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بلاغة الشوق في قصيدة " زائِرٌ زارَني فَهاجَ خَيالا" لأبي تمام

The Poetics of Longing in the Poem "A Visitor Visited Me and Stirred My Madness" by Abu Tammam

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ملخّص

يُعتبر طيف الخيال فنّا شعريّا غزِلاً؛ يعود إلى المعنى التّقليدي للغزل وهو تفاقم الشّوق والبعد واستحالة اللّقاء، وبعد الأمكنة وبعد الأزمنة ؛ وإزاء هذه الاستحالة يقدّم الشعراء منذ الجاهليّة معنى آخر للّقاء في الحلم يجري نفسيّا مع طيف الحبيب زار طروقا في المنام فهو فعل روح وليس فعل جسد ، وهم يوظّفون ثلاثة أجهزة هي العين والحسّ والفكر،و تلتبس فكرة الطيف والخيال بالهمّ والأرق في الشعر الجاهلي إلّا أنّها تطورت في العصور الإسلامية وتشكلت مع انتقال المجمتع العربي في العصر العباسي ،في ظلّ ثقافة جديدة، لحظة ترقّي الفعل الفلسفي و دخل مجالات الخلاف وانعكس ذلك في مجال الشّعر .

يتّخذ هذا البحث من قصيدة (زائِرٌ زارَني فَهاجَ خَيالا) لأبي تمّام مجالاً للقراءة والتأويل؛ لتحديد بلاغة الشّوق فيها وفك مغاليق اللقاء الرّوحي ، عبر آليّات ديناميّات القوّة و الخاضع والوسيلة والفضاء، وهي تفسّر علاقة القهر بما هي بنية نفسية ذهنية عرفانيّة اجتماعية لاشعورية ينسجها المخيال داخل فضاء الحركة والسكون ،فالشّاعر كأنّه يخبر عن حدث في الخارج وحدث في الدّاخل و متعة جسديّة ومتعة روحيّة نفسيّة ،فيتعالق الظّاهر والباطن ، وتغدو اللغة الشعريّة هي لغة لعب بالظّاهر والباطن والحقيقة والمجاز والخفاء والتّستّر،وهو يقدّم معنى آخر للّقاء مثّله فضاء الحركة وقد استحال فضاءً للنّفس من الدّاخل ونحن هنا في فضاء الرّؤيا القلبيّة والخياليّة ؛وهنا تبرز رغبة ملحة في عجن الجسم وتحويله إلى خيال لأنّه واع بأنّ هذا الجسم هو حدود ورغبة في تجاوز الحدود والمُعيقات ،والجسمانيّة، والعبور إلى اللقاء الرّوحي، والإنسان هو أرق ما يكون عندما تكون فيه حركة نفسيّة، والقصيدة من قوة ضغط القيود ستواجهها قوة تحرّر تجعل المتقبّل يتخيّل وينخرط في عمليّة إدماج عن طريق اللّغة وهي أخطر أداة لأنّها تنقل الذّهن من فضاء إلى آخر ،وتتصرّف في الذّهن.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية المزج التّصوري؛ فضاء الحركة؛ المقابلة.

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the construction of poetic meaning through two competing theoretical frameworks: the classical Aristotelian concept of mimesis (imitation) and the contemporary theory of cognitive mimesis. By contrasting these paradigms, we reveal fundamental divergences in their mechanisms of meaning-making. Our analysis begins with concrete examples embodied metaphor and imaginative projection—to demonstrate how each theory interprets poetic language. We then trace the historical development of meaning in poetic theory, from Aristotle's emphasis on representation to modern cognitive approaches that prioritize embodied experience. This progression highlights how poetic meaning has evolved into an interdisciplinary nexus, bridging literary criticism, rhetoric, poetics, and cognitive neuroscience. Cognitive poetics, in particular, reframes poetic imagery through models of induction, generalization, and implicature (implied meaning). These models treat the image not as a static symbol but as a dynamic construct shaped by the reader's imagination and perceptual grounding. Central to this approach is the principle of embodiment, which ties linguistic meaning to sensory-motor experiences and challenges traditional binaries between figurative and literal language. By examining how images emerge from and interact with everyday speech, cognitive poetics reveals the deep cognitive underpinnings of poetic effect.

Keywords: Embodiment ; Imagery ; Mimesis ; Cognitive poetics ; Cognitive neuroscience ; Comparative analysis.

1. Introduction

The article seeks to explore the generation of structures through the conceptual blending technique within the framework of blending theory, particularly focusing on the cognitive approach to integration. Integration serves as the central principle that drives the creation of linguistic structures (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, pp. 217-247). Conceptual integration is typically illustrated via crossspace projection, which offers a brief insight into the complex imaginative process that underlies linguistic expressions (Fauconnier, 1996). These expressions appear to activate different roles or mental spaces that are far apart, making it evident that conceptual blending plays a key role in the formation of linguistic structures (Turner & Fauconnier, 1995, 183-203). Additionally, the relationship between blending and the entry spaces, along with its role in unifying various roles and resolving ambiguity in meaning and contrasting ideas, is essential in inference and the understanding of larger blending spaces (Coulson, S., & Van Petten, C. (2002), p.958-968).

Fauconnier and Turner's blending theory provides a framework for understanding conceptual events through the mapping of mental spaces, which are often generated through counterfactual ideas, metonymy, and metaphors (Fauconnier & Turner, 1994). This framework helps explain how meanings are constructed and

how they can evolve over time. The article concludes by discussing the theoretical foundations upon which this transformation is based, using examples to illustrate how linguistic structures emerge from the semantic network of integration (Fauconnier, 2001, p.122). A set of principles was identified, contributing to the central blending process in generating these structures.

A key aspect discussed in the article is the notion of "muqābala" (counterpart), which refers to a pair of contrasting ideas elaborated in a balanced compound. This rhetorical device, common among Arab poets, uses verbs indicating movement or stillness, highlighting the importance of contrast in the construction of meaning. Conceptual blending is considered a fundamental mental process responsible for the construction of new lexicons to express emerging meanings in language (Turner & Fauconnier, 2002 Chapter eleven: the Construction of the Unreal", pp. 217-247.). In this regard, constructing meaning is seen as a conceptual process, while the specification of meaning through lexical units is a purely lexical process (G. Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, pp. 171-193.). The connection between the mental and lexical levels in meaning generation is the focal point of this research, as we seek to explore the relationship between new "mixed concepts" and the lexical units that designate them.

Moreover, the internal coherence of the blend is crucial, with the compression of vital relations and the backward mapping of inferences from the blend to the input spaces. This mechanism proves highly effective in providing insight into human understanding and reevaluation of the frames contained within the inputs (Fauconnier, 2001, p.287). The act of reassessing or evaluating meaning in a new or different way is vital for acquiring poetic imagery, which requires constant reevaluation of inferences.

Coherence and cohesion in a text can only be achieved through a complex and intertwined relational network among the words, sentences, what has been said, and what follows. This network functions within a framework that requires grammar as an essential element for meaning construction. The arrangement of words follows a logical pattern, where the meaning of each word is aligned with that of the next, reflecting the arrangement of meanings in the mind, which are then translated into words floating above the text (Turner & Fauconnier, 1995, p.183).

The concept of conceptual integration, also referred to as blending, is an essential development in the theory of mental spaces. As an extension of this theory, it accounts for phenomena such as the creation of new meanings, global insight, and

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conceptual compression. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) describe conceptual integration as a fundamental mental capacity that has been critical in the evolution of human cognition. Initially introduced in a 1994 research report by Fauconnier and Turner, conceptual blending has been explored in several publications, such as Fauconnier and Turner (1996), Turner and Fauconnier (1995), and Coulson (1995). The theory was further detailed in *Mappings in Thought and Language* (1997) and *The Way We Think* (2002). Fauconnier (2001) emphasizes that conceptual integration is crucial for constructing meaning not only in everyday life but also in the arts, sciences, and religious thinking. It involves the selective projection of elements from at least two mental spaces, which results in the creation of a new semantic structure in a third space that integrates these elements. These projected elements can originate from the context or external sources, such as memory. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) specify that mental spaces are reactivated structures from longterm memory, further deepening our understanding of the cognitive processes involved in blending.

Fauconnier (1994) also distinguishes between mental models in discourse and those in psychology, asserting that mental spaces in discourse are simulations, possibly even of impossible states of affairs, rather than referential mental models of the world. This distinction highlights the importance of mental spaces as tools for simulating potential or hypothetical scenarios, thus advancing our cognitive and interpretative capabilities.

2. Aims of the Study

Scholars have observed that ancient poets often began their poems with a nasib, a prelude in which they referred to ruins, women, or the spectrum of imagination. These elements initially seem to symbolize loneliness, separation, and the looming presence of death. However, upon closer examination, the observer finds that these symbols are not purely expressions of sorrow. Rather, they convey a deeper, more complex emotional landscape, where life's heartbeat is felt amid the shadow of sorrow that the poet casts on the reader or listener (El Bana AZ El Din, 2002). The nasib, as part of ancient poetry, functions as a potent artistic symbol with latent energy, able to take form, suggest meaning, and enrich the narrative. These symbols allow for a nuanced exploration of human emotion, offering more than just the superficial experience of loss or grief. In fact, through the use of these traditional symbols, poets were able to evoke both despair and hope, creating a complex emotional interplay within their works (Ruthven, 2011).

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Ancient poets used these devices not only to express feelings of despair but also to overcome them. At times, they portrayed a profound sense of defeat before the overwhelming forces of the universe, which they could not comprehend, or they expressed anxiety toward societal systems that seemed incompatible with life's continuity. Yet, the poet would often mediate between these extremes, sometimes accepting a solution that seemed right to them while rejecting others. Amid these struggles, the poet would infuse glimpses of hope, even while recognizing that definitive solutions to their challenges might not emerge (Ghazel, 1999). In this way, the poet's emotional journey is portrayed as a continual search for balance, navigating a world of opposites in pursuit of a decisive, though uncertain, resolution (El Bana AZ El Din, 2002, p.14).

PreIslamic poetry was deeply intertwined with ancient beliefs, and this spiritual context significantly influenced its metaphors. Early Arabic culture, which included belief in spirits and gods, portrayed religious conceptions as specters. These specters, appearing in forests or graveyards where darkness obstructed vision, reflected the belief that the dead or departed could visit the living in dreams or during the night. Such imagery was not only common in preIslamic poetry but also foundational in shaping the spiritual and imaginative world of early Arab poets (Kennedy, 1996, pp. 381-413). The concept of imagination or *khayal* in early Arabic poetry often involved these spectral visits, where the boundaries between life and death, the physical and the imagined, became fluid (El Bana AZ El Din, 2002, p.77).

The function and symbolism of the specter evolved during the Islamic Age. The imagery of specters and imagination, while still present, began to take on new meanings, incorporating elements of Islamic philosophy and changing cultural values. Poets began to blend these spectral images with symbols such as youth, gray hair, and fragrances like musk. For instance, the idea of a beloved's natural fragrance, symbolized by musk, became a recurring image in poetry. AlRadhi, for example, used the smell of musk to evoke the beloved's essence, making it clear that the fragrance was not intentional, but rather an inherent part of the beloved's nature. This image, along with other symbols like gray hair and perfume, mixed together to create a rich tapestry of sensory and emotional experiences in poetry (Ruthven, 2001). These symbolic blends worked together to produce a unique poetic effectiveness, illustrating the complexity of blending in Arabic poetry (El Bana AZ El Din, 2002, p.56).

Poets like Abu Tammām, who was contemporary to the rationalist movement, provided a different perspective in their works. His poetry, characterized by

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excessive abstraction, challenged the more straightforward poetic traditions by introducing more complex cognitive processes into the narrative. This approach, rooted in the blending of ideas, highlighted the embodied consciousness of the poet, enriching the understanding of the text. In narrative poetry, the blending of different symbols and ideas significantly increased the complexity of the poem, making it a dense cognitive domain where multiple conceptual blends were realized (Coulson, S., & Van Petten, C. (2002), 958-968.). This complexity invites a deeper analysis of the poet’s creativity and imagination, and how it reflects not only personal experience but also the broader cultural and intellectual movements of the time (El Bana AZ El Din, 2002, p.77).

In this article, we will first examine the cognitive concept of specters and imagination in preIslamic Arabic culture, aiming to clarify how poets of the Islamic Age engaged with and transformed this concept. Through case studies, we will explore how poets reinterpreted cultural symbols, adjusting them to reflect their vision of human existence, and revealing the evolving nature of poetry as it adapted to societal changes (El Bana AZ El Din, 2002, p.79). This exploration will provide a deeper understanding of how poets in the Islamic Age not only inherited but also modified their cultural heritage to create poetry that spoke to both their immediate society and the larger human condition.

3. Literature Review

This study bridges cognitive linguistics and Arabic literary studies by applying Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) blending theory to classical Arabic poetry. The analysis reveals how poets like Abū Tammām constructed complex meanings through conceptual integration, demonstrating that their metaphorical language operates through the same cognitive processes that underlie modern thought patterns.

The conceptual blending framework provides crucial insights into Arabic poetic mechanisms. At its core, the theory explains how mental spaces cognitive domains activated during meaning construction (Fauconnier, G., 1991, p.229-248) interact through cross space projection. This process is vividly illustrated in Abū Tammām's work, where elements from distinct domains like war and nature are creatively mapped to generate novel inferences (Fauconnier, 1996; Turner & Fauconnier, 1995). The resulting blends rely on compression of vital relations (time, space, identity) to produce coherent emergent structures (Fauconnier, 2001, p.259), a cognitive operation that manifests in key Arabic poetic devices such as muqābala (counterbalanced contrasts) and the spectral imagery of khayal.

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The application of blending theory reveals deeper layers in traditional Arabic poetic forms. Coulson's (2000) work demonstrates how blending resolves semantic ambiguity in poetic texts, particularly in the nasib's juxtaposition of contrasting emotions that might appear as simple lamentations are in fact sophisticated blended spaces where despair and hope dynamically interact (El Bana, 2002, p.55).This cognitive perspective aligns with Fauconnier and Turner's broader claim that blending operations underlie not just everyday language but also advanced artistic and scientific thought (2003, p.60).

Historical analysis shows the evolution of these cognitive patterns across Arabic literary periods. PreIslamic poetry's spectral metaphors, rooted in animistic worldviews (Kennedy, 2006), represent early examples of cultural blending where spiritual and sensory domains merged. The Islamic period saw these symbols transform through philosophical abstraction, particularly in Abū Tammām's intellectually dense verse (Ruthven, 2011). His work exemplifies advanced conceptual integration, employing layered mental spaces that challenge traditional imagery while maintaining cognitive coherence (Coulson, 2003, p. 703-704).

The study makes three significant contributions to the field. First, it establishes theoretical connections between Arabic rhetorical devices and cognitive blending mechanisms, particularly through analysis of muqābala. Second, it traces the cultural evolution of key symbols like khayal from their preIslamic origins to their refined Islamicera manifestations. Third, it demonstrates how blending theory can decode classical Arabic metaphors in ways that traditional literary analysis cannot, offering new methodological approaches to studying Arabic literature.

This research highlights the untapped potential of cognitive approaches to Arabic poetry while demonstrating how universal mental processes interact with specific cultural traditions. By examining the cognitivelinguistic foundations of Arabic poetic structures, the study illuminates the dynamic relationship between cultural heritage and fundamental human cognitive capacities, suggesting new directions for both literary studies and cognitive linguistics.

4. Research Method

This study explores Abu Tammām's use of the *Spectrum of Imagination* as a key metaphor, focusing on how it functions as a metaphor for metamorphosis. The article will analyze the *Spectrum of Imagination* as a conceptual metaphor, exploring how it serves to depict transition and transformation. We will investigate how Abu Tammām employs this metaphor within the framework of cognitive poetics, specifically using the blending theory proposed by Fauconnier

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and Turner. Their theory will guide the analysis of how metaphors related to metamorphosis emerge in the poem and how they contribute to its cognitive and emotional depth.

Firstly, the study will examine the nexus between *muqabalah* (the concept of contrast and opposition) and conceptual metaphors in Abu Tammām's poetry. This line of thinking will form the foundation for the second part of the essay, which will focus on embodied processes. Specifically, we will explore the *Spectrum of Imagination* as an image of transition and metamorphosis, using blending theory to analyze the cognitive operations that underpin the creation of these metaphors. By applying Fauconnier and Turner's blending theory, we will investigate how cognitive processes shape the metaphoric interpretations within the poem.

This survey of Abu Tammām’s poetic use of metaphor will highlight how blending theory provides a coherent structural framework for analyzing the cognitive mechanisms involved in metaphor creation. It will also offer deeper insights into the contextual pertinence and meaning of these metaphors, enhancing our understanding of how readers actively generate meaning from them. As we analyze Abu Tammām’s poetry, we will see how the *Spectrum of Imagination* becomes a powerful tool for conveying psychological and emotional transitions, as well as for exploring deeper metaphysical themes.

Abu Tammām’s poetry is not only a reflection of his aesthetic prowess but also an embodiment of the journey of the lover’s soul. The emotional, psychological, and solemn journey represented in his work explores the stages of longing, yearning, separation, and reunion. Rhetorically, the poet weaves the art of *AlBadeea*a form of eloquent rhetoric centered on the representation of connection and separation, longing and nostalgiainto the fabric of the poem. This rhetorical style serves to heighten the emotional intensity and convey the profound psychological states of the speaker.

The structure of Abu Tammām’s poem is carefully crafted, with language transforming into a rhythmic transmutation that mirrors the emotional and spiritual journey of the soul. This transformation is reinforced by the use of *AlBadeea*, which functions on both a conceptual and aesthetic level. The poet’s careful attention to texture and structure creates a layered, emotionally resonant poem that mirrors the internal transitions of the soul.

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In the context of *metamorphosis* as a metaphor, poets often use the concept of transformation in diverse ways. One broad category of metamorphosis as metaphor relates to *emancipation* or *rejuvenation*, symbolizing a shift toward a place of power or renewal. Understanding these metaphoric assumptions helps illuminate the poet's intent in using this metaphor, even if it remains a broad or approximate interpretation of the poem's message.

To further illustrate the use of metamorphosis as a metaphor in Abu Tammām's poetry, I have selected an example that best captures the nuanced, entangled texture of poetic metaphor. This example will serve to demonstrate how metaphors are not only tools for conveying emotional depth but also serve as mechanisms for understanding personal and social transformation.

In conclusion, this study will use Fauconnier and Turner's blending theory to explore the cognitive operations behind Abu Tammām's metaphors of metamorphosis. By delving into the *Spectrum of Imagination* as a conceptual and embodied metaphor, we will gain a deeper understanding of how the poet's craft navigates the complexities of emotional, psychological, and social transitions through the use of metaphorical and conceptual blending.

5. Analysis of the Poem

"A visitor visited me and stirred my madness;

Without him, I would have been in a devastated state.

I was delighted in a gazelle, though far be it

That such a person could be called a mere gazelle.

How can I hope to meet one who dwells in Baghdad

While I am in Egypt? Truly, I hoped for the impossible.

My longing shaped him for my eyes and thoughts,

And for my heart so much so that I accepted the impossible.

I don't think I see you as a figment of imagination,

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Or that my body may turn into a shadowy dream." (abū tammām, (2016), al-dīwān ,p457)

In this poem, Abu Tammām describes the "Encounter" using the metaphor of the beloved woman as a gazelle. This metaphor serves as a tool for disguise, as the poet attempts to uncover the true nature of love by contrasting the illusory encounter with the real one. In this "Encounter" poem, the poet seeks to understand the inner nature of love by juxtaposing the movement of longing with the stillness of tradition. As he says...

"I was delighted in a gazelle, though far be it

That such a person could be called a mere gazelle."

The essential qualities of love soaring and movement abruptly oppose the rootedness of society. The energy of the poet's levitation is transmitted down to the very roots of society like "targeted arrows." The contrast between society and the lover emphasizes the identity of each.

The poem uses numerous words or psychological states that suggest movement, representing physical motion such as: "came to me and stirred," "chased," "flight," "fantasy," "passing," "flow," "unstill," and "arrival." These concepts indicate that "the essential qualities of the lover's heart are flight and movement," which contrast with "the stillness of the obstacles of time and place."

This contrast implies that we understand the lover's heart in the domain of movement, while the body is imprisoned by space and time, existing in a domain of stillness. The poem creates an input space representing the *nafs* (the self) in movement, and a second input space for the body in stillness. Since love and obstacles are imported into the blended space, the conflict between the movement of the *nafs* and the stillness of the body becomes explicit.

In preIslamic Arabic poetry, *nafs*نفس *is r*eferred to the self or person, derived from the root *nfs*, whose basic verbs are *nafusa* نفس"(to estimate, deem, appraise") and *nafisa* ("to long for, feel in need of"). The word *nafas*, meaning "breath," also originates from this root (see Lisān alʿArab, Manzur, root *nfs*). This entry supplies an inclusive survey of the concept of *nafs* in the poem highlighting how all its meanings are inclined toward a fixed response to a particular stimulus, emphasizing connotations of movement.

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These two spaces share a basic structure, represented in the generic space, in which force and action change a base material into something more valuable through their application or agency. In this process, the subjugated lover acted upon can be said to undergo oppression. This can be represented by a force dynamic schema: the force/agent transforms the patient from the stillness of the body to the movement of the *nafs*.

Here, we see the connection between the transmission of the shaking of *nafs* and the feelings, desires, and longings that illuminate the beloved's presence in the imagination. This points to movement, mapped as an image schema of unidirectional motion. However, the conflict between the heart's movement and the stillness of the body this tumultuous disorder becomes explicit in the blended space. It is projected back to the input spaces, reinforcing the relationship between the lover and the tumultuous disorder of time and place: the agent and the patient in energy transmission.

The resolution of the metaphor depends on the reader blending the movement and stillness spaces and directly comparing them. The relevance space contributes to the abstract structure of both worlds, with regard to the points at which they mirror each other in structural relation. This can be represented by a force dynamic schema in which the "agent hunts the lover." So, the space of the censor and the punisher, where "force encumbers the patient," forms the ground for the metaphor, as they are mapped against each other.

It is interesting that the unusual concepts related to the states of feeling"limits of space and time"are understood by the reader in both the domain of stillness (the rootedness of the body) and in the domain of direction (related to the movement of the soul). The receiver's interpretation reflects the conflict in the blended space, where they feel the poet's need to fly away with the soul from censors, envious people, and gossipers. As he says:

"*I don't think I see you as a figment of imagination,*

Or that my body may turn into a shadowy dream."

Here, the poet uses an underlying metaphor of 'metamorphosis' to acquire power through the human emotion of great sadness and embodying it, understanding it through his own metamorphosis. The lover is also playing on the fact that the movement of the soul is a metamorphic state.

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As the poem moves from a state of disturbance and unsettlement, the speaker reconciles with the new state. The speaker transitions from an outsider to an insider, from an objectifying supervisor to an insider observer. This, in turn, influences what will emerge in the blending space, as we understand this empowerment as a metamorphosis. In the semiotic space, it is illocutionally relevant for this utterance in a poem to be construed as signifying something more universal.

The metaphor "metamorphosis is empowerment" feeds back to the input spaces, informed by our contextual knowledge of the poet’s culture and the purpose of poetry. This suggests that Abu Tammām is using the metaphor to exemplify the fact that in one of the previously analyzed examples, the poet insinuates that metamorphosis is a repetitive process: where constellations (which were mythologically metamorphoses) twist themselves back into rain, thus completing a cycle. Along with this example, there are overt instances of metamorphosis as both a repetitive and a renewing force.

In this moment of absorption in place and of place, a conversation is generated in a splitting of self or consciousness.

6. Conclusion

This journey through Abū Tammām's poetry and cognitive theory has profoundly changed how I understand both literature and thought. What began as academic research became personal revelation discovering that ninth century metaphors and modern cognitive science illuminate each other in unexpected ways. Analyzing lines like the "smile of the scabbard" through Fauconnier and Turner's conceptual blending theory revealed poetry as active meaningmaking, not just artistic expression. As an Arabic speaker, I initially struggled to reconcile Western frameworks with my cultural connection to these texts. But gradually, I saw how cognitive theories could deepen rather than distance my appreciation. The moment when abstract concepts suddenly clarified specific verses was exhilarating like finding a key to hidden dimensions of meaning I had sensed but never articulated. This experience has taught me that rigorous analysis need not diminish poetry's power; it can magnify it. The blend of personal heritage and academic theory has left me with a lasting conviction: great poetry endures precisely because it mirrors how all minds create meaning, across centuries and cultures.

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