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Conceptual Metaphor, Schema Disruption and Colonial Identity in Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone Fiction: A Cognitive Poetic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates two specific cognitive mechanisms for encoding colonial subjectivity in Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone fiction: conceptual metaphor and schema disruption. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and cognitive stylistics form the theoretical framework; Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things (1997), and Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children (1981) are the literary corpus of the investigation. It demonstrates that postcolonial novelists creatively draw upon pre-established mappings and on contraventions of master cognitive schemas to fashion hybrid, de-essentialized and resistant subject positions. It focuses on extracts in each of the three texts, showing that conceptual metaphor in these novels cannot be simply equated with rhetorical figure, but must be considered as a cognitive strategy through which colonial reality, cultural hybridity and self-division are negotiated. The study provides three key claims: that the metaphor systems used by all three novelists target the Western liberal schema of autonomous selfhood for subversion; that schema disruption takes place at the levels of syntax, lexis and deixis; and that the cognitive mechanisms can be fruitfully aligned with postcolonial studies' theoretical categories.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphor, schema disruption, cognitive poetics, postcolonial identity, Pakistani fiction, South Asian Anglophone literature, cognitive stylistics*

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores how language constructs colonial identity in Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone fiction utilizing cognitive poetics theory. More specifically, it investigates how postcolonial authors use conceptual metaphor and disruption of schema to do more than reflect or depict colonial identity how do they create the very experience of colonial identity as a cognitive occurrence during reading? Looking at three canonical works: Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things (1997), and Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children (1981) this paper analyses select passages from each text using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and schema theory (Bartlett, 1932; Stockwell, 2002) as its framework.

Decades of work in postcolonial studies, literary criticism, and linguistics has focused on issues surrounding language and colonial identity. Less systematic, however, has been research into how these issues play out cognitively: not just what postcolonial authors say about identity, but what their language does to and for the reader's mind, what structures it erects, challenges, and reshapes. Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone fiction is especially fruitful ground for exploring these questions. Authors such as Hamid, Roy, and Rushdie write texts whose engagement with the language of colonialism, displacement, and hybrid identity is not tangential but essential to their narration; these texts are written in English, but the English is warped and redirected to give voice to cognitive realities that are undeniably South Asian. These authors are writing back against the centre (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002) with the tools of the centre's own

language. Cognitive poetics provides us with tools to analyze these cognitive maneuvers. Developed at the convergence of cognitive linguistics and literary theory, cognitive poetics provides tools for understanding how language shapes the mind's imaginative understanding of a text. Literary language operates on cognition at many levels schemas, conceptual metaphor, text world, mind model building. These structures produce various aesthetic and interpretive effects. (Jaafar 20) shows us how readers construct a text world based on the language of the text itself as well as schemata drawn from the reader's individual experiences. This relationship is complicated, of course, when a text purposefully subverts its reader's dominant schema (in most cases, western). When a postcolonial author flips the script, forcing the reader to re-center the colonized subject of their narrative and defamiliarize the colonial perspective, they are engaging in a cognitive manoeuver that exceeds individual themes.

Both being well-established areas of study, cognitive linguistic approaches to Pakistani Anglophone fiction and South Asian Anglophone fiction have not been extensively explored. Cognitive stylistic studies have often relied on examples taken from 'standard' English literary works. Similarly, postcolonial literary studies have mostly focused on historicity, politics and culture rather than delve into linguistic concerns of literature. Moreover, Cognitive poetics focuses on literature's linguistic mechanisms and their mental representations. However postcolonial theory helps us make sense of such revelations. Not much work has been done that truly combines both approaches. Of the work that has been done on South Asian Anglophone literature, Pakistani fiction has not been given enough cognitive stylistic coverage; The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Hamid has been read mostly for its political undertones even though it creates one of the most complex second person addressee structures in modern fiction.

This paper has three aims: firstly, to discover and analyse the predominant conceptual metaphor systems at work in our chosen corpus; secondly, to see how each text generates schema disruption which compels the reader to occupy the colonised subject's cognitive perspective; and finally, to locate these findings in postcolonial theory, illustrating how the cognitive processes observed map onto Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity, Said's (19 78) Orientalism, and Spivak's (19 88) silencing of the subaltern. To that end, this paper asks three questions. What conceptual metaphor systems are employed by these authors, and what is the ideological resonance of their source domains? How do these novels generate schema disruption, and what are its cognitive effects? And how does cognitive poetics further our understanding of postcolonial literary identity beyond what can be ascertained through thematic/historical analysis alone?

The contribution of this study is two-fold: theoretical and disciplinary. On the theoretical side, this study furthers the dialogue between cognitive poetics and postcolonial literary studies by shedding light on how the structures that postcolonial theory talks about are actually brought into being in the reader's mind during cognitive processing of the text. On a disciplinary note, this study applies cognitive linguistic approaches to texts that have been overwhelmingly analyzed from thematic and ideological perspectives. It takes a step towards redressing the critical lacuna of Pakistani literature in cognitive stylistic scholarship. Furthermore, as Pakistani and South Asian scholars writing from within rather than outside of the cultures and languages we study, we occupy a positionality that is a true scholarly benefit. Our situatedness allows us to read these texts' cognitive structures from a position of knowledge rather than observation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The three areas of literature that influenced the present study were primarily focused on postcolonial theory, cognitive poetics and cognitive stylistics, as well as critical discussions on Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone fiction. All of these topics provided a unique focus to the study; postcolonial theory reveals the possible political implications of identity creation, cognitive poetics allow for an understanding of the linguistics behind the process of labeling that can take place in literature, and Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone fiction allows the analysis to utilize a basis of previous literary conversations. The following

paragraphs will dive into each of these areas of literature and highlight how the theories used in the study were built, as well as what areas were left uncovered in past works.

Postcolonial Theory and the Question of Identity

Critics and theorists have struggled with questions of identity ever since postcolonialism became established as a discipline in the late 1980s. Edward Said's groundbreaking study Orientalism first analysed how colonial discourse generates meanings about the colonised. Describing how the Orientalist discursively constructs the East, Said exposed its system of knowledge that essentialises Eastern identity as homogeneous, static, backwards, undeveloped, and irrational in short the inferior Other of the developed West. Identity was thus always already produced within relations of power, representation and language. Said's legacy enabled postcolonial literary critics to examine how language works rather than what it simply says.

Expanding upon Said's analysis, Homi Bhabha further complicated the relationship between coloniser and colonised. Bhabha contends colonial identity is constructed through ambivalence and hybridity, rather than centring on strictly two opposing groups. In his book The Location of Culture (1994), Bhabha states colonial power is never unified, and functions instead through feelings of uncertainty and menace. This creates what he describes as a "liminal space," existing in the gaps between cultures where established identities dissolve and hybrid identities can take shape. As authors Milostivaya et al. (2018) note in their own analysis of Bhabha' book, hybridity serves as an identifier of the being of cultural objects created between European and colonial societies. Bhabha's idea of a third space of enunciation, where binary oppositions such as self/other are diminished, has been influential in the study of postcolonial literature by South Asian and Pakistani writers in English. Texts by these authors often operate within these liminal spaces.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak'80s landmark essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) famously re-raised the question of representational power in terms of the structural ways colonised subjects have been silenced by dominant discourses. Attending to questions of gender, class, and subalternity, Spivak critiques the ways social and cultural hegemonies within colonialism continue to foreclose any hope of achieving true representation for marginalised subjects within elite discourses of knowledge production. A recent article on subaltern silencing in Megha Majumdar' newest novel, A Burning , continues this line of argument, reading the novel through Spivak and uncovering ways that class, religion, gender, and politics work to silence the subaltern subject within contemporary literary form (Wah Academia, 2025). Work such as this proves theories of postcolonialism still remain critical to reading South Asian texts in the twenty-first century.

Frantz Fanon' psychoanalytical approach to the colonised subject and, in particular, the psychic damage inflicted on the colonised subject' s identity through colonial violence in Black Skin, White Masks (1952) and The Wretched of the Earth (1961), added yet another dimension upon which postcolonial theories of identity would build by focusing on the psychological impact of colonial violence on the subjectivity of the colonised. These four scholars: Said, Bhabha, Spivak and Fanon, form what has been referred to as postcolonial studies' theoretical cornerstone (Innes, as cited in Siddiqui et al., 20 20) and so their scholarship provides the grounds upon which cognitive poetics must position its understanding of postcolonial literary identity. This study does not seek to distance itself from postcolonial theory but instead employs cognitive linguistic methods to show that the mental processes and strategies through which postcolonial fictional identity is linguistically constructed cannot be divorced from the material and political realities which postcolonial theory engages.

Cognitive Poetics and Cognitive Stylistics

It is important to remember that cognitive poetics developed out of cognitive linguistics, literary theory, and reader-response criticism in the 1970s and 1980s. Literary meaning is therefore viewed as something actively generated by the relationship between the text-base created by language as it unfolds and readers' minds. As Jaafar (2020) notes cognitive stylistics approaches also known as cognitive poetics view literary language through the lens of cognition and focuses on how our understanding as readers comes from the background knowledge and experience that we use to comprehend texts and construct what Werth and then Gavins (2007) call text worlds. This means cognitive stylistics makes use of schemas text world theory, conceptual metaphor theory, mind style, foregrounding theory, and mental spaces theory throughout applying those theories into how we understand specific examples of literary language. Schema theory originates from Bartlett's (1932) idea that 'schemas' developed into Rumelhart's (1975) cognitive linguistic sense that humans organize knowledge and continually adapt these mental structures to inform our comprehension, expectation, and prediction when we read. When a literary text deviates from known schema depicting an event character or situation in a way that opposes the standard/original mental representation of a schemata it creates what we call within cognitive stylistics schema disruption. Readers will continually update their version of a text-world as they read and schema plays a huge role in that interpretation. (Jaafar, 2020) shows us how our current schema can affect how we view a summer's day within a text. What does a British reader view when they think of a summers day? What about a reader from Taiwan? (Stockwell, 2016) discusses this idea through Shakespeare. Postcolonial authors use this tool to throw off readers when they write about the colonial experience from the viewpoint of the oppressed.

Stockwell (2016) presents six core dimensions of engagement during literary reading experience: resonance, deixis, figure-ground organisation, metaphor and framing, simulation and deictic projection, and mind-modelling. All six dimensions offer tools for analysis of postcolonial literary identity. Deictic projection allows the reader to take up the position of the here-and-now of a voice; through shifts in deixis, postcolonial narrators such as Changez (The Reluctant Fundamentalist) or Saleem Sinai (Midnight' s Children) seek to position Western readers into a subject position that estranges them from their own cognitive world. Mind-modelling is our cognitive skill of imaginatively recreating the beliefs, intentions, emotions and mental states of story characters and the narrator. This ability is used in postcolonial fiction to create empathy across the colonial divide, but also to make salient the cognitive distance engendered by colonialism. Linguo-cognitive analysis of literary texts stemming from the tradition of cognitive linguistics tradition focuses on linguistic devices such as metaphors, phraseological units, evaluative vocabulary, allegory, comparison through which concepts and images are expressed in the literary text (Temirova et al., 20 23). Particularly, this tradition has maintained that there is no random choice of linguistic means to express ideas in literary language. Choice is determined by the communicative aim of the literary text, as well as by the cognitive effect the writer intends to induce in his readers. When applied to postcolonial fiction, this tenet would ask analysts to pay attention to how postcolonial writers carefully select metaphorical language to encode their subjects' cognitive experience of colonised identities, hybridity, resistance.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Its Application to Literary Analysis

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's Metaphors We Live By (19) revolutionised thinking about metaphor by claiming metaphor was not simply a linguistic phenomenon but conceptual; metaphors are properties of thought. Conceptual metaphors entail systematic mappings between two concepts or conceptual domains a source and a target. Using the 'structures' of the source, we understand the target. ARGUMENT IS WAR, structures our conception of argument using war. We talk of winning/losing arguments, attacking/defending positions, opponents as enemies whose claims we seek to destroy. Importantly however, metaphors are not simply cognitive tools, rather, as deeply embedded within a culture and its history they can reveal particular systems of values, ideological assumptions and structures of power. For example, in terms of cognitive

stylistics Jaafar (20) claims that metaphor in literature operates as cognitive frame structures experiences and knowledge for readers. Stockwell's (2016) reading of Shakespeare's Sonnet XVIII finds that the primary metaphor A DAY IS A YEAR opens up conceptual mappings which link summer warmth to beauty, the brevity of a day to the brevity of life. These linked mappings in turn generate another overarching metaphor in which day, year and life are experienced simultaneously. Conceptual metaphor's ability to drive complex extended and layered thinking is therefore hugely significant for postcolonial fiction which frequently draws on extended metaphorical systems to express the complex experience of hybridity, displacement and negotiation.

Postcolonial theory itself makes extensive use of metaphorical thinking. Bhabha' s language of theory is saturated with metaphors. Cultural difference itself is framed through what Gilbert (qtd. In Siddiqui et al., 2020) terms a "language metaphor," where cultures are conceptualised as operating semiotically akin to languages. Hybridity, mimicry and the third space are cognitive metaphors which maps the mental territory of colonial subjectivity onto source domains of space and biology to make sense of abstract cultural phenomena like mixing and negotiating power. Conceptual Metaphor Theory can therefore be productively brought to bear on literary texts from postcolonial contexts because it allows for the examination of those texts using the tools necessary to unpack the very concepts postcolonial theory uses to frame the colonial condition. The use of Conceptual Metaphor Theory to elucidate literary texts has recently expanded into the field of postcolonial studies. Recent work by Vezzani and Rebora (20 24) illustrates how empathetic reactions to South African postcolonial fiction are elicited by metaphoric framing which positions readers to "feel into" the lived experiences of marginalised others. Another study by Ghosh (20 21) examines South Asian diasporic women poets to show how metaphorical patterns of meaning around home, food, and cultural identity in contemporary poetry can encode diasporic experiences of loss and longing in ways that challenge accommodation within dominant Western metaphor systems. These examples suggest Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides not only the opportunity to analyse tropes but can be used to illustrate how ideological and political stances become entrenched within the deep conceptual logic of language itself.

Cognitive Poetics and Postcolonial Literary Studies: An Emerging Convergence

Productive though not yet very extensive, cognitive poetics has begun to intersect with postcolonial literary study. Cognitive stylisticians have focused largely on the western canon; postcolonial critics have tended to focus more on questions of history, politics, and representation than on questions of linguistic cognition. There has been some call for an approach combining cognitive linguistics with awareness of postcolonial history. For example, Temirova et al. (20 23) show that linguo-cognitive analysis can uncover the particular cognitive effects writers craft through metaphor, allegory, and evaluative language to represent colonial encounter. These effects– which postcolonial fiction from South Asia and Pakistan constructs particularly adeptly, they argue include certain consistent patterns of cognition that writers want their readers to experience. Rao and Narayan established early on this tradition of representing cognitive life in postcolonial India (Siddiqui et al., 2023), and more recently Hamid, Sidhwa, and Shamsie have contributed texts that make this cognitive experience of in-betweenness a central literary concern. But as Asad et al. (20 20) note, because cognitive poetics must also take into account the historical conditions in which texts were read.

South Asian Anglophone Fiction and the Cognitive Construction of Hybridity

Anglophone Pakistani and South Asian fiction are cognitively interesting because the language itself bears the cognitive tension of having been imposed by colonisers but being used emphatically by postcolonial writers with South Asian schemas. Simply put, writing back to the centre in English is itself a cognitive act (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002). Saraswati (20 21) tracks the development of diaspora as a conceptual lens through which South Asian Anglophone writers' experience of living "here" and being from "there" is

articulated, highlighting how diaspora experience is shaped by a complex interaction between the writer's South Asian schemas for home and belonging and the Western contexts where they are published. The SILC Journal (20 24) empirically shows how foregrounding operates as a linguistic strategy of resistance in South Asian fiction today. These insights map almost one-to-one onto cognitive poetics: postcolonial writers foregrounding the previously subjugated schemas of the colonised subject are performing cognitive acts of resistance that are simultaneously aesthetic and political. Cognitive stylistics allows us to give empirical evidence of precisely how hybridity/ambivalence/resistance is realised linguistically and produced in the minds of readers.

Research Gap

Three gaps motivate the current study. Firstly, there is a lack of comparative studies investigating metaphorical systems across several SA and Pakistani Anglophone novels. The majority of works analyse thematic parallels rather than explore cognitive mechanisms responsible for creating them. Secondly, Pakistani authors have received insufficient attention from cognitive stylisticians despite playing a crucial role in postcolonial canon. Thirdly, and most importantly for the purposes of the current study, conceptual metaphor and violation of schemata have not been theorized as joint cognitive mechanisms. The current study attempts to fill all the aforementioned gaps. As Pakistani and South Asian scholars who themselves come from the context they study, the current authors' unique positionality allows us to take advantage of our insider access to the cultures under analysis and read these texts' cognitive underpinnings from a position of cultural know-how rather than distant observation.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach adopted in this study bridges cognitive stylistic analysis and postcolonial literary interpretation in a way that is systematic, transparent, and replicable.

Research Design

This research follows a qualitative interpretative methodology. Situated in the cognitive stylistic tradition, the method for this study follows as outlined by Temirova et al. (20 23) description, analysis and synthesis, comparison, cognitive analysis, and linguistic analysis. Cognitive poetic analysis requires the careful interpretation by a reader who applies their knowledge of theory as well as cultural experience to the literary language being analyzed. Following Temirova et al. (2023) postcolonial theory is the horizon of interpretation that remains constant throughout: identifying a conceptual metaphor is merely the first step as the researchers always move towards its political and cultural significance.

Theoretical Framework

The present study thus applies a two-tier theoretical model, with Conceptual Metaphor Theory and schema theory (the two main cognitive linguistic theories) as the descriptive framework and the postcolonial theories of Said (1978), Bhabha (1994), and Spivak (1988) as the interpretive context for the cognitive findings. The two frameworks are not used as separate levels of analysis applied in turn to the target texts, but are genuinely integrated: postcolonial theory describes what is at stake in the colonial encounter at the cultural and political level, while cognitive poetics supplies the linguistics tools for analysing how those stakes are encoded and negotiated in the surface features of the literary language.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) assumes that metaphor is a property of thought not of language, and is based on systematic mappings between source and target domains that structure human experience at the conceptual level. In the postcolonial literary analysis, the framework directs the

analysis towards the source domains the writers draw on to encode the target domain of colonial identity: what source domains does Hamid draw on to structure Changez's experience of cultural displacement? What conceptual architecture does Roy use to encode the "Laws of Caste" and the "Love Laws" that shape her narrative world? These are not questions of imagery but questions about the cognitive models through which postcolonial experience is structured and communicated.

Schema theory, as applied to cognitive stylistics by Stockwell (2002) and demonstrated in detail in the analysis of literary texts in Jaafar (2020), is a complementary analytical tool. Schemata are structured mental representations of prototypical events, situations, and entities, which are built up through cultural experience and prior knowledge. Literary texts draw on, reinforce, and in the case of postcolonial fiction deliberately violate and disrupt these mental frameworks, producing the cognitive effects of surprise, defamiliarisation, and ideological disturbance that characterise the reading experience of texts that set out to challenge dominant cultural assumptions. The analysis in the present study traces the specific schema violations that each text effects and interprets their cognitive effects in the postcolonial theoretical context.

Corpus Selection and Justification

The main corpus consists of Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007*), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things (1997*), and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children (1981*). The primary selection criteria for the texts were four-fold: that each is canonical in the South Asian and Pakistani Anglophone tradition and has a substantial body of secondary scholarship; that each has been recognised for its stylistic and linguistic innovation; that, taken together, the texts span Pakistan, India, and the Indian diaspora and allow for comparisons. Three texts were chosen to allow depth of analysis, privileging smaller, more representative passages of notable cognitive stylistic density as sites of analysis.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection was in two steps: first, the novels were read in their entirety. Second, in each text, relevant passages were marked when high concentrations of conceptual metaphors, schema violation, deictic shifts, and cognitive world-building were found, and then these passages were analyzed using the three-stage approach for each of the three cognitive stylistic features in the study, i.e. (a) the identification of the feature; (b) its description in terms of the cognitive effect in the text world of the reader, and (c) its interpretation in the relevant postcolonial theory terms. The approach is in line with that in Temirova et al. (2023). The two analyses, i.e. that of conceptual metaphor and that of schema, were used comparatively across the three texts, in order to identify both common cognitive stylistic strategies and author-specific features. The triangulation principle was used throughout the collection and analysis process, by aligning the study findings with the secondary critical literature, so as to make the interpretations follow from those in existing scholarship and not to be based on mere impression.

Analysis

The analysis in what follows considers each of the three texts in turn: Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things (1997), and Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children (1981). In each case, two or three verified extracts are given in centered, formatted blocks. These are followed by cognitive stylistic analysis sensitive to conceptual metaphor, schema disruption, and deictic positioning. Working from the linguistic surface of each extract outwards towards cognitive architecture, and from cognitive architecture towards postcolonial ideological force, the analysis employs the three-stage procedure outlined in the Methodology: identification of the cognitive stylistic feature, description of the cognitive effect, and interpretation within postcolonial theoretical context.

Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist: The Janissary Metaphor and Colonial Self-Division

Hamid's novel is shaped as a sustained dramatic monologue, in which the Pakistani narrator, Changez, speaks to an unnamed American interlocutor over the course of an evening, in a café in Lahore. The novel's formal structure is itself a cognitive device: the second person address of the narration places the reader in the position of the silent American, eliciting an identification with the position of the listener which the novel works to undo. Two extracts from the novel have been chosen for close analysis, both of which exemplify a different stage in Changez's cognitive and political self-understanding.

Extract 1

Extract 1.1 The Janissary Metaphor

> *"There really could be no doubt: I was a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire at a time when it was invading a country with kinship to mine and was perhaps even colluding to ensure that my own country faced the threat of war. Of course I was struggling! Of course I felt torn!"*
>
> (Hamid, 2007, p. 152)

The dominant conceptual metaphor at work in this passage is IDENTITY IS MILITARY SERVICE. The source domain is the Ottoman janissary corps, soldiers recruited from Ottoman-occupied Christian populations and trained from youth to fight for the Ottoman sultan, often against their own people. The target domain is Changez's role as a Pakistani employee of an American financial firm in the post-9/11 era. The mapping is exact: janissary soldiers were the colonised made complicit in their own subjugation, and Changez makes recourse to this historical source domain in order to render to himself and the American reader he is simultaneously addressing the cognitive dissonance of his own position. He is, in Bhabha's terms, in a third space of enunciation, not simply Pakistani nor simply American but something "unstable and hybrid" that is unaccounted for by the dominant frameworks of either culture.

The cognitive effect of this metaphor is thus one of the schematic disruption on two levels at once: on the one hand, for the Western reader, 'janissary' triggers an Ottoman history schema incompatible with the American corporate schema called up by the first half of the metaphor; the violent imposition of a mapping between these two domains calls into question the reader's own comfortable sense of location, dragging Wall Street finance and US imperial might into the experiential realm of colonized conscription. On the other hand, for Changez himself, the metaphor enacts a very different cognitive process, and in fact one with which his own narrative has been threatening to align him: the metaphor in this instance gives form to an experience of self-disjunction that Changez had not previously been able to acknowledge, much less make sense of. We understand our experiences by mapping them onto schemata; the janissary metaphor gives Changez's inner dissonance the shape of a coherent and recognizable historical schema, and in so doing makes it thinkable, and therefore actionable. The exclamatory syntax which immediately follows *"Of course I was struggling! Of course I felt torn!"* performs the catharsis of cognitive realisation: the metaphor is not simply a description of Changez's state but an enactment of the moment of recognition within which it also enacts the very same realization within Changez

Extract 2

Extract 1.2 The Watchful Gaze and Cultural Displacement

> *'You're a watchful guy. You know where that comes from?' I shook my head. 'It comes from feeling out of place,' he said.*
>
> (Hamid, 2007, p. 74)

This brief extract, a piece of dialogue spoken by Changez's American boss Jim, encodes a schema violation of high cognitive salience. Jim's assessment that Changez's watchfulness stems from "feeling out of place" recruits the schema of cultural displacement and projects it onto the conceptual domain of perceptual hyperawareness. The IDENTITY IS SPATIAL POSITION metaphor, in which cultural group membership is conceptualized in terms of the source domain of physical location, is a highly entrenched conceptual structure in English: to feel "out of place" is to be, from the cognitive perspective of the text-world's participants, outside of the community's normative spatial schema. This exchange disrupts the default Western schema, in which immigrant success is evidence of belonging, and assimilation. Changez, at this point in the story, is an adept at the performance of assimilation: he dresses well, works hard, and is a top performer in the field of Princeton-educated American professionals. But his watchfulness a deictic index of cognitive vigilance at the dominant group's schema edges unmasks a text-world subject who is at once inside and outside of American success.The deixis of the exchange is significant. Jim addresses Changez in the second person ("you're", "you know"), positioning himself as the authoritative interpreter of Changez's psychological state. This deictic positioning reproduces the colonial structure in miniature: the Western subject diagnoses the colonised subject's experience with an authority that the colonised subject cannot contest. Changez's only response is to shake his head, a physical gesture encoded in the narration, not spoken aloud. The absence of verbal response is itself a cognitive stylistic signal: Changez is silenced at the level of dialogue even as he narrates. This mirrors what Spivak (1988) identifies as the structural silencing of the subaltern within dominant discourses, where speech is possible in form but constrained in substance.

Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things: The Love Laws and the Cognitive Architecture of Caste

Roy's novel is organized around a framework that the narrator terms the Love Laws: the rules *"within which [a culture] decides who should be loved. And how. And how much"* (Roy, 1997, p. 33). These Laws function in the novel as an extended conceptual metaphor, through which the social systems of caste hierarchy are understood by means of the source domain of legislation (formal, binding, enforceable rules with institutional authority). The cognitive effect of this metaphor is to reveal the arbitrariness of social hierarchy by foregrounding its legislative nature: Love Laws are like any other law in that they are enacted by human social authority, and not by nature or divinity. Two extracts are chosen for analysis.

Extract 3

Extract 2.1 The Love Laws

> *"Ammu saw what he saw. . . . History's fiends returned to claim them. To rewrap them in its old, scarred pelt and drag them back to where they really lived. Where the Love Laws lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much."*
>
> (Roy, 1997, p. 172)

This section is perhaps the most cognitively concentrated in the novel, packing three full-blown conceptual metaphor systems into a single extended moment. One of them is HISTORY IS A PREDATOR, which uses the source of an animal returning to its territory to claim it. History does not just press on the characters; it hunts them, *"returned to claim"* them and *"rewrapping"* them in its *"old, scarred pelt."* The repeated

image of a pelt is effective. It constructs history as a skinned animal whose hide is the colonial past and the activity of being *"rewrapped"* in it as the activity of being re-subjected to colonial and caste authority. The PAST IS A SKIN metaphor (produces) a gut reaction as a cognitive one, a mapping of the abstract domain of historical determinism onto the sensory domain of physical binding.

The second metaphor system at play in this part is of the Love Laws themselves, and the system here is SOCIAL HIERARCHY IS LEGISLATION. Roy's syntax in this part is deliberately broken, *"And how. And how much"* is an example of foregrounding: the breaking of the schema of a fully-formed clause with a verb and other necessary parts of speech. Each of these short, grammatically incomplete sentences separates out each part of the force of the Love Laws as the name for a law with which we are all familiar, so that the reader has to experience the full power of each in isolation as a discrete cognitive unit. This is a textbook example of Mukarovsky and Leech (cited in Jaafar, 2020) in foregrounding as the breaking of automatised schema in language in order to create an unusual, heightened awareness. The reader cannot gloss over these sentences, and the syntax forces this slower, more drawn-out cognitive processing of the social prohibition.

The third metaphor works on the level of deixis. The expression *"where they really lived"* sets up a spatial schema in which the Love Laws have a place a cognitive location, a social territory that is more real, more fundamental than any passing dalliance with caste crossing. The spatial metaphor maps AUTHENTIC IDENTITY onto ORIGINAL LOCATION, figuring the characters' brief transgression of caste lines as a temporary displacement from their "real" cognitive and social place. The word "really" is ideologically laden: it encodes the normative schema of caste society as ontologically prior, casting the transgression as deviation and the hierarchy as ground.

Extract 4

Extract 2.2 Schema Violation and the Small Things

> *"That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much."*
>
> (Roy, 1997, p. 33)

This passage comes right near the beginning of the novel. It sets up the cognitive schema that will be violated at various points in the text that follows. *"That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made"* enacts a violation of schema on the level of historical causation. A reader's causal schema for a story about individual tragedy will tend to operate in terms of personal decisions and the concatenation of more or less proximate events; Roy, with this sentence, deflects the causal schema to a deeper, historical origin, the time when the Love Laws were formalized. The word *"really"* resonates with the later use above, enforcing a causal reality that lies beneath the level of individual experience, binding personal disaster to the apparatuses of colonial and caste power.

The short, syntactically fragmented sentences which follow *"The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much"* have a second cognitive function here, at the beginning of the novel, which is distinct from their function at the midpoint of the passage: they set up the Love Laws as a kind of refrain, a repeated cognitive anchor, that will gather emotional and analytical density across the text. This is an example of what Stockwell (2002) terms textual resonance: the ability of a repeated phrase to bring to life ever richer cognitive associations as the reader advances through the text. When the reader re-encounters the same phrase in the passage analysed above, the Love Laws bear the full weight of all that has happened in the novel between these two instances.

Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children: Chained to History and the Metaphor of Bodily Dissolution

Rushdie's novel contains the most obviously theorised cognitive metaphor system in the corpus. Saleem Sinai is born as India becomes independent, "mysteriously handcuffed to history" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 4): his personal identity is mapped onto the national identity of post-colonial India through an extended conceptual metaphor of physical embodiment and bodily disintegration. The cognitive argument at the centre of the novel is that the postcolonial subject's identity is inextricably bound to the historical forces that have created it; the metaphor of the body as the site of national history is the cognitive architecture by which this argument is made.

Extract 5

Extract 3.1 Handcuffed to History

> *"I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country. For the next three decades, there was to be no escape."*
>
> (Rushdie, 1981, p. 4)

The primary conceptual metaphor in this sentence is PERSONAL IDENTITY IS CAPTIVITY. This is mapped through the source domain of physical constraint: handcuffs and chains fasten Saleem's personal fate to that of the nation. Note the cognitive precision of the word 'handcuffed' in this context: handcuffs are an instrument of the state's power, used to bind a subject who is presumed to be resistant. It is this mapping that allows Rushdie to conceptualize the relationship of the postcolonial subject to national history as at once both non-volitional and violently enforced: Saleem did not choose to be born at midnight; the state or history, imagined here as state-like power, has bound him to a fate from which he cannot be released. This is what Lakoff and Johnson (1980) term the structural metaphor: the consistent mapping that organizes the conceptual domain of the postcolonial self in terms of physical constraint.

This function of the word 'indissolubly' within the conceptual metaphor system is to foreclose the possibility of dissolution, of parting, of the extraction of the subject from the colonial history's chains. It forecloses the schema of individual agency and liberal selfhood that governs Western cognitive models of identity, to be replaced with a schema of historical determination that is explicitly postcolonial in nature. For the Western reader, whose cognitive schema of identity is organized around the autonomous self and individual choice, this metaphor generates a significant schema disruption: the self that Rushdie presents in Midnight's Children cannot be cognitively processed in terms of the dominant Western cognitive frames of liberal individualism.

Extract 6

Extract 3.2 The Sum Total of History

> *"Who what am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine."*
>
> (Rushdie, 1981, p. 533)

This passage is the clearest formulation of Rushdie's cognitive metaphor of collective selfhood. The question *"Who what am I?"* itself a cognitive stylistic marker: the substitution of *'what'* for *'who'* in the

conventional formulation of self-interrogation upsets the standard schema of personal identity as a fixed, singular 'who' and suggests that the postcolonial self might instead be a *'what'* a thing defined by historical processes, rather than a person defined by essential individuality. The answer that follows enacts IDENTITY IS ACCUMULATION, mapping the target domain of personal selfhood onto the source domain of an arithmetic sum: the self is the sum of all prior inputs, all prior actions, all prior events. This is a conscious violation of the Western cognitive schema of individual identity as autonomous and self-generating.

Syntactically, the repetition of 'I am' across three clauses performs a progressive expansion of the cognitive category 'self. The first clause *("I am the sum total of everything that went before me*") institutes a temporal schema, according to which the self expands backwards in time to embrace its entire history. The second clause (*"I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine*") institutes a relational schema, according to which the self expands outwards to embrace all other subjects with whom it has come into contact. This expansionary, relational, historically constituted self is the cognitive model of postcolonial identity that Rushdie's novel is proposing as an alternative to the bounded, autonomous, liberal self of the Western cognitive tradition. It is, in Bhabha's (1994) terms, a self that inhabits the third space of enunciation, where fixed identities are destabilized by the fluid processes of cultural encounter and historical determination.

Viewed comparatively, the three authors of this corpus are found to use related, if not identical, cognitive stylistic strategies. Hamid operates by way of dramatic metaphor and deictic manipulation, casting the reader into a cognitively intimate yet disorienting position. Roy, by foregrounding and syntactic fragmentation, draws upon the disruption of standard sentence structures to command the reader's cognitive focus onto the heft of social proscription. Rushdie, in turn, manipulates the sustained expansion of the self's conceptual boundaries, deploying the metaphor of corporeal and historical accumulation to architect a postcolonial cognitive model of identity at odds with the Western liberal one at its very foundations. The unifying factor across all three strategies, however, is the authors' exploitation of cognitive linguistic resources in the service of producing the reader's experience of the postcolonial condition: to not merely thematize it, but to fashion it as a cognitive event at the moment of reading.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore how conceptual metaphor and schema disruption operate as co-operating cognitive mechanisms in the process of colonial identity formation in Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone fiction. The analysis of six validated extracts from Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Roy's The God of Small Things, and Rushdie's Midnight's Children corroborates the view that metaphor in these texts is no rhetorical ornament but a cognitive tool through which authors encode, negotiate, and contest the conditions of postcolonial identity.

Three main observations can be made. First, all three authors make use of conceptual metaphors that in different ways reconfigure the Western cognitive structure of liberal, autonomous selfhood. Hamid's janissary metaphor encodes dividedness as a built-in feature of the postcolonial situation, Roy's Love Laws render the capricious power of caste hierarchy visible, and Rushdie's handcuff and accumulation metaphors model the postcolonial self as historically conditioned and relationally constructed. Second, schema disruption is achieved in these narratives at syntactic, lexical, deictic, and metaphorical levels, with effects that are cumulative, and thus cannot be reduced to individual tropes. Third, the cognitive operations in these texts are directly related to the conceptual categories of postcolonial theory: Hamid's ambivalence is isomorphic to Bhabha (1994), Roy's structural silencing is isomorphic to Spivak (1988), and Rushdie's constrained selfhood is isomorphic to Said (1978). Cognitive poetics, then, does not supplant postcolonial theory; rather, it discloses the linguistic operations by which its concepts are actualized in the reader. The

study offers a replicable three-stage process of identification, cognitive description, and postcolonial interpretation that scholars working at the intersection of these fields can adopt. Corpus size could be expanded to include other writers such as Bapsi Sidhwa, Kamila Shamsie, and Jhumpa Lahiri, or alternatively, the corpus stylistic approach with the use of AntConc may be added to the qualitative analysis of this study. The field of cognitive poetics in postcolonial literary studies is a vibrant and underdeveloped area of study, and the present study is offered as one contribution toward this end.

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