

Mimesis, Artistic Inspiration and the Blends We Live By

Tim Rohrer¹

Cognitive Science

University of California at San Diego

rohrer @ cogsci.ucsd.edu

Cite as:

Rohrer, Tim. 2005. “Mimesis, Artistic Inspiration, and the Blends We Live By.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 37: 1686-1716.

Abstract:

The cognitive linguists Fauconnier and Turner (1998, 2002) have proposed that human creativity may be modeled by their theory of conceptual blending (conceptual integration). I apply blending theory to the pragmatics of fiction, showing how blending theory explains the mechanics of literary mimesis. I investigate how conceptual blends are iteratively chained, arguing that a mimetic blend can be defined as a blend that self-referentially embeds itself into subsequent blends. Using examples from Mario Vargas Llosa’s novel *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* and its cinematic adaptation as *Tune in Tomorrow*, I show how these mimetic blends can be a literary device whereby an author may offer metafictional social commentary on issues such as the ability of art to incite fictive emotion or even violence on the part of the art-viewer. However, blending theorists typically fail to note important methodological issues raised by whether they are modeling the person who is interpreting (as opposed to who is creating) the conceptual blends. This shortcoming leads me to propose a “space-swapping” hypothesis which argues that the differences between creativity and interpretation can be at least partly explained by the differing roles played by highly similar mental spaces.

¹ Present address: The Colorado Advanced Research Institute, Box 3736, Boulder, CO 80307-3736

Introduction: The problem in microcosm

“Ever since I wrote my first short story, people have asked if what I wrote ‘was true.’”
—Mario Vargas Llosa

The central question of mimesis is age-old and simply stated: Why does fiction seem true to us, sometimes even truer than depictions of reality? Doesn’t the very conception of the novel (or of fiction generally) require lying? Poets, playwrights, novelists, satirists, even historians have had their works banned or suppressed because of the belief that they consist of lies. As Mario Vargas Llosa (1984) observes, Spanish religious authorities banned the publication or importation of novels in its American colonies until after the Mexican Revolution of 1816 on the grounds that novelistic lies would damage the spiritual life of the natives. Though he finds their ban absurd, he argues that their religious rationale was based on a sound insight: Novels are not mere lies, but extraordinary lies with the power to make us feel that they are true; the power to reorder and reshape time, memories and events so successfully that novels induce real emotions within our bodies. Within the philosophy of literature this phenomenon is much discussed as the problem of ‘fictive emotion,’ or why something we know to be literally untrue can cause us to feel real emotions (e.g. Radford, 1975, 1977; cf. Lamarque, 1981; Carroll, 1990). Why do we suspend belief when we encounter fiction? What separates fiction from autobiography or journalism? What separates fiction from lying in its ordinary sense? How does the novelistic mimesis work?

Vargas Llosa’s essay on mimesis and whether novels must lie is framed by one of the questions that many readers incessantly ask of authors; namely ‘Was it true?’ From his perspective as the author of several semi-autobiographical novels, the answer is obvious—as an author he knows how little of his own real life he depicted. But as he also notes, the real problem posed by such questioning is why whether “novels are accurate or false is as important to certain people as whether they are good or bad, and [why] many readers, consciously or unconsciously, link the two together” (Vargas Llosa, 1984). By exactly what process do such readers become so entranced that they confuse the novel and reality to the extent that they are prompted to ask the author this sort of question?

Such questions are of immense interest to cognitive theorists working on conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, 1998). They observe that for many highly successful conceptual blends, the imaginative part of the blend is obscured and we ‘live in the blend.’ When a novelist creates a blend so successful that a reader can ‘live’ in it, such questions naturally result because the mimetic quality of the artwork reconfigures the reader’s sense of truth and reality. Because blending theory can explain how such artworks entrance readers by chaining successive blends together, it has much

to contribute in illuminating the mechanics of mimesis. However, blending theorists have typically not differentiated the perspective of the reader from that of the author in their analyses. In giving their analyses, blending theorists often construe their interpretation of the blend to be identical to both other readers' and the author's perspective. This failing can be addressed by changing the altering the usual methodology used in both literary and cognitive analyses of such literature. By giving explicit attention to my personal, temporally situated experience of reading one of Vargas Llosa's semi-autobiographical novels, I simultaneously illustrate both how this failing in blending theory can be repaired and how a series of blends that unfold in time can explain how literary mimesis works. The key to each of these arguments will be to pay careful attention to how the process of writing reconfigures temporal experience for both novelistic and scholarly writing. All too often blending theorists identify the blend with the end results of the writing and interpretative processes, rather than document the changes across time. By attending to how the conceptual blends change throughout the processes of the creation and the interpretation of the artwork, it is my contention we can better understand literary mimesis.

However, framing readers' responses to a novel in terms of truth and lies, as Vargas Llosa (1984) does, requires that we carefully consider the purpose of a novel—especially when it depicts violence. Obviously, such readers know that works of fiction are not lies in the ordinary sense of the term. The cognitive linguist Sweetser (1987) has outlined the pragmatics of what most people consider to be an ordinary lie. The three prototypical features of a lie are that it is (i) a factually false statement; (ii) intended to deceive the hearer; (iii) intended to harm the hearer. While works of fiction arguably are both factually false and intended to deceive, the artist clearly does so for the purpose of entertainment, not for the purpose of causing harm to the reader. Therein lies the crux of the argument of the Spanish religious censors; suppose an artist, in the attempt to entertain, creates an artwork which causes harm as a secondary effect of its being believable? The central problem is not one restricted to 18th century debates over the effects of novels on the spiritual life of so-called 'savages'; it has contemporary real-world currency, as evidenced by the ongoing debate over whether increasingly graphic and explicit portrayals of violence in film, video games and other forms of art can cause or contribute to real-life acts of violence by art-viewers imitating the art they watch. In their defense some artists claim that their art is simply imitative, accurately depicting the violence found in the real world. Their argument is that fiction is not intended to harm; violence is simply one part of life and the depiction of it causes no actual harm to the art-viewer.

Note the parallels to the philosophical problem of fictive emotion: If the artistic lie were always restricted to the fictive mental space created by the artwork and was therefore incapable of causing real emotions on the part of the audience, there would be no objection to artwork depicting violence, racial or ethnic hatred, sexual deviance or other moral issues. However, there can be no doubt that audiences do respond to art; they are successfully deceived by the lies of fiction insofar as they feel real emotion in response to art. It is therefore an open question to whether the artists are to any extent morally culpable for any harmful acts which are inspired by their artworks, or whether they are inculpable because their artistic inspiration draws upon preexisting, real world violence. That defense seems to be weakened by an obvious distinction drawn between the writers of history or biography and the makers of a documentary film on the one hand,

and fiction writers and dramatists of all sorts on the other. Fiction writers do not claim to be faithful to real world events, though they may acknowledge it as a source of inspiration.

Thus the pragmatics of fiction is both different from and intertwined with the pragmatics typically associated with lying in its prototypical sense. The differences arise because the lying in fiction is mimetic, which means in part that it is not clear whether art imitates life or life imitates art. This is because artistic mimesis is not limited to merely imitating or depicting real life, but instead art often reconfigures our sense of time and reality both by reconstructing our memories of the past by selectively re-presenting it and by providing its viewers with guides to future action and role models for them to follow. In this sense life can be said to imitate art.

In this article I argue that mimesis is a richly complex process whose pragmatics is illuminated by the theory of conceptual blending (aka conceptual integration, see Fauconnier and Turner, 2002, 1998). I analyze the specific mechanics of the mimetic art-life blends in Vargas Llosa's 1977 novel *Tia Julia y El Escribidor* (Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter) as translated by Helen Lane and also its subsequent cinematic adaptation in the 1990 film *Tune In Tomorrow*. I term the blends I wish to discuss the fiction-autobiography blend (genre blending) and the art-life blend (mimetic blending), and I discuss examples of both types of blends. In the conclusion of the article, I explain how these blends in the film and the novel come to constitute a defense of the artist's ability to depict violence without incurring responsibility for inciting it.

I take my examples from Latin American 'magic realism' because this literature typically evokes fantastic blends between 'what could only happen in art' and what 'actually' happens in the story; not infrequently, the magic realists employ the device of 'the-story-within-the-story' to make this point salient. The analysis of these fantastic blends will reveal not only the mechanics of such literary devices, but how these blends can create a level of metafictional commentary in which the author can comment on the mimetic process of artistic creation itself. While I would suggest that using blends to create a level of metafictional commentary is generally true of Latin American 'magic realism' (and much other world literature), the metafictional commentary of these texts has the added advantage of addressing the differences between journalism and mimetic fiction on the one hand and truth and lies on the other.

Thus this article is best viewed as a tapestry of three related interdisciplinary arguments. As a cognitive linguist addressing literary theorists, I explain how blending theory can better illuminate the mechanics of literary devices which create metafictional commentary, such as the process of mimesis. Second, I show how literary analysis (e.g. Riceour, 1984, 1988), particularly in the examination of differences between the processes of artistic creation versus artistic interpretation, can yield important insights for cognitive linguistics. Blending theory has only recently begun to pay attention to problems of cognitive phenomenology and pragmatics, such as who is doing the enunciation or which propositional attitudes (i.e. sarcasm, irony, metacommentary) a particular speaker might have toward a particular blend. While I will not use additional 'base' spaces to analyze the enunciative characteristics of a blend as do Brandt and Brandt (2002), I will argue that some problems of enunciation can be accounted for by considering how and when the mental spaces can 'swap' roles within the blending system—e.g., I will show how what counts as the blending space from the perspective of the author is an input from the reader's space. While I use the complementary perspectives

of the artistic creator and the art-viewer to make this point, I would suggest that such space-swapping may well be true of the speaker-hearer dyad generally. Conceptual blending theorists need to make explicit the contents of precisely whose head or heads they are claiming to model.

Finally, as a philosopher I use these analyses to pursue insights into the age-old problem of whether artworks can cause harm through their ability to evoke the real-world emotions and even real-world actions on the part of the art-viewer. I argue that through the use of mimetic blends, both texts achieve a metafictional level of social commentary. Both artworks consciously exploit these blends in order to make meta-level commentaries about the kinds of stories authors and screenwriters choose to write—particularly as to whether it is necessary for artists to include the type of scapegoating and violence that can lead to ethnic and racial tension in the world outside the artwork.

A Methodological Epigraph: Space-Builders, Iterative Blending and Epistemic Access

I write. I write that I am writing. Mentally I see myself writing that I am writing and I can also see myself writing seeing that I am writing. And I see myself remembering that I see myself writing and I remember seeing myself remembering that I was writing and I write seeing myself write that I remember having seeing myself write that I saw myself writing that I was writing and that I was writing that I was writing that I was writing. I can also imagine myself writing that I had already written that I would imagine myself writing that I had written that I was imagining myself writing that I see myself writing that I am writing. (Vargas Llosa, 1977: epigraph, attributed to Salvador Elizondo’s *The Graphographer*).

Vargas Llosa’s book begins with an epigraph—to the extent that a novel may be said to begin with an epigraph and not with its first sentence—from another Latin American magic realist concerning the nature of authorship. Epigraphs are typically selected by the novelist after the act of creation is complete, as they are meant to be read in relation to the work as a whole—which means the reader might as well skip reading them until after the book has been digested. But suppose we begin with this highly unusual epigraph, if only because explaining its blends will introduce the elements of the conceptual blending theory used in analyzing the novel as a whole.

The first crucial element of blending theory is the notion of a mental space (Fauconnier, 1985, 1997), which is a cohesive packet of conceptual information. Elizondo’s first sentence “I write” establishes a ‘Life’ space within which an “I” writes (diagrammed as in figure 1). The initial structure of this mental space is minimal—there is an agent, presumably human, performing an action. The use of present tense and the first person pronoun can induce the reader to infer that the narrator and the author are the same, but such an inference is only plausible, not mandatory. In the second sentence however, an “I write” phrase is followed by what Fauconnier calls a space builder, “that ...”, which prompts for the creation of a new mental space, whose contents are whatever is being written about. In figure 1, I label these spaces ‘Life’ and ‘Art’ because the use of a direct present tense in the first space creates a space in which the narrator lives—consider by contrast how an opening phrase which uses a space builder such as ‘Once

upon a time...’ would create a representational mental space. The “that” clause in the second sentence works as a similar kind of space-builder—it creates a reported, representational story space—so I label it an ‘Art’ space. Yet this sentence creates not only a representational, ‘Art’ space (“I write that ... I am writing.”) but possible mappings between the pronoun “I” in the two spaces. These mappings are represented in the diagram by the solid and dashed lines respectively. While again it would not necessarily have to be the case, a reader would ordinarily identify the initial “I write” of each space with the second “I write” in the absence of any contravening evidence. But since a double mapping is possible, establishing an identity mapping between all three uses of the pronoun “I”, the two spaces yields a third, blended space in which “I write that I am writing” is understood not as a creating a representational ‘Art’ mental space in which some-one else writes but as creating an ‘Art-life’ blend which represents the fact that in the ‘Life’ space, the narrator is engaged in the process of writing—“I write that I am writing.” In the standard Fauconnier and Turner blending schema (1998), two mental spaces serve as input spaces from which elements are selectively projected and become fused in the blend. Again, while there is no necessary reason to fuse the referents of these pronouns as I have diagrammed them in the blend, conventional knowledge about how pronouns ordinarily work in language lead us to assume that the author is inviting us to make these projections.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Another important characteristic of blending in language is that blends may be chained together and even iteratively embedded (see Fauconnier and Turner on ‘X is the Y of Z’ blends, 2002: 139-166). Because Elizondo repeatedly exploits this facet of blending, I have labeled this blended space a “first level art-life blend.” In the passage, the chain of self-reference is quickly iterated again with another mental space builder in the first clause of the third sentence, “Mentally, I see myself ...” which then ‘mega-blends’ to the entire blend established in the second sentence. This is diagrammed in figure 1 as a second level art-life blend. The second clause of that sentence creates a highly similar second-level blend once again, “... and I can also see myself writing that ...” Of course, what the “I” of this blend is writing is nothing other than the entire second-level art-life blend, and so the blending process redoubles with the next clause “... seeing myself writing that I am seeing myself writing that...” (This redoubled blend is also loosely diagrammed in figure 1, but there are now so many connections between the “I” elements of the different spaces that I diagram these connections only in a more conceptual fashion.) In subsequent sentences, Elizondo introduces further space builders such as “remembering” and “imagining” to chain even more levels of self-referential blending into his art-life megablend. Note that this sort of embedded chaining of blends upon blends quickly begins to boggle the mind. This notion of chaining multiple blends together, particularly as they iteratively embed the contents of a previously blended space, is essential to the working model of mimesis I develop in the concluding section of this article. In this blend, the obvious self-referentiality of an author writing about writing makes the mimesis explicit, but the Vargas Llosa novel more subtly exploits the same principle of chaining self-referential blends together.

One may relevantly ask: Where is the blend? Is it an external phenomenon reposed in the words on paper, or is it internal to the processes of the mind? And if

internal, in whose mind does it take place—the author or the reader, the artist or the art-viewer? Blending theory has not generally addressed these issues clearly, in part because theorists tend to refer to some artwork—a painting, a cartoon, a novel, a passage in a novel, a phrase—as “the blend.” But this ordinary reification is misleading; blending is a theory of the mental processes which generate meaning. In some sense, the questions posed above rely on a false dichotomy because there is always interaction between the mind and the larger sociocultural context as generating meaning is intrinsically a socio-communicative act. However, blending theorists are cognitive scientists, interested in describing the general cognitive operations used in generating meaning. As cognitive operations typically take place within a particular ‘mind’ (or ‘head,’ or ‘brain’—as specified by a particular cognitive scientist), the requirement to generalize across many examples often produces the illusion that the blending operations occur in precisely the same way for all relevant parties. This is surely not the case. When taken together with the tendency to reify the blend as the artwork, this focus on cognitive generalization can lead to overlooking important phenomenological issues such as taking into account the perspective of which particular mind is ‘running the blend’ at a particular moment in time.

The Elizondo example is particularly instructive for illustrating these problems of perspective because it is writing about writer writing—i.e., it concerns the nature of authorship. As a reader, I know what I am reading; I have good epistemic access to my thoughts via introspection as (and after) I read the passage. Furthermore, my knowledge of blending theory gives me the ability to notice myself running the blends as (and after) I read. Now I also believe that the passage seems to afford fairly good epistemic access into the mind of the author, and thereby what I would term ‘the art-life blends’ in his mind as Elizondo wrote the passage. This apparent transparency may be an illusion, but note that the illusion of transparency is reinforced by the content—i.e., the author is writing about a character who is also writing, and in the first-person narrative voice as well. I can speculate about the author’s blends not only because I know this content, but also because we share to some degree a sociocultural context in which writers write stories and create novel worlds. Yet it is crucial to acknowledge the limited quality of epistemic access to another’s mind in the sorts of analyses found in cognitive linguistics, such as blending theory.

Such methodological problems are of acute importance for conceptual blending theorists and cognitive scientists generally. It is for such considerations that I begin discussing the blends in Vargas Llosa’s novel in an introspective rather than purely cognitivist manner, as I want to make explicit the fact that I have better epistemic access to my own blends as a reader than to Vargas Llosa’s as an author. But given such tremendous methodological problems with introspection, why begin with the reader’s perspective at all? Alternatively I might seek to sidestep these methodological difficulties by turning to Vargas Llosa’s comments on his own act of creation. But as the literary scholar Roland Barthes (1977: 142-154) has observed, once the text is published even the author returns to it only as a guest. This is because the act of writing, of creating an artwork, alters the organization of time. Returning post-hoc, authors can only introspectively speculate on how they created their own artwork, as the lens of the time also affords only a limited epistemic access to the act of creation. The point is that there are limits to any kind of post-hoc description, whether it be introspection, interpretation, speculation about authorial intent, literary analysis, or even post-hoc authorial speculation

—and therefore it is important not only to start where the epistemic access is best, but to acknowledge its limits.

Another possibility to assuage such methodological problems with introspection would be to adopt the methodology favored by many cognitive linguists, posing experiments which aim to support or falsify parts of blending theories or analyses in ‘real-time’ or ‘online’ mental processing (to use two computational metaphors frequently employed by cognitive scientists). Certainly, experimental methods can sometimes afford better real-time investigations of blending phenomena (e.g. Coulson and Matlock, 2001), but experimentation also has its limits on its epistemic access. For example, research questions must be highly focused in order to trap the exact mental operation studied and the test must be repeated many times to obtain statistical validity. As a consequence, such constraints tend to limit the focus of experimental investigation to simpler, less complex conceptual blends. Moreover, experimental studies also produce a ‘white room effect’—it is difficult to even conceive of a set of experimental controls which would not intrude upon the creativity of a writer in the act of writing (i.e. experimentally measuring the creation conceptual blends).

Such philosophical considerations show that post-hoc methods do have some epistemic advantages as compared with experimental studies, both in handling longer and more complex texts and blends and also with regard to investigating blending in the authorial process itself. Introspection and speculation are important tools which lay alongside experimentation in the cognitive scientist’s cabinet, and theorists need to keep in mind that all methods of inquiry have differing qualities of epistemic access into the particular minds doing the blending operations they wish to discuss. The Elizondo epigraph, where the language indicates that the writer is inviting the reader to make a blend between narrators and authors—and thus between ‘art’ and ‘life’—highlights some of the key questions resulting from the use of introspection coupled with blending theory to analyze literary mimesis. Who is doing this blending? To what extent is it the author, and to what extent is it the reader? To what extent does a successful mimetic blend require that the two become identified in the reader’s version of the blend? Does the author’s language facilitate or inhibit such identifications?

Fiction or Autobiography? Fiction and Autobiography?

“All the reader really wants from a novel is to believe that when they have finished it,
they now know the writer a little better.”
—Eudora Welty

When a reader approaches a book, one has various pragmatic expectations even before opening its cover. If it is shelved in the biography section, one reasonably assumes that it contains a ‘truthful’ and factual account of someone’s life. If, on the other hand, it is shelved under fiction, bears the publisher’s classification as such on its spine, and contains the typical lawyerese declaration that ‘any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales, is entirely coincidental,’ then one may reasonably assume it is to be taken as the product of the author’s imagination and not factual or truthful. But when the book’s title is ‘Aunt Julia and the scriptwriter’ and the dedication reads “To Julia Urquidí Illanes, to whom this novel and I owe so much,” the problem of how to

mentally classify the book, and therefore how to approach its contents, is complicated. Should the reader regard it as a work of fiction or as an autobiography?

Yet, as with epigraphs, who really reads dedications and gives them thought at the moment they begin to read a novel? In fact, in the case of this book, my observations on the dedication come post-hoc, as a matter of introspective reflection after completing the novel and choosing it as a subject for my own scholarly writing. If I were to tell a more chronologically exact autobiographical tale, I would have to admit that I plunged quickly to the first page, began reading and enjoying the novel, and even the hint on the first page that this was not your ordinary work of fiction was simply taken uncritically. Vargas Llosa's second sentence, which might very well have evoked a smile on my part at the narrator's self-deprecation, gave me a small portent of things to come: "I had a job with a pompous sounding title, a modest salary, duties as a plagiarist, and flexible working hours: News Director of Radio Panamericana" (Vargas Llosa, 1977: 1). What upon reflection I might now reconfigure (along with the dedication) as a cue to start blending the genre of the novel with the genre of autobiography, simply flew by at the time as I immersed myself in turning the pages. In retrospect, I now see the entire first chapter as a meditation upon the relationship between the journalistic reporting and artistic fiction. For example, some pages later the narrator briefly recounts an argument with a coworker on whether their job of rewriting news articles to be read on the airwaves permits his coworker to sensationalize and dramatize the news, or more simply report it, as the narrator would have it (and so explains his self-deprecation as a mere plagiarist on the first page).

Nor were my suspicions aroused when the third major protagonist of the story makes his dramatic appearance by stealing the narrator's typewriter off his desk. As the narrator and his coworker attempt to intervene, a fight nearly breaks out, and the scriptwriter tells the narrator prophetically that "Art is more important than your News Department, you sprite" (Vargas Llosa, 1977: 15). The misunderstanding is cleared up only by the fortuitous intervention of one of the owners of the radio station, and the narrator belatedly realizes that this man is the new scriptwriter about whom his boss had waxed eloquently at lunch. Incidentally, that conversation was reported several pages earlier in the chapter, where the narrator says that he remembers the exact day well because he both met his Aunt Julia and had had the conversation about the talents of the scriptwriter on the very same day. Speaking again with the benefit of hindsight, it now seems obvious to me that the author had set out from the beginning to play with the contrast between reporting the facts and telling a good story, intentionally blurring the lines between the autobiographical and novelistic genres.

Yet in the course of my reading—as best as I can remember—I still did not catch those hints in real time, as I read. Nor did I give more thought to the fact that I first read the narrator's name—Marito, the diminutive of the author's first name of Mario—in the course of his first encounter as an adult with his Aunt Julia. Ironically, it was not until the narrator makes explicit a shift in the affectionate diminutive nickname which Julia uses for him that I consciously made the connection between the narrator and the author's names: "Ever since she'd heard Javier calling me that, she too now addressed me as Varguitas" (Vargas Llosa, 1977: 136).

That sentence comes at the close of the seventh chapter, and I am certain that that is the exact moment at which I consciously began to think through the nature of the conceptual blend between the genres of autobiography and the novel. As it happened,

that very sentence came at a convenient point in time for me to pause in my reading of the novel. Shortly after I put down the book, I voiced my suspicion that the novel was quite autobiographical in a conversation with the friend who had recommended the book. I remember the exact words in which I broached the matter: "It really makes me wonder whether he was in fact married to a woman named Julia."

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The blending diagram in figure 2 is a schematization of my thinking. Note that this first schematization is an interpretive blend, by which I mean that it is drawn from the perspective of one which is reading the artwork and generating meaning from it, as opposed to the perspective of the artist who creates it. As I read the book, I was experiencing it as a book representative of two different genres, each of which is represented as an input space in the diagram. There are important identity mappings between the elements of these genres, such as that between the novelistic protagonist and the subject of an autobiography, the characters of the novel and the real friend of the autobiographer. At the same time there were discrepancies between the genres, elements whose mappings were disanalogous and inconsistent, such as between the lawyer's disclaimer in the front matter and the author's dedication in the front matter. At a more abstract level, I was also experiencing this book generically as a book, something with protagonists and more peripheral characters, words on pages bound together in a cover, with additional data supplied from the publisher on its spine and on the publisher's page. That comprises a very generic level structure common to the two input spaces that is represented as a mental space drawn above and between the two input mental spaces.

Finally, there is the blended space which represents my speculations about the events and the actual life of the author, given my suspicion that the author was deliberately mixing his genres. This space existed at first only in my own imagination; I have no direct epistemic access to Vargas Llosa's memories of the events of his life, nor was I present to have witnessed any of them. I was constructing the blended space in my imagination from the two sets of experiences I did have, from my two interpretations of the book. This blended space would eventually become a space in which I reconceived the genre of the book as a fictional autobiography, but I had not yet reached that moment in the blending process.

As it is now the age of the instant information gratification, i.e. the internet, in the actual chronological moment the question was easily addressed long before I drew that schematization—though it is my contention that I was 'running the blend'—that is doing the cognitive work—as I was speculating about his life. Diagramming the blend is merely a matter of formalizing and representing the thought process for clarity—the diagram is not the blend just as surely as the map is not the territory. And when I sat down at the computer and used the internet to search for a biography of Vargas Llosa, I rapidly discovered that he had been married to a Julia (Liukkonen, 2002). Minutes later I searched for a book review and discovered therein that he had known a Bolivian scriptwriter in his youth by the name of Raul Salmon (Kennedy, 1982). Somewhat later I also took notice of the dedication, and made sure that the two names of the Julias in the biography and in the dedication were exact matches. I could have continued by investigating other similarities, such as the names and identities of the more minor characters and his other friends from that period of his life, but I did not feel the need to

complete every possible match in the blend to come up with my interpretation of what Vargas Llosa’s real life had been like. Additional details from the reviews and biographies and other materials I read online, such as reports that he had been very afraid of his father in real life, were gradually incorporated into my reading of the rest of the novel, as for example in the penultimate chapter where the narrator’s father effectively exiles Julia from Peru for six weeks after they eloped. Throughout the rest of my reading, I was grappling with questions such as “Is this novel really an autobiography? Or if only in part, how much so?”

Thus far I have paid very close attention to my own experience of *reading* the novel, introspectively describing the blending that I was doing as I was encountering the artwork from the interpretative stance of the reader. But did Vargas Llosa intend to create a fictional autobiography? It is difficult to tell, as even his own pronouncements on the relationship between fiction and truth are not simply straightforward (e.g. Vargas Llosa, 1984). Yet considering the question of what is being blended from the point of view of the creator—as much as we are able to—is an important endeavor. After all, only Vargas Llosa (and to a lesser extent the other real-life participants) have good epistemic access to what actually transpired in Vargas Llosa’s life and in his experiences of those events. For example, Julia Urquidi Illanes wrote a book responding to Llosa’s account of their romance (Urquidi Illanes and Perricone, 1988). But given the fact that Vargas Llosa knows his own life story best (and doesn’t need to speculate about it in the same sense that I must as an outside reader), it would be better to make the input space of the blending diagram represent his real life and replace the blended space in our diagram with the second input space of figure 2, i.e. autobiography. Of course, some small adjustments must be made as a result of such space-swapping; most notably his blended space is now a *fictional* autobiography. Whereas from my perspective as a reader, I knew nothing of Vargas Llosa’s real life and had only my experience of the book to go on in creating my blend, at the time of the novel’s writing Vargas Llosa had his own memories and the desire to write a novel. By effectively swapping the roles of these two epistemically different yet highly similar spaces containing knowledge of Vargas Llosa’s real life, I think we get a much better picture of the blending process as it was unfolding in Vargas Llosa’s mind as he wrote the novel. He may not have set out to blend the genres of the novel and the autobiography, but in the adaptation of elements of his own life to the constraints of the novel he has done so. In figure 3, I give the blending diagram as it would be drawn from the perspective of the artistic creator.

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Note that Vargas Llosa’s (1984) own reflections on writing the novel lend more authority to this manner of diagramming his blending process: “I began with experiences still vivid in memory and stimulating to my imagination and then fantasized something that is an extremely unfaithful reflection of that material.” His memories are the inspiration for his novel—in blending terms they are an input space—but they are also *merely* the inspiration for his novel—he is not attempting a journalistic autobiography in which he ‘plagiarizes’ his own real life, to use the word he chooses in describing himself as protagonist on the first page. He only begins with these memories. As he writes the novel, he fantasizes what he needs—he invents characters and events, altering and reordering time as necessary to tell a good story with dramatic conflict, strong

protagonists and antagonists and so on. The blended space of the fictional autobiography is the natural outcome of selectively projecting events taken from the novelist's real life and fusing them with the elements of the novelistic form.

I suspect that most blending theorists would generally regard figure 3 as more canonically 'correct' than figure 2, but why? The key lies in the considerations of time and perspective I have foregrounded many times as I introspectively narrated my own encounter with the artwork. Like writing, the acts of analysing and diagramming blending are necessarily post-hoc activities, ordering and altering time through selective reporting. If one takes this diagram as canonically describing this blend, my speculations regarding Vargas Llosa's real life would then be a process of *deblending* or *disintegration*. Since I have poor epistemic access to Vargas Llosa's real life, I would be using my knowledge of the other spaces to 'fill in' my knowledge of that input space, i.e., Vargas Llosa's memories. And after I had built up my knowledge of that space using 'backwards projection,' I could then 'rerun the blend' and come to see the novel as a blend resulting from the process of Vargas Llosa adapting his real life memories to a novel. This idea of 'backwards projection' is not unique to blending theory; Paul Ricoeur (1988: 160-179) has made similar observations in his theory of the three-fold mimesis, in which he argues that we as readers have to constantly reconfigure our understanding in response to not only the author's text, but also to the knowledge and expectations which we readers carry to the text.

But why should a reader have to do the blend 'correctly,' in order as diagrammed in the canonical view? Well-versed in blending theory, I can see how I might come to reconfigure my speculations as to Vargas Llosa's real life as 'backwards projection' and 'filling in the input space' rather than just considering the novel from a different point of view. I simply ignored the phenomenology of my own experience as a reader and interpretant and identified with the author's experience as creator. I did so in part because as a scholar I expect to explain effects in terms of their causes, and if by writing the novel Vargas Llosa created the blend which I was thinking through, then diagramming the blend from the authorial perspective must be the correct way to diagram the blend. For purposes of explanation, we blending theorists often violate the chronology of the cognizer's experience and inferential objectives in favor of imposing an authorial one.

By attending carefully to matters of perspective and the exact moment in time of the blending process, I hope to have shown that blending theorists need to take careful phenomenological account of exactly when and from whose perspective the conceptual blending is taking place. An analogy may prove helpful in explaining the space-swapping hypothesis. Suppose we are gourmands trying to understand exactly which ingredients went into a particularly appetizing new dish from what we taste, and we speculate that there is cinnamon, anise and so on. But as blending theorists, we don't stop there—we diagram our efforts to reconstruct the recipe. At some later point, we speak to the chef and he gives us the recipe so we can make it ourselves for someone else. We then make the dish for another friend but once again, as good blending theorists, we don't stop there. Now knowing the recipe, we rediagram the entire process from the perspective of the chef making the dish. Note that once again the space of our speculations as to the ingredients and the recipe listing them would effectively swap places within the conceptual blending network. Whereas at one moment we know the taste (i.e. have it as an input space) and speculate about the chef's ingredients (in the blended space), at the other moment we

know the ingredients (i.e. have it as an input space) and speculate how it will taste to our friend (in the blended space). Both of these blending processes have equal cognitive validity to us as experiences, but they take place at different times and with different knowledge. As scholars, we tend to canonize the second sort of end-product blending diagram (that of the person who knows how it was created) at the expense of the first diagram (that of the person who is learning and speculating about how to create it). But that tendency can lead us away from an accurate and adequate model of the precise order in which a particular blending network unfolds from a particular person's perspective at a particular moment in time.

The Author and the Scriptwriter: The Art-Life Blend in the Novel

"I write about life, and the impact of reality is crucial to my work."
—Pedro Camacho

The fictional autobiography blend is not the only important large-scale blend that drives this novel, however. Equally important are the stories within the story. As I read, I could not fail to notice that every even-numbered chapter (excepting the final chapter) is told not in first person but in third person, and were markedly different in diction and tone from the odd-numbered chapters—for example, each chapter ends with cliffhanger questions about the future of the characters. The characters in these chapters vary, but since the setting is also Lima it seems initially plausible that these different stories will eventually be woven together with the chapters of the first-person narrative. And in various, if unexpected, ways they are in fact woven into the novel.

What exactly these chapters are remains somewhat enigmatic until a reference is made to them explicitly in the fifth chapter, just as the romance between Marito and his Aunt Julia is beginning to blossom into a relationship. While it is clear that Pedro Camacho, the scriptwriter's name in the novel, has been hired as a writer of radio serials, and chapters two and four do fit the format of a radio serial right down to the cliffhanger questions at the close of the program, that possibility has not yet crept explicitly into the first person narrative of the odd-numbered chapters. When that finally becomes clear, it appears just after Julia dismisses their playful relationship as a foolish fancy that could never become a serious romance—and yet, interestingly enough, the willingness to pretend that it isn't serious seems to be the real reason that it happens at all. Julia begins by jokingly deprecating their relationship:

"The love affair of a baby and an old lady who's also more or less your aunt," Julia said to me one night as we were crossing the Parque Central. "A perfect subject for one of Pedro Camacho's serials."

I reminded her that she was only my aunt by marriage, and she replied that on the three o'clock serial a boy from San Isidro, terrifically handsome and an expert surfer, had had relations with his sister, no less, and horror of horrors, had gotten her pregnant (Vargas Llosa, 1977: 90).

There are two particularly interesting sets of connections made here. The first is that chapter two is the serial in which the brother impregnates his sister, and thus the even-numbered chapters become marked as Pedro Camacho's serials. The second is the emphatic denial of the incestuousness of their own relationship—the Julia of the novel, as well as the Julia of real life, are not related by blood but only by marriage. However, they

do have a very real fear of being found out as lovers by their family, who would not approve of such a match. But the disanalogous mapping between the literally incestuous serials and the merely socially incestuous narrative initiates a blend between the two types of chapters, between Camacho's serialized fiction on one hand and the fictional autobiography of the first-person narrative on the other. Their love story takes place against the backdrop of the stories within the story.

Another interesting instance of this art-life blend occurs at the very end of the novel, when Marito returns to Peru on vacation and bumps into his old friends. Camacho has gone insane from overwork in the penultimate chapter, and in the final chapter he appears only as a bumbling old fool whose luck has run out, a pale shadow of his former brilliant self. But ironically, one of his mental problems is precisely the same as the results of a mental breakdown of one of his own characters in the serial offered up in chapter ten. Neither Vargas Llosa's character nor the character's character can abide riding in vehicles, and both must walk everywhere in Lima (Vargas Llosa, 1977: 177, 369, 373). Once again, a story within the story has been blended with the story.

INSERT FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

I am now in a position where I may explicitly diagram the first-level blend between art and life in the novel (figure 4), by which I mean only the blend between the serial chapters and the narrative chapters. In one input space is the serialized art that is fiction even to the characters of the novel, and in the other input space the 'real' life of the characters within the novel. The counterpart mappings are imperfect—Julia and Marito are not brother and sister nor related by blood, and while that perhaps makes their affair not physical incest but at almost the same angle a forbidden love—the imperfection is part of what drives the larger story. The generic space is that of a dramatic story, a forbidden love affair, and the blend is the story of their life together, as represented to be real in the narrative of the odd-numbered chapters. At this level of the blend there is no reference to the fact that the artwork is a fictionalized autobiography in which the author's life imitates the art he creates; this blend takes place entirely within the world of the novel.

Yet a second, more mimetic, variety of the art-life blend also recurs throughout the novel's narrative. The actual writing of the radio serials consumes the narrator, who declares he desperately wants to become a writer and is fascinated with Camacho, the first real writer in his life. His determination to become a writer irrespective of the consequences is also integral to his seduction of Julia, as they must eventually love each other regardless of the (familial) consequences. This parallel spurs him to study Camacho ever more closely to find out what it means to be a writer, and to make one's living by art regardless of the consequences. Out for drinks and a walk one night as a threesome, Camacho spontaneously invites them for dinner inside his humble abode. In the ensuing after-dinner conversation Camacho confesses to them that he has a secret method for making his serials so life-like—and so wildly successful. On Sundays, when not at work, he dresses up in costumes—wigs and maid's uniforms, false mustaches and a policeman outfit, and the like—in order to better imagine the characters of his radio serials. Witnessing this, Marito asks the scriptwriter "Do you acquire disguises to fit your characters, or do you invent your characters on the basis of the disguises you already have?" who replies that "It's plain from your question that you're still very young...

Don’t you know that in the beginning is the Word—always?” (Vargas Llosa, 1977: 135) The allusion to the biblical account of Genesis is blatant, and invokes an analogy between that myth of the creation of the world and the creation of art. We imagine who we are, and writing down that imagination gives shape to our identities.

Here is another example of the sort of iteratively embedded blending that I described in the Elizondo example at the outset (figure 1). There is a double parallel between, on the one hand, the inner blend of how the scriptwriter writes the stories within the story that blend out one level to the first person narrative story and, on the other hand, how Vargas Llosa the author is writing both that blend and the blend between a fictional narrative and his real life. The fact that the author (Camacho) must pretend to be what he writes about is strongly reminiscent of the fact that Marito is pretending to be and dreaming of becoming a writer and living a writer’s life with Julia in Paris. Of course, Vargas Llosa the author does go on to become a writer and marry his aunt Julia. In the only even-numbered chapter written in the first person, which is also the final chapter, he reveals the outcome of their marriage and that they do live together in Spain and Paris where he has become a successful novelist. Thus Vargas Llosa has Marito telling the story of how he came to live in the blend in the story he tells Julia as he begins to romance her: “I told her the whole story of my life—not my past life, but the one I was going to have in the future, when I lived in Paris and was a writer” (Vargas Llosa, 1977: 87). This fantastic blend—the young boy narrator telling presciently the story that he knows to be true from the later perspective of the author—is the counterpart of Camacho’s dressing up in costumes. The lesson is that the art of being a writer is living like one; of becoming a character in one’s own life story, of living in the blend. The stories within the story become the story; the stories we tell about ourselves determine what we will become. This is living in the blend.

INSERT FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

In figure 5 I diagram this art-life double blend, by which I mean the parallels which take place as Marito studies Camacho in order to learn to be a writer and learns to think and live like his characters, and then later and in ‘real life’ actually becomes Vargas Llosa the author, writing the novel. In one input space we have Marito’s narrative in which he observes Camacho write serial stories so life-like that the novel’s ‘reality’ emulates them; this maps across to the second space in that the adult Vargas Llosa who wrote this novel has told Julia a story so convincing about becoming a writer that he actually becomes one and fulfills his prophecy. In the blend Vargas Llosa fuses with Camacho because each is the author of his own reality, and just like Camacho he eventually becomes a character in his own work. Similarly, Marito’s falling in love with his aunt Julia is fused in the blend with the adult Vargas Llosa’s falling in love with writing. In the end, both Camacho and Vargas Llosa are living in their blends, living in worlds of their own creation. Life becomes art, not only within the novel but also outside it; this is the double parallel that gives this blend its mimetic character. Taken at a metalevel, the novel is demonstrating how art and life imitate one another.

The Cinematic Blends: The Silver Screen Adaptation Blend

“Us writers, Martin... We can’t afford to sit around. We’ve got to make reality impact!”
—Pedro Carmichael

The challenge of adapting an artwork from one medium to another is never insignificant, but in the case of a novel which quite consciously blends together the serialized radio stories and the outer ‘real-life’ story of the novel’s characters it is redoubled. Yet from its first moments the 1990 film *Tune in Tomorrow* not only succeeds in exploring the novel’s art-life blend, it exploits opportunities afforded by the cinematic medium to deepen the blend. A simple example of this kind of deepening is how the opening credits are delivered in a way which flouts conventional expectations of how film credits are normally presented. While the usual cinematic convention is to present the film’s title, director, and starring actors in the written modality overlaid on a backdrop of opening sequences, in this film the credits are read by a radio announcer as if he was announcing a new radio serial while the visuals consist of a series of establishing shots of New Orleans, where it will be set. At the conclusion of the opening credits, the camera finally portrays the man speaking the words as he sits at the desk of the radio station—a segue into the subsequent scene taking place inside the radio station.

A more complex example of how the shift in medium affords redoubling the art-life blend is the capacity for rapid scene changes afforded by the visual modality. Recall that Vargas Llosa has structured his novel so that every other chapter in the novel is a radio serial; but the film adaptation seamlessly shifts between the characters of the ‘real-life’ story and the world of the radio serials. While the audio track stays continuously within the modality of the radio serial, the camera shifts between the ‘real’ characters of the novel who are reading their lines in the radio studio, the real characters as they listen to the radio serial as it goes out over the airwaves (frequently accompanied by a prominently displayed car or desktop radio), and the characters of the serial in the dramatic settings of the radio serial. This of course draws on a standard convention in contemporary film and television known as a narrative voiceover, but is extended within the film by the fact that one subject of the film is the production of that very radio serial narrative itself. Accordingly, the body positions of two different sets of actors are often identical in posture as the camera fades from real life story to the radio serial story or vice versa, thereby reinforcing the parallels in the art-life blend.

I have already mentioned in passing that the setting of the film is New Orleans, not Lima as in the novel. In fact we can see the problems posed by the adaptation of the novel to the film as a kind of blending in itself. As we saw with the novel, blending theory can be used to model this shift in medium from either the perspective of the art-viewer or of the author, and the choice of whose perspective we model will lead to somewhat different representations. Let us begin by considering the matter from the perspective of the scriptwriter who wishes to adapt the novel (see figure 6). Various constraints impact producing a film that do not impact writing a novel, ranging from banal to artistic in nature. Considering for example the shift of setting, the scriptwriter might have been influenced by the fact exotic locations can be expensive to shoot in, or that the Hollywood studio executives who might buy the story might prefer to have a location that their target audiences find easier to imagine. Furthermore, there are constraints of the new artistic form, such as achieving an ‘appropriate’ running time of 90 to 120 minutes, and so on. Given such constraints a series of small changes occur during the course of this adaptation that inevitably have consequences for how the story

proceeds. Among them is the fact that the names are Americanized: Marito becomes Martin, Pedro Camacho becomes Pedro Carmichael (and eventually Peter Carmichael), the Genaro father and son duo who own the radio station become one person with a split personality (Sid/Sam); while the Argentines, the scapegoats in the novel, become Albanians in the film. Finally, there is also a major artistic shift in that the scriptwriter becomes to play an even more salient role in the metalevel of commentary on the nature of art, particularly as the endings of the film and the novel diverge (see following section). While to some extent this last change makes the film less faithful to the novel, in another it can be seen as keeping faith with the novel's artistic commentary on the blend between art and life. For if the author of the film is in some sense the scriptwriter, then it is more reasonable that the film's scriptwriter should also be a meta-level commentator and not meet the same unfortunate demise that the novel's scriptwriter does.

INSERT FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

Of course, more important than the Americanization of the names and changing the story's setting are the artistic changes that the shift in medium precipitates. While the screenwriter might have imagined what a perfectly faithful adaptation of the novel might have looked like, it would be artistically crude not to take advantage of the new medium—and this produces some differences in plot in the blended space of the film. For example, rather than having Pedro Camacho weaving the various radio serials together with each other as he gradually goes increasingly insane, the film has Pedro Carmichael weaving a single serial storyline together with the story of Martin's love affair with his Aunt Julia. The incest of the radio serial, in which a brother gets his sister pregnant and then plans to kill her new husband in a fit of jealousy, is cinematically interwoven with a sequence in which Martin dreams of killing Julia's new suitor, a rich gynecologist, right down to pointing the gun in an identical posture and with identical mannerisms. As the scene progresses, a third narrative is woven into the cinematography, in which the actor playing Carmichael narrates the story at the radio studio's microphone, and also points at his head the cap pistol used at the radio studio for sound effects. This scene of Carmichael pointing the cap pistol at his head then cuts to a scene with Martin is pointing his gun at his head at almost the same angle.

Carmichael also takes a much more active role in bringing together the lovers than in Vargas Llosa's fictional autobiography. In the novel Camacho does not appear to be consciously blending his serials to Marito's love affair, but in the film the opposite is true. For instance, instead of the novel's spontaneous invitation to dinner in Pedro's home, the film's Carmichael invites them in advance for a dinner, greets them at the door in a maid's outfit, explains how his method-acting helps provide his inspiration before rather than during dinner, and then (ostensibly) leaves the lovers alone while they enjoy the dinner he has prepared. However, in a brief sequence the film hints he traipses upstairs rather than going out. After their dinner has taken place, complete with a lover's quarrel, the camera traces a wire from the lampshade up to an attic room where Carmichael sits, listening and recording their dinner conversation.

Naturally Carmichael uses their very words later in his serial—a habit that continues while an oblivious Martin continues to be the quasi-omniscient Carmichael's unwitting source of material. Oblivious to the content of the radio serial even as everyone about him listens to it, Martin does not begin to catch on the fact that he is

being used until Carmichael again uses their exact words obtained from eavesdropping on yet another lover's quarrel. When Martin finally confronts him for stealing their words, Carmichael's reply is an unabashed defense of the art-life blend:

MARTIN: Why did you put what we said on the radio?

CARMICHAEL: Let me ask you one question.

MARTIN: What?!?

CARMICHAEL: What's more important.... Life? Or art?

MARTIN: But it wasn't art! You just copied word for word what we said!

CARMICHAEL: And where did you get the words you used? Your attitudes?

The so-called feelings in your stupid heart? From me. From us. Writers.

You feed on us, we feed on you. Art isn't just some guy's name, you know...

Art is two cannibals on a desert island, dying of hunger. Eat or be eaten,

Martin. Name of the game! Eat or be eaten!

Of course, Carmichael's striking analogy between art and cannibalism is intended as a defense of his actions that explicitly raises the mimetic character of art, in which it is never clear whether life imitates art or art imitates life. Again, the costuming and choreography of the scene reinscribe the mimetic cycle. The taller Martin, looking uncomfortably gawky and youthful in his tennis shorts and tight t-shirt, confronts the shorter Pedro in his home where he has donned the costume of a Hasidic Jew, no doubt in keeping with his predilection for dressing as his characters to enliven his writing. Pedro first appears in his kitchen, elevated above the entryway but several stairs, as if it were a pulpit from which he descends as he delivers his sermon to Martin. He backs Martin across the room, subverting Martin's original rage, and concludes the scene by mollifying a speechless Martin by offering him a pair of tickets to a jazz club that very evening. Of course, the occasion is merely another setup for Carmichael to manipulate their love affair; the old cannibal has eaten the younger one for lunch. His plans for manipulating Martin's life to imitate his art continue unabated.

Another similar plot difference is that while in the novel it is Martin who decides that he must marry Julia after their love affair has been discovered, in the film it is Carmichael who urges it on Martin. While both efforts to become married are comedic affairs, the event structure differs greatly. In the novel's Peru, the difficulties center on Marito's traipsing throughout the countryside to find a town magistrate willing to marry them despite the fact that he is not yet of age to marry without parental consent. In the film's counterpart for this, Carmichael organizes a charade of a nighttime marriage ceremony in the Louisiana bayou performed by none other than the lead voice actor of the radio serial—a marriage which he is again surreptitiously recording, apparently with the intent of stealing material from the ceremony for his radio serial. Here again, the counterparts between the different spaces of the blend are inexact; the event structures, while parallel in some superficial details (eloping to the country, a botched marriage ceremony, and so on), differ in the key element of the Pedro character's efforts on the Martin/Marito character's behalf. In the film Martin and Julia discover Carmichael's charade by themselves, while in the novel it is the magistrate who 'discovers' he cannot marry an underage Marito even though he has accepted his bribe. The shift in agency is revealing; in the film, unlike in the book, the element of authorial omnipotence is reposed not in the autobiographical narrator but in the script writer.

Underscoring this shift in mimetic agency, in the ability to will things to be, is a shift in voice. The cinematic voice is clearly not a first-person narrative by the Marito

character. Given the shifting between scenes, it is mostly a seemingly anonymous third-person narrative perspective on the action, though near the conclusion it leaves some room for the viewer to believe that the story is being told by the Carmichael scriptwriter character. Yet the shift in voice and the shift in agency between Marito and the scriptwriter are unmistakably ironic and yet completely faithful to the spirit of the art-life blend, if not to the letter of the novel; for just as Marito is the quasi-omnipotent writer of the novel, the actual script writer (William Boyd) who is writing the screenplay adaptation makes Carmichael, the script writer within the story, the quasi-omnipotent creative force behind the film's story. In this way the screenplay author has moved a key characteristic (the self which wills oneself to be a writer) of the Vargas Llosa character into the Camacho-like character, creating Carmichael as a blend of himself as screenwriter and Vargas Llosa as novelist. And of course, the power of the author to will his autobiographical creation (and therefore also his own status as an author) into being—which was reposed in a novelist when the novelist wrote the novel—is now reposed in the scriptwriter, because a script writer writes the film's script.

The film's altered blend works because it emerges naturally from the fact that in both stories the young writer is apprenticing to the old one. How is this sense of omnipotence taught, this sense by means of which a writer is able to create one's own life on the basis of one's imagination? A key passage of the film dialogue, which has no counterpart in the novel's dialogue, is one of many places in which the art-life blend takes on its stronger twist. In it, Martin nervously confesses his incipient desire to become a writer—and Carmichael responds with a sarcastic lecture, telling him that a writer doesn't just have a secret desire to be a writer—he has to will it to be, make it become real:

MARTIN: Yeah, I had a story published in the Picayune ... I'm not sure ... I'm studying to be a lawyer, but ... I think I'd kinda like to be a writer.

CARMICHAEL: You'd 'kinda like to be a writer?' He'd 'kinda like to be a writer.' Well, it's not the 'kinda' job, you'd 'kinda like' to have. You're forced... compelled ... you got no choice man.

MARTIN: Yeah, well I do feel like that!

CARMICHAEL: Us writers, Martin... We can't afford to sit around. We got to make reality impact! Seize the opportunity. Know what I mean?

Of course, this advice is also sound advice for Martin's burgeoning love affair with his aunt Julia, and this scene is immediately followed by a dinner scene in which Martin seizes the opportunity to dance while being out for dinner with Julia and her wealthy, elderly suitor. Where in the novel Camacho is portrayed as a hapless fool where matters of love and women are concerned, Carmichael teaches Martin how to will a love affair into being as well as how to will himself into being a writer. The blend between learning to love and learning to write, which was latent in the art-life blend of the novel, is simply drawn a little tighter in the film than in the novel. The latency of an even tighter counterpart relationship between willing the love affair and willing oneself to be a writer in the original novel accounts for why Pedro's willingness to be Marito's Virgil, his faithful companion who guides him in matters of love as well as writing, works within the screen adaptation. It feels true because it draws on already existing connections. The doubled art-life blend of the novel is only enhanced by the strengthening of the scriptwriter character in the cinematic adaptation.

Note that I have taken a different course in choosing my perspective as I use blending theory to discuss the film's genre blend. In discussing the novel, I recounted first

my own process as a reader, as an art viewer who developed a blend concerning Vargas Llosa's real life, and only later shifted to thinking about the authorial perspective. By contrast, I could diagram the film *Tune in Tomorrow* from the perspective of an art-viewer—for example I could give my own introspective reflections on my experience in encountering the film—and the film would be an input space while the counterfactual space of what a perfectly faithful adaptation would become the blend, just as in the case of my wondering whether the novel was autobiographical in the genre blend described in figures 2 and 3. The point is just that different perspectives on the artwork can produce differently ordered diagrams, but that blending theorists must always make explicit whose cognition is being modeled. And in the case of a film which is an adaptation of a book, surely whether the viewer has already read the novel (or is even aware that it is an adaptation) would impact their blending process. Additionally, it is important to point out that not only is this account of the scriptwriter's (i.e., William Boyd's) conceptual processes speculative, but I am also vastly oversimplifying because the director, actors, cinematographer, editor and others play collaborative creative roles in the final product. Of particular note, although I will not discuss them here, are the blends which result from the casting of the actor Peter Falk to play the Pedro Carmichael character.

Tune in To the Mimetic MegaBlend: Of Hatred, Albanians, Argentines, and Norwegians

“Everybody has got to have something to hate. Hate burns...it burns like love.”
—Pedro Carmichael

There remain two substantial problems raised at the outset, that of how mimetic blending may yield a meta-fictional level of social commentary on the one hand and, on the other hand, the moral controversies concerning writing when it depicts violence and thus raises the possibility of causing unintended harm as a secondary consequence of the artwork. The two problems are tightly intertwined in the film, and for brevity's sake I shall omit any introspective narrative reflecting my process of constructing the blend as a reader/art-viewer and simply treat the crucial blend as a finished post-hoc product, though I do want to mark it as a blend as seen from an interpretative perspective.

While the novel does raise the issue of Camacho's near-pathological hatred of 'Argentines' (Argentineans), speculating at times on connections between this obsession, his misogyny and the nationality of his long-absent Argentinean wife, in the film the issue of racial hatred in art is taken up even more explicitly. Unlike in the novel, from just after the opening credits how Pedro Carmichael's radio serials are filled with references to the unsavory habits of Albanians. These begin quite softly—in the very first episode Carmichael writes, a character named Dr. Albert Quince asks his nephew Richard at the wedding of his niece: “What's a matter boy? You look like an Albanian peasant whose cow just died!” Of course, Richard's unhappiness stems from his love affair with his sister, the bride; and throughout the course of the serial, the insults to Albanians will escalate to include incest, scatology, bestiality and child-murder. For example, when the love affair in the serial is discovered, one of the female characters says “It's disgusting! It's incestuous! It's ... totally Albanian!”

Naturally in the film the New Orleans Albanian population does not react kindly to these gags, and there is an angry fistfight in an alley between several Albanians and

Pedro and Martin that is mercifully cut short by the arrival of the police. Letters are written to the radio station owner, and an upset Sid/Sam employs Martin to ask Pedro to tone down the Albanian gags:

SID/SAM: And yet...all praise to the good lord... Our audience is up 183%!

What in the Sam Hill am I gonna do Martin? You tell me.

MARTIN: I dunno. Tell him to go easy on the Albanian gags?

(Scene cuts to a closeup of Pedro Carmichael, apparently just after Martin has relayed the message to go easy)

CARMICHAEL: 'Go easy.' 'Go easy.'

MARTIN: Well—I figure—um.. I mean—are they that important? Are they really worth bothering about?

CARMICHAEL: Yes. Yes. Yes, Martin, yes they are. Everybody has got to have something to hate. Hate burns...it burns like love.

MARTIN: But why Albanians?

CARMICHAEL: Why not? (pauses) The impact of reality! Without that the artist is nothing.

MARTIN: Well, I promised I'd ask.

CARMICHAEL: That's what I like about you Martin ... all that reality impacting you.

The film's scriptwriter is defending his Albanian slurs in a much more sophisticated way than the novel's scriptwriter does his Argentinean slurs. While the novel's Camacho is portrayed as actually hating the Argentineans (in the end perhaps because he is a misogynist who hates his Argentine wife), the film's Carmichael explains that "hate burns like love" and he likes the effect he has had in "all that reality impacting" Martin. The idea that his words are inspiring ethnic tensions is seen by him as vindication of his ability to create a profoundly mimetic art-life blend (figure 7)—to have "the impact of reality." And with his "Why not hate Albanians?" attitude, the Carmichael character appears to be offering the argument that some villainry and scapegoating are necessary elements to a good dramatic story, one capable of sending the radio station's ratings up 183%.

Of course, this metalevel commentary is the result of an interpretive art-to-life blend on my part as an art-viewer, but the defense that violence is a real and hence a necessary plot device is a standard one offered in contemporary debates over whether cinematic portrayals of violence contribute to the high level of violence in the United States. Naturally such debates raise questions as to whether film should be censored in an effort to curb violence. The film develops these themes as Martin's effort at curbing Carmichael's language fails, and the Albanian slurs continue to escalate. Albanian protestors surround the radio station's building, and Sid/Sam personally implores Carmichael to stop making racial epithets. Finally, Sid/Sam tells Carmichael that he has received calls from the Albanian Liberation Organization threatening to torch the station if the slurs do not stop. He then flatly orders Carmichael to submit his scripts for censorship before broadcast.

In their own ways, both the novel and the film are exploring ways in which mimesis is a dangerous process. In the novel, Marito resists his father's attempts to determine the script by which he will live his life and whom he will marry; in the film, Carmichael resists imposed artistic censorship at the risk of inciting violence for his art. Just moments before the live broadcast of his first 'censored' episode, he pulls the fire

alarm. Then, in what is probably the closest parallel to the novel's Camacho gradually going insane, Carmichael does a one-man radio serial, playing all the parts with his own voice. Of course, shots of him at the microphone doing the voiceover are intercut with shots of both the 'fictional' radio serial world and of the 'real-life' Martin's continuing pursuit of Julia. The multiple storylines of the serial and the film characters' 'real life' are compressed into one blend using the visual medium with narrative voiceover. This crescendo of growing insanity is only broken when Martin resists Carmichael's storyline. He shakes off the spell and, although Carmichael describes it, he does not encounter Julia's lover in the parked car with her and then turn the gun on himself—though we do see a dream sequence in which this appears to begin to take place. The camera then cuts to Carmichael uttering his Albanian epithets, and he goads the Albanians into action. They break into the radio station and pile up chairs, scattering fuel, looting and setting fire to the station just as he finishes the broadcast.

When Martin resists Carmichael's attempts to blend his life into his radio serials, the violent climax at the radio station is supplanted by a return to the 'real-life' storybook romance between the lovers, while the film leaves Carmichael hanging in the midst of the flames. Here the film takes up Martin's narrative voice rather than Carmichael's, and there is a distinct feeling that he has shaken off Carmichael's influence and begun to assert himself to write his own story. Martin surprises Julia alone in the parked car, and although she is shocked to see him brandishing a gun, confessions ensue. Martin accuses her of being unfaithful and accepting material favors from her elderly suitor, but she reassures him that the car and her apartment were arranged by none other than Pedro Carmichael. In short order, love takes its natural course and they climb passionately into the back seat. The film cuts to the lovers cooing to each other the next morning, an idyll only broken by a siren in the distance. The siren makes Martin think that his father, the policeman, is coming to find him, and they hurriedly pull on clothes only to be see that they are being joined by a fire engine—driven of course, by a firefighter-costumed Pedro Carmichael, face blackened and apparently smoke-stained from his narrow escape at the radio station. He greets them, and disappears behind the trunk of their car, ignoring their indignant complaints about meddling in their love affair and manipulating their emotions. And then he returns to the subject of why mimetic blends are dangerous by finally giving something more of an explanation for his inexplicable hatred of Albanians:

MARTIN: Pedro! This time you are not going to get away—

CARMICHAEL (re-emerges having just changed into a cardinal's red robes):

Cardinal Peter Carmichael, I think. Yes. Yes. That would be good. Oh my goodness Carmen, my goodness. I had no idea you were here... (kisses Julia)
... god loves you my child... and peace to you too son.

JULIA: Pedro, I want you to know I haven't figured it out yet just what it is exactly that you did, but I will.

CARMICHAEL: Ah come on, without me you kids would still be holding hands in the movies. I gotta run.... Goodbye Julia. Look after this little sapsucker here. Keep writing son, and remember what I told you. Life is a shitstorm, and when it is raining shit, the best umbrella you can buy is art.

MARTIN: Damn right! (pause) Wait a second man, where are you going? What are you going to do?

CARMICHAEL: Ah, New York. Telly-vision. That's where the rubber hits the road these days.

JULIA: Television? You're sure?

MARTIN: What about the Albanians?

CARMICHAEL: Albanians? What about em? Fine outstanding race. I love the Albanian people. I'm half-Albanian myself for god's sake.

JULIA and MARTIN: You are?

CARMICHAEL: But the Norwegians now... The things that they'll do. Talk about depraved! It'd make a maggot gag.

What happens in this penultimate scene, and in the film as a whole, is an example of what Fauconnier and Turner call temporal compression in blending. With his flippant remarks about loving the Albanians he has so gleefully insulted throughout the course of his serials, Peter Carmichael seems to be saying it does not matter who is being insulted, as long as the audience is given some sort of villain to serve as a sacrificial scapegoat. To complete the blend we viewers must imagine that next year, when he is a television writer in New York, it will be the Norwegians he will use as scapegoats.

INSERT FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE

This final scene also draws on a remarkable bit of foreshadowing which reaches back to the film's prologue before the opening credits, much as the novel's concern about mimesis were foreshadowed by the epigraph from Elizondo. In that brief prologue a radio station in Detroit receives a bomb threat from someone claiming to be the Alaskan Liberation Organization. As the radio station burns the camera follows a short, slight figure stealing away from the building across a darkened street. Compression is one of the primary mechanisms exploited in conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), and by implying that story just repeats itself the film creates a brilliant compression—wherein the past, present and future are compressed into simultaneity—that makes time irrelevant. The same is true of the compressions of space, for artists must always be stirring up controversy, and it hardly matters where they are or whom they choose to scapegoat—in Detroit, the firebombing of the radio station was done by scapegoated Alaskans, in New Orleans, by Albanians, and perhaps in a New York future, the Norwegians. This is because having any scapegoat to blame will do, just as when Martin's mind leaps to blame the rich gynecologist for his own difficulties in wooing Julia.

Note that the details supplied in both the Detroit past space and the New York future space are not only partial but largely complementary—requiring the art-viewers to use 'backwards projection' in order to complete the blend. Carmichael makes slurs about Norwegians, but there is no bomb threat from a 'Norwegian Liberation Organization,' nor do we see Carmichael making any slurs against Alaskans, but are left to infer that. As these two spaces are put together with the main story it becomes clear that the partial projections complete one another (as indicated by the dashed arrows and items in parentheses in figure 7). One possible interpretation that emerges is the claim that story structure—irrespective of time or place—requires villains and scapegoats. And by compressing the various mediums in which stories can be told—this is a film adapted from a novel about a radio serial scriptwriter, after all—the film seems to also make point about the universal need for villainry in story structure regardless of medium. Whatever the medium, stories require conflict—it doesn't matter where they are set and whether the hatreds to be cultivated are against Argentineans or Albanians. One can still ask,

however, whether this necessity makes the artist morally inculpable for choosing to tell this kind of story and for stooping to ethnic race-baiting to find a villain. Shouldn't it be possible to tell another kind of story, to create a villain without resorting to such base devices as ethnic scapegoating?

Remember once again, though, that this is a film—and a novel—about mimesis. Perhaps if the film had ended after that exchange, the defense of mimesis would fall flat, but the film ends with Julia and Martin imagining their life together in Paris as he becomes a writer and she a singer. The implication is that that they will succeed, for they have learned that what is to become a writer is to write oneself into being a writer; to become an artist requires practicing the art. Mimesis is a bootstrapping process in which life and art simultaneously inspire one another in a circle of emergent meaning. In his account of the threefold mimesis, Paul Riceour (1984) argues that mimesis is a cycle which only begins with the author's imitation of reality; second, it then moves to an author organizing the text and offering guides for future action. This creates a third mimesis, the tension between the reader and the author over how to understand and live after having read the text. By establishing a cycle such as the story of the artist who allows reality to impact his artwork, creating just this kind of tension, and successfully impacts reality only to be run out of town and then start over to do the same thing again, the screenwriter has established the sort of infinite loop of iteratively chained blends that Vargas Llosa implied by his choice of the Elizondo epigraph. The sort of temporal compression using iterative blending invoked by the Carmichael character is the key mechanism by which this film achieves its mimesis. Just as with Elizondo's series of blends in the excerpt from *The Graphologist*, *Tune in Tomorrow* is a film which explores how a series of chained blends evokes the process of mimesis.

Thus the former position—that it does not matter whom the writer chooses as a scapegoat, because the notion of story itself requires villains and scapegoats—is not quite the only conclusion to draw. If this a film about what is to create, about what story is, then perhaps one might imagine another kind of story, one in which love conquers and creates, one in which scapegoating and violence are not necessary to advance a plot. Perhaps that is the sort of writer Martin will himself become, instead of becoming a cheap hack writer of lurid race-baiting stories like Carmichael. In having Martin break free of Carmichael's narrative at a seemingly climactic point, the film opens a space for discussing how mimesis can be accomplished with love rather than ethnic slurs. By doing so the film makes us ask the crucial question—who is doing the blending? Is it Martin or Carmichael? Or is it us, in how we will choose to live our lives and respond to an artwork? What stories will we, like Martin, create? Or will we allow ourselves to be manipulated by the insane Carmichaels of the world?

The art-life blend of the film has taken up the questions raised by the novel's own art-life blends and deepened them, bringing to the forefront questions of artistic censorship and the artist's culpability for moral violence in ways that are only latent in the novel. This has at times made for a darker and more controversial depiction of mimesis in the film, but the film is also more ambitious as to how it treats the growing insanity of the scriptwriter, opening more possibilities for metacommentary. Throughout each artwork, there lies a series of carefully constructed large-scale blends between art and life, between the genres of fiction and autobiography, between the cinematic and the novelistic genres. Via the plot device of the story within the story, these blends embed themselves into more complex versions of themselves in a way that reveals the process of

Rohrer, Tim. 2005. Appeared as "Mimesis, Artistic Inspiration, and the Blends We Live By," *Journal of Pragmatics* 37: 1686-1716. Final draft: Check published edition for pagination of quotes.

mimesis itself. With careful attention to who is doing the blending, applying the flexible framework of conceptual blending to story is invaluable to the understanding how the mechanics of the process of literary mimesis works, in both artistic creation and interpretation.

References

- Barthes, Roland, 1977. The death of the author. *Image, Music, Text*. Heath, Stephen (Ed., Trans.). Hill Press, New York.
- Brandt, Line, Brandt, Per Aage, 2002. Making sense of a blend. *Apparatur: Tidskrift for Litteratur og Kultur* 4.2, 62-71.
- Carroll, Noël, 1990. *The Philosophy of Horror; or, Paradoxes of the Heart*. New York, Routledge.
- Coulson, Seana, Matlock, Teenie, 2001. Metaphor and the space structuring model. *Metaphor and Symbol* 16.3, 295-316.
- Fauconnier, Gilles, 1985. *Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Fauconnier, Gilles, 1997. *Mappings in Thought and Language*. Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Fauconnier, Gilles, Turner, Mark, 1998. Conceptual integration networks. *Cognitive Science* 22, 133-187.
- Fauconnier, Gilles, Turner, Mark, 2002. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and The Mind's Hidden Complexities*. Basic Books, New York.
- Kennedy, William, 1982. Peruvian soap opera, *New York Times* web site. Orig pub. 1 August 1982. <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/06/28/specials/llosa-julia.html>
- Lamarque, Peter, 1981. How can we fear and pity fictions? *British Journal of Aesthetics* 21.4, 291-304.
- Liukkonen, Petri, 2002. Mario Vargas Llosa. *Pegasos* web site, <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/vargas.htm>
- Urquidí Illanes, Julia, Perricone, C.R., 1988. *My Life with Mario Vargas Llosa*. Peter Lang, New York.
- Radford, Colin, 1975. How can we be moved by the fate of Anna Karenina? *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplemental 49, 67-80.
- Radford, Colin, 1977. Tears and fiction. *Philosophy* 52, 208-213.
- Riceour, Paul, 1984. *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1. McLaughlin, Kathleen, Pellauer, David (Trans.). University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Riceour, Paul, 1988. *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3. Blamey, Kathleen, Pellauer, David (Trans.). University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Sweetser, Eve, 1987. The definition of lie: an examination of the folk models underlying a semantic prototype. In: Quinn, Naomi, Holland, Dorothy (Eds.), *Cultural Models in Language and Thought*. Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Vargas Llosa, Mario, 1977. *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter). Lane, Helen (Trans. 1982). Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York.
- Vargas Llosa, Mario, 1984. Is fiction the art of living? Talbot, Tony (Trans.). *New York Times*, 7 Oct 1984, p. BR1.

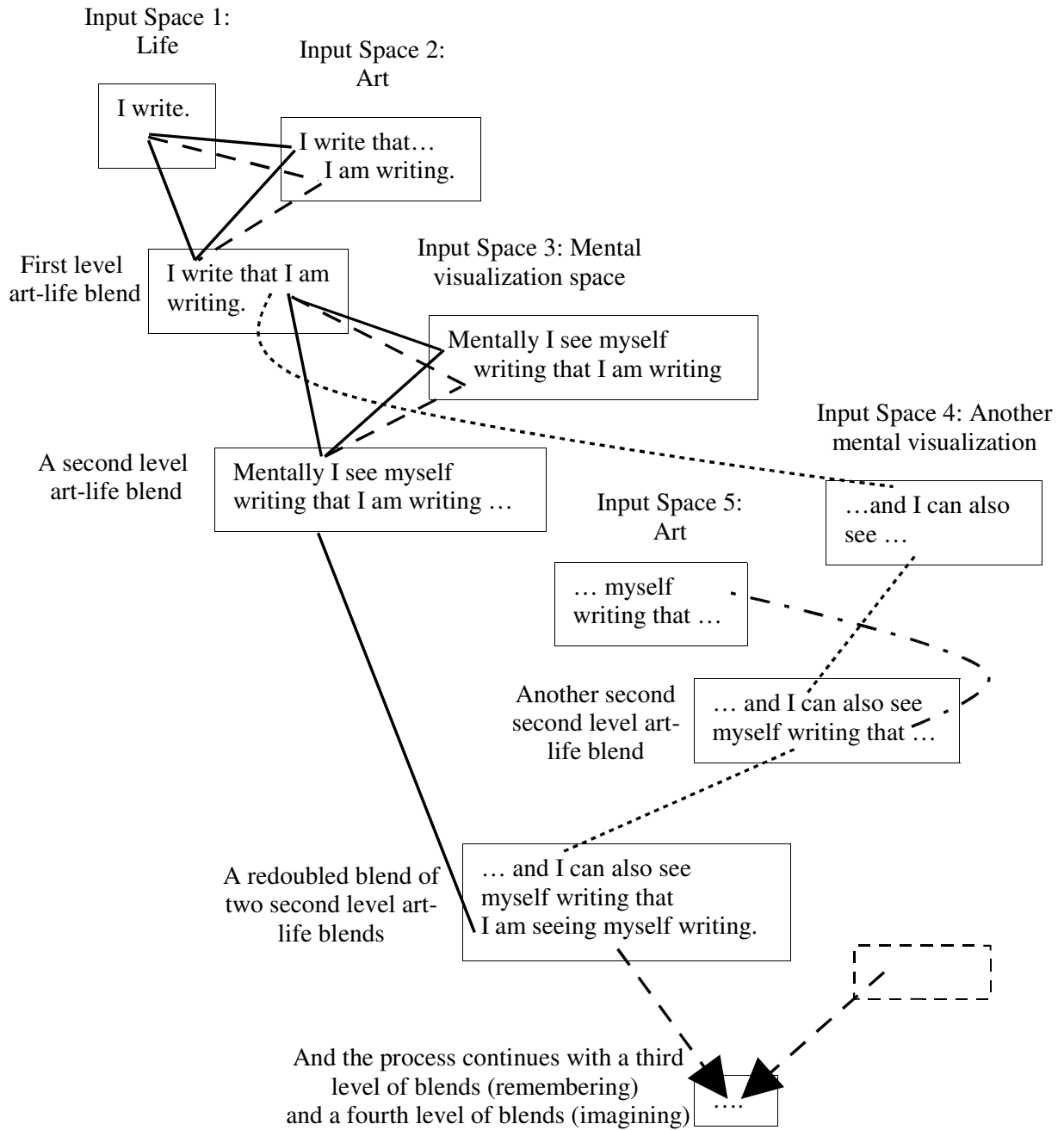


Figure 1: Multiple iterations in the Graphologist Art-Life blend

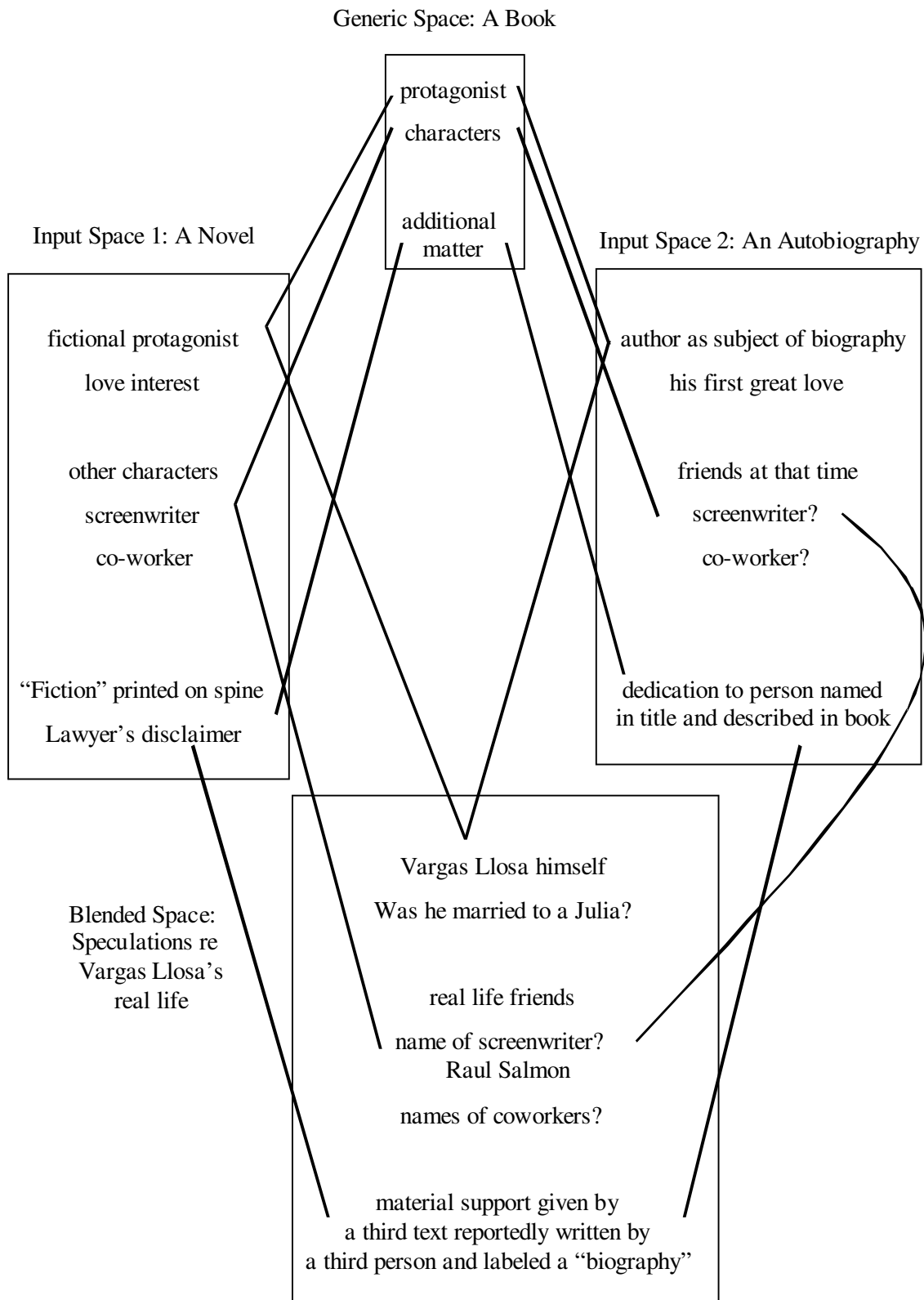


Figure 2: The Genre Blend (from the reader’s perspective)

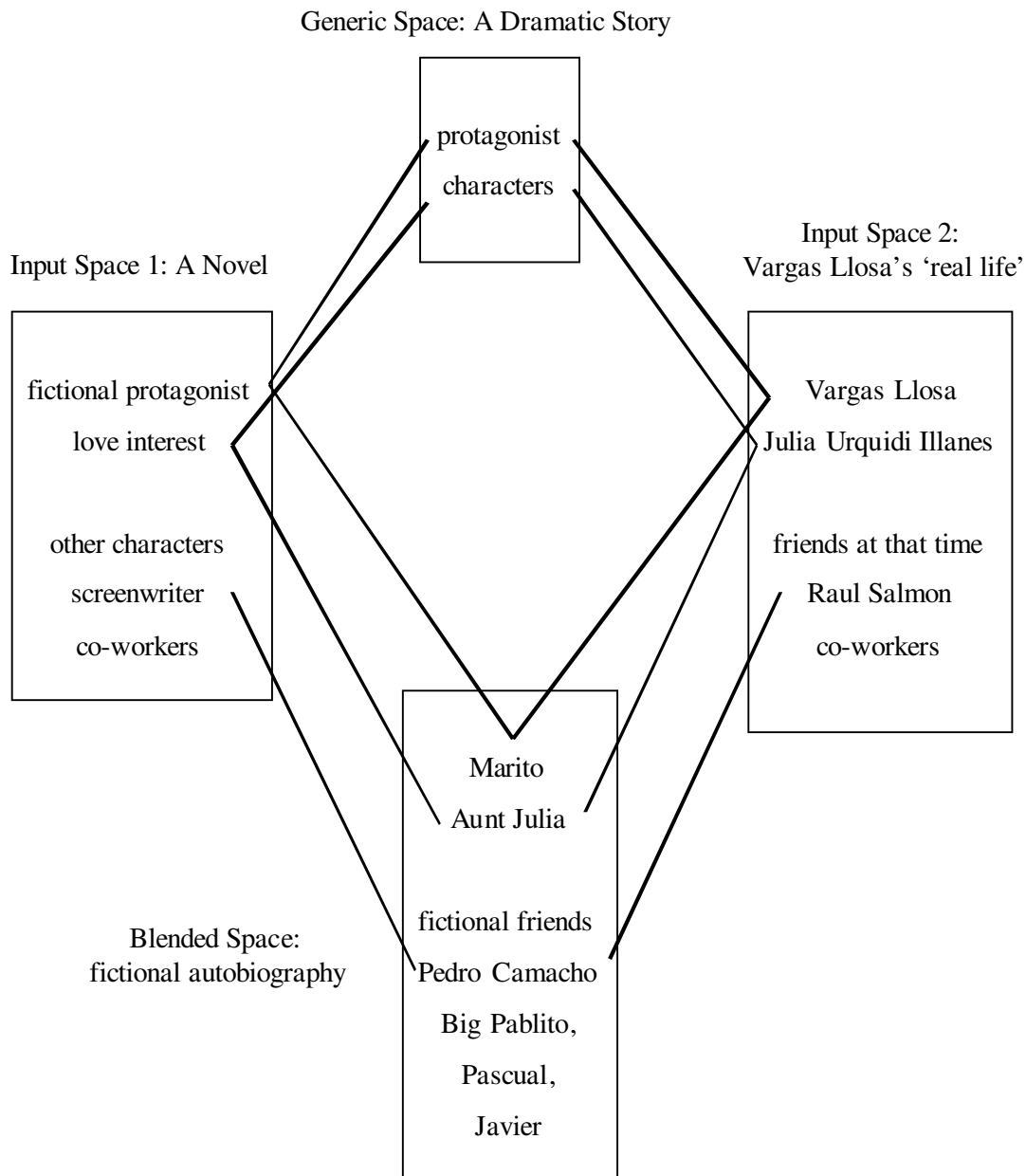


Figure 3: The Genre Blend (from the author’s perspective)

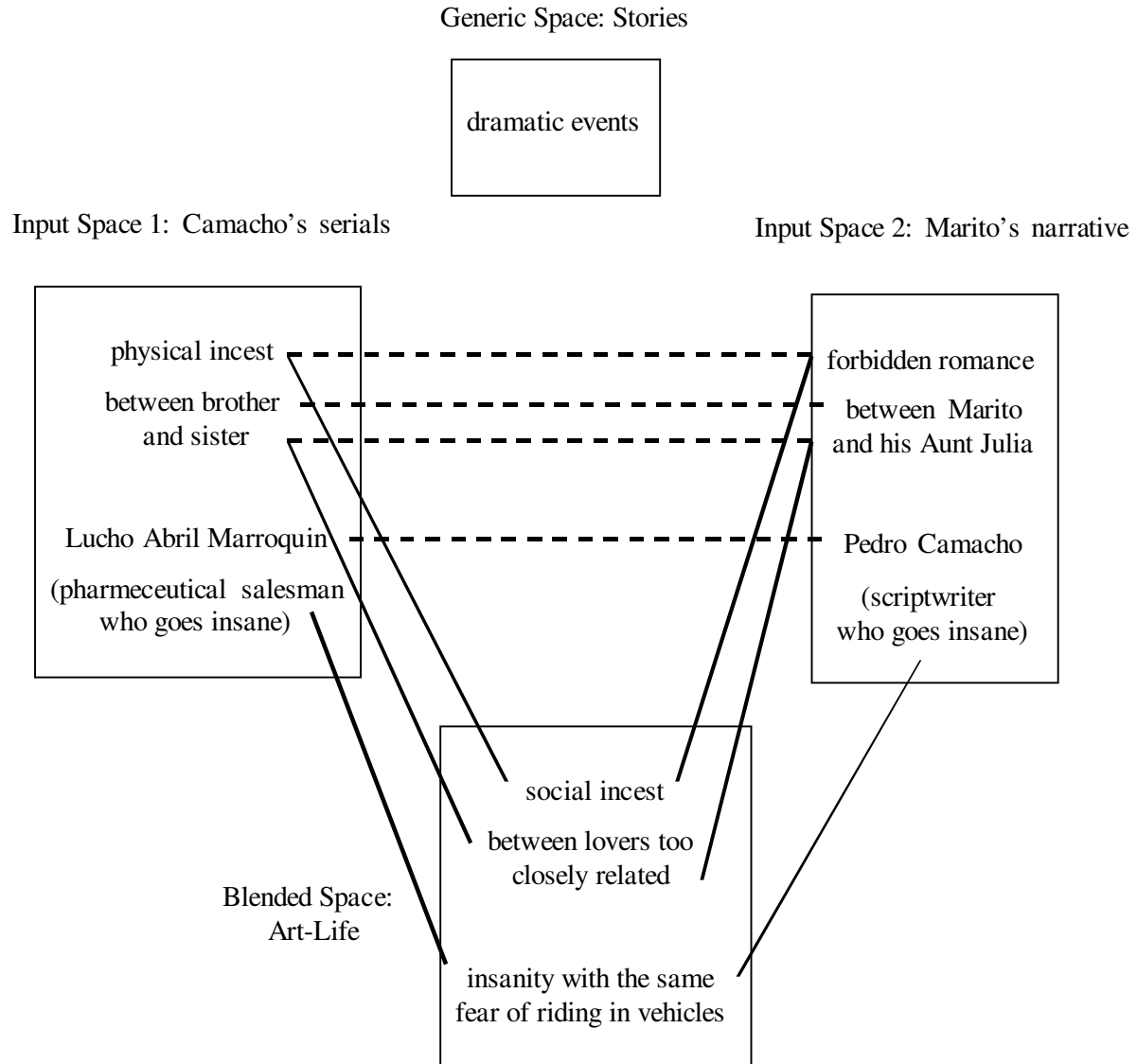
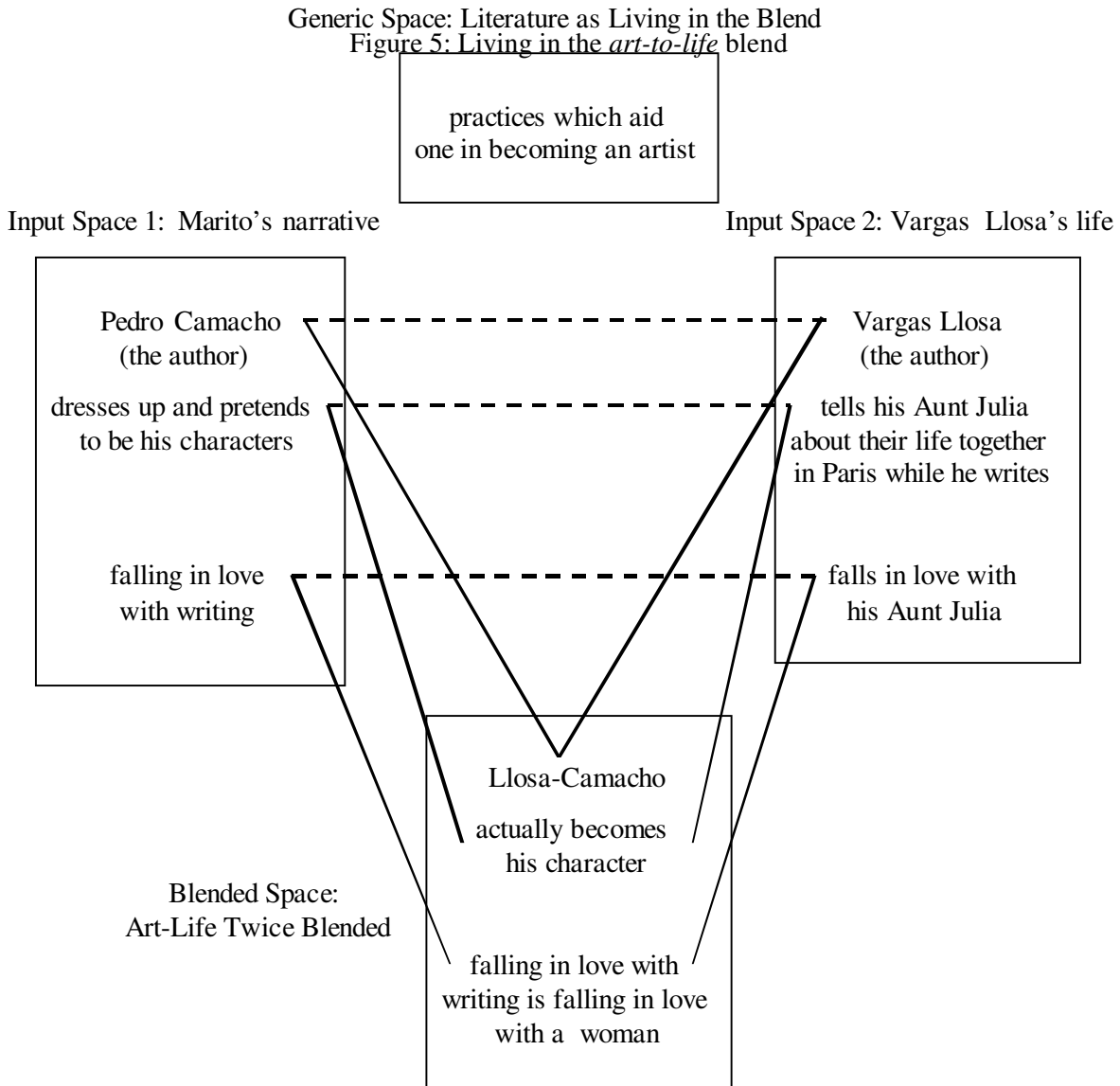


Figure 4: The Art-Life Blend *within* the novel



Generic Space: Constraints and possibilities of adapting to the cinematic medium

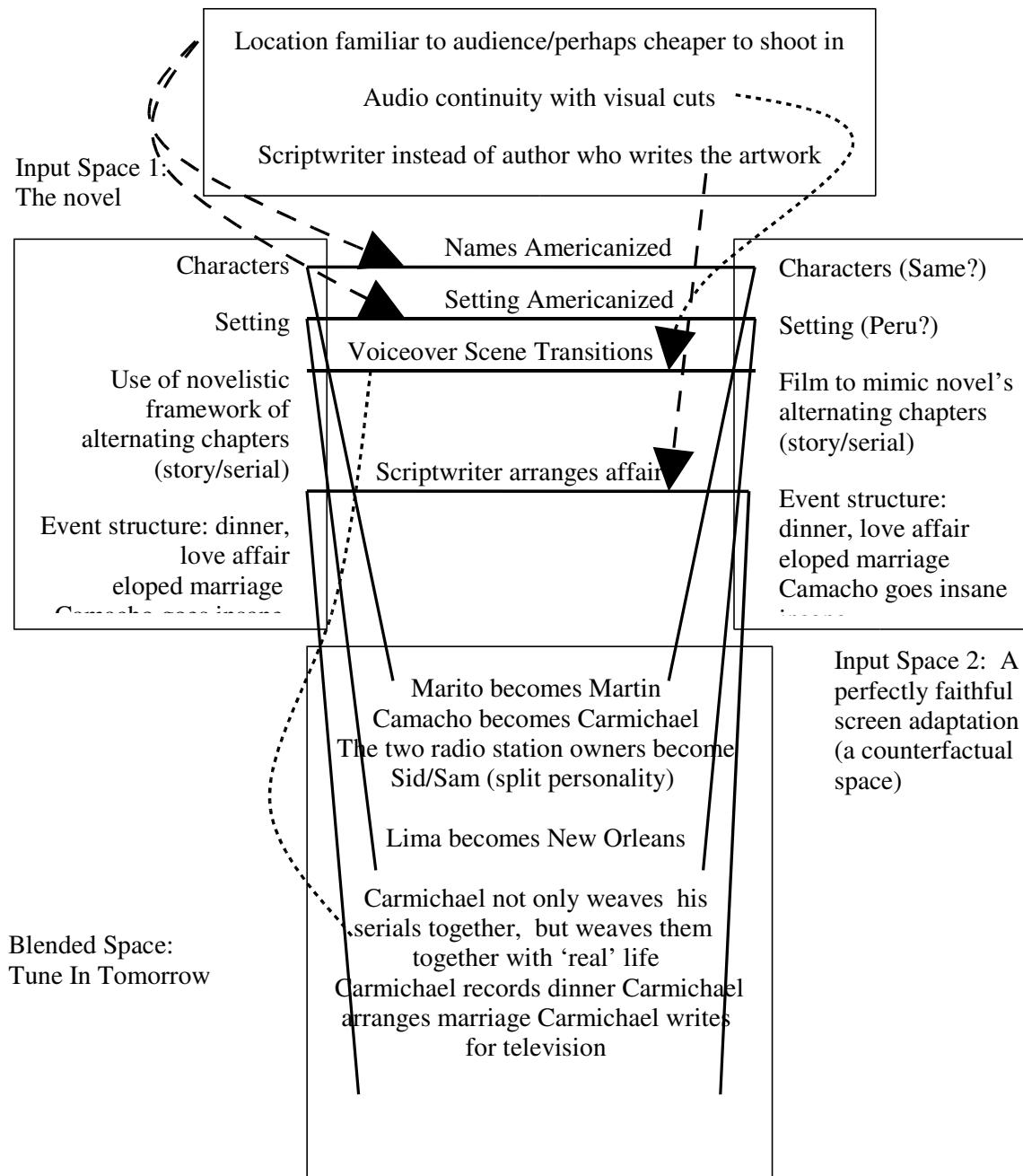


Figure 6: The novel-to-film adaptation blend

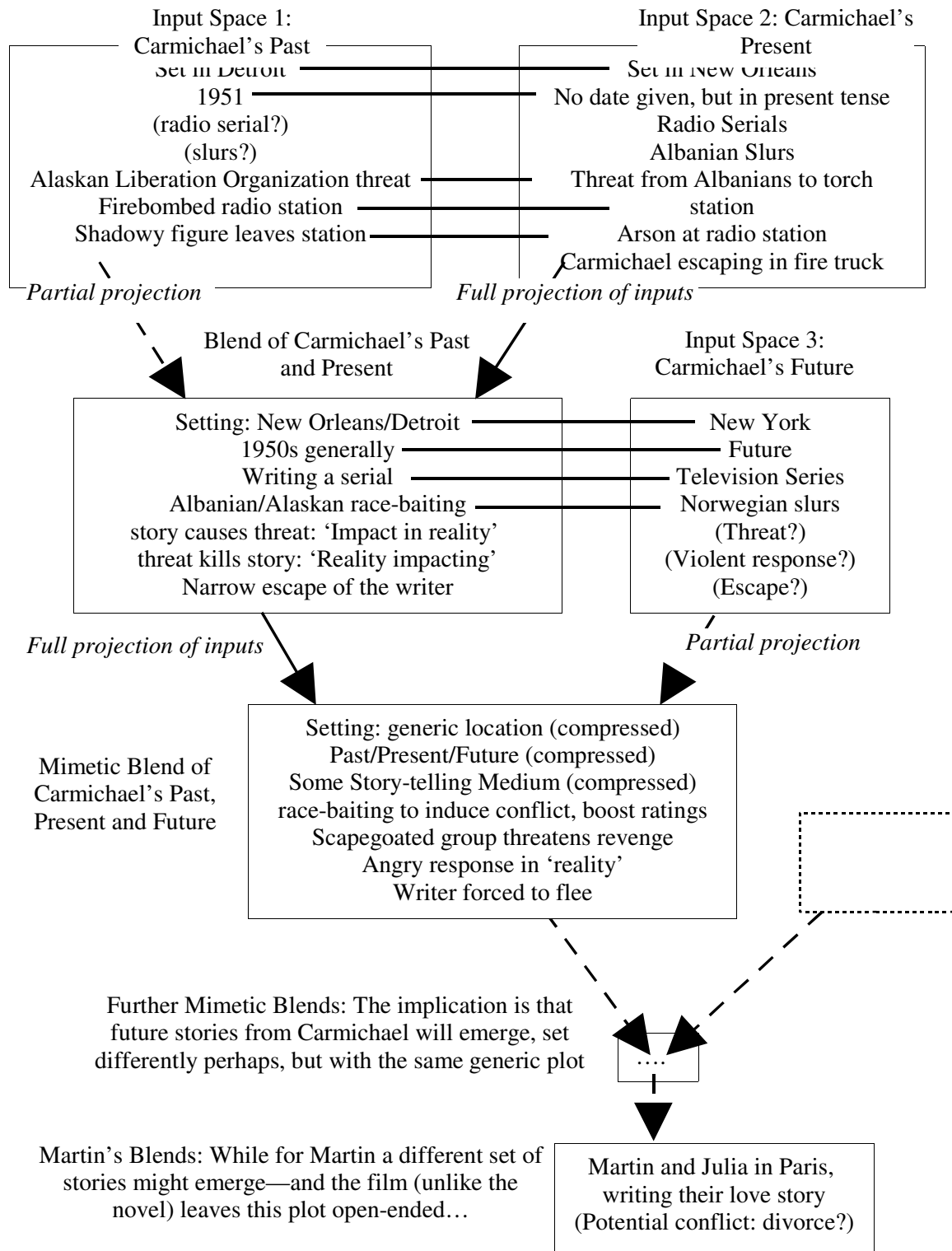


Figure 7: The mimetic blend