



## Cognitive Science and Literature. A cognitive analysis of the metaphoric processes in *Shalimar the Clown* by Salman Rushdie

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Literary critical readings have always been shaped by a multitude of theories ranging, for instance, from psychological, historical to socio-cultural approaches. What really lacks in literary studies is an overall theory of literature (Freeman 2000), which could likely cover all literary genres. The question to be answered is: is it possible to build a bridge between cognitive science and literary production in order to achieve insightful understandings of literary works? Some useful suggestions seem to come from cognitive linguistics, a blooming field of studies which recognizes in some linguistic phenomena the key for an in depth comprehension of the overall literary work and conceptual world of its author. After a survey of the most important analysis frameworks, an analysis of the narrative world of Salman Rushdie in his novel *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) will be proposed, with particular attention towards: (i) the importance of Conceptual Integration/Blending processes (Turner 1996, 2007; Fauconnier & Turner 2001, 2008; Turner & Fauconnier 1999), (ii) the construction of blends (Fauconnier & Turner 2001) and so of (iii) the main *mental spaces* governing the novel (Fauconnier 2007). The basic aim will be to look at the cognitive apparatus lying behind a particular literary production and to test the cognitive approach to literature also in the field of postcolonial literary production: indeed this area of studies seems to match successfully with the frameworks ranging over cognitive science and literary studies.

### 1. Analysis framework: *The Literary Mind* (Turner 1996) and beyond

Cognitive linguistics assumes that language is not the product of particular structures in the brain, but of the general cognitive systems that human beings use for conceptualizing all aspects of reality. This assumption, extensively discussed by Turner (1991; 1996) and Fauconnier & Turner (2001; 2007), has opened a glimpse into the way of considering the relation between literary and everyday language, and of particular linguistic phenomena, such as figurative language, which are no more considered as results of special mechanisms (Freeman 2000: 253).

In Turner's studies, the work *The Literary Mind* (1996) represents a sort of transition from the analytical and detailed *Reading Minds* (Turner 1991) to a wider attention upon *conceptual integration/blending* and general cognitive functions (Turner 2007, Fauconnier & Turner 2001; 2008). *The Literary Mind* is a sort of manifesto of the cognitive approach to literature, being a depth analysis of our mistaken classification of mind's principles and linguistic phenomena surrounding the main assumption THE EVERYDAY MIND IS ESSENTIALLY LITERARY. He identifies three basic principles - *story*, *projection*, and *parable* (Turner 1996) - in our mind functioning and tries to give evidence of their everywhere presence in both the everyday and literary language

in order to set a common ground between them. In Turner's words (1996: 5-10), *story* is the basic mode according to which our daily thinking and speaking is organized with no distinction between literary or everyday oral language. The second basic principle, *projection* (Turner 1996: 4-5), makes basic stories become more complex stories as, for instance, *event stories* and *non spatial stories* (Turner 1996: 49), which are not directly linked to our sensory-motor experience, like the foundational schemas, but belong to a higher abstraction level. Finally, Turner does not define *parable* the widely known figure of speech, but he uses this term for indicating the process of *projecting* one story into another (Turner 1996: 5-6) according to a natural and unconscious ability that helps human beings to make sense of a story through another one. All these concepts are widespread in both everyday and literary communication and make it possible to analyse all levels of language from the same perspective. Turner (1996) calls *narrative imagining* the ability of creating *stories* by combining simple *schemas*, from this cognitive ability from which also our rational capacities and conscience derive. *Narrative imagining* turns to give evidence to the close relation between literary production and daily linguistic practices as far as cognitive abilities are concerned.

*The Literary Mind* offers only an outline of a theory which includes different principles with the common goal of achieving a comprehensive theory of language without the notorious dichotomy literary *versus* everyday language. The reasons for supporting this theory have been long analyzed by Turner himself (Turner 2002; 2007), by Fauconnier (2007) as well by Fauconnier and Turner (2001; 2008) and more and more details have been added.

From where do the basic *stories* mentioned by Turner (1996) emerge? According to the cognitive linguistics theory, they are based on simple and repetitive elements, and depend on a sequence of simple experiential patterns belonging to our culture and individual background. These patterns are called *image schemas* (Turner 1996; Oakley 2007), and derive from and reflect our sensorial perceptual elementary orientation towards reality, thus providing information about our way of interacting with the world. *Image schemas* allow to map spatial information into a conceptual structure, they are a kind of "distillers of spatial and temporal experiences" (Oakley 2007: 215) in the organization of knowledge and meanings. *Image schemas* have neither fixed features nor specific contents but they are very flexible in adapting themselves to a wide number of contexts (Oakley 2007: 217) even if some schemas are more specific than others.

Image schema theory is important in the development of cognitive approach to literature not only in Turner's work but, for example, also in Freeman (1995), who tries to give a thorough account of how this theory could produce more reliable interpretations of literary works, through the analysis of the "conceptual universe" behind Emily Dickinson's poetry. This universe, as we will see in reference to Rushdie's novel, is constructed around specific and recurring schemas such as *PATH* and *CIRCLE* or *CYCLE* (Freeman 1995). Sometimes these references are unequivocal, particular words link Dickinson's poetry to an exact *image schema* (*CYCLE*) thus defining her particular features (Freeman 1995: 656). So, according to the image schema theory the lexicon used for expressing both literal and metaphorical concepts (Turner 1996) is strictly linked to our knowledge of concrete objects or actions.

In Fauconnier's terms (2007) our both schematic and specific knowledge, its frames and basic structures, are incorporated in a series of *mental spaces*. These spaces can be schematic when they refer to simple image schemas, e.g. *PATH*, and imply a simple frame of walking along a direct path, or they can be specific when they refer to an individual experience of such a frame (Fauconnier 2007: 351). In both cases they are stored in our long term memory and used dynamically in the working memory as well. *Mental spaces* and the connections among them are widespread in human cognitive activities, some principles governing their connections seem to

be universal while others seem to be related to specific schemas, and so to the particular context in which these connections are performed (Fauconnier 2007: 372-373).

But through which processes are these spaces constructed? *Mapping* is the key word for explaining how source spaces connect to each other to create complex, abstract or metaphorical, *mental spaces*. Fauconnier (2007: 355) provides a simple but telling example, that is the frame X IN LOVE WITH Y, which can easily build many possible spaces in accordance to our cultural background, e.g. *Romeo is in love with Juliet*, etc.

The connecting mental power which works over *mental spaces* is called *conceptual integration* or *blending*. The theory of *blending* has been founded and developed by Turner (1996; 2007), and Fauconnier and Turner (2001; 2008) and it draws the attention of many scholars interested in the application of cognitive linguistics to literature, as for example Freeman (2000) and Calderón Quindós (2005) just to name a few. *Blending* is one of the fundamental cognitive abilities of human beings and enables us to make connections between different stories, *mental spaces* or even networks of *mental spaces*, without any conscious effort (Turner 2007). The results of this process are likely to be entrenched as well as new independent units. *Blending* allows abstract concepts to become concrete, and vice versa, and makes it possible to combine elements otherwise incompatible. Examples of *blending* in literature are “the most striking and memorable” (Turner 2002: 14) but this process is supposed to be ubiquitous also in everyday thought and language (Turner 1996: 67). The process of *conceptual blending* is determined by important principles, called *constitutive principles*, which give rise to new spaces (Fauconnier & Turner 2001; Turner 2007): (1) *cross-space mapping*, which is a connection between some elements of the input spaces; (2) *generic mental space*, which contains the common elements of input spaces; (3) the *blended space* or *blend*; (4) the *selecting projection* reminds us of the selection of elements that are projected into the *blend*.

In the *blend* an *emergent structure* is created, not present in the inputs, in three ways: (i) *composition* of the elements from the input spaces in order to create previously inexistent relations, (ii) *completion* through elements recovered from background meanings and (iii) *elaboration*, referring to the process of elaborating and transforming *blends* (Turner 1996:83; Turner 2007: 379). Sinding (2005) identifies these three stages with reference with *Ulysses* by Joyce, where the *blending* process enables a useful combination of parallel *mental spaces* and so also of different genres.

From a general perspective *blends* have all the same structure but not all representations of *blend* are good examples. Fauconnier and Turner (2001) propose a set of *optimality principles*, which the *blends* satisfy better or worse. They are: (i) *integration* because the *blend* must constitute an integrated unit; (ii) *topology*, because all spaces involved in the process share an organizing frame; (iii) *web*, referring to the preservation of the connections to the input spaces; (iv) *unpacking*, that is the possibility of going from the *blend* back to all other spaces; and (v) *good reason* or finding significance for each element appearing in the *blend*. Along with this division, there are some subdivisions, which organize the blend process more in detail, for example by looking at relevance principle and compression principle (Fauconnier and Turner 2001; Turner 2007). Fauconnier and Turner (2001) while stating that there are some routine strategies of combining *mental spaces*, they turn to show that the way through which a *blend* is organized according to the optimality principles is really creative and complex. For example, grammatical constructions can be composed to evoke particular conceptual integrations, so process of *conceptual blending* parallel to a formal process. Simple as well as more complex linguistic phenomena depend on *conceptual blending* and this process, ranging over different fields, proves to be a ubiquitous, systematic but unconscious cognitive activity. These features lead

Fauconnier and Turner (2001) to conclude that there are no sharp borders among human being cognitive activities but an overall network.

## 2. Metaphor and the *Poetics of Mind*

### 2.1. Rethinking metaphorical processes

The *Conceptual Integration* Theory by Fauconnier and Turner has introduced also a new perspective in the study of metaphors, which turn to be considered as products of a general, not specific, cognitive human ability. So the combination of conceptual elements through the dynamic process of *blending* determinates also the construction of figurative language which, as widely recognized, is not only a matter of language and it is not a special quality of literary language.

Classical stylistic theories, born with Aristotle, claim that metaphors are a matter of language and style, used as literary devices in poetics for achieving special rhetorical effects. Nowadays metaphor is not uniquely linked to poetics and it is no more "a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable" as written in the Oxford English Dictionary. Giving an accurate definition of metaphor has become more and more problematic due to all implications this concept may come with. It should be kept in mind that giving a definition of metaphor is an empirical question and that the main goal of scholars is not to find differences between literary and everyday metaphors but looking at their common ground, *generalizations* in Lakoff's words (Lakoff 1979: 203). Lakoff (1979: 205) finds evidence of *generalizations* not only in metaphors but also in several aspects of language: polysemy, inference, semantic changes (Lakoff 1979: 246). The common properties to be found at a conceptual level, should be applicable to both everyday and literary language since there is a sort of continuum from frozen or conventional metaphors (called catachreses) to novel metaphors based on the assumption that linguistic metaphors are only an exterior display, a "surface" (Lakoff 1979: 203) of underlying conceptual maps, a link from language expressions to conceptual bases.

In the field of Cognitive Linguistics, metaphor is based on conceptual association and it is not a linguistic convention (Grady 2007). Moreover the conceptual patterns can be expressed by many linguistic means, because a wide set of terms can be used for expressing the same metaphorical association. The Theory of Conceptual Metaphor is rooted in the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which has become a theoretical forerunner of a new way of considering figurative language. The Conceptual Theory of Metaphor (CTM) assumes that there is a process of *mapping* between closely related concepts based on some particular correspondences. Therefore metaphors are based on conventional conceptual association. A particular pattern is "mapped" in Lakoff and Johnson's words, or "projected" in Turner's words, (1996) from a source conceptual domain into a target domain. Conventional metaphorical patterns can be more general and applicable to many correspondences, as for example LIFE IS A JOURNEY, or more specific such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY in which the *mapping* is limited only to some features (Grady 2007).

*Mapping* is governed by principles, as stated above with reference to the *blending* process, and it involves not only the projection of elements or properties of the source domain but also of the relations and scenarios (Grady 2007) which characterize it. These features of the *mapping* process prove that metaphors imply a strong conceptual activity, a bidirectional process of enrichment, and a rich set of conceptual structures. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have paved the way to the identification of such conceptual metaphors by establishing a

close link between linguistic expressions, conceptual structure and our sensory orientation towards reality. Metaphors derived by spatial orientation, called *orientational metaphors* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 14), are connected to the dichotomies up/down, in-out, front-back and so on. These basic dichotomies are obviously linked to cultural aspects as well (Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

*Orientational metaphors*, which are not arbitrary but determined by human being physical movements in the world, turn to be mapped into several target domains giving rise to particular metaphorical linguistic phenomena. For instance, a *primary metaphor* (Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Grady 2007) such as MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN is widespread across languages, it is applicable to many both metaphorical and literal meanings and also linked to other metaphorical concepts such as HAPPY IS UP, SAD IS DOWN; GOOD IS UP, BAD IS DOWN because it is the result of a recurring association performed daily by human beings.

These metaphorical patterns have an internal systematicity and create direct links to many linguistic expressions. For example, the concept of happiness and the words used for talking about it are strongly linked to GOOD IS UP. This happens because the *mapping* between source and target domains can take different forms, and a single source concept can characterize many target domains. For example, the conceptual metaphor THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS proves to reveal many further connections: RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS, A CAREER IS A BUILDING, SOCIAL GROUPS ARE BUILDINGS and so on (Kövecses 2000). The multiple relations between source and target domains form the “scope of metaphor”, which makes it possible to make generalisations as well as to identify new systems of metaphors (Kövecses 2000: 91).

To conclude, both *blending theory* and *conceptual metaphor theory* state that human beings daily thinking and speaking are linked to metaphorical constructions constructed upon simple and recurring elements. Both theories talk about a pattern to be recognized and applied in several ways through projection or *mapping* processes, even if only in *blending* the relation is bidirectional and allows a kind of “feedback” from the *blend* to the inputs (Grady 2007: 201). The strongest distinction between these two theories is also what makes them both useful. *Blending* pays greater attention to the dynamic processes, remember for example the complex relation between spaces, which allow the creation of newer and newer spaces and associations while remaining in the overall network. In fact, in relation to their complex and up-to-dated work on conceptual *blending* for a reconsideration (or “rethinking”) of metaphor, Fauconnier and Turner (2008) state that “conceptual work is never-ending, and we can and continue to bring more spaces and even networks into play with the elaborate integration network E/X/M” (Fauconnier & Turner 2008: 61). On the contrary, CMT is more concerned with conventional patterns of associations stored in our long-term memory, which in Grady’s opinion (2001: 201) could be considered fundamental preconditions to the development of *blends*.

## **2.2. The Poetics of mind**

Gibbs (1994) claims that human cognition is shaped by poetic processes, and tropes, such as metaphors and metonymies, are seen as basic devices for conceptualizing various levels of experience. Gibbs (1994) reminds us that “figurative language is not deviant or ornamental but is ubiquitous in everyday speech” (Gibbs 1994: 16), thus collocating his work in the wake of Turner’s. Everyday language has traditionally been thought to be less metaphoric than language used in literary prose and poetry and so more easily comprehensible. This traditional pragmatic view of language is based on the assumption that only a literal use of

language reflects actual meanings, and that metaphor is created for rhetorical purposes. This vision disregards the importance of the metaphorisation process at further levels.

Many aspects of thought and language are metaphoric, so the principle aim of cognitive science applied to literature is to understand *how* intentional/unintentional metaphors convey information about writers' minds. Metaphors, which prove to be ubiquitous and extremely necessary in our cognitive activities, play a role in creating links between concepts, in defining and justifying meanings in linguistic contexts, and they are absolutely necessary. Some expressions are metaphoric because it would be impossible to express the same concept by using literal expressions, or they may be metaphoric to make the message more understandable (Gibbs 1994: 125-126). Evidence of the last option derives from the wide use of metaphors in technical texts, where complex concepts may become clear through a process of metaphorisation.

From Gibbs' point of view, figurative language plays a fundamental role also in revealing general mental processes lying behind narrative production. Narrative is the mirror of basic functions of human cognitive activity and could be considered a cohesive component of culture as well. The cognitive function named *conceptual blending* gives the possibility of deepening narrative text analyses by considering a text not only as a final product but also as a process, determined by particular cognitive elements. The goal is to clearly understand thematic, stylistic and linguistic choices of authors and reveal the hidden complexities of narrative even in an apparently linear work. Discussion about narrative and metaphor from a cognitive perspective implies also thinking over the importance of linguistic and cognitive dynamics behind a text and over the so called *poetic imagination* (Gibbs 1994).

Experimental protocols based on reading times (e.g. McElree & Nordlie 1996) demonstrate that there are no strong differences between figurative and literal meanings, thus giving evidence to Gibbs and Turner's views. Note that there is a powerful need of establishing fixed stages in metaphor comprehension. Beyond the proposals coming from neuroscience, for example Gibbs (1994) defines four stages in figurative language understanding: *comprehension*, *recognition*, *interpretation* and *appreciation* (Gibbs 1994: 116-117). Application of these stages has been partially found in empirical experiments performed on poetic texts. Noteworthy Goodblatt and Glickson (2003), which present a clear example of thoroughly going into a text and its cognitive components. These texts show many examples of *conceptual blending* and the task is a merely reading task and a recording of observations about the comprehension pattern. Nevertheless the solution is not so simple and clear: in the field of neuroscience, studies based on different techniques (e.g. ERPs, fMRI, Eye tracking methodologies) become more and more frequent.

To sum up, adopting a cognitive perspective about metaphor means looking at metaphor as a complex linguistic, cognitive, conceptual system, which mirrors the poetic features of human mind. But how could linguistic metaphor be linked to conceptual maps? The answer lies in the fruitful combinations of conceptual *mappings* through the mechanisms of *blending* described above. So metaphors can be studied as linguistic expressions (by paying attention to grammatical and lexical choices), as ideas (by analysing their content and the assumed relation to cognitive processes below), and as messages, with a particular function within precise contexts (Steen 1999).

### 3. Literary analysis and cognitive science

#### 3.1. Reading proposals

The current challenge to a traditional way of considering the relation between language and literature has brought to important re-readings of novels. New reading proposals of widely known works could be the first step for validating the appropriateness of cognitive science in literary analysis without ignoring cultural and linguistic components, which certainly play basic roles. Actually, the close connection between human experience in the world, cognition and language explored by cognitive linguists is a blooming field for analysing literature, because the frameworks of *blending* and conceptual integration networks are likely to be applicable to literary texts. In this way, it may be demonstrated: (i) the conceptual closeness between literary and everyday language (Turner 1996), (ii) the pervasiveness of conceptual metaphors, *mental schemas* and all surrounding processes as well as of the figurative thought.

Understanding literary texts may be seen as a dynamic activity, based on embodied information, which is performed online by human beings while reading and understanding a text (Gibbs 2003). Gibbs (2003: 38) gives importance to “ad-hoc comprehension processes”, which makes it possible to have flexible interpretations of texts. But, as it will be seen in next paragraph, this position is not shared by all scholars (e.g. Jackson 2000; 2002; 2003).

On this matter, in order to avoid accuses of generalisation and lack of concrete examples (Spolsky 2003), it will be useful to see how cognitive linguistic approach has been applied: this first step could easily bring us towards the analysis of the postcolonial novel *Shalimar the Clown* by Rushdie. For example, Turner (1991: 52-54) proposes the reading of the allegoric novel *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) by Bunyan in terms of the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY upon which the whole story has been constructed. This metaphor provides a framework for reading the text not only from the strictly literal meaning but enables readers to make the necessary abstractions in order to understand the allegory and so the poetic meaning.

Then, Steen (2002) analyses *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1683) by Aphra Behn, which is embedded in a historical framework and based on a non-ordinary psychology of love. There are the traditional elements of love passions, personal conflicts, and references to the absolutist politics, so that Steen states this novel is an example of *blending*: “A. Behn produces an instable but potent *conceptual blend*” (Steen 2002: 91) because the story is an amorous absolutism and the relationship between lovers is the transposition of the relation between the king and his subjects in an absolutist monarchy. The semantic and conceptual fields of love and politics are linked, so that the linguistic choices belonging to the concept of power are applied to human feelings (Steen 2002: 95). The reader is sharply invited to identify himself/herself with the characters, to feel close to their emotional conditions: the work proves to be both a literary piece of art and an instrument of politic propaganda. Steen's proposal seems not exactly successful: he has tried to combine a historical analysis model with the cognitive model, but the result is not so appreciable. There is an actual lack of cohesion among all analysis proposal aspects and the theoretical background of the application of cognitive science to literature is almost inexistent (Adler and Gross 2002). Actually there is the intention of referring to cognitive models of analysis through an open reference to Turner and Fauconnier (Steen 2002: 95) in order to explain how, by *conceptual integration*, the slight tension between love and politics in the novel could be explained.

Another analysis proposal comes from Richardson (2002), who reviews *Persuasion* (1818) by Austen by taking into consideration the framework provided by cognitive science without disregarding the topics related to the period during which the novel has been written.

Indeed, Richardson (2002) proposes an in-depth account of mind conceptions in Austen's period, thus revealing that Turner's framework is not so far from the medical and psychological interest in mind of the Romantic Period (Richardson 2002: 141-142). In spite of intentions, the tone of the analysis proposed by Richardson (2002) is not so close to Turner's proposal. The synthesis seems not very successful to Adler and Gross (2002) who define Richardson's analysis "the least cognitive" (Adler and Gross 2002: 202) because it is perfectly in line with traditional forms of historical literary analysis, even though it is enriched by an extreme attention to natural and medical features of the novel characters.

The proposal by Calderón Quindós (2007) is more concerned with the construction of the author behind the poem, starting from the constructions of *mental spaces* (Fauconnier 2007), and Lakoff and Johnson's theory of *image schemas* (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). The construction of the self is connected to both experiential knowledge and long term memory, as well as to the underlining conceptual metaphors and suggestions from the words themselves: all cooperate in what the author calls powerfully "a multi-connection holistic game" (Calderón Quindós 2007: 158). Calderón Quindós' framework provides an insightful analysis of how a writer, in this case Plath, can lead the reader to construct a world or his/her own version of the writer and her conceptual world or "universe" in Freeman's words (Freeman 2005).

### 3.2. The other side

It is right to notice that beyond these attempts to validate the importance of cognitive approach to literature, there is also a sceptical vision of the validity of cognitive approach to literature based on the assumption that the role of Cognitive Literary Studies is more apparent than real. Among these scholars there is Jackson (2000; 2002; 2003), who states that the criteria used to interpret literary works are, and should remain, totally different from those used in scientific fields. Applying scientific thought to literature could lead to consider as rules elements aroused only from interpretation and referred to cultural, social or psychological aspects (Jackson: 2000). What about the possibility of harmonizing cognitive science and literature in order to justify and make less relativistic the interpretation of literary works? Jackson underlines the real risk of speaking about wrong, false or creative language only on the base of a neurological effect: "Will we assess good literature by measuring neurological responses to certain syntactical forms?" (Jackson 2000: 329). So a scientific approach to literature seems to be impossible in Jackson's opinion, because it is impossible to level literary creative works open to a multiplicity of interpretations. Talking about a linguistic or literary *object* could pave the way to an extremely dangerous generalization and to forget that each work stirs up as many interpretations as many people read it. Interpretation is the constitutive ingredient of literature: "literature must have interpretation" (Jackson 2003: 204).

Then, the opponents to a cognitive vision of literature believe that cognitive linguistic approach is only one of the possible frameworks of analysis, but not the basic one as showed by some disappointing results. Furthermore, according to Spolsky (2003) there are no substantial differences among the approach proposed by cognitivists and post structuralism and post modernism approaches, i.e. what cognitivists say is already well-known.

### 4. Cognitive Poetics and the Postcolonial Discourse: Rushdie's literary world

The analysis frameworks described above can converge to the real purpose of this paper, that is reading the novel by Rushdie not only from a traditional postcolonial perspective (McLeod 2000; Bates 2006; Gervais 1993; Gikandi 1996 to name just a few) but also by the light of the



cognitive linguistic approach. The validity of all postcolonial frameworks is unquestionable, because they give the necessary cultural perspective, but a new cognitive approach could open even unexpected scenarios. The complex conceptual universe of Rushdie may be unpacked and deeply understood thanks to the conceptual integration theory. Remember, for example, the *double scope integration* (Turner 2007), the most advanced form of *conceptual integration*, which includes very different input spaces, a *blend* including features from both inputs, and an emergent structure in the *blend*. Turner (2007) assumes that strong differences in the inputs allow the creation of “rich clashes” and so highly creative *blends*. This seems to be successfully applicable to Rushdie’s novel (2005), where cultural and conceptual clashes create creative and unique blends at several levels (cf. 5-6-7 below). At the same time, we will see how *image schemas* and *mental spaces* can offer a deeper glimpse into Rushdie’s linguistic choices and the cognitive world behind them.

In constructing the relation between cognitive poetics and postcolonial discourse in Rushdie selected novel, we must start from some fundamentals of postcolonial literature analysis. For instance, take the concept of *hybridity*, which is linked to the indefinite position of the self in a postcolonial reality both in figurative and literal sense, and associated with the concept of *in-betweenness* (McLeod 2000), or living *in-between* nations, cultures, languages and so on. *Hybridity* stands for a plural vision of reality, which is not delimited by sharp borders, but appears incomplete, unstable, fuzzy, thus being connected with untraditional spaces of creativity. One of the most important postcolonial theorist, Homi Bhabha, in an interview (Rutherford 1990: 207-221), referring to postcolonial creative spaces, talks about a *third space*, that is an area of negotiation of meanings and of representation. This *third space* reminds us of the *blend*, as described above, which presents an emergent structure and features taken from both input spaces.

A second example of a possible connection between cognitive linguistic approach and the postcolonial theory lies in the importance of metaphor. As far as the cognitive approach (Gibbs 1994; Turner 1996; Fauconnier & Turner 2008) is concerned, metaphor in both its linguistic and conceptual counterparts is present in our language in conventional forms, and repeatedly transformed into new forms.

The works of the Indo-English writer, Salman Rushdie, are rich materials for understanding how metaphor could be pervasive at different levels and how important it is to consider metaphor not as a mere linguistic or poetic device. Metaphor construction has a particular significance in Rushdie’s fiction, because metaphorical transpositions allow real facts to become literary characters, places and events at different levels of the text construction. Moreover, in Rushdie’s literary production deep attention is paid to metaphors which become a paradigm for understanding and talking about reality with all its cultural presuppositions.

For instance, Sanga (2001) proposes a synthesis of Rushdie’s literary world based on five key metaphors (*migration, translation, hybridity, blasphemy* and *globalization*), which turn to be a useful framework for examining the topics and the formal features of his novels. Among the metaphors proposed by Sanga (2001), *migration* and *translation* must be considered recurring themes within postcolonial literature and constitute undoubtedly the most meaningful metaphors in Rushdie’s narrative world. This is stressed also by Gane (2006), who talks about the translation processes in another novel by Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children* (1981). In this novel, translation appears through the image of a magic radio, which makes all Indian languages intelligible to the so called midnight’s children in a highly composite linguistic and cultural space. This creative space of the novel looks like a *blend*, whose input spaces are

the English and the Indian cultural and linguistic spaces, and creates an emergent structure through the three stage model of *composition*, *completion* and *elaboration* (cf. 1).

As proposed by Freeman (2000) in the analysis of two poems by Dickinson, several metaphor systems interact in the definition of abstract concepts, so even if the *blend* can be unpacked, in respect of one of the *optimality rules* (Fauconnier & Turner 2001), our understanding of the target is constrained by the *blend* itself. Indeed metaphorical *mappings* are much more than simple one to one connections and, as a result, they generate multiple meanings. *Mapping* gives an intricate nature to Rushdie's conceptual world in *Shalimar the Clown*, but is *mapping* a marker of the author's conceptual universe (Freeman 1995) or only a narrative strategy (Freeman 2000)? Both answers are acceptable. *Mapping* is a strong marker of how the author uses his metaphorical background in his literary production, but it is also a strategy because the author often departs from the conventional forms of conceptual metaphor.

Conceptual integration theory by Fauconnier and Turner (2001) is not openly connected to metaphorical constructions, but we can assume that to some extent all metaphorical processes involve *blending* (Freeman 2007). Blending provides the instrument of revealing the structure of both conventional and novel metaphorical processing, the mixing of genres (Sinding 2005), thus addressing question of literary structure and style.

These remarks pave the way to the main goal of this paper. For giving a clear description of Rushdie's conceptual scenario, it will be analysed: (1) the outer surface of the novel, that is structure and style, thus referring to the mixing of genres, the *conceptual blending* and *mapping* phenomena; (2) the second level involving characters and content, at this level many examples of *blending* may be simply the matching of elements that do not meet in reality (Grady 2007), as in the example of the modern philosopher meeting Kant, proposed by Fauconnier and Turner (2001); (3) the inner surface of the novel: the linguistic choices concerning how the juxtaposition of terms may reveal a underlining conceptual pattern.

##### **5. Conceptual blending and Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the outer surface of *Shalimar the Clown*: structure and style**

It has been already stated that *blending* theory is concerned with online processes and that the deriving multiple spaces can be combined in creating conceptual networks. On the contrary, CMT is oriented towards the cognitive metaphorical structures stored in our mind. But they are not separate because *conceptual blending* operates within the frameworks proposed by CMT (Crisp 2003).

In *Shalimar the Clown*, the structure follows the *image schema* of CYCLE. Though Turner (1991; 1996) talks about MOVEMENT ALONG A DIRECT PATH as the most frequent *image schema*, in *Shalimar the Clown* the novel structure and time passing are organized around a circular structure according to the Indian conception of time. The CYCLE image schema is linked to many natural phenomena (Freeman 1995), but in Western and Christian world life tends to be organized along a never ending linear PATH. Actually, Turner claims that there are also two ways of conceptualizing and talking about time passing: "We like to think of time, which has no shape, as having a shape, such as linear or circular, and of that shape as having skeletal structure" (Turner 1991: 58). So the main conceptual metaphor which runs over the novel is TIME IS A CIRCLE. For instance, in the novel the event's epilogue appears from the first page whereas the genesis is only at the end of the novel, but as it happens in a CYCLE, the beginning and the end coincide.

The literary space of the novel is composed by five parts: (i) India, (ii) Boonyi, (iii) Max, (iv) Shalimar the Clown, (v) Kashmira. Each part, entitled with the name of the character who

dominates it, can be considered as a first step towards the construction of the general *blended space* involving the whole novel. Beyond the plot itself, that will be analysed in the next paragraph, the reader faces immediately clashing input spaces, which become an *integrated blended space*.

There is a strong contradiction, a clash, between the five parts of the novel, underlined by the change of style, and within each part as well. For example, the first part is titled *India* but it is set in the USA being India only the misleading name of the female protagonist of the novel. In this first part Rushdie's style is in perfect accordance with the crime report, while the features of the so called magic realism, suggested by the connection with *India*, are still veiled. In the third part, titled *Max*, the narrative technique looks absolutely western, and close to spy stories, mixed with the styles of biography and crime news. These parts are in strong opposition to the second, the fourth and the fifth parts where the Indian Subcontinent dominates and a new narrative dimension arises. Here there is a different organisation of the narrative space, because the stylistic choices performed by the author show a particular closeness to Indian oral traditions and magic realism. So the narrative space is constructed across real and fantasy elements coming from very different input spaces. The movement between cultures, marked by the succession of the novel's parts and relevant styles, proves the existence of multiple realities in the novel.

The features of Rushdie's prose collide with the cognitive models (Steen 2003) that may be shared by most people. From the points of view of structure and style, these models include genres or particular scenarios within genres (cf. Steen 2003). The overall representation of the text is based on elements taken from very different mixed text types. This assumption seems to be not applicable to *Shalimar the Clown*, because the narrative scenario has uncommon features and is dynamically constructed through a continuous *blending* process. *Blending* does concern not only the writer, but also the reader because the connections created by the author are likely to be the same reconstructed by the reader (Freeman 2000).

## 6. The novel content

The story narrated in *Shalimar the Clown* starts in 1991 in Los Angeles with the murder of Max Ophuls, former American ambassador in India, before her daughter India's eyes, and it continues with a long and detailed flashback in search of the murder's reasons. To this purpose, a multitude of stories is constructed since the murder, which proves to be not a political one, as expected, but a crime of passion. Thus the biography of Max's daughter India, the account of Max's youth, of the idyllic Indian village Pachigam, the story of Boonyi, and her road to perdition, the story of Shalimar and his desire for revenge, follow one another throughout the novel. Note that even though the title of the novel gives particular importance to the figure of Shalimar, the narrated events move often away from this character. The narrative universe of Rushdie, as it emerges from the novel content, is multifaceted and heterogeneous.

Two of the conceptual metaphors governing the quite elaborate plot are LIFE IS A JOURNEY and LIFE IS A BATTLE. The first one could be applicable to the lives of Max and India, while the second concerns the story of Shalimar the Clown at several levels. Indeed, the novel content looks like a long JOURNEY both in space and time (Freeman 1995). A journey in space because: Max goes from the USA to the Indian subcontinent and back, his daughter India travels to India in search of her true origins, Shalimar goes from India to the USA for his personal revenge. But it is also a JOURNEY in time because: the narration begins in present (India's sleepless nights, Max's murder), it goes back to a very far past (Max's life in India and then in Europe, Boonyi and Shalimar's lives in India), then it comes again to present (India

searching for her origins) with a strong link to the past (India discovers her Indian roots and changes her name into Kashmira).

The second conceptual metaphor, *LIFE IS A BATTLE*, may be also considered a sub-metaphor or a more specific metaphor (Grady 2007) in comparison with *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*. This metaphor is connected above all to Shalimar, who fights against his enemy Max throughout his life, making the murder of Max the only one reason for living. War is a recurring theme in the novel for the characters' lives, but it represents also the historical background of the whole narration.

If we want to see an application of the *blending* theory, we need to refer again to the *PATH* schema, and to also to the *CONTAINER* schema and their projections. Indeed, the novel is based on the physical and metaphorical movement of Shalimar from a good Indian boy through the shapeless reality of love, suffering, and subsequent desire for revenge, the training as a terrorist, towards the final achievement of his revenge. On the contrary, the *PATH* of India implies a first stage of unawareness of many aspects of her life and a second stage of regaining what belongs to her, passing through a difficult research and introspection. Like a liquid in a *CONTAINER*.

In Rushdie's scenario, in accordance to Turner's theory (1996), *narrative imagining* ability, which is "prediction [...] evaluation [...] planning [...] explanation [...]" (Turner 1996: 9), is used to create the important link between the author, the novel characters and the reader. Indeed, the characters of the novel often resort to *narrative imagining* to organize their thoughts and convey them to audience. This process, the basis of the metaphor construction through *projection*, makes it possible to understand all metaphoric connections created by Rushdie. For example, read the following association:

'Pumpkin time, Cinders' she told herself. The magic spell was about to break, her gown would once again be an ashy rag ... The glass slipper didn't fit her any more. It was on another woman's foot. (Rushdie 2005: 187)

This passage describes the feelings of Peggy Rhodes, Max's wife, when she finds out about her husband's infidelity. The tale of Cinderella is the symbol of the loss of a spell, represented by the marriage in Peggy's life. In this situation Rushdie plays on what Turner (1991: 128) defines "conceptual connections" and "identity connections" (Turner 1996: 122), i.e. the connections creating links between different spaces and making possible the identification of a story through another one. But *narrative imaging* functions only if author and reader share all links between the stories involved. When these conditions are absent even the communication itself is interrupted and the author must explicitly interfere to clarify all implicit assumptions. For instance, this happens when the character Peggy quotes Grimm Brothers' tale *Rumpelstiltskin* (Rushdie 2005: 211) and the author shortly explains the plot of the tale in order to make the reference clear. In this example, the cognitive world of the author due to the particular input spaces it derives from, does not collide with the reader's one and the cognitive *mappings* performed must be explained.

## **7. The construction of *blended* characters**

In Turner's analysis framework (1996: 136-139), characters can be constructed through *identity projections* (Turner 1996: 137), when they respect the reader's expectations and presuppositions, and *metaphoric projections* (Turner 1996: 137) when relations are not immediate. Note that also in the construction of characters, postcolonial paradigm of analysis, providing the cultural framework, and cognitive linguistic approach to literature meet successfully. Indeed, in *Shalimar the Clown* character identities may be fully included both

within the so-called *hybrid* and *diasporic* identities constructed and analysed within the postcolonial discourse, and referring to the coexistence of conflicting cultures, and in the cognitive paradigm of *conceptual blending* by Fauconnier and Turner.

In order to outline a definitive picture of characters, it is useful to look at their collocation in the novel and at the systems of thought lying behind them, as well as at the recurring elements defining them. For instance, all characters have experience of *migrants* in both physical and metaphorical senses, since in this context migration implies not only a movement in space from a country into another one, but also drastic identity changes. We already know that LIFE IS A JOURNEY, so the *migration* paradigm, which describes the condition of characters living *in-between* geographical, historical and cultural spaces, is a clear *mapping* of this conceptual metaphor. All characters in the novel experience of intentional or unintentional journeys in search of a desirable position for themselves and a stable definition of their identities. But after all, they live in no place, in a situation of not belonging. For Boonyi Kaul, India's mother and Shalimar's beloved, changing her place stands for the possibility of finding her identity far from her birth country. Unfortunately her desire remains unsolved and results even in a tragic epilogue: Boonyi loses her daughter and essentially her freedom.

Therefore, the *metaphorical projection* of characters (Turner 1996: 137) may be woven into analysis categories proposed within postcolonial studies. The common aims of these analysis frameworks concern the following topics:

- (1) The physical and cultural displacement of characters and their living *in-between*;
- (2) The voluntary or necessary changes of names and identities;
- (3) The idea of *rootlessness* linked to the recovery of lost identities in a way which goes "from roots to routes" (McLeod 2000: 208).

The contemporary belonging to both the Western and the Oriental world, actually belonging to neither of them, is a recurring theme in the lives of the novel's characters and, for example, it is underlined by the presence of characters born from culturally mixed parents. For example, the protagonist India was born from an Indian mother and an American father, thus being collocated in a *hybrid* space. Note that India's condition becomes even more complex for the presence of a "third parent", that is her stepmother Peggy. The complicated condition and collocation of India is clearly displayed in her name, which is obviously not accidental but has a high metaphorical value linked to the Indian subcontinent. This heavy value is perceived by India herself as a lifelong weight imposed on her by her father:

She has been conceived in the East...but if that were a sufficient excuse, if it was okay to hang people's birthplaces round their neck like albatrosses, then the world would be full of men and women called Euphrates or Pisha. (Rushdie 2005: 5)

Moreover India thinks her name does not reflect her personality, it is only an unpleasant heritage:

She didn't want to be vast or subcontinental or excessive or vulgar or explosive or crowded or ancient or noisy or mystical or in any way Third World. Quite the reverse. (Rushdie 2005: 6).

At the beginning of the narration, India's past is unknown, even though the reader is allowed to recollect several elements for defining her identity and her *rootlessness*. One of the first signals are her restless nights when her hidden past seems to come out and create a strange link with the Oriental world. Indeed, through the night India speaks in a strange

guttural language resembling Arabic and neither the protagonist nor the reader can immediately understand the metaphorical meaning below. India can undoubtedly be labelled as a *hybrid* identity because she is under construction in an interstitial cultural and conceptual space. But India's being *in-between* gives her also the label of *blended character* thus collocating her also within the framework proposed by Turner (1996: 136).

The character of India is constructed step by step through a recollection of elements. The trigger which induces India to look backwards in her past and so to gain more information on her identity is an old photo, which allows her to reconstruct her roots back into the far Indian Subcontinent. This reminds us of a literary device already used by Rushdie as a way of looking back in one's own past. Actually Rushdie himself has covered a similar route while writing his well-known work *Midnight's Children* (Rushdie: 1981):

An old photograph in a cheap frame hangs on a wall of the room where I work...But the photograph tells me to invert this idea; it reminds me that it's my present that is foreign, and that the past is home in a lost city in the mists of lost time. (Rushdie 1992: 9)

Thanks to a photo, India learns even her true birth name: Kashmira Noman. In such a way the albatross hanging on her neck is broken off and she gains a precious heritage: her *imaginary homeland* (Rushdie 1992) from indefinite sensation becomes a strong but real tie. The new collocation of India is displayed also by her requirement of being named Kashmira and her need to visit Kashmir.

The change of name is a recurring theme in the narrative space of Rushdie, because the author often selects different names for the same character thus complicating the novel's mimetic relation to reality. There are many meaningful instances of this practise in the novel. For example, Shalimar the Clown is a name chosen by the protagonist himself in place of his birth name Noman, which easily reminds the reader of the presence and contemporary absence of this character in the novel. Shalimar is often not physically present but he is in charge of the main part of narrated events. It is noteworthy that a considerable part of the novel describes Noman/Shalimar training as a terrorist in a dimension that seems pretty unreal. Shalimar's choice of a new name is above all a tribute to his birthplace, The Shalimar Gardens in Lahore, even if it hides other important cultural cross references. Shalimar is a city in Florida, the title of an Indian movie of 1978, the name of a diamond, and Shalimar Bagh is a colony near Delhi. This metaphorical load, which is surely not accidental, is not so immediate to a western reader.

In the description of Max Ophuls' life the device of changing names is taken to extreme. This character, India's father and Shalimar's enemy, looks apparently like the most firm identity through the novel. But this state turns to be unreal as revealed by the account of his life during the years of The Resistance when he often faces the construction of new identities and the use of different names for political reasons or for hiding immoral actions. Max is even an able forger, who literally constructs new identities for the Hebrew subjected to racial persecution by creating forged identity cards.

*Blended spaces* are often constructed by the author for conveying further information about characters. For instance several stages of Boonyi's life are marked by projections of Indian myths. For example, the myth of *Sita, Ram and Ravan* (Rushdie 2005: 49) is *projected* into the love story between Boonyi and Shalimar, with Max Ophuls playing the role of Ravan, the devils' god.

Another *projection* derives from Anarkali myth, a play performed in Pachigam village in which the protagonist has often been interpreted by Boonyi herself. The *metaphoric projection*

of the unfaithful woman is immediately clear to the reader and it is explained also within the narrative space as well.

The following diagram (Fauconnier & Turner 2001; Grady 2007) shows how the four space framework of the *blending* process includes all the references implied in the understanding of a *blended space*:

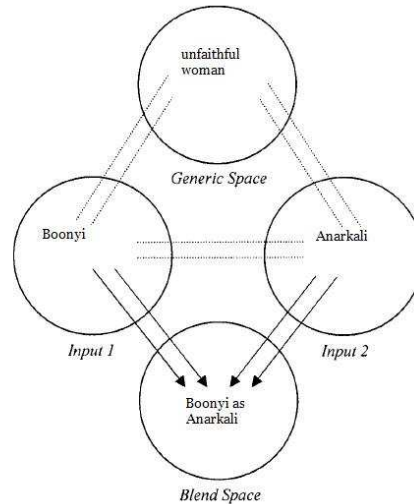


Figure 1  
Boonyi/Anarkali blend. Adapted from Fauconnier & Turner 2001; Grady 2007: 200

A further *blend* is created by India and her lost mother, to be considered the input spaces. After India's birth, they will never meet again, but when India finds out her real origins, the broken tie with her mother is recreated. So India is no more an American girl with an exotic name, but she becomes the most important *blend* of the whole novel.

To conclude, Rushdie the knowledge and expectations of readers, because characters are not always straightforwardly connected to the scenario (Steen 2003) but as compensation they give highly valued information.

### 8. Linguistic level: the final step for understanding Rushdie's conceptual universe

The last stage in the novel analysis includes the linguistic choices made by Rushdie. The cognitive linguistic theory claims that language is the outer surface of cognitive processes working behind. For example, the so called *orientational metaphors* (cf. 2.1.) are mapped into many creative conceptual domains, as showed by the following quotations:

- (1) The ambassador had entombed her memory under a pyramid of silence. (Rushdie 2005: 18)
- (2) The weight of the inexorable bore down on her as if the gravitational force of the earth had suddenly increased. (Rushdie 2005: 20)
- (3) The downward spiral had been fast, and she had been lucky to survive the smash at the end of it. (Rushdie 2005: 350)
- (4) Her feelings were unable to rise to the surface, they were buried beneath her fear. (Rushdie 2005: 363)

(5) The talk show host had the feeling that he was watching the drowning of one reality, the reality in which he lived, by a sudden flood from the other side of the world, an alien deluge in response to which his beloved viewers would form a flood of their own. (Rushdie 2005: 27-28)

(6) "My time is being swept away" the ambassador said. (Rushdie 2005: 19)

(7) The ambassador again began to speak volubly, the words crowding out of him like traffic. (Rushdie 2005: 21)

(8) She was used to such soliloquies, his fugues on themes of this or that .... But now his praise-song seemed to cross a frontier and bear him away from her into a shadow. (Rushdie 2005: 23)

(9) The event that would shatter the cocoon of the lie in which she lived took place some months later (Rushdie 2005: 346)

So, these expressions mark physical, and cognitive, movements from one point to another one in a physical and metaphorical space. Note the systematic referring to verbs and nouns linked to spatial movements. In detail, in the sentences (1), (2) and (3) there is an up-down movement underlined by the use of *under* (1), *bore down* (2), and *downward* (3). From a cognitive point of view, these movements imply a worsening of the situation, or better a path or a fall towards a state worse than the previous one (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 14-21) according to the conceptual metaphor MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN. Sentence (4) is constructed upon the same mental schema but the movement goes the opposite way because there is an attempt of reaching a metaphorical surface and so an improvement. Then, the following sentences show a movement on a horizontal line with a change of direction in sentence (6). Finally, in quotation (9) *shatter the cocoon* suggests a movement from inside to outside, embodying the idea of redemption. Spatial movements become metaphorical movements and they are naturally understood by readers, because they faithfully follow human beings' attitude towards reality. Note that the communicative process is not interrupted, thus giving evidence to a close relation between metaphorical and literal expressions. Note also that the linguistic connections, analysed above, are based on analogical and metaphorical relations in accordance to the statement "we understand one concept in terms of the other" (Turner 1991: 158). Indeed, conceptual metaphors behind and beyond linguistic metaphors are automatically perceived and fully activated, the comprehension of source and target *mental spaces* is simultaneous.

To activate the target is automatically to activate both the *mapping* that structures it and the source domain in terms of which it is structured. (Turner 1991: 158)

Also *conceptual blending* seems to be visible at a pure linguistic level. Turner (1991: 129-131) reported on an analysis paradigm based on the juxtapositions of contrasting words. For instance, associations between: (a) physical object and not-physical object; (b) person and not person; (c) not-event and event; (d) food and not-food; (e) period of time and not period of time; (f) legal agreement and not legal agreement; (g) linguistic structure and not linguistic structure; (h) belief and not belief (Turner 1991: 130). Observe the following quotations from *Shalimar the Clown*:

(10) Noman had never understood how to think about love, how to give names to its effects of moral illumination and tidal fluctuation and gravitational pool. (Rushdie 2005: 45-46)

(11) Love and hate were shadow planets too, noncorporeal but out there, pulling at his heart and soul. (Rushdie 2005: 46)



(12) Yes, the future would come for her, a messenger descending from the heavens to inform a mere mortal of the decision of the gods. (Rushdie 2005: 181)

(13) In the kitchen where once Pamposh had reigned he felt in communion with her departed beauty, felt their souls blending in his bubbling sauces, their vanished joy expressing itself in vegetables and meat. (Rushdie 2005: 103)

(14) The woman's names twisted in her like knives, their street addresses, apartment numbers, zip codes and phone numbers burned holes in her memory like little phosphorus bombs. (Rushdie 2005: 176-177)

(15) Boonyi looked like a poem. (Rushdie 2005: 100)

(10) and (11) show the association between *physical and not physical* object. In detail in (10) the *not physical object* love is associated with illumination, fluctuation, and gravitational pull, which usually refer to physical movements in space or physical objects. Sentence (12) presents an association *person- not person*, because future is embodied in a messenger bringing information from heaven. In (13) there is the uncommon link *food-not food*: Boonyi and her mother experience a close imaginative and spiritual relationship, embodied in sauces and meals. In (14) Rushdie establishes a link between several linguistic elements - names, street addresses, and zip codes- to absolutely not linguistic elements -such as knives and bombs- thus constructing the painful state of a deceived woman. And finally in (15) the protagonist Boonyi is compared to a poem according to the same association. Note that some associations may take the form of oxymora "In the second year of her liberated captivity" (Rushdie 2005: 201), or synaesthesias: "Her contempt smelled like spring rain. Her voice showered over him like silver" (Rushdie 2005: 101).

As we have seen at the other analysis stages, also at a linguistic level it is possible to identify conceptual metaphors. For example, the following extracts may be seen as projections of the metaphor LIFE IS A PLAY (Turner 1991: 159-161):

(16) As the glare of the lights stopped flooding the camera lens India understood that she was looking at an allegory of the future her father had not wanted to imagine. ...Morality and immorality, the beatified and the corrupted, walked towards the cameras, hand in hand, and in love. (Rushdie 2005: 24)

(17) So the fiction of undying romance was kept up, impeccably by her, extremely peccably by him. (Rushdie 2005: 176)

In (16), future appears to the protagonist India like a movie scene ("camera lens", "walked towards the cameras"), while in (17) terms like "fiction", "romance" are used to talk about Max's marriage. Furthermore the second part of (16) makes it possible to identify the application of the schema PATH as well, since it describes reality as placed along a line, covering a segment with its inner symmetry and equilibrium. From the point of view of linguistic and semantic choices, in (16) the opposite poles -the beatified and the corrupted- are placed at the extremities of a metaphorical segment (Turner 1991: 79) and become a metonym of all human beings.

## 9. Conclusive notes

Cognitive poetics (Gavins & Steen 2003) derives from cognitive science, linguistics, and literary theory. It concerns literature, in all its forms, and pays great attention to the conceptual world of the author emerging from the text. But understanding how a novelist structures his work opens new perspective into the cognitive world of readers as well (Freeman 2000).

What this paper has tried to demonstrate is the possibility of adapting the analysis framework of the cognitive linguistic approach also to a novel belonging to postcolonial literature. Indeed the cultural implications of this field of literary production could lead us erroneously to think that it needs its own categories of analysis. It is unquestionable that in order to define a comprehensive literary theory, cultural approach should be taken into account, but the approach proposed here may show the possibility of new scenarios as well.

Rushdie's literary production is very rich, and this paper has proposed one of the possible ways of addressing a definition of his appealing "universe". His scenario is surely unconventional (Steen 2003), because the *mapping* processes performed by Rushdie, beginning from conceptual metaphors daily used by human beings, are highly creative and do not respect the reader's expectations. As a consequence, the reader is continuously invited to create a particular conceptual structure where for example: time follows a circular path, life is a real journey from India to the USA and vice versa and a metaphorical journey between clashing cultures, characters originate from very different input spaces thus becoming very creative *blends*.

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