There is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective ‘knowing’; the more affects we allow to speak about a thing, the more eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our ‘concept’ of the thing, our ‘objectivity’. (Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy* III 12)

Nietzsche’s words might once have been epistemologically stimulating; to the scholar today, however, they rather appear intellectually commonplace and yawn-inducing. The idea of a fundamental plurality or polyphony of voices in text, society and comprehension has become a constant companion in the 21st century. Particularly in the humanities we honour what the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch has called “aesthetic competence” (“aisthetische Kompetenz”), i.e. the ability to perceive differences, to sense plurality and detect disparities in the seemingly homogeneous (36).

In this context it is not surprising that much of narrative theory has been dedicated to discussing the finer points of narrative perspective over the last few decades. What is surprising, however, is the ‘paradoxical’ fact that despite the extensive debate in this field one essential aspect of literary perspectives has been largely overlooked. Following Vera und Ansgar Nünning, I believe that the literary phenomenon – one might also call it the stylistic device2 – of “multiple perspectives” or “multiperspectivity” has been strikingly under-theorized (cf. Nünning/Nünning 4f).

In a spirit of methodological multiperspectivity I therefore suggest that Conceptual Integration Networks, or Blending Theory, as developed by Fauconnier/Turner (“Conceptual Integration”; *The Way We Think*), may remedy this particular narratological shortcoming. By linking multiperspectivity with blending this paper shall illustrate how concepts from cognitive studies and linguistics can trigger a cross-disciplinary re-conceptualization of theoretical concepts.

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2 See, for example, Simpson.
Multiperspectivity, Character-Perspectives, and Perspective Structures

Throughout literary history, writers have stylistically juxtaposed the subjective worldviews of characters, thus foregrounding the significance of individual perspectives. The most prototypical cases of multiperspectivity can be found in repeated, successive renderings of one and the same event from different character’s points of view. Although scope, style and shape of this literary phenomenon do vary significantly, multiperspectivity characteristically foregrounds some form of ‘tension’ or ‘dissonance’ that emerges from the clash of the staged perspectives. A classic example can be found in Tobias Smollett’s epistolary novel *Humphry Clinker* (1771). Here, inter alia, a journey to the city of Bath is successively rendered in letters by the old squire Matthew Bramble and his young niece Lydia. Though both relate their impressions of the same trip to the famous health resort, their descriptions could hardly differ more drastically. While Bath for Bramble has become “the very centre of racket and dissipation” (63), Lydia is sure she has found “an earthly paradise” (68). Her fascination with “the splendour of dress and equipage” (68) is countered by the squire’s biting condemnation of the “mob of impudent plebeians” (66); and what she believes to be a pleasant and “good-humoured” mingling of social classes in the pump rooms, her uncle perceives as an outrageous insult to the genteel people (cf. 68; 66).

Given this disparity, it is easy to conceive why literary critics have emphasized that such juxtapositions of perspectives create “effects of friction” or “dissonance” (“Reibungseffekt”; “Dissonanzeffekt”) (Lindemann 51; 53). Lydia’s youthful enthusiasm and Bramble’s misanthropically bad humour oppose each other; focussing on this opposition, Wolfgang Iser (108f), for example, has argued that Smollett’s novel directs the reader’s attention to the individual nature of perception. Such foregrounding of what Graumann & Sommer (35) call the “inevitable relativity of human knowledge” can be found in similar fashion in novels from Richardson to George Elliot and Ian McEwan — a foregrounding that in turn creates a wide range of secondary effects including dramatic irony, epistemological doubt, or simply suspense.3

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3 The phenomenon of “multiperspectivity” as such has so far been mainly addressed by German scholars. For an overview on past research see Suhrkamp (2003: 9-18); a general outline of the use of the term perspective in art, philosophy and literary criticism can be found in Wood or Guillén.
4 For a comprehensive and useful account of multiple perspectives in literary texts, including a distinction between different basic forms of multiperspectivity, see the two introductory chapters by Vera and Ansgar Nünning in Nünning/Nünning (3-77).
5 Such effects are not necessarily restricted to the juxtaposition of character-perspectives. Tension between other individual textual perspectives could be constituted, for example, by narrator-perspectives or implied-reader-perspectives (cf. Suhrkamp 36-49).
6 Cf. Nünning/Nünning 19f.
7 Multiperspectivity generally leads to a semantization of narrative form on the level of discourse (cf. Nünning/Nünning 31).
Yet despite the ubiquity of this literary phenomenon, narrative theory has only recently addressed multiperspectivity as a topic in its own right. Traditional approaches to point of view (particularly those in the wake of Genette) were more interested in literature as an act of narrative transmission. Yet, in order to grasp the more deeply semantic content of character-perspectives, this vantage point appears to be inadequate. Consequently, yet without denying the apparent validity of the “communicative level of narrative transmission”, it seems to be necessary to adopt what Ansgar Nünning calls a “different perspective on perspectives” when analyzing multiperspectivity (207). Nünning defines a character-perspective as the constructed worldview of an individual.

A character-perspective could thus be defined as an individual’s fictional system of preconditions or subjective worldview – the sum of all the models he or she has constructed of the world, or others, and of herself. A character-perspective is governed by the totality of an individual’s knowledge and belief sets, intentions, psychological traits, attitudes, ideological stance, and system of values and norms that have been internalized […] (211). Interestingly, this definition of perspectives bears striking resemblance to the more recent understanding of characters as mental models. Such character models, as described in the works of Margolin, Culpeper or Schneider, describe characters as “mental files” (Margolin, “Character” 76). These ‘files’ provide the cognitive structure “in which all further information about the corresponding individual will be continually accumulated, structured and updated as one reads on […]” (ibid.). Linking Nünning’s constructivist idea of character-perspectives with the concept of mental character models, allows us to conceive of perspectives as complex mental representations, incrementally constructed and bearing the respective character’s name. Since most novels, however, feature a number of characters the reader usually has to process not only one but several perspectives simultaneously. Thus, in a text like Humphry Clinker, a complex network of distinct, individual character-perspectives emerges during the reading process – a network that Nünning labels the “perspective structure of narrative texts”.

The ‘perspective structure of narrative texts’ is a concept equally rooted in the tradition of constructivism and structuralism. It thus models the “world-making activity” (Ryan 110) of the recipient, while simultaneously aiming at a taxonomical description of the structures emerging during the reading process. In this way, Nünning’s approach not only investigates the constructed nature of fictional characters, but also attempts a systematic depic-

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8 Most influential works in narratology, like, for example, Genette; Rimmon-Kenan; Bal; Chatman; or Stanzel do not feature discussions of multiple character perspectives.
9 Nünning’s definition draws on the concept of the ‘communicative system of preconditions’ developed in Schmidt’s Foundation for the Empirical Study of Literature (300).
10 See, for example, Margolin “Cognitive Sciences”; Culpeper; Schneider “Towards a Cognitive Theory” and Grundriff. For an overview of cognitive approaches to character, see Schneider “Cognition”. 
tion of the interconnected net of character-perspectives that is mentally “realized in the reading process” (Nünning 215). The combination of both aspects results in a powerful heuristic tool that serves as an ideal conceptual starting point for an investigation of narrative character-perspectives.\footnote{A typology of perspective configurations is only one of the many findings that result from investigating the perspective structure of narrative texts. For a more detailed discussion and further possible applications, see Nünning; Suhrkamp; and the contributions in Nünning/Nünning.}

Yet unfortunately, the taxonomic advantage of modelling perspectives as stable networks also limits the concept’s ability to account for the dynamic nature of text-processing.\footnote{The importance of dynamic aspects during the mental construction of characters has been pointed out by Helmut Grabes as early as 1978 (cf. Grabes).} Following Pfister (60ff), Nünning construes the relationships between character-perspectives as “pattern[s] of contrasts and correspondences” (216), thereby adhering to the fundamental structuralist differentiation between paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions of language and literature.\footnote{Nünning’s notion of perspective structures of narrative texts draws on Pfister’s concept of perspective structures in drama, which in turn has been heavily influenced by the structuralist credo that selection and combination constitute “the two basic modes of arrangement” in language and literature (Jakobson 37).} Consequently, in this framework the relationship between, for example, Bramble’s and Lydia’s viewpoints is conceived of as a static connection that can be broken down into a number of fixed relations. However, in light of the dynamic nature of the reading process such an analysis seems to be incomplete. As a basic cognitive mode of operation that also accounts for "dynamic aspects of meaning construction" (Evans/Green 400), Conceptual Integration Networks may help to surmount the structuralist limitations of the perspective structure of narrative texts. By ‘blending’ Nünning’s concept with Blending Theory, a more adequate framework for the interaction of contrasting perspectives can be developed.
Blending and Multiperspectivity in Smollett’s *Humphry Clinker*

Conceptual Integration Networks consist of at least four mental spaces (see Fig. 1).\(^*\) Two, or more, input spaces, a generic space and a blended space. If the notion of ‘mental spaces’ is extended to include mental models of character-perspectives, Bramble's perspective on Bath, e.g., could be conceived as such an input space; his niece’s point of view would then, in analogy, constitute a second input space.

Input spaces in general are connected by ‘cross-space mapping’ which is responsible for identifying comparable components in the input spaces. Based on such cross-space connections the ‘generic space’ provides “information that is abstract enough to be common to both (or all) the inputs” (Evans/Green 404). In relation to narrative character-perspectives, this means that the generic space can, for example, contain the abstract general setting of a story that the character’s share. In the case of *Humphry Clinker* this encompasses, for instance, ‘time’, ‘place’ and ‘social status’: Lydia and Bramble travel together; they visit the same places at the same time, and belong to the same family, i.e. the same social class.

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\(^{*}\) A large number of publications on blending has appeared during the last decade. Given its academic proliferation I will forgo an introductory synopsis of this concept. For a full account see Fauconnier/Turner “Conceptual Integration”; *The Way We Think*; general introductions can be found in Evans/Green; Ungerer/Schmid or Coulson/Oakley. For a discussion of various aspects of blending see also the special issues in *Language and Literature* 15 (2006); *Journal of Pragmatics* 37.10 (2005); and *Cognitive Linguistics* 11.3-4 (2000).
Connected to the generic space are the input spaces, i.e. the character-perspectives. From Lydia’s letters the reader learns that Bath is “an earthly paradise” for the young woman. In her eyes “gayety, good humour, and diversion” characterize this fashionable place where “the merry bell rings round, from morn to night” (68). Her uncle on the other hand complains about “the noise, tumult & hurry” plaguing the city (63). He is enraged by the way class distinctions are blurred and the new buildings that Lydia praises as “enchanted castles”, Bramble scorns as architectural absurdities (cf. 65, 68).

It becomes apparent that these contrasts create an effect of friction or dissonance between both input spaces. Yet, the reader does not cognitively stop at perceiving this dissonance. Neither is he or she likely to mentally decide for one of the perspectives, discarding the other. Instead an additional mental space is constructed: Lydia’s and Bramble’s descriptions are blended into a mental image of Bath.

By merging both inputs, a new structure emerges that is more than just the sum of its parts. Dialectically embracing the element of dissonance, an image of Bath is mentally constructed that is based on information from the input spaces but also transcends this information. In the blend Bath becomes a city buzzing with people, change and entertainment; a place that is fascinating, especially to the young and pleasure seeking, but also pompous and shallow in its pleasures; a health resort that, on another level, mirrors the changes of late 18th century British society in its many faceted architectural, cultural and economic developments.

Many aspects of this blend do not originate from ‘construction’, i.e. the integration of information from the input spaces, but arise from the so-called processes of ‘completion’ and ‘elaboration’ (cf. Fauconnier/Turner, The Way We Think 42-44; 48f). In order to think about Bath, for example, as a place of social change, a considerable amount of background knowledge has to be recruited to the blend. But once the reader starts to complete the mental image of Bath with knowledge of English history he/she can not only increasingly refine the mental blend of the city but also elaborate on it. This means the reader can “run the blend” (44; 49) and, e.g. picture the hustling and bustling of countless maids and servants preparing food, running errands and thus ensuring that “the merry bell” keeps “ringing”. Likewise, it is possible to project a detailed mental image of Bramble and his family on a sightseeing tour through the resort in a carriage – although this tour only features as a passing remark in one of Lydia’s letters.

Another crucial feature of Blending Theory is the so-called ‘backward projection’ from the blend to the input spaces. Earlier theories of meaning construction have largely overlooked the fact that many inferences essentially require the prior existence of a blended space. Lydia’s youthful naivety and Bramble’s misanthropic irritability do not directly spring from the contrasts between their respective perspectives, nor can they be traced solely to the information provided in their letters. In fact, inferences about the charac-
ters arise from the interaction of input and blend and are projected backwards, thereby refining and expanding the mental character models of Lydia and her uncle. Consequently, it is only by comparing Bramble’s descriptions with the more balanced blend of Bath that the reader can infer a connection between his ill-humoured judgements and the chronic bad health he is suffering from.

Fig. 2: Conceptual Integration Networks Applied to the Character-Perspectives in *Humphry Clinker*.

Many more examples could be found, but it may have become apparent that blending theory provides a framework that is able to conceptualize multiperspectivity in a much more detailed way than previous approaches (cf. Fig. 2). Obviously, there is a number of possible objections to my application of Conceptual Integration Networks to multiperspectivity. Nevertheless, applying Ockham’s razor, blending provides the most comprehensive and at the same time parsimonious conceptualization of multiperspectivity to date. More importantly, the outlined approach also offers the possibility of going be-

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15 For a short summary of potential problems with Blending Theory see Coulson/Oakley (191-94). On a general level one could also object that my approach does not sufficiently take into account the full complexity of reception processes. Jürgen Schütte, however, has argued that any serious reception oriented analysis of literary texts ultimately has to take the form of a retrospective hermeneutic reflection (cf. 181f). As such, investigations into character-perspectives necessarily involve a schematized narratological treatment that for methodological purposes has to focus on select elements.
yond modelling narrative competence. In this context I would like to suggest that a revised concept of multiperspectivity can inspire new interpretations by shifting the focus of attention from the contrasts between perspectives to their correspondences.

**Postmodernism and Multiperspectivity in Penelope Lively's *Moon Tiger***

Blending theory vividly demonstrates that meaning construction is a dynamic process involving multiple stages and mental spaces. Dissonance in consequence is not an immediate effect but the product of a prior matching and blending of structures. Effects of tension cognitively require the recognition of correspondences between the inputs. Contrast, more generally speaking, dialectically implies similarity. This insight might not necessarily lead to a new reading of *Humphry Clinker* but it has interesting consequences for many so-called postmodern texts. In the last part of this paper, I will analyze Penelope Lively’s novel *Moon Tiger* as an example of how considering cross-space matches between perspectives can lead to stimulating revisions of critical readings.

Lively’s Booker Prize winning novel *Moon Tiger* is a classic example for what has come to be associated with postmodern fiction. Metafictionally charged, it presents the life of 76-year old protagonist, Claudia, in an achronological kaleidoscope of shifting perspectives. Homodiegetic and retrospective contemplations by the protagonist, who is in hospital dying from cancer, alternate with passages related by a covert heterodiegetic narrator. Completely receding into the background, this narrator renders the viewpoints of various characters, including Claudia, by use of internal focalization. The respective passages, often only a few paragraphs in length, are usually not linked chronologically or causally, but instead interconnect by association, and thereby amplify the perplexing effect created by the narrative situation. The most striking feature, however, is the pronounced multiperspectivity of the novel. Several scenes are rendered successively from up to three different character-perspectives, providing a vivid display of the incommensurable nature of individual experience. Some of these contrasts, e.g. a series of misunderstandings between Claudia and her daughter Lisa are developed and emphasized over a number of chapters. What in *Humphry Clinker* is, according to Angus Ross (12), “only sketched out, rather than thoroughly exploited” becomes a full-fledged and dominant characteristic in *Moon Tiger*. Accordingly, the protagonist herself proclaims that history and biography are “composite” and decides to tell her story in a polyphonic way:

> Many voices; all the voices that have managed to get themselves heard. Some louder than others, naturally: My story is tangled with stories of others – Mother, Gordon, Jasper, Lisa, and one other person above all; their voices must be heard also […]. So since my story is also theirs, they too must speak […]. (*Moon Tiger* 5f)
Lively’s skilful synthesis of experimental narrative form and historiographic metafiction has led reviewers quite naturally onto the well-trodden path of postmodern analysis and rhetoric. Taking up the novel’s salient metaphor of the kaleidoscope, literary scholars have insisted that the text destabilizes the concepts of history, biography and identity. “Shake the tube and see what comes out”, says the protagonist, and critics have dutifully argued that *Moon Tiger* offers a kaleidoscopic disarrangement of narratives; instead of providing a complete and coherent account of Claudia’s life, *Moon Tiger* allegedly presents a fragmentary, associative, and often dissonant jigsaw puzzle that in the best tradition of postmodernism denies a traditional understanding of memory and personality. In this spirit, Mary Moran, for instance, argues that “Lively’s kaleidoscope technique […] suggests the lack of an objective meaning to reality” (104f). Along the same lines, Tony Jackson (174) perceives a provisional rejection of “the conventional idea of cause and effect”, and Debrah Raschke finds a “poststructuralist decentering” with the reader being stuck “between a multitude of perspectives” and confronted with “polymorphic identities” that “create the means for escaping fixed identities (125).”

Without question, the novel does arrestingly and stylishly foreground the limitations and deficiencies of individual perception and storytelling. Yet in the light of blending theory, this assessment itself must seem limited and deficient. From the dynamics of blending it has become apparent that difference and dissonance build on the cognitive attempt to identify similar structures. Undoubtedly, there are experimental texts that effectively obstruct and frustrate the attempt to create narrative meaning. But can the supposedly ‘experimental’ *Moon Tiger* – and many other so-called postmodern texts – be counted among them? And if not, might it not be worth while to shift the focus of attention from difference to sameness for a change? In the case of *Moon Tiger*, this question can definitely be answered in the affirmative.

In my opinion the jigsaw-puzzle setup of the novel does not deny the creation of meaning but rather activates the process of cognitively reassembling the pieces in a causally and chronologically coherent manner. As in *Humphry Clinker*, differences between character-perspectives do not so much leave the reader stranded ‘between a multitude of perspectives’ but contribute to a complex blend of perspectives. Thus, the novel evokes a richer and more colourful picture of Claudia’s life than a single perspective could accomplish. By foregrounding, for example, the differences between the viewpoints of Claudia and her daughter, the text allows us to make inferences that go beyond either of the character-perspectives. From a number of scenes in the novel it becomes apparent that from Lisa’s childhood on, mutual expectations of mother and daughter remain unfulfilled. For that reason, both characters also refrain from communicating their innermost feelings, and, consequently, keep important key events in their lives a secret hidden from each

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16 For example, Beckett’s “Ping” (1968); Christina Brooke-Rose’ *Thru* (1991) or *Texternination* (1992); B.S. Johnson’s *The Unfortunates* (1969), or the novels by Raymond Federman.
other. Drawing on these correspondences, backward projection enables us to draw psychological profiles of mother and daughter, which are based on folk-psychology and are not experimental at all. In this way, by focussing on correspondences across various input-spaces, it becomes possible to arrive at an interpretation that reads the relationship of Claudia and Lisa in a fundamentally different way: as the troubled product of mutually unfulfilled expectations and a lifelong lack of communication – an interpretation that in my opinion neither requires a particularly ‘polymorphic’ notion of identity nor disposes of ‘cause and effect’.

Undoubtedly, Mary Moran is right in saying that the novel voices “contemporary epistemological and ontological concerns” (117). Nevertheless, I believe that despite its unconventional narrative style *Moon Tiger* does not destabilize meaning. Rather, I think that while putting the narrative pieces together an increasingly complex but ultimately causally and temporally commonplace understanding of the protagonist’s psyche, identity and biography emerges. Only through considering all character-perspectives can one realize, for example, that none of her friends, lovers, or relations knows about Claudia’s experiences as a war correspondent. Though her story keeps circling back to wartime Egypt, where she fell madly in love, got pregnant, and lost both lover and child, nobody knows about these crucial events. The emotional intensity with which her love of the soldier Tom is depicted further enhances the inferential significance of Claudia’s apparent decision to keep this episode a secret. Thus, it not only stands in sharp contrast to the aloofness that characterizes all of her post-war relationships, but also adds a new interpretive dimension to these relations. In this way, by blending a complex set of mental spaces, an elaborate mental model of Claudia takes shape. Ultimately, it becomes apparent that the romantic love-of-a-lifetime experience during the war and the ensuing unbearable pain of death and miscarriage provide the interpretive key to the protagonist’s life; her subsequent behaviour and all of her relationships are affected by the emotional trauma she experiences during the war – a trauma from which she never recovers, and a reading that, again, does not explode or de-centre common concepts of identity!17

**Methodological Multiperspectivity**

“[Life] has its core; its centre”, Claudia says, and her relation to the soldier, Tom constitutes the heart of her biography and the semantic and structural core of the novel. Though not all postmodern texts necessarily have a similar centre, blending theory may inspire revised readings of many texts that play

17 Margaretta Jolly arrives at a similar conclusion when analysing *Moon Tiger* from a feminist perspective: “*Moon Tiger* […] represents the superficiality of much other mainstream fiction’s take up of feminist plot and aesthetic. […] Lively’s playful style and rejection of the marital plot turn out to be, underneath, the same old romance.” (67)
with character-perspectives. Instead of solely focussing on differences, cross-
space matches and blends should also demand the interpretive attention of
the literary scholar. In this way, a bridge can be build between the descriptive
and taxonomic\textsuperscript{18} undertaking of a cognitively inspired narratology and the
more creative activity of interpreting literature.

Returning to the opening quote, Nietzsche probably knew very well why
he put ‘objectivity’ in inverted commas. Being a forerunner of postmodern
philosophy he knew that final knowledge is fundamentally elusive. But he
also understood that perceiving ‘a thing’ from different perspectives often –
not logically but phenomenologically – does “complete our ‘idea’ of this
thing”. Following this line of thought, the humanities should not be afraid of
training “more eyes, various eyes” from different disciplines (I might add) to
our objects of research; for there is little to lose and perhaps much to gain
from a careful and critical engagement with the perspective of the cognitive
sciences. My attempt to reconceptualise multiperspectivity by means of
blending is intended to serve as an example for how ideas from cognitive
studies may serve as a source of inspiration for the literary scholar. By ex-
panding rather than invalidating previous narratological approaches (cf.
Nüning/Nüning; Suhrkamp) I have tried to demonstrate how ideas from
other disciplines can become valuable assets for literary analysis and theory.

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\footnote{18 Cf. Herman’s discussion of the aims of narratology (28).}


