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„The Delicacy of Equivalence. Reproduction or Transfer?

A cognitive angle on metaphors In Salman Rushdie's
'Satanic Verses'“

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1. Introduction

My reasons for choosing this particular topic for my thesis are manifold. First, having done translation work for a number of years now, I have always been very interested in the mechanisms of translating and in the ongoing processes of the mind when words from one language are being transferred to another. Another reason for me was, how important a part do feeling and intuition play in the translation process? Furthermore, the possibility of translating metaphor has been a central topic of discussion for some years now.

My parents brought me up to be bilingual from early childhood on, so much of my access to both German and English takes place on an emotional level. As a child, in particular, I believed that I just could not translate from one language into the other because a word or expression “felt” differently. It was as if I had two hard disks, one for each language, without any connection in between. Later, I realised that translation was actually possible, but still, for me it can only ever be a compromise—sometimes, two words, even if they mean exactly the same, don’t sound “right” in the other language. In the course of a translation workshop, one of my teachers at university once put the matter in a nutshell, as the saying goes, and said, “You can never translate words as such; all you can ever hope to translate are situations!” Hence the title of my thesis. Translation is a delicate undertaking, like walking through a minefield of potential misunderstanding and misinterpretation—and this is especially the case with idiom and metaphor.

In this paper, I aim to deal with issues such as, what makes a good translator? What are the main features of a successful translation? Is there any such thing as real equivalence? Often a word might mean the same in another language on the surface but “feels” differently, as I stated above.

Mainly, however, I plan to establish what translation of metaphor really entails. Theories on the subject are few and far between. I shall examine some of the few existing ones in detail, especially those with cognitive aspects. Therefore, my focus will be on the cognitive theory of metaphor as

proposed by Lakoff and Johnson ([1980] 2003). I shall also mention other perspectives, including the philosophical background of metaphor, to complete the overall picture, though without going into greater detail.

Must an expression evoke the same emotions in both languages? If so, I do not believe that metaphor can be translated at all. Is it enough to retain its “power” or “effect” or “meaning”? What is a translator to do if a metaphor proves too stubborn—translate it verbatim, use another metaphor, convert it to simile, add extra information that keeps some of its emotive or cultural effects, reduce it to literal language (always assuming that this can be actually done), or simply delete it?

Are metaphors culture-specific, or can they be transferred from one culture to another? Some authors claim that some metaphors are universal, as experience entails so much more than just a specific cultural background. This would mean that metaphor can be translated across any two languages without loss of effect or meaning. Others, however, maintain that some metaphors at least are untranslatable, especially those used for effect, such as in advertising¹. I am especially interested in so-called original (or novel) metaphors, i.e. metaphors coined by an author to relate a new aspect of the world to his readers, as well as in poetic metaphors. Some metaphors can be transferred across two languages and, by the same token, across two cultures; others are utterly untranslatable—and this fact can thoroughly confuse the translator. The main focus of this paper, however, is the question whether metaphor can be translated at all—that is, transferred from one language (and culture) to another without incurring any losses whatsoever—and my gut feeling (and personal experience) tells me that it cannot. Loss is inevitable if one tries to leap across the conceptual gulf that exists between any two cultures—even if they share a common language, as do Austria and Germany, or England and America—and in the case of two different languages all there can ever exist is a compromise.

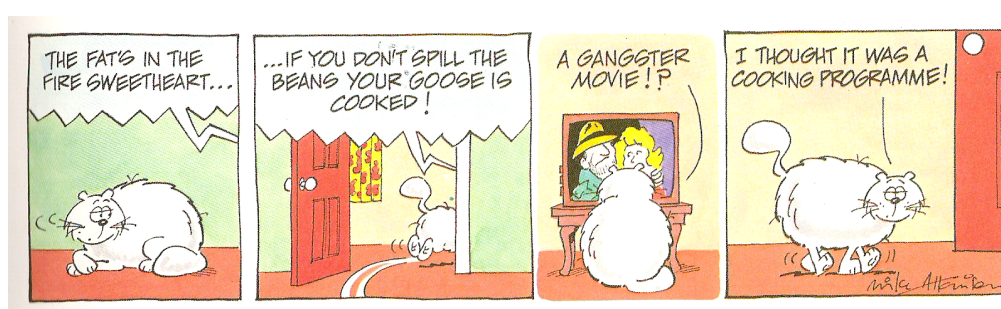
¹ Think of the chocolate slogan from the eighties: “Have a break—have a KitKat!” This has never been translated as the original wordplay would have been lost entirely. Today advertisers seem to be less ingenious: The infamous McDonald’s slogan “I’m lovin’ it” has been inexpertly translated as “*Ich liebe es*”—which has an altogether different implication...

I have chosen Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses" because I am a great admirer of Rushdie's work, and India has always held a special fascination for me (my affinity for things Indian was probably passed down to me by my English grandfather, who was a major in Her Majesty's army and served in India and Pakistan). I feel Rushdie's language is almost magical, so full of parable, allegory, and poetic metaphor. Of course, his Islamic and Persian background has greatly influenced his poetic language, and I am not an expert on these issues, but I shall endeavour to analyse a number of metaphors that are clearly delineated and recognisable as such (and Allah knows there are enough of those!). I was, of course, sorely tempted to tap into the lushness of Rushdie's rich prose and to go off on a tangent eulogising about Rushdie's style, and almost ended up doing a literary analysis rather than a linguistic one; even if—an idea I obstinately cling to—the two cannot be strictly separated as any literary evaluation hinges upon the linguistic angle.

In my analysis, I plan to focus on religious metaphor (e.g. blasphemy, God and Satan, the archangel Gabriel, prophets, Mohammad and the Q'uran) in my analysis, but other metaphorical concepts such as life and death, flying and falling, migration and translation, cities, etc. will also be dealt with in this paper, always with a view to their translation.

Finally, I shall investigate how the translator of the "Satanic Verses" has solved the problem of metaphor translation in general, as well as specific cases, again focussing on the types of metaphor mentioned above.

Thus, I hope to be able to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of some of the translator's solutions. She may have felt a bit like Fat Cat below, utterly baffled at some (idiomatic) expressions and equally nonplussed at others...



2. Section I – The Theoretical Part

2.1. A (very) short outline of the history of metaphor

The words of a living language are like creatures: they are alive. Each word has a physical character, a look and a personality, an ancestry, an expectation of life and death, a hope of posterity. Some words strike us as beautiful, some ugly, some evil. The word *glory* seems to shine; the common word for excrement seems to smell. There are holy words, like the proper name of God, pronounced only once a year in the innermost court of Jerusalem's Temple. There are magic words, spells to open gates and safes, summon spirits, put an end to the world. What are magic spells but magic spellings? Words sing to us, frighten us, impel us to self-immolation and murder. They belong to us; they couple at our order, to make what have well been called the aureate words of poets and the inkhorn words of pedants. We can keep our words alive, or at our caprice we can kill them—though some escape and prosper in our despite.

Morris Bishop, *Good Usage, Bad Usage, and Usage*²

Philosophers, linguists or psychologists of many bents have speculated about the exact nature of metaphor, and theories on the matter abound. Metaphor³ has become an interdisciplinary topic and a central issue not only for rhetoricians and literary critics but for advanced thinkers in psychology, art history, philosophy, and theology. To remain within the boundaries of linguistics (and psychology, which is closely related with regard to this topic), and to make use of Gibbs' list (in Cameron 1999: 29), but without going into detail, we have the salience-imbalance theory by Ortony (1979c), the domains-interaction theory by Tourangeau and Sternberg (1981, 1982), the structure-mapping theory proposed by Gentner and Clements (1988), and the class-inclusion theory as put forward by Glucksberg and Keysar (1990). Outside of psychology, other theories need to be mentioned, such as the speech act theory by Searle (1979), the no-meaning theory of Davidson (1979), the semantic-field theory by Kittay (1987), similarity-creating theory proposed by Indurkhaya (1992), and the relevance theory put forward by Sperber and Wilson (1985/86). To describe all of these hypotheses and theories in detail would by far exceed the boundaries of this paper. For this reason I plan to focus on the cognitive theory of metaphor as put forward by

² In Rheingold 2000, introduction.

³ "meta phor" (ancient Greek) means "borne across", similar to the Latin word "translatio"

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) resp. Lakoff and Turner (1989), and its closest “relatives”.

2.1.1. The cognitive approach

[Does] the mind discover likeness in the unlike in order to clarify the world, or to obscure the impossibility of such clarification?⁴

People tend to think that poetic language is completely different from the ordinary, everyday variety, and regard metaphor as part of the former, something alien, flighty or ephemeral that normal people do not use. However, metaphor is entirely different to common belief: It is in fact so ordinary that we use it unconsciously and automatically, even as children. Brisard and Sandra (2000) even go so far as to say that “metaphors are events, not objects”.⁵ Language makes use of general cognitive mechanisms, at least of categorisation mechanisms, and despite a positivist tradition which dismisses metaphor as irrelevant, recent work by many theorists provides evidence of its ubiquity (cf. Lakoff 1987). A symposium “Metaphor: The Conceptual Leap” at the University of Chicago in February 1978 (cf. Sacks’ preface to “On Metaphor” 1981) mainly triggered the discussions that are based on Cassirer’s notion that metaphor leads us back “to the fundamental form of verbal *conceiving*” (ibid.). Gardner and Winner (in Sacks 1981: 123) have investigated the development of metaphoric competence, as their article is called, and claim that there are four areas of interest central to psychology and philosophy. First, they focus on the specificity of the processes involved in metaphor, and on whether metaphoric skill is actually part of our linguistic skill, or a wider human capacity, linked to general perceptual and conceptual processes. Second, staying within the area of language, the question arises whether metaphor is a special kind of trope with its own rules, properties and applications, or allied with other tropes such as similes, analogies and hyperbole. Then they ask whether all

⁴ Rushdie, Salman, *Shalimar The Clown*, Random House N.Y. 2006, p. 226

⁵ Brisard, Frank, Dominiek Sandra, *Braiding the multiple threads of interdisciplinary research on metaphor*. Workshop at the Japanese Cognitive Science Society's Annual Meeting (2000), Shizuoka Art and Culture University, Hamamatsu, Japan, June 30 - July 2 2000. (Thread 3: Psychology)

metaphors can be investigated in the same way or differently, according to the respective type of metaphor (e.g. cross-sensory, perceptual, psychological-physical or predicative), and, finally, whether metaphoric usage could be better explained by analysing the structure of language (e.g. semantic features of topic and vehicle) or by considering its pragmatic effects, as in actual speech acts. (Gardner and Winner, in Sacks 1981: 123)

These common concerns have been addressed by numerous authors I have come across in my research, and some answers will be provided below. Gardner and Winner (in Sacks 1981: 128) have made some interesting points, such as their twofold definition of metaphoric competence: this consists first and foremost in metaphoric comprehension, which is the ability to paraphrase a figure of speech, but also in metaphoric production, which, according to them, is a late-developing ability that requires considerable linguistic and metalinguistic competence. This contradicts Lakoff and Johnson's (2003: 6) view, who assert that metaphor is a tool of thought which we develop at a very early age, albeit mostly unconsciously. However, children can also use metaphor quite deliberately. For example, when asked to describe the clouds in the sky, my three-year-old daughter, after pondering for a while, called them "lots of broccoli swimming across the sky". When I asked her if she really thought the clouds were made of broccoli, and if this vegetable could really swim, she replied that of course this was not the case: The clouds were white not green, but just as "squishy-squashy looking" as broccoli. This ties in with a 1977 study (H R Pollio et al, quoted in Aitchison 1994: 154), according to which this spontaneous use of metaphor occurs often with young children but decreases with age, and the fastest among children who attend a high-standard school.

Returning to the subject of metaphoric competence, Gardner and Winner (in Sacks 1981: 136) have discerned two (dissociable) aspects of it: on the one hand, it refers to the capacity of providing linguistic paraphrases of a frozen figure of speech⁶, which takes place in the left hemisphere of the human brain, and on the other hand to the sensitivity to the pragmatics (context) of metaphoric utterances (a matter of the right hemisphere). The two combine

⁶ a thought which is not shared by many authors, see also below

to a sense of the occasion on which a given figure of speech is likely to be uttered, which also has some neuropsychological implications.

Metaphors are essential tools of thought, not simply literary devices, and an analysis of them yields a better understanding of social assumptions (cf. Spivey 1997: 2). In academia, for instance, scholars in the same field tend to share the same theoretical metaphors to provide frames for understanding complex processes, but also in a generative capacity. Spivey goes on to discuss the metaphors of construction as the creative production of the mind, such as taking someone else's point of view, and refers to Piaget's well-known constructivist claim that knowledge structures influence how we construe our reality (cf. Spivey 1997: 15).

Metaphor is omnipresent, it permeates our thoughts, and it is conventional, an integral part of our every-day thought and language. Moreover, it allows us to understand ourselves and our world in a way no other tool of thought would allow us to. Therefore, one can safely claim that metaphor is not merely a matter of words, as is widely believed, but rather a matter of thought, and it is indispensable to our imagination and reasoning. Aitchison (1994: 148), in her much-acclaimed book "Words in the Mind", describes metaphor as "simply the use of a word with one or more of the 'typicality conditions' attached to it broken" and states that the use of such words is so common that we hardly notice them any longer. Furthermore, while it is relatively easy to mix metaphors, according to her it is rather difficult, if not downright impossible, to find inapplicable ones, that is, metaphors nobody would be able to understand, at least in some way, as most people are equipped with a lively imagination and therefore rather good at finding possible explanations. Poets who know their trade can speak to us because we all share the same basic modes of thought (cf. Lakoff and Turner 1989, preface to "More Than Cool Reason"), and by drawing our attention to new images in their work, they are able to open new vistas of thought.

Basically, we can say that as soon as we understand one thing in terms of another we use metaphor. More scientifically speaking, metaphor is defined as a set of correspondences between two conceptual domains, where one

domain is mapped⁷ on, i.e. understood partly in terms of, the other. Take, for instance, a very basic metaphor, one that can be found in most of the literature on metaphor, i.e. DEATH IS DEPARTURE—this is reflected by English idioms such as “he has left us”, “she has passed away”, or “the departed”. Partly means that the metaphor highlights some aspects of departure (e.g. saying farewell, being gone) but disregards others (e.g. packing a suitcase, locking the door). By thinking of death as someone leaving us, we understand that they are gone, no longer with us, and thus try to grasp something as complex and unthinkable as death in terms of something we understand well enough—departure. In a way, this metaphor helps us to come to terms with issues we would otherwise find unacceptable, such as death.

Such conceptual metaphors often underlie poetic language; poets may have extended and composed them in novel ways, but most of the time they do not invent these metaphors as such. This runs counter to the aforementioned belief that metaphor is a matter of language only. Rather, we need to distinguish between basic conceptual metaphors, which are cognitive in nature and may be very common, and the linguistic expressions of these concepts, which may then be novel or unique: We need to differentiate between metaphorical thought as such and the language that expresses it. As Lakoff and Turner (1989: 50) phrase it, “Any discussion of the uniqueness or idiosyncrasy of a metaphor must therefore take place on two levels: the conceptual level and the linguistic level. [...] In short, idiosyncrasy of language may or may not express idiosyncrasy of thought, but idiosyncratic thought requires idiosyncratic language”. This also means that “the relatively small number of basic conceptual metaphors can be combined conceptually and expressed in an infinite variety of linguistic expressions” (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 51). By contrast, the so-called original (or novel) metaphors, i.e.

⁷ In their afterword of the edition 2003, Lakoff and Johnson have somewhat amended this initial view of mathematical mapping as they had described it in their edition of 1980; rather, metaphor can also add elements, entities and relations to the respective target domain (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 253). They also relate that Narayanan (1997) has developed a new topographic theory in which conceptual metaphors are mapped neurally, i.e. neural circuits linking the sensory-motor system to the cortex (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 255). This neural learning mechanism creates a stable system of basic conventional metaphors that remain in the mind indefinitely, independent of the respective language (2003: 256).

metaphors coined by an author to relate a new aspect of the world to his readers, with no given relationship between topic and vehicle, are idiosyncratic in their conception, and can only be expressed linguistically by using special poetic metaphors⁸.

However, we need to keep in mind that metaphor is not just for poets but part of our everyday life, and it is the principal way we understand abstract concepts such as life, death, love or time. The more metaphors there are for a concept, the more central it is to our lives, and when we try to comprehend the wealth of our experiences in these domains, no single, consistent structuring of that experience would do (cf. Lakoff and Turner 1989: 52). Instead, we use structures from a wide range of very different, often contradictory, domains to understand different aspects of the concept.

Poetry just makes use of basic concepts by endowing them with particular linguistic expressions, or by extending ordinary conventionalised metaphors. So, to return to our initial metaphor of DEATH IS DEPARTURE, we could talk about someone “packing their last suitcase”⁹. As this unusual wording attracts attention to itself it becomes conscious, thus drawing upon cognitive resources different from those used automatically in the case of conventionalised metaphors. Else, a poet could use our familiarity with certain basic conceptual metaphors to modify them in an unusual way, which requires effort on the reader’s part when analysing it. This is due to the fact that, normally, only certain aspects of the metaphor are “used” for mapping while another remains “unused” Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 53) describe imaginative metaphor as either extensions of such used parts of a metaphor, as instances of its unused parts, or as completely new, i.e. novel metaphors.

Another poetic device for using metaphor would be compression: an author can combine two or even more metaphors in a single sentence, which is not usual in everyday language, and thus draw attention to them (other tools to

⁸ See e.g. Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* (English version) page 34 “How had the past BUBBLED up [...]”, implying the resemblance of one’s past experience to oxygen bubbling up through the waters of the mind, or as in a fizzy drink such as champagne.

⁹ However, in the course of my work I have come across this expression, albeit in non-standard German—my sister, who is a vet, uttered it (“*Der packt grad seine Koffer!*”) in connection with a male pig on its last legs... This would also be a typical example of the difficulty arising from having to translate some metaphors.

render poetry unusual would be phonological or syntactical complexity and the like, which is entirely independent of metaphorical use). However, Bryson (2000: 127) has pointed out, in his inimitable way, the perils of ineptly combined, so-called mixed metaphor¹⁰, by quoting Fowler's famous examples, "This is a virgin field pregnant with possibilities" and, "He has been made a sacrificial lamb for taking the lid off a can of worms" (Fowler 1999: 491, in Bryson 2000: 127). Rushdie himself quotes Orwell, who has provided "beautiful parodies of politicians' metaphor-mixing: 'The Fascist octopus has sung its swan song, the jackboot is thrown into the melting pot'", and continues with a report in *The Times* about the smuggling of classified documents out of Civil Service departments, referring to the "increased frequency of 'leaks' from 'a high-level mole'" (Rushdie 1991: 98). Such combinations are of course profoundly undesirable (even if rather funny), their shortcomings lying not so much in the mixture of metaphors but in that of hackneyed clichés. Not every poet is in Shakespeare's league, who wrote, "Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them", one of Hamlet's utterances, which represents a masterful combination of two fresh metaphors. However, Bryson (2000: 127) also points out that "it isn't necessary to have two metaphors to botch a sentence. One will do if it is sufficiently inappropriate" and goes on to quote a newspaper cutting which claimed that "Indiana, ranked the No. 1 swimming power in the nation, walked away with the Big Ten championships tonight".

To summarise, we can say that, usually, poets do not create the metaphors their work is based upon (except maybe in avant-garde poetry). Instead, "it is the masterful way in which poets extend, compose, and compress them that we find poetic" (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 54).

The question now is, how does the metaphorical process actually function? Basically, understanding metaphor requires knowledge, especially in the case of conventional or conventionalised metaphor. In order to comprehend a target domain in terms of a source domain, the latter must be familiar to us. We understand the target domain partly in terms of the source domain, which

¹⁰ which Fowler himself defined as "the application of two or more inconsistent metaphors to a given situation" (in Burchfield 1999: 491)

means that we realise how some aspects of the latter apply to another concept while others do not. Lakoff and Turner (1989: 61) have called this basic knowledge a “schema” (i.e. knowledge structured in a skeletal form¹¹) and use the term “slots” for elements of a schema that are to be filled in (i.e. adapted to the situation at hand). This metaphoric structuring helps us to grasp abstract ideas such as life and death. As soon as we have learned such a schema we know it for good, it becomes conventionalised and we use it automatically, unconsciously, and without effort. At this point, Lakoff and Turner (1989) draw our attention to the fact that conceptual schemas and metaphors have a certain power over us as we rely on them to understand the world around us. Conventionalised schemas and metaphors have a persuasive power, arising from the internal structure of metaphor.

2.1.2. What is metaphor?

I gotta use words when I talk

T S Eliot

The answer to the question of what metaphor is seems to have been provided already—or has it? The best way of doing so would be “to begin with what is not metaphorical. In brief, to the extent that a concept is understood and structured on its own terms—without making use of a structure imported from a completely different conceptual domain—we will say that it is not metaphorical” (Lakoff and Turner 1989: 57). As metaphoricity has to do with certain aspects of a concept, we therefore cannot regard an entire concept as either metaphorical or non-metaphorical. This means that part of a concept can be understood literally, i.e. without metaphor, while another aspect of it requires metaphorical interpretation. This is due to the fact that we believe some of our concepts are not based upon metaphor but grounded in our physical and social experience, such as journeys, fire, day and night, heat and cold, locations and others. These concepts serve as source domains for many a metaphor, and in this sense, at least, we understand them non-metaphorically.

¹¹ Widdowson calls a schema the “normal pattern of reality” which people establish in their minds by linking certain linguistic features with features of their world when making an indexical connection (1996: 63).

Of course, cultural anthropology tells us that even our physical and social experiences are understood in different ways from one culture to another, but still, their grounding is not metaphoric—we actually live these concepts, regardless of our culture, as some metaphors are grounded in our biological makeup.

Nogales (1999: 11) points out that, in order to recognise an utterance¹² as being metaphorical, there must be some difference between the metaphor vehicle and the metaphor subject. For instance, saying that “a full-stop is a semi-colon” is not understood in a metaphorical sense as the similarity between these two punctuation marks is too great. The same applies to Aitchison’s examples such as “wine is whisky” or “cars are lorries” or “marmalade is jam” (1994: 150). She states that the items involved must not share the major characteristics, and that it is best if they come from a different semantic field altogether. However, they must share some features, even if we can usually think up some characteristics they might have in common, given time enough to ponder on it. This is especially the case in what the author calls “prototypical metaphors”, i.e. metaphors where the items involved are usually dissimilar in that they come from different semantic fields, but also similar in that they share obvious but minor characteristics. What, however, are we supposed to do with expressions such as “emerald ghost” or “doom’s electric moccasin”, taken from a poem of Emily Dickinson’s (Aitchison 1994: 151)? This rather arouses multiple associations, and this is what Lakoff (Lakoff and Johnson 2003) has called the “activation of frames”, the multiple mapping that takes place when we comprehend one thing in terms of another.

So far, we have established that metaphors are based on concepts and the way these concepts interact. When we communicate with other human beings, we interact as physical entities with other such physical entities, and therefore we use a language that serves our needs. Since these needs are often corporeal, the terms we use for referring to physically delineated

¹² Nogales defines an “utterance” as a “sentence in context”, never isolated, saying that metaphor cannot occur at sentence level (1999: 13)

objects must also be clearly delineated. This is what we understand as a basic concept, and it underlies all metaphoricity.

2.1.3. Types of metaphor

The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another¹³

Having established the fact that human thought processes are mostly metaphorical, Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 5) go on to describe the systematicity of metaphorical concepts, claiming that, since metaphorical expressions in a language are tied to metaphorical concepts systematically, we are able to use the respective expressions to study the nature of these metaphorical concepts, and the way metaphorical expressions highlight one aspect of a concept while hiding others. They also arrive at the conclusion that many of our metaphorical concepts, such as TIME IS MONEY, are specific to our industrialised culture. Moreover, if we say that a concept is structured metaphorically, we mean that it is partially structured by metaphor, and that it can be extended in some ways but not in others—which can turn out as a pitfall for the unwary translator.

Lakoff and Johnson (ibid.) list a variety of metaphors, starting with the above-mentioned structural metaphor, where one concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another. Metaphorical concepts that do not structure another concept as such but rather a whole system of concepts are called orientational metaphors, as they usually have something to do with spatial orientation (e.g. up-down, in-out, on-off etc.). Such metaphors are based on our physical experience of ourselves and our surroundings, as already specified above, and they refer to fundamental concepts, although even here cultural differences can arise. As verticality, for instance, is part of our everyday experience, it has entered our language in many different literal and metaphorical expressions, a fact that highlights the inseparability of metaphors from their experiential basis. Moreover, there is systematicity

¹³ Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 5

inherent in spatialisation metaphors, they are not randomly assigned but rooted in our cultural as well as physical experience. The ultimate target seems to be coherence of the entire system, which is why often one aspect of a concept is chosen for the metaphor but not another. Again, this may vary from one culture to another, thus making it rather difficult to differentiate between the physical and the cultural bases of a metaphor. Furthermore, the authors emphasise that, while two metaphors might not be consistent (meaning that they do not form a single image but two different ones, as e.g. time can be seen either as something moving towards us or as stationary while we move through it), they can still fit together in a way, by virtue of being subcategories of a minor category and therefore sharing a major common entailment (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 44). This suggests that metaphors are connected by coherence rather than consistency.

When defining ontological metaphors (i.e. ways of viewing events, activities, emotions ideas, etc., as entities and substances) according to their respective purposes, Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 25) also describe container metaphors¹⁴, which are based on our physical experience of ourselves as entities with an inside and an outside, defined by a bounding surface, and conduit metaphors, which imply movement of sorts. The container and conduit metaphors have so far been combined logically by most authors. In his review of "By Word of Mouth" (Goossens et al., 1995), Forceville (1997) quotes Reddy's (1979) claim that "human communication is overwhelmingly understood in terms of a speaker or writer transmitting meanings, packaged into words, to a listener or reader who, in turn, 'unpacks' the words to obtain the meanings" but also points out that the "many different types of manipulation that linguistic expressions can undergo (cf. 'cook up/ adorn/ condense/ disclose a story') moreover reveal that focusing exclusively on the containment schema underlying the conduit metaphor constitutes a crude oversimplification" (Reddy 1979, in Forceville 1997). Rather, he stresses that other metaphorical clusters shape our communication, and that even where the conduit metaphor is pertinent, it is always used together with another

¹⁴ Aitchison (1994: 152) points out that such metaphors may go back to the Greek physician Hippocrates in the fourth century BC, who assumed that the human body contained four humours in the liquid form.

schema (such as FORCE, PATH, CENTRE-PERIPHERY, BALANCE or CONTROL, and CONTACT schemata, by Pauwels and Simon-Vandenberghe¹⁵, who have investigated the source domain of body parts that metaphorically shapes communication) to be able to describe specific instances adequately. Personification provides another such category of ontological metaphors, for which objects are viewed as persons, or rather as different aspects of a person. This enables us to grasp many an abstract concept in terms of human motivation, characteristics, and activities (p 33). Brisar and Sandra (2000)¹⁶ distinguish between yet another two sets of metaphor types: familiar vs. unfamiliar metaphors, and predicative vs. referential metaphors. Metaphor, in their research, is not seen as a semantic object with a real correlate in the mental lexicon, but rather as a type of event that may trigger different processing strategies, depending on the architecture of the brain. According to them there is thus very little room for interdisciplinarity in the field of metaphor research in psychology, as the question of metaphor within the structure of the language processor does not necessarily relate to its status in semantic or pragmatic theories of meaning (ibid.). When discussing the topic of comprehension of novel (or original) metaphor, one should also consider that, as metaphoric comprehension is a process of matching a topic to a vehicle, or of expanding a categorisation, in the case of novel metaphor such a connection must first be established by the hearers in order for them to understand it. Our metaphorical understanding is supported by our ubiquitous knowledge base, such as conventional metaphors, and within linguistic knowledge, we interpret a sentence metaphorically, at least at the moment of receiving it, only using our episodic knowledge after some moments of conscious thinking. Thus, metaphorical understanding seems to be drifting closer to analogical thinking.

When talking about the partial nature of metaphorical structuring, claiming that only some aspects of a concept are used for understanding another, Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 53) also mention what happens to the “unused” part of a metaphor. They distinguish between literal and figurative (or imaginative) metaphorical expressions, which can, however, all be part of a

¹⁵ in Forceville 1997 linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S037821669789399X

¹⁶ <http://kyoumu.educ.kyoto-u.ac.jp/cogpsy/personal/Kusumi/kusumi.html>

single general metaphorical concept. For instance, the expression 'he has triggered a process of re-thinking' would be an acceptable, literal everyday expression, while 'he has shouldered the rifle of innovation' would be figurative (or non-literal). The authors also differentiate between three subspecies of imaginative metaphor, which are constructed either through extensions of the used part, through instances of the unused part of a literal metaphor, or through the coining of a novel metaphor, i.e. one that is not normally used to structure our conceptual system but rather a new way of thinking. Of course, all linguistic expressions used to characterise general metaphorical concepts must needs be figurative by nature as the fact that they only partially describe another concept takes them beyond the realm of the merely literal. However, some strike us as very normal as we constantly use them in our thinking and talking (and they have become an integral part of our everyday lives) while others are marginal, more idiosyncratic, and not bound within a conceptual system but rather stand alone and isolated. Which part of a concept is used, is established by convention and depends on the respective language and culture, and such metaphors do not interact with others. In her study, Rachel Giora tests the claims of psycholinguists that understanding metaphor "does not involve a special process, and that it is essentially identical to understanding literal language" (1997: 1). She is especially interested in whether figurative language involves processing the surface literal meaning and claims that its comprehension is not processing-intensive, as it does not require a trigger. She also maintains that figurative and literal language uses are both governed by the general principle of salience, that is, salient meanings (e.g. conventional, frequent, familiar, enhanced by prior context) are processed first:

Thus, for example, when the most salient meaning is intended (as in, e.g., the figurative meaning of conventional idioms), it is accessed directly, without having to process the less salient (literal) meaning first (Gibbs 1980). However, when a less rather than a more salient meaning is intended (e.g., the metaphoric meaning of novel metaphors, the literal meaning of conventional idioms, or a novel interpretation of a highly conventional literal expression) comprehension seems to involve a sequential process, upon which the more salient meaning is processed initially, before the intended meaning is derived (Blasko and

Connine 1993; Gerrig 1989; Gibbs 1980; Gregory and Mergler 1990). Parallel processing is induced when more than one meaning is salient. For instance, conventional metaphors whose metaphoric and literal meanings are equally salient, are processed initially both literally and metaphorically (Blasko and Connine 1993). The direct/sequential process debate, then, can be reconciled: different linguistic expressions (salient-less salient) may tap different (direct/parallel/sequential) processes. (Giora 1997: 1)¹⁷

Giora (among others) has proposed the Graded Salience Hypothesis, which claims that salient meanings are processed before less salient ones¹⁸. A meaning of a word or an expression is considered salient if it can be retrieved directly from the lexicon. According to this hypothesis, the processing of familiar metaphors (with a minimum of two salient interpretations, i.e. the literal and the metaphoric) should activate both their metaphoric and literal meanings, regardless of the type of context in which they are embedded, while processing less familiar metaphors (which have only one salient meaning, namely, the literal) activates the literal meaning in both cases. Nevertheless, in the literally biased context it is the only one referred to. The processing of familiar idioms, however, in a context leaning towards the idiomatic meaning almost exclusively evokes their figurative meaning, since their figurative meaning is much more salient than their literal meaning. Still, processing less familiar idioms in an idiomatic context activates both their literal and idiomatic meanings, because both meanings enjoy similar salience status. Giora states that in a context leaning towards the literal, familiar idioms evoke their more salient idiomatic meaning far more than less familiar idioms do, and that the findings of various tests support the graded salience hypothesis, also revealing that, contrary to current beliefs, metaphor

¹⁷ Giora, Rachel, Understanding figurative and literal language: The graded salience hypothesis. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 7/1, 183-206, 1997. [\[PDF\]](#)

¹⁸ A meaning of a word or an expression is salient if it is coded, i.e., retrievable from the mental lexicon (e.g., the literal meaning of novel metaphors but not their intended, non-literal meaning made available by context). Factors contributing to degree of salience are conventionality, frequency, familiarity, and prototypicality. Prior context may be instrumental, but it has a limited role. It may facilitate activation of a word's meaning(s), but it can hardly inhibit activation of salient meanings (cf. Giora and Balaban 2001: 116)

interpretation involves the processing of literal meaning, and that metaphor and literal interpretations do not involve equivalent processes.

In their edition of 2003, Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 264) have made some revisions of their original division of metaphors into the three types orientational, ontological, and structural, rather saying that all metaphors are structural in that they map structures to structures; all are ontological in that they create target entities, and many are orientational in that they map orientational image-schemas. The authors admit to failing to recognise the profound importance of primary metaphor, as often people tend to learn about the target concept before the source domain, and connect a physical experience to the metaphor, which renders it a primary one. Later, through knowledge and experience, such primary metaphors are extended. In his essay *The contemporary theory of metaphor* Lakoff provides an explanation of his own research results that contradicts "certain assumptions that were widely taken for granted in 1977" (2003: 204). These assumptions are a set of traditionally wrong claims that stem partly from the idea that "what is literal is not metaphorical" (ibid.), maintaining that (1) everyday language is only literal; (2) everything can be described and understood without using metaphors; (3) only literal use can be true or false; (4) lexical definitions are always literal; and that (5) the concepts used in grammar are all literal (ibid.). Lakoff then illustrates that there are a vast number of irreducible metaphorical concepts in our everyday life that function systematically, grounded in our physical and cultural experience.

Nogales (1999: 6) points out that metaphor needs to be regarded from both a semantic (i.e. the propositional content expressed by a metaphorical utterance is its metaphorical content) and a pragmatic (i.e. extralinguistic knowledge is required for deriving this content) perspective, including the notions of meaning, content, and speaker intention. However, it should also be seen from the angle of the conceptualisation of literal language use, as metaphor is primarily a matter of reconceptualisation, an essentially pre-linguistic phenomenon that underlies language use. For her, "the metaphorical and the literal form a continuum rather than existing as noncontiguous sets", so her approach of reconceptualisation somehow

straddles the view of metaphoricity as either semantic/pragmatic or else non-linguistic. Nogales (1999: 10) raises the question of how we recognise a metaphorical utterance in the first place, providing examples such as, “Steve is a sheep dog”, “he lives without a doorbell or a window”, or “the ham sandwich wants a cup of coffee.” Her analysis, which is based on a philosophical rather than a psychological approach, yields some rather interesting and unusual results: Nogales claims that reconceptualisation, based on concepts in our minds, is embodied in a kind of “naïve metaphysics” which is challenged by figurative language use (1999: 10). Literal utterances are understood as such because they are consistent with a standardised conceptualisation underlying their use, in the shape of a standardised taxonomy. This view is shared by Booth (in Sacks 1981: 173), who maintains that “what metaphor is can never be determined with a single answer”; rather, we need taxonomies of a concept, not single definitions, in order to be able to understand the mapping process that goes on in the human mind. A consistency check helps us to derive what the speaker is actually saying, and to identify the exact degree of metaphoricity of an utterance. The more metaphorical an expression, the less it is consistent with this taxonomy, i.e. the conception underlying language use. Instead, the comprehension of a metaphorical utterance (e.g. “Steve is a sheepdog”) requires us to reconstruct the underlying concepts, to reconceptualise both, using Black’s terminology¹⁹, the metaphor vehicle (a sheep dog is a canine) and the metaphor subject (Steve is human), and thus rule out the aspects specified by a literal interpretation as they are obviously inconsistent with them. At this point Nogales (1999: 11) defines reconceptualisation as the selection and suppression of features in order to individuate something and argues that this process is governed by the role an entity plays within a system (which she defines as a “related group of entities” that are part of our naïve metaphysics), and with regard to its relationship with the system²⁰.

¹⁹ Black in Johnson (ed) 1981: 63-82.

²⁰ This reflects Lakoff and Johnson’s (2003) claim that, in the process of comprehending metaphor, we select certain aspects of it while dismissing others, i.e. the so-called unused part of the metaphor. Black describes this process as that of applying a system of associated commonplaces of the subsidiary subjects (the metaphor vehicle) to the principal subject by

Nogales (1999: 20) holds that, while proposing that metaphoricity is NOT a matter of meaning (sic!)²¹, it is not determined by a speaker's intention to speak metaphorically but stems from the relationship between the class represented by the metaphor vehicle in its literal sense, and the class the term refers to in its metaphorical sense. In her analysis of metaphor, therefore, the metaphoricity of a given utterance lies in the reconstruction of the concepts implied; consequently, it arises from the change in one's conception of some or all the entities (literally) referenced by the utterance (Nogales 1999: 21). So, despite the strong connection between the literal and the metaphorical, there is a fundamental difference between the two, which, in Nogales' terms, is based upon the class reconceptualisation that must needs take place, and the different truth conditions they entail (depending on the class to which the subject of the metaphorical utterance is assigned membership). In case of a metaphor, the truth conditions are not given by the rules of a language, as in its literal paraphrase, but must be inferred by the listener, through the class definition, by reconceptualising the metaphorical vehicle in a process of abstraction (Nogales 1999: 29). A new taxonomy, or better, a new category scheme, with its corresponding inclusion and exclusion, accentuation and de-emphasis of certain features, is proposed as the better means of understanding the metaphorical subject (1999: 30).

2.1.4. Metaphor and metonymy

The distinction between metaphor and metonymy is often confusing and difficult to comprehend; Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 265) define the difference as follows:

selecting, emphasising, suppressing, and organising the features of the respective subject (Black 1981:78, in Nogales 1999:42).

²¹ The essay by Jerry Morgan, "Observations on the pragmatics of metaphor", agrees with Searle's approach, stressing the necessity for pragmatic rules in the belief that "talking of metaphor as a kind of meaning is a mistake itself" (In Ortony 1993: 127).

- Metaphor involves two domains, i.e. the source domain (i.e. the metaphor vehicle²²) that provides the concepts for the reasoning process, and the target domain (i.e. the metaphor subject or topic), which consists in the matter at hand which we aim to understand. Metaphorical expressions have a literal meaning in the source domain, and the mapping is usually multiple, which means that at least two elements are mapped onto at least two other elements. The mapping also serves to preserve the image-schemas of the source domain, e.g. inside stays inside, source remains source, etc.
- Metonymy involves but one domain, which is the immediate subject matter, and one mapping, for which the source is mapped to the referent, the metonymic target, so that one element of a domain stands for another. Metonymy arises from correlations between two physical entities, such as pars-pro-toto, synecdoche, or OBJECT FOR USER, or between a physical entity and something that is metaphorically conceptualised as a physical entity (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 59). In other words, we use one entity to refer to another, related entity. Lakoff (1987: 77) calls metonymy a “basic characteristic of cognition” and states that it is common for people to take a well-understood or easy-to-perceive aspect of something and use it to stand either for the thing as a whole (pars pro toto) or some other aspect or part of it. Thus this process follows general principles, albeit different from the ones involved in the comprehension of metaphor.

Confusion mainly arises from the fact that in both cases a conceptual mapping takes place that is reflected in language, even if the processes involved are different. Therefore, when distinguishing between the two, one should look at how the expression is used, rather than simply at the meanings of a single linguistic expression, and whether it involves two domains or not. If the latter form a single subject matter with a single mapping procedure, it is metonymy; if the domains are used separately,

²² “The metaphor vehicle is the entity used by the speaker to convey an understanding of the metaphor subject” (Nogales 1999: 13).

involving more than just one mapping, and if one forms the subject matter (the target) while the other (source) provides the basis for inference, it is metaphor. Furthermore, the main function of metaphor is to aid understanding, while metonymy has a primarily referential function (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 36), even if it also provides understanding. However, it allows us to focus more on particular aspects of the concept we are referring to. Like metaphor, it is not just a matter of language but of thought and action, too, and neither is it arbitrary or randomly assigned. Metonymic concepts are as systematic as metaphorical ones as they allow us to conceptualise one thing in terms of its relation to another, and they are also grounded in our experience.

Conceptual metaphor and metonymy can combine to yield complex and novel images; however, the different image-schemata which languages employ to represent the same referential situation can reflect the different saliency that is generally given to functional relationships (Kuteva and Sinha, in Schwarz 1994: 220).

The question about the exact difference between metaphor and ellipsis, or rather metonymy and ellipsis, may arise at this point. Nogales' sample sentence "The ham sandwich wants a coffee" (1999: 9) is not a metaphor or metonym as it does not involve the reconceptualisation of a ham sandwich in terms of its role and subsequent application to the customer, or of the customer in terms of a sandwich and its characteristics. Neither would we regard the sandwich as a part of the customer's (as in *pars-pro-toto*). Rather, we seem to add mentally something like "the man who ordered a ham sandwich" etc., which makes the utterance elliptical. Furthermore, once a metaphor is firmly and conventionally linked to its "metaphorical meaning", so that it comes to mean something in addition to its original meaning, it ceases to be a metaphor. Nogales' example of this process is the expression "to kick the bucket", which, once it comes to mean "to die", ceases to be metaphorical and becomes an idiom (Nogales 1999: 74). Therefore, the test of metaphoricity is the degree to which the original meaning is active in the comprehension of the utterance.

2.1.5. Meaning

Meaning is a shaky edifice we build out of
scraps, dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles,
chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved.
Perhaps it is because our sense of what is the case
is constructed from such inadequate materials
that we defend it so fiercely, even to the death.²³

At this point, a short treatment of meaning might come in useful to make some issues clearer, especially in view of my chosen subject matter, the *Satanic Verses*, the reception of which has been vastly differentiated; what was Rushdie's intention, or is that even important? How did his countrymen or other Muslims, respectively, receive it and how did the rest of the world react to this supposed blasphemy?

In his treatise of Symbolic Logic (1958: 165, in "The Annotated Alice" 1960/2000: 225), Carroll himself says that "any writer of a book is fully authorised in attaching any meaning he likes to any word or phrase he intends to use".²⁴ This is based upon the assumption that meaning is only concerned with words as lexical items, but of course meaning is also an issue above the word level, as word order can change the meaning of a sentence (even if grammatical processes never initiate meaning, as Widdowson (1996: 53) points out, but act upon meaning already lexically provided), or below it, in that morphemes are also meaningful.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 201) attach meaning to experiential concepts that structure our thinking processes and emphasise that meaning can never exist independent of human understanding, but nowhere do they define what meaning as such really is. However, they talk about a theory of meaning that is "based on a theory of truth" (ibid.) and quote David Lewis' definition (on the sentence level), "A meaning for a sentence is something that determines the

²³ Rushdie, Salman, Imaginary Homelands, in: *Imaginary Homelands*, 1981-1991, Granta Books, p 12

²⁴ We are reminded of Humpty Dumpty's famous ditty: "'When I use a word', Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.'

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'

The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master—that's all.'

Carroll's "The Annotated Alice" (1960/2000: 224)

conditions under which the sentence is true or false”²⁵. Truth, the basis of meaning, here is defined in terms of “fitting the world”. I am going to give a more detailed account of the objectivist myths of meaning and metaphor further below.

Despite many centuries of study, we still know very little about the true nature of meaning, or how it is represented in the human mind. Some of the better-known proposals include connotation (defined by O’Grady as the “set of associations the use of a certain word can evoke”, O’Grady 1996: 273), denotation (or, according to O’Grady, *ibid*, the “referents”, the attempt to “equate the meaning of a word or phrase with the entities to which it refers”, or as Widdowson (1996: 21) puts it, the “aspects of reality encoded as semantic components in linguistic form”), extension (the set of referents) and intension (inherent sense, concepts evoked), and semantic decomposition (or componential analysis, which Widdowson (1996: 127) defines as “the decomposition of lexical items into their basic elements of meaning”). Most approaches to meaning seem to relate meaning to concepts in the human mind; the problem, however, still lies in the definition of a concept as such. At this point, therefore, it might be helpful to try and define what a concept actually is.

Concepts form a system in our minds that underlies our use of words and sentences to express a certain meaning. This system organises and classifies every aspect of our experience, from feelings and perceptions to social and cultural phenomena and our physical world. The study of our conceptual system reveals how we express meaning through language, especially through the way these concepts are structured, extended, and interrelated (cf. O’Grady 1996: 276). Basically, we need to understand that concepts are rarely straightforward with clear-cut boundaries, but rather that they are usually fuzzy, and that their members can be graded in terms of their typicality. This even applies to concepts with scientifically defined boundaries (think of, for instance, the concept “BIRD”, as quoted by O’Grady 1996: 277). This suggests that concepts have some kind of internal structure,

²⁵ Lewis, David, “General Semantics”, in Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman, eds, *Semantics of Natural Language*, 1972: 173.

like concentric circles with the “best” (or prototypical) example close to the centre and less typical specimens in its more peripheral layers. This structure provides a lot of insight into the nature of the human conceptual system. The study of metaphor, in particular, illustrates that these concepts are not used isolated from each other but that “they make up a giant network, with many interconnections and associations among the various subparts” (O’Grady 1996: 278).

Nogales (1999: 32) defines concepts according to the so-called Classical View, with both an intensional and an extensional component: A concept can either be defined in terms of the features an object must possess in order to be part of it, or else in terms of the objects that fall under it. However, being a summary representation, the specified features are not to be regarded as an exhaustive description, and they are “singly necessary and jointly sufficient” (ibid.) to define a concept. Nogales then modifies this view by quoting Wittgenstein’s alternative representation of concepts through the notion of family resemblance, for which class membership is not determined through certain properties alone but through the similarity to prototypical class members. Accordingly, the functionality of categorisation explains why such category schemes are “highly determined, mirror the correlational structure of the environment, and possess basic levels of categorisation” (Nogales 1999: 37). The interaction view looks at matters from a directly opposed point of view, saying that in the most interesting cases metaphors create similarity, rather than state some pre-existing similarity, thus producing new knowledge by projecting the knowledge associated with the secondary subject (a kind of a source domain) onto the primary subject (the target domain) (cf. Gola 1993).

While, according to O’Grady (1996: 284), conceptualisation has to do with the meaning of individual words and phrases, meaning can be established on other levels, too. Halliday has distinguished four different notions of meaning on the sentence level. First, he isolates “certain features that can be thought of as representing the real world as it is apprehended in our experience” (1990: 19) and calls this interpretation the “experiential meaning” of a sentence, reflecting reality. Second, he refers to a different kind of meaning

encoded in the same sentence, i.e. the “interpersonal meaning”, as the sentence is not only representative of reality but also a piece of interaction between speaker and listener (Halliday 1990: 20). By combining these two meanings, he then arrives at the “logical meaning” of his sample sentence, which is the expression of fundamental logical relations within the sentence. Finally, he defines what makes sentences into a text as the “textual meaning”, representing different aspects of the texture of the quoted line, claims that all “these strands of meaning are interwoven in the fabric of the discourse” (Halliday 1990: 23) and calls his method the “functional approach” as every sentence of a text is multifunctional and we therefore need to regard it from a variety of angles, with each perspective contributing towards the total interpretation. Halliday’s categorisation of meaning reflects his notions of the “functions” of language, i.e. the ideational (subdivided into logical and experiential), the interpersonal, and the textual functions.

John Lye²⁶ investigates the issue on the text level, asking whether a literary work means what the author “intended” it to mean, and if so, how we can tell. If all we have is the text itself, we can only surmise on the exact nature of the author’s intentions and ideas using our interpretative practices and values. Lye provides a list of options for expanding our knowledge by studying other works by the same author, by learning more about what sort of meanings works in that particular tradition, time and genre seem to have in common, by investigating how the author as well as other writers and readers of that time used to read texts, i.e. their interpretative practices, and by finding out what the cultural values and symbols of the time consisted in (ibid.).

A text can only have meaning within a framework of pre-existing, socially supported ideas, symbols, images, ways of thinking and values; although our experiences differ, as do our temperaments and interests, we interpret the world according to certain norms, determined by our varying social and cultural backgrounds.

Although we may have at our disposal, as additional evidence for meaning, what the author said or wrote about his or her work, Lye warns us to rely on it

²⁶ <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jlye/meaning.html>
Lye, John, “The Problem of Meaning in Literature”, 1996

too much, as an author's ways of using literary conventions are cultural, and often his or her writing has taken a direction totally different from the one s/he had originally planned, and developed meanings which s/he had never intended. Moreover, Lye claims that a work of literature may embody cultural or symbolic meanings that emerge only through regarding them from a historical or another cultural perspective.

Answering his own question of whether the meaning of a text resides in the text itself, Lye argues that "the formal properties of the text, i.e. the grammar, the language, the uses of image and so forth, contain and produce the meaning, so that any educated (competent) reader will inevitably come to essentially the same interpretation" (ibid.). He then questions the possibility of our finding out if the text is actually interpreted in the same way as meaning is encoded by the formal properties involved, and as the above-mentioned "competent readers" were all taught to read the formal properties of a text in more or less the same way. As all meanings are strongly grounded in culture, the claim that meaning is inside a text does not convince him²⁷. Rather, he argues that meaning is based on certain conventions, traditions, "the cultural codes which have been handed down, so that insofar as we and other readers (and the author) might be said to agree on the meaning of the text, that agreement would be created by common traditions and conventions of usage, practice and interpretation" (ibid.).

Lye's "competent readers" will interpret one and the same text in different ways, depending on when they read it, who they are and where they come from (their "class, gender, ethnicity, belief and world-view", ibid.), and why they are reading a text. A text must be regarded from two different perspectives: from the historical, and from the cultural as meaning cannot be separated from culture and context. Consequently, it becomes very difficult to find out what a text "really means", especially what it means to a particular reader, group or tradition (ibid.).

Lye then queries whether meaning, then, exists in a reader's response, processing or reception of a text as this would be somehow inevitable: Meaning exists only relative to the way people function in the world and

²⁷ <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jlye/meaning.html>

understand it, and therefore it must always be meaning to someone (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 217).

Lye comes to three essential conclusions (cf. Lye 1993²⁸), which all have important effects on the interpretation of metaphors in any work of literature:

1. Meaning is “social”, i.e., language and conventions collaborate to produce it. When we read a text, we are participating in social, or cultural, meaning. Response (to a work of literary art, or any other text) is not merely an individual thing but part of our culture and history.
2. Meaning is contextual; if you alter the context, you often alter the meaning (which also has huge implications for translating).
3. Texts written as works of art follow their own codes and categories, and the more we know of literary devices and practices or of a particular genre, the better we can decode the text, or understand it—consequently, the matter of meaning is bound to the question of reader competency.

Meaning is cultural and a phenomenon that is not easily ascribed or located; it is historical, social, and derived from the traditions of reading and thinking and understanding the world in which a person is educated and socialized (cf. Lye 1993). Moreover, meaning can never be separated from experience and thus be assigned arbitrarily, as Saussure and others maintained, or at least implied (cf. R. Dirven in Schwarz 1994: 131). More often than not, meanings are construals made by human beings in a given setting, and therefore subject to culture-specific categorisation. Lyons (1977: 643, in Palmer 1981: 8) has made a useful distinction in terms of “sentence meaning”, referring to the grammatical and lexical features of a sentence, and “utterance meaning”, which also comprises other aspects of meaning, especially those related to context. It is this distinction that permits us to ‘say’ one thing but ‘mean’ another.

²⁸ <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jlye/meaning.html>

So, how does meaning affect the phenomenon of metaphor, apart from being, as Palmer (1981: 103) puts it, “fairly haphazard”? As already mentioned in the previous chapter, Nogales (1999: 42) claims that metaphor is NOT a matter of meaning. In this, she contradicts Black, who claims that metaphor is mainly a matter of meaning. Thus, when using a metaphor, we have two thoughts of different things acting together and supported by a single word or phrase, the meaning of which is the result of this interaction. This aspect of Black’s theory has caused it to be classified as an interaction theory of metaphor as it regards metaphorical meaning as the result of the interaction between the meanings of the principal and subsidiary subjects (cf. Nogales 1999: 42). Black’s theory of metaphor is a semantic theory, as are in fact most of the traditional ones since they account for metaphor in terms of metaphorical meaning, holding that metaphors express a metaphorical content different from that expressed by the literal interpretation of an utterance. However, the main drawback of semantic theories of metaphor lies in their disability to explain how this metaphorical meaning ties in with literal meaning, and how it interacts in the comprehension of an utterance. Some authors (such as Fogelin) claim that the meaning of a given term changes when the context changes, giving rise to the so-called meaning-shift theories of metaphor, which are also based on the distinction between meaning (semantics, or meaning *in* language) and use (pragmatics, or how Widdowson (1996: 61) defines it, “[...] what people mean *by* the language they use, how they actualise its meaning potential as a communicative resource”).

Recently, the focus of metaphor theory has shifted to the latter, which regards metaphor as a phenomenon of conversation, that is, spoken discourse. Davidson (1991: 430, in Nogales 1999: 62), among others, strongly rejects any semantic interpretation of metaphor, claiming that “metaphors mean what the words, in their most literal interpretation, mean, and nothing more”. For him, metaphor is a matter of use, and of learning. Nogales (1999: 63), by contrast, formulates a view of metaphor that integrates both its semantic and pragmatic elements while still preserving some of the traditional distinctions (between meaning and use, or between

meaning and content, respectively), thus establishing further criteria for an analysis of metaphor: the intuition for metaphorical content and truth, and the need for consistency with the framework provided by semantics and pragmatics. In his “Ten Literal Theses” (in Sacks 1981: 173), Booth states that what a metaphor means always depends on the respective content. He calls this phenomenon “shades of meaning” (in semantics known as “connotation”), and refers to the hearer’s interpretation as part of it. While it applies to all spoken discourse, in the case of metaphor it is particularly strong, as metaphors are much richer in meaning, i.e. all that is communicated by a speaker or effected by an utterance, respectively.

2.1.6. Other philosophical aspects

a good metaphor implies an intuitive
perception of the similarities in dissimilars
(Aristotle, “Poetics”)

Lakoff and Johnson (2003 [1980]) wrote their book “Metaphors We Live By” as a reaction to the claims made by two major American philosophers of our time: Donald Davidson, who claimed that all metaphor is without meaning, and John Searle, who averred that certain semantic and pragmatic principles underlie the process of assigning literal meaning to metaphorical sentences. Both these arguments are based on the common assumptions of analytic philosophy and Western tradition, i.e. that concepts are always “conscious, literal, and disembodied, that is, not crucially shaped by the body and brain” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 271)—which has been profoundly refuted by more recent findings.

Traditionally, metaphor used to be rather unpopular with philosophers throughout the centuries, with a few exceptions (such as Aristotle). The main reason for this fact could have been its vagueness of reference, as expressed in, for instance, Romeo’s famous saying “Juliet is the sun”. Without the knowledge that Romeo is deeply in love, we would have difficulty assigning the right qualities to Juliet—either the sun’s destructive or its life-giving attributes—and this lack of precision makes the expression difficult to

articulate and evaluate. Nogales (1999: 79) explains that metaphor does not usually specify which properties of the metaphor subject are being predicated, which renders an interpretation (and therefore paraphrase) of it extremely difficult (and any translation of it often downright impossible).

As Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 244-246) have found out, four major historical fallacies exist, and they can all be traced back to Aristotle's view on metaphor. The first is that metaphor resides in words, not concepts; the second, that it is based on similarity instead of cross-domain correlations in our experience; third, that concepts are necessarily literal, not metaphorical; and fourth, that rational thought is never affected by our mental and physical makeup (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 244). The authors deplore the fact that "[...] these age-old, a priori philosophical views are so deeply ingrained that they blind many readers to any evidence to the contrary" (2003: 245). Kant, also in the objectivist tradition, claimed that we can acquire a universally valid knowledge and moral laws by using our universal reason. Although his approach was a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism, this is what made it fall within the objectivist sphere, despite his statement that the knowledge of a thing per se is denied to us (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 195). Other philosophical traditions, all in the objectivist way of thinking, have claimed that meaning is objective, disembodied, compositional (building-block theory) and independent of use and human understanding, and that grammar is independent of meaning and understanding, which is epitomised by the linguistic hypotheses put forward by Noam Chomsky, who maintains that grammar is merely a matter of form (just consider his distinction between 'competence' and 'performance').

Fortunately, empirical research has provided a wealth of evidence of the structuring role that metaphor plays in abstract thought processes, even if the above assumptions are extremely difficult to eradicate even in this enlightened day and age. Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 222) came to the conclusion that the objectivist views are incapable of providing a satisfactory account of human understanding in a number of issues, such as:

- the human conceptual system and rationality

- language and communication
- the sciences (psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistics)
- moral / aesthetic values
- understanding scientific concepts
- the grounding of mathematics etc. in human understanding

and say that “the basic elements of an experientialist account of understanding—interactional properties, experiential gestalts²⁹, and metaphorical concepts—seem to be necessary for any adequate treatment of these human issues” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 223).

²⁹ Interestingly, the German word *Gestalt*, very common to any psychologist, is one of those that are impossible to translate, so it has become a German loan word in the English language. Rheingold (2000: 249) has defined *gestalten* as “little wholes that make up larger wholes” or “integrated structures or patterns that must be apprehended as wholes rather than disconnected parts” (p 250), and points out that our perception of such a gestalt, visual or otherwise, significantly influences our interpretation of the object perceived. Another important point is that the gestalt is always greater than the sum of its part, e.g. in music, the notes that make up the melody.

2.2. Translation theory

Übersetzen heißt, in Ketten tanzen
(Heinrich Heine)³⁰

There still tends to be a gap between practical translating and a theory of translation as such—if the latter exists at all. Mary Snell-Hornby (1986: 12) postulates translation science as a separate discipline. She regards it as an “interdisciplinary, multi-perspective entity that is based on the complex reality of actual translating and not on the axiomatic models of linguistics and is characterised by its reconciliatory view” (ibid.). While she deplores the fact that linguistics seems to ignore the voice of the craft itself, rather tending to underestimate the latter, Snell-Hornby suggests trying to close the wide gap yawning between theory and practice as translation is in urgent need of gaining practical relevance through scientific reflection. This could be done by letting go of purely linguistic models (such as Koller’s substitution theory, where the elements a1, a2, a3... from language inventory L1 are replaced with elements b1, b2, b3... from language inventory L2)³¹, which Snell-Hornby strongly rejects, claiming that the translator is more than a simple ‘switchboard operator’ or ‘interface’ (*Schaltstelle*—another tricky metaphor to translate...). Text is not linear but a *gestalt*, an entity which is more than simply the sum of its components, and language never occurs in a vacuum but always in a specific situation within a cultural framework. Therefore, the translator recreates the text, on the basis of the given conditions (Snell-Hornby 1986: 13).

The absence of a viable theory has more or less reduced translating to an “act of faith”, as Tabakowska (1993: 2) has put it, who also stresses that cognitive linguistics and literary studies are mutually dependent. Indeed, the common objective of both linguistics and poetics seems to lie in an explanation of the factors that motivate personal choices—in our case, the

³⁰ “Translating means dancing in chains”; Stolze, Radegundis. 1986. “Zur Bedeutung von Hermeneutik und Textlinguistik beim Übersetzen”. In Snell-Hornby, Mary (ed), *Übersetzungswissenschaft*. Tübingen: Francke, 13–160.

³¹ Koller 1972: 69 quoted in Snell-Hornby 1986: 13.

writer's as much as the translator's. Additionally, a link between cognitive linguistics and translation theory as such needs to be established for the purpose of this paper.

2.2.1. “*Inseln der Gemeinsamkeiten*”³²”

To focus exclusively on the act of transcoding means that the multiple perspectives of language and text are disregarded—but most translators will bear out the fact that translation is much more than simple transcoding, and it is therefore not surprising that no useful definition of what a ‘good’ (i.e., successful) translation is like has been found so far. Translation does not work with single, isolated units but rather weaves a net of interrelations between these units or words, based on their contextual relevance and respective function in the entire text (cf. Snell-Hornby 1986: 14-16).

Vermeer (in Snell-Hornby 1986: 33) corroborates this view, emphasising that the translator never merely transcodes a text from one language into another. Rather, translation is a complex action where somebody “reports” about a text (original state of affairs) under new functional, cultural and linguistic conditions within a new situation, also endeavouring formally to emulate the original text as closely as possible. Eco (2003: 3) calls this “the translator’s ethical obligation to respect what the author has written”, and translation a “disguised indirect discourse”. For Vermeer, a translation mostly depends on the purpose of the target text, apart from the characteristics of the translator, as this purpose is also an element of the target culture. This means that translation is cultural transfer (see also below) plus a personal feat of the translator’s, and that it cannot ever be “finished” or objective, rather remaining a matter of taste and personal preference—especially in belletrist fiction, as in our case. Vermeer even goes so far as to maintain that there is no real (qualitative) difference between translating fiction and other texts, as translation is always, *per definitionem*, teleological, i.e., purpose-orientated.

³² “Islands of similarities”

2.2.2. Is there any such thing as real equivalence?

The word 'translation' comes, etymologically, from
the Latin 'bearing across'. Having been borne across
the world, we are translated men.
It is normally supposed that something
always gets lost in translation;
I cling, obstinately, to the notion
that something can also be gained.³³

Often a word might mean the same in another language on the surface but 'feels' differently. Still, the concept of equivalence has been a focal issue in all theories of translation, some considering it as a crucial theoretical notion, others rejecting it as either an illusion, an unattainable target of translation, or simply renaming it 'functional adequacy' (which is equally vague a term). Those who support the idea of equivalence either tacitly assume that it exists ("similarity of response", Tabakowska 1993: 2), or else acknowledge it explicitly, referring to equivalents as "meaning invariants" (ibid.). Tabakowska (1993: 3) tries to justify the claim that equivalence in literary translation should be defined in terms of poetics (i.e. a particular function of language, a way of structuring information within a text) and, in a more holistic approach, attempts to keep the concept of equivalence on the level of textual structure, which is also proposed by Snell-Hornby (1988: 19), who avers that equivalence has a certain dialectic tension.

Apart from the concepts of terminological ("*begriffliche*") and situational equivalence, for which only linguistic signs, deep structural units or sentences are compared, Burgschmidt and Götz (1974: 90) added another three criteria against which a text must be checked prior to its translation into another language: (i) the register³⁴ ("variety of language related to the wider social role played by the performer at the moment of utterance, e.g.

³³ Rusdhe, Salman, Imaginary Homelands, in: *Imaginary Homelands*, 1981-1991, Granta Books, p 17

³⁴ Halliday (1990) refers to register as a semantic concept, which "can be defined as a configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a particular situational configuration" and must also "include the expressions, the lexico-grammatical and phonological features, that typically accompany or REALISE these meanings" and sometimes "indexical features, indices in the form of particular words, particular grammatical signals, or even sometimes phonological signals that have the function of indicating to the participants that this is the register in question" (1990: 38, 39).

'scientific', 'religious', 'civil service' etc.”), (ii) the style (relationship between speaker and listener, speaker's intentions with regard to listener), and (iii) the medium (spoken or written language) (ibid.).

Interestingly, the term itself is used differently in different languages, or even within one and the same language. Looking at the German *Äquivalenz*, one will find that, while contrastive linguistics uses it for the relations between lexical units, in translation theory it refers to all sorts of relationships on the word, sentence or even textual level.

Paradoxically, 'Äquivalenz' is not the same as 'equivalence'. While the former was not to be found in any dictionary before the 1960s, the latter has been in use as a scientific term (of e.g. mathematics, formal logics) for about 150 years, denoting an 'umkehrbar eindeutige Zuordnung', a 'reversibly clear allocation' (Snell-Hornby, in Snell-Hornby 1986: 15). However, to make already confusing matters even more complicated, it was also mentioned as early as 1460 in the OED as both a sharply delineated technical term of science AND an oscillating word of everyday English (in the meaning "of similar significance" or "virtually the same thing", i.e. relative in a quantitative sense). Translation theory is leaning more towards the latter usage of equivalence, but at the same time striving to retain the important concept of reversibility. However, 'equivalent' and 'gleichwertig' are not necessarily the same, either, again rendering the entire hypothesising rather useless. Therefore, Mary Snell-Hornby (1986: 15) has come to the conclusion that neither word makes a lot of sense in translation science as the German term is too static and one-dimensional while the English counterpart is too hazy and wishy-washy ("similarity") and does not solve the problem of interlingual blurring.

A reconciliation of practical efficiency and theoretical adequacy is called for, says Neubert (in Snell-Hornby 1986: 85). He criticises the modular concept of equivalence, where isolated language units are "set off" against each other, and proposes an "interactional" approach to equivalence, focusing on textual meaning, which is global. Translation is always a search for the "Inseln der Gemeinsamkeiten", the 'isles of similarities' in a 'vast sea of differences' (Neubert, in Snell-Hornby 1986: 88). However, the above problem still

remains: These 'isles of invariance' are relative, again depending on someone's personal choice, and therefore give space for great difference between two or even more "good" translations of the same piece of text. In conclusion, Neubert (ibid.) quotes de Bono (1979: 146), who referred to translating as an act of "lateral thinking", a practical process of creativity which turns creativity itself into a tool for the translator.

By stressing the importance of paraphrase, Paepcke (in Snell-Hornby 1986: 129) provides another solution: The complex problem, for him, lies in total meaning as composed of idiomatic meaning and its paraphrase³⁵. Idiomatic paraphrasing is based on the rule that everything an author has meant, thought and formulated when writing a text also has to be formulated by the translator in the course of its translation: "Paraphrasen sind die sinnerhaltende Wiedergabe von Satzbedeutungen bei vielfach eintretendem Perspektivenwandel" (i.e. "paraphrases reflect the original meaning of sentences while often changing the perspectives involved", in Snell-Hornby 1986: 129). Therefore, a paraphrase is the interpreted and re-worded rendering of the original text, provided that the translator has comprehended the latter. Thus, the denotative core meaning contained in the original wording is retained:

Die Paraphrase dient vorzugsweise der Überwindung der in unterschiedlich gestalteten Texten notwendig vorhandenen Divergenzen. Auf diese Weise verhindern Paraphrasen das Vorkommen verfehlter Sprachverwendungen. Ihre Funktion besteht darin, daß sie den idiomatischen Sprachgebrauch durch verbale oder nominale Wendungen absichern, wobei das Grundproblem des idiomatischen Sprachgebrauchs darin liegt, daß die einzelnen Komponenten einer Verbal- oder Nominalfügung auf der Ebene der Übersetzung nicht remantisierbar [sic!] sind.³⁶ (Paepcke, in Snell-Hornby 1986: 130)

³⁵ O'Grady (1996: 272) has defined paraphrases as two sentences with the same meaning, i.e. the same truth conditions, while there may still be some subtle differences in e.g. emphasis between the two. Therefore, two structures can never have exactly the same meaning, and paraphrase can never be perfect.

³⁶ i.e. "Paraphrase mainly serves to surmount the necessary divergences contained in differently constructed texts. Thus, paraphrases prevent the misuse of linguistic structures. Their function is to ensure the idiomatic use of language through verbal or nominal phrases, the main problem of this idiomatic use of language lying in the fact that the individual components of such a nominal or verbal phrase cannot be reworded on the level of translation"

However, Paepcke rejects the very idea that paraphrases might be in any way unclear or merely subjective, rather stressing the need for appropriate language use³⁷ in translation. Macheiner (2004: 28), on the other hand, formulates a puzzle, as she calls it, by raising the following question: is that which is said in other words really the same? Of course, this has something to do with the complex problem of the relationship between form and content, and the central question to what extent the two can be separated or rather form an indivisible entity. She solves the problem by resigning herself to the fact that, by changing the form, i.e. the language, some of the original meaning inevitably gets lost too, and that all we can ever hope to achieve in translation is to get as close as possible to the original text. She also stresses how important it is for the translator to comprehend the entire text at the outset, before searching for similar expressions in another language:

Seine Fähigkeit, sich die Welt, von der der Text handelt, in allen angesprochenen Punkten vorstellen zu können, ist die Voraussetzung dafür, daß alles das, was wegen der Unterschiede zwischen den beteiligten Welten eigentlich nicht übersetzbar ist, schließlich doch irgendwie für das Verstehen der Übersetzung zur Verfügung steht.³⁸ (Macheiner 2004: 29)

This reflects another author's, Fessenko's, view, who maintains that another culture must be reflected in a way that allows the readers to visualise it accurately and to be able to understand these foreign forms of life and behaviour, categories, norms and values in terms of their own cultural experience (2003: 4).

As far as metaphor is concerned, Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 136) also ask whether paraphrase is really possible, and if two sentences can ever mean exactly the same. Like Macheiner, they answer both questions in the negative, and point out that any change in a sentence—be it word order, vocabulary, grammatical construction, even intonation—necessarily alters

³⁷ According to Crystal (1995: 367), a usage is "appropriate" in a situation if it is performing the required function satisfactorily and does not draw attention to itself.

³⁸ i.e. "One's ability to imagine the world evoked by a particular text in all its minute detail is prerequisite for being able somehow to understand all that is untranslatable, regardless of the differences between the two worlds involved"

the entire meaning of the sentence, more or less subtly. In addition, they are able to provide a reason why this should be so: As we conceptualise sentences metaphorically in spatial terms, the elements of linguistic form have spatial properties such as length, and relations such as closeness. This means, then, that the spatial metaphors of our conceptual system (like CLOSENESS IS STRENGTH OF EFFECT) automatically structure the relationship between form and content. As some aspects of meaning are not based on arbitrary linguistic conventions but rather on our natural inclination to correlate what we say with our conceptual system, the form of what we utter is conceptualised in spatial terms, and any alteration, or paraphrase, will give rise to subtle variations in meaning. Nogales (1999: 5) holds that, as metaphors seem to convey propositional content beyond or instead of what they express in actual language, it is often difficult, if not downright impossible, to express this content by the use of paraphrase. While the paraphrase of a metaphorical utterance may reflect its truth conditions, the metaphor conveys more than just those, something different. Nogales (1999: 6) discusses this so-called non-paraphrasability of metaphors at length and argues that an analysis of metaphor as reconceptualisation explains both its impact and use. This means that metaphor highlights our current conceptualisation, challenges it, and then presents an alternative, thus prompting us to reconceptualise. She also raises the interesting point that the more 'dead', i.e. conventionalised, a metaphor, the more easily it is paraphrased. In general, though, she claims that, while the cognitive content of a metaphor can easily be conveyed in other terms, the feeling evoked by the metaphorical vehicle cannot be reproduced.

Paepcke's definition (in Tabakowska 1993: 18) of equivalence reflects the one put forward by the advocates of literary theory, i.e., appropriateness of use (for literary works, normative characteristics such as genre, period, literary technique etc.), while in linguistic theory translation equivalence is composed of sub-equivalences (phonological, syntactic or semantic). Here, the assumption is that natural languages 'converge' at the level of deep structure, where the semantic identity between an original and its successful translation should be established in order to 'strike the same chord', to use a

perceptual metaphor, within the respective reader. This would mean that two sentences are regarded as equivalent if they have identical deep structure, while any correspondence between them on the surface level would be regarded as an additional bonus accounting for their congruence, but not as essential (cf. Tabakowska 1993: 18).

Reflecting the prevalent Aristotelian dichotomy of 'form' and 'content', and thus two interrelating forms of equivalence, contrastive linguistics is more preoccupied with isolated sentences, tacitly assuming that translation equivalence exists regardless of longer textual structures. Linguistic pragmatics has subsequently attempted to reveal the inadequacies of such theories of equivalence and to replace them with the (still rather vague) concepts of dynamic vs. functional equivalence. However, the emotive factor still determines the criteria of equivalence, once again dooming them to fall outside the scope of linguistics as such (cf. Tabakowska 1993: 19).

Cognitive linguistics now opens totally new perspectives for translation theory as it offers a powerful tool for describing, comparing, and evaluating the ways in which two languages structure semantic content. For Tabakowska (1993: 20), the merit of cognitive linguistics does not consist in making new discoveries but in providing a theoretical framework for a systematic and coherent description of old and well-grounded intuitions. The renowned Italian philosopher and linguist Umberto Eco (2003: 5) may hold a more conservative view (but still with a cognitive angle) of equivalence, with his aforementioned stress on "faithfulness" to the original text: for him this means that translation is always a form of interpretation, and that translators need to aim at rendering not necessarily the intention of the respective author (who may have been dead for years) but rather the intention of the text, which he defines as "the interpretative effort on the part of the reader, the critic or the translator" (ibid.). I believe his approach is largely due to the fact that, having been at the receiving end of translation himself numerous times, he has most probably felt his work gaining a kind of independence, which he must have viewed with some misgiving. Therefore, Eco has considered many concepts of translation studies, such as adequacy and equivalence, from the point of view of negotiation, which he defines as "a process by virtue of which, in

order to get something, each party renounces something else, and at the end everybody feels satisfied since one cannot have everything" (Eco 2003: 6). However, when considering the great number of pitfalls of practical translating, he comes to the conclusion that, while equivalence might still be an important factor, the aim of a translation must be to create the same effect in a reader's mind as the original text was meant to create. So, instead of speaking of "equivalence of meaning", he now defines a "functional equivalence", which refers to the fact that a "good" translation needs to "generate the same effect aimed at by the original" (Eco 2003: 56). This means that the translator has to develop a hypothesis about the intended original effect in order to remain faithful to its intention, to use Eco's own words (*ibid.*); and, as this may give rise to a great number of different hypotheses, the decision what a translation should reproduce becomes negotiable. The main issue for Eco, however, is referential equivalence, which means that a translation must convey the same facts and events as the original, while literal equivalence or equivalence of meaning fades into the background. Still, a crucial question remains: While preserving its effect, how far can a text be altered without violating the equivalence in reference?

In a specific situation one language may require a different register, lexis or syntax than another, which is partly due to the different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, verbal expressions have no autonomous existence but rather need to be considered against a wide background of the actual knowledge, experience and cognitive abilities of communicating human beings. Lewis Carroll, the famous author of *Alice*, put it this way: "No word has a meaning *inseparably* attached to it; a word means what the speaker intends by it, and what the hearer understands by it, and that is all..." (1960/2000: 224).

These facts have made Tabakowska (1993) favour a more dynamic approach, which considers text to be more a process than a product, a gradually emerging entity "constantly confronted with present expectations and past experiences of those who witness its birth" (1993: 15). This is mindful of Derrida's well-known maxim "all reading involves construal", as well as of deconstructivism, which obliterates all clear demarcation lines between text and context (just as cognitive linguistics rejects the sharp

distinction between semantics and pragmatics). However, I rather tend to agree with Nogales (1999: 91-91), who says that metaphors, as well as other instances of figurative speech, are clearly dependent upon context in many ways, even more so than literal language—be it only for defining whether an utterance is actually metaphorical or literal. Without appearing in a specific context, it can neither be identified (an epistemological issue) nor properly defined as a metaphor (a metaphysical issue).

Tabakowska (1993: 3) has raised another interesting point with regard to equivalence that should be noted: “If translation assessment is to go beyond mere error-hunting it requires from the analyst such proficiency in both languages as only few (if any) can lay claim to.” Style is choice—on both the writer’s and the translator’s parts. The preference of a certain expression reflects the writer’s choice of conceptualisation out of the array of possibilities provided by the linguistic conventions of a language, while the translator selects an expression from the many choices of the target languages, relying on his or her personal comprehension, i.e., interpretation of the original text.

3. Translation of metaphor

To unlock a society, look at its untranslatable words
Salman Rushdie, *Shame*, p 111

Theories on the translation of metaphor have not really been an issue so far. Some have been proposed by Dagut, Newmark, and others, but in this paper I am focusing on the cognitive aspects of metaphor theory, as well as on other issues, such as: how important is it to retain the original image in the target language? Is it better to change the image in order to save the overall effect, or the pragmatic meaning of the metaphor? Sometimes, as Eco (2003: 47) points out, a translator has to enrich the original text in order to avoid missing important details (such as metaphor...)—even if saying more sometimes means saying less, because the translator fails to keep a crucial and meaningful reticence or ambiguity (2003: 50). Some concepts seem to refuse to travel across linguistic boundaries, and cannot be translated.

Nevertheless, rewriting also represents an “act of fidelity”, again in Eco’s words (2003: 57), or an “act of faith”, in Tabakowska’s (1993: 2, see chapter 2), on the translator’s part if s/he aims to reproduce the original’s effect on the reader. The difficulty here lies in defining the extent to which a translation should be allowed to say what the original does not.

In her doctoral thesis, Schmid-Gallistl (1996: 115) criticises several more extreme approaches, saying that, for instance, the more original a metaphor, the easier it is to translate is too simplistic a theory as the cultural factor can never be disregarded. Although she seems to favour Dagut’s method, she also finds fault with his classification of metaphors into three categories (ephemeral, one-off metaphors—unique semantic creations—metaphors that are used daily), all of them artificial and rather useless. Not even Mason earns her unqualified approval although she has focused on the meaning aspect with regard to metaphor, reducing its translation to the act of mere interpretation; Schmid-Gallistl (1996) criticises the fact that the culture factor is over-emphasised in Mason’s theory, thus rendering any theory of metaphor translation obsolete. She even goes so far as to claim that “cultural components just add another layer of complexity to the decoding and re-encoding processes, but they themselves have nothing to do with the mechanisms governing the translation of metaphor” (1996: 117).

Repeatedly, Schmid-Gallistl emphasises the two-fold difficulty presented by the translation of metaphor, i.e. the decoding of the original expression and its subsequent re-encoding in the target language, which for the translator is often fraught with the danger of disregarding register and frequency of the respective metaphor if the image looks enticingly similar to the one used in the source language. Moreover, the author maintains that most translators are not sure which aspect of metaphor to recreate in the target text, its expression, image, or sense. She firmly believes that the translator requires a technique, a method, a theoretical framework, rather than mere intuition, should the translation of a metaphor be really successful, and that words and images do not matter in metaphor translation as long as the respective ontological and, especially, epistemic correspondences match in both

languages.³⁹ She seems, however, and especially in the light of her claim that metaphor and culture have nothing to do with one another, unduly preoccupied with discovering a technique, a clear-cut method, for translating metaphors, especially if they prove particularly stubborn (Schmid-Gallistl 1996: 118).

A literal translation of metaphors (unless you are lucky enough to have a pair of languages that share some 'real' equivalents, such as *to throw in the towel* and *das Handtuch werfen* to imply that someone has given up on something) often provides hilarious results (and is often done deliberately by bilinguals among their own kind). One of such 'Dinglish' phrases in our family is, 'If you think you can me over the ear beat then you are on the woodway!' Apart from the obvious grammatical and lexical errors, this shows very nicely how metaphor or idiom is often untranslatable verbatim. A better English rendering of the above would probably be, 'If you think you can cheat on me you can think again' or some such. But again, this feels totally different to the German original '*Wenn Du denkst, Du kannst mich übers Ohr hauen, bist Du auf dem Holzweg*'.

2.4. Cultural transfer—negotiation accomplished?

All experience is cultural through and through
(Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]: 57)

In her paper on the prospects of translation within a cultural framework, Fessenko (2003) defines culture as follows:

Kultur, eigentlich die Summe der geistigen Errungenschaften einer Zeit oder eines Volkes, ist bezogen auf die Bereiche von Musik, Kunst, Literatur, Wissenschaft usw., die auch Moral, Glaube, Sitte, Brauch, Gewohnheiten und Verhaltensformen einschließt, welche der Mensch im Prozess der Sozialisation erwirbt. Kultur ist also nicht etwas, was von Natur aus gegeben ist, sondern vielmehr

³⁹ This reminds me of a sermon, held by a Swiss Methodist preacher, which I heard when I was about ten: he talked about *den Kopf waschen* (to tell someone off) and *die Füße waschen* (to serve one another)—the implications of which got totally lost in the inexperienced interpreter's verbatim rendering in English.

das, was durch das Leben in der sprachkulturellen Gemeinschaft erworben wird. (Fessenko 2003: 1)⁴⁰

Therefore, culture is a kind of human potential that needs to be realised afresh by each group or generation, and it is a synthesis of unity and variety. Halliday (1990: 47) defines a “context of culture” as the broader institutional and ideological background against which a text must be interpreted, giving value to it but also constraining its interpretation. Culture is something that people do on certain occasions and the way they attach certain meanings and values to them. All these factors determine how a text is interpreted in its context of situation and make up the nonverbal environment of a text.

In their chapter on the relationship between metaphor and cultural coherence, Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 23) claim that “the most fundamental values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture”. Many of these values in our particular culture, for instance, are coherent with spatialisation metaphors such as UP IS GOOD. The authors infer that our values are not independent but must form a coherent system with the metaphorical concepts governing our lives. Of course, values differ not only between two cultures but even within one and the same culture, and generally the subculture a person lives in determines which values are given priority, not to mention personal values. Individuals, like groups, assign different priorities to the values of the mainstream culture, but their individual value systems are still coherent with the main orientational metaphors of the latter (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 24). In general, though, the authors point out that, while not all cultures share our emphasis on the concept of up-down, “the major orientations seem to cut across all cultures, but which concepts are oriented which way and which orientations are most important vary from culture to culture” (ibid.).

Of course, it is not only the conceptual system that varies from one culture to another but also its linguistic expression. In the tradition of Whorf, Fessenko links language very firmly to thought (“die Sprache ist die Realität des

⁴⁰i.e. “ Culture, or rather the sum total of mental merits of a time or a people, refers to the areas of music, art, literature, science, etc., but also includes morals, faith, traditions, habits, and behavioural patterns man has acquired in the course of socialisation. Culture, therefore, is not given by nature, but rather what we have acquired through living in a certain linguistic culture and society“

Gedankens”⁴¹, 2003: 2) and between the conceptual and the linguistic levels, she defines a mental-lingual level, which serves to transcode “mental units” into verbal signs, functioning as a kind of “mental-lingual translator” which she refers to as the “Transform-Code”. Her approach is based on the concept of the “inner language” which was developed by the Russian literature expert Boris Eichenbaum and the Prague Linguistic Circle. This inner language negotiates between the text and the subject, between language and the psyche, and plays an essential role in all processes of human understanding and communication. Fessenko claims that this Transform-Code is universal in its structure, as no intra- or intercultural communication would otherwise be possible, and it serves as the basis of any cognitive human activity, which includes that of translating. Its realisation, however, can vary from one culture to another, which accounts for the ethno-cultural differences between the figurative language and conscious gestalts we use (2003: 3). Other authors, such as Kloepper, claim that metaphor poses no problem whatsoever for translation due to its universal “fields of imagery” (Kloepper 1967: 116); however, I should still like to point out that culturally determined metaphors cannot be translated, or rather transferred, literally from one language to another. Of course, any creative use of metaphor in the target language may have to be tested for equivalence with the source language metaphor.

The culture factor plays a central part in the interpretation of metaphorical concepts. As many of our day-to-day activities are metaphorical in nature, the concepts used therefore structure our reality. Consequently, the introduction of a new metaphor into our culture and language creates a new reality, which has given rise to many a cultural change. New metaphors are created while old ones are lost—this view runs counter to conventional assumptions on the purely linguistic nature of metaphor. Of course, as Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 145) point out here, words alone cannot create reality. However, changes of our conceptual system also affect our perception of the world around us and thus our reality. This is a view of reality that is entirely different to theories of objective, external reality which exists independent of human experience and perception. Still, it is the human aspect of reality that is central to our interest,

⁴¹ ‘Language is the reality of thought’

and this will vary from culture to culture, since different cultures are based upon different conceptual systems (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 146). Lakoff's view is reminiscent of the revised Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis (which suggests that each language may 'create' its own world and thus its own semantics⁴²), as he says that each culture must come up with its own way of dealing with its environment, and that the social reality defined by a culture also influences its members' view of physical reality. As we understand much of our social reality and part of our physical perception in metaphorical terms, metaphor plays a significant role in determining our reality. Aitchison emphasises the fact that certain metaphors are prominent in each decade, the most pervasive one currently being the computer, but also in each country or continent, the most popular American imagery in politics being sports (1994: 152). However, she also points out that the universal and the cultural aspects of metaphors are intertwined, and that "any language selects one portion of the universal picture and elaborates it" (Aitchison 1994: 153). For instance, fear triggers two opposing physical reactions, either English metaphors of cold ("rooted to the spot", "icy-cold fingers of fear", "frozen with fear", etc.) or Greek metaphors of fleeing ("panic-stricken flight"), which shows that different cultures highlight different aspects of the world (1994: 154). Aitchison goes on to say that specifically cultural metaphors interact with more general image-schemas, i.e. "outline frameworks from which we subconsciously work, such as the 'ladder' image" (ibid.) (an up-down scale, with "good" at the top and "bad" at the bottom, which seems to cut across most cultures we know, see above). Apart from the pervasive nature of metaphor, this illustrates to what extent our subconscious thought is structured by the 'folk images' we have been brought up with. Palmer, by contrast, seems to reject the idea of universals entirely, stating that "we do not find identity, but only close similarity" between the languages of two different cultures, especially in the case of colour terms and categories (1981: 115).

Summing up, we have established that basic conceptual metaphors are part of a common conceptual system that is shared by the members of a culture.

⁴² But: is this view their invention or did they, like Leo Weisgerber, borrow the idea from Wilhelm von Humboldt?

'Systematic' means that there is a fixed correspondence between the domain that is to be understood and the structure of the domain we map onto it in order to understand it. This procedure is based on our common experience and resulting linguistic conventions, and largely unconscious. Still, the conceptual connections of our culture are indispensable to our understanding of a great number of words and idiomatic expressions in our language. Therefore, we need to regard translation always as a shift, not only between two languages but between two cultures, and the translator as a negotiator between the two: People with different conceptual systems understand the world in a way that is also different from our own in many ways, and this means that even their criteria for truth and reality may be vastly different. Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 184) maintain that "metaphors are basically devices for understanding and have little to do with objective reality, if there is such a thing". They argue against so-called objectivism, saying that there is no fully objective, unconditional, or absolute truth, but also reject absolute subjectivism, quoting Humpty-Dumpty's famous ditty that something means "just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less" (see above). Rather, they offer a "third choice to the myths of objectivism and subjectivism" (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 185) in the shape of a new "experientialist myth", which is a synthesis of imagination and reality. Therefore, metaphor is "imaginative rationality" (2003: 193) as it helps us to understand partially what cannot be comprehended in its totality, such as our emotions, aesthetic experiences, morality or spirituality. Truth, for them, is always relative to understanding and can never claim objectivity. Nevertheless, truth does exist, albeit only relative to our conceptual system, and subject to our daily experiences, interactions, and physical and cultural environments. Likewise, meaning can never be disembodied but must always be embedded into our understanding. This is especially significant in the case of metaphor as, while it is oftentimes literally false, its figurative, i.e., metaphorical meaning can be true.

Does this mean that all metaphors are culture-specific? Or can they be transferred from one culture to another? Lakoff claims that some metaphors are universal, as experience entails so much more than just a specific cultural background, saying that "Inevitably, many primary metaphors are

universal because everybody has basically the same kinds of bodies and brains and lives in basically the same kinds of environments, so far as the features relevant to metaphor are concerned” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 257). For some, this could imply that metaphor can be translated across any two languages without loss of effect or meaning. Actually, Lakoff, and other authors, however, maintain that some metaphors at least are not translatable, especially those used for effect, such as in advertising. Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 227), especially, raise the issue that objectivity always depends on the respective cultural values, rendering reasonable objectivity and thus truth impossible in case of conflicting values or conceptual systems. For them, meaning is never cut and dried; rather, it depends on our imagination and the coherence of our metaphorically structured conceptual system. While primary metaphors may be universal, more complex metaphors that are composed of such primary ones and thus make use of culturally based concepts will differ significantly from culture to culture (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 257).

Eco’s interpretation also seems to make sense, though: In a short aside on the relation between translation and ontology, he claims that there are some universal phenomena that any language knows, such as physical experiences (e.g. walking, crawling, jumping, etc.) or weather conditions (rain, sunshine etc.) but no flying humans and the like, and this suggests that there exists a “hard core of being” (Eco 2003: 181) independent of the language or culture we grow up with. So, while Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 231-232) claim that all our experience is cultural in a way, they do allow for the fact that some experiences (e.g. standing up) are more physical and less ‘cultural’ than others (e.g. attending a wedding ceremony). In such cases, the translator is not faced with insurmountable difficulty, as s/he is in the case of more abstract concepts—a simple English phrase like ‘I love you’ is used in contexts in which a German speaker would never utter it. So, while philosophers and linguists may have sufficient leisure to discuss such discrepancies indefinitely, a translator is confronted with them on a daily basis, more often than not under extreme economic pressure, and therefore compelled to solve the puzzle one way or another (and fast). Usually,

translators have neither the time nor the inclination to apply complicated rules such as the ones used below for the translation of metaphors, so they are rather inclined to follow their intuition and instinct, as does every fluent bilingual. I would also advocate such a procedure; only in cases where no obvious solution to an immediate problem presents itself would I choose to follow a more systematic approach and analyse a text according to such rules (e.g. the ones proposed by Schmid–Gallistl 1996).

Another tricky phenomenon, as Eco (2003: 39) points out, and steeped in metaphor, is the translation of vulgar expressions and profanities, not to speak of the typical four-letter words, which are also often used metaphorically. What in German might be, if not quite acceptable, just plain vulgar, in English might be regarded as downright obscene, and vice versa, or what in Italian might be rude but not unusual, in German would be utterly blasphemous. In such cases, the translator is forced to incur inevitable cultural losses—and to translate ‘situations’. Another such example would be the so-called fixed forms, or speech formulas (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 51). They consist of a number of words but function like single ones, and they are legion in our language. Such phrasal lexical items are usually structured coherently by one metaphorical concept and culturally dependent, which means that the translator often has extreme difficulty transferring them to another language. Both the profanities and the fixed expressions Salman Rushdie uses in his works are oftentimes almost impossible to translate, and this is one of the reasons many passages of the German version of *The Satanic Verses* sound very wooden and pompous.

Mary Snell-Hornby (1986: 16) has suggested an integrated approach to the translation of metaphor, claiming that the phenomenon of metaphor itself is supra-cultural, whereas the associative potential of symbols and images is often culture-specific. Moreover, the question of whether a metaphor can be translated, or how difficult it is to transfer from one language to another, cannot be decided by a given set of abstract rules but rather depends on the respective metaphor within the text concerned. It follows that a translator needs to be familiar not only with two languages and cultures, but also with two different conceptual systems. When people need to communicate without

sharing the same culture, knowledge, etc., mutual understanding becomes extremely difficult. Still, it is possible through the negotiation of meaning (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 231). For this purpose, a translator must be aware of the differences in cultural backgrounds and world views, plus have a talent for finding the right metaphor to get the original message across.

So far, Snell-Hornby's point of view is the one I favour before all the others I have come across in my research, even if she offers no method as such to the translator, as Schmid-Gallistl (1996) has called for. While, naturally, the role of the translator as a communicator across cultures is one of my main concerns, we must bear in mind that translators are not supposed to create language but rather to 're-create' it according to already existing linguistic and cultural norms; and so far, my original 'feeling' has not been changed one iota: metaphors cannot be translated from one language to another without incurring some kind of loss. Something inevitably gets lost in the process (even if, as Rushdie prefers to think, something is also gained in translation), as I am planning to show further below in my case study.

3. Section II--A case study:

“The Satanic Verses” by Salman Rushdie

3.1. The life and work of Salman Rushdie⁴³

Our identity is at once plural and partial.
Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures;
at other times, that we fall between two stools.⁴⁴

Salman Ahmed Rushdie was born in Bombay on 19 June 1947, in the year of Indian independence, as the eldest son of a wealthy liberal family. His father, a Muslim businessman, was a connoisseur of literature who spoke Hindi and Urdu, and understood Persian and Arabic. In order to get a traditionally British education, his son, aged 14, went to Rugby Public School in 1961. A year later, his whole family followed for a short time, obtained the British Citizenship and then moved on to Karachi in Pakistan while Salman attended King's College in Cambridge, where he read history. In 1968 he graduated with honours and travelled to Pakistan to be with his family, and to work as a journalist for print media and television. Soon, however, in 1969, Rushdie returned to London—the Pakistani way of censoring such work proved to be too much for him. Back in England, Salman Rushdie continued to work as a journalist, but additionally acted at the avant-garde Fringe Theatre. Between '69 and '73 he also worked as an ad writer, which he continued to do part-time until 1980.

In 1970 he met Clarissa Luard and married her 6 years later, only to get divorced in 1987. Rushdie dedicated his children's book *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, published in 1990, to their son Zafar.

Salman Rushdie began to write in 1973, starting with two novels that were to remain unpublished. Apart from his literary work, he also wrote book reviews and scripts for the two TV films *The Riddle of Midnight* and *The Painter and*

⁴³ The most detailed biography I found was the one compiled by Sandra Vlasta in her thesis (*“Zwischen Mythos Indien und den Satanischen Versen—die Rezeption Salman Rushdies im deutschsprachigen Raum”*, 2002), pages 11 to 13.

⁴⁴ Rushdie, Salman, “Imaginary Homelands”, in: *Imaginary Homelands*, 1992, Penguin Books, p 15

the Pest. Finally, in 1975, his first novel *Grimus* was published, “which, to put it mildly, bombed”, as Salman Rushdie himself wrote about it in *Imaginary Homelands* (1992: 1). He began to get involved in immigrants’ matters and travelled to India in order to do some research for his next novel, *Midnight’s Children*, which was published in 1981 and won the Booker Prize, the James Tait Black Prize and the Prize awarded by the English Speaking Union the same year, and the Booker of Bookers two years later.

Shame, published in 1983, put Rushdie back on the literary agenda, he was again nominated for the Booker Prize and won the French *Prix du Meilleur Livre Étrangé*. Rushdie also joined the Royal Society of Literature.

A journey to Nicaragua, where Rushdie had the opportunity of talking to politicians, authors and farmers who lived and worked there, inspired him to the opus *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey* (1987). In 1988 he married author Marianne Wiggins. Finally, on 26 September 1988, Viking / Penguin published Rushdie’s incendiary novel *The Satanic Verses* in Great Britain, and it was awarded the Whitbread Prize. Soon after this, violent protests ensued all over the world. The novel was forbidden in several countries, and Rushdie accused of blasphemy, a serious offence in Islamic regions.

Together with Elizabeth West, Rushdie published *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing* in 1997, a collection of texts written by English-speaking Indian writers between 1947 and 1997. Two years later another of Rushdie’s monumental works appeared—*The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, highly acclaimed by the critics (and one of my personal favourites)—and in September 2001 *Fury*, which proved less popular with the critics. His latest book, *Shalimar The Clown*, published in 2005, once again hit the headlines and was apostrophised as one of Rushdie’s masterpieces.

Until very recently, Salman Rushdie lived in New York with his third wife, model and TV hostess Padma Lakshmi, who, however, has just filed for divorce. Apparently, none of Rushdie’s partners managed to come to terms with the danger of being the cynosure of Islamic eyes, and a target for fanaticism, especially now that Rushdie has been knighted by Her Majesty,

Queen Elizabeth II. Time will tell whether he will ever manage to take up a “normal” life after all the difficulties he has been going through for the sake of a right most of us usually take for granted—that of the Freedom of Speech.

3.2. *The Satanic Verses*—A Bone of Contention

At the centre of the storm stands a novel, a work of fiction, one that aspires to the condition of literature. It has often seemed to me that people on all sides of the argument have lost sight of this simple fact. *The Satanic Verses* has been described, and treated, as a work of bad history, as an anti-religious pamphlet, as the product of an international capitalist-Jewish conspiracy, as an act of murder (‘he has murdered our hearts’), as the product of a person comparable to Hitler and Attila the Hun. It felt impossible, amid such hubbub, to insist on the fictionality of fiction.⁴⁵

The title of the novel *The Satanic Verses* derives from certain verses that were originally integrated into the Q’uran, Islam’s holy book, and later discarded. They refer to three Islamic goddesses, Manat, Uzza, and Al-Lat. While Mohammad initially claimed that these three were Allah’s intermediaries, reminding us of Mary’s role in Roman Catholicism, later he was forced to remove them from the faith again, which he ultimately defended by asserting that the words he had used to introduce them were not inspired by God himself but by his vilest enemy, the Shaitan, Satan, the devil incarnate, who had masqueraded as the voice of the holy. Rushdie’s novel hinges upon this banning of the original satanic verses, highlighting the slightly unsavoury nature of this happening.

A short synopsis of this novel will be followed by a description of its background and publication, including some details of the British situation, the Islamic reaction to the opus, and the issue of blasphemy versus freedom of speech from different cultural and religious perspectives. A short analysis

⁴⁵ *Imaginary Homelands* (Rushdie 1992: 393)

of the *The Satanic Verses* from the literary point of view will round off this chapter.

3.2.1 Synopsis

The *Satanic Verses* seems to be a phantasmagoric, surrealistic, and absurdist book. It is huge, sprawling, opaque, nihilistic, and kaleidoscopic. It is crammed with esoterica, allegories, parables, metaphors, Arab words, and word plays. It is inventive, exuberant, and incoherent, if not crazy. Little in the book is at it seems, for a devil in one scene is an angel in the next, and heaven becomes hell.⁴⁶

In this opulent allegory, Salman Rushdie emulates the birth of his faith—which he himself lost as a younger man. This fourth opus of Rushdie's taxes the reader to the utmost with its wealth of figures, events, themes, motifs, allusions, and plots; however, when looking at it more closely and logically, a very clear, almost mathematical structure evolves, which shows how clearly demarcated the single strands of this story are.

The protagonists of this novel are Gibreel Farishta, an actor well-known in India for his 'Theologicals', i.e., popular movies about Hindu myths, and Saladin Chamcha, an anglophile voice imitator working in TV commercials, who seems to have completely assimilated British culture. In the main plot, the two are on a flight from Bombay to London; Gibreel is trying to win back Himalaya-mountaineer Alleluia Cone, Saladin his wife Pamela, both rather glacial and very English beauties. However, the plane is hijacked by fanatics and blown up right above the channel on the English side (a fact which only evolves very gradually nearing the culmination and end of the novel).

Miraculously, Gibreel and Saladin survive, but both metamorphose into something else during their fantastic fall through the clouds: Gibreel develops a halo while Saladin gradually grows a pair of horns. While the former manages all right in the beginning, finds his Allie and lives like a millionaire in a penthouse, even acquiring divine or rather archangelic characteristics, the latter is accused of being an illegal immigrant and taken into custody, where he is abused and treated like the animal he is changing into. After a long

⁴⁶ Levy 1995: 559

period of hunger and strife, he finally manages to flee and find shelter with some Bangladeshi friends who run the Café Shandaar in London. After a lot of heartache and difficulty, doubts and terror he finally wins back his human shape during an immigrant rebellion. Full of rage at being left in the lurch by his former companion Gibreel he decides to take his revenge: In a series of anonymous telephone calls he pretends to be several of Allie's lovers, which is easy for him, the "Man of the Thousand Voices", and the relationship between Gibreel and Allie breaks up. Gibreel suspects Saladin of being instrumental in their split but still saves his life during ethnic riots and drags him from the burning Café Shandaar, where Saladin still lives. Thus, Gibreel seems to have atoned for many of his former sins.

In the end both return to Bombay; Saladin to be with his dying father and Gibreel to make films about his visions, which are told in sub-plots throughout the novel. However, these movies turn out to be embarrassing flops, and when he is accused of murdering his producer, stuttering Whisky Sisodia, and Alleluia Cone, his mountaineering ex-lover, once Gibreel blows his brains out. Saladin, though, the loser throughout the entire story, is given a second chance with his lover, physician Zeeny Vakil.

The main plot, which is told in chapters I, III, V, and VII, is fairly straightforward—the subplots, related in chapters II, IV, VI, and VIII, are not. Gibreel's dreams and visions begin with the early days of Islam in the 7th century (and contain the critical passages), where he takes on the guise of the archangel Gabriel who passes on the divine revelations to Mahound (aka Mohammed, which especially enraged the faithful followers of Mohammad as the name Mahound was coined by medieval Christians to refer to the "devil" or a "false prophet") but does not know whence they came. However, he also utters the so-called satanic verses, through which three female divinities are at first admitted into the Q'uran and then abandoned again. He has to fight against the devil and even wrestle the prophets and other angels at some stage, scenes with profound homoerotic allusions. He doubts, and this is the gravest offence:

Doubt, it seems to me, is the central condition of a human being in the 20th century. One of the things that has happened to us in the

20th century as a human race is to learn how certainty crumbles in your hand.⁴⁷

Gibreel is depicted with a halo and divine qualities but feels and thinks like a rather weak man, human and utterly fallible. His dreams begin when, recovering from a serious disease, he loses his faith as Allah failed to answer his prayers during his tribulations, and he feasts on a mountain of pork. One vision flows into another, forming a coherent sequence.

A second subplot tells the story of Mahound in Jahilia, symbol of the Holy City of Mecca, of his exile, return and fight against the resistance of Baal, the dissenting poet, who has persuaded the whores in his bordello Hijab (=curtain, or women's veil) to assume the names of the prophet's twelve wives in order to promote business (another nail in Rushdie's religious coffin...)—which goes to show that once religion is deployed for secular profit things start to go seriously wrong. Finally Mahound manages to have Baal arrested and sentenced to death for his blasphemous action.

Rushdie has also sneaked his own persona between the covers of his book and thus more or less predicted his own fall from grace: Salman the scribe, a historical figure, is called upon to write down Mahound's prophecies just as he got them from Gibreel—but the scribe decides to test the Prophet by changing the verses, at first subtly and then so much that the prophet begins to realise what exactly he is doing (unthinkable—the holy Q'uran altered by a simple scribe!). Salman is accused of unforgivable blasphemy and ostracised: "Your blasphemy, Salman, can't be forgiven. Did you think I wouldn't work it out? To set your words against the words of God?" (TSV⁴⁸ p 374)

Another strand of the plot weaves the story of Ayesha, a girl full of faith and surrounded by shimmering butterflies, who calls her entire village to join her in her foot-pilgrimage to Mecca—only to lead them to their watery deaths in the waters of the Arabian Sea.

⁴⁷ Interview with Salman Rushdie, 27 January 1989, by Bandung File. Quoted in Sanga 2001: 20.

⁴⁸ I shall henceforth refer to *The Satanic Verses* this way.

3.2.2 Background and reactions

Central to the purposes of *The Satanic Verses* is the process of reclaiming language from one's opponents.
(*Imaginary Homelands* 1992: 402)

The Satanic Verses was first published in the United Kingdom by Viking Press / Penguin in September 1988, only to be banned in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Egypt, Somalia, Saudi-Arabia, Qatar, Indonesia, and South Africa, all countries with Muslim majorities, within the following two months. Especially in the author's home country as well as in Pakistan the revolts were particularly violent, 22 demonstrators were killed, and hundreds injured. Shortly after this, Muslims in England were also starting to protest against the publication of this controversial novel—especially in the mostly Muslim town Bradford, where the book was publicly burned—to be followed by mass protests all around the world. Rushdie received several bomb threats so he was forced to cancel many of his readings, and although he publicly apologised for hurting Islamic feelings, storms on embassies in the Middle East, as well as riots in Kashmir, Bombay, and Dacca ensued, and ultimately a fatwa⁴⁹ was imposed on the author. The fatwa was issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (who is also portrayed in the opus as an exiled imam), at the time Iran's revered leader of about fifty million Shiites, on 14 February 1989, and a high reward promised to the one who managed to kill Salman Rushdie. Iran even despatched a death squad, and the issue erupted into a world-wide controversy. Rushdie was forced to go into hiding in order to save his life, and security forces and shelter were provided for him by Western countries, especially by his new home country Great Britain. However, the fatwa was extended to other persons as well: Anyone who dared criticise it also became its target,

⁴⁹ A fatwa is a religious decree against something which is deemed dangerous or threatening to either the Islamic faith or its laws, authorising any Muslim to enact the sentence, even capital punishment, on the perpetrator of the crime.

including bookstores displaying the novel (such as W H Smith) or dissenting imams, and publishers and translators were threatened with death.

Consequently, England ceased all diplomatic communications with Iran, and both countries withdrew their ambassadors, only to reinstate them in September 1990. Despite the danger to his life and that of his family, Rushdie was unable to keep a low profile; reacting to the fatwa he published his essay *Is Nothing Sacred*, which was later included in *Imaginary Homelands* (1992). In this essay he expounded the fact that people fought wars more over language than over territory (p 420), and reconfirmed his belief in personal freedom, and in the freedom of speech:

Facing the utter intransigence, the philistine scorn of so much of Actually Existing Islam, I reluctantly concluded that there was no way for me to help bring into being the Muslim culture I'd dreamed of, the progressive, irreverent, sceptical, argumentative, playful and *unafraid* culture which is what I've always understood as *freedom*. Not me, not in this lifetime, no chance. Actually Existing Islam, which has all but deified its Prophet, a man who always fought passionately against such deification; which has supplanted a priest-free religion by a priest-ridden one; which makes literalism a weapon and redescriptions a crime, will never let the likes of me in. (1992: 437)

Although he repeatedly stressed that he greatly regretted hurting the sensibilities of millions of Muslims all over the world he never expressed any contrition about actually writing *The Satanic Verses*—which would have been the only way of calling off the death squads and ending the fatwa. The isolation seemed to prove too much for Rushdie's wife Marianne, as she left him in August 1989.

In December 1990 Rushdie again tried to find a way of lifting the fatwa by signing a declaration of his affinity with Islam and its followers, maintaining that the characters in his book are not representative of his own views, but he only met with rejection. The Iranian regime refused to call off any of the imposed ostracisms, most probably for political, domestic reasons. Later Rushdie renounced his testimony to Islam, calling it a white lie in times of trouble, and despite the great danger—in July 1991 Japanese Professor Hitoshi Igarashi was murdered, one week after the Italian Ettore Capriole was

stabbed and badly injured, because both of them had translated *The Satanic Verses* into their respective languages—the novel was translated into French, Italian and Norwegian, even though the respective translators used pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. The German publishers Kiepenheuer & Witsch postponed the German translation indefinitely for security reasons, so several crusading publishers, authors and literary organisations founded the *Artikel 19 Verlag*, which was based on Article 19 of the Human Rights Charta, i.e. the freedom of speech, and finally published the *Satanic Verses* in 1990, after the 1989 book fair of Frankfurt, where the Norwegian⁵⁰ version of the book was the only translation available, and no Iranian stand was to be seen. Many other publishers and printing houses from Germany, Austria and Switzerland joined the consortium, and the proceeds from the book sale went to the organisation 'Writers in Prison'.

In spite of the danger to his life Salman Rushdie has been trying slowly to inch back into a more normal sort of life; he travels, publicly promotes his books, and gives numerous interviews. In 1999 the Iranian government officially renounced the fatwa, but Muslim fundamentalists still cling to it and have even increased the sum put on Rushdie's demise. Meanwhile the author has left Great Britain and currently lives in New York.

While *The Satanic Verses* has been translated into numerous languages to date, despite the initial difficulties described above, and sold more than 1.5 million copies world-wide, it is still banned in the majority of Muslim countries. Ironically, most of the so-called intellectuals who advocated the ban have admitted to not even having read it (e.g. Sher Azam of the Bradford Council of Mosques, who publicly admitted that "Books are not my thing"⁵¹)—albeit with the claim that it is too scandalous a text for them even to contemplate doing so. Levy (1995: 562) suspects that much of the hysteria in Britain was deliberately incited by extremists in order to exploit already prevalent anti-Western feelings. The fact that the novel received high acclaim in the Western world, even being short-listed for the prestigious Booker Prize in

⁵⁰ Four years later, the CEO of the publishing house Aschehoug, William Nygaard, was shot in front of his house in Oslo and badly injured.

⁵¹ *Imaginary Homelands* 1992: 403

1989 and awarded the Whitbread Literary Prize worth twenty thousand pounds the same year (although the nomination was withdrawn at first for political reasons), further enraged the Muslim fundamentalists who so violently opposed the publication of this opus. Some Islamic mullahs even suspected the West of plotting an attack on Islam through the Rushdie affair, in order to denigrate their faith and insult its followers, as Rushdie seems to represent Islam as a religion invented by Mohammad and not revealed by Allah himself. Indeed, Islam fundamentalism regards the Western world as 'unbelievers' who hold nothing sacred, and therefore fail to understand the concept of blasphemy. Amid the razzmatazz about the effrontery towards Muslim sensibilities, few have however taken note of the fact that the novel is equally disrespectful of British authorities and celebrities: Mrs Thatcher is renamed "Mrs Torture" and her wax effigy ritually burned in the course of ethnic riots in London (maybe that was why the Iron Lady hesitated to grant Rushdie full diplomatic protection straight away). Rushdie also highlights the British arrogance towards other ethnicities in this opus, as he has done in other works before this one. Multicultural societies are replacing "pure" ones (if such a thing ever existed) and hybridity has become the only possible societal form of today's world:

Those who oppose the novel most vociferously today are of the opinion that intermingling with a different culture will inevitably weaken and ruin their own. I am of the opposite opinion. *The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Melange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world.⁵²

Mutation and recreation are motifs throughout most of Rushdie's works, and this he seems to regard as the main target of world literature: eclecticism, fusion, and bastardisation, just as he argues that plurality and hybridity represent the backbone of 'his' India.

Rushdie is, perhaps, the most famous author on whom the fatwa has been imposed, but far from the only one. All over the world writers are suffering for

⁵² Rushdie, Salman, *Imaginary Homelands*, Penguin, London, 1992, p 393/394

expressing their opinions freely, have become victims of murder, imprisonment or persecution, and are forced to live in hiding or constant flight. Many have written letters of solidarity to Rushdie, published in *For Rushdie* and *The Rushdie Letters*, although the international public is generally unaware of the violence such authors often have to face for exercising their right to freedom of thought and its expression. Today, Rushdie seems to be relatively free from the constraints of the fatwa and finally able to live like any other “normal” celebrity. He even ventured into the country of his birth with his twenty-year-old son Zafar in April 1999 after more than twelve years of exile, which, in his own words, was his “dream of glorious return”. And glorious it was! He was welcomed enthusiastically by many Indians, despite several violent Muslim protests preceding his travels, and received acclaim for his work at the Commonwealth Writers Award ceremony.

3.2.3 Literary reviews

There are times when I feel that the original intentions of *The Satanic Verses* have been so thoroughly scrambled by events as to be lost for ever.⁵³

If I had to interpret this novel in a literary way I would liken it to a Persian rug: beautiful to behold due to its millions of knots and colours, skeins of wool and silk of varying colours, textures, and strength are joined in unexpected places, all these strands are skilfully interwoven and at some points difficult to disentangle but somehow, miraculously, they form an intelligent entity and unravel. They join only to separate again, the pattern seems haphazard at close quarters and rather wild, like a crazy quilt but with a mission that emerges only if you stand back and regard it from a safe distance. The reader comes to realise that any coherence can only be established at a metaphorical level—and metaphors are the only cohesive device that really hold the entire opus together. Obviously it can be evaluated against a

⁵³ Rushdie, Salman, *Imaginary Homelands*, Penguin, London, 1992, p 403

background of history or religion, each of which has a separate metaphorical system, and a slowly evolving logic—so none of it should be taken lightly, or at face value, as Rushdie himself emphasises:

I do not believe that novels are trivial matters. The ones I care most about are those which attempt radical reformulations of language, form and ideas, those that attempt to do what the word *novel* seems to insist upon: to see the world anew. I am well aware that this can be a hackle-raising, infuriating attempt.⁵⁴

Amid the world-wide outcry against or for the publication of this controversial novel, its literary analysis seems to have been strangely unimportant for many. However, a few reviewers actually did their work even if their opinions of this novel differed widely⁵⁵.

American and English reviewers strongly disagreed about the quality of the book; while it was short-listed for the Booker Prize and many eulogised about it, calling it a veritable 'masterpiece', others referred to it as unreadable or at least very difficult to read. Some regarded it as entirely superfluous, others as a wonderful story full of parables, dreams and allegories from the Q'uran, a story about good and evil. A debate ensued as to the exact literary genre of this novel—is it surrealist, magical realism, or something else entirely? Rushdie (1992) defended his choice of form thus:

My work [...] has made it essential for me to confront the issue of religious faith. Even the form of my writing was affected. If one is to attempt honestly to describe reality as it is experienced by religious people, for whom God is no symbol but an everyday fact, then the conventions of what is called realism are quite inadequate. The rationalism of that form comes to seem like a judgement upon, an invalidation of, the religious faith of the characters being described. A form must be created which allows the miraculous and the mundane to co-exist on the same level—as the same order of event. I found this to be essential even though I am not, myself, a religious man. ("In God We Trust", *Imaginary Homelands* 1992: 376)

⁵⁴ Rushdie, Salman, *Imaginary Homelands*, Penguin, London, 1992, p 393

⁵⁵ In her master's thesis "*Zwischen Mythos Indien und den Satanischen Versen*" (2002), Sandra Vlasta provides a very good summary of the press reactions especially in the German and Anglo-American worlds.

The Satanic Verses has been compared to James Joyce's *Ulysses*—the reader is said to be equally confused after reading it—and Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, which is equally difficult to retell. Others have likened Rushdie's style to that of Günter Grass, who actually is a very good friend and staunch supporter of Salman Rushdie's. Grass' opus *Unkenrufe* even incorporates a character mindful of Rushdie himself, in the shape of a highly successful, shrewd businessman operating in eastern Germany, a man of Indian origin. Some reviewers closely inspect the title, which refers to the passages originally added to the Q'uran by Muhammad to include three pre-Islamic deities into the faith. Later these verses are taken out of the Holy Book again as they had been "whispered into the Prophet's ear by the devil" himself.

Others have written about the numerous literary allusions contained in the book—from *Il Principe* via *Othello* to *Der Steppenwolf* and *Finnegan's Wake*—and liken Rushdie to authors such as García Márquez, Pynchon, Calvino, Gore Vidal or Pirandello (cf. Vlasta 2002: 74). Christian Seiler, writing for the *Weltwoche*, accuses Rushdie of borrowing from a wild miscellany of sources, "from Jorge Luis Borges and Woody Allen, [...] Klaus Maria Brandauer, the Doors, Walt Disney, Henry James, W H Hudson, Bob Dylan, and Shakespeare" (cf. Vlasta 2002: 75). Many talk of Rushdie's puns and funny wordplays, from Attallah over Alleluia Cone to Whisky Sisodia, the stuttering producer, while some criticise the wealth of disparate voices and abundant narratives, and the fact that you could open the novel on any page and start reading (ibid.). The *Zeit* critic attacks Rushdie's self-appointed role as auctorial narrator who is way above and beyond the meanderings of his story. Rushdie is holding the strings in his hands and letting his puppets dance to his tune, and many of his moves stay inscrutable to his readers, such as the function of pilgrim Ayesha (cf. Vlasta 2002: 77) I beg to differ from this point of view—the prophetess Ayesha, originally Mohammad's favourite wife, fulfils the role of female religious leader, a kind of female Moses, which is a species that is very scarce in the Islamic faith and society and as such essential for Rushdie's view of women, who strongly disagrees with Islam's treatment of them and seems to put forward a feminist revision of

this religion (cf. Sanga 2001: 115). This he describes in more detail in his novel *Shame*:

I had thought, before I began, that what I had on my hands was an almost exclusively masculine tale, a saga of sexual rivalry, ambition, power, patronage, betrayal, death, revenge. But the women seem to have taken over; they marched in from the peripheries of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies, histories and comedies, obliging me to couch my narrative in all manner of sinuous complexities, to see my 'male' plot refracted, so to speak, through the prisms of its reverse and 'female' side. It occurs to me that the women knew precisely what they were up to—that their stories explain, and even subsume, the men's. Repression is a seamless garment. [...] *If you hold down one thing you hold down the adjoining*. In the end, though, it all blows up in your face.⁵⁶

In his essay "One Thousand Days in a Balloon" (*Imaginary Homelands* 1992: 437), Rushdie deplores the fact that "actually Existing Islam has failed to create a free society anywhere on Earth, and it wasn't about to let me, of all people, argue in favour of one. Suddenly I was (metaphorically) among people whose social attitudes I'd fought all my life—for example, their attitude about women [...]".

Purportedly, the original Ayesha led a violent military campaign against the Prophet's son-in-law, which for male Muslims was reason enough to subdue women and keep them out of public and political life.

3.3. Main types of metaphor used by Rushdie

In one sense words are our masters,
or communication would be impossible.
In another we are the masters;
otherwise there could be no poetry.⁵⁷

3.3.1. In the beginning was the word

It seems to be no accident that many of the world's religious scriptures assert that the universe was created by a word. Additionally, word magic was the

⁵⁶ *Shame* p 173

⁵⁷ Roger W. Holmes, "The Philosopher's Alice in Wonderland", *Antioch Review*, Summer 1959, in: *The Annotated Alice*, [1960] 2000: 227)

original magic, for the naming of things and processes is the first step in gaining power over them. Even if the science of words is relatively young, the magic of words seems to have existed as long as humankind. As language has evolved in thousands of linguistic communities throughout the world, many different cultures have developed special expressions to describe and enhance the power of words (cf. Rheingold 2000: 46). In a sense, we are all magicians—the more we know about words, and how to use them, the more power we have over ourselves and our fellow ‘word magicians’, and the more options our lives offer us. In a higher sense, though, there are word magicians who are far superior to their fellows—and Salman Rushdie is such a one. His word power creates a wealth of new images and realities in his reader’s mind, and metaphor is one of the most powerful tools at this particular poet’s disposal.

From the experimentalist point of view as put forth by Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 235), metaphor is a matter of imaginative rationality, and therefore novel metaphors create new understandings and, thus, realities. This especially applies to poetic metaphor, where new conceptual metaphors are created using the medium of language. Rushdie is a perfect example of a creator of new metaphors. Not only does he coin new phrases, combining both high-brow and colloquial British English with Urdu and Bombay vernacular, he also evokes completely new images through the powerful use of new gestalts, thus creating new realities in his work. Especially, though, he shows his superior linguistic ability in the “marshalling of already existing forms of metaphoric thought to form new extensions and combinations of old metaphorical mappings” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 267). A past master of his craft, he uses conventional conceptual metaphors as the bases of many an allegory. His main argument for using this particular literary form (about the exact nature of which the literary world disagreed fundamentally, calling it anything from magical realism to surrealism) has been stated above.

The conceptual system that structures cultures and religions is basically metaphorical in nature, while symbolic metonymies serve as crucial links between our everyday experience and the coherent metaphorical systems underlying religions and cultures. Thus, and due to the fact that they are

grounded in our physical experience, such metonymies provide an essential tool for understanding religious and cultural concepts (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 40).

According to Crystal (1995: 403), religious language has always been a “fruitful source of rule-breaking”, and “those who believe in God are continually trying to say what cannot be said”. As they attempt to describe through language something that is beyond words, they need to bend it, thus creating a special language of religion that is full of metaphor (in fact, no way could we talk about faith without this tool). Metaphors and paradoxes can be found throughout the tradition of Christianity. Crystal (ibid.) quotes John Donne, who concluded his “Divine Meditations” (XIV) with a series of striking paradoxes:

Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I,
Except you’ enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.

Some words or phrases would seem meaningless in everyday life but acquire a new meaning through their religious context. Crystal (ibid.) makes an interesting remark about the fact that “figurative language does not stay fresh forever, and the metaphors of traditional religious expression need to be regularly refurbished, if its message is to stay relevant, meaningful and alive”, and states that the devising of new ways of talking about God and His creation usually gives rise to controversy. Rushdie, who has coined many a new religious phrase and conjured up new images of God and His angels, is a prime example of this process. Obviously, conservative forces object to any changes and therefore strive to stem this flowing tide of newness, but it cannot really be stopped; spiritual renewal from the bottom rarely can. This new language is found chiefly in new collocations, i.e. new juxtapositions of lexical items which suggest ways of talking, and thus of thinking, about God that relate more meaningfully to present-day life. Crystal (1995: 403) sees the reason for these processes in either fresh intellectual reflection or poetic inspiration, or else in a combination of the two—and Salman Rushdie seems to incorporate both in his work, and especially so in *The Satanic Verses*.

3.3.2 Migration

As already hinted at above, migration is a form of hybridity that is inescapable, inevitable in today's multicultural societies, and for Rushdie the migrant seems to have become an aesthetic figure. Migration is a displacement or disruption that affects both a person's language and, thus, identity. Sanga (2001: 117) highlights the hyphen—as in Indo-British, Anglo-Irish etc.—and its role in complicating the migrant's identity, but also its power to create an interstitial space, a space-between, which is uniquely the migrant's and constitutes something entirely new and unspoiled. The idea of nation is abandoned in favour of new alternatives, thus opening a generative capacity which takes us beyond mere national boundaries, beyond the idea of home and belonging, even beyond the idea of family.

Both Gibreel and Saladin have left their families in order to find a new identity abroad, and the latter even tries to metamorphose into a 'good and proper Englishman' by marrying a white British woman from a 'posh' family; instead, this act of self-denial turns him into a goatish demon. Neither of them finds what he is looking for but instead they both receive something they do not want. In this, they seem to share the fate of any immigrant faced with the same sort of choices that are not choices at all. In neither country do they have a real home—England regards them as inferior, as usurpers, while in India they have become the other, members of a different society. For them, the border seems to have become "the only reliable consistent home" as, just like their spiritual father, the author, they "can never settle fully on either side" (Sanga 2001: 17). Rushdie tries to expand this border and to call for a new conceptualisation of history from a postcolonial perspective. Though the migrant is often marginalised, his position has a lot to be said for—ideally, the migrant is "free of the shackles of nationalism" (Rushdie 1992: 124) and therefore free to forge new, imaginative relationships with people, ideas and memories instead of places. As the two protagonists topple from the sky, they metamorphose into two opposites—Gibreel turns into an archangel while Saladin changes into Satan—and throughout the tale they seem to operate as a dialectic combination, sometimes even blurring the boundaries between their self and the respective other: "Gibreelsaladin

Farishtachamcha”—an instance of interchangeable or alternative identities. Even Mahound, as Rushdie has renamed Mohammad the prophet, fails to distinguish between the two, so closely are they related to one another. East and West intermingle, good and evil become indistinguishable.

Such a duality of possibilities also exists within one and the same person, however, which is exemplified in the figures of both Gibreel and Chamcha themselves; the voice-over artist has so many voices that he seems to have lost his very own, original one, while the actor impersonates deities and loses his own identity to become an archangel. This idea of multiple selves seems central to the entire plot of this novel. Especially Chamcha strives to fit into the new community, to assimilate and establish himself as a true Englishman, and thus almost loses his Indian self. He cannot feel at home in either country: England rejects him and India has abandoned him; he cannot stay, but neither can he return. The severity of this conflict can only turn the immigrant into a demon, a monster, and Chamcha is further alienated and marginalised.

3.3.3 Hybridity

Rushdie calls the process of hybridisation “the novel’s most crucial dynamic means” and stresses that “its ideas derive from many sources other than the Islamic ones” (1992: 403). Indeed, Indian culture has thrived on the multiplicity of religions and classes, of different languages and peoples, resulting in a highly pluralistic, and hybrid, microcosm. Hybridity can be defined as the process of fusing together different genders, nationalities, religions, ethnicities and classes, all of which make up modern-day society. Therefore, we can regard hybridity as a kind of result of migration and translation, a result that does away with any notion of unity and purity and thus challenges our view of the world. In Rushdie’s work, this process is mirrored in several ways, through his choice of genre—a wild mixture of different literary genres ranging from oral Indian narratives to the Western novel and from surrealism to realism—and his numerous intertwined stories, which first strike us as so many red herrings thrown in the way of our

understanding before they gradually emerge as subplots that actually have a bearing upon the case, even if their contexts remain contradictory to the main plot. It is, as Rushdie himself has put it, “a little of this and a little of that...”, an impure form that invokes newness as an integral metaphor of all his works, and especially so in *The Satanic Verses*. The plot of *The Satanic Verses* oscillates between two countries, India and England, and both cultures are fused, especially in the figure of Saladin. Although Chamcha tries to reject his own background he acquires a hybrid identity, neither fully English nor fully Indian but rather incorporating both, and finally succeeds, while Gibreel, his alter ego, fails to embrace such hybridity and falters in the end.

By deploying this hybridity, Rushdie seems to resist not only the predominance of English culture but also the intolerance of most ideologies inherent in his own culture. A new image of the world emerges from this overlapping of Eastern and Western discourses, subversive and full of strength. This is also exemplified in the great variety of different registers and genres (including that of the film, both Eastern and Western, of comics, documentaries and popular TV series) scattered throughout the entire work. Sanga (2001: 20) has also noted on the deployment of film terminology and cinematic techniques such as montage, collage, fade-in and fade-out, cuts, close-ups and wide angle shots.

History is fallible and every person is a migrant in time, as the past can never be recreated. This notion of fragmentation is central to Rushdie's fiction and emphasises the essentially personal process of piecing together the inconsistencies in order to establish our (sometimes dual) identity. By including absurdity and magic into this process, Rushdie shows that no historical account can render an accurate tale of what is true. However, the narrative relies upon the authority of reality, despite its fusion with the unreal; in his novel *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie says that “reality can have metaphorical content, that does not make it less real” (1995: 282).

3.3.4 Translation

Translation here must be regarded as more than just a linguistic process. For Rushdie, it also means transgression and transformation, of people, situations and circumstances. This he highlights by transforming English into something new, mingling Shakespearean phrase with Urdu expressions and Bombay vernacular, which often puts the 'plain' English reader at a disadvantage. Indeed, Rushdie's prose seems to privilege the Indian reader, even though he writes in the oppressor's language, that is, English. There is a constant condensing and displacement of meanings, which sometimes renders a clear-cut reading of the novel difficult (if not downright impossible, as some have claimed). In this sense, translation seems to be connected to metaphor as it also involves transformation and change. In *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie seems to re-invent English by adding to it, by Indianising it, so to speak, by "chutnifying the Queen's English", as some have put it (cf. Sanga 2001: 64) and thus shaking off the shackles of colonialism. In a way, English had also become the language of the former British colonies, and therefore an integral part of the latter's culture—a hybrid culture, if you like, based on a complex process of translation and transformation. Rushdie seems to resist the hegemony of the English language by nativising and personalising it according to his own rules; places and characters are made to represent people, the language itself parallels post-colonialism, and what is real becomes fictional, and vice versa. Being 'borne across', translated and metaphorised, obviously opens up new vistas for the migrant between cultures; rather than having to give up his original roots, he has a surfeit of rules, and he is faced with a variety of choices. A decision needs to be made.

Translation is the creation of something new, a dialectic birth of hitherto unknown concepts and freedoms, and as such utterly desirable. Thus, it ties in with the above-mentioned process of reclamation as for instance when Saladin Chamcha is transformed into a "goatish, horned and hoofy demon" and he and other migrants are "demonised by their 'host culture's' attitude to them": "They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct" (Rushdie 1992: 402). So, just as migrants do not become devils merely because others call them thus, the book title does not mean

that the entire Q'uran was written or inspired by the devil incarnate. However, metaphors are instruments of power, as we would do well to remember, admonishes Sanga, focussing especially on the colonial metaphors of British imperialism and the way such metaphors were disseminated synonymously throughout all the former British colonies (cf. Sanga 2001: 2). According to her, this “practice of homogenising diverse cultures by representing them through the same system of metaphors was in a effect a way in which the British Empire could deal with alterity and difference” (ibid.). Postcolonial literature, by contrast, attempts to reshape these firmly entrenched metaphors of British colonialism, thus creating something entirely new. In Rushdie’s novels, this is done through absorbing real historical events and elaborating them in a fictional way. Such eclecticism is intended to “unmask the colonial intonations and begin to change the metaphors we live by” (Sanga 2001: 4).

Schneider (1999) has established a connection between Freud’s work *Das Unheimliche* and our conception of such monsters, albeit cinematic ones, calling them a “reconfirmation in reality of previously surmounted beliefs”⁵⁸ Therefore, “horror promotes emotional catharsis in audiences; like fantasy, it offers viewers an escape from the tedium of everyday life; like comedy, it provides a relatively safe (because relatively disguised/distorted) forum for the expression of socio-cultural fears”. For Schneider, monsters are the “metaphorical embodiments of paradigmatic uncanny narratives”, whose role it is to “reconfirm previously surmounted beliefs by their very presence” (ibid.).

Saladin Chamcha is turned into a two-horned beast, with devil’s hooves and gigantic genitals, again focussing the reader’s attention on the satanic theme pervading the entire novel.

⁵⁸ <http://www.othervoices.org/1.3/sschneider/monsters.html>

3.3.5 Religious metaphor and blasphemy

Pleasechu meechu . . . hopeyu guessma nayym
(*Sympathy for the Devil*⁵⁹)

Perhaps it is possible to uncover an “interstitial” space
in the dialectic between fundamentalism and
Western liberalism from where we can begin to formulate
new questions about the nature of blasphemy.⁶⁰

Obviously, this type of metaphor is central to the book. The phrase “satanic verses” occurs several times throughout and is used in various contexts. In a way, the entire book can be regarded as metaphorical, maybe in a literary rather than in a linguistic sense—although even this distinction becomes blurred.

Blasphemy operates at various levels in *The Satanic Verses*. It could be described as the alternate rendering of that which is considered sacred and immutable, as a result of the commingling of migration and translation into something new and possibly hybrid. Sometimes, it sheds light on that which is best left unsaid and combines the profane with the godly in a single breath. As Sanga has put it, blasphemy seems to be “the act of saying the unsayable and [...] thinking the unthinkable” (Sanga 2001: 108). Or, in Levy’s (1995: 557) words, “one person’s free speech [is] another’s blasphemy” if the laws intended to prevent offences to certain religious groups curb its dissenter’s rights to the freedom of speech. In effect, the definition of religion has always seemed to pose an insuperable problem for any laws on blasphemy. In *The Satanic Verses* himself, Baal, the dissenter, utters a statement which seems to reflect Rushdie’s own stance: “Where there is no belief, there is no blasphemy” (TSV 380).

Rushdie depicts the twelve whores as the Prophet’s wives, renames the Holy City of Mecca into Jahilia (which, in Arabic, means ‘ignorance’) and

⁵⁹ Song by the Rolling Stones, from their album *Beggars Banquet*, phonetic rendering of Mick Jagger’s refrain, “Pleased to meet you...hope you guess my name”. These lyrics are one of the leitmotifs used by Rushdie throughout the novel *The Satanic Verses*.

⁶⁰ Sanga, Jaina, *Salman Rushdie’s Postcolonial Metaphors*, Connecticut, 2001, p 129.

Mohammad himself into Mahound (an epithet employed by Islam-hating Christians in medieval times to epitomise Mohammed as a false prophet, or even the devil's agent), thereby casting doubt upon the inclusion and later exclusion of three Islamic divinities, and fictionally reworks certain parts of the Q'uran—all distinctive acts of blasphemy according to Islamic faith, even more so as several instances uncover its inherent inconsistencies and ambiguities. Levy (1995: 559) quotes Rushdie's interview with an Indian journal, where he said that no subjects were off-limits, including God and the prophets, and that, even if people got 'upset' by the irreverence of his book, he had felt the need to write about religion and revelation from his own, secular, point of view. Rushdie seems to apply Western standards to the construction of the Q'uran, which means 'recitation', i.e., of God to the Prophet, and this in itself is considered a heresy, and a heinous crime. Rushdie's tone, at times, ventures into the flippant, even satirical, providing and retracting information in the same breath, and thus violates the sacredness of his quarry even more. The fact that Mahound impersonates the Prophet has angered the latter's devout followers even further (even though the Prophet's name is not mentioned a single time throughout the entire book), and it remains unclear whether the repudiation of the questionable verses he originally heard from Gibreel was caused by the latter or even by Mahound himself:

"It was the devil," he says aloud to the empty air, making it true by giving it voice... This is what he has heard in his listening, that he has been tricked, that the Devil came to him in the guise of the archangel, so that the verses he memorized, the ones he recited in the poetry tent, were not the real thing but its diabolic opposite, not godly but satanic. (TSV p 123)

Repeatedly, Salman Rushdie has stressed that he intended no blasphemy when writing his controversial book. Rather, he sought to highlight the juxtaposition of good and evil throughout the novel. One such opposition are the brothel and the harem, pictured as antithetical worlds, and both are intended for sequestering women, either for their own men or for strangers. The fact that the twelve whores assume the names of the Prophet's wives was not intended as an insult to the faith: "The two struggling worlds, pure

and impure, are juxtaposed by making them echoes of one another; and, finally, the pure eradicates the impure" (In Good Faith, *Imaginary Homelands* 1992: 401). This way, again something new is created, and it embodies that which the migrant is faced with on a day-to-day basis. Traditional Islamic values are shattered by their confrontation with Western liberalism, and the migrant is forced to make a choice—one way or another. However, Rushdie seems to be saying that by creating a new identity for himself, the migrant is taking on the role of God (TSV p 49)—and, to all intents and purposes, this is blasphemy.

Much of the novel *The Satanic Verses* is based on Islamic tradition, and on the (divine? archangelic?) revelations of Mohammad the Prophet, written down into the Q'uran, Islam's holy scripture, which is considered the absolute and undiluted, ergo divine, truth by Muslim fundamentalists.

3.3.6 Globalisation

Sanga (2001: 131) has included this issue in her treatise of Rushdie's postcolonial metaphors, and even goes so far as to refer to the author himself as the metaphor of globalism, saying that, in his fiction, worlds that cannot normally be reconciled collide, thus exposing the limitations of art as such and highlighting the fallacy of history. Globalisation seems to have replaced imperialism, the only difference, at least according to Tomlinson (1991: 175, quoted in Sanga 2001: 140), lying in the fact that "it is a far less coherent or culturally directed process..."

Other than that, I have found it very difficult to discover a useful definition of the term "globalisation" in Sanga's article, and mostly it was intended to aid in the analysis of another novel of Rushdie's, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, anyway, so I shall put this metaphor 'on the backburner', to use an American metaphor, and continue with other, more interesting and informative issues.

3.3.7 Dreams

Dreaming is our gift; it may also be our tragic flaw.⁶¹

In this novel, dreams and visions play a central part. In a way, these dreams of Gibreel Farishta's hold the book together; they provide the subplots, the 'veil of illusion'. For Rushdie, dreaming is very important as a definition of our humanity:

The dream is part of our very essence. Given the gift of self-consciousness, we can dream versions of ourselves, new selves for old. Waking as well as sleeping, our response to the world is essentially imaginative: that is, picture-making. We live in our pictures, our ideas. I mean this literally. We first construct pictures of the world and then we step inside the frames. We come to equate the pictures with the world, so that, in certain circumstances, we will even go to war because we find someone else's picture less pleasing than our own.⁶²

By superimposing these dream sequences, or hallucinations, upon the more realistic account of events, Rushdie questions the reliability of our own senses as well as that of historical records and religious writings. Gibreel's identity seems to crack up, to fall apart irreparably, and thus unmasks its multiplicity.

3.3. 8 Names

Rushdie has given many of his protagonists Indian names that represent an allegory of their respective character. Chamcha, for instance, literally means 'spoon' in Urdu, and this is why Gibreel often dubs him 'Spoonoo' (which Saladin doesn't particularly like). However, a chamcha is also a sycophant, which could describe the sycophantic Indian servants of British Sahibs, and in our case, the sycophantic way in which Saladin is trying to 'suck up' to the English in order to become one of them. His profession as a voice-over artist yields further evidence of his sycophantic nature; although his skin is dark his English accent is faultless, and people need not look at him when he speaks

⁶¹ Rushdie 1992: 378

⁶² Ibid.

(as his outspoken lover Zeeny Vakil points out to him). So, as Sanga (2001: 66) emphasises, to miss the idiosyncratic meaning of Saladin Chamcha's name is to miss "one of the most crucial points in the novel". Gibreel is his other self, and his name in Arabic means 'Gabriel', while Farishta is the Urdu and Persian word for 'angel'. Just like the archangel he purports to be, he constructs his own version of Islam.

Giving the twelve prostitutes in the most famous Jahilian brothel the names of Mohammad's wives is another instance of the referential power of naming; Rushdie earned heavy criticism for this linguistic feat, even though he later stressed that it was just intended to show that the good always defeats the evil—it is no coincidence that ultimately, the whores forget their own names.

This motif of dual identity and disruption pervades the entire opus; Baal the poet is paired with the writer and also with Mahound, the prophet. Salman the Persian, a scribe, is both a figure in the novel and the author himself, and at times we cannot be sure (not even Mahound can distinguish between them) whether Gibreel Farishta is human, an angel, or the devil incarnate. The concepts of UP and DOWN are blurred, they are resolved into a 'space between', where difference becomes sameness and vice versa, it no longer matters.

As Sanga (2001) repeatedly points out, any distinction between the said metaphors in Rushdie's fiction can only be artificial as they are all inextricably intertwined and involve each other in any discussion about a single one of them.

3.3.9 Death

Those who listen to the Devil's verses,
spoken in the Devil's tongue,
will go to the Devil in the end
(TSV p 484)

The novel begins and ends with allusions to death: "To be born again, first you have to die" (TSV p 3) and "If the old refused to die, the new could not be

born" (TSV p 547). Other passages echo this fundamental statement, such as the one referring to Pamela Chamcha's lucky escape from an untimely end in a car crash (TSV p 182), only to die later in a fire laid by herself, and the entire book seems to reflect the phoenix metaphor in its underlying truth. Inseparably linked to the notion of death, however, is that of falling. The concept of verticality can be followed from the very beginning of the novel, where Gibreel and Chamcha fall from the skies and undergo certain metamorphoses, but survive. Others are less lucky: Rekha Merchant, Gibreel's ex-lover in Bombay, meets her end by leaping from a high-rise after hurling her children to the concrete below (even if her spectre, floating about on a flying rug, continues to haunt Gibreel throughout the book); Pamela Chamcha's parents had committed suicide by a similar method; and even Alleluia Cone, the mountaineer who is accustomed to heights, even revels in them, ironically meets her fate by being pushed (by Gibreel) from the roof of a sky-scraper. Thus, the metaphor UP IS GOOD seems to be inverted in this novel as the protagonists are always the danger of falling to their death.

3.4. *Die Satanischen Verse*--metaphor translated

We are caught in metaphors. They transfigure us
and reveal the meaning of our lives.
Salman Rushdie⁶³

3.4.1 General remarks

When I first read Rushdie (I think I started with *Shame*) I was fascinated by the rich, colourful and, for me, alien language, the like of which I had never come across before. Later, when I started working as a translator and read other novels by Salman Rushdie, I always thought that his writing must be utterly untranslatable—it is so specifically Anglo-Indian, so 'Hinglish', so how on earth could one transfer this into another language? At this point, Umberto Eco (2003: 74) gave me some food for thought: Talking about the "rewriting that pushes the limits of the original creation" he quotes Humboldt, who said that translating meant not only leading the reader to an understanding of the

⁶³ "The Firebird's Nest", *The New Yorker* (23 June 1997), quoted by J. Sanga 2001: 1

language and culture of the original but also enriching one's own language—as Rushdie has done in all his works. He has created something entirely new, so why shouldn't something equally new be created in German (or any other language *The Satanic Verses* has been translated into)? (Interestingly, both Eco and Humboldt talk about James Joyce's and Günter Grass's work, to which Rushdie's has been frequently likened.) The German version of *The Satanic Verses* finally appeared in October 1989, after much ado, games of journalistic hide-and-seek and political razzmatazz.

First and foremost, a translator is a reader who interprets the respective piece of literature in a unique way, and therefore his work is coloured by his own personality. Reception, interpretation, and translation are inseparable, and especially when dealing with an altogether different culture a translator is easily overtaxed. The dialectics of translation is often underestimated, and most criticism either praises or criticises, without providing better alternatives.

The German version of *The Satanic Verses*, with its 707 pages, is significantly thicker than the 547 pages of the English original—which may surprise Vlasta (2002: 189) but not the seasoned English-German translator who knows that translations from English into German usually gain at least 10% volume (a fact that sometimes perturbs the clients). Vlasta (ibid.) criticises the slightly pompous style of alleged translator Gisela Stege (who preferred to remain anonymous due to the fatwa that was extended to other persons involved in the promotion and distribution of *The Satanic Verses*), saying that it is old-fashioned, exalted, and inaccurate while conceding that the translator must have been under extreme time pressure in view of the political situation of the time, and therefore sacrificed stylistic subtlety to content. Moreover, there are several inconsistencies in the method the translator deployed in the course of her work. For instance, the first name originally assigned to Farishta is Gibreel, which the translator changed into Gibriel. One fails to see why she has done so, except maybe for phonetic reasons (inconsistently, as she should have changed all the other names in a similar way to retain their original sound). The German name would have been Gabriel, spelt just like the English counterpart and pronounced similarly, and it evokes religious associations, as the strange form used by Ms Stege

does not (and therefore founders). She has also changed the name of Ayesha (the Prophet's wife, the whore and the butterfly leader) to Aischa, again for no apparent reason.

I tend to agree with Vlasta that it is rather a shame to rush through the translation of such a monumental piece of literature. Still, her arguments seem a bit thin to me, and her comparison of the two versions is far from exhaustive as it was not the main focus of her paper.

An investigation of how the translator of the *The Satanic Verses* has solved the problem of metaphor translation in general, as well as specific cases, with special focus on the types of metaphor mentioned above, yields a number of interesting examples. In order to be able to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of some of the translator's choices, I originally planned to follow the procedure suggested by K. Schmid-Gallistl (1996) in her doctoral thesis, which consists in analysing the ontological and epistemic correspondences of the English and the German versions, respectively, happy to have found a 'scientific lifeline' as intuition, one of the translator's most rewarding tools, seemed to carry too little weight in an academic paper. However, in the course of my research, I have discovered the limitations if not shortcomings of this method as it focuses too strongly on two aspects of metaphoric thought processes, i.e. those of epistemic and the ontological mapping, and disregards other, equally important factors, not least the cultural aspect. The procedure proposed by Schmid-Gallistl moreover struck me as too lengthy and repetitive, artificial even, and therefore quite useless for practical translating.

Much more to the point, and much more helpful for understanding the way metaphorical processing functions, have I found Lakoff and Turner's (1989: 8) definitions of the devices of poetic thought, such as extending, elaborating, questioning, compressing, and personifying metaphors, as already mentioned in chapter 1.1, whereas Steen's checklist for metaphor analysis (in Cameron 1999: 81), again, seems too lengthy and complicated a procedure to be really useful for the evaluation of the translated metaphor, although no doubt it is extremely valuable for analysing systematic metaphor. It seemed to make more sense to focus on various aspects of the respective

passages, and to discuss their shortcomings individually. I shall now provide a number of examples translated from English into German⁶⁴.

3.4.2 Sample translations

All metaphors are capable of misinterpretation
(TSV page 537)

I have chosen some of the metaphors which I consider the most striking and tried to discover their German counterpart in the translated version of the novel *The Satanic Verses*. Naturally, there is no need for a complete analysis of all metaphors deployed here by Salman Rushdie.

Metaphors that refer to blasphemy, God and Satan, the archangel Gabriel, prophets, Mohammad and the Q'uran are part of my analysis, but other metaphorical concepts such as life and death, flying and falling, animals and people, sand and water, cities, colours etc. will also be dealt with in this chapter, always with a view to their translation and translatability.

3.4.2.1 (More or less) Successful translations

Example 1

English version page 531:

“Then all of a sudden Changez Chanchawala [Saladin’s father] left his face; he was still alive but he had gone somewhere else, had turned inwards to look at whatever there was to see [...] *He does not avert his eyes but looks death right in the face.*” (author’s emphasis)

German version page 686:

“Und dann verließ Changez Chanchawala ganz plötzlich sein Gesicht; er lebte noch, aber er war irgendwo anders hingegangen, hatte sich nach innen

⁶⁴ I am, alas, limited to my two ‘mother tongues’ and therefore unable to evaluate the Indian aspects—although some have very obviously been ‘botched’ by the translator even for the laywoman’s eyes.

gekehrt, um, was immer da war, anzuschauen [...] *Er schlägt die Augen nicht nieder, sondern blickt dem Tod direkt ins Gesicht.*”

This container metaphor (THE HUMAN BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE SOUL) has been translated correctly, using German idioms and phrases while still keeping the original image (DEATH IS A PERSON).

Example 2

English version page 547:

“If the old refused to die, the new could not be born.”

German version page 707:

“Wenn das Alte sich weigerte zu sterben, konnte das Neue nicht geboren werden.”

This sentence taken from the end of the narrative is also the beginning of the story, a song sung by Gibreel Farishta while he plunges towards the sea. It implies that phases of one’s life, or attitudes, chances, etc., are like people (personification metaphor, CHANGE IS DEATH or CHANGE IS BIRTH, respectively). The English version incorporates both past and conditional, which the German does not, but that is due to grammatical differences between the languages and must be regarded as one of the inevitable losses we incur through translation.

Example 3

English version page 534:

“An orphaned life, like Muhammad’s, like everyone’s. A life illuminated by a strangely radiant death, which continued to glow, in his mind’s eye, like a sort of magic lamp.”

German version page 691:

“Ein Leben als Waise, wie das Muhammads, wie das aller. Ein Leben, erleuchtet von einem seltsam strahlendem Tod, der vor seinem geistigen Auge wie eine Art Wunderlampe weiterglomm.”

The German version is a literal translation of Rushdie's metaphors of life and death. My claim that original, novel metaphor (or even extended metaphor if we take into account that LIFE IS A PATH that can be illuminated) is the easiest to translate seems to hold true in this case also, even if, in German, it does not have the same onomatopoeic power. One could of course argue that an *orphaned life* could be better translated as *ein verwaistes Leben* although in German it could be understood ambiguously, namely also as an empty life. Possibly, *Waisenleben* would be the most appropriate translation of *an orphaned life*.

Example 4

English version page 314:

“I could have learned him, step by step, climbed him to the very summit. Denied mountains by my weak-boned feet, I'd have looked for the mountain in him: establishing base camp, sussing out routes, negotiating ice-falls, crevasses, overhangs. I'd have assaulted the peak and seen the angels dance. O, but he's dead and at the bottom of the sea.”

German version page 416:

“Ich hätte ihn kennenlernen können, ganz allmählich, hätte ihn bis zum Gipfel besteigen können. Da mir meine schwachen Füße die Berge verweigern, hätte ich den Berg in ihm gesucht: das Basislager aufgeschlagen, Routen geprüft, gefrorene Wasserfälle, Gletscherspalten, Überhänge bezwungen. Ich hätte den Gipfel in Angriff genommen und die Engel tanzen sehen. Aber er ist tot und liegt auf dem Grund des Meeres.”

The metaphor MAN IS A MOUNTAIN, created by Rushdie to reflect Alleluia Cone's profession and applied to her lover Gibreel, has been retained in all its aspects. The most apparent weakness in this passage lies in the verb

besteigen as it has strong, overt sexual connotations in German that are only hinted at in the English original. In addition, Rushdie's use of the verb *to learn* with a human object is non-standard usage (*to learn about* or *to learn to know*) but rather poetic licence. The German verb *kennenlernen* does not have the same physical impact or its erotic overtones.

Example 5

English version page 97:

“‘A poet's work,’ he [Baal the satirist] answers. ‘To name the unnamable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep.’ And if rivers of blood flow from the cuts his verses inflict, then they will nourish him.”

German version page 134:

“‘Die Aufgabe des Dichters’, antwortet er. ‘Das Unnennbare zu benennen, Betrug aufzudecken, Stellung zu beziehen, Auseinandersetzungen in Gang zu bringen, die Welt zu gestalten und sie am Einschlafen zu hindern.’ Und wenn aus den Wunden, die seine Verse reißen, Ströme von Blut fließen, so werden sie ihn nähren.”

Most of the metaphors (VERSES ARE WEAPONS, THE WORLD IS A PERSON etc.) deployed in the original have been successfully transferred into German, apart from the fact that a fraud is a fraudulent person (the criminal) while the German word *Betrug* (the crime) is an abstract noun and a better translation would have been *Betrüger entlarven* (leaving out *zu* in all instances here, as the German infinitive with *zu* expresses purpose). Personally, I would also prefer to translate the verb *shape* with *formen* not *gestalten* (design) as the latter has fewer physical entailments. All the other metaphors, however, retain the original implications as they evoke very similar images in the reader's mind.

Example 6

English version page 288:

“He chose Lucretius over Ovid. The inconstant soul, the mutability of everything, das Ich, every last speck. A being going through life can become so other to himself as to be *another*, discrete, severed from history.”

German version page 383:

“Er entschied sich für Lukrez und gegen Ovid. Die wandelbare Seele, die Veränderlichkeit allen Seins, des Ichs, jedes kleinsten Atoms. Ein Wesen, das durch das Leben geht, kann sich so weit von sich selbst entfernen, daß es ein anderes wird, getrennt, losgelöst von der Geschichte.”

Basically, this translation works quite well, apart from some register incongruence (e.g. *speck* is more *Staubkörnchen* than atom) but the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor has been retained in all its aspects. What must be pointed out, though, is that, for no apparent reason, the German enumeration “die Veränderlichkeit allen Seins, des Ichs, jedes kleinsten Atoms” suddenly contains genitive forms while the English original merely provides a list.

Example 7

English version page 34:

“How had the past (i) bubbled up, in (ii) transmogrified vowels and vocab?”

German version page 52:

“Wie war es möglich, daß die Vergangenheit (i) wieder aufstieg, in Form (ii) gänzlich veränderter Vokale und Vokabeln?”

I have given this particular sentence a lot of thought but it seems to be one of the cases where the metaphor has to be watered down from (i) *bubbling* to mere *rising up* (*aufsteigen*) which merely retains the rising movement but forgoes the metaphor THE MIND IS A LAKE or some such. The bubbles also suggest that we remember the past more in bits and pieces than in a single go, not simultaneously but over a course of time, as it emerges from the murky waters of our memories. If this metaphor proved difficult to transfer, (ii) *transmogrified* must have floored the translator completely. According to dictionary.com, the pseudo-Latin verb ‘to transmogrify’ means “to change in

appearance or form, esp. strangely or grotesquely; [to] transform”⁶⁵, which is not reflected by the German translation as it leaves out the element of the grotesque or bizarre. Still, it does highlight a vast change in Chamcha’s usually so refined English as he seems to be reclaimed by his unmistakable Indian heritage and culture.

Example 8

English version page 180:

“[Pamela] realized that Chamcha was not in love with her at all, but with that (i) voice stinking of Yorkshire pudding and hearts of oak, that (ii) hearty, rubicund voice of (iii) ye olde dream-England which he so desperately wanted to inhabit.”

German version page 241:

“[Pamela wußte], daß Chamcha nicht in sie verliebt war, sondern in diese (i) Stimme, die nach Yorkshirepudding und Eichenkernholz stank, diese (ii) joviale, rosige Stimme des (iii) guten alten Traum-Englands, in dem er so schrecklich gern gelebt hätte.”

Voices play a central part in Saladin Chamcha’s life; being a so-called voice-over artist, he can imitate any voice but the one he most strives for is Pamela Lovelace’s, his former wife’s, refined speech as it so clearly reflects her high social status. She, however, calls it the bane of her life, and violently rejects it because her father, a classical scholar, had passed on The Voice to her but then committed suicide together with his wife, and Pamela could never forgive them for it. Rushdie describes this voice in very colourful terms (e.g. “a voice composed of tweeds, headscarves, summer pudding, hockey-sticks, thatched houses, saddle-soap, house-parties, nuns, family pews, large dogs and philistinism”, page 180) that conjure up a clear image of social class but always adding something derogatory such as the verb *stink*. The translator has solved the difficult task of transferring these attributes into German really

⁶⁵ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/transmogrified>

well, keeping the original metaphor that adds substance to something insubstantial, i.e., Pamela's voice.

3.4.2.2 Less successful translations

Example 1

English version page 35:

“Damn you, India [...] To (i) hell with you, I (ii) escaped your clutches long ago, you won't get your (iii) hooks into me again, you cannot (iv) drag me back.”

German version page 53:

“Verdammtes Indien [...] (i) Hol dich der Teufel, ich bin (ii) deinen Klauen vor langer Zeit (ii) entkommen, (iii) mich kriegst du nicht mehr (iii) in die Finger, dir (iv) geh ich nicht mehr (iv) ins Netz.”

While in the English example all three metaphors used for the country of India—clutches, hooks, drag—are consistent, the German choices simply do not gel: clutches (*Klauen*) do not go with (iii) fingers (*Finger*) and a spider's web (*Netz*), three different images (predator, human, spider, respectively) are evoked here, compared to a single one in the original text, that is, India resembles a hungry beast (+ANIMAL, +PREDATOR, –HUMAN). Here, the conceptual metaphor A COUNTRY IS A PREDATOR is novel, while the linguistic phrases themselves, through cleverly combined by Rushdie, are not.

Suggested alternative:

“Fahr zur Hölle, ich bin deinen Klauen vor langer Zeit entkommen, deine Krallen können mich nicht mehr fassen, du kannst mich nicht zurückzerren.”

Example 2

English version page 525:

“The things one’s memory threw up!”

German version page 679:

“Was die Erinnerung nicht alles hochspülte!”

The metaphor THE MIND IS A CONTAINER is underlined by the pun *to throw up* that plays upon the literal meaning of the phrase and the semi-literal meaning of ‘to vomit’. To *wash up* (as in driftwood on the beach), which would be the translation of *hochspülen*, does not have the same impact.

Suggested alternative:

“Was einem nicht alles im Gedächtnis hochkam!”

Example 3

English version page 520:

“The future, even when it was only a (i) question-shrouded (ii) glimmer, (iii) would not be (iv) eclipsed by the past; even when death moved towards the (v) centre of the stage, life went on fighting for equal rights.”

German version page 672:

“Die Zukunft, auch wenn es⁶⁶ nur ein (i) von Fragen vernebeltes (ii) Schimmern war, (iii) würde nicht von der Vergangenheit (iv) verdunkelt werden; selbst wenn der Tod sich der (v) Bühnenmitte näherte, fuhr das Leben fort, um Gleichberechtigung zu kämpfen.”

The metaphors FUTURE IS LIFE / PAST IS DEATH and FUTURE IS LIGHT / PAST IS DARKNESS may have been retained in the German rendering but they have been watered down. (i) A shroud implicates death; the German word *Nebel*, however, is just a weather-phenomenon, which is far too weak to match the English original. (ii) Glimmer, too, is more than just *Schimmer* (faint glow), and an (iv) eclipse replaces light with darkness, whereas the verb *verdunkeln* merely means to darken, thus losing the stark contrasts

⁶⁶ In German, the noun “Zukunft” is female, therefore the pronoun here should be “sie” not “es”.

used by Rushdie. Moreover, (iii) *would not be eclipsed* can, grammatically speaking, be read in two different ways ('was unwilling to' vs. the conditional 'would not') whereas the German rendering only allows for a single interpretation. Furthermore, the (v) *centre of the stage* is an English idiom from the world of theatre which cannot be compared to simple *Bühnenmitte* in German.

Suggested alternative:

“Die Zukunft, auch als sie nur ein durch Fragen verhülltes Glühen war, würde sich niemals durch das Leichentuch der Vergangenheit verfinstern lassen; auch wenn der Tod mehr und mehr das Rampenlicht suchte, kämpfte das Leben weiterhin um gleiches Recht.“

Example 4

English version page 539:

“Gibreel’s old problem of (i) sulphurous halitosis had evidently (ii) returned (iii) with a vengeance.”

German version page 697:

“Gibrils altes Problem – sein (i) schwefeliger Mundgeruch – war offensichtlich (iii) in alter Frische (ii) wieder aufgetaucht.”

In English, (i) *Mundgeruch* is merely bad breath, whereas *halitosis* is more a medical term that is not as widely known. (ii) *Return* is synonymous with 'to come back' and therefore a metaphor of general horizontal motion; (ii) *auftauchen* means 'to surface' and therefore implies vertical movement in water. To translate the English idiom (iii) *with a vengeance* with (iii) *in alter Frische* (in its old freshness) in the context of halitosis is a rather daring feat, which strikes the reader as rather funny (which was hardly Rushdie’s intention) and surely requires no further explanation.

Suggested alternative:

“Gibreels altes Problem, sein schwefelsaurer Odem, war zurückgekehrt, noch stärker als je zuvor.”

Example 5

English version page 546:

“[...] and about how he [Chamcha] (i) was going to die for his verses, but could not (ii) find it in himself to (iii) call the death sentence unjust.”

German version page 705:

“[...] und er dachte daran, wie er selbst (i) wohl für seine Verse (i) sterben würde, und daß es (ii) ihm nicht möglich war, das Todesurteil ungerecht zu (iii) nennen.”

Apart from the author's autobiographical cynicism, this sentence contains three aspects that have proved difficult for the translator. *Was going to die* implies that Chamcha is absolutely sure about his imminent death; (i) *wohl sterben würde*, by comparison, is far too weak to reflect this certainty. The container metaphor (THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE SOUL) of the English original (ii) *find it in himself* has got lost in the translation, the wording of which is also far too insipid to reflect how Chamcha racked his brain, and probably also plumbed his conscience, only to come up with the same death sentence. Moreover, the verb (iii) *nennen* is not the ‘*mot juste*’ in this context as it has nothing to do with the naming of things but rather with the way he regards the death sentence.

Suggested alternative:

“[...] und er dachte daran, daß er sicher für seine Verse sterben mußte, doch in ihm war nichts, das dieses Todesurteil als ungerecht bezeichnen konnte.”

Example 6

English version page 545:

“Sisodia [...] had finally bumped accidentally into death.”

German version page 705:

“Sisodia [...] [war] zufällig dem Tod über den Weg [gelaufen].”

To *bump into* something or somebody is a widely spread English idiom (although not usually associated with death) that implies contact with something solid, corporeal. The German phrase *über den Weg laufen* also refers to chance meetings but, when combined with death, does not have the same impact as no physical contact is implied by it. The metaphor would be DEATH IS SOLID and in English it is static whereas in German it moves down a path.

Suggested alternative:

“Letztendlich war Sisodia zufällig in den Tod gestolpert.”

Example 7

English version page 432:

“[...] to damage that trust”

German version page 565:

“[...] das Vertrauen zu zerstören”

The German word *zerstören* is much too strong; it would be ‘destroy’ in English, which is not implied in this metaphor. Although the translator has kept the metaphor TRUST IS A THING that can be damaged or destroyed, she has overstepped the line.

Suggested alternatives:

“das Vertrauen zu beschädigen/schmälern”

Example 8

English version page 439:

“O, he [Gibree] was (i) in a high good humour that day, (ii) rubbishing London and the English (iii) with much of his old brio.”

German version page 574

“Oh, er war an jenem Tag (i) in Hochstimmung, (ii) schwafelte (iii) mit nahezu altem Brio über London und die Engländer.”

Whereas (i) has been translated to reflect the original idiom, (ii) is, again, much too weak. *Schwafeln* would be the same as ‘to waffle’, which makes it an inappropriate word in this context. In (iii) the possessive adjective has been left out in the German rendering, and the word *Brio* is not as familiar to the speaker of German as the latter does not have the same musical connotation (‘con brio’ meaning ‘with verve’).

Suggested alternative:

“Oh, er war an jenem Tag in bester Laune, fast so ätzend wie früher zog er mit Wonne über London und die Engländer her.”

Example 9

English version page 437

“[...] and (i) picked their way through (ii) broiling, horizontal (iii) secretarial flesh.”

German version page 572:

“[...] und (i) bahnten sich einen Weg durch (ii) röstendes horizontales (iii) Sekretärinnenfleisch.”

To (i) *pick one's way* implies that one has to step over things (that may be disgusting) whereas *sich einen Weg bahnen* is more of a ploughing movement, which, in this particular case, sends the mind boggling. Although the cooking metaphor of (ii) roasting (iii) meat has been kept in the German translation, it is too literal. What sounds novel in English (even if the metaphor of roasting in the sun is reasonably well-known) in German sounds utterly ridiculous, even faintly nauseating, although the phrase *in der Sonne*

braten is widely spread. *Flesh* would be better translated as *Haut* (skin) as *Fleisch* is more meat than flesh, but I would prefer to leave it out altogether. Translating the English *horizontal* verbatim would imply that the secretaries are ladies of the night, so to speak,

Suggested alternative:

“[...] und suchten vorsichtig einen Weg zwischen bodendeckenden, sonnendurchglühten Sekretärinnen.”

Example 10

English version page 457:

“Wrestling, through his many stories, he [Gibreel] proceeds.”

German version page 597:

“Ringend schreitet er durch seine vielen Geschichten voran.”

Nowadays, the term for the sport of wrestling is never translated into German, as *Ring* sounds rather old-fashioned and does not imply the same degree of tough fighting. Moreover, the German verb *ringen* is transitive and requires a prepositional complement, which is missing here. The metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY applies to both the original sentence and its translation but the latter is clumsy.

Suggested alternative:

“Und er kämpft sich durch seine vielen Geschichten weiter.”

Example 11

English version page 518:

“Fact is, [...] religious fafaith, which (i) encodes the (ii) highest ass ass aspirations of human race, is now, in our cocountry, the servant of (ii) lowest instincts, and gogo God (iii) is the creature of evil.”

German version page 671:

“Tatsache ist, [...] daß der religiöse Glaube, welcher die höchsten(ii) höchsten Ziele der menschlichen Rasse (i) einschließt, in unserem Land zum Didi-Diener der (ii) niedersten Instinkte und Gogo-Gott zum Wesen des Bösen (iii) geworden ist.”

This sentiment is expressed by stuttering producer Whisky Sisodia sitting next to Chancha on the flight to Bombay. Apart from the clever use of Sisodia's linguistic disability, which gets utterly lost in the translation, the sentence incorporates the universal metaphor of (ii) UP IS GOOD and DOWN IS BAD in either language (highest—*höchsten*, lowest—*niedersten*). One may dispute the fact whether aspiration can be translated as *Ziel* (goal), or point out that it should be *niedrigste* not *niederste Instinkte*, the fact remains that the original metaphor has been retained. What has been altered, though, is the difference between state and process: (iii) *is* has been changed to *geworden ist* (has become), which certainly is not part of the original metaphor since it implies a process, i.e., that of change, and not a state. Furthermore, (i) *encode* means that something has been put into words whereas *einschließen* means merely to incorporate, implying that there is more involved.

Suggested alternative:

“Es ist einfach so, daß die Religion, der Gaga-Glaube, der das menschliche Sch Sch Streben nach dem Höchsten ausdrückt, bei uns jetzt der Dldi-Diener der niedrigsten Instinkte ist, und Gogo-Gott ist das Geschöpf des Bösen.”

Example 12

English version page 168

“They describe us [...] That's all. They have the (i) power of description, and we (ii) succumb to the pictures they (iii) construct.”

German version page 226

“Sie beschreiben uns [...] Das ist alles. Sie haben die (i) Macht der Beschreibung, und wir sind den Bildern (ii) unterworfen, die sie sich von uns (iii) machen.”

The metaphor deployed by Rushdie is LANGUAGE IS A WEAPON, as (i) *power* and (ii) *succumb* imply war. As in a situation of war, *they* has no immediate referent but everybody involved knows who ‘they’ are—the others, the enemy. The *power of description* means that the ‘powers that be’ have the power to describe lesser mortals, i.e. the process, while *Macht der Beschreibung*, literally translated into German, has a different deep structure as it refers to the end result, i.e. the product, the person described. The German translation takes this into account but the passive structure (ii) *unterworfen sein* does not match the original. The verb (iii) *construct* is stronger and more physical than the verb *machen*, which simply means ‘make’. Moreover, the author does not mention pictures ‘of us’ (*von uns*) but images in general, which means that the translator has added her own interpretation.

Suggested alternative:

“Sie beschreiben uns [...] Sie haben die Macht des Bezeichnens, und wir unterwerfen uns den von ihnen entworfenen Bildern.”

Example 13

English version page 205

“The exile is a (i) ball hurled high into the air. He (ii) hangs there, (iii) frozen in time, (iv) translated into a (v) photograph; (vi) denied motion, suspended impossibly above his native earth, he awaits the inevitable moment at which the photograph must begin to move, and the earth reclaim its own.

German version page

“Das Exil ist ein (i) Ball, der hoch in die Luft geschleudert wird. Und dort (ii) hängenbleibt: (iii) gefroren in der Zeit (iv) verwandelt in eine (v) Fotografie, eine (vi) aufgehobene Bewegung; in unmöglicher Position über seiner

heimatlichen Erde, wartet er auf den unvermeidlichen Augenblick, wenn die Fotografie sich bewegen und die Erde ihr Eigentum zurückfordern muß.”

This passage especially illustrates the ingenuity of the author and, at the same time, the translator’s shortcomings. Apart from the fact that the English word *exile* here refers to a person (to be gleaned from the personal pronoun *he* at the beginning of the second sentence), while the German word *Exil* is an abstract noun, leaving the pronoun *er* (he) without a referent, and disregarding the punctuation errors of the translator’s, several other aspects must be mentioned. Point (i) fails due to the abstract noun; *he hangs there* is not the same as *hängenbleibt* (gets stuck there) as it is more active and highlights the metaphor EXILE IS IMMOBILITY that is based upon that of TIME IS MOVEMENT. Whereas *frozen in time* is a well-known English idiom, its literal translation into German makes little sense.

Suggested alternative:

“Der Vertriebene ist ein Ball, den man hoch in die Luft schleudert. Dort hängt er dann, wie eingefroren, in einem Photo eingefangen; jeder Bewegungsmöglichkeit beraubt, hängt er, aller Wahrscheinlichkeit zum Trotz, über seiner Heimerde und wartet auf den unvermeidlichen Augenblick, in dem sich das Foto wieder bewegen und die Schwerkraft zu ihrem Recht kommen muß.”

Example 14

English version page 169:

“[...] Chamcha in his utter bewilderment (i) woke and slept as if the two conditions (ii) no longer required to be thought of as opposites, but as (iii) states that flowed into and out of one another to create a kind of (iv) unending delirium of the senses [...]”

German version pages 227/228:

““[...] Chamcha, völlig verwirrt, (i) pendelte zwischen Wachen und Schlafen, als würden diese (ii) beiden Zustände keine Gegensätze mehr bilden,

sondern (iii) ineinander und auseinander fließen in einem (iv) nicht enden wollenden Delirium der Sinne [...]"

The simplicity of the past tense forms (i) *woke* and *slept* leaves no other interpretation than the protagonist doing exactly that, whereas the German verb *pendeln* (to commute, or to swerve to and fro) implies that he moves between two separate, distant entities or places of his own accord. This is then contradicted by the image of two substances flowing into one another (iii), a blurring of the conditions of sleep and consciousness, which however has been retained in the German rendering. Furthermore, the phrase (ii) *required to be thought of* has been changed to simple 'were', which considerably changes the meaning. Maybe, to make up for this loss, the translator has changed *unending* to *nicht enden wollend* (i.e. not wanting to end), and, by implying that A CONDITION IS A PERSON capable of deliberate action, thus adds an element of intentionality that is not expressed by the original.

Suggested alternative:

"Chamcha, in seiner totalen Verwirrung, glitt vom Wachzustand in den Schlaf, als müßten diese beiden Zustände nicht mehr als Gegensätze betrachtet werden, sondern als flößen sie ineinander und auseinander heraus, um ein Delirium der Sinne hervorzubringen, das niemals aufhörte."

Example 15

English version page 425:

"My Chamcha may be no Ancient of Venice, my Allie no smothered Desdemona, Farishta no match for the Moor [...]"

German version page 556:

"Mein Chamcha mag zwar kein Fähnrich von Venedig sein, meine Allie keine eingestaubte Desdemona, Farishta dem Mohren nicht gewachsen [...]"

Rushdie quotes Shakespeare here, drawing an analogy between the latter's characters in *Othello* and his own protagonists, a state of affairs the translator has taken into consideration. Höfele (in Müller 1995:78) points towards the "story's subjection to its powerful pre-text", suggesting that it cannot "escape [...] from the echo-chamber of literary history" (page 79). However, translating the attributive past participle *smothered* with *eingestaubt* (dusty) changes the meaning considerably. Whereas the former is only applied to animate things such as people or maybe animals—it is based upon the faculty of breathing—dust can only collect on the inanimate, the forgotten and unused.

Suggested alternative:

"Mein Chamcha mag kein Fähnrich von Venedig sein, meine Allie keine halberstickte Desdemona, Farishta dem Mohren nicht gewachsen"

Example 16

English version page 299:

"[...] the man's not in your league [...]"

German version page 396:

"[...] der Mann ist nicht in deinem Club [...]"

This well-known idiom based upon the metaphor MEMBERS OF A SOCIAL CLASS ARE A SPORTS TEAM can be translated verbatim (as in (a) below) but not with the word *Club*, which is not the same as *Liga* (league). It can also be transformed into a different metaphor, i.e. SIZE IS STATUS (b), which is often used as the German counterpart of this idiom.

Suggested alternatives:

(a) "[...] der Mann spielt nicht in deiner Liga [...]"

(b) "[...] der Mann ist dir nicht gewachsen [...]"

Example 17

English version page 421:

“The appointed night arrived: a night of dreadful heat.”

German version page 552:

“Die festgelegte Nacht kam: eine Nacht furchtbarer Hitze.”

The euphemism ‘a place of dreadful heat’ directly refers to hell in western (Christian) religion and mythology; therefore, much more than just a sensation of heat is implied in this short but expressive phrase.

Suggested alternative:

“Die besagte Nacht war da: eine Nacht heiß wie die Hölle”

Example 18

English version page 335:

“[...] (i) whatever was left of Rekha flew with (ii) vanguished fury (iii) into the sun.”

German version page 443:

“[...] (i) was von Rekha geblieben war, flog (ii) ohne Zorn (iii) zur Sonne.”

The personification metaphor that implies that fury can be defeated like an opponent in war (FEELINGS ARE PEOPLE) is totally lost in the translation as (ii) *ohne Zorn* simply means ‘without anger’. (iii) *Into the sun* implies death while *zur Sonne* (to the sun) merely states the direction of Rekha Merchant’s, Gibreel’s suicidal ex-lover’s, flight, maybe resembling Icarus’ plight but not directly stating this connection. (i) *Whatever* moreover implies that the narrator is unsure as to whether there is anything left of Rekha Merchant at all, whereas *was* (what) signals certainty to the contrary; merely the amount, the quantity remains in the dark.

Suggested alternative:

“[...] als das, was auch immer von Rekha noch übrig war, in die Sonne flog; ihr Zorn war besiegt.”

Example 19

English version page 180:

“It had been a marriage of (i) crossed purposes, each of them (ii) rushing towards the very thing from which the other (iii) was in flight.”

German version page 241:

“Es war eine Ehe gewesen, in der sich die (i) Ziele kreuzten wie zwei Züge, in der jeder auf das (ii) losraste, wovor der andere (iii) gerade floh.”

This passage contains the metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY or rather RELATIONSHIPS ARE PATHS, in this case two different ones crossing one another. The English expression (i) *crossed purposes* is an idiom and therefore problematic to translate into another language. Eager to retain the metaphor, the translator has added an image, that of trains (*Züge*), which is sometimes necessary, but the outcome strikes me as rather clumsy as in the original, man and wife are the ones rushing into different directions whereas *jeder* refers to the trains (although I suspect the translator has overlooked this fact). Rushing (ii) and flight (iii) have been translated verbatim as *losraste* and *gerade floh*, respectively, faithful to the path metaphor, although in German the former sounds a bit odd (‘rasen’ is usually associated with breakneck speed) while the latter implies that the people involved keep altering their course (*gerade* meaning ‘currently’).

Suggested alternative:

“Es war eine Ehe widersprüchlicher Erwartungen gewesen, in der jeder auf genau das zueilte, wovor der andere flüchtete.“

Example 20

English version page 310:

“A case [...] of cashew and monkey nuts.”

German version page 411:

“Ein Fall [...] von subkontinentaler Unzurechnungsfähigkeit.”

Allie's mother Alicja, a Polish Jew living in London, voices her strong disapproval of her daughter's current lover, Gibreel, stating that the latter is “a case” (page 310) and further on specifying the kind of case, i.e. “a case of cashew and monkey nuts”. Within this context, the pun used by Rushdie here strikes me as especially clever as it combines the idiom ‘to be nuts’ with the ethnic component implied by *monkey* and *cashew*. This is, of course, utterly untranslatable and the translator can only make a feeble effort—but not as tentative as Ms Stege's, whose compromise sounds rather feeble indeed. *Subkontinental* refers to plants growing on the fringes of continental influence⁶⁷ and is therefore much too vague to reflect Alicja's strong statement that almost borders on the racist. The original *nuts* expression addresses the metaphor MAN IS A BEAST as it refers to nut-eating primates, and I have not found an appropriate German alternative, except for the compromise below, which at least incorporates the ethnic dimension, even if it may not be sufficiently derogatory.

Suggested alternative:

“Ein Fall von ethnisch angehauchtem Wahnsinn”

Example 21

English version page 325:

“Mister, I'll (i) cook your goose! I'll (ii) fry your heart and (iii) eat it up on toast!”

German version page 430:

“Mann, ich (i) mach dich fertig! Ich werde (ii) dein Herz braten und (iii) auf Toast essen!”

⁶⁷ “im Randbereich des kontinentalen Einflusses wachsend (von Pflanzen; Bot.)”, in: Duden - *Das große Fremdwörterbuch: Herkunft und Bedeutung der Fremdwörter*. Mannheim, Leipzig, Wien, Zürich: Dudenverlag 2003.

Just like in the Fat Cat cartoon (see foreword), the author uses idioms from the world of cookery which have little to do with anybody's culinary efforts. These (dead) metaphors cannot be translated into German verbatim, but still the translator's choices seem to be not quite appropriate; even if *ich mach dich fertig* (meaning something close to 'I'll let you have it') reflects the meaning of cooking somebody's goose, as the saying goes, it is not consistent with the other phrases. I therefore prefer the translation below.

Suggested alternative:

"Du, ich hau dich in die Pfanne, brate dein Herz und streich's mir auf's Brot!"

Example 22

English version page 241:

"A City Visible But Unseen"

German version page 321:

"Eine Stadt: sichtbar, aber ungeschaut"

Jahilia—"A City Visible But Unseen"—is Rushdie's equivalent of Mecca, the name Jahilia itself refers to a term used by Muslims denoting the period of history prior to the revelation of the Q'uran. It means 'ignorance', or 'barbarism', and today it is a word of contempt meaning "unislamic" (Easterman⁶⁸ 1992:34). The caption *sichtbar, aber ungeschaut* does, however, not strike the same chord as the English rendering. A literal translation would be something like 'eine Stadt, die jeder sehen könnte, die jedoch keiner wahrnimmt' (a city everybody could see but no-one actually perceives). Personally, I would prefer 'die (un)sichtbare Stadt' (i.e. the (in)visible city) or some such, even if the original types of adjectives—the first a proper one, which implies a property, the second a past participle, which implies an agent—would thus be lost.

⁶⁸ Easterman, Daniel. "What is Fundamental to Islam?" in *New Jerusalems: Reflections on Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Rushdie Affair*. London: Grafton, 1992, pp. 29-44

Suggested alternatives:

“Jahilia—die (un)sichtbare Stadt”

“Erkennbar, jedoch nicht offenbar”

“Sichtbar und doch übersehen”

Example 23

English version page 254:

“(i) First light, and the (ii) dawn chorus began, (iii) chattering of road-drills, (iv) chirrup of burglar alarms, (v) trumpeting of wheeled creatures clashing at corners, the (vi) deep whirr of a large olive-green garbage eater, screaming radio-voices from a wooden painter’s cradle (vii) clinging to the upper storey of a Free House, (viii) roar of the great wakening juggernauts rushing awesomely down this long but narrow pathway.”

German version page 337:

“Das (i) erste Licht. Und der (ii) Chor der Morgendämmerung setzte ein: das (iii) Dröhnen von Preßlufthämmern, das (iv) Heulen von Alarmglocken, das (v) Trompeten bereifter Wesen, die an den Kreuzungen aneinandergerieten, das (vi) tiefe Brummen eines großen olivgrünen Müllfressers, kreischende Radiostimmen auf einem hölzernen Malergerüst, das sich an das obere Geschoß einer Gaststätte (vii) schmiegte, das (viii) Brüllen der mächtigen, eben aufgewachten Schwerlastzüge, die furchterregend auf diesem langen, aber schmalen Weg dahineilten.”

The analogy here refers to the way in which the birds (ii) welcome the new day in the (i) early hours of the morning. However, Rushdie uses this image as a parody, comparing birds and other animate creatures with man-made modern contraptions (MACHINES ARE ANIMALS). The onomatopoeic sounds of (iii) *chattering* and (iv) *chirruping* are confined to birds, while (v) *trumpeting* and (viii) *roaring* are sounds emitted by much larger animals, even predators. It would be beside the point to analyse in detail which machine represents which animal and what the exact entailments are; the metaphor basically rests upon the use of ANIMATE FOR INANIMATE, which

is sadly neglected by the translator. The painter's scaffolding is likened to ivy or wine that (vii) clings to a building, whereas *anschniegen* merely means to snuggle up to something or someone, which is not nearly strong enough to reflect the image intended by the author.

Suggested alternative:

“Anbruch des Tages, und der Chor der Morgendämmerung setzte ein: das Schnattern der Preßlufthämmer, das Tschilpen von Alarmanlagen, das Trompeten bereifter Wesen, die beim Abbiegen aneinandergerieten, das tiefe Surren eines olivgrünen Müllschluckers, kreischende Radiostimmen auf einem hölzernen Malergerüst, das sich an das obere Geschoß eines Lokals anklammerte, das Brüllen der mächtigen, erwachenden LKW-Züge, die ehrfurchtgebietend diesen langen, aber schmalen Weg entlangrasten.“

Example 24

English version page 260:

“It’s not just the (i) dentals that go wrong [...] The (ii) fucking plosives scare me stupid. I keep thinking I’ll (iii) spray the old bones on the street again. Age, Chamcha: it’s all humiliations. (iv) You get born, you get (v) beaten up and (vi) bruised all over and finally you (vii) break and they shovel you into an urn.”

German version pages 344/345:

“Es ist nicht bloß das (i) Gebiß, das mir Sorgen macht [...] Ich hab’ eine Wahnsinnsangst vor den (ii) Scheißverschlußlauten. Ich denke andauernd daran, daß ich wieder (iii) hinsegeln werde. Das Alter, Chamcha. Eine einzige Erniedrigung. (iv) Man wird geboren, man wird (v) geschlagen und (vi) getreten, und am Ende (vii) legt man den Löffel weg und wird in eine Urne geschaufelt.”

Mimi Mimouliau, Chamcha’s former working colleague and another highly-gifted voice-over artist, speaks about the foundering of her career after a particularly nasty fall through which she has lost her teeth. This is why she

has trouble pronouncing some sounds such as dentals and plosives—she does not worry about her dentures, as the translator has interpreted the beginning of her soliloquy. Furthermore, the expletive (ii) *fucking* is better translated with ‘verdammten’ (damned) as the German compound has some even more unsavoury connotations. Rushdie has coined the phrase (iii) *to spray the old bones*, obviously referring to Mimi’s fear of losing her precious teeth again, of spitting them out like so much saliva, which does not require physical contact with terra firma, whereas *hinsegeln* (‘to sail down’) does. (iv) *You get born*, nobody asks you for your consent; *man wird geboren* (one is born) is therefore much too general and also loses the personal implication of the pronoun *you*. If you are (v) *beaten up* (one of the few instances where UP is bad), you are more than just given a good hiding; you end up lying on the ground with more or less severe injuries, (vi) *blaue Flecken* (bruises), which are the outward sign of your predicament. The version *geschlagen und getreten* (beaten and kicked) are therefore not strong enough to reflect the author’s intention. Finally, (vii) *den Löffel hinlegen* (to put the spoon aside), an alternative rendering of the German idiom ‘den Löffel abgeben’ (to hand in the spoon, i.e., to kick the bucket), is rather insipid compared to the powerful metaphor of HUMAN IS GLASS (or any other brittle substance that can be broken into pieces and shovelled into an urn), and the metaphor LIFE IS A SHATTERING FORCE also gets lost (a person without a spoon is still too big to fit into an urn).⁶⁹

Suggested alternative:

“Es sind nicht nur die (i) Dentallaute, die nicht funktionieren [...] vor den (ii) verdammten Verschußlauten hab ich die allermeiste Angst. Ich glaube immer, daß ich die (iii) alten Knochen wieder auf der Straße verteile. Das Alter, lieber Chamcha, eine einzige Erniedrigung. (iv) Du kommst ungefragt auf die Welt, du wirst (v) zusammengeschlagen, hast überall (vi) blaue Flecken, und am Ende (vii) zerbrichst du und wirst in eine Urne geschaufelt.”

⁶⁹ This passage is highly reminiscent of the way Karl Moor (in Schiller’s “Die Räuber”) describes the human life cycle...

Example 25

English version page 123:

“He [Mahound] returns to the city [of Jahilia] as quickly as he can, to (i) expunge the (ii) foul verses that (iii) reek of brimstone and sulphur, to (iv) strike them from the record for ever and ever, so that they will (v) survive in just one or two unreliable collections of old traditions and orthodox interpreters will try and unwrite their story [...]

German version page 168:

“So schnell er kann, kehrt er in die Stadt zurück, um die (ii) unreinen Verse (i) auszumerzen, die (iii) nach Schwefel stinken, um sie für alle Ewigkeit (iv) aus den Akten zu streichen, so daß sie nur in ein oder zwei unzuverlässigen Sammlungen alter Überlieferungen (v) überdauern werden, und orthodoxe Exegeten werden darangehen, sie ungeschrieben zu machen.”

After a heavy-going wrestling-match between Gibreel in his archangelic guise and Mahound, the prophet, the latter rushes back to the city of Jahilia to repudiate the verses whispered in his ear by the devil incarnate, convinced that he has been duped by the archangel.

Rushdie uses the attribute (ii) *foul* to describe the verses uttered by the devil, as well as the verb (i) *to expunge* for Mahound's effort to get rid of them. The adjective is commonly associated with bad odours, with decay even, or with very bad behaviour in the figurative sense (see sports language), while the epithet *unrein* (unclean) merely expresses that something is flawed. Although it is used in mostly religious contexts, the strong imagery of decay inherent in the English word gets lost. The German verb *ausmerzen* is used for flaws that need to be put right; it does, however, not allow for the enormity of the blasphemy contained in the verses mentioned. The verb (iii) *to reek* in English refers to both smelling and smoking, a choice which is not available in German; still, smoke is usually associated with a pungent odour, affecting both the olfactory and the visual senses, whereas smells are not usually linked to an image of smoke. To (iv) *strike something from the record* is a

well-known English idiom that does not normally evoke any specific image any longer so the translator's choice of *aus den Akten zu streichen* seems to make sound sense (although maybe the English verb 'to strike' may have stronger connotations than its German counterpart as it is also used for acts of violence). If verses (v) *survive*, they are likened to a living thing whereas *überdauern* merely implies that they stand the test of time, which is more used for inanimate objects. For Rushdie, the Satanic Verses are more than objects; however, he seems to regard them as adversaries of the faithful, as having a life of their own, which is not reflected in the German rendering. Furthermore, it ties in with Mahound's attempt to 'kill' the verses (*expunge*, 'auslöschen') in the first place.

Suggested alternative:

"Er kehrt so schnell er kann, in die Stadt zurück, um die (ii) mephitischen Verse, die (iii) vor Schwefel rauchten, (i) auszulöschen, um sie für alle Ewigkeit (iv) aus den Akten zu streichen, so daß sie nur in ein oder zwei unzuverlässigen Sammlungen alter Überlieferungen (v) überleben werden, und orthodoxe Exegeten werden darangehen, sie ungeschrieben zu machen."

4. Conclusion

A conclusion seems rather difficult to draw from these thoughts. However, I am adamant in my claim that many texts, be they from high-brow literature, children's literature or trash, seem contrived when they are translated from English into German, and can be immediately recognised as translations. When dealing with metaphor (or, indeed, with any other types of language), most translators tend to stick too closely to the original in both the semantic and the pragmatic sense, often ignoring any cultural implications a text may have. This was already brought home to me with a vengeance when I was a child, voraciously reading anything I could get my hands on, and books like the German translation of the *Chronicles of Narnia* by C S Lewis, so popular now, were gibberish to me. From the research I have done in the course of this paper, I can infer that many a botched translation stems from a bad translation of the metaphors involved, which is due to a variety of aspects. Any systematic attempt to apply a given or preset pattern to metaphor translation surely is doomed to failure from the outset as no two passages can ever be compared.

Therefore, any translation of metaphor can only be a compromise, and as such, a better or a worse compromise. A one-to-one rendering, without any loss, has proved impossible, hence the sub-heading 'more or less successful translations' which I chose in chapter 4.2.1 above. Such inevitable loss is due to a number of facts, as my analysis has shown. Some passages fail to evoke the same emotions in the reader; others use words or phrases that are not as common in the target as in the source language or vice versa; still others do not reflect the same register or syntax. In most of the cases, however, it seems that metaphor itself is at the root of the problem: an inappropriate rendering of original metaphor in the target language fundamentally changes the effect intended by the author and thus the way the reader understands and interprets the respective work of literature.

It seems that intuition still remains the most reliable tool at the translator's disposal, even if some intuitive translations fail miserably—see above.

I should like to conclude my thoughts by quoting a passage written by Rushdie himself, a passage which seems to apply most to the author himself in his effort to come to terms with both his migrant background and the reception of his literary work:

The very word metaphor, with its roots in the Greek words for bearing across, describes a sort of migration, the migration of ideas into images. Migrants—borne-across humans—are metaphorical beings in their very essence.

(Imaginary Homelands, page 278).

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Appendix

Abstract (German)

Seit dem Durchbruch der beiden amerikanischen Autoren George Lakoff und Mark Johnson vor mehr als zwei Jahrzehnten erfreut sich die kognitive Metapherntheorie großer Beliebtheit und wissenschaftlicher Akzeptanz, da sie bislang unbekannte Verknüpfungen im menschlichen Bewußtsein aufzeigt. Metaphern sind mehr als bloße Tropen, sie sind essentielle Instrumente des Denkens, und eine Analyse unserer gängigsten Metaphern entlarvt diese als Helfer unseres Zurechtkommens mit Situationen und Vorstellungen, welche wir ansonsten nicht verstehen, geschweige denn akzeptieren könnten – wie zum Beispiel Sterben und Tod. Auch wenn die Existenz einiger universeller metaphorischer Konzepte außer Zweifel steht, so scheinen doch die meisten Metaphern an eine bestimmte Weltanschauung bzw. Kultur gebunden zu sein, was bedeutet, daß eine Übersetzung solcher Metaphern sehr schwierig oder gar unmöglich sein muß. Der umstrittene indischstämmige Autor Salman Rushdie ist ein Meister der Metaphern; seine blumige Sprache verbindet niveauvolles Englisch mit indischer Umgangssprache und schafft auf diese Weise einen einzigartigen Stil, der eigentlich unübersetzbar ist, besonders im Falle seines international bekannten Werks *The Satanic Verses*. Diese Arbeit ist der Versuch, dies anhand einer Vielzahl von Beispielen zu illustrieren und die Schwierigkeiten aufzuzeigen, welche die Übersetzung von Metaphern von einer Sprache in eine andere, bzw. deren Transfer von einer Kultur in eine andere, in sich birgt.

Abstract (English)

Ever since American linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson succeeded in proving the ubiquity of metaphor in our everyday lives, their cognitive theory of metaphor has been thriving among professionals and amateurs alike. Metaphors are much more than mere tropes; they are essential tools of thought, and an analysis of our most common metaphors has shown that we rely upon them to come to terms with situations and concepts otherwise unacceptable to us, such as death or grief. While some metaphoric concepts undoubtedly span more than just one culture and language, most metaphors seem to be culture-specific and therefore difficult, if not downright impossible, to translate, at least not without incurring any kind of loss in the process. Indian-born author Salman Rushdie is a past master of metaphor, and his highly imaginative prose has proved difficult indeed for the translator of *The Satanic Verses*. This paper aims to point towards specific problems one may encounter when endeavouring to translate metaphor from one language to another, or rather when transferring it from one culture to another.

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