YUSUF FRANKO'S CARICATURES UNDER THE CONCEPTUAL BLENDING MAGNIFYING GLASS
Kavramsal Entegrasyon Büyüteci Altında Yusuf Franko'nun Karikatürleri

NIHADA DELIBEGOVIĆ DŽANIĆ

(Assoc. Prof. Dr.), University of Tuzla, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of English Language and Literature, Tuzla / Bosnia and Herzegovina e-mail: nihada.delibegovic@gmail.com, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8241-6338

MIRZA DŽANIĆ

(Assoc. Prof. Dr.), University of Tuzla, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of English Language and Literature, Tuzla / Bosnia and Herzegovina e-mail: dzanicm@gmail.com, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1114-6166

Atıf/Citation

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Nihada DELIBEGOVIĆ DŽANIĆ, Mirza DŽANIĆ

Abstract: The aim of the paper is to show that conceptual blending theory, proposed by Fauconnier and Turner, is equipped with the mechanisms that can explain the construction of the meaning of Yusuf Franko Kusa's political caricatures. These magnificent cartoons reveal the history of late nineteenth-century Pera. The construction of the meaning of political caricatures involves the construction of a blended space which results in an incongruity that is characteristic of humorous blends. Projections from the blend to input spaces highlight the scenarios within inputs, and as a result we view scenarios in the input spaces from a different perspective i.e. in the light of the comic effect created within the emergent structure.

Keywords: Conceptual blending theory, Yusuf Franko Kusa's political caricatures, criticism of society

Öz: Makalenin amacı, Fauconnier ve Turner tarafından önerilen kavramsal entegrasyon teorisinin, Yusuf Franko Kusa'nın politik karikatürlerinin anlamının inşasını açıklayabilecek mekanizmalarla donatıldığını göstermektir. Bu muhteşem karikatürler, on dokuzuncu yüzyıl Pera döneminin tarihini gözler önüne serer. Siyasi karikatürlerin anlamının açıklanması, mizahi karışımların karakteristik özelliği olan uyumsuzlukla sonuçlanan bir entegrasyon alanının yapısını içerir. Entegrasyondan girdi alanlarına yapılan projeksiyonlar, girdiler içindeki senaryoları vurgulamaktadır ve bunun sonucunda girdi alanı senaryoları farklı bir perspektiften, yani ortaya çıkan yapı içinde oluşturulan çizgi roman etkisinin ışığında görüyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kavramsal karışım teorisi, Yusuf Franko Kusa'nın politik karikatürleri, toplum eleştirisi

Introduction

The aim of the paper is to show that conceptual blending theory, proposed by Fauconnier and Turner, is equipped with the mechanisms that can explain the construction of the meaning of Yusuf Franko Kusa's political cartoons. Yusuf Franko Kusa was born in 1855 in Istanbul. He comes from a Lebanese family belonging to the Melkite Greek Catholic Church that moved to Istanbul in the late 18th century. In 1873 he started his career as a junior clerk, a bureaucrat in the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His duties in the Ministry, and life in the center of Istanbul, enabled him to be both a member and an observer of high-society social circles in Pera. Yusuf Franko Kusa drew caricatures depicting Istanbul high society from 1884 to 1896, which means that most of them were created during the period of censorship. Namely, in 1877 Sultan Abdulhamid II banned the production of all caricatures. This ban remained in place until he departed the throne in 1908.This is most probably the reason why Yusuf Franko Kusa's word of cartoons remained unknown to public. Hidden gem, Yusuf Franco's caricature album, was discovered in an antique rug dealer's shop in Istanbul in 1957. The album contains images of the author and witty caricatures that portrayed contemporary scenes of social life and political debates in Pera.

Political cartoons as a distinctive genre, with characteristic features, conventions and discourse aims, have had a long tradition as a means of shaping public opinions. The primary

purpose of political cartoons is to express a political or social commentary through creative, memorable, and often humorous pictorial and verbal representation of aspects of political, cultural and social reality. As Hess and Northrop point out, "[c]artoonists continually translate political abstractions into tangible visual representations".[1]These visual representations of political, social and cultural issues, drawn in pencils and crayons, are far from realistic. Rather, political cartoons often represent fantastic and humorous scenarios in which caricatures of politicians are cast in ludicrous roles and political issues are represented as bizarre. Unrealistic as they may be, cartoons are not intended simply to entertain the viewer. Rather, by posing interpretative riddles before the viewers, composed of pictorial and verbal elements, cartoons offer different points of view and powerfully criticize reality. These interpretative puzzles are never too hard to decipher for the viewers as cartoonists, in order to convey their messages, exploit the viewers' shared knowledge, including their social, historical, and political knowledge.

1. Conceptual blending theory

Theoretical framework for this study is Conceptual blending theory, introduced by Fauconnier and Turner in 1993. It has found its application in accounting for a wide range of phenomena of human thought and action. Conceptual blending is a powerful process which provides "global insight, human-scale understanding and, the new meaning"[2] . Fauconnier and Turner built blending theory on the foundations of Fauconnier's mental space theory.[3] The central idea behind blending as a basic cognitive operation is that it operates over a conceptual integration network, which comprises mental spaces and relations holding between them. "Building an integration network involves setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backward to inputs, recruiting new structure to the inputs or the blend, and running various operations in the blend itself"[4].
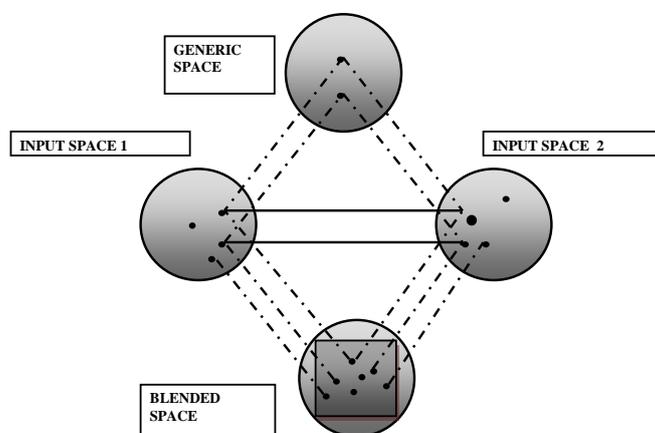

Figure 1. The basic diagram presenting a conceptual integration network[5]

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[1]Hess, Stephen and Sandy Northrop. *American political cartoons: The Evolution of a National Identity, 1754-2010.* New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2011. p. 14.

[2] Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner. *The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*, New York: Basic Books, 2002, p. 92.

[3] Fauconnier defines mental spaces as "very partial assemblies constructed as we think and talk for purposes of local understanding and action" (2007, p. 351).

[4] Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner. *The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*, New York: Basic Books, 2002, p. 44.

[5] Ibid p. 46.

As the diagram shows, a conceptual integration network is composed of at least two input spaces, a generic space, and a blended space, although a single network can be composed of several inputs as well as blended spaces. The generic space captures the shared elements of both inputs and these elements from the generic space are in turn mapped onto the counterpart elements in the input spaces. The structure from the input spaces is projected into the blend, a new mental space. "Blends contain generic structure captured in the generic space but also contain more specific structure, and they can contain structure that is impossible for the inputs, […]"[6]. However, not all elements from the inputs are projected into the blend, which means that projections from the input spaces to the blend are partial. The emergent structure in the blended space is not copied from either input. Rather, the new structure within the blend is generated in three ways, namely through the processes of composition, completion, and elaboration, all of which operate unconsciously.

Behind the possibilities for conceptual blending, there is an entire system of interacting principles. In order to explain one of the products of this system, it is necessary to tackle the entire system. This system rests on conceptual compression, which has an effect on a set of relations strongly influenced by shared social experience and fundamental human neurobiology. These relations are also referred to as vital relations.[7] In addition to vital relations, Fauconnier and Turner[8] propose a set of optimality principles that further clarify the relations within the conceptual integration network.[9] They claim that under these principles, blends function most efficiently, but also point out that satisfying one of these principles does not automatically involve satisfying the other ones. Coulson and Oakley[10] suggest that these principles limit the spectrum of possible blending analyses and make the conceptual integration theory less arbitrary.

"Blending can be detected in everyday language, idioms, creative thought in mathematics, evolution of socio-cultural models, jokes, advertising, and other aspects of linguistic and nonlinguistic behavior"[11]. In that sense, conceptual integration theory has emerged as a powerful theory that can account for a wide variety of linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena[12]. Therefore, it is not surprising that conceptual integration theory has found its application in the study of political cartoons.

2. Cognitive-linguistic analysis of selected Yusuf Franko Kusa's caricatures

In this section we will analyses elected caricatures from Yusuf Franko Kusa's collection and peek in the political and social life of Pera at that time. It is believed that the best way to understand certain historical period is to analyze different forms of humor that people at that time appreciated. We believe that cognitive-linguistic analysis of Yusuf Franko Kusa' caricatures will reveal certain aspects of life in Pera that were covered with the dust of history just like the forgotten album in the rug dealer's shop.

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[6] Ibid p. 47.

[7] Fauconnier and Turner (2002) distinguish the following vital relations: Change, Identity, Time, Space, Cause – Effect, Part – Whole, Representation, Role, Analogy, Disanalogy: Property, Similarity, Category, Intentionality and Uniqueness.

[8] Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, Conceptual integration networks. *Cognitive Science, 22*(2), (1998), p. 133-87.

[9] These principles include: Topology Principle, the Pattern Completion Principle, Integration, the Maximization of Vital Relations Principle, the Intensification of Vital Relations Principle, the Web Principle, the Unpacking Principle, the Relevance Principle, the Compression Principle, and Metonymic Tightening (Fauconnier & Turner 2002).

[10] Oakley, Todd and Seana Coulson, "Blending basics.", *Cognitive linguistics*, 11, no. 3/4 (2000), p. 186.

[11] Tunner, Mark, and Gilles Fauconnier. "Conceptual integration and formal expression. "*Metaphor and Symbol*", 10, no. 3 (1995), p. 186.

[12] Cf. Hougaard, A., & Oakley, T. (Eds.), Mental Spaces in Discourse and Interaction. John Benjamins, Amsterdam & Philadelphia 2008.; Dancygier, B. (Ed.),'Special Issue on Conceptual Blending', Language and Literature, 15(1), 2006; Oakley, Todd and Esther Pascual,'Conceptual Blending Theory'. In B. Dancygier (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics,* Cambridge University Press. Cambridge 2017, pp. 421-48.

2.1. Case study 1
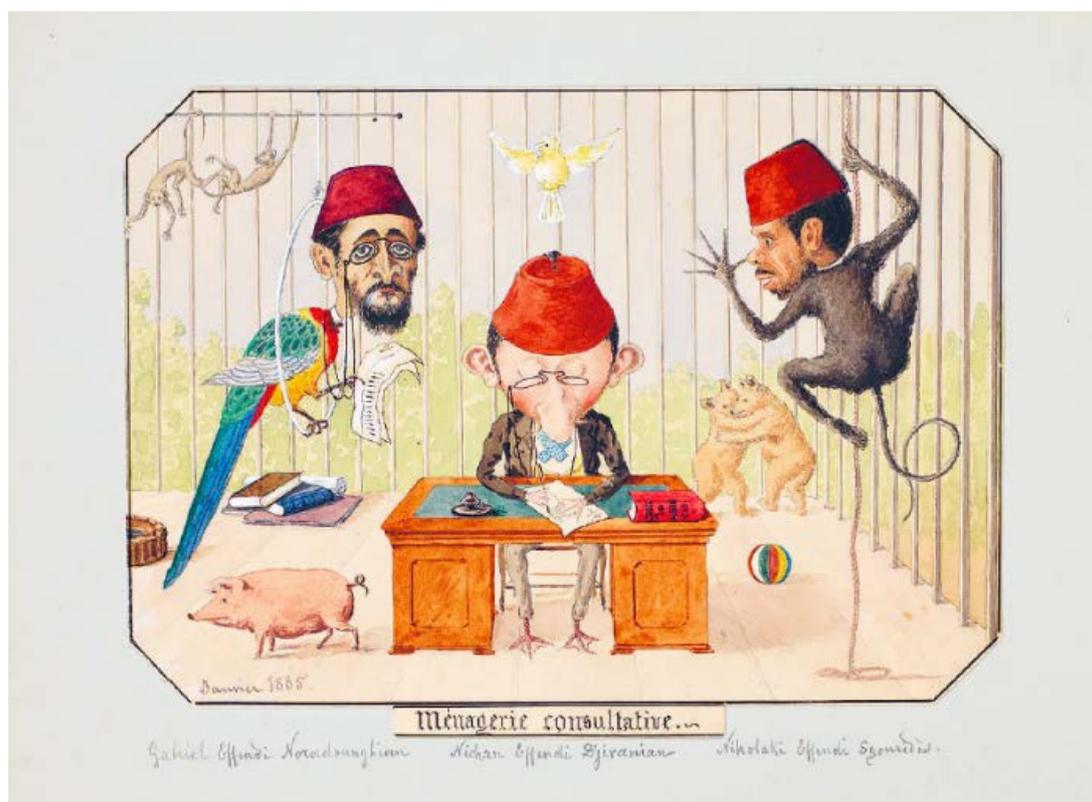
Figure 1. "*Menagerie consultative*", 1885.

It is believed that this caricature represents Yusuf Franko Kusa's masterpiece. The cartoon mocks the functioning of the State Secretariat for International Law. It forms a double space network that is composed of two input spaces, generic space and the blend. In input space one resides political situation in the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Abdul Hamid II. He is often perceived as the last Sultan who had effective control over the fracturing state. This input space projects to the blend prominent political figures of that time Gabriel Efendi Noradungyan, Nişan Efendi Civanyan and Nikolaki Efendi Sguridis. In the second input space we have typical zoo setting with the cage, different animals, i.e. a parrot, monkeys, a macaque, a hen, a pig, etc.

Both inputs project their frame structures to the blend, as it contains not only elements from both inputs but also literal blends of Ottoman bureaucrats and different animals. In front of them is the code of the fools lying on the table, which is actually censorship. As it has already been pointed out in 1877 Sultan Abdulhamid II banned the production of all caricatures

In the blend Gabriel Efendi Noradungyan, an advisor to the Ottoman Porte from 1883 and a law professor from 1885, is represented as a parrot. Although parrots are considered to be the most intelligent birds, most people first think of their ability to reproduce human speech. It is alluded that Gabriel Efendi Noradungyan   was able to read law and quote different legal acts, but it is questionable how wise advisor he was to the central Ottoman government. Parrots are able to reproduce human speech, but not to create their own sentences. It also suggested that Gabriel Efendi Noradungyan just automatically repeated what was said to him and did not offer his original advice. The second prominent character is Nikolaki Efendi Sguridis, represented as a macaque. According to Tamari it was quite common in the oppositional press in Istanbul to

portray Abdul Hamid II's Arab advisors as monkeys.[13] Clearly, Nikolaki Efendi Sguridis was not of Arab origin but Yusuf viewed his diplomatic abilities as very modest or even non-existent. Therefore, this visual representation seems justifiable.

In the middle of the cartoon is Nişan Efendi Civanyan, a director of correspondence at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and later the director of the foreign press bureau. He is decorated with gallinaceous legs, big ears and a prominent nose. As we can see the author did not significantly change the physical appearance of this Ottoman official. However, one prominent characteristic, i.e. his legs seem to be enough to activate our knowledge about cognitive abilities of these animals. Poultry certainly does not belong to the category of brightest animals.
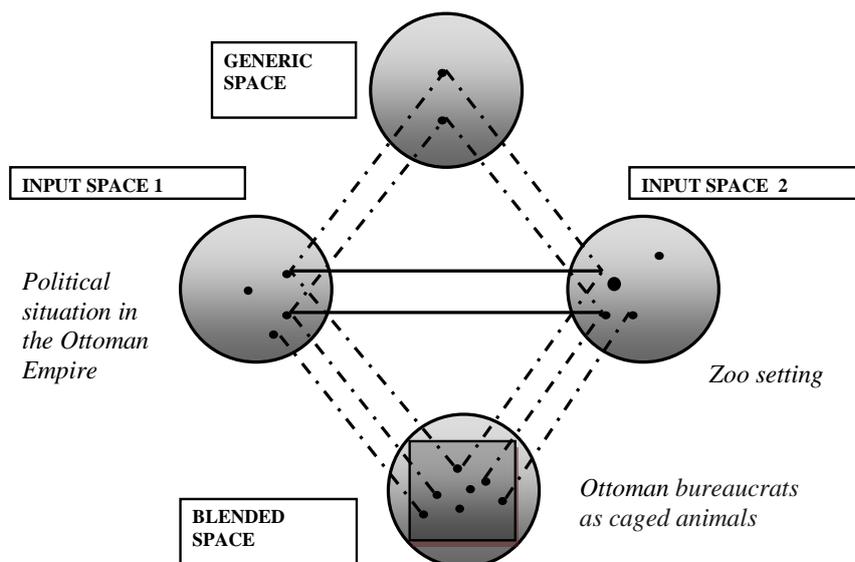

Figure 2. The conceptual integration network for the caricature "*Menagerie consultative*"

Backward projections from the blended space to input spaces reinforce construals in input spaces in accordance with the new structure created in the blend. Yusuf Franko Kusa makes us view reality from different perspective. The Ottoman diplomatic circle at that time was in serious problem as the most important positions were occupied by individuals of very modest, limited abilities. We can speculate about the author's intentions and can only say that her left the gates of a late-nineteenth century Ottoman bureaucrat's world half-opened. The rest is up to us to put the puzzle together.

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[13] S. Tamari, The Great War and the Remaking of Palestine. University of California Press, 2017, p. 15.

2.2. Case study 2

Figure 3. "L'expiation" Undated.

The last caricature in Yusuf Bey's album is "Expiation". We might presume that drawing caricatures in the period of strong censorship was very difficult for creative Yusuf Bey so therefore he decided to metaphorically kill the caricaturist and close his album. Clever and witty as he was Yusuf Bey left the clues why he stopped drawing in his last masterpiece so might conclude that his characters came back to haunt him.

This cartoon forms four space network in which input space one embraces typical execution scenario with gallows, executers, and curious public. In the second input space reside characters from Yusuf Franko's world, i.e. diplomats, Ottoman bureaucrats and prominent figures of high-society social circles in Pera together with his family members.

Input space one provides a frame structure for the blend, which also receives salient projections from the other input space. In the blend Yusuf Bey's neck is broken, his blood colored tongue is sticking out of his mouth. Birds are flying over to make the whole scene even more realistic. Some of the characters he earlier portrayed in the album are now pulling the ropes. His family members are crying nearby, while various diplomats and officials are observing the situation impartially.

The blend projects back to input spaces and this caricature express serious criticism of the state of affairs in the Ottoman Empire in its last days. The subjects of his caricatures metaphorically pull all the ropes in the Ottoman society while common people are helpless and cannot make any significant changes. They cannot expect any help from the diplomatic circles as they only observe the situation and certainly not participate directly. They pull the ropes

behind the stage. It is assumed that the author wanted to emphasize that the public inertness, silent support of censorship would come back to haunt the Ottoman Empire.


GENERIC SPACE

INPUT SPACE 2

INPUT SPACE 1

Political situation in the Ottoman Empire

Execution

BLENDED SPACE

The execution of Yusuf Franko Kusa
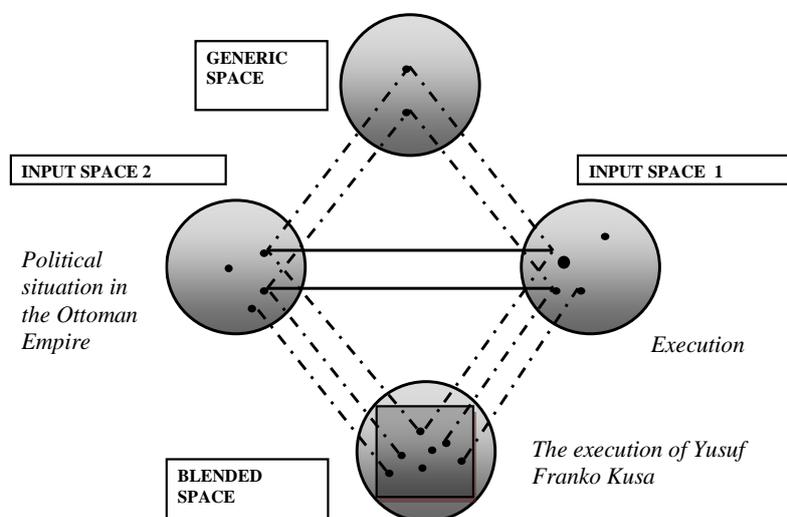
Figure 4. The conceptual integration network for the caricature "L'expiation"

Conclusion

From the case studies discussed above we can claim that the key element in the creation of humor in conceptual blending is the incongruity produced in the blended space, which prompts us to go back to the inputs in order to resolve incongruity. As Marín-Arrese claims, "[t]he problem solving or resolution of the incongruity is realized by projecting backward to these input spaces ..." [14] In the first case study, important political figures are represented as animals, in the second one the artist is placed in the gallows. All of these incongruities prompt the viewer to unpack the blend by looking for the inputs[15].

In order to understand the meaning of these cartoons, the viewer must unpack the blend and reconstruct the input spaces following the cues represented verbally and/or visually in the memes and jokes. It must be emphasized that the understanding of the caricatures depends heavily on viewers' complete encyclopedic knowledge. The clues given are likely to be entrenched within the discourse community targeted by the caricature. Authors must offer enough pictorial and/ or verbal cues for the viewer to solve the puzzle, or in terms of conceptual blending, unpack the blend.

Furthermore, the new structure created in the blend also successfully criticizes the absurdities of the real world. In that sense, Coulson (2002) finds that the emergent structure in the blend can promote the construals in the input spaces. Therefore, apart from resolving the incongruity created in the blend, backward projections from the blended space to input spaces

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[14] J. I. Marín-Arrese, 'Humour as ideological struggle: The view from cognitive linguistics'. Paper presented at the 8th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference. Logroño, 20-25 July 2003. Available at http://wwwling.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/iclc/ Papers/JuanaMarinArrese.pdf. 2003.
[15] G. Fauconnier & M. Turner, The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities, Basic Books, New York 2002, p. 333.

reinforce construals in input spaces in accordance with the new structure created in the blend. Therefore, it can be argued that the emergent structure in the blend not only helps us conceptualize a certain scenario but it also reinforces a certain construal in the input spaces. As Coulson (2002) concludes, "[b]y projecting prominent personalities into new contexts, cartoonists can show us the ridiculous side of a serious situation, or, […], the serious side of the ridiculous".[16]

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[16] S.Coulson, What's so funny: Conceptual blending in humorous examples. Available at: http://www.cogsci.ucsd.edu/~coulson/funstuff/funny.html, 2002.

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