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Mental spaces and conceptual blending

Gilles Fauconnier & Mark Turner

155 Donner Lab

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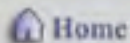
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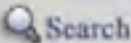


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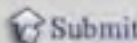
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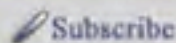
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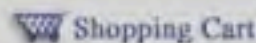
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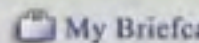
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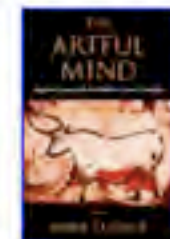
"Frame Blending." 2008. In [*Frames, Corpora, and Knowledge Representation*](#), edited by Rema Rossini Favretti. Bologna: Bononia University Press. 13-32. [Pdf of draft](#). [CSN version](#).



"The Way We Imagine." In Ilona Roth, editor, [*Imaginative Minds. Proceedings of the British Academy*](#). London: Oxford University Press & the British Academy. [Pdf of draft](#).



"The Art of Compression" in [*The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity*](#). Edited by Mark Turner. Oxford University Press, October 2006. [Zipped pdf version](#).



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Abstract:

The invention of each new communications technology has brought new opportunities for understanding the self by blending our vague, diffuse notions of self over time with our notion of self as a user of the technology. These technologies include semaphore signaling systems, signed language, telegraphy, personal letter writing, telephony, radio, television, e-mail, and chat rooms. We know our technologies better than we know ourselves. Our communications technologies are designed to operate at human scale and are therefore at the center of what we know best. Accordingly, we think of ourselves in terms of them, by blending our general concept of ourselves with our understanding of how the communications technology works.

Keywords: conceptual integration, blending, technology, identity, cognitive science

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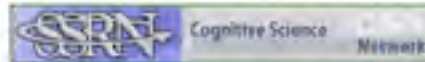
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I study the nature and emergence of higher-order cognitive operations that distinguish human beings from other species and appear in the record of our descent during the Upper Paleolithic.

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["Categorization of Time and Space Through Language."](#) [Foundation For Polish Science](#), Serock near Warsaw, Poland, 25-28 February 2009.

["Big-Time Morality: The Cognitive Science of Moral Considerations Across Space and Time."](#) National Humanities Center symposium on "Autonomy, Singularity, Creativity." 14 November 2008.

[Slavic Cognitive Linguistics Association](#), University of Chicago, 12-14 October 2007.

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 28 September 2007.

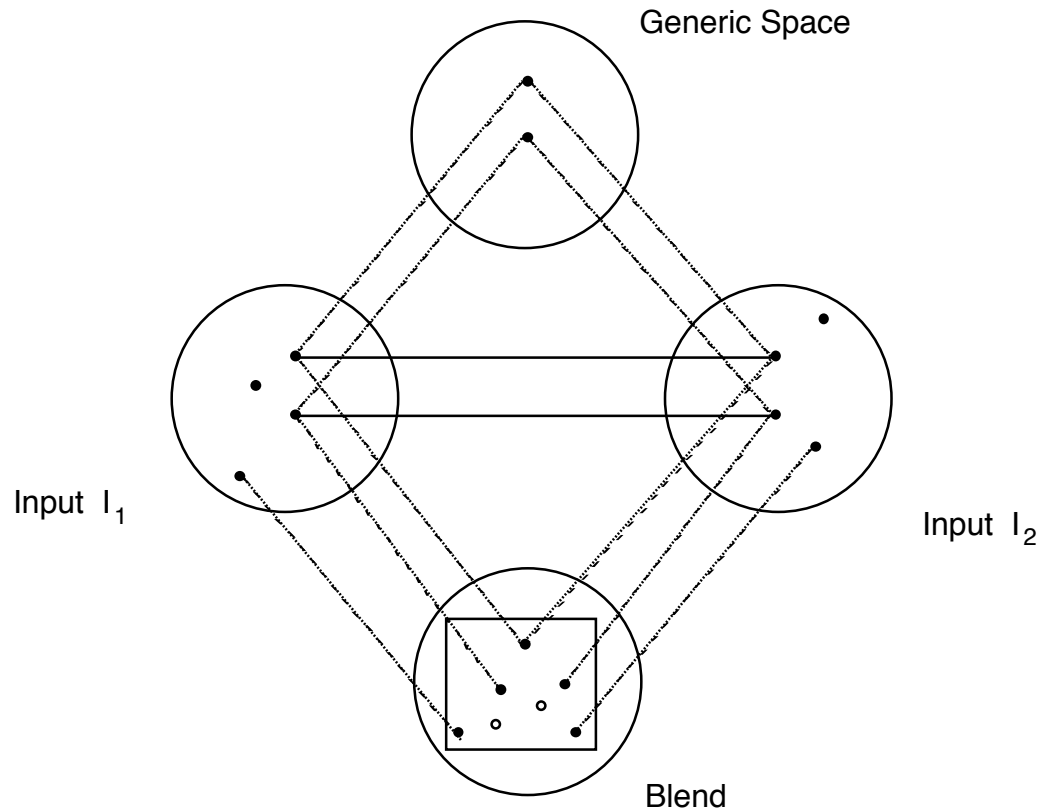
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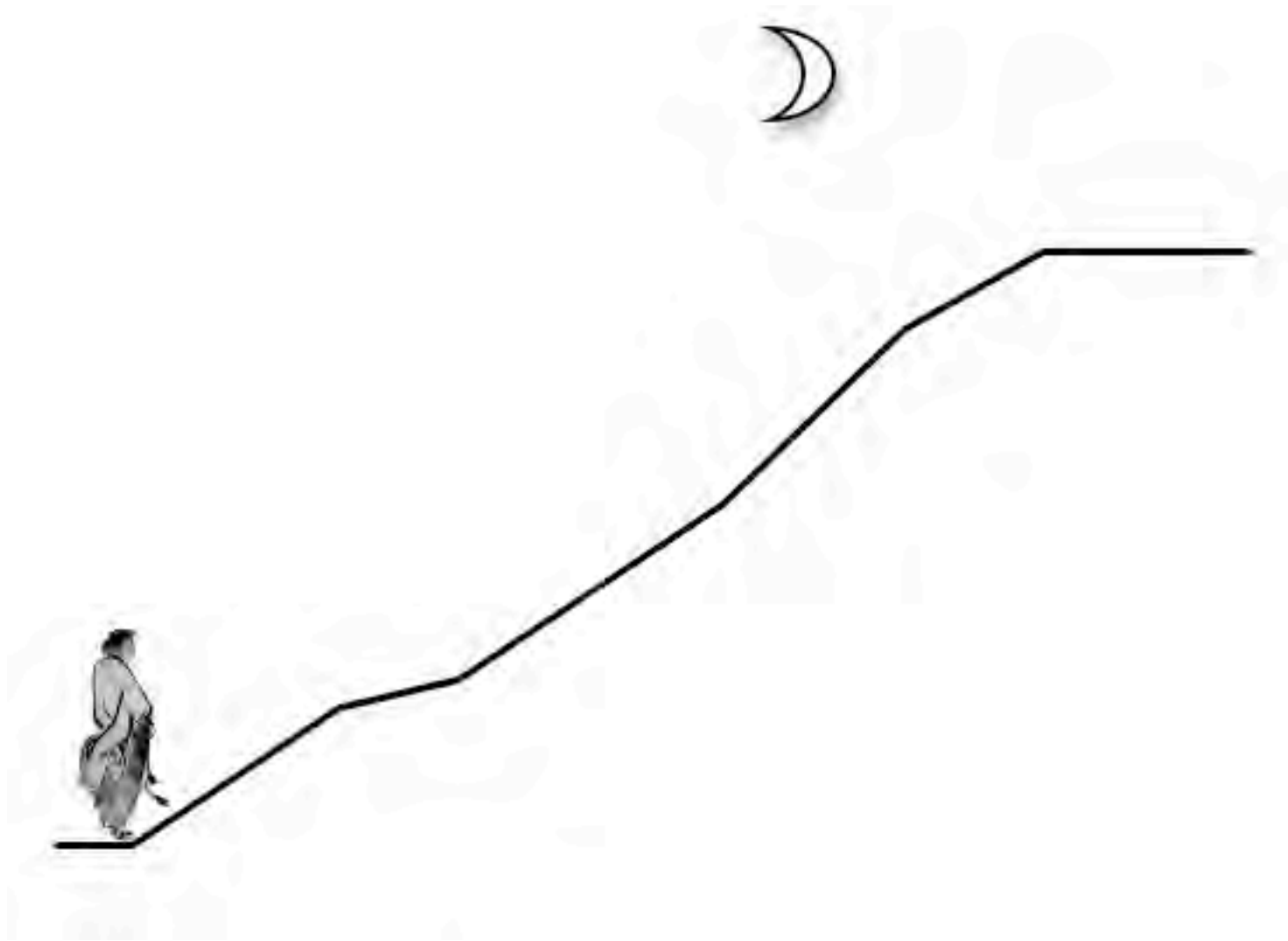
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Riddle: is there a place on the path which the monk occupies at the same hour of the day on the two separate journeys?

The riddle of the Buddhist Monk

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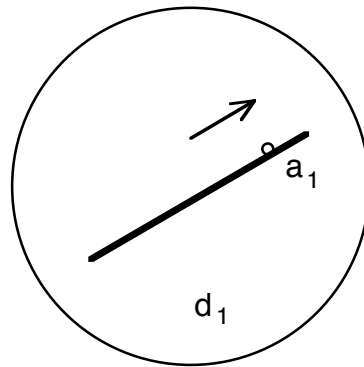


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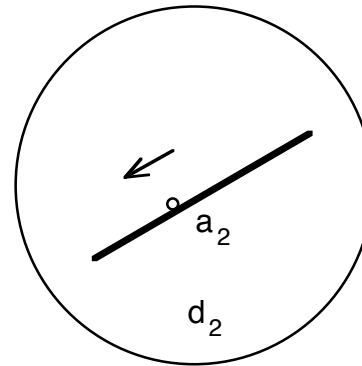
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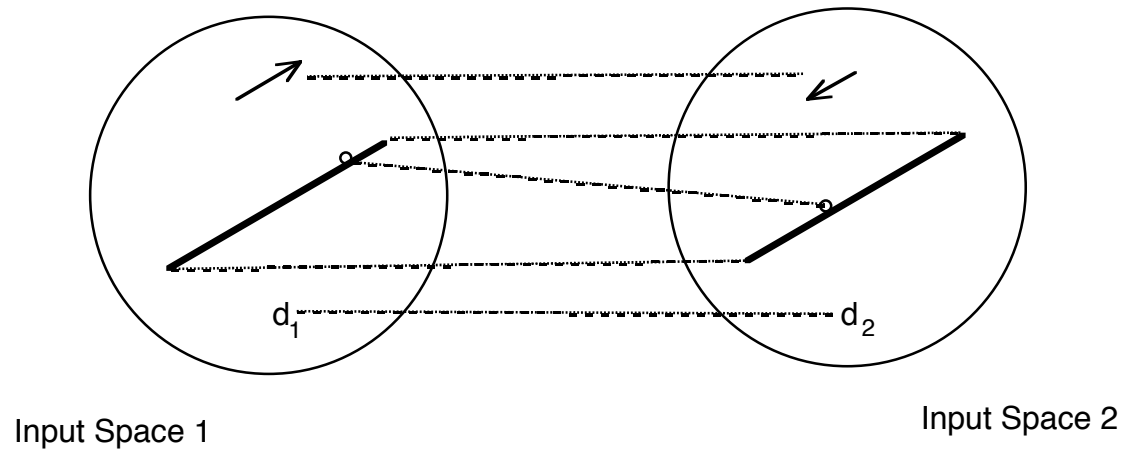


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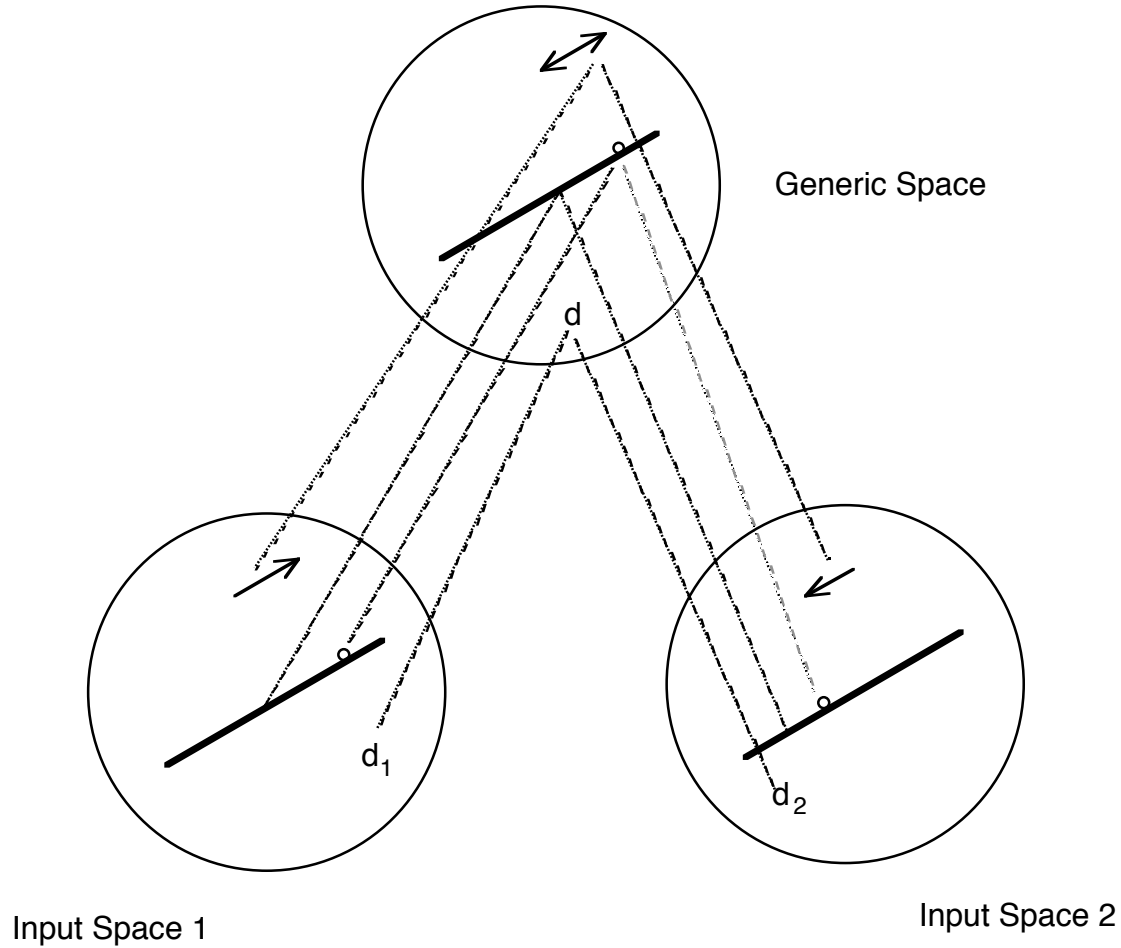


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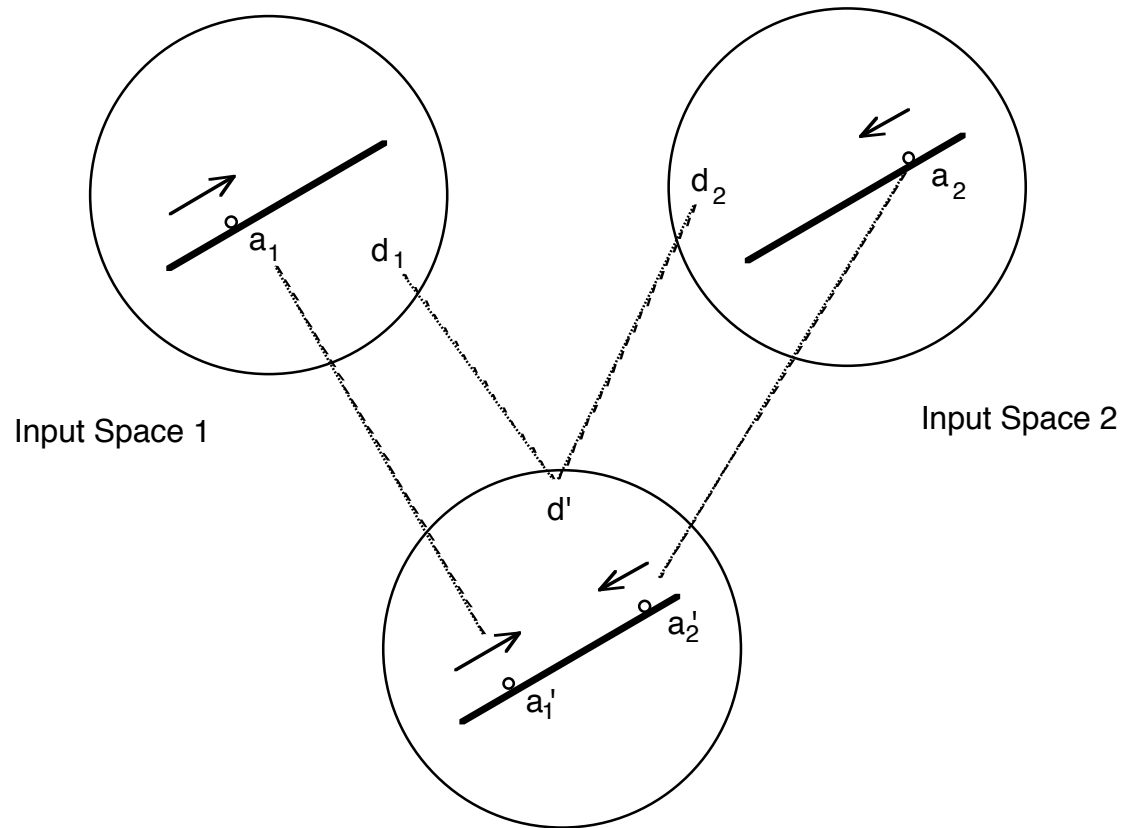
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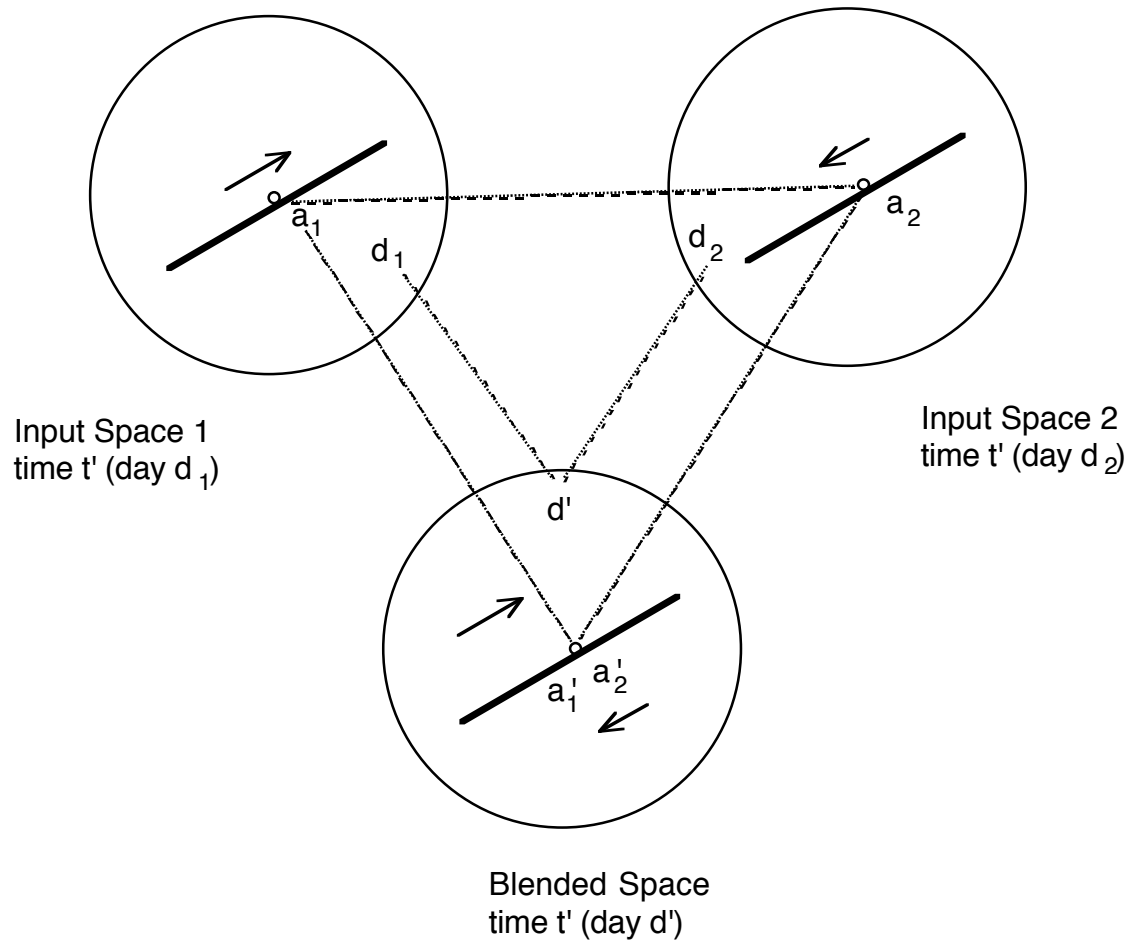
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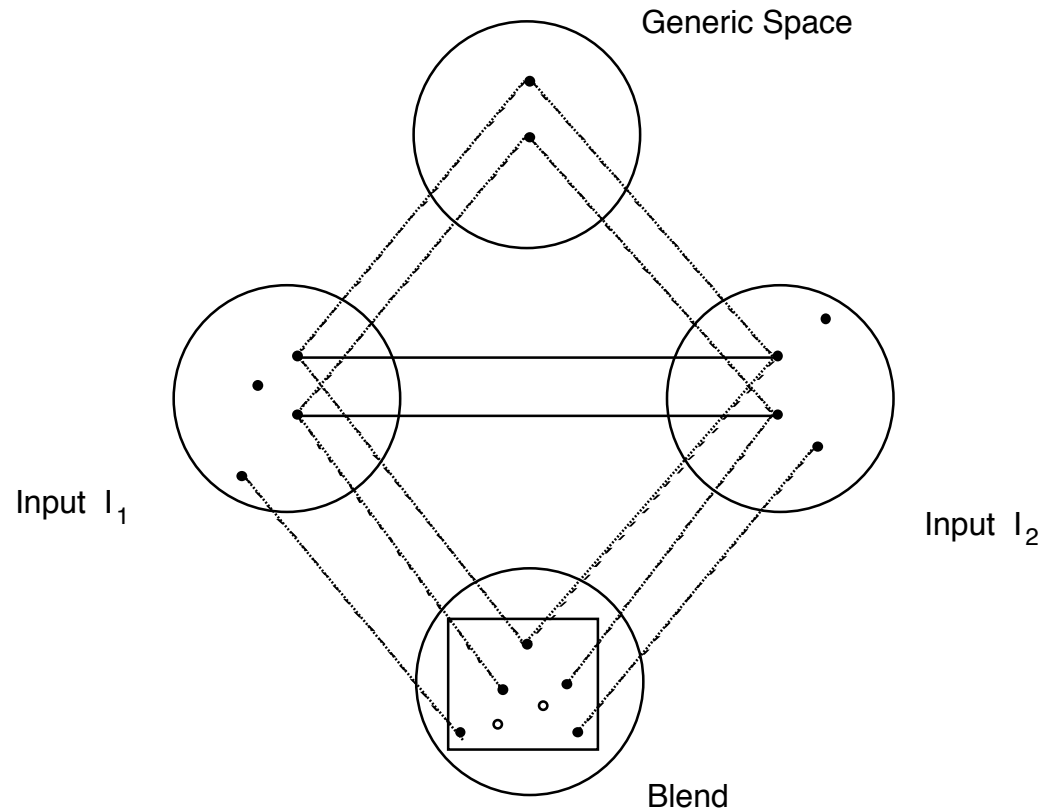
Projection to the Blended Space



Emergent Meaning in the Blended Space



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Mental Spaces and Blending

Terms **familiar** from the field of cognitive linguistics

- mental spaces
- conceptual structure
- connections, relations, mappings, projections, matching, fictive structure
- frames, scripts, models
- identity, role-value, category, analogy, similarity, counterfactuality, negation, metonymy, synecdoche, apostrophe, catachresis, figure, metaphor, . . .
- relational networks of form-meaning pairs
- relation of conceptual structure and cognitive operations to grammar
-

Mental Spaces and Blending

But fundamental differences . . .

- nature of meaning and language
- compression
- emergent structure

Mental Spaces and Blending

Important corrections

- Conceptual connection and blending are
 - basic, not special
 - not costly
 - mostly run in backstage cognition, almost never visible to consciousness, too complicated for consciousness

Mental Spaces and Blending

Important corrections

- Conceptual connection and blending are
 - mostly not supplemental to putative cognitive operations (creativity, metonymy, counterfactuality, metaphor, . . .) but rather, for the most part, the source of these phenomena

Mental Spaces and Blending

Important corrections

- Conceptual connection and blending are
 - as far as we have been able to determine, available across all conceptual domains

Mental Spaces and Blending

Important corrections

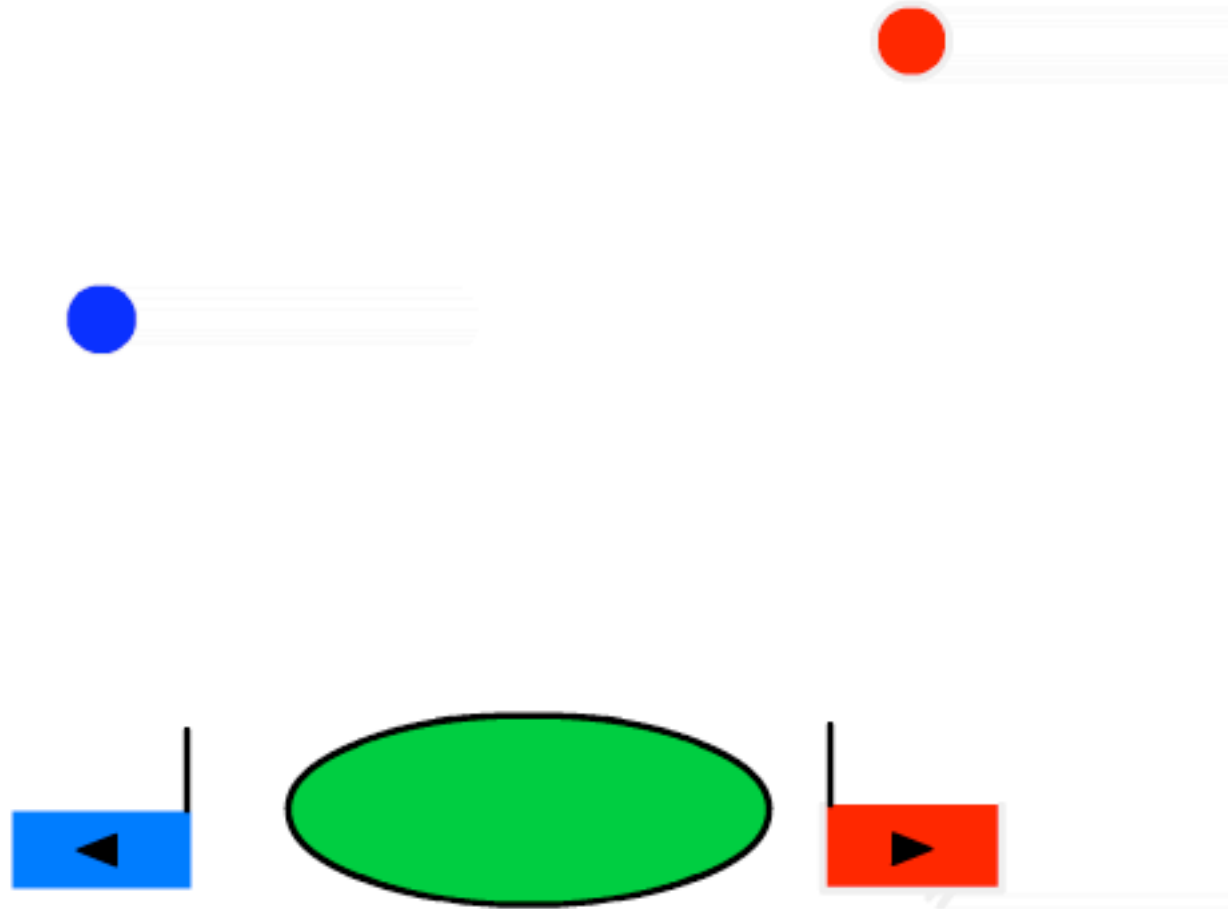
- Although conditions in any particular behavior - such as discourse, presentation, language, gesture, art, - can be consequential for particular integration networks, those conditions are not starting points for analyzing the operations of mental space networks and blending. The basic mental operations are general over all these conditions.

Blending Box Experiments

Selective Projection
Emergent Structure

Blending Box Experiments

Blending Box Experiments



Mental Spaces and Blending

Important corrections

- Blending is a basic mental operation that works over conceptual networks of many different shapes, sizes, forms, and natures. It is not represented by any particular diagram with a certain number of spaces in a certain array and a certain dynamic development.

Mental Spaces and Blending

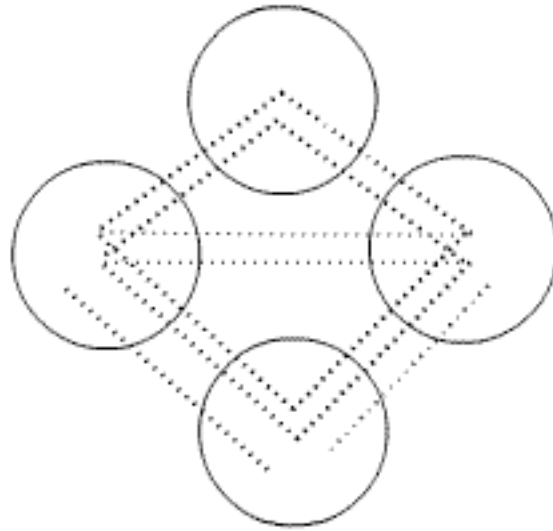
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Mental Spaces and Blending



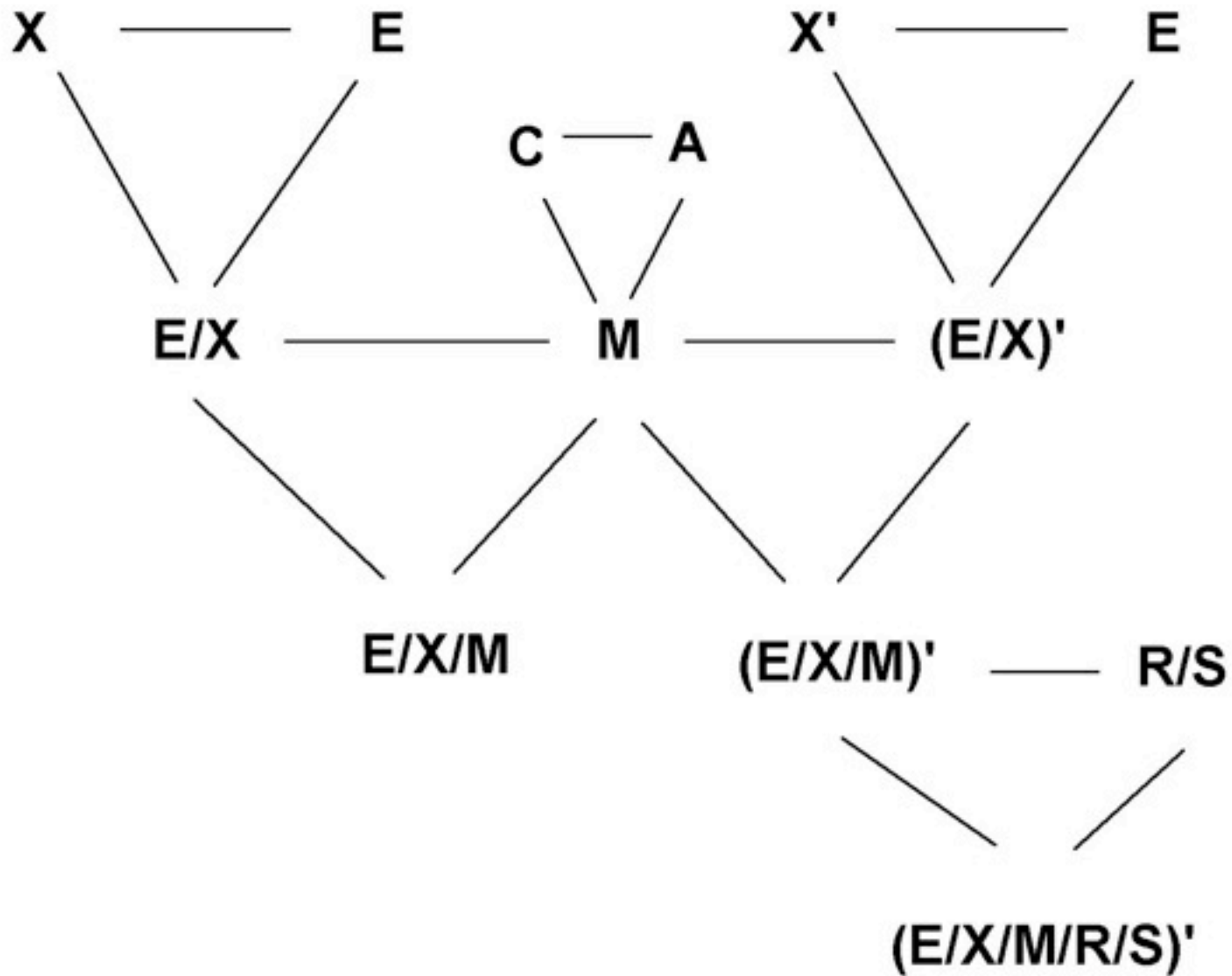
Mental Spaces and Blending

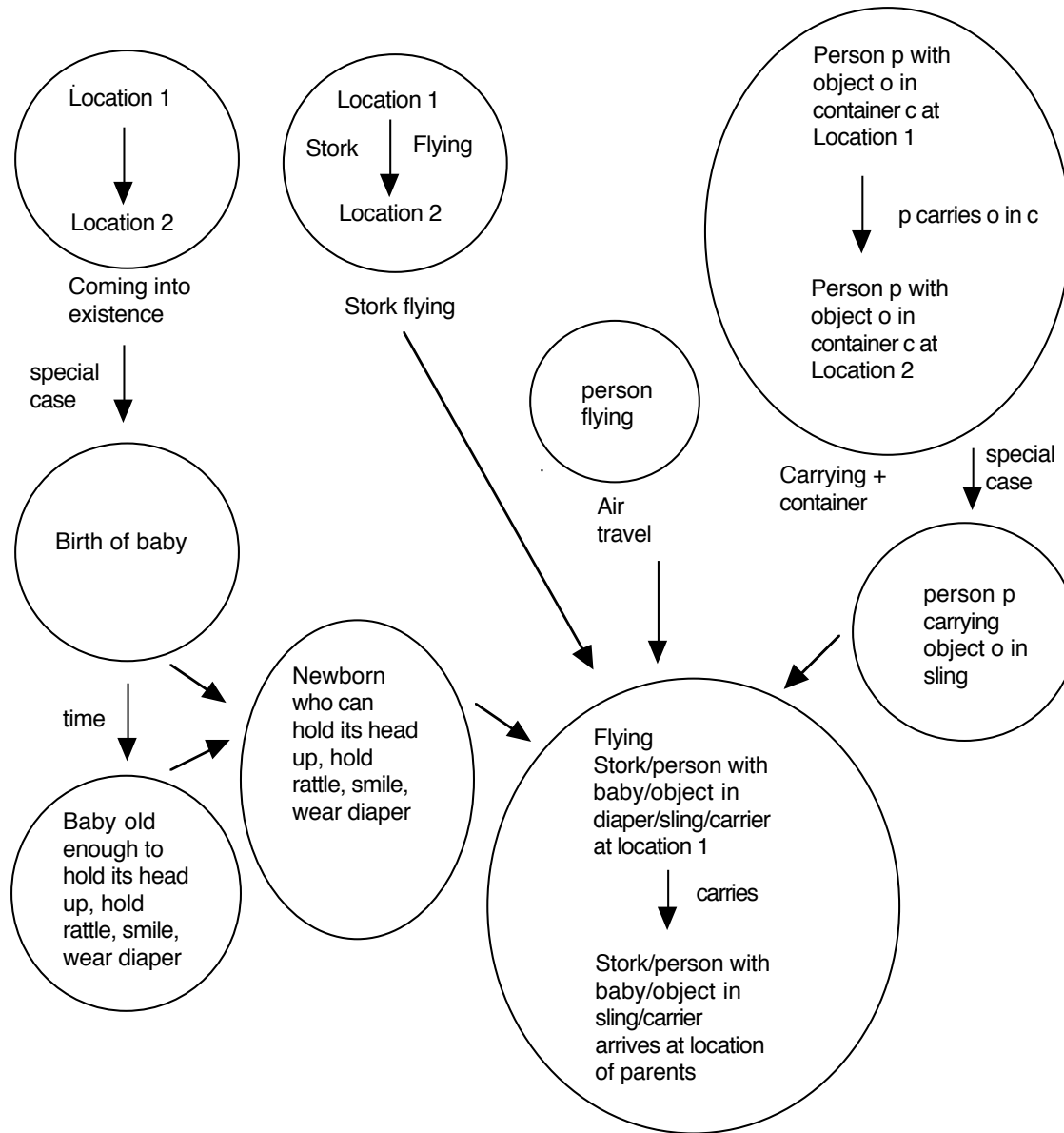


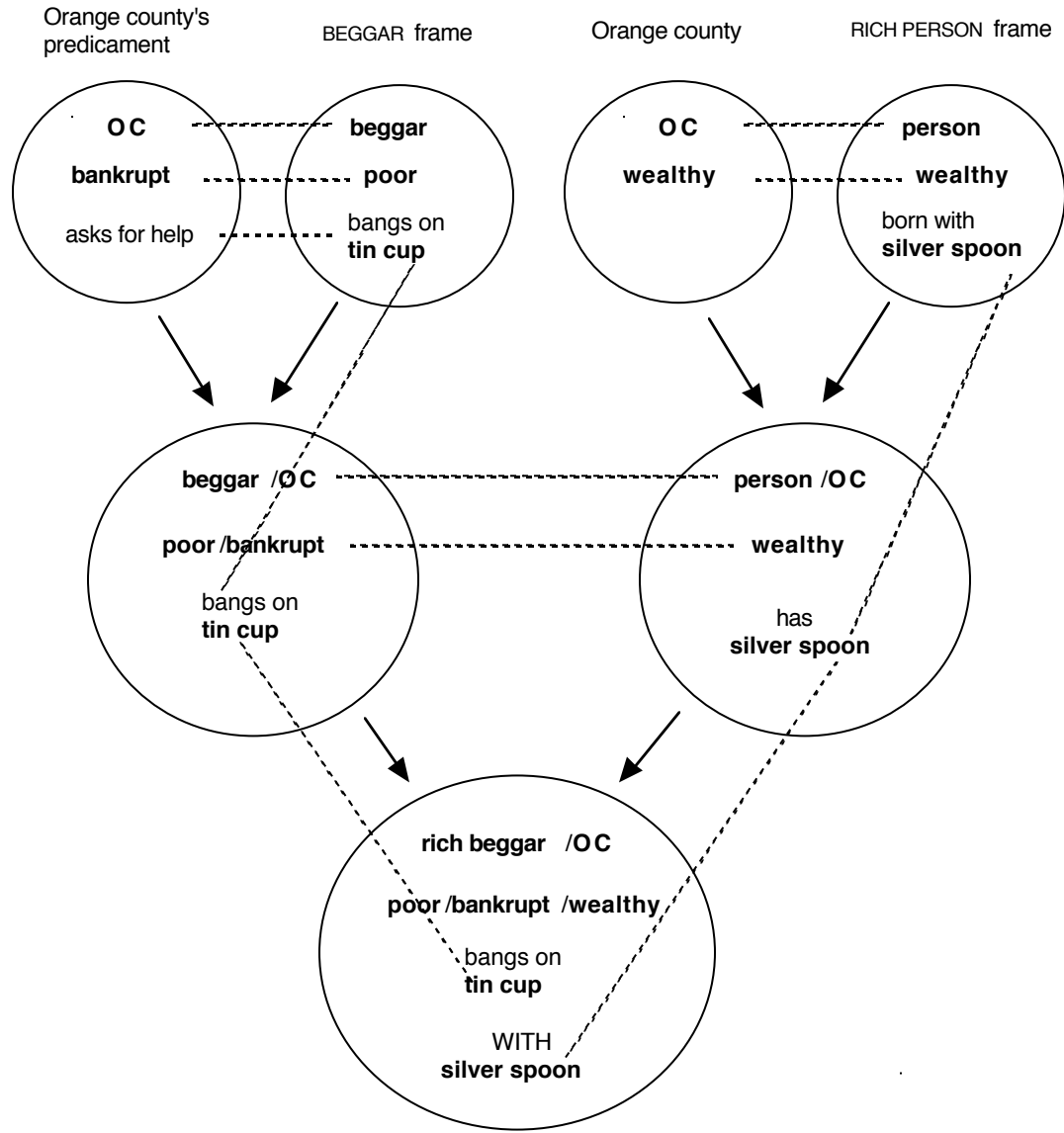
Mental Spaces and Blending

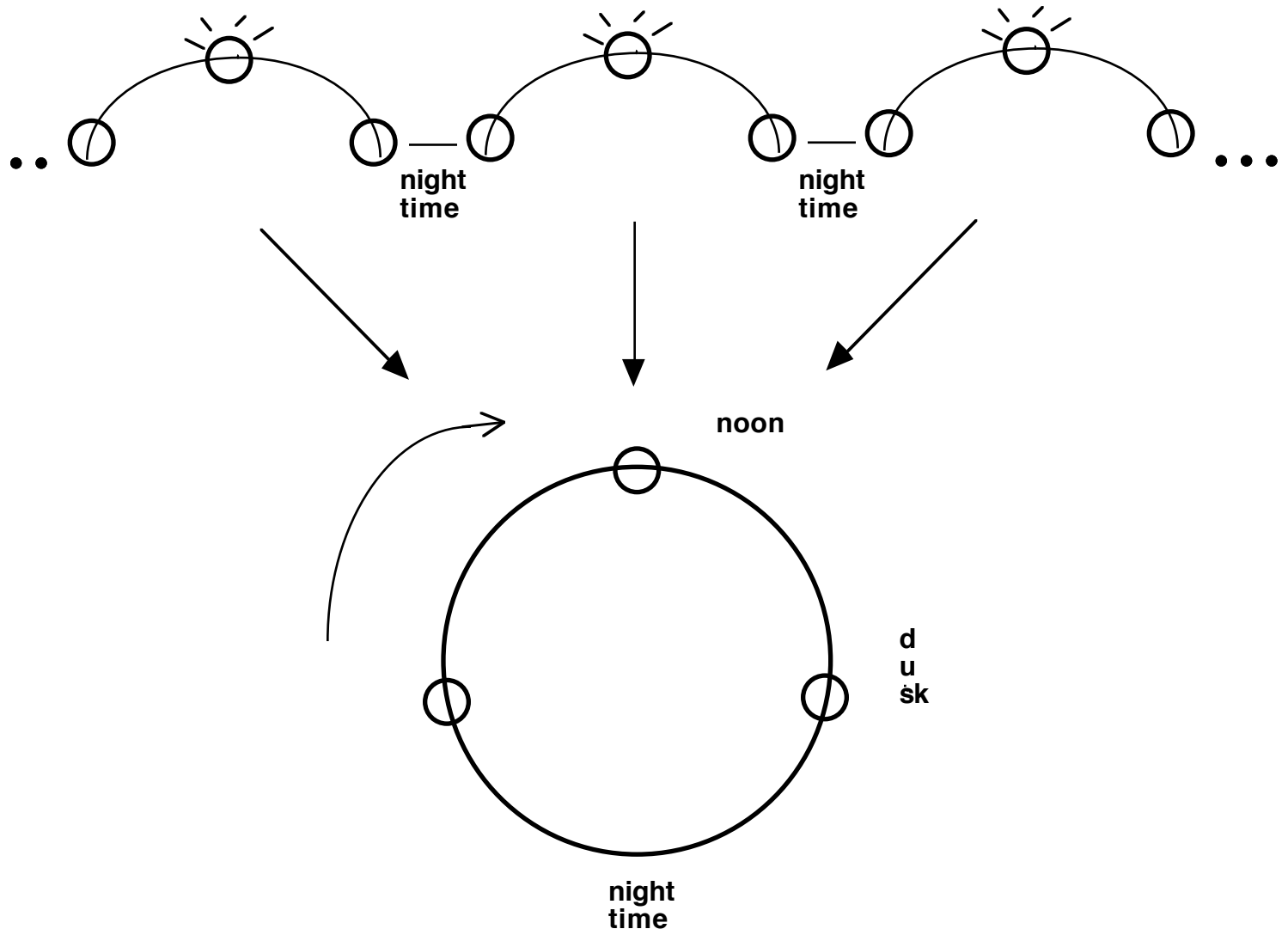
Mental Spaces and Blending

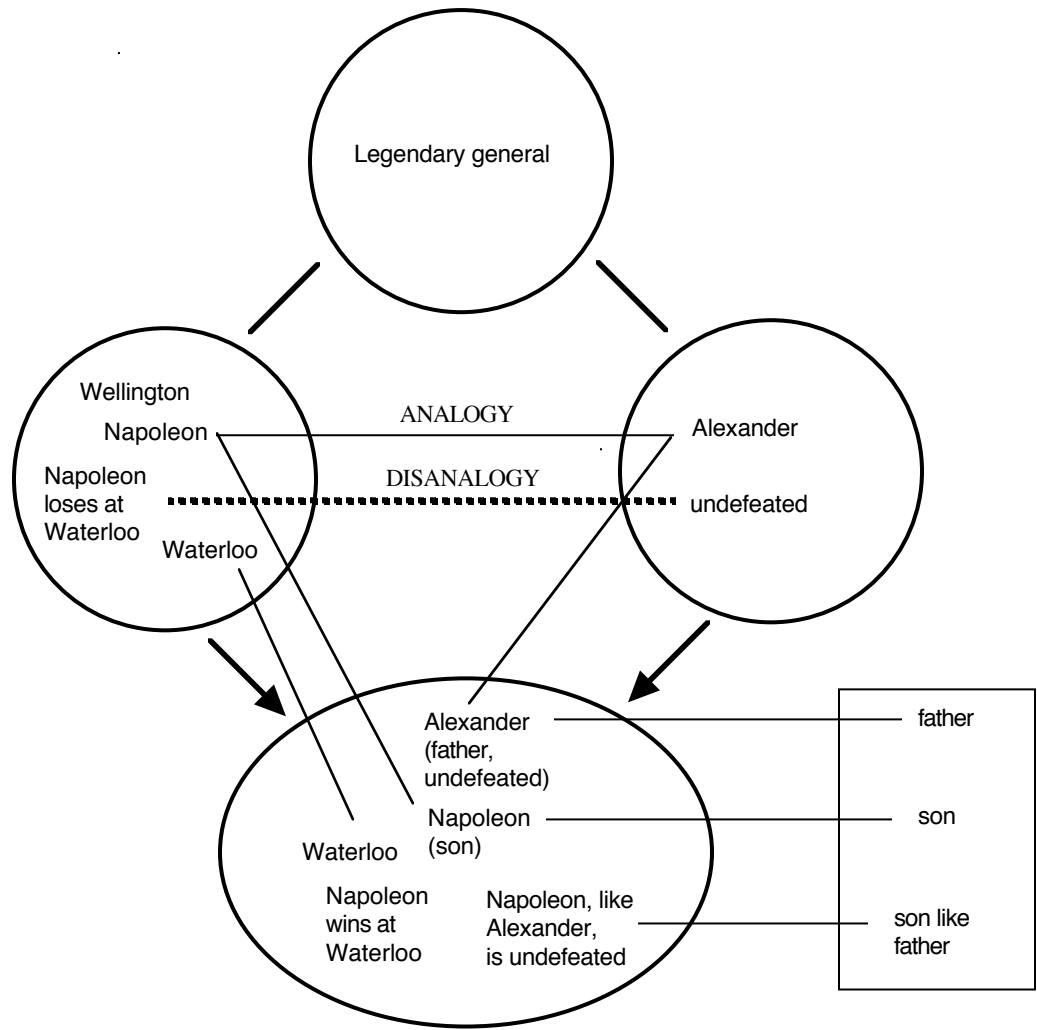
Mental Spaces and Blending

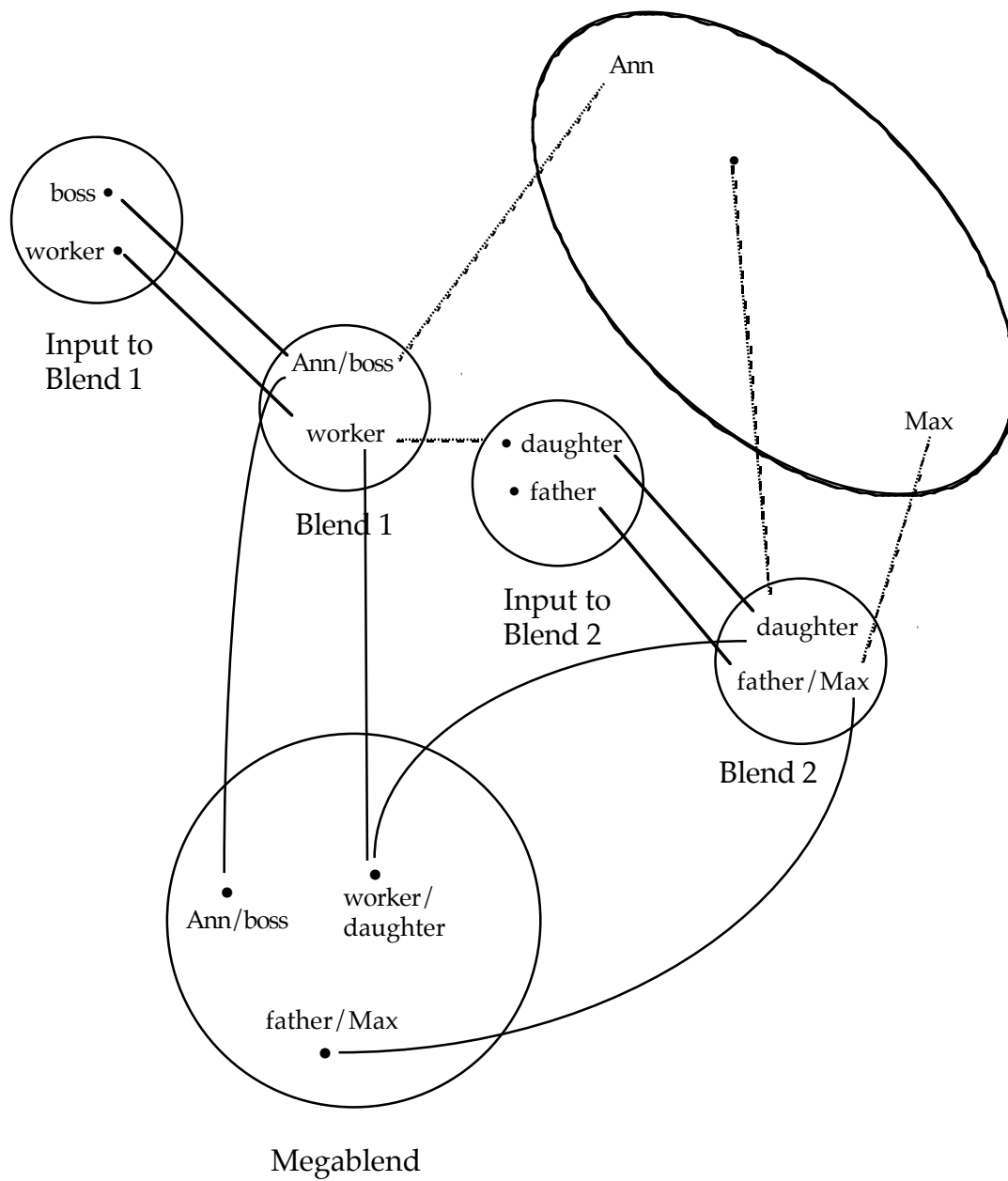


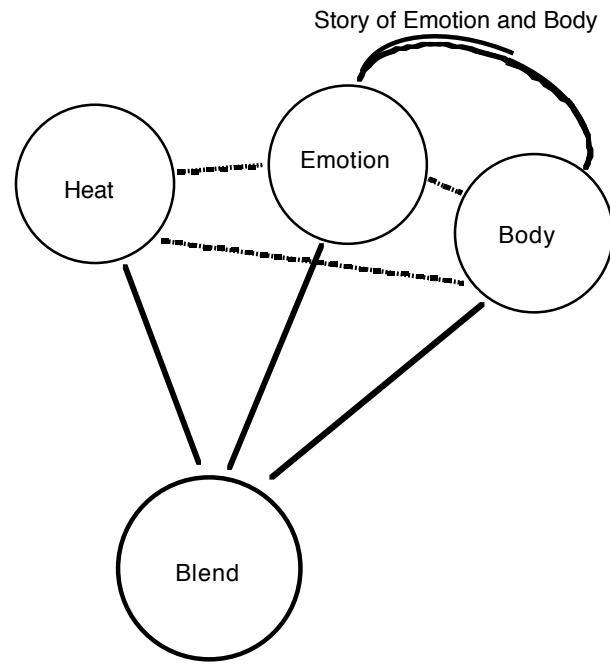
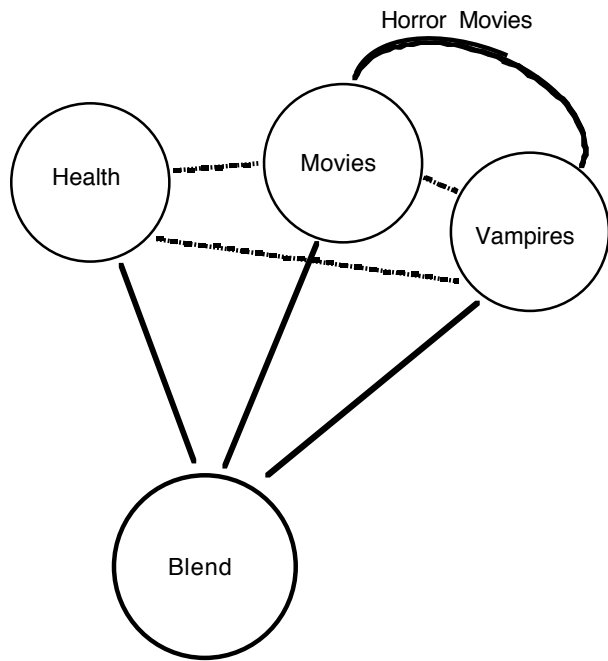












Mental Spaces and Blending

But fundamental differences . . .

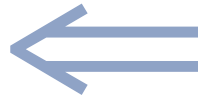
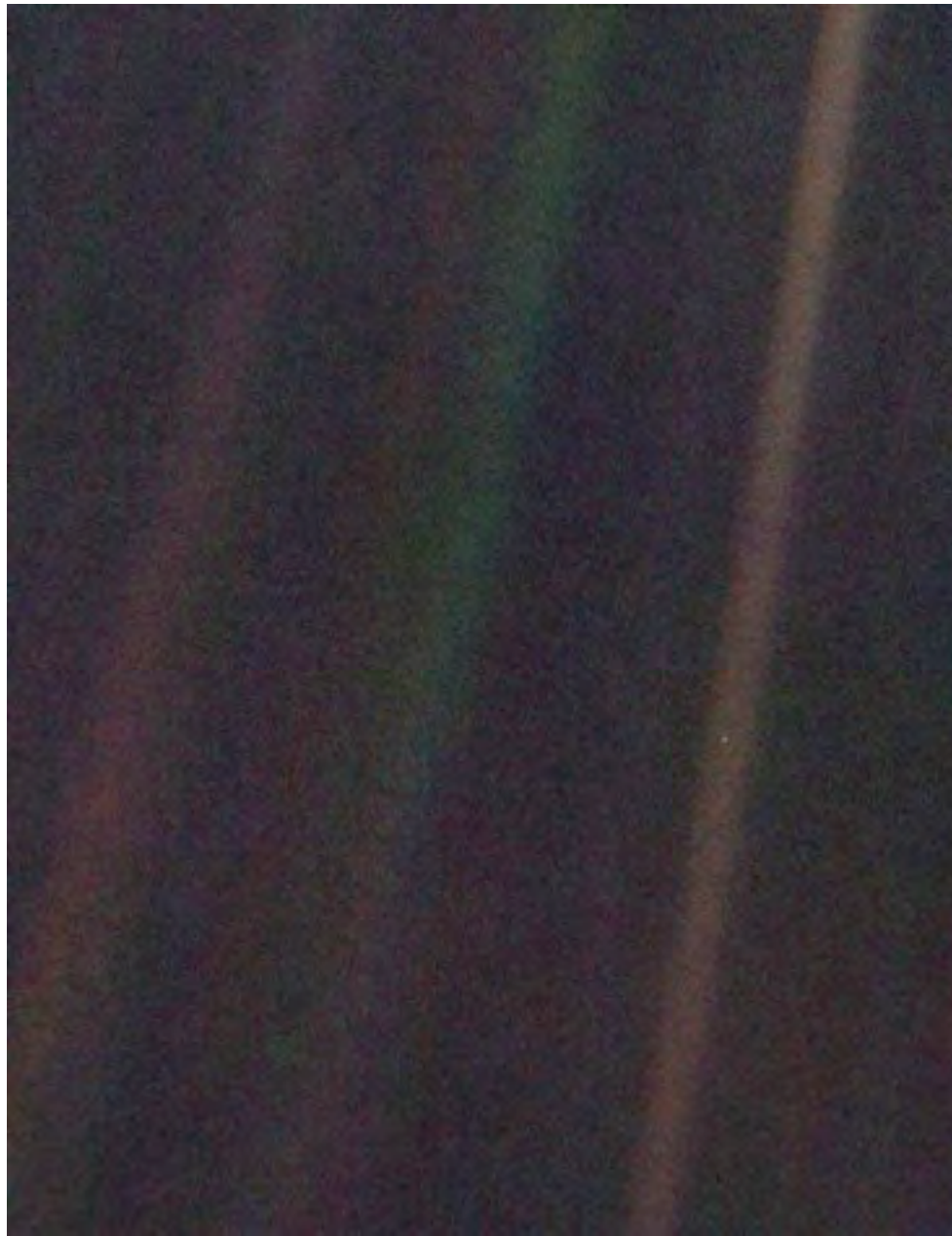
- nature of meaning and language
- compression
- emergent structure

An Inconvenient Truth

“An Inconvenient Truth” is the film version of Al Gore’s slide-show presentation on global warming. Close to the end, Gore shows a picture of the Earth as a what he calls a “pale blue dot.” The Earth is a single pixel on a huge cosmological screen, difficult even to pick out when he points at it. The picture was taken from a distance in space of 4 billion miles. Gore says, “Everything that has ever happened in all of human history has happened on that dot. All the triumphs and tragedies, all the wars and all the famines, all the major advances. That is what is at stake—our ability to live on planet Earth, to have a future as a civilization.”

And then he concludes the film with this blend: “Future generations may well have occasion to ask themselves, 'What were our parents thinking? Why didn't they wake up when they had the chance?' **We have to hear that question from them now.**”

Pale Blue Dot

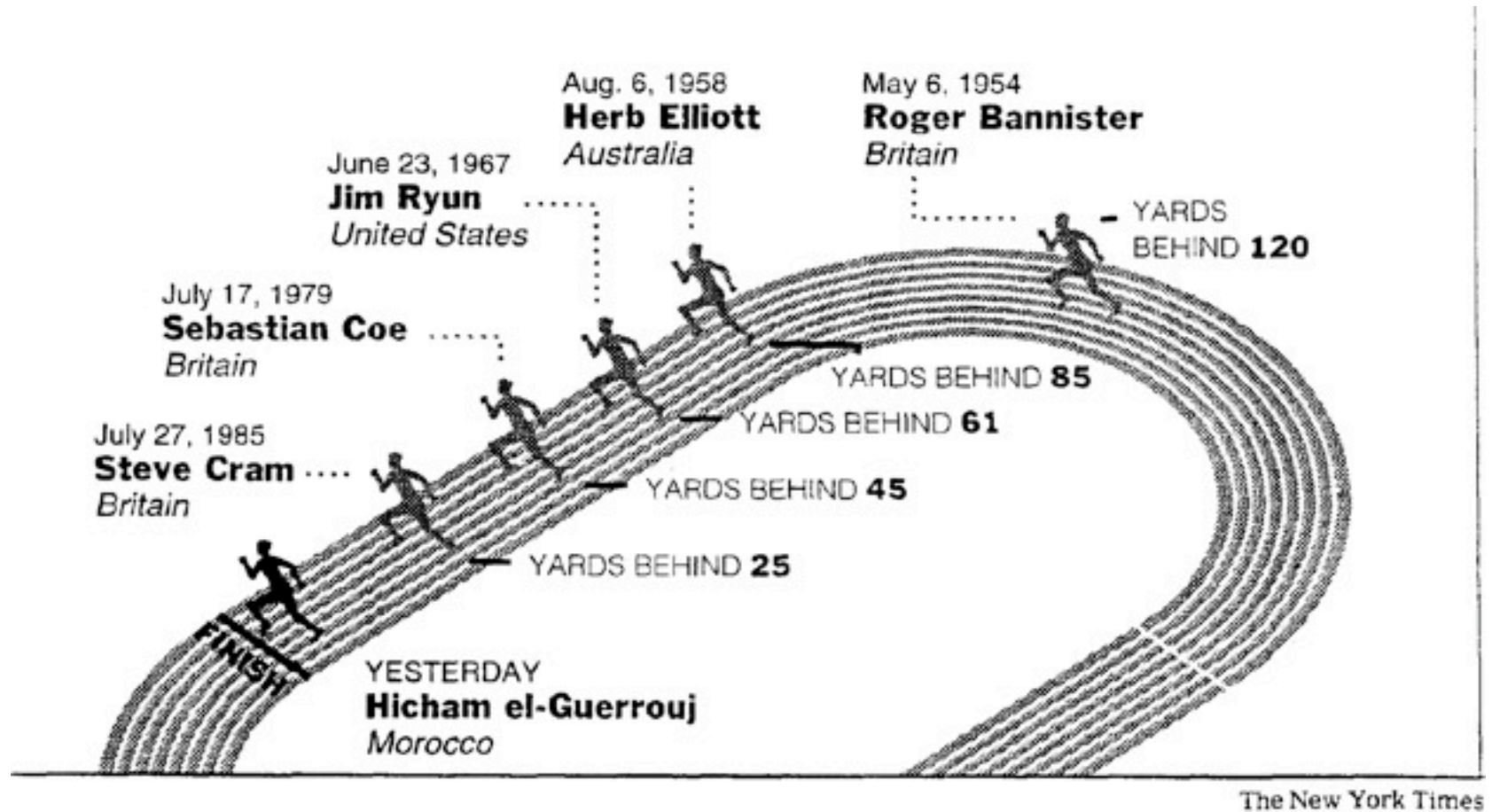




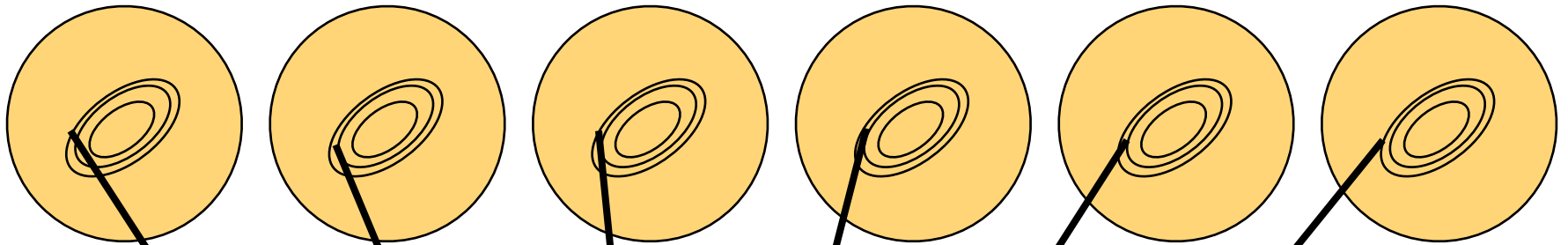
The Time Blend at the end of “An Inconvenient Truth”

And then he concludes the film with this blend: “Future generations may well have occasion to ask themselves, 'What were our parents thinking? Why didn't they wake up when they had the chance?' **We have to hear that question from them now.**”

Mirror Network: Fictive Interaction



World Record in the Mile



1999

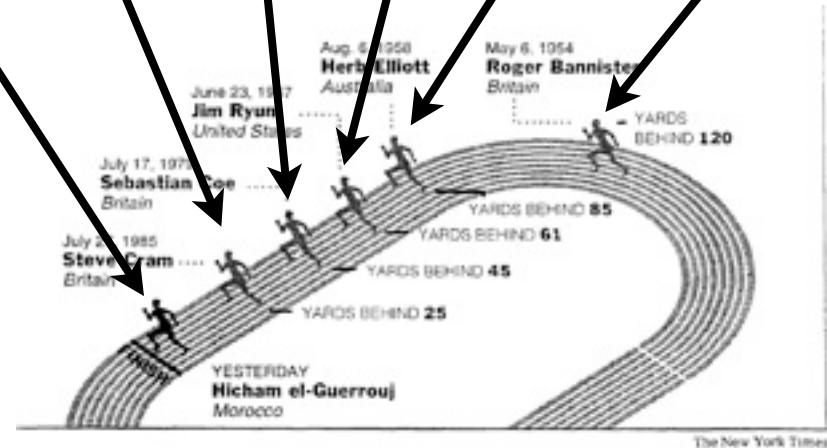
1985

1979

1967

1958

1954

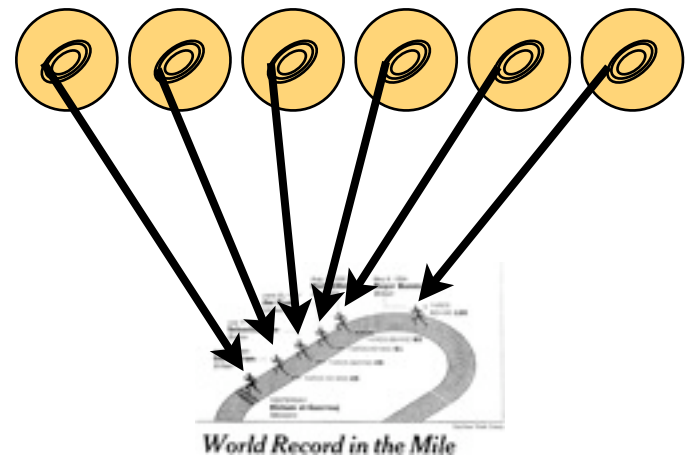


World Record in the Mile








Linguistic constructions are made available by network projections

“Hicham el-Gerrouj beat Roger Bannister.”

“Hicham el-Gerrouj defeated Roger Bannister by 120 yards”



Fictive Interaction

-  Abrantes, Ana Margarida. Fictive Interaction as an Instance of Theatricality in Cognition. 2009. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1409396>
-  Pascual, Esther, E. Królak & Th.A.J.M. Janssen. In preparation. Do-it-yourself compounds: Scenarios set up through fictive interaction. *Cognitive Linguistics*.
-  Pascual, Esther. 2008. Fictive interaction blends in everyday life and courtroom settings. In A. Hougaard & T. Oakley (eds.). *Mental Spaces in Discourse and Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
-  Pascual, Esther 2008. Text for context, trial for trialogue: An ethnographic study of a fictive interaction blend. *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 6: 50-82.
-  Pascual, E. 2006a. Questions in legal monologues: Fictive interaction as argumentative strategy in a murder trial. *Text & Talk* 26(3): 383-402.
-  Pascual, Esther. 2006b. Fictive interaction within the sentence: A communicative type of fictivity in grammar. *Cognitive Linguistics*. Volume 17, Issue 2, Pages 245–267.
-  Pascual, Esther. 2002. Imaginary Trialogues: Conceptual Blending and Fictive Interaction in Criminal Courts. Utrecht: LOT Dissertation Series 68.

Mental Spaces and Blending

But fundamental differences . . .

- nature of meaning and language
- compression
- emergent structure



2009 LINGUISTIC INSTITUTE

LINGUISTIC STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE ECOLOGIES

LSA 119

Mental spaces and conceptual blending

Gilles Fauconnier & Mark Turner

155 Donner Lab

MW 10:30-12:15

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