studies of moment by moment reading activities, and experimental and interview studies of readers during life crises.

Introduction

...we need books that...grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us.

– Franz Kafka (2016, p. 16)

How and when does literary reading provide a self-altering “axe”? An empirical answer requires prior theoretical consideration of how reading cuts deeply into the oft warily protected depths of human experience. Kafka’s prescription suggests that he is neither concerned with reading that “makes us happy” nor with reading for “pleasure.” Less obviously perhaps, he is neither concerned with the “appreciation” of literary style nor with the “imaginal vividness” that lin-

guistic nuance affords. But, if neither pleasure, appreciation, nor compelling imagery is at issue, what is the sterner stuff of Kafka's literary imperative?

The proposal that frames the present review is that this sterner stuff is the *self-altering expressiveness*¹ of literary reading. Briefly, literary reading invites a mode of expression that is self-relevant, revealing, and transformative; expressive literary engagement may affect the reader while reading, for a few moments after, and, occasionally, for hours and days. However, depending on the conception of expression at issue, expressive reading will seem to be the focus of a few or, alternatively, many empirical studies. Thus, without prior theoretical articulation of how Kafka's axe cuts into frozen experiential depths, identifying relevant empirical studies is not possible. Comparison of theories of expression invites consideration of different – and sometimes subtly contrasting – conceptions of self-altering expression.

Self-Altering Expressive Reading

Reflective Reanimation of Categorical Conceptions

One comprehensive account of literary reading (Caracciolo, 2014) posits that engagement with literary texts (e. g., poetry, short stories, novels) depends upon forms of representation that are grounded in first-hand personal experience. This account depends upon differentiation between abstract (transmodal, symbolic) representational systems and grounded (enactive, embodied, embedded, and extended) representational systems (Ward et al., 2017). Grounded representational systems have their origin in comprehension of the enactive, embodied, embedded, and extended “here-and-now” of directly lived situations. During literary reading these same representational systems are reactivated during comprehension of the grounded “here-and-now” of imaginally lived situations. Thus, imaginal engagement is personal (and, in that perfunctory sense, expressive) by virtue of the reader's reliance upon grounded representational systems inherited from firsthand engagement with the lived world.

One version of this approach proposes that literary reading almost exclusively involves grounded representational systems (Barsalou, 2010; Matheson & Barsalou, 2018). The guiding notion is that contemporary theories of grounded representational systems have largely displaced earlier theories of abstract rep-

¹ Expressiveness is more than evidence of being in a particular state; it is articulation and clarification of something about what “it is like” to be in that state (Robinson, 2005, p. 264).

representational systems. However, an alternative version of this approach describes the *interaction* between abstract and grounded representations (Mahon & Caramazza, 2008; Lambon Ralph et al., 2017). Some aspects of this interaction occur immediately, within milliseconds of initial presentation of a word or phrase. Other aspects are temporally extended; that is, activation of abstract representations flows, over time, toward activation of grounded representations. For example, reading the word “flying” may initially activate an abstract representation (e.g., a transmodal, symbolic conception of “airborne transportation”) that, under certain conditions, flows toward activation of various enactive, embodied, embedded, and extended representations (e.g., a kinaesthetic sense of “bodily ascent,” a visual sense of a “receding horizon,” an auditory sense of “wind in my ears”). This transition involves movement from the pre-reflective ability to say only what is abstractly named and recognized toward the reflective ability to say something “more” that involves grounded representations. Such saying provides *reanimating explication* of what a selected intentional object “is like,” that is, how it has appeared and how it might appear again. The active reflection of reanimating explication adds an agentic element to what nonetheless remains a perfunctory conception of expression.

Expressive Reanimation as Response to Experiential Gaps

Actively reanimating explication of an abstractly named and recognized intentional object is triggered by initial detection of an experiential gap between reflectively abstract and pre-reflectively grounded representations. Paraphrasing Merleau-Ponty (2012), Landes (2013) portrays the expressiveness of literary writing and reading as dependent upon an initial “silence” (p. 143), a vaguely sensed gap between what is understood and what can be said. This “gap” is *not* blank (Davis, 2013) but rather an evocative “holding ground” (p. 6) for “knowing and yet not knowing at different levels” (p. 7). Davis’s discussion of this holding ground borrows from James’s (1890/1950) portrayal of an “active gap” at the “fringe” of consciousness (pp. 249 ff); James’s discussion influenced Husserl’s (1973) analysis of categorial “horizontality” (pp. 116 ff); and Merleau-Ponty’s (2012) encapsulation of the Husserlian analysis refers to a vaguely felt sense of “the same” that “gives direction to thought” (p. 235).²

² Bühler (1934/1990) similarly adapted Husserl’s account of speech production to describe the “spheric fragrance” of words. Jacobs (2015) borrows Bühler’s example of how the fragrance of the word *Radieschen* (garden radish) can “evoke red and/or white color impressions, crackling sounds, or earthy smells and spicy tastes in the minds of the readers and ‘transport’ them

From within this fertile silence, as Merleau-Ponty was aware, the flow of activation from abstract to grounded representational systems is not always optional. Apraxia patients, for example, are impaired for (grounded) firsthand object use – despite being unimpaired for naming and recognition of others' mimed object use (Mahon & Caramazza, 2008). If context-appropriate object use expresses a person's categorial conception of an object (e.g., a shovel), apraxia patients seem unable to express their grounded conceptions of objects they can abstractly name and recognize in others' activities.

Analogous gaps between abstract and grounded categorial representations occur often among individuals who are not neurologically impaired. For example, an unsettling separation between grounded and abstract understanding is evident in experienced gaps, following loss or trauma, between the grounded reliving of flashbacks or reminiscences – and the numbing irreality of deliberately remembered events (Frewen & Lanius, 2015; Fuchs, 2018). Similarly, unsettling gaps are evident in psychological disorders (e.g., obsessive compulsive disorder) that involve “dissociative absorption” (Soffer-Dudek, 2017).

In non-clinical populations, experienced gaps between abstract and grounded categorial representations are often reported by individuals who (a) become highly absorbed in perceived, imagined, or remembered events (e.g., deep hypnosis, moments of *déjà vu*, vividly real dreaming) and (b) report high scores on a personality trait called “openness to experience” (Glisky et al., 1991; Soffer-Dudek et al., 2015). Evidence that exceptionally absorbing dissociative moments are associated with openness to experience motivates consideration of whether gaps between abstract and grounded categorial representations permeate everyday language, perhaps especially among people who are predisposed to detect them and move reflectively toward their reanimating explication.³

either into a garden or to a dinner table” (p. 137). Jacobs does not, however, refer to the unease that accompanies vaguely articulable felt knowing (a moment much like having something on the tip of your tongue) that initiates such embodied “symbol grounding.”

3 Detection of a gap between abstract and grounded categorial representations initiates continuing interplay between persistently accessible abstract representations and gradually increasing access to grounded representations. Abstract representations minimally involve horizontal categorial relations (synonyms, antonyms) and vertical categorial relations (hypernyms, hyponyms), including the neural systems that “compute” such transmodal categories. In contrast, grounded representations involve (a) a taxonomic system involving similarities in visuospatial features (e.g., apple-red; watermelon-oval) and (b) a thematic system based on similarities in integrative relations (e.g., locative relations [mountain-snow], whole-part relations [monkey-foot]). The taxonomic system relies especially on shape and color features, while the thematic system relies especially on location, motion, and functional action features (Mirman et al., 2017). As construed here, categorial judgments depend upon the “computation” of a

Emotional Expression as a Prototypic Case

A complete conception of expression addresses how, in response to experienced gaps, expressive language moves diachronically toward more fully grounded categorial representations. The temporality of this process stands out most clearly in discussions of emotional expression. Affective aspects of representational structures are not always considered part of grounded (enactive, embodied, embedded, and extended) forms of representation. However, Colombetti (2014), for one, explicitly includes affect among the primary components of experientiality. Representations of emotion, feeling, and mood are interwoven with other aspects of experientiality during reflective movement toward reanimated categorial representations. Such interweaving complicates the present discussion because of several persistent misconceptions about emotional expression (Robinson, 2005). Although the language of expression applies also to dispositions, attitudes, and even beliefs, the active expression of emotions, feelings, and moods requires special consideration.

According to one formulation, bodily (behavioural, physiological) manifestations of emotions, feelings, and moods are *ipso facto* affective “expressions.” According to a second formulation, emotions, feelings, and moods are preformed internal events that become externally manifest (“ex-pressed”) in descriptive communicative utterances. According to a third formulation, bodily manifestations of emotions, feelings, and moods are consciously accessible events that are retrospectively construed (named, labeled) as “feelings” of some kind. However, each of these conceptions of expression neglects key aspects of the temporal process through which such expression occurs.

Interwoven Internality and Externality. First, the complexity of this process calls for consideration of the extent to which emotions, feelings, and moods interweave (a) abstract *and* grounded representations of *internal* sensations, postures, movements, or movement tendencies; (b) abstract *and* grounded representations of *external* percepts or images; and (c) a (Fregean) “sense” of this weave of internality and externality that is more fine-grained than these referential intensions prescribe (e.g., the “felt sense” of a perceived or imagined event “for me”; Fuchs & Koch, 2014; Gendlin, 1997). This interweave is not as abstract as a person’s reflectively accessible “self-concept” or “personality.” Neither is it as pervasive as the embodied “mineness” that lends continuity to moments of consciousness (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2012). Rather, this interweave possesses the co-constituting mutuality of internality and externality, as sug-

profile of (abstract and grounded, potentially nonlinear) similarities that determine membership within an inexact species-like class (Lambon Ralph et al., 2017).

gested by Merleau-Ponty's (2012) account of how the blue of the sky is expressively "given":

As I contemplate the blue of the sky...I do not possess it in thought, or spread out towards it some idea of blue...I abandon myself to it...it 'thinks itself within me', *I am the sky itself* as it is drawn together and unified, and *as it begins to exist for itself*; my consciousness is saturated with this limitless blue. (p. 249, italics ours)

Such an expressive moment involves the co-constitution of an external object (the sky) and its internal subjectivity (its "for-me-ness"). The latter provides an embodied sense of "self" that is very difficult to separate from the correlated sense of a "given" object.⁴

Emotional and Existential Feeling. Second, the complexity of this process motivates consideration of the breadth and scope of such self-implicating givenness. One way to articulate this breadth is to distinguish between emotional feelings and existential feelings. Both emotional and existential feelings involve interwoven internal representational structures, external representational structures, and their felt sense "for me." However, an emotional feeling involves a short-term relation with a specific intentional object (e.g., momentary fear of this coyote in my backyard); in contrast, an existential feeling involves a long-term relation with a global situation (e.g., estrangement from everyone around me; Ratcliffe, 2005), perhaps even a persistent background feeling (or mood) that shapes how one finds oneself in the world, a "feeling of being" (Ratcliffe, 2013). While the expression of existential feelings involves a global sense of self, the expression of emotional feelings involves a situated sense of self.

Third, as mentioned, articulation of this process requires consideration of (a) how representations of a feeling begin with detection of a gap between explicitly abstract and tacitly grounded categorial representations and (b) how sensing such a gap initiates reflective movement from abstractly named and recognized representations toward more fully grounded representations. For example, a smile, shrug, or raised voice toward a close friend may at first be accessible as an abstractly named and recognized event that is accompanied by a vaguely sensed feeling of *some* kind. During reflection, this vaguely sensed feeling may become explicitly articulated as a feeling of a *particular* kind (e.g., the grounded complexity of what it "is like" to feel bemused). The diachronic move-

⁴ The difficulty of this separation challenges the notion that introspection (or interoception) mediates expressive literary reading. Kukkonen (2018), for example, affirms that interoception and exteroception are integrated. She then focuses on "coordination between readers' interoception and the embodied language of the text" (p. 108). The processes by which coordinated interoception initiates readers' mindwandering and by which "interoceptive anchors" enable them to "find their way back into the text" (p. 124) remain unclear.

ment from abstractly named and recognized states and events to *reflectively re-animated* feeling qualia (grounded explication) is central to the conception of “expression” that is focal here (Robinson, 2005).

Dispositions, Attitudes, and Beliefs. Expressive explication reanimates the felt sense of categorial conceptions in general, including not only conceptions of the internality of feeling (e. g., what it “is like” to be bemused), but also the interwoven internality and externality of a situated felt sense (e. g., what it “is like” to be bemused by this close friend). By implication, expressive articulation may reanimate the felt sense of attitudinal categories (e. g., what it “is like” to *value* close friendships); dispositional categories (e. g., what it “is like” to *want* a close friend), or beliefs (e. g., what it “is like” to *believe* that this person is a close friend). By extension, expressive explication may move toward grounded reanimation of a broad spectrum of feelings, attitudes, dispositions, and beliefs during reading (e. g., what it “is like” to be becalmed on the South Sea, what it “is like” to kill an old money-lender).

The Metaphoricity of Self-Altering Expressive Reading

The process by which reflective explication leads to expressive reanimation is insufficient to explain the *self-altering* effects of literary reading – even when it involves reanimation of emotional or existential feelings. Although empirical study of when expressive reanimation is also self-altering is hardly conclusive, some evidence points to the transformative *metaphoricity* of reading engagement. Sikora et al. (2011) reported that, in a phenomenological study of response to Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, most respondents compared autobiographical events and events within the world of the text. Some referred to the settings of autobiographical events that physically resembled settings in the poem (“autobiographical diversion”; p. 265); (b) others referred to the affective tone of autobiographical events that resembled affective themes in the poem (“autobiographical assimilation”; p. 262); and (c) still others described elements in cultural narratives external to the poem (e. g., other texts) that resembled objects, persons, or events in the poem (“ironic allegoresis”; p. 262). In general, these resemblances were offered in simile-like constructions (A is like B).

In contrast, another group of readers metaphorically blurred the boundaries between events within and outside the text (“expressive enactment”; pp. 263–

265). They identified metaphoric relations between successive images in the poem; enlivened kinaesthetic and auditory images in the poem by invoking relevant autobiographical memories; and recalled autobiographical events with an affective tone that resonated with affective themes within the poem. Moreover, these respondents regularly used the second person pronoun “you” to speak inclusively about self and other (e.g., “you can’t run from it”), a style that was subsequently observed in a phenomenological study of a short story (Fialho, 2012). These results prompted closer examination of expressive enactment – including the metaphoric form of categorial explication and the quasi-metaphoric form of second person pronoun use (Miall & Kuiken, 2002; Kuiken et al., 2004).

Emergent Meaning

These studies modestly affirmed the metaphoricity of expressive enactment; they also provided preliminary evidence that such metaphoricity is creative. Historically considered (e.g., Cazeaux, 2007), and as indicated in recent research (e.g., Beaty et al., 2017), one aspect of creative task engagement is metaphoric thinking, especially its capacity to generate emergent meaning. The emergent meaning of metaphoric structures involves disclosure of category attributes that were not previously attributed to either the metaphoric vehicle or topic considered in isolation. Echoing Glicksohn and Goodblatt (1993; Goodblatt & Glicksohn, 2017), Jacobs and Willems (2018, p. 152) described this process as the integration of incongruous linguistic structures into a “meaning gestalt.”⁵

Emergent meaning in this strong sense differs from (a) how much a metaphoric representation is “appreciated” (Gibbs, 1990) or (b) how “apt” a metaphoric representation might seem (Thibodeau et al., 2017). Recent accounts suggest that the emergent meaning of literary metaphors derives from bidirectional interaction between their vehicles and topics. Fauconnier and Turner (2003) proposed that emergent meaning derives from the “blending” of features of the vehicle and topic within a momentary “space.” In its most “powerful” and creative form (“double-scope integration,” p. 58), blending resolves “clashes between [two domains] that differ fundamentally in content and topology” (p. 60). Two implications of this framework are pertinent. First, bidirectional interplay between a metaphoric vehicle and topic suggests differentiation between cases

⁵ Empirical studies of metaphorically generated emergent meaning are scattered throughout the literature (e.g., Becker, 1997; Estes & Ward, 2002; Teraï & Goldstone, 2012; Tourangeau & Rips, 1991). They will not be reviewed here.

in which concrete (grounded) vehicles guide comprehension of abstract (transmodal, symbolic) topics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and those in which abstract topics (transmodal, symbolic) *also* guide comprehension of concrete (grounded) vehicles (Danesi, 2017). Second, in response to metaphoric structures, such bidirectional interplay may be a source of the emergent meanings that contribute to transformative category reanimation (Goodblatt & Glicksohn, 2017). When such bidirectional interplay is extended to metaphoric representation of existential feelings, the result may be *self-altering* reanimation of a reader's long-term relation with a global situation (including the "felt sense" of that global situation "for me").

Extended Metaphor

The import of this claim becomes clear when the diachronically structured metaphoricity of literary reading is spelled out. First, the reflective explication that moves toward self-altering reanimation is regularly mixed with literal predication and conventional metaphoric predication (including once "lively" but now "dead" metaphoric structures). Second, the reflective explication that moves toward self-altering reanimation draws upon the emergent meaning of simple metaphoric structures, such as compound noun-noun phrases (*A-ish B*; Gagné & Spalding, 2014); nominal class inclusion sentences (*A is a B*; Glucksberg, 2008); and analogic relations (*A:B as C:D*; Wolff & Gentner, 2011). However, self-altering literary reading probably does not depend upon either literal predications, dictionary entry polysemy, or decontextualized metaphoric structures.

Instead, articulating the metaphoricity of self-altering literary reading leads toward the representational complexities of extended metaphoric "parallelisms" (Jakobson, 1960, 1966). Reflective explication across extended metaphoric structures supports a type of thematization that reanimates what is repeatedly sensed as "the same" across those structures (Kuiken & Douglas, 2018). Sometimes the locus of these extended structures is readily identified, as in the following excerpt from Borges' (2000) essay, "A New Refutation of Time." In these lines, an abstract understanding of time metaphorically (and progressively) moves toward reflective explication of time's moving, devouring, and immolating insistence:

Time is a river that carries me along,
 and I am the river;
 It is a tiger that devours me,
 and I am the tiger;
 It is a fire that consumes me,
 and I am the fire.

Several features of this passage stand out. First, each verse begins with a simple nominal metaphor (e. g., “Time is a river”). Second, each nominal metaphor is followed by *elaborative* (i. e., explicative, perhaps even ampliative) modulation of an initial metaphoric vehicle (e. g., “...it [the river] carries me along”). Third, each nominal metaphor with its elaborative modulation is followed by *compounding* modulation through a nominal metaphor (e. g., “I am the river”) that has both the initial metaphoric topic (e. g., “time”) and the initial metaphoric vehicle (e. g., “a river”) as its metaphoric topics. Two other features of this sequence deserve mention. First, each elaborative modulation involves a polysemic verb (e. g., “carries”) for which the etymology suggests a previously lively metaphorical sense (e. g., human “carrying” has become vehicular “carrying”; Wolff & Gentner, 2011). Second, each compounding modulation involves an explicitly self-relevant metaphoric topic (e. g., “I am” riverish-time), resulting in a repetitive structure that exemplifies the existential inclusiveness of metaphors of personal identification (Cohen, 2012; Kuiken et al., 2004).

These extended metaphoric structures are plausibly the “equivalences” (Jakobson, 1960) that support a reader’s thematizing explication of a sense of “the same” across several separate – and perhaps discontinuous – textual structures. However, Kuiken and Douglas (2018) also emphasize that, beyond such directly metaphoric “equivalences,” quasi-metaphoric equivalences arise when, for example, recurrent intonation patterns juxtapose “equivalent” anchor and apposition phrases (cf. Jakobson, 1960, p. 15–16; Mukařovský, 1976, p. 23). Thus, the present focus is specifically on semantic parallelisms, although recurrent intonation patterns (involving, for example, enjambment and caesura) often subserve quasi-metaphoric appositional structures and functional shifts often generate subtle quasi-metaphoric effects (for example, when a noun is metaphorically personified as a verb).⁶

⁶ Not all recurrent intonation patterns subserve this quasi-metaphoric function. Sometimes they enable optional metaphoric construal – but more often they enable the apprehension of *content-independent* melodiousness (Menninghaus et al., 2018). Content-independent melodiousness may facilitate anything from ease of processing to “attunement” to the very possibility of categorial disclosure (Ratcliffe, 2013).

Experiential (Explication-Centered) Phenomenology

Toward what kind of creative understanding do these metaphoric and quasi-metaphoric modulations move reflective readers? Expressive enactment (Kuiken & Douglas, 2017) involves focused but flexible “listening” for semantic *résonance* (Bachelard, 1994) across successive metaphoric modulations – not only in the written text per se but also in the reader’s spontaneous explication of its textual structures (e.g., supplemental explications of “the river-ish *flow* of fire”). If explicative “saying” is found either in the written text or in supplemental explications, the reader may find that these metaphoric modulations are freshly and, at first, inexpressibly revealing. A freshly sensed resonance, an intimated sense of “the same,” will seem to capture and hold something that *was* “there” (in the retrospectively considered text), *is* “here” now (in a present impression of the text), and may *again be* “here” (in the text prospectively considered).

A reader’s metaphoric “crossings” of category boundaries shape relations between resonances within the text, as well as relations between resonances drawn from the reader’s personal life. Thus, during expressive – and “thematizing” – explication of these relations, the dreamy (involuntary, imaginal, mood-changing) remnants of first-person self-remembering (Berntsen, 2009) are metaphorically enfolded into the forms of representation offered by the text. Rather than autonomous (i.e., “associated”) autobiographical memories (Larsen & Seilman, 1988; Seilman & Larsen, 1989), bidirectional interplay between resonating text events and autobiographical events is plausibly characteristic of self-altering expressive reading.⁷

Self-Implicating Interpretive Reading

Reflective Interpretation of Dialogical Voices

While expression may involve the grounded explication of categorial conceptions (what *something* “is like”), it differs fundamentally from explanatory inter-

⁷ Miall and Kuiken (2002) drew attention to feeling-guided “boundary crossings” through which readers metaphorically adjust their understanding of “defamiliarized” narrative objects and revise affectively congruent autobiographical narrative objects. Their specific proposal regarding metaphoric boundary crossings is obscured in Fialho’s (2007) account of a more diverse array of “refamiliarization strategies” (pp. 111–112), some of which more nearly reflect interpretive (explanation-centered) reading than expressive (explication-centered) reading.

pretation of relations between events (what brings *something* about). Ricoeur (1985) proposed that the temporal order of narrative events converges with the construction of relations among those events: from the structure of one event *after* another arises the conceptual relation of one event *because* of another. Pivotal to his account is that the events in literary reading are a polyphony of temporally constrained points of view. “Every point of view is the invitation addressed to readers to direct their gaze in the same direction as the author or the characters” (Ricoeur, 1985, p. 99). By implication, it is also an invitation to interpret explanatory relations between the moments within which those directions of gaze are manifest.

Interpretation of the narrator’s and characters’ “voices” (points of view) has been offered as a way to access the self and, in doing so, to refigure narrative personal identity. In one account, Brokerhof et al. (2018) propose adaptation of Hermans’ (2011) theory of dialogical selves. Based on James’ (1950/1890) self-theory and Bakhtin’s (1973/1929) commentary on Dostoevsky, Hermans emphasizes the polyphonic and dialogical nature of identity refiguration:

The transformation of an ‘inner’ thought of a particular character into an utterance instigates dialogical relations...between this utterance ‘here’ and the utterance of an imagined other ‘there’...In this way, the interior thought of the main character [is] exteriorized in the form of a spatially separated opponent so that a fully developed dialogue between two relatively independent parties [can] develop. In such a dialogical narrative that is structured by space and time, space is ‘upgraded’ so that...*temporally dispersed events are contracted into spatial oppositions that are simultaneously present*. (p. 659, italics ours)

During literary reading, the polyphony within the multiple voices of the reader’s personal identity is interwoven with the polyphonic structure of the fictional narrator and narrated characters. Several outcomes are proposed: (a) fictional personae extend the array of dialogical voices that constitute the reader’s personal identity (self-expansion; Slater et al. 2014); (b) fictional personae echo one or more of the dialogical voices that constitute the reader’s personal identity (empathy; Koopman & Hakemulder, 2015; identification; Cohen, 2006); (c) voices within the reader’s personal identity reactively engage fictional personae (side participation; Bezdek et al., 2013); and (d) a coordinated overview of several fictional personae may shape a reader’s perspective on the text (a “meta-position”; Herman, 2014).

Dialogical Mentalization

There are several reasons to be cautious about the dialogical voices model; it has received little direct attention from empirical researchers interested in self-altering literary reading (Caracciolo & van Duuren, 2015). On the other hand, ignoring this model may elide key differences between self-altering expressiveness and self-implicating interpretation. Several of these differences depend upon subtle forms of *separation and coordination* between points of view during engagement with the personae of literary texts. Such separation and coordination may be characteristic of the “mentalizing” that simulates “human (or human-like) agents, their intentions, and the vicissitudes these intentions meet” (Djikic & Oatley, 2014, p. 500).

Singular and Multiple Deictic Shifts. In discussions of absorption in a narrative world, the reader’s deictic shift to the world of the text is regularly conceived as *singular* identification with the narrator’s or a primary character’s frame of reference (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009, p. 323; Kuijpers et al., 2014, p. 93). Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) explicitly propose that deictic expressions (e. g., “this,” “here”) mark a reader’s transition to the “deictic center” of the narrative world. However, the singularity of this transition is not invariant. The dialogical model suggests that “entry” into the world of the text involves more than one frame of reference – and perhaps their layered or embedded co-occurrence. For example, Fletcher and Monterosso (2016) provide evidence that free indirect discourse may either support first-person identification with individual text personae or support oscillation between first- and third-person points of view (see also Sopčák et al., 2020). The latter pattern may establish contrapuntal interplay between two frames of reference; for example, it may provide “a lightly ironic distance” (p. 88) that opposes a singular deictic shift into the world of the text.

Another example of multiple deictic complexity may be the interplay of points of view during mundane empathy. In some versions of theory of mind, the mentalization that supports empathy depends upon first-person simulation of one’s inner life *prior to* third-person projection onto an other’s inner life (Goldman, 2005). This conventional conception of empathy (“placing myself in another’s shoes”) creates temporal separation between first-person and third-person points of view. Rather than resonance between voices expressed as second-person synchrony (Gallese, 2005), enactive intersubjectivity (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2012), or metaphoric personal identification (Cohen, 2012), temporal separation may be an attribute of the mentalization that supports one kind of empathy during dialogical interpretation.

The possibility of multiple and multi-layered deictic shifts motivates consideration of three contrasts between the cognitive bases of self-altering expression and self-implicating interpretation.

Extra-Personal Spatialization. The dialogical model proposes that the frames of reference represented by the imaginal here-and-now of text personae attain *spatial* presence (Hermans, 2014, p. 569). However, this claim ignores evidence that a perceived or imagined here-and-now involves dissociable extra-personal (distal) and peri-personal (proximal) spatialization. Object perception or imagination depends upon the parallel function of two neurocognitive systems, one extracting integrated *visuospatial* features for the purpose of object recognition and another extracting integrated *sensorimotor* features for the purpose of pragmatic engagement (Maranesi et al., 2014). Extra-personal space is a scene-relevant frame of reference that integrates visuospatial perception of the relative locations of recognizable objects (Goodale & Milner, 2004). In contrast, peri-personal space is a self-relevant frame of reference that integrates sensorimotor perception of recognizable objects that are within bodily reach. Such proximal self-object relations are sensed through covert activation of sensorimotor correspondences that make those objects seem potentially manipulated (through movement, touch, and gesture; Klatzky, 1998; Stern, 2010).

Both extra-personal space and peri-personal space involve embodied, rather than abstract, representations, but peri-personal space may provide embodied access to the intimacy of movement, position, and touch that is especially supportive of self-altering expression (Gendlin, 1997; Fuchs & Koch, 2014). Sometimes, then, the embodied world entered during a deictic shift is mediated by linguistic structures that contribute to a reader's sense of peri-personal space. For example, synaesthetic metaphors may modify the proximal (e.g., gustatory) sensorimotor modalities of the vehicle with the distal (e.g., auditory) sensory modalities of a metaphoric topic (Shen & Aisenman, 2008). Such compounds (e.g., "sweet melody") may support entry into the relative intimacy of an imaginal peri-personal space. In contrast, entry into the embodied world of the text may be mediated by synaesthetic metaphors that contribute to a reader's sense of extra-personal space. For example, synaesthetic metaphors may modify the distal (e.g., auditory) visuospatial modalities of the vehicle with the proximal (e.g., gustatory) sensorimotor modalities of the topic (e.g., "melodious sweetness"). Such compounds may support entry into the relative "remoteness" of imaginal extra-personal space.

Cognitive Perspective Taking. Recent evidence also suggests that several empathic frames of reference are grounded in primary intersubjectivity (Gallagher, 2012; Sopčák, 2011). One such frame of reference is *pre-enactive empathy* (Kuiken & Douglas, 2017), the ego-centric fusion of one's own and another's em-

bodied subjectivity within a form of premotor activation that anticipates explicit imagery – and subsequent recognition of relevant words, phrases, syntax, etc. (Boulenger et al., 2020; Willems et al., 2010). Such fusion and potentially explicative *anticipation* depends upon a tacitly metaphoric shift to a text personae's perspective (e. g., “I *am* character X”; Cohen, 2012; Kuiken et al., 2004). The resulting egocentric frame requires representation of the target percept or image in relation to this fused self-other body.

In contrast, in *cognitive perspective-taking*, the interplay of one's own and others' embodied subjectivity is accessible as allocentric perspective coordination (Ekstrom & Isham, 2017; Przyrembel et al., 2012). Allocentric coordination depends upon world-based coordinates – as seen from “everyone's” point of view. Such allocentric coordination enables simile-like comparison of one's own and a narrative personae's perspectives (e. g., “I *am like* character X”). While the metaphoricity of pre-enactive empathy facilitates anticipation of what something “is like” for a fused self-other, the structure of cognitive perspective-taking facilitates the comparative interplay of perspectives. Although it is tempting to link pre-enactive empathy with affective empathy (e. g., Perry & Shamay-Tsoory, 2013), a pivotal possibility is that, as indicated in Healey and Grossman's (2018) recent review, cognitive perspective-taking is especially dependent on executive cognitive functions (in particular, mental set switching).

Explanation. There is fairly robust evidence supporting separation between the neurophysiological markers of response to questions about what an event “is like” (categorical identification) and questions about what explains that event (causal attribution; Spunt & Lieberman, 2011). And, explicit causal attributions draw on the same neural networks that are the substrate of theory of mind tasks (Spunt & Adolphs, 2014). Ricoeur's (1985) suggestion that temporal order of narrative events converges with the construction of relations among those events implies movement from categorical identification to causal attribution. Similarly, Kuiken and Douglas (2017) emphasize that the inferences that guide interpretation also guide the attribution of intentions to characters in narrated situation models (Graesser et al., 1994). By their account, literal wording and immediately derivative local inferences are passively perceived before the reader provides inferences that explain “*why* actions, events, and states, are mentioned” in that first-level text (p. 372). Such explanatory inferences articulate causal relations, background states (emotions, attitudes), author motives, etc. (p. 375).

Temporal Intervals, Viewpoints, and Self-Implicating Interpretation

The metaphoric linguistic structures that are focal during self-altering expressive reading contrast with another array of linguistic structures that are focal during self-implicating interpretative reading. There is gradually increasing clarity about the role of linguistic structures that coordinate temporal intervals with character/narrator viewpoints and support plot assembly. Going beyond the contrasts between *fabula* and *suzjet* (Toolan, 2001), first and third person narration (Kaufman & Libby, 2012), and inclusion or exclusion of characters' thoughts and feelings (van Krieken et al., 2017), recent studies have examined markers of coordinated temporal intervals and viewpoints, including shifts in verb tense (Sanders, 2010), demonstrative deictics (Dancygier, 2019), and free indirect discourse (Nikiforidou, 2012). As Sanders and van Krieken (2019; p. 284) argue, these linguistic markers shape three basic structures. In one, several temporal intervals are embedded recursively within a single viewpoint (e.g., van Duijn & Verhagen, 2019); in a second, successive temporal intervals correspond one-to-one with separate viewpoints (e.g., van Krieken et al., 2016); and, in a third, several viewpoints are blended into a single temporal interval that is marked by multiple parallel viewpoints (e.g., Nikiforidou, 2012). Little is known about the genre-specificity of these structures (e.g., narrative fiction vs. lyric poetry vs. news stories). However, in general, readers assemble an "actual" time-line (i.e., a plot) by considering the temporal intervals – and the viewpoints that frame them – across an entire narrative.

As part of plot assembly, coordinating an array of temporalizing frames poses challenging interpretive (explanatory) questions. Beyond the narrated events through which narrative personae overcome obstacles or deficiencies (external causes), the coordination of temporalizing frames entails articulation of their motives or intentions (internal causes; Zwaan & Rapp, 2006). To portray a temporal frame from a narrator's or character's point of view is to present events as momentarily perceived, interpreted, and evaluated by that character – and as the perceived source of that character's intentions ("voice"). The quest for explanations (external *and* internal causes) during plot assembly resembles the interplay between prospection, retrospection, and recognition that Sternberg (1990, 1992, 2006) attributes to narrative comprehension. However, the challenges faced during plot assembly (e.g., while reading Nabokov's *Pale Fire*) require a more nuanced account than is captured by the emotions that Sternberg attributes to prospection (suspense), retrospection (curiosity), and recognition (surprise). By implication, the immediate experience of plot assembly also

contrasts with the “immersive” emotions that Jacobs (2016) considers prototypical background to metaphorically foregrounded linguistic structures (Jacobs & Lüdtke, 2017).

Empirical Comparisons

Expressive and Interpretive Linguistic Structures

The linguistic structures that become focal during expressive (explication-centered) reading precipitate an attentional orientation that is attuned to textual metaphoricity – and potentially supportive of self-altering expression. In contrast, the linguistic structures that become focal during interpretive (explanation-centered) reading precipitate an attentional set that is attuned to textual markers of temporal intervals and character/narrator viewpoints – and potentially supportive of self-implicating interpretation. It may be useful to determine empirically whether there are theory-guided and functionally coordinated subsets of linguistic structures that support these two aspects of literary reading. One viable subset is comprised of metaphoric structures and quasi-metaphoric structures, including the phonological and syntactic variations that facilitate juxtaposition of potentially metaphoric topics and vehicles (Kuiken & Douglas, 2018). A second subset is comprised of linguistic markers of temporal intervals and character/narrator viewpoints, including shifts in verb tense and temporal adjectives, demonstrative deictics, and free indirect discourse (Sanders & van Krieken, 2019).

Regarding the expressive (explication-centered) subset, detection of nominal metaphoric structures is already daunting (Steen et al., 2010); detection of cohesive chains of metaphoric and quasi-metaphoric structures is even more so. Nonetheless, Dorst’s (2011, pp. 126–128) descriptive study of extended metaphors that plausibly elicit personification demonstrates what can be accomplished by analyzing brief excerpts from extant literary texts using Metaphor Identification Procedures (VU; Steen, 2016). Kuiken and Douglas (2018, Study 1) demonstrated the potential of modestly adapting such excerpts for experimental purposes.

Regarding the interpretive (explanation-centered) subset, systematic specification of the structures that identify temporal intervals and character/narrator viewpoints has been initiated. Eekhof et al. (2020) present the ViewPoint Identification Procedure (VPIP) as a systematic method for identifying markers of per-

ceptual, cognitive, and emotional viewpoint in narrative discourse. There is reason to be optimistic that a combination of computational procedures and expert judgment will enhance these efforts (Herrmann, 2017).

Attunement to Expressive and Interpretive Linguistic Structures

The duality that frames the contrast between expressive (explication-centered) and interpretive (explanation-centered) response to these two subsets of textual structures is given impetus by research concerning attention, openness, and creativity. Studies of attention and openness suggest that literary reading is an opportunity to engage these textual structures creatively. That literary reading affords this opportunity is consistent with background evidence that trait “openness to experience” predicts (a) familiarity with fiction genres (Fong et al., 2013); (b) preference for culture-related reading material (e. g., “classical literature”; Schutte & Malouff, 2004); (c) preference for literary texts (Kraaykamp & van Eijck, 2005; Swami et al., 2012); and (d) the rated importance of literary reading (Wild et al., 1995; Kuijpers et al., 2018).

More to the point, recent evidence indicates that trait openness to experience is associated with two subtly different attentional patterns: one suited to categorial explication and another suited to explanatory interpretation. Specifically, one attentional pattern involves an aspect of global “openness to experience” called “openness”; the other involves an aspect of this global trait called “intellect” (DeYoung, 2015; DeYoung et al., 2007).⁸ In response to extended imaginative problems (e. g., remote associates tasks, metaphor interpretation), “openness” predicts selective attention complemented by an executive function (mental set switching) that facilitates perspective changes to *different dimensions* (Zabelina et al., 2019) and *levels of analysis* (Zabelina et al., 2016). In contrast, in response to constrained abstract problems (e. g., multiple uses tasks, interpreting analogies), “intellect” predicts sustained selective attention complemented by an executive function (short-term memory updating) that facilitates access to *different problem solutions* (Zabelina et al., 2019). The former may support expression-centered explication (i. e., switching to different dimensions and levels of a categorial percept or image); the latter may support ex-

⁸ Mullennix (2019) distinguishes between automatic and controlled attentional processes in dual-processing approaches to aesthetic experience (e. g., Graf & Landwehr, 2015). Although we do not address the details, the automatic/controlled distinction differs from the openness/intellect distinction summarized here.

planation-centered interpretation (i.e., switching among alternative solutions to the “problem” of plot assembly). Consistent with this formulation, openness predicts sensuous-affective aesthetic creativity (e.g., in the arts); intellect predicts abstract conceptual creativity (e.g., in the sciences) (cf. DeYoung, 2015; Fayn et al., 2015; Kaufman et al., 2016).⁹

Expressive and Interpretive Gap Detection

Although the aspect of openness to experience that is suited to constrained abstract problems (“intellect”) can be distinguished from the aspect of openness to experience that is suited to extended imaginative problems (“openness”), both involve co-activation of sustained and flexible attentional subsystems. Nonetheless, subsets of linguistic structures may have quite different effects on attention, especially on the co-activation of subsystems supporting sustained and flexible attention (Zabelina, 2018). Direct assessment of such attentional patterns may only be possible in research paradigms that involve the manipulation of very brief text segments (e.g., Bohrn et al., 2012; Forgács et al., 2012). Understandably, research in this domain has relied instead on readers’ self-reported response to aggregates of linguistic structures within longer texts. For example, in research guided by the foregrounding model (Hakemulder & van Peer, 2016), it has seemed useful to rely on self-reported defamiliarization (e.g., surprise, strikingness) or on ratings that are plausibly correlated with defamiliarization (e.g., discussion value). However, there have been no systematic psychometric studies of self-report measures of response to such anomalous textual structures (e.g., content validation, confirmatory factor analyses, convergent and discriminant validation). Moreover, rather than focusing on defamiliarization and its derivatives, it may be more useful to examine contrasting attentional responses to the subsets of linguistic structures articulated here.

Inexpressible Realizations. The immediate attentional response to metaphoric and quasi-metaphoric structures (e.g., extended metaphor) may resemble what Shklovsky called *ostranenie* (usually translated as “defamiliarization”). He compared *ostranenie* to an encounter with an intentional object as though it is “seen for the first time” (Shklovsky, 1917/2017, p. 81), rather than as abstractly conceived (p. 77), routinely named (p. 81), or merely recognized

⁹ Notably, items on the Tellegen Absorption Scale (Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974), an acknowledged measure of the openness aspect of overall openness to experience (DeYoung, 2015), reflect dissociative absorption, i.e., reported gaps between abstract and grounded categorical representations (Soffer-Dudek, 2017).

(p. 88). Chernavin and Yampolskaya (2019) compare this encounter with the “attentional doubling” that derives from a similar gap between abstract understanding and sensuous (grounded) intuition within the phenomenological *epoché*.

Research concerning the effects of foregrounding is consistent with this account. First, rated strikingness, which is the most consistently replicated response to foregrounded passages (Hunt & Vipond, 1985; Miall & Kuiken, 1994; Sopčák, 2007; van Peer, 1986), suggests an evocative intimation that something more richly grounded might be but has not yet been said. Second, rated strikingness co-occurs with rated feeling (Miall & Kuiken, 1994), although it is unclear whether these feelings involve (a) an emotional reaction to a discrete narrative object or event or (b) a feeling-of-knowing that guides subsequent explication. The latter option is consistent with evidence that such feelings sensitize readers to subsequent passages with mood-congruent connotations. Miall and Kuiken (1995; 2001) found evidence that feeling-guided exploration occurs in response to passages that immediately follow (and are continuous with) a highly foregrounded passage. Other studies indicate that feeling-guided exploration occurs across discontinuous passages (Fialho, 2012; Sikora et al., 2011).

Consistent with this proposal, strikingness ratings suggest that a more fully reanimated conception of what something “is like” will derive from subsequent explication. A fairly direct measure of such reanimating intimations is a brief self-report scale for *inexpressible realizations* (Kuiken et al., 2012, p. 270). Such intimations may occur specifically in response to the metaphoric and quasi-metaphoric linguistic structures that anticipate self-altering expression.

Persistent Curiosity. The immediate attentional response to markers of temporal intervals and character/narrator viewpoint is perhaps *persistent curiosity* (i. e., the interactive combination of retrospective, concurrent, and prospective curiosity). Cognitive coordination between these temporal frames and viewpoints can occur in a variety of ways: they may contrast with one another, reinforce one another, be causally linked, become mixed, etc. (van Duijn & Verhagen, 2019). Thus, the immediate effect of detected markers of temporal intervals and of character/narrator viewpoint may be the *interactive* (not additive) combination of retrospective curiosity (e. g., “I wonder how this [moment] came about”), concurrent curiosity (e. g., “I wonder what is happening here”), and prospective curiosity (e. g., “I wonder what will happen next”).¹⁰

¹⁰ Fayn et al. (2019) used an analogous but simpler index, i. e., the correlation between simple curiosity and confusion ratings. It is noteworthy that their index of curious confusion was unrelated to openness/intellect in a study of response to a difficult poem, although this relationship was evident in response to other tasks.

Predicting Expressive and Interpretive Reading

Whether a reading moment supports a creative explanation-centered attentional set (via “intellect”) or a creative explication-centered attentional set (via “openness”) may depend upon an interaction between each of these aspects of trait “openness to experience” and the presence of a situated commitment to “dwelling silently” in the world of the text.¹¹ Following Ihde’s (2007) phenomenological account, such “dwelling” resembles silently listening for the farthest sound; the more closely one listens in silence, the more readily do *unanticipated* sounds show themselves.¹² An analogous form of “dwelling silently” characterizes reflective openness to an unanticipated “something more” or “something else” within an imaginably present text world.

The situated commitment to “dwelling silently” is especially pertinent when considering the family of contemporary constructs that describe absorption in the narrative world (e. g., flow, transportation, engagement, immersion, flow; see Hakemulder et al. 2017). However, rather than assuming that each of these constructs imperfectly reflects the same underlying process (cf. Walter et al., 2020), Kuiken and Douglas (2017, 2018) examined the *contrast* between two kinds of narrative absorption – rooted either in expressive (explication-centered) engagement or in interpretive (explanation-centered) engagement. Corresponding to this distinction, they developed the Absorption-like States Questionnaire (Kuiken & Douglas, 2017) to assess two conceptually (and factorially) independent subscales: expressive enactment and integrative comprehension.

Integrative Comprehension. Integrative comprehension is a form of reflective engagement that supports an interpretive (explanation-centered) orientation. This orientation accentuates the distal senses (seeing, hearing) and provides an impression that the text world is “beyond reach” (but navigable); objects, locations, and people seem positioned relative to each other and “over there” (*extra-personal space*). It also involves the activation of memory categories concerning what is familiar to people-in-general (“world knowledge”) and that facilitate allocentric (object-to-object) coordination of the perspectives of text personae (*cognitive perspective-taking*). Finally, this form of reflection supports an explanation-centered impression that fictional events are portrayed as they might “actually” occur (*generalizing realism*).

11 Koopman and Hakemulder (2015) similarly suggest that the “slowing down of readers” perceptions of the “fictional world” creates moments of “stillness.” However, their unidimensional conception of stillness differs from the integrated function of sustained attention and attentional flexibility.

12 Such openness may be wilful, rather than precipitated by external events (e. g., textual foregrounding).

Expressive Enactment. In contrast, expressive enactment is a form of reflective engagement that supports an expressive (explication-centered) orientation. This orientation accentuates the proximal senses (reaching, touching, holding) and provides an impression that the text world is “close”; objects, locations, and people seem almost palpably “within reach” (*peri-personal space*). This form of reflection activates memory categories that center on what is familiar to oneself and identifiably intimate others (“personal knowledge”) and that facilitate egocentric coordination of these perspectives with the perspectives of imaginal text personae; the reader covertly and metaphorically anticipates the implications of saying (with a narrator) “I am in the world of the text” or (with a character) “I am in the world of this character” (*pre-enactive empathy*). This form of reflection supports explication-centered exploration of “what it is like” to participate in a blend of experiences that is simultaneously self-relevant, relevant for intimately known others, and yet grounded in imaginal text personae (*self-implicating givenness*).

Expressive Enactment: Contrasts with Integrative Comprehension

A recent series of studies has concentrated on expressive enactment, especially psychometric and structural equation models of that construct (Kuiken & Douglas, 2017, 2018; Kuiken et al., 2012). It is now possible to articulate the characteristics of – and effects of – expressive enactment, especially as suggested by the preceding discussion of immediate and extended response to metaphoric and quasi-metaphoric structures. Although more has been accomplished in studies of expressive enactment than in studies of integrative comprehension, contrasts with integrative comprehension will be mentioned where appropriate.

Expressive Enactment and Inexpressible Realizations. According to the structural equation model developed by Kuiken and Douglas (2017, 2018), (a) self-reported open reflection initiates both expressive enactment and integrative comprehension and (b) expressive enactment mediates the relationship between open reflection and inexpressible realizations. That pattern has been consistently observed (Kuiken & Douglas, 2017, 2018), suggesting that an inexpressible realization is the first moment in more extended explication-centered reflection. Notably, integrative comprehension does not predict inexpressible realizations.

Expressive Enactment and Metaphor Comprehension. The Kuiken and Douglas model also begins to identify how readers reflect on the sensed but initially inexpressible complexity of metaphoric and quasi-metaphoric textual structures. Douglas (2019) and Kuiken and Douglas (2018) found that expressive enactment mediated the relationship between open reflection and the comprehension of *unconventional literary* metaphors (e. g., “Death is a fat fly”), while integrative comprehension mediated the relationship between open reflection and comprehension of *conventional nonliterary* metaphors (e. g., “Genes are blueprints”). This pattern underscores an asymmetry between poetic and mundane metaphors; rather than metaphoric linguistic structures in general, expressive enactment specifically predicted comprehension of metaphors with greater potential to disclose emergent meanings. This pattern is also compatible with the notion that integrative comprehension is distinctively associated with the plot assembly that depends upon both literal and conventionally metaphoric predications.

Expressive Enactment and Sublime Disquietude. The specific aesthetic outcomes that emerge through expressive enactment require careful consideration. Aesthetic response traditionally involves epistemic (appetitive) *interest*, which can be distinguished from satiating (consummatory) *pleasure* (Silvia, 2010; Pankepp & Biven, 2012) and perhaps also non-satiating (anticipatory) *pleasure* (Koelsch et al., 2015). Perhaps epistemic interest is indeed an emotion (or feeling); if so, it must be differentiated not only from anticipatory pleasure (e. g., joy) but also from the “appreciation” of stylistic structures that are somehow “on top” of content (Menninghaus et al., 2019, p. 177) or that serve a poetic function independently of a referential function (Hakemulder & van Peer, 2016).

In contrast to univalent pleasure or interest, Kuiken et al. (2012) set out empirical criteria for sublime disquietude, which has its roots in the fragile architecture of Kant’s (1987) theory of aesthetics (cf. Deligiorgi, 2014). Sublime disquietude represents a poignant epistemic blend of (a) “unpleasure” in the “inexpressibility” of a feeling-guided concern (e. g., “...I sensed something that I could not find a way to express”; “...what seemed clear to me also seemed beyond words”) and (b) the “pleasure” of a felt shift toward relatively full and grounded understanding of such a feeling-guided concern (e. g., “...I felt sensitive to aspects of my life that I usually ignore”; “...I felt that my understanding of life had been deepened”).

Also, sublime disquietude represents this poignant epistemic blend in relation to existential feelings, as reflected in the long-term and inclusive language of items assessing the epistemic pleasure of “self-perceptual depth.”¹³ As ex-

13 The measure of “self-perceptual depth” (Kuiken et al., 2012) was derived from studies of self-perceptual change reported after (a) intensive therapeutic reflection (Kuiken et al., 1987);

pected (Kuiken & Douglas, 2017, 2018), expressive enactment mediates the relationship between open reflection and sublime disquietude. In addition, as indicated in both studies, expressive enactment mediates the relationship between open reflection and being moved (e. g., “I felt touched,” “I felt moved to tears”; Menninghaus et al., 2015; Menninghaus et al., 2019). In contrast, integrative comprehension mediates the relationship between open reflection and narrative comprehension (rated narrator intelligibility, causal explanation, and explanatory cohesion).

Implications. Among the questions that arise from the preceding research is whether the effects attributed to either expressive enactment or integrative comprehension generalize to other modes of engagement, such as the immersion that derives from a reader’s reactive participation in narrative construction (Nilsson et al., 2016; Ryan, 2001) or the side-participation that derives from interactions with text personae (Bezdek et al., 2013; Gerrig & Jacovina, 2009). The Kuiken and Douglas (2017) instrument assesses such reactive engagement, enabling future comparison of that mode of reflective engagement with expressive enactment and integrative comprehension.

Also, although integrative comprehension is facilitated by the same open reflection that facilitates expressive enactment, the social explanatory outcomes of integrative comprehension plausibly involve the mentalizing attribution of causes (Healey & Grossman, 2018; Spunt & Adolphs, 2014), rather than the expressive explication of what it is like to be narrative personae (whether the narrator or a character). If literary reading facilitates “simulation” of the “thinking styles” of narrative personae, perhaps mundane empathy is specifically an outcome of the mentalizing that occurs during the interpretive (explanation-centered) “construction” of situation models (Djikic & Oatley, 2014). However, studies of how literary reading enhances social cognition have given insufficient attention to how some literary narratives – perhaps especially tragic narratives (Nussbaum, 2001) – foster the poignant bivalence of sublime disquietude. These narratives present challenging questions about what constitutes human virtue within the context of subtle ambivalence and seemingly unavoidable conflicts (Oliver & Woolley, 2011). Ongoing research (Sopčák et al., in preparation) suggests that a *global* moral outcome (called non-utilitarian respect) emerges from the same nexus of processes through which expressive enactment leads to sub-

(b) impactful dreams (Kuiken & Sikora, 1993); and (c) self-altering reading (Sikora et al., 2011). Items on this instrument reflect existential feelings, especially convictions about aspects of a person’s orientation toward broadly inclusive states of affairs (e. g., “I felt sensitive to *aspects of my life* that I usually ignore”; “I felt that my *understanding of life* had been deepened”; “I felt like changing *the way I live*”). Such wording is congruent with use of the second person pronoun “you” to speak inclusively about not only myself but also about “life” in general.

lime disquietude. In contrast, a *specific* moral outcome (e. g., changes in attitude toward indigenous minorities) emerges from within the nexus of explanatory processes through which integrative comprehension leads to plot coherence and narrator intelligibility.

Related Research Directions

Critical Life Events and Self-Altering Literary Reading

Acquaintance with the “axe” that literary reading sometimes wields is facilitated by examining experiential accounts gathered in interview studies. These qualitative studies range from a large set of brief – and self-structured – reports of how books make “a difference” in readers’ lives (Sabine & Sabine, 1983; Ross, 1999) to carefully delimited sets of extended – and carefully elicited – accounts of how literature is life-changing. For example, Tangerås (2018) conducted a narratological study that accommodates the complexities of “expressive enactment” and the related “aesthetic dimension” (p. 10), but also addresses whether life-changing literary reading occurs during personal “crises.” Tangerås conceives these crises inclusively; they may involve depression, grief, loss of faith, etc. Similarly, Brockerhoff-Macdonald (2017) recently completed a narratological study indicating that reading during life crises facilitates “resilient” coping during times of stress. Swaton and O’Callaghan (1999), using the methods of grounded theory, found evidence that such “healing stories” become enduring life-guiding narratives.

A few experimental studies have also examined the self-altering effects of reading following loss or trauma. Sikora et al. (2010) found that, among readers who reported significant loss (due to death or physical separation), expressive enactment predicted self-reported restructuring of memories related to the loss. Similarly, Khoo (2017) found that, among readers who reported loss, reflection on a traumatic (first-person) narrative predicted self-perceptual depth. Going beyond self-perceptual depth to a measure of self-altering aesthetic response, Kuiken and Sharma (2013) found that, among readers who reported traumatic loss (due to physical violence, accidental injury, or natural disaster), a measure of dissociation predicted “reading at the limits of expressibility,” as well as sublime disquietude. These studies suggest that self-altering reading may be associated with expressive enactment and sublime disquietude during grief – although precise articulation of these relations is still needed.

Absorption and Exploration of Possible Selves

Several recent studies assess how narratives induce explicit changes in self-concept, including shifts toward a reader's ideal self (Shedlosky-Shoemaker et al., 2014). For example, using a reaction time task, Sestir and Green (2010) found that, when readers were instructed to identify with a story character or to transport themselves "into" the story world, a shift from "not me" to "me" character-related attributes (e.g., conscientiousness) was evident. Similarly, Krause and Appel (2019) found that trait transportation was positively related to story-congruent self-ratings. However, in their studies, counterarguing was *negatively* related to story-congruent self-ratings, suggesting that readers who are "more distant" (p. 3) resist assimilation of story character traits into their own self-concept. It is tempting to draw a parallel between the effects of trait transportation and counterarguing with expressive enactment and integrative comprehension, respectively. Perhaps the *inverse* relation between integrative comprehension and (a) understanding unconventional literary metaphors and (b) sublime disquietude reflects resistance to explication-centered aspects of expressive literary reading.

The preceding studies of self-perception change are compatible with related research indicating that identification and transportation precipitate attitude change and self-perception change in a direction that is congruent with text content. However, a study by Djikic et al. (2009) suggests that, rather than text-congruent change, literary reading induces changes in self-perception that do not directly reflect text content. Specifically, they found that, compared to a matched non-literary text, individuals who read a literary text reported trait-independent and direction-independent changes in their profile of ratings on a personality questionnaire. Moreover, these changes were mediated by equally "idiosyncratic" changes in reader profiles of emotion ratings.

In a conceptual replication, Djikic et al. (2012) found that readers who considered either an essay or literary text "artistic" reported trait-independent and direction-independent changes in their profile of personality ratings. In this study, however, changes in trait openness (regardless of direction) correlated with judgments of artistic merit, which the authors interpret as "open[ing] a door to a different way of being" (p. 33). Consistent with these findings, Djikic et al. (2013) found that, compared to reading essays, reading literary texts is followed by reduced "need for closure."

Thus, the expressiveness of literary reading may not only be more likely among readers who are already open to experience; such expressiveness also may facilitate subsequent open reflection. However, this shift toward post-read-

ing openness is more than “idiosyncratic” personality change (Djicic & Oatley, 2014, p. 301). Rather, it may involve explication of broadly inclusive existential feelings, including (a) thrownness; (b) finitude; (c) timelessness; (d) wonder; (e) disquietude; (f) inexpressible realizations; and (g) self-perceptual depth. In this domain, the relevant psychometric issues have been broached but hardly resolved (cf. Kuiken et al., 2012, pp. 255 ff). Addressing those issues will be necessary in attempts to examine the crystallizing discontent (Baumeister, 1994), the readiness for self refiguration (Caracciolo & van Duuren, 2015), and the sublime disquietude of Kafka’s axe.

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