Blending and characters' mental functioning
in Virginia Woolf's *Lappin and Lapinova*

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ABSTRACT
In this paper I apply Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) theory of Conceptual Integration, or Blending, to the analysis of a central aspect of the main characters' mental lives in Virginia Woolf's story 'Lappin and Lapinova'. The female protagonist of the story, Rosalind, has difficulties adjusting to her role as the new wife of Ernest Thornburn, and therefore constructs an alternative fantasy world where Ernest is a rabbit King called Lappin. At the beginning of their married life, Rosalind and Ernest develop this fantasy world together, and add to it a counterpart for Rosalind herself – a hare called Queen Lapinova. With the passing of time, Ernest loses interest in the fantasy, but Rosalind becomes increasingly dependent on it, so that Ernest's announcement of Lapinova's death at the end of the story also results in the 'end' of their marriage. In my analysis, I show how the 'rabbit' fantasy world can be described in terms of what Fauconnier and Turner (2002) call a conceptual integration network: a dynamic construct resulting from the interaction of different mental spaces and involving the creation of a blended space with 'emergent structure' of its own. In order to account for the different roles that the blended space plays for Rosalind as opposed to Ernest, I adopt Palmer's (2004) distinction between 'intramental' and 'intermental' functioning. I therefore describe the fantasy world as a multiple blend that begins as an intramental construct, develops into an intermental construct, and ends as a largely intramental construct once again, with serious implications for Rosalind's sanity and for the relationship between the two main characters in the story.

KEYWORDS: blending, conceptual integration, fictional minds, text worlds, Virginia Woolf.

1. Introduction: 'Lappin and Lapinova', fictional mental functioning and blending

Virginia Woolf's short story 'Lappin and Lapinova' was first published in 1938, and later included in the 1944 posthumous collection *A Haunted House*. The story deals with some of the themes that are central to Woolf's fictional and critical works, notably women's experience and alienation in the family and society, and mental illness. In this article I discuss the development of the main characters' mental lives throughout the story, focusing particularly on the fantasy world that is initially shared between them, and that gradually becomes a symptom of the female protagonist's increasing detachment from reality. This fantasy world, I will argue, can be usefully described as a complex and dynamic conceptual integration network (Fauconnier and Turner 2002).

The opening paragraph of the story provides a deadpan and rather distanced description of a wedding in London. Only the groom is referred to by name (Ernest Thornburn), and the brief descriptions that are provided of Ernest and 'his bride' (Rosalind) begin to suggest a contrast between them: Ernest is positively described in terms of his external, physical appearance ('Certainly he looked handsome'), while Rosalind is described in terms of a less positive personality trait suggested by her behaviour ('she looked shy') (Woolf 1944: 69).[1] In the second paragraph there is a switch to the representation of Rosalind's consciousness, and free indirect thought presentation is used to reveal how, four days after the wedding, she

(1) had still to get used to the fact that she was Mrs. Ernest Thorburn. Perhaps she never would get used to the fact that she was Mrs. Ernest Anybody, she thought [. . .]' (Woolf 1944: 69)

Rosalind, we discover, finds 'Ernest [. . .] a difficult name to get used to' since it reminds her of overpowering and uncomfortable images associated with 'her mother-in-law's dining room in Porchester Terrace' (Woolf 1944: 69). She therefore starts thinking about the names she would have chosen for her husband, since, in her view, he 'did not look like Ernest either' (Woolf 1944: 69).[2] This rather irrational attitude to personal names triggers a search for an alternative name and identity for Ernest, which will constitute the core of the story's plot:

(2) But what did he look like? She glanced at him sideways. Well, when he was eating toast he looked like a rabbit. Not that anyone else would have seen a likeness to a creature so diminutive and timid in this spruce, muscular young man with the straight nose, the blue eyes, and the very firm mouth. But that made it all the more amusing. His nose twitched very slightly when he ate. So did her pet rabbit's. She kept watching his nose twitch; and then she had to explain, when he caught her looking at him, why she laughed. (Woolf 1944: 69-70).

Rosalind notices a resemblance between her new husband and her pet rabbit— a creature that is not just quite different from Ernest, but also part of her own autobiographical memories of life before marriage. This resemblance is initially based on a specific, visually perceived similarity (nose twitching), and introduced by means of a simile ('when he was eating toast he looked like a rabbit'). Subsequently, however, this similarity is developed into a much richer metaphorical scenario, where Ernest has an alternative identity as a 'King rabbit' named 'Lappin' and Rosalind is a hare called 'Queen Lapinova'.[3] This scenario, as I will show, is initially constructed jointly by the two characters during their honeymoon, and persists as a shared 'private world' (Woolf 1944: 72) for some time in the early stages of their married life. However, while Rosalind becomes progressively more dependent on this alternative version of their identities, Ernest gradually loses interest in it, and finally declares the collapse of the private world by announcing that Lapinova has been caught in a trap and killed.

As this brief summary suggests, 'Lappin and Lapinova' is a highly introspective story, as is typical of Woolf's writing and modernist fiction in general: relatively little 'happens'

by way of external events, and the plot is primarily constituted by changes in the mental lives of the two main characters.[4] Several narratologists have recently proposed that narrative generally should not be defined in terms of sequences of interconnected events, but rather in terms of the projection of the consciousness and subjective experiences of (fictional) individuals. In particular, Fludernik (1996) has defined 'narrativity' in terms of 'experientiality', namely 'the presence of a human protagonist and her experience of events as they impinge on her situation or activities' (Fludernik 1996: 30). Similarly, Palmer (2004) has proposed that 'narrative fiction is, in essence, the presentation of fictional mental functioning' (Palmer 2004: 5). Palmer also points out that narratologists have tended to focus on individual, or 'intramental', cognitive functioning, and have overlooked the fact that narratives also often present the joint cognitive functioning of groups of characters, or, in other words, 'intermental thinking'. As I will show, the private world in 'Lappin and Lapinova' starts off as an intermental construct shared by Rosalind and Ernest, but gradually becomes an intramental phenomenon that is limited to Rosalind, while the couple cease to be the intermental unit they appeared to form during their honeymoon.

The particular nature of the 'private world' that is at the centre of 'Lappin and Lapinova' could be captured, to some extent, by possible-world approaches to narrative fiction, which distinguish between the 'actual domain' in the world of the story and the characters' private 'sub-worlds' (e.g. Ryan 1991). The latter are defined as alternative versions of the actual domain that exist in the minds of characters, and include what Ryan calls 'Fantasy worlds', corresponding to characters' fantasies, dreams, hallucinations and fictional creations (Ryan 1991: 109). Seeing Rosalind and Ernest's 'private world' as a Fantasy sub-world, however, does not capture its most essential characteristic: the fact that, as I will show, it is constituted by a fusion of some aspects of Rosalind and Ernest's 'real' lives and identities with a series of fantasy scenarios populated by rabbits, hares, Kings and Queens, and so on. I will therefore argue that this private world is best seen as a mental space that results from the blending of the characters' own 'reality' with other, imaginary scenarios. It can therefore be argued that the story is about the progressive development, in the characters' minds, of what Fauconnier and Turner (2002) call a conceptual integration network: a dynamic construct resulting from the interaction of different mental spaces and involving the creation of a blended space with 'emergent structure' of its own.

2. Rosalind and Ernest's honeymoon and the intermental establishment of a conceptual integration network

Rosalind's perception of a parallel between Ernest and her pet rabbit occurs during their honeymoon in Switzerland. Extract (2) above shows that, from the start, Rosalind is aware that this is a very idiosyncratic similarity, not just because of the contrast between her husband's physique and that of a rabbit, but also because Ernest's nose twitch is so slight as to be barely noticeable. Indeed, Rosalind herself is not always able to perceive this similarity, which causes her distress at various points in the course of the story. Interestingly, Kövecses (2002) has argued that conventional metaphors that appear to be

grounded in a similarity between source and target domains cannot be said to rely on 'objective', pre-existing similarities, but on 'some nonobjective similarity as perceived by speakers of English' (e.g. between life and gambling games) (Kövecses 2002: 71-2). This, Kövecses points out, 'implies that some metaphors are not based on similarity but generate similarities' (Kövecses 2002: 72; see also Black 1962: 37). In Rosalind's case, the idiosyncratic similarity she perceives appears to be motivated primarily by her need to find an alternative identity for Ernest, and preferably one that links him with her own life and experience before marriage.

Rosalind's own awareness of the incongruity of the comparison between Ernest and her pet rabbit results in laughter, which she explains to her husband as follows:

(3) 'It's because you're like a rabbit, Ernest,' she said. 'Like a wild rabbit,' she added, looking at him. 'A hunting rabbit; a King Rabbit; a rabbit that makes laws for all the other rabbits.' (Woolf 1944: 70)

Although he was not previously aware that his nose twitched, Ernest 'had no objection to being that kind of rabbit' (Woolf 1944: 70), and therefore starts twitching it on purpose, in order to amuse Rosalind. The parallel between Ernest and a rabbit then persists as a shared joke beyond its initial introduction by Rosalind. At lunch time, we discover, Rosalind holds out some lettuce saying 'Lettuce, rabbit?', and Ernest proceeds to nibble the lettuce off her hand, while twitching his nose. Rosalind responds with the words ''Good rabbit, nice rabbit'', and pats his head 'as she used to pat her tame rabbit at home' (Woolf 1944: 70). In spite of this apparent harmony, however, Rosalind is acutely aware of the absurdity of the comparison that is being acted out:

(4) But that was absurd. He was not a tame rabbit, whatever he was. She turned it into French. 'Lapin,' she called him. But whatever he was, he was not a French rabbit. He was simply and solely English—born at Porchester Terrace, educated at Rugby; now a clerk in His Majesty's Civil Service. So she tried 'Bunny' next; but that was worse. 'Bunny' was someone plump and soft and comic; he was thin and hard and serious. Still, his nose twitched. 'Lappin,' she exclaimed suddenly; and gave a little cry as if she had found the very word she looked for.
    'Lappin, Lappin, King Lappin,' she repeated. It seemed to suit him exactly; he was not Ernest, he was King Lappin. Why? She did not know. (Woolf 1944: 70)

In extract (3) Rosalind had already been presented as going beyond the characteristics of 'actual' rabbits in order to find a suitable fantasy identity for Ernest: her initial simile 'like a rabbit' rapidly develops into '[l]ike a wild rabbit, [. . .] [a] hunting rabbit; a King Rabbit; a rabbit that makes laws for all the other rabbits' (Woolf 1944: 70). Unlike 'wild rabbit,' 'hunting rabbit' does not evoke a realistic type of animal, since rabbits are neither carnivorous not predatory; and the subsequent reference to a law-making King rabbit appears to be inspired more by the anthropomorphized animals of fairy tales than by rabbits as actual animals. In extract (4) Rosalind's words are interspersed within a representation of her continued mental struggle to find an appropriate name and metaphorical image for Ernest as a rabbit. While Ernest's quintessential Englishness rules out the French word for 'rabbit', his physique and personality are incompatible with the

associations of the English word 'bunny'. The name Rosalind finally settles for is a Russian-sounding conversion of the French 'Lapin'.

In making sense of Rosalind's speech and thought at this point, readers need to imagine that she is struggling to combine her perception of Ernest's characteristics with an appropriate set of rabbit characteristics in order to arrive at a coherent single alternative representation of her husband. Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) notion of 'conceptual integration network' can provide a useful account of the kind of cognitive process readers need to attribute to Rosalind, and therefore go through themselves, in order to make sense of her mental functioning at this point in the story.

Rosalind's initial perception of a similarity between Ernest and her pet rabbit can be captured in terms of a simple conceptual integration network, consisting of four spaces: a source input space containing a (male) rabbit which has the (rabbit-like) characteristic of twitching its nose; a target 'reality' input space containing Ernest and his (perceived) characteristic of twitching his nose; a generic space containing a male creature whose nose twitches; and a blend where Ernest is a rabbit whose nose twitches. Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 40) describe mental spaces as 'small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action'. Mental spaces are connected to schematic structures in background knowledge. At this point in the story, Rosalind's mental struggle arises from the fact that the source input space is initially modelled on her autobiographical memory of her pet rabbit, and general schematic knowledge of 'real' rabbits. This knowledge does not provide any further suitable correspondences with Ernest's characteristics, and therefore does not allow her to develop the network successfully beyond the 'nose-twitch' parallel. Indeed, Fauconnier and Turner emphasize that the process of blending is not arbitrary: 'Not just any discordant combination can be projected to the blend' (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 24).

Conceptual integration networks can include more than four input spaces, however, resulting in 'multiple blends' (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 279ff.). Rosalind's mental effort in finding a suitable alternative identity for Ernest can be seen as involving the introduction of further source input spaces alongside the 'rabbit' space in her developing conceptual integration network. In particular, the expressions 'hunting rabbit' and 'King Rabbit' suggest two further input spaces: one containing a (male) hunter (henceforth the 'hunting' input space), and one containing a King (henceforth, the 'monarchy' input space). A single highly schematic generic space, containing a male creature, is shared by these three input spaces and by the target 'reality' space (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 283). In Fauconnier and Turner's model, multiple-space networks such as this can also include 'local' generic spaces that are shared by only some of the spaces in the network: for example, the 'rabbit' space and the 'reality' space share a generic space containing a nose-twitching male creature; the 'monarchy' space and the 'reality' space share a generic space containing a powerful male creature, and so on (Fauconnier and Turner 2002: 282).

More importantly, the inhabitants of each of these source input spaces are mapped onto each other and onto Ernest in the 'reality' target space, resulting in a blend where Ernest

is a hunting King rabbit. Each of the source input spaces provides to the blend some of the characteristics that Rosalind perceives in Ernest, or wishes to attribute to him. The 'rabbit' space provides the nose-twitch, and the link with a particular animal from Rosalind's pre-marital life (this could be seen as an episodic, personal memory that feeds into the 'rabbit' space). The 'hunting' space provides a prototypically male behaviour that can metaphorically correspond to the role of being the main provider in a family, being physically strong, aggressive, and so on (these characteristics can of course also apply to sexual behaviour). The 'monarchy' space provides the notion of power and control over others, as well as the expectation of reverence and respect. Indeed, the choice of the Russian-sounding name 'Lappin' could be seen as resulting from one of the long-term memory structures that may be linked with the 'monarchy' input space in the character's mind (when the story was written, Russia had only recently ceased to be ruled by the Tsars).

The space that results from the blending of the three source inputs with the target is highly creative and idiosyncratic, since it includes a single individual with conflicting properties (e.g. being a rabbit conflicts with being a hunter). On the other hand, the relative naturalness of the blend (for this reader, at least) may result from the fact that we are familiar with similar, more conventional blends from fairy tales, where anthropomorphised animals have human-like social structures (e.g. monarchs, laws), and characteristics that their real-world counterparts do not necessarily have. As I will show in the course of the paper, Rosalind's particular 'rabbit' blend develops its own emergent structure, as she and Ernest turn it into a richly furnished narrative scenario.

The notion of a conceptual integration network is particularly apt to capture the creative and dynamic nature of Rosalind's mental construct, which develops over time from an initial intuition. Importantly, the search for appropriate material in the source input spaces is driven by material in the target input space (Ernest's perceived characteristics) – a process that cannot be properly accounted for by approaches to metaphor involving the unidirectional mapping of material from source to target domain. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) also stress that blends contribute to the achievement of 'human scale', by compressing complex and disparate scenarios and relations into simpler ones that are cognitively more manageable. In 'Lappin and Lapinova', Rosalind cannot cope with her own 'reality', and particularly her new married identity. The blend enables her to transform this reality into a simpler alternative scenario that she can cope with, because of the way identities are changed and because of its crucial, if tenuous, link with her pre-marital life.

Up to this point in the story, all initiative for the development of the 'rabbit' conceptual network has come from Rosalind. In the paragraph following the 'naming' of King Lappin, the narrator tells us that, when 'there was nothing new to talk about [. . .] she let her fancy play with the story of the Lappin tribe' who 'became very real, very vivid, very amusing' (Woolf 1944: 70-1). For the first time, Ernest is then presented as actively joining in her imaginative enterprise:

(5) Ernest put down the paper and helped her. There were the black rabbits and the red; there were the enemy rabbits and the friendly. There were the wood in which they

lived and the outlying prairies and the swamp. Above all there was King Lappin, who, far from having only the one trick—that he twitched his nose—became as the days passed an animal of the greatest character; Rosalind was always finding new qualities in him. But above all he was a great hunter. (Woolf 1944: 71)

In Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) terms, Rosalind and Ernest are here jointly exploiting the conceptual network's potential by adding structure to the blend. In particular, the presence of rabbits of different colours is projected from the 'rabbit' space into the blend, while the notion of friendly and enemy groups can be recruited from the 'monarchy' space. Although, at the end of extract (5), the joint imaginative enterprise appears to be led by Rosalind ('Rosalind was always finding new qualities in him'), the bulk of the extract represents words and ideas that can be attributed to *both* characters. In Palmer's (2004) terms, at this point Rosalind and Ernest appear to form an intermental unit, and the conceptual integration network is a joint, intermental construct.

In the following paragraph, Rosalind asks Ernest a question about what 'the King' had been doing that day. In his response, Ernest takes the initiative in creatively extending the blend:

(6) 'To–day,' said Ernest, twitching his nose as he bit the end off his cigar, 'he chased a hare.' He paused; struck a match, and twitched again.
    'A woman hare,' he added.
    'A white hare!' Rosalind exclaimed, as if she had been expecting this. 'Rather a small hare; silver grey; with big bright eyes?'
    'Yes,' said Ernest, looking at her as she had looked at him, 'a smallish animal; with eyes popping out of her head, and two little front paws dangling.' It was exactly how she sat, with her sewing dangling in her hands; and her eyes, that were so big and bright, were certainly a little prominent.
    'Ah, Lapinova,' Rosalind murmured.
    'Is that what she's called?' said Ernest—'the real Rosalind?' He looked at her. He felt very much in love with her.
    'Yes; that's what she's called,' said Rosalind. 'Lapinova.' And before they went to bed that night it was all settled. He was King Lappin; she was Queen Lapinova. They were the opposite of each other; he was bold and determined; she wary and undependable. He ruled over the busy world of rabbits; her world was a desolate, mysterious place, which she ranged mostly by moonlight. All the same, their territories touched; they were King and Queen. (Woolf 1944: 71)

In Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) terms, Ernest's first utterance in this extract involves the 'elaboration' or 'running' of the blend: he modifies it creatively by imagining things happening within it – in this case King Lappin hunting a hare.[5] King Lappin's behaviour here comes from the 'hunting' input space, but, crucially, the creature that he is presented as hunting is first described as a 'hare' and then as a 'woman hare'. The latter expression is itself a blend of two elements that are each compatible with one of the input spaces in the network, namely the 'reality' space and the 'rabbit' space respectively: hares are similar to rabbits, while 'woman' can be interpreted as an implicit reference to Rosalind. In other words, the new entity that is added to the blended space is constructed as a fusion

of three elements that can be added to three of the spaces in the network respectively: a hunted creature in the 'hunting' source space, a hare in the 'rabbit' source space and Rosalind in the 'reality' target space.

At this point Rosalind intervenes, and the two characters flesh out the hare's characteristics together, by combining some of Rosalind's characteristics (shyness, smallness, eyes that are large and slightly prominent, the fact that she has her sewing dangling from her hands) with some of the possible characteristics of a hare (small, white/silver grey, with big, bright eyes popping out of her head, and its front paws dangling). The husband-wife relationship between Ernest and Rosalind in the target input space triggers the addition of a Queen in the 'monarchy' input space, which is then projected into the blend. The name of the hunted Queen hare in the blend is then derived from her husband's in the way that is typical of Russian names. This results in 'Queen Lapinova', who, as Rosalind confirms to Ernest's question, is for her 'the real Rosalind'. It is interesting to notice how, as a result of the contrasts between the three source input spaces, Queen Lapinova's characteristics in the blend override those of real hares: real-world hares are stronger and faster than rabbits, and are certainly not hunted by them. In the final three sentences of extract (6), Lappin and Lapinova are finally described as 'the opposite of each other', and a contrast is set up between them both in terms of personality ('bold and determined' vs. 'wary and undependable') and in terms of activities (ruling over other rabbits in the daytime vs. ranging alone in a 'desolate and mysterious place' at night-time). In Fauconnier and Turner's terms (2002: 299ff.), the result of the integration of the three source input spaces and the target input space is a 'multiple-scope' blend, since the input spaces have different structures, and the blend inherits some structure from each of them.

Readers familiar with Woolf's writings can easily detect her social critique in the way the conceptual integration network is constructed: the contrast between Lappin and Lapinova clearly exposes gender inequalities and stereotypical perceptions of male and female characteristics. In the first part of the story, however, the two characters develop the network together, so that the blend is (at least partly) an intermental construct suggesting some degree of harmony. The fact that they spend a lot of time imagining a fantasy version of their relationship may suggest that their 'real' relationship is somewhat limited, of course, but at the same time they construct the blend in such a way that, in spite of their differences, 'their territories touched'. Extract (6) also contains the only sentence in the whole story that appears to give us direct access to Ernest's individual mind: 'He felt very much in love with her'. The last four sentences of the extract can also be interpreted as a free indirect representation of speech that is attributed to both characters, suggesting their intermental convergence at this point in the story.

3. Further inter- and intramental developments in the conceptual integration network

After their honeymoon, Rosalind and Ernest are presented as possessing 'a private world, inhabited, save for one white hare, entirely by rabbits' (Woolf 1944: 72). Although the uniqueness of a single hare among rabbits may suggest Rosalind's alienation from other

people (including Ernest), at this stage it appears that the conceptual integration network is becoming entrenched in both characters' minds, and that it acts as a source of intimacy and complicity. The narration describes how Rosalind and Ernest look and wink at each other when anybody mentions rabbits, so that they feel, 'more even than most young married couples, in league together against the rest of the world' (Woolf 1944: 72). They also continue to develop collaboratively the emergent structure of the blend, by adding to the 'rabbit' source space characters drawn from their general knowledge of the countryside (e.g. 'a gamekeeper, or a poacher, or a Lord of the Manor') and matching them with members of Ernest's family in the 'reality' target space (e.g. 'Ernest's mother, Mrs. Reginald Thorburn, for example, fitted the part of the Squire to perfection') (Woolf 1944: 72).

From this point of the story onwards, however, the narration focuses only on Rosalind's intramental cognitive functioning. This reveals her isolation from other characters, and the increasingly central role that the conceptual integration network plays in her mental life:

(7) Without that world, how, Rosalind wondered, that winter could she have lived at all? (Woolf 1944: 72)

The presentation of this reflection on Rosalind's part is followed by a lengthy representation, from her internal point of view, of Ernest's parents' golden-wedding party. The party is described as a large and overwhelming event, during which Rosalind felt acutely uncomfortable and out of place. At one point, for example, she remembers the note she received from her mother-in-law on her engagement to Ernest ('My son will make you happy'), and goes on to reflect bitterly on this memory:

(8) No, she was not happy. Not at all happy. She looked at Ernest, straight as a ramrod with a nose like all the noses in the family portraits; a nose that never twitched at all. (Woolf 1944: 73)

Rosalind's deep sense of alienation leads her to an unusually lucid assessment of her actual emotional state, and is marked by her inability to perceive in Ernest the behaviour that had originally triggered the parallel with her pet rabbit and the construction of the whole conceptual integration network. As a consequence, she is also unable to switch from the (uncomfortable) 'real' situation she inhabits to the private world within which she feels comfortable and at ease.

Rosalind's discomfort and isolation at this point are repeatedly expressed via similes and metaphors that are very different from the rabbit scenario: as an only child and orphan, Rosalind feels 'a mere drop among all those Thorburns assembled in the great drawing-room' (Woolf 1944: 73); during dinner, she 'seemed insoluble as an icicle' (Woolf 1944: 74); and, as the room gets warmer, the icicle metaphor is used again to suggest Rosalind's increasing sense of her own insignificance:

(9) She felt that her icicle was being turned to water. She was being melted; dispersed; dissolved into nothingness; and would soon faint. (Woolf 1944: 74)

At this point, two of the dinner guests start talking about rabbits, and Rosalind's perception of her surroundings is immediately transformed:

(10)   At that word, that magic word, she revived. Peeping between the chrysanthemums she saw Ernest's nose twitch. It rippled, it ran with successive twitches. And at that a mysterious catastrophe befell the Thorburns. The golden table became a moor with the gorse in full bloom; the din of voices turned to one peal of lark's laughter ringing down from the sky. It was a blue sky—clouds passed slowly. And they had all been changed—the Thorburns. (Woolf 1944: 74).

The mere mention of rabbits suddenly enables Rosalind to perceive once again the similarity between Ernest and a rabbit and this, in turn, triggers the activation of the blended space that constitutes her private world: her perception of the room is therefore transformed into the kind of natural scenario in which Lappin and Lapinova live. In the rest of the paragraph, Rosalind creatively elaborates the blend by attributing alternative identities to the various members of Ernest's family: her father-in-law, who has a passion for collecting things, becomes a poacher; one of her sisters-in-law 'who always nosed out other people's secrets' becomes 'a white ferret with pink eyes'; and her mother-in-law, 'whom they dubbed The Squire,' now appears to Rosalind as '[f]lushed, coarse, a bully', but also as a fragile part of 'a world that had ceased to exist', and as an object of hatred to her own children (Woolf 1944: 74-5). In Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) terms, the blend has become an entrenched part of Rosalind's mental life, but is still dynamically connected to the inputs within the network, so that new material can be added to the input spaces and projected into the blend.

This vivid running of the blend, which occupies Rosalind's mind until the end of the evening, is represented in a way that may lead to important inferences on the part of readers. In contrast to what appears to be the case in the narration of the characters' honeymoon, the mind through which we experience the golden-wedding party is Rosalind's only, and the activation and running of the blend is here an exclusively intramental event. Rosalind is never presented as interacting with Ernest during the party, and no access is given to his mind. This may be interpreted as an indication that the intermental harmony between Rosalind and Ernest is gradually diminishing, and cannot be recreated particularly when the couple are with Ernest's family, leaving Rosalind to feel vulnerable and isolated. Secondly, the progressive construction of Rosalind's mental functioning may lead readers to attribute to her the symptoms of incipient depression or mental disturbance.

Turner (2003) has compellingly argued that a crucial ability of human beings is that of operating simultaneously in different 'stories': we are able to function in our immediate surroundings (our 'real' story) while at the same time imagining ourselves in a different place and time; in some cases we may also blend the two stories into a third story. However, the minds that are described in Turner's examples are always able to distinguish between 'real' and 'imaginary' stories, and to operate successfully in the former while indulging in the latter. This is not the case with Rosalind, who cannot cope

with her 'real' story and can barely function within it. The blended scenario provides the only version of Rosalind's reality in which she feels comfortable, so that, in the golden-wedding scene, it entirely replaces her immediate surroundings and becomes the only 'reality' that Rosalind mentally inhabits. This inability to cope with her 'real' life if not through a fantastic scenario is what may lead readers to conclude that Rosalind's initial difficulties as a new wife have progressively developed into some form of mental disturbance.[6]

A potentially crucial textual signal of how Rosalind is losing touch with her own 'reality' is a rephrasing in a reference to her towards the end of the description of the golden-wedding dinner: 'Rosalind—that is Lapinova' (Woolf 1944: 75). The names of members of the blend appear again in narratorial references to the characters in the following extract, where Rosalind and Ernest are driving home after the party:

(11)   'Oh, King Lappin!' she cried as they went home together in the fog, 'if your nose hadn't twitched just at that moment, I should have been trapped!'
         'But you're safe,' said King Lappin, pressing her paw.
         'Quite safe,' she answered.
         And they drove back through the Park, King and Queen of the marsh, of the mist, and of the gorse–scented moor. (Woolf 1944: 75)

From the very beginning of the story, the direct speech stretches attributed to Rosalind showed her addressing her husband as 'King' or 'King Lappin'. However, prior to this point in the narrative, the blended space that exists in the characters' minds has been kept clearly separate from the 'main narrative space' (Dancygier 2004), which corresponds to the Rosalind and Ernest's 'reality' within the world of the story. This has been reflected in all references to characters up to this point. The switch from 'Rosalind' to 'Lapinova' at the end of the golden-wedding scene is followed, in extract (11), by a narratorial reference to Ernest as 'King Lappin', and to Rosalind's hand as 'her paw'. The use of referential expressions from the blend in the narration can be explained as the result of a further blending of the 'rabbit' blended space with the main narrative space (see Dancygier 2004). This may suggest that Rosalind has progressively lost a sense of the ontological separation between her 'reality' and the 'rabbit' blended space, so that she is at times only mentally aware of the latter. As a consequence, the readers' own access to the story's actual world is also filtered through the blend, and increasing doubts may arise over the reliability of the narration itself. Crucially, Ernest's response to Rosalind in extract (11) is too brief and ambiguous to allow us to infer much about the degree of intermental convergence between the characters at this point in the story.

4. Time passing and the loss of intermental functioning

The part of the story that I quoted as extract (11) is followed by a temporal shift to a winter's night years after the day of the golden-wedding party. After Ernest has come home from the office, Rosalind starts to recount her own day's activities within what is clearly the 'rabbit' blended space ('I was crossing the stream when —'). Ernest interrupts her with the question 'What stream?' and reacts to her description of the location of the

stream with the words: 'What the deuce are you talking about?' (Woolf 1944: 76). Rosalind is distressed by his reaction, but eventually manages to involve him in the fantasy once again:

(12)   'My dear Ernest!' she cried in dismay. 'King Lappin,' she added, dangling her little front paws in the firelight. But his nose did not twitch. Her hands—they turned to hands—clutched the stuff she was holding; her eyes popped half out of her head. It took him five minutes at least to change from Ernest Thorburn to King Lappin; and while she waited she felt a load on the back of her neck, as if somebody were about to wring it. At last he changed to King Lappin; his nose twitched; and they spent the evening roaming the woods much as usual. (Woolf 1944: 76)

What Palmer (2004) calls the 'continuing-consciousness frame' leads us to assume that the characters' individual mental functioning continued during the time that the narration provides no detail for. However, the conversation that takes place between Rosalind and Ernest suggests that the 'rabbit' private world played different roles in their respective mental lives: Ernest clearly struggles to remember it, and only appears to become involved in it after much effort on Rosalind's part; on the other hand, the blend still seems to play a central part in Rosalind's mental life, as suggested by the casual way in which she introduces it in conversation, her distress at Ernest's initial incomprehension, and the continued use of referential expressions drawn from the blended space in stretches of narration ('her little front paws', 'roaming the woods as much as usual'). While the blend appears to be both entrenched and dynamically developing in Rosalind's mind, its memory has clearly faded in Ernest's, so that the characters' struggle to achieve the intermental functioning that Rosalind clearly needs.[7] The description of activities in the blend provides further clues as to the kind of relief that Rosalind finds within it: while the real Rosalind is sitting at home sewing, Queen Lapinova moves freely in the countryside ('I was crossing the stream'); and while the two characters' 'real' daily lives are quite different from each other, Lappin and Lapinova are presented as habitually sharing the same activities ('roaming the woods much as usual').

That night, we are told, Rosalind 'slept badly'. In the middle of the night, she wakes up, looks at Ernest sleeping, and notices that his nose does not twitch. This causes her to panic about whether it has ever twitched, whether he really is Ernest and whether she is really married to him. She is assailed by memories of her in-laws' golden-wedding party, and finally wakes Ernest up, by calling him 'Lappin, King Lappin!'. When he wakes up and demands an explanation, she simply says: 'I thought my rabbit was dead' (Woolf 1944: 76). This time, Ernest refers to what Rosalind is saying as 'rubbish', and tells her to go back to sleep.

The following paragraphs describe what appears to be further signs of Rosalind's mental disturbances. She curls up and lies awake in bed 'like a hare in its form' (Woolf 1944: 77), and appears to slip into a nightmare where she is hunted by hounds. The following day, she can 'settle to nothing' (Woolf 1944: 77), she feels as though her body and her rooms have shrunk, and as if the shape of the furniture has changed. When she goes out, the interior of each of the houses she passes seems to contain a replay of her in-laws' golden-wedding dinner, and the sight of a stuffed hare in the National History Museum

makes her 'shiver all over' (Woolf 1944: 77). After returning home, she switches into the 'rabbit' fantasy, but she finds that she is unable to move within it beyond the stream: in Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) terms, she can no longer successfully 'run' the blend. She then interprets a sudden noise as the crack of a gun, but it turns out that it was actually Ernest turning the key in the door. The story ends after with the following conversation between the two characters:

(13)   'Sitting in the dark?' he said.
         'Oh, Ernest, Ernest!' she cried, starting up in her chair.
         'Well, what's up now?' he asked briskly, warming his hands at the fire.
         'It's Lapinova . . .' she faltered, glancing wildly at him out of her great startled eyes. 'She's gone, Ernest. I've lost her!'
         Ernest frowned. He pressed his lips tight together. 'Oh, that's what's up, is it?' he said, smiling rather grimly at his wife. For ten seconds he stood there, silent; and she waited, feeling hands tightening at the back of her neck.
         'Yes,' he said at length. 'Poor Lapinova. . .' He straightened his tie at the looking–glass over the mantelpiece.
         'Caught in a trap,' he said, 'killed,' and sat down and read the newspaper.
         So that was the end of that marriage. (Woolf 1944: 78)

Although the words 'gone' and 'lost' in Rosalind's direct speech are partly ambiguous, there is little doubt that she needs confirmation that Ernest still shares the fantasy, so that she can renew it in her own imagination. The narrative descriptions of the two characters' behaviour at this point emphasize the contrast in their emotional involvement in the situation: Rosalind 'cried', 'faltered, glancing wildly at him out of her great startled eyes'; Ernest 'asked briskly, warming his hands by the fire' and then smiled 'rather grimly at his wife'. The subsequent description of his behaviour suggests that he reflects for a moment on how best to reply before deciding to pronounce Lapinova dead in a trap.

Because we have no access to Ernest's mind during this conversation, a range of different motives and attitudes may be attributed to him: does he realize what his utterance means to Rosalind? Does he think that the fantasy has gone far enough and should be stopped? Does he feel that the fantasy should be ended for Rosalind's own good? Is he simply going along with what Rosalind has said by providing an explanation for why she has 'lost' Lapinova? In any case, his attitude appears to be relaxed and casual, since he is described as adjusting his tie while he talks and then as sitting down to read the newspaper.

The story's final sentence is also interpretatively open-ended: minimally, it suggests that, from that point on, there was no more intimacy and complicity between the two characters; however, readers may well imagine that Rosalind descended further into insanity, and they may even contemplate more radical consequences of her realization that the private world has collapsed (such as that she left Ernest or killed herself). But why should this be the case? As we have seen in the course of the analysis, Rosalind has not simply become dependent on the fantasy, but is also dependent on Ernest's intermental involvement with it in order to be able to access it herself. In many ways, therefore, Palmer's claim that 'a large amount of the subject matter of novels is the

formation and breakdown of intermental systems' (Palmer 2004: 163-4) captures an important part of the subject matter of this story. In addition, Rosalind seems to have lost a proper sense of the ontological distinction between the source and target input spaces in the network, and between the blend and her own reality. Consequently, we can imagine that, in Rosalind's mind, the death of Lapinova in the blend gets projected back into the target input space, which corresponds to her own reality as Rosalind. If Lapinova is dead, she is also metaphorically 'dead', and her life can therefore no longer continue as it had previously. The role that the conceptual integration network has in Rosalind's mental life means that, whatever happens to Lapinova, also happens to her, and that life without the possibility of identification with Lapinova is impossible.

5. Concluding remarks

Fauconnier and Turner's notion of conceptual integration has proved to be a useful explanatory tool in the analysis of the creative mental construct that is at the centre of Virginia Woolf's 'Lappin and Lapinova'. In particular, the non-arbitrary nature of blending explains Rosalind's struggle to develop her initial intuition into a satisfactory alternative to her 'reality'; the notion that input spaces are formed on the basis of a combination of background knowledge and current stimuli explains the way in which a range of different elements, characteristics and relations coalesce into a single private world; the idea that blending allows the achievement of 'human scale' accounts for how this private world reduces Rosalind's reality to a 'scale' that is appropriate for her; the notion of emergent structure (especially the 'running' of the blend) and the idea that blends remain attached to the rest of the network explain the dynamic development of the private world in the course of the story, as well as the fact that Lapinova's death in the blend dramatically affects the character's perception of the 'real' world; and the notion that conceptual integration networks can become partly entrenched explains its persistence in the characters' minds (and Rosalind's in particular) and the fact that some of its central elements and relations remain unchanged throughout.

Another advantage of the application of blending theory is that I have been able to describe a particularly salient and imaginative instance of literary creativity in terms of a cognitive process that, according to Fauconnier and Turner (2002) accounts for many different types of creativity across many different domains, including very basic mental operations. More specifically, I have accounted for cognitive processes and representations that need to be attributed to fictional characters in terms of processes and representations that, if Fauconnier and Turner are right, are central to the mental lives of all human beings. As narratologists emphasize, we primarily construct fictional characters' mental functioning in terms of what we know about the workings of 'real' minds (e.g. see Margolin 2003, Palmer 2004: 175ff.).

The fact that the processes I have analysed in terms of conceptual integration have to be attributed to fictional characters means that 'Lappin and Lapinova' is different from the examples of blended stories that are discussed, for example, by Turner (2003). Turner's examples are narratives where 'input stories with different (and often clashing)

organizing frames [. . .] are blended into a third story whose organizing frame includes parts of each of the input organizing frames'. These include the temptation of Adam and Eve in *Genesis* and *The Dream of the Rood* (Turner 2003: 128). In 'Lappin and Lapinova', in contrast, a blended story is presented as part of the mental functioning of the main characters, so that readers have to construct the blend as part of their ongoing construction and assessment of the characters' mental lives within the world of the story. This, as I have shown, leads to inferences concerning the characters' concerns, emotional states, mental balance and mutual relationship. More specifically, the relationship between Rosalind and Ernest is marked by the development of the conceptual integration network from an intramental construct to an intermental construct, and finally to a construct that has two different intramental roles and realisations.

My analysis has not been without problems, however (for more general critiques of Blending theory, see Gibbs 2000 and Ritchie 2004). At various points, the complexity of the story raised analytical issues that could have been dealt with in more than one way, or that have not explicitly been dealt with in work on Blending theory so far. In my analysis I included three source input spaces in the conceptual integration network (the 'rabbit' space, the 'monarchy' space and the 'hunting' space). More source input spaces could have been postulated, however: for example, an 'English country life' input space could have been included to cater for the projection of roles such as a gamekeeper and a poacher into the blend (in my analysis, these characters are seen as additions to the 'rabbit' space from background knowledge of one of the environments that rabbits live in). When dealing with lengthy and complex texts such as literary narratives, analysts have to strike a difficult balance between exhaustively capturing the potential richness of the text and producing analyses that are reasonably economical and comprehensible. An equally important issue is how to cater for information that cannot easily be represented in terms of mental spaces. This applies to a crucial element of Woolf's story, namely characters' proper names and their associations. Rosalind reflects on the inadequacies of 'Ernest' and 'Lapin' before enthusiastically settling for 'Lappin' as her husband's alternative name. Indeed the names 'Lappin' and 'Lapinova' are an important element of the blend (as well as providing the story's title), but it is somewhat difficult to do justice to their significance within an analysis in terms of mental spaces and conceptual integration.

Another issue is that of the function of the generic space: is it necessary to postulate further additions to the generic space as the network develops, or is it sufficient to include it as a minimal structure which allows the initial setting up of the whole network? Here I have adopted the latter option, since I could not see any analytical advantages in continuing to discuss further developments of the various generic spaces in the network (see Ritchie 2004 for a discussion of this issue). Finally, a further problematic but promising area is the use of a mental-space model to account for the projection of viewpoint in fiction (e.g. Sanders and Redeker 1996, Semino 2003, Dancygier 2004, in press). In my analysis, I have drawn from Dancygier (2004) in order to explain the narrator's use of referential expressions such as 'King Lappin' as the result of the blending of the main narrative space with a character's private mental space. The initial

work that has been done so far suggests that the study of viewpoint in narratives would greatly benefit from a comprehensive treatment in terms of mental spaces.

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Notes

[1] All references are to the 1944 edition of the collection, published by The Hogarth Press. The author and editors are grateful to the Society of Authors for granting permission to reproduce extracts from the story as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Virginia Woolf. Readers unfamiliar with the story and

unwilling to make a trip to the library will be able to find several reproductions of the text on the World Wide Web.

[2] Rosalind's attitude to the name 'Ernest' and to the relationship between names and identity intertextually evokes Oscar Wilde's play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, where Gwendolen will only agree to mary someone called 'Ernest'. Woolf's story is quite different from Wilde's play, however, in the way in which it conducts a critique of marriage and social conventions.

[3] The character's adoption of animal identities has some autobiographical resonance, since Woolf and her husband are known to have invented animal names and identities for each other (King 1994: 211-2).

[4] See Lowe (1999) for a study of viewpoint in the story and of readers' perceptions of the two main characters.

[5] Interestingly, as he talks, Ernest is described as twitching his nose twice, thereby exhibiting, for Rosalind's sake, the behaviour that triggered the conceptual integration network in the first place.

[6] Readers' knowledge about the role of mental illness in Woolf's own life and death may of course contribute to this inference.

[7] Once again, it is interesting that Ernest's initial incomprehension momentarily prevents Rosalind from seeing his nose twitch and thereby from activating the conceptual integration network.