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Conceptual blending, narrative discourse, and rhetoric*

TODD V. OAKLEY

Abstract

This study addresses the concerns of the linguist interested in understanding complex referential relationships that develop over extended stretches of discourse, the concerns of the rhetorician interested in understanding how human beings use language for purposes of establishing and maintaining individual and group identity, and the concerns of the literary critic interested in understanding the role narrative structure plays in guiding readers through complex textual artifacts. I address these concerns by conducting a three-part analysis of a passage from Art Spiegelman's Maus II: Survivor's Tale using Fauconnier and Turner's Conceptual Blending model. As an extension of Fauconnier's (1994) mental space grammar, conceptual blending is a general cognitive instrument capable of performing a variety of discourse functions—from event integration, conceptual change, and metaphor projection to humor, literary invention, and the transfer of emotions and attitudes. Discourse participants construct mental spaces for the purpose of local understanding and action. One kind of mental space is a blended space, which develops rich conceptual structure of its own from two or more input spaces and a generic space. My aim is to show that conceptual blending provides a plausible account of how readers construct meaning in narrative discourse.

Keywords: *conceptual blend; narrative; literary criticism; rhetoric; argumentation; Maus.*

1. Introduction

Linguists, rhetorical theorists, and literary critics study the construction of meaning. Cognitive linguists attempt to explain meaning by studying the implied models human beings use to structure information. Rhetoricians attempt to explain meaning by reference to language use (verbal or

textual) as a means of promoting social cohesion. Literary critics attempt to explain the often indeterminate meanings of richly complex textual artifacts and the culture and polity from which they emerge. Though each enterprise shares this general goal, each has a distinct, even incommensurate, view of what counts as an adequate explanation. Recent work in language, thought, and action suggests that these enterprises are not sharply distinct, because the construction of meaning rests not on specifically linguistic knowledge, nor on specifically rhetorical action, nor on specifically literary acumen, but on general principles of cognitive framing. Word meanings are only superficially distinct from syntactic structures, sentence meanings, discourse and pragmatic principles, figures of speech, rhetorical and argumentative strategies, and narrative structure.

Fauconnier and Turner's model of conceptual blending (also known as conceptual integration) provides a unified frame for understanding the dynamic constructions of meaning that concern cognitive linguists, rhetoricians, and literary critics. Conceptual integration has been shown to be a basic cognitive operation in metaphor and analogy (Fauconnier and Turner 1994; Turner and Fauconnier 1995; Turner 1996a; Fauconnier 1997; Coulson 1995; Hofstadter 1995; Oakley 1995; Sun 1994; Veale 1996), counterfactual thought (Fauconnier 1997; Oakley 1995; Turner 1996b; in Turner and Fauconnier *in press*), grammar (Fauconnier and Turner 1996; Coulson 1997; Mandelblit 1996, 1997; Récanati 1995; Sweetser 1997), neuroscience (Grush and Mandelblit *in press*), literature (Brandt *in press*; Freeman 1997; Herman *in preparation*; Hiraga *in preparation*; Steen *in press*; Turner and Fauconnier *in preparation*), mathematics (Robert 1998; Lakoff and Núñez 1997), and music (Zbikowski 1997).

This impressive array of research is designed to establish the pervasiveness of blended mental spaces as a cognitive phenomenon. Yet to appear in print is a detailed discourse analysis that addresses simultaneously the concerns of the linguist, rhetorician, and literary critic. Just as generative linguists have to conduct detailed syntactic analysis, cognitive linguists who rely on the blending model must conduct the same detailed analysis for meaning construction in real discourse, explaining how and why each linguistic cue prompts a certain kind of construction. Detailed linguistic analysis should dovetail with the rhetorician's interest in the establishment and maintenance of social categories that foster individual and group identity, as well as the literary critics interest in the appreciation of complex textual artifacts, often for the same purposes. My intent, then, is to blur the distinction between these three enterprises by showing how the model of conceptual blending explains some complicated phenomena of the continued construction of meaning as discourse evolves. These

complicated phenomena include category extension and inference from counterfactual spaces. The broad aim of this study is integrate work on blending with two domains of research common to literary critics and rhetorical theorists: narratology and argumentation theory.

The sample text on which this study is taken comes from volume two of Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize winning work, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, a comic book account of Vladek and Anja Spiegelman's (the author's parents') survival of Auschwitz. But this now canonical work of Holocaust literature (Brown 1988) is more than a narrative of survival, it is a psychological account of the author's relationship with his immediate family, particularly his brother, Richie, who died in Hungary in 1942. The following text represents a conversation between Art and his wife, Françoise, (depicted as mice) about the brother he never met (see Plate 1).

Art: [1] I wonder if Richie and I would get along if he was still alive.

Françoise: [2] Your brother?

Art: [3] My *Ghost-Brother*, since he got killed before I was born. [4] He was only five or six. [5] After the war my parents traced down the vaguest rumors, and went to orphanages all over Europe. [6] They couldn't believe he was dead. [7] I didn't think about him much when I was growing up ... [8] He was mainly a large, blurry photograph hanging in my parents' bedroom.

Françoise: [9] Uh-huh. I thought that was a picture of *you* though it didn't look like you.

Art: [10] That's the point. They didn't *need* photos of me in their room ... I was *ALIVE!* ... [11] The photo never threw tantrums or got in any kind of trouble ... [12] It was an ideal kid, and I was a pain in the ass. [13] I couldn't compete. [14] They didn't talk about Richie, but that photo was a kind of reproach. [15] He'd have become a doctor, and married a wealthy Jewish girl ... the creep ... [16] But at least we could've made him go deal with Vladek. [17] It's spooky having sibling rivalry with a snapshot! (15)

The language typified in this passage highlights the extent to which language production and comprehension relates only obliquely to correspondence of objects and the world, and demands that those studying the online construction of meaning look not for word–object correspondences but for the complex and dynamic means by which discourse participants set up frames which often do not represent objective aspects of reality. Cognitive theories of language production and comprehension must rise to the challenge of explaining, for any given case, how language users determine which background assumptions are relevant and which should be ignored.

The specific aim of this article is to show that conceptual blending provides a simple and uniform account of how language users coordinate



Plate 1. *The conversation between Art and Françoise in Maus. From Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began by Art Spiegelman. Copyright © 1986, 1989, 1990, 1991 by Art Spiegelman. Reprinted by permission of Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.*

background assumptions with linguistic forms distributed over an entire segment of discourse, a segment in which *Richieu, brother, Ghost-Brother, he, him, photograph, photo, it, the creep, and snapshot* stand in co-referential relationship to one another. This article has three main parts. In part one, I describe in brief the basic mechanics of conceptual blending, and, more elaborately, I connect blending theory to McNeill's (1992) system of narrative levels, a necessary step for depicting the rich contextual relationships that make comprehension of this exchange possible. In part two, I apply the blending model globally to this passage to show how the nominal compound *Ghost-Brother* develops as a conceptual blend. Once developed, the blend functions rhetorically as a new category and conceptually as a counterfactual mental space that draws salient elements from other mental spaces. The global analysis of part two provides a frame for the specific application of the theory of conceptual blending in part three, a local mental space explication of the each sentence of the exchange between Art and Françoise. This local analysis will highlight the argumentative strategies the speaker uses to establish a new social category whose primary function is to serve as an idealized model of the proper Jewish son.

2. Theoretical grounding

I will now lay out the basic principles of blending, elaborate on the specific narrative context of *Maus*, and integrate the blending model and McNeill's (1992) concept of narrative levels in order to establish conceptual blends as typical products of cognitive framing.

2.1. A brief example

Conceptual blending operates within the tradition of cognitive semantics, a collection of theories of meaning and understanding that recognize the foundational role mental imagery, bodily experience, and metaphor plays in thought, language, and symbolic action. Much of what we call thinking and reasoning consists of complex cross-domain projection of information. A crucial step in recognizing the complexity of projection came with attempts to model metaphor. Current theories of analogical and metaphoric reasoning followed a two domain model, in which the source domain projects information directly onto the target domain through structural transfer (see Black 1962; Gentner 1983; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Turner 1989). The structure-rich source transfers information to a relatively structure-poor target. Through this process, human beings extend or even transform what Boden (1994: 79) calls "conceptual space", those organizing frames that "unify

and give structure to a given domain of thinking". Though parsimonious, this structural transfer model oversimplifies the projection process. Consider in brief the well-worn metaphor *This surgeon is a butcher* (Veale 1996) as reference to an incompetent practitioner. At first blush, one detects only two spaces in which projection issues directly from the source to target, resulting in a series of fixed mappings: butcher maps onto surgeon; animal (cow) maps onto human being; commodity maps onto patient; cleaver maps onto scalpel; abattoir maps onto operating room; and cutting meat maps onto cutting flesh. Finding the cross-domain mappings, however, does not by itself explain how the central inference of incompetence arises. A butcher, though of considerably less social prestige than a surgeon, is competent at what he does. The cleaver, a diagnostic property of butchery, is appropriately designed for severing flesh from bone. In the butchery domain, practitioners are highly competent and socially valuable. In many cases most of the concrete imagery can issue from the target domain—an operating room, other doctors and nurses dressed in surgical gowns, and a surgeon—and not from the source domain. In short, the target space provides just as much if not more rich conceptual structure as the source, suggesting that projection from these domains is highly selective and active in the moment of thinking and speaking. But, again, how and where does the central inference arise?

Fauconnier and Turner's conceptual blending model offers a more suitable, though less parsimonious, account. Working over an array of mental spaces—online conceptual packets built up as we think, talk, and understand—blending occurs when two or more *input spaces* in cooperation with a *generic space*¹ project *partial structure* into a fourth space known as the *blend*. The blend inherits partial structure from each input space and develops its own *emergent structure*.

With respect to the *surgeons are butchers* metaphor, the blend inherits from the mental space of SURGERY roles and relations as well as the inference that what is being worked on is a living human being, while simultaneously inheriting from the mental space of BUTCHERY the role BUTCHER (if nothing else). A generic mental space is built to provide the semantic rationale for bringing these two spaces into alignment. This generic conception is that of events in which an agent uses an instrument to affect a patient. Having inherited partial structure from each input space, the blend develops an emergent structure of its own. The notion of incompetence comes from neither input space, but rather emerges as a result of selective projection of elements into a blended space. The BUTCHERY space projects a means-end relationship incompatible with the means-end relationship established in the SURGERY space.

In surgery, the default end is to put the patient back together and save her life. Except in cases of amputation, severing flesh from bone is a temporary means to an end in a successful operation. In butchery, however, the intended end of the operation is to kill the animal and then sever its flesh from its bones. The blend space imports the concrete attributes from the SURGERY space and combines it with the means–end relationship characteristic of the BUTCHERY space. The fact that the butcher is working on a human being prompts one to focus on the incongruity of means–end relations in the two input spaces, leading to the central inference that the surgeon is incompetent.

Even with such contextually minimal and conventionalized metaphors the projection process is neither one-way nor simple. It is multidimensional, operating according to a set of uniform structural and dynamic constraints. In similar fashion, the blended mental space for *Ghost-Brother* inherits specific conceptual structure from many input spaces as well as schematic structure from a generic mental space. I return to this point later.

2.2. Metablends

In this section, I give a brief overview of rich structure of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* to clarify the context of this passage. But I also provide a place for examining basic issues of framing narratives, since a basic principle of cognitive semantics is that understanding relationships and activities in the world means creating and understanding narratives, and creating and understanding narratives depends (though not solely) on our capacity to create and exploit webs of mappings between mental spaces (Sanders 1994; Turner 1996a). My discussion takes as its point of departure McNeill's (1992: 184–188) general theory of narrative levels. Just as these levels help him pinpoint the different functions of gesture in oral narration, so will they help us pinpoint the complex relationships among speakers, listeners, writers, and readers necessary for analyzing the conceptual and linguistic patterns of this passage.

According to McNeill (1992: 184), storytelling is not a straightforward matter of tracking a sequence of events or episodes. Storytelling is suffused with complex shifts of time, space, viewpoint, and distance between narrator and story, as well as the complex integration of the sequential with the nonsequential. To explain the relationship between gesture, thought, and language, McNeill and his associates devised a tripartite scheme for tracking narrative structure. McNeill terms them the *narrative*, *metanarrative*, and *paranarrative* levels. Establishing a narrative, meta-narrative, or paranarrative moment in discourse entails building mental

spaces that guide discourse participants in the online construction of meaning. On closer inspection, these narrative levels are, in fact, deeply entrenched conceptual blends, and though originally designed to make sense of spontaneous, ephemeral discourse, McNeill's system can be used to great effect on planned, permanent textual artifacts like *Maus*, if for no other reason than that the model scene of this entire text is one person talking to another. I begin with a comparative synopsis.

In McNeill's study, the narrative level consists of reference by the narrator to the events, actions, characters, and settings, in either a Tweety and Sylvester cartoon or Alfred Hitchcock's 1929 film *Blackmail*; in Spiegelman's comic book, the narrative level consists of references by the narrator to the events, actions, and persons regarding the Auschwitz concentration camp and World War II. In McNeill's study, the metanarrative level consists of the references made by the narrator to the structure of the story she is telling. In Spiegelman's comic book, the metanarrative level consists of extensive references made by the book's author about the process of artistically realizing this story verbally and pictorially. In both cases, the story is conceived as an object that is constructed, completed, scrutinized, and given to someone else. In McNeill's study, the paranarrative level consists of references by the narrator to her own experience of observing the cartoon or film. In other words, the narrator steps out of her official role and steps into her role as onlooker unconstrained by the duties and voice of the official narrator. In Spiegelman's comic book, the paranarrative level consists of several characters' acts of stepping out of their appointed roles in the narrative in order to share their experiences of family life at the Spiegelman household.

In McNeill's study, the narrative level constitutes the overriding topic of conversation, while the metanarrative and paranarrative levels constitute subordinate discourse moments whose primary purpose is to maintain social cohesion and topic coherence (e.g., the narrator switches to the paranarrative level when she assures the auditor that the cartoon was really funny, and then switches to the metanarrative level when she informs the auditor that it was not a Bugs Bunny cartoon). In Spiegelman's comic book, the narrative level likewise constitute the overriding topic. It is the work's *raison d'être*. And likewise, the metanarrative and paranarrative levels help to maintain interest in the story. Unlike McNeill's study, these two levels constitute prominent storylines in their own right. While metanarrative and paranarrative moments are of short duration in conversation (usually no more than one or two clauses marked by a gesture), the metanarrative and paranarrative moments become topics of conversation that can take up several sentences, as is the case with the exchange between Art and Françoise. Despite these differences, McNeill's

system still allows us to track and coordinate the extensive and complex background knowledge necessary for understanding the exchange between Art and Françoise.

Though useful, the general theory as presently conceived is inadequate for our purposes without understanding how these levels interact. Fauconnier and Turner's model explains how discourse participants implicitly, effortlessly, and automatically structure information for the purpose of producing and understanding stories. These narrative structures are *metablends*, instances of blending at the metadiscourse level that serve as conceptual anchors for the blending process at the exchange level.

2.2.1. *The narrative level*

As stated before, the narrative level consists of references to events from the world of the story. At this level, the listener takes the narrator's expressions to be accurate accounts of world events in their actual order. McNeill (1992: 189) tapes the narrator saying "And there's Sylvester peeking around the window". Since stories consist typically of events, agents, and actions, occurring in the past, input space 1 guides language users to order events and action into a consistent temporal, sequential, and relational logic. Let us call input 1 the EVENT space. In it, *Sylvester* is cast in the role of PREDATOR and *Tweety* is cast in the role of PREY, thus establishing for this mental space the *organizing frame* of "actions among adversaries". Since all stories are told by someone to someone else, input space 2 specifies the salient role NARRATOR. In contrast to input space 1, the temporal logic of this space typically corresponds to THE PRESENT rather than the past, because the organizing frame for storytelling is the conceptual equivalent of "a present symbolic reenacting of past events and actions". Let us call input space 2 the STORYTELLING space. The EVENT space specifies the content of the story, while the STORYTELLING space specifies the roles, relations, and activities necessary for conveying the story to someone else.

The conventional blend for narration emerges as a result of selective projection of elements from these two spaces into the third, integrated space. At this point the NARRATION space is composed by the select projection of roles and relations from input space 1, such as "Sylvester is predator", "Tweety is prey", "Sylvester schemes", "Tweety evades and outsmarts Sylvester", "Sylvester gets hurt", and so on. The NARRATION space is composed by the additional projection of the NARRATOR role, her perspective, and the temporal logic from the STORYTELLING space. This small network of projections constitutes an ephemeral story in which the narrator represents Sylvester's actions and Tweety's reactions to her AUDITOR. In the blend, but not in the either input space, the events and

actions are represented *as if* they are unfolding before the auditor's eyes, as signaled by the narrator's use of the present tense with an imperfective aspect. Unless the narrator spoke while the cartoon was running (which she did not), the act of bringing the past into the present is impossible literally, but essential, effortless, and useful conceptually.

Specific to *Maus*, the narrative level corresponds to Vladek's survival story. Input space 1, the EVENT space, specifies real-world historical events as they were experienced by a particular class of participants connected to Vladek and Anja Spiegelman. Let us call them *characters*. The most prominent characters at this narrative level include *Vladek*, *Anja*, and *Richieu*. Input space 1 also specifies the setting and time frame of "Eastern Europe between 1942 and 1944." Input space 2, the STORYTELLING space, casts two individuals, Vladek and Art, in the roles of narrator and auditor, respectively. The setting for this mental space is "Rego Park, New York in the early 1980s" (shortly before Vladek's death). The blended space composes these elements, thus producing an emergent conceptual structure of its own. Let us call this blend the SURVIVOR'S TALE space after the text's subtitle.

The constituent words in the subtitle implicitly guide reader's expectations. The phrase *A survivor* projects back to the event space and forces to our attention the role PROTAGONIST. The noun *tale*, by contrast, projects back to the STORYTELLING space and forces to our attention the activity therein, "telling a story". The possessive suffix to *survivor* prompts the composition of the blend. Since the tale belongs to the protagonist survivor, the blend produces a strong (but not certain) inference that he controls the telling of it, that the events depicted are from his perspective. In fact, in the SURVIVOR'S TALE space Vladek is both the protagonist of the tale and its narrator (a conventional blend for first-person narration). The story is told from his perspective and in his Yiddish-English dialect. Referentially, the two roles are fused in the blend, emphasizing Vladek's dual status. Since Vladek is projected from two heterogeneous input spaces, the blended space produces the peculiar logic. Vladek exists simultaneously in two settings: wartime Poland and 1980s Rego Park, New York. Anja and Richieu, by contrast, are projected into the blend only from input 1 as characters who exist in wartime Poland and Hungary.² The story itself, purportedly true, has the status of "history".

Born in 1948, Art is projected into the blend from input space 2 only as the auditor of the narrative. The emergent logic of this space is richly counterfactual: the events that occurred from 1942 to 1944 in Poland and Hungary are represented *as if* they were unfolding before Art's eyes. In the blended space, but not in either input space, Vladek, the narrator can become a German soldier and threaten Vladek, the prisoner of war by

saying, “See this mess? It had better be spotlessly clean in one hour. Understand!” (Spiegelman 1986: 52, i.e., *Maus*, vol. 1). What is perceived as a seamless and whole activity without components is really a complex and fragmentary blend of partial representations that are nevertheless brought together in systematic ways. In blending, many heterogeneous mental spaces are connected and held simultaneously within a singular mental construction.

2.2.2. *The metanarrative level*

Storytellers do not spend all their time telling stories. They also spend a great deal of time and effort making comments about the stories they are telling. In McNeill’s study (1992: 168), one narrator says, “Right, ok, this one wasn’t exactly a Bugs Bunny cartoon”. The deictic phrase *this one*—along with the narrator’s coordinated gesture in which she cups her hands and extends them out to the auditor, as if handing over an object—prompts the construction of metanarrative mental space in which the story is metaphorically construed as a physical object that is manipulated by the narrator and transferred to the auditor. Michael Reddy (1979: 284–324) has already established that human beings commonly think of communication in terms of the manipulation and transfer of objects, what he calls the “conduit metaphor”. It is revealing that the gestures marking metanarration are largely themselves deictic and metaphoric (McNeill 1992: 189), suggesting that metanarratives are instances of conceptual blending.

The blend for this metanarrative moment develops in roughly this manner. The speaker begins with the assumption that there exists a coherent set of events—either fictive or real—that deserves mention. Input space 1 is the EVENT space. In this case, the events constitute a cartoon. In contrast to the detailed set of projections from the EVENT space for the narration blend, no specific projection of components from this space occurs this time: no roles, relations, or actions of any kind are forced into view. It is simply a unified entity without specific components. The speaker is the narrator; thus, input space 2 specifies the role NARRATOR, thereby calling to the auditor’s attention her status and her duties. For instance, the narrator might ask the auditor, “Did I already tell you this story?” Let us call input space 2 the ANIMATOR space in deference to Goffman (1981, 1986). Animators are producers of utterances. They may not author them, but they do reenact them. What is more, animators are free to project their own attitudes and concerns onto the material (e.g., an actor’s tone of voice when saying a character’s line). The metanarrative blend recruits all the elements of the EVENT space *en masse*. In the blend, but not in the input space, the elements collect to form something resembling

a physical object that fits in the narrator's hands. The narrator can conceivably hold it up, scrutinize it, evaluate it, and take it apart (e.g., "This is the part of the story where Sylvester swallows the bowling ball"). In the EVENT space, these elements are unintegrated, and in the NARRATION blend, these events are sequentially ordered. But in the METANARRATION space these constraints do not obtain. The emergent property of the blend is the construal of the story as a physical artifact. But unlike many physical objects whose content and purpose are immediately recognized, this artifact needs someone to tell the recipient what it is and how it works. In the blend, the story is an object that needs to be unpacked in order to be fully appreciated. In McNeill's general theory, metanarration concerns the conditions wherein that unpacking takes place.

When applied to the realm of textual artifacts, the metanarrative blend typically highlights the actions of the author (who may or may not be the narrator), and the structure and purpose of the story itself. A great deal of the conversation in *Maus* represents Art's own attempts to assemble the text and thereby tell Vladek's story.

Let us examine the intricate structure of this metablend. It is a recursive blend, because the blended SURVIVOR'S TALE space functions as input space 1, projecting all its elements, roles, and relations *en masse*. Since this work is a textual artifact based on the oral presentations of Vladek Spiegelman, the second input, the AUTHOR space, gives us the organizing frame for this blend. Its salient element includes the role AUTHOR. In addition, this space projects a distinct event-structure: the author constructs an object, a "text". In *Maus*, the blended space emerges as a distinct mental space when Art refers to his "book about you" [Vladek] (Spiegelman 1986: 12, i.e., *Maus*, vol. 1). From input space 1, the blend recruits the events, actions, narrative voice and perspective as an integrated entity. In the blend, but not in the input space, the whole of this material is condensed into one physical object: the book. Let us call the metanarrative blend the BOOK space. From input space 2, the blend recruits the organizing frame "drawing a book" and author role. In the blend, Art is identified as the "author of the book", as opposed to his role as auditor in the SURVIVOR'S TALE space. The temporal dimensions of this space extends from 1981 to 1989, the time it took to finish it. In the blend, Art's status as author and illustrator of this text is prominent, just as the narrator's status as animator is prominent in the METANARRATION space of McNeill's subject.

As the metanarrative develops, Art begins to reveal the process of drawing this book itself. In the BOOK space, the author tells us about the difficulties he had drawing the book. But what is conspicuously

counterfactual about this blend is that he recounts the difficult process of drawing the book *as if* he were doing it before the reader's eyes. For instance, on page 11 of *Maus II*, François asks Art, "What are you doing?" Art replies, "Trying to draw you". In this space, Art reconstructs for the reader the difficult moments of drawing the text. Once again, the blend represents events that have occurred in the past *as if* they were unfolding before our eyes.

What also emerges as a prominent theme in the BOOK space is the potentially unreliable status of the narrator. Since the status of the story as "history" emerges as a salient property in the SURVIVOR'S TALE space, Vladek takes on the status in the metanarrative blend of SOURCE, i.e., witness of the actual events, or ORAL HISTORIAN. Art is engaged in an historical enterprise; therefore, he wants to get history right by obtaining corroborating evidence from other sources, such as Anja's diary chronicling the same events but from her perspective. In this blended space, the story is a concrete object with specific properties fashioned from material provided by the source. The metanarrative allows Art to reveal his artifice in the artifact itself, letting the reader know, for instance, that Vladek's rambling conversations with him did not follow the actual order of presentation—(Spiegelman 1986: 82, i.e., *Maus*, vol. 1). In this mental space, Art becomes the FABRICATOR, the one shapes the material into a coherent story while retaining Vladek's voice and perspective.

2.2.3. *The paranarrative level*

Discourse participants also make references to their own experience of observing the event of storytelling itself. Often, they discuss their attitudes and feelings toward the characters in the story. This is the level of narration McNeil terms paranarrative. At this level, discourse participants speak for themselves. For example, one of McNeill's narrators says, "um have you seen any of the uh Bugs Bunny cartoons?" (1992: 168) Specific to mental space grammar, the two input spaces typically correspond to the NARRATION space and the space of DAILY LIFE, wherein the discourse participants act not as narrators or auditors, but as their real-world counterparts. In this case, no story is being told and no past is being brought into the present *as if* it were unfolding before our eyes. If the narration blend depends on the identification of the narrator as the person speaking, the auditor as the person listening, the characters in the story as the actors participating, then the paranarrative level can be said to *disintegrate* the narration blend by decoupling the narrator and auditor from their appointed roles.

In *Maus*, the paranarrative is slightly more complex, prompting still another blend. In it, Vladek speaks as Art's FATHER not as PROTAGONIST and NARRATOR, Art speaks as his SON not as the AUDITOR and AUTHOR, Anja speaks as his MOTHER not as HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, and Mala speaks as Vladek's SECONDWIFE and ART'S STEPMOTHER not as HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR. In this configuration, input space 1 is still the SURVIVOR'S TALE space, and input space 2 is the space of FAMILY RELATIONS. While input space 1 contributes some of the historical information, such as the fact that "Richieu is older than Art" it does not project specific role assignments and relations, such as "Vladek as Protagonist". Input space 2 contributes the organizing frame of "parent-child" as well as a narrative perspective that corresponds temporally and spatially to "Art's birth and upbringing just outside New York City". In this space, Art is an "only child". The paranarrative blend, let us call it the SPIEGELMAN space, aligns the roles from input space 2 with the characters and select historical background from input space 1. In the blend, but not in either input space, Richieu and Art are brothers. Art is not an only child. Once again, an element belonging to the past is brought into the present.

At this point it would be instructive to observe the transition from the SURVIVOR'S TALE space to the SPIEGELMAN space in order to see how these metablends function as a connected network of spaces. In the following text Vladek begins to recount an episode where German soldiers ordered him to clean out a stable in one hour (see Plate 2):

Vladek: And somehow we did make the job in only an hour and a half. *BUT LOOK WHAT YOU DO, ARTIE!*

Art: Huh?

Vladek: You're dropping on the carpet cigarette ashes. You want it should be like a stable *here*?

Art: Oops. Sorry. [52]

Notice that Vladek maintains an important link to the SURVIVOR'S TALE space by reusing the word *stable*, so that the quality of the setting from input space 1, "messy stable", is projected onto the quality of the setting in the SPIEGELMAN space, "messy living room".³

The purpose of metablends is to provide a coherent framework for explaining typified narrative activities, which, particularly in texts like *Maus*, guide readers in ways of which they are rarely conscious. What makes conceptual blending so promising as a general model of cognitive framing is its ability to handle metadiscourse structures as well as discourse, sentential, lexical, and referential structures. Figure 1 provides an synoptic image of the connections among these spaces.



Plate 2. An illustration of the abrupt shift from narrative to paranarrative in Maus. From *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History* by Art Spiegelman. Copyright © 1973, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986 by Art Spiegelman. Reprinted by permission of Pantheon Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

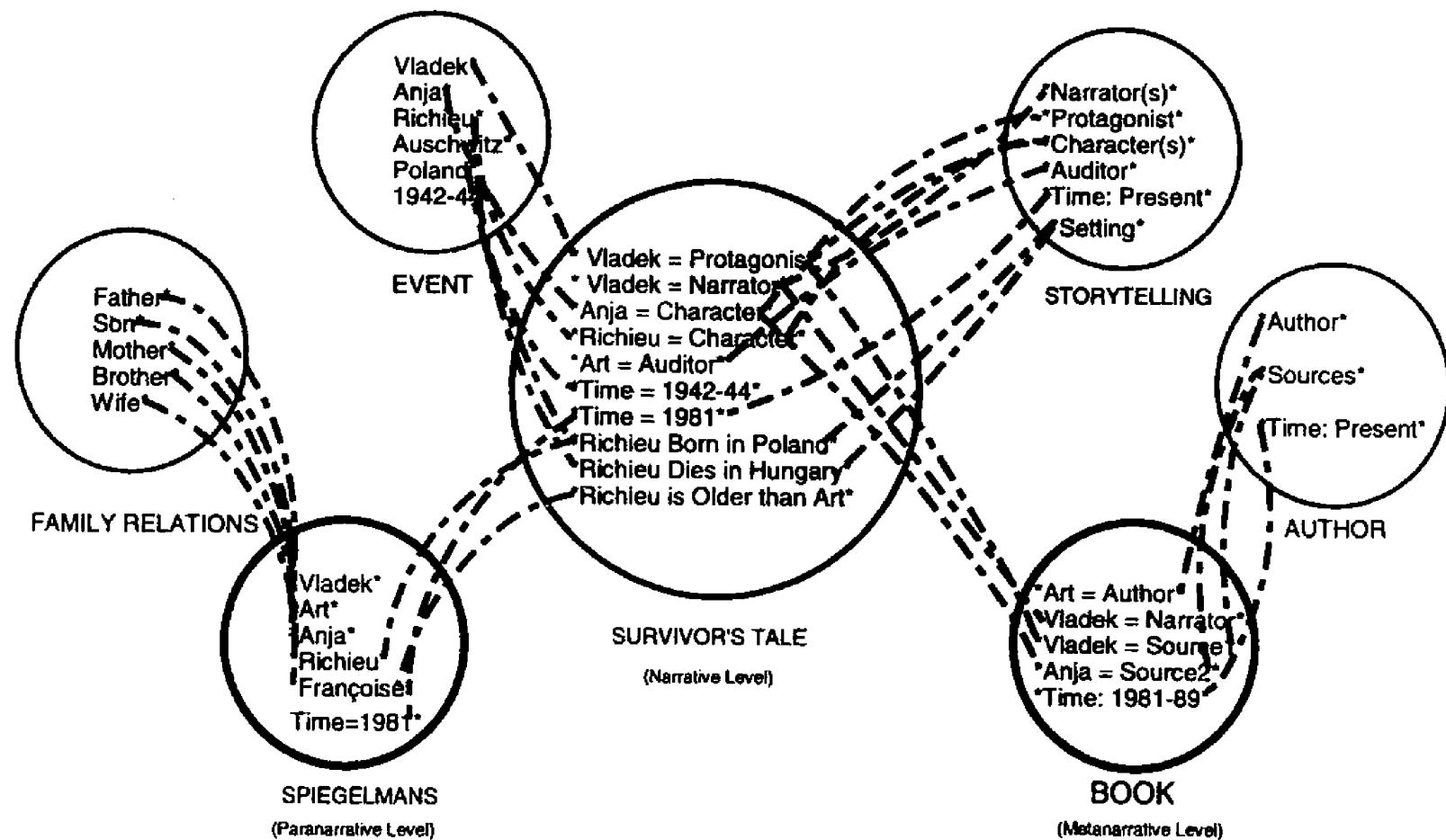


Figure 1. *A representation of the metablends in Maus*

The passage in question constitutes a *paranarrative* moment in which Art and Françoise are talking in a car. Françoise drives, listens, and responds once. She is the **AUDITOR**. Art, the passenger, is the **SPEAKER**. In this instantiation of the *paranarrative*, Art is also the **NARRATOR** who discloses to his wife the story of Richieu's death and its own peculiar effect on him. The reader is, following Goffman (1981), the **INTENDED HEARER**, nonparticipants granted permission to listen in on a private conversation.⁴

3. Global analysis

The analysis will proceed in four modes: composition—selective projection from input spaces; completion—recruitment of specific background information; elaboration or “running the blend”—developing the blend through imaginative mental simulation according to its emergent properties and logic; and optimality principles—basic constraints on the composition, completion, and elaboration of blends.

3.1. *Composition*

Minimal framing for the blend occurs when the reader parses the words *Ghost* and *Brother*. The named elements of this nominal compound give the reader only the briefest instructions for constructing a new conceptual category by specifying two distinct category domains that have yet to be integrated. As a partial composition, *Ghost-Brother* creates a blended

space from two input spaces, GHOST and BROTHER, and a generic space (to be discussed below). Figure 2 provides a schematic study of the initial composition for ghost-brother.

The blend recruits general information from the GHOST space. Since readers are told from the beginning that Richieu instantiates this new category, knowledge that he died in 1942 (recruited from the SURVIVOR'S TALE space) permits the inference that Richieu is a GHOST. One commonplace aspect of ghosts is that they are DISEMBODIED PRESENCES of once living beings, capable of inhabiting objects—animate or inanimate. The blend also recruits elements from the BROTHER space. Categorical structure associated with brother comes not from the SURVIVOR'S TALE space but from the mental space of FAMILY RELATIONS used in building the paranarrative SPIEGELMAN space. One commonplace aspect of brothers is that they are LIVING PERSONS. Readers can recruit many default assumptions about brothers, such as that they live with the sibling in the same house, have the same parents, and so on. As I will show, the correlation of these two input spaces creates a “ghost blend” whose general purpose is to induce an element from an earlier story (Richieu's upbringing) into a later story (Art's upbringing) without claiming existence in that later story.

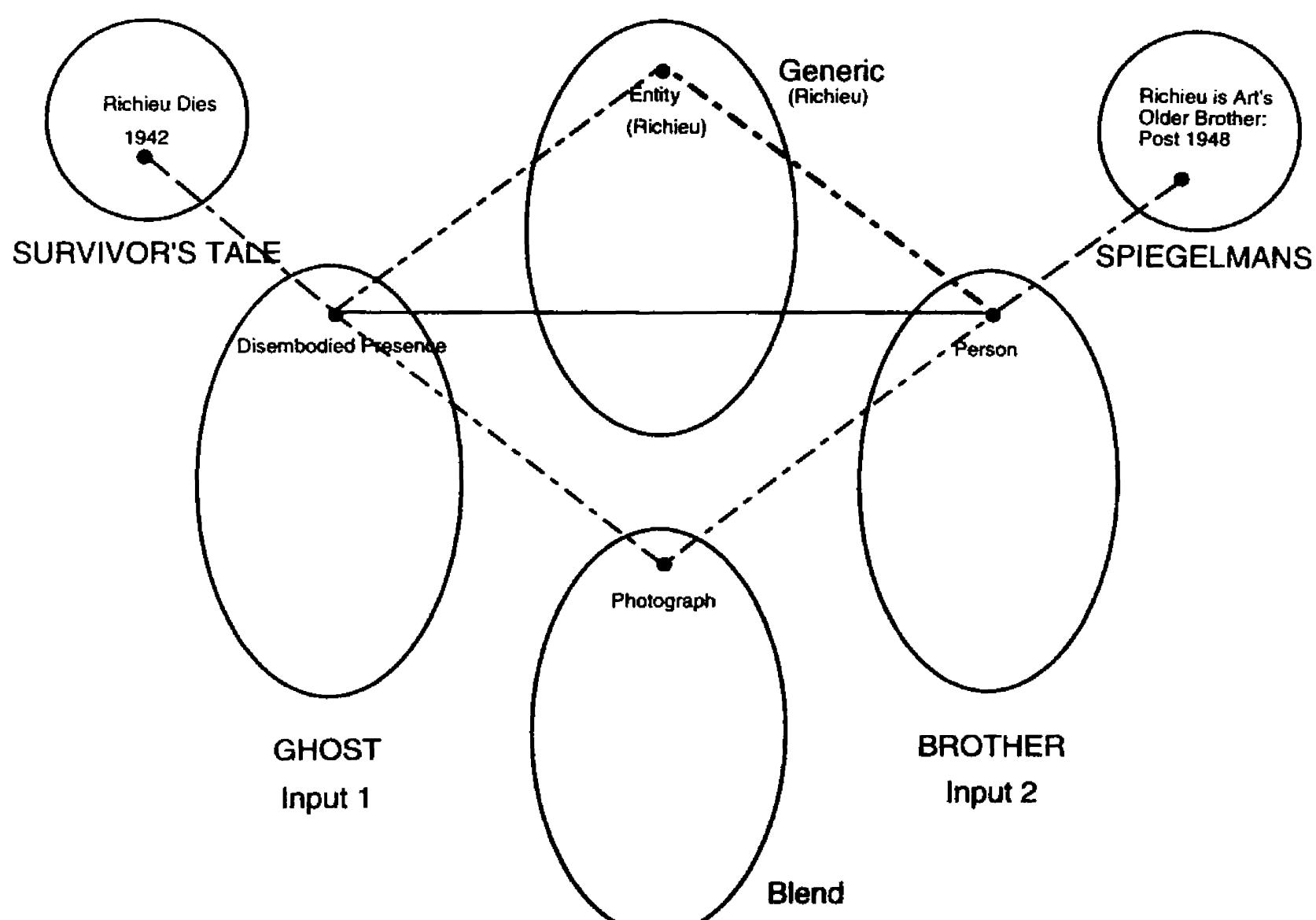


Figure 2. *Composition of the blend for Ghost-Brother*

The projection from input spaces is selective. Based on previous narrative information, readers are invited to recruit very specific information from the input spaces while inhibiting the potential recruitment of other information. For instance, while readers will easily infer that ghosts are dead, they are unlikely to recruit from the GHOST space the common literary scenario of “conversation with a ghost” (as in the famous opening scene of *Hamlet* when the Ghost speaks to his son, the Prince), given that Art never met Richieu, and that he has never claimed to have had paranormal experiences.

In order for the blend to exploit the specific and rich connections between disembodied presences and persons, it must access schematic conceptual structure common to all three spaces. To compose the minimal framing for *Ghost-Brother*, readers must build a generic space that provides the semantic and pragmatic rationale for projecting partial structure into and out of the blend. In this case the generic space corresponds to the abstract category ENTITY, which is linked to a particular set of EVENTS. Let us call this space the ENTITY space. Hence, the cross-space counterparts DISEMBODIED PRESENCE and PERSON may be envisioned abstractly as entities. But a disembodied presence needs an embodied entity to inhabit in order to make its presence known. Thus, the blended space is composed for the purpose of embodying that presence. The minimal framing for the blend is not complete with Art’s utterance of this new category. Not until sentence eight (panel four) does he refer to any object that may embody his ghost-brother. When the object, *a large, blurry photograph*, is named, readers are given the basic elements to construct the blended space.

As a metonym for Richieu, the PHOTOGRAPH becomes a focal element in the blended space, because it establishes a symbolic connection with organizing frames of both inputs—being dead and being a brother. The photograph of Richieu functions simultaneously as an index for brother (photograph of a person) and as ghost (photograph as a person) in two heterogeneous mental spaces.

3.2. *Completion*

The minimal framing in which the counterpart elements DISEMBODIED PRESENCE, PERSON, and PHOTOGRAPH collapse to identity, provides the foundation for completing the blend by recruiting background knowledge of ghosts, brothers, parents, traumatic events, death, and survival. Readers access this knowledge through default category structure as they recruit information from the narrative and apply it to this paranarrative about sibling rivalry. Figure 3 diagrams the completion of the blend.

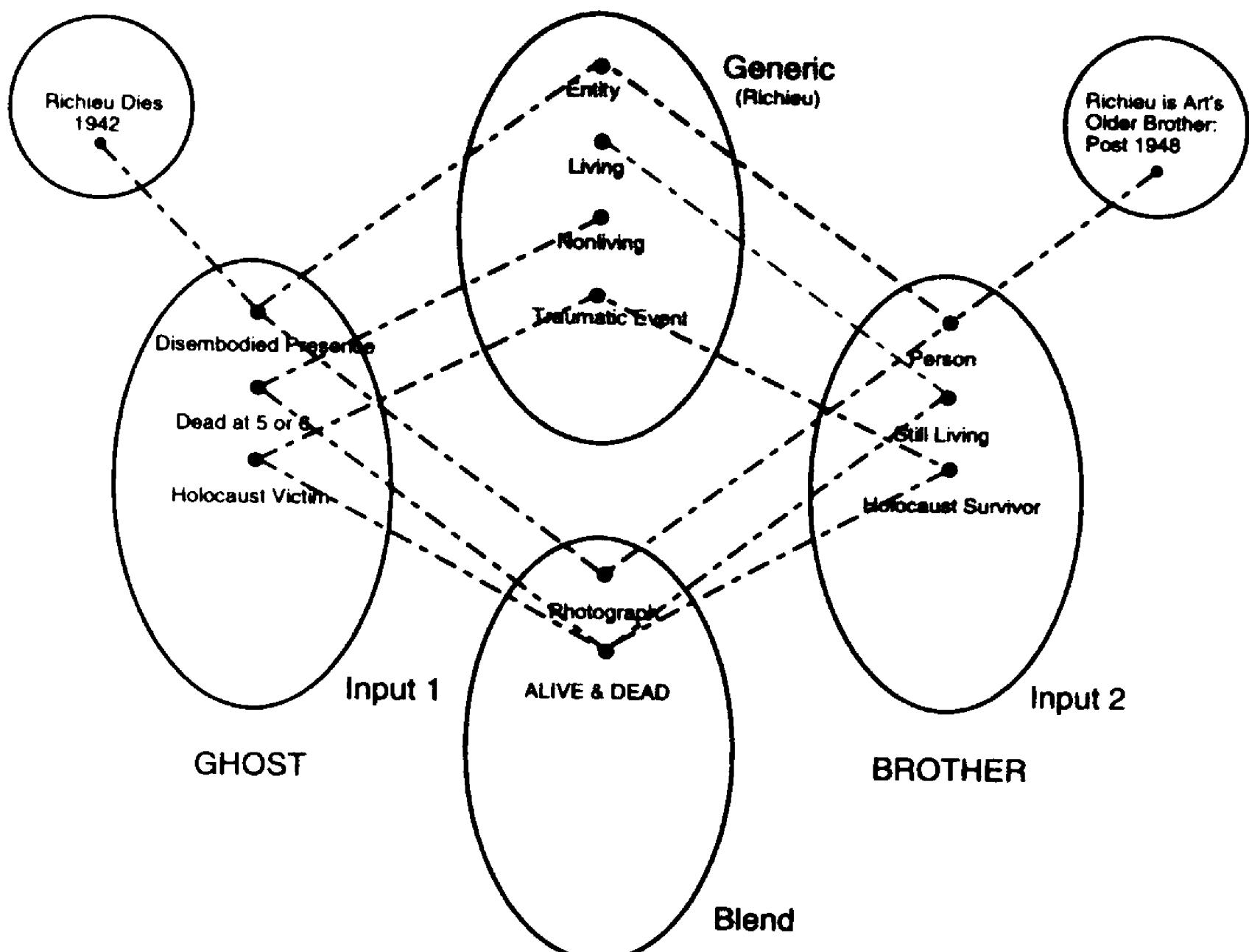


Figure 3. *Completion of the blend for Ghost-Brother*

The specific information of the GHOST space includes such things as the fact that Richieu “died between the ages five or six” and that he was a “Holocaust victim”. We would also include the important fact that he died before Art was born. The basic logic of this space is that Richieu is dead. The BROTHER space includes the focal attribute “animate”, an option made available by the abstract logic of the generic space. The basic logic of this space is that Richieu is still alive suggesting that he had survived the Holocaust. Both inputs share common structure of a person experiencing traumatic events; hence, the completion of the blend depends on the recruitment of more framing structure from the ENTITY space. In this space, the designatum can be either living or non-living, but more specifically, it can be linked to an event or series of events. In this case, the designatum of the generic space is the name *Richieu*, a name associated with a particular set of TRAUMATIC EVENTS, so that the very mention of the name forces the scenario of experiencing traumatic events prominently into view. The generic space does not, however, specify the result of these events. In sum, the generic space

provides different kinds of abstract conceptual structure used to guide and constrain the projection of information among the rich textures input and blended spaces. It provides category structure—the superordinate category ENTITY; it provides frame structure—the entity is associated with events and actions of historical significance; it provides role structure—the designated category plays a particular role in the unfolding of events, either as someone acting or as someone being acted upon; it provides identity structure—the designated entity, regardless of its particular conceptual manifestation in each input space or blended space, corresponds to *Richieu*. This sentence is very hard to parse without these changes.

Inputs 1 and 2 constitute antithetical spaces, each referring to the same principal but with contrary semantic features, each identified with Richieu, but each casts him in antithetical roles of HOLOCAUST VICTIM and HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR.

Since the input spaces possess contrasting conceptual structure, constructing the blend cannot be a simple cut-and-paste assembly of elements from those input spaces. Usually, we focus attention on a set of principles or logic that develops only in the blend. For example, in the blend, but not in any of the input spaces, the photograph is endowed with human characteristics. Only in the blend does Art compete with a photograph for his parents' affection and support, and only in the blend is Art jealous of an inanimate object.

As an index of Richieu, the photograph may operate as a metonymic referent to a PERSON with respect to the BROTHER space, and this now non-existent person may be endowed with intentions and a potential to act from the perspective of the blended space. This is due to the fact that the blended space has an emergent structure of its own: the basic logic of the blend is that Richieu is both dead and alive. The mental space of ghost-brother speaks to the strange "inbetweenness" of Art's family ties, Richieu is not quite a dead brother, but he certainly is not a living sibling either. In short, the blended space of GHOST-BROTHER gets readers inside the speaker's head.

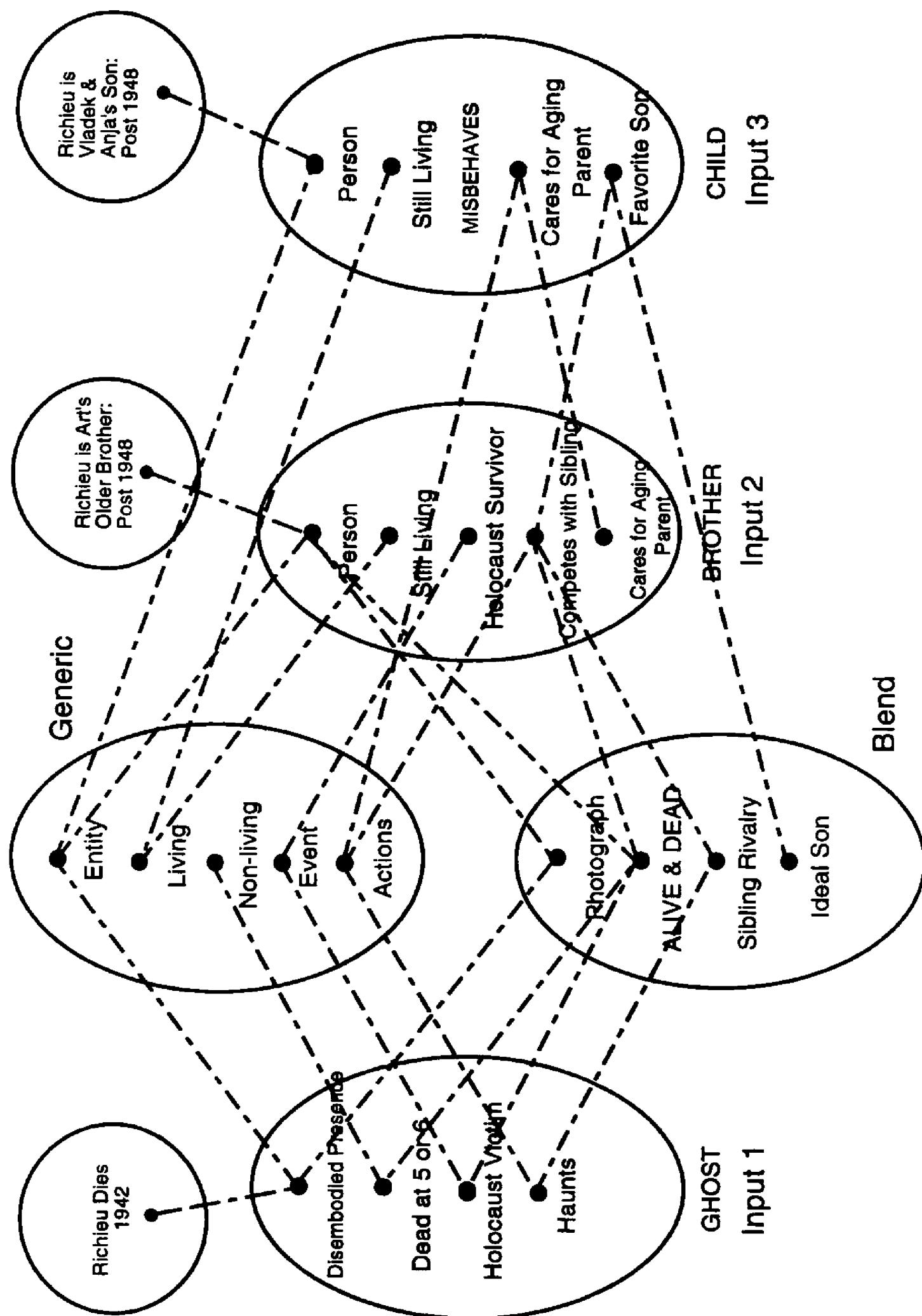
Thus, the reason conceptual blending is a powerful general mechanism of cognition is that its completion brings together conceptual structure that is usually kept apart. Because the counterparts of each input space are contradictory—the GHOST space is a *fantastic* world structured by real world facts, whereas the BROTHER space is a *plausible* world structured by facts that do not hold in the real world but which are nevertheless possible—readers need to construct a third space that (1) materializes the referent of both input spaces, and (2) endows that material object with specific characteristics and status.

3.3. Elaboration

Blends are elaborated by imaginative simulation according to its emergent principles and logic. Figure 4 represents the elaboration of the blend. In this case, elaboration occurs with the recruitment of elements from input space 3, corresponding to the category SON (evoked implicitly in sentences five and six). Let us call it the CHILD space. Like the BROTHER space, its contents are structured by the counterfactual proposition that Richieu is alive. Unlike the BROTHER space, Richieu is cast in the role SON. In this space Art and Richieu are sons to Vladek and Anja at the same time. They grow up together. This mental space also comes with a complex viewpoint unique from all the others. It represents Art's perceptions of his parents' attitudes toward Richieu and himself, in which Art compares unfavorably to Richieu. Elaboration creates an extremely complex blend designed to make sense of Art's relationship to his immediate family. It encapsulates his experience as a child of Holocaust survivors and as a brother to one of its victims.

On elaboration, readers also coordinate new information from the remaining input spaces into the blend. Issuing from the GHOST space is the common activity of haunting. Ghosts haunt. That is, they make their presence known and felt by taking on a particular form. In the blend, the ghost of Richieu may be said to "haunt" the photograph (as suggested by the speaker's use of the adjective *spooky* that closes this exchange), thus endowing the inanimate object with human intentions, feelings, and actions. Issuing from the BROTHER space is the scenario in which Richieu is burdened with the responsibilities of being a brother. In this space, Richieu would have to care for Art, help with the chores, and receive parental discipline. The BROTHER space is contrary-to-fact, cuing readers to imagine a scenario relative to the actual one. What is interesting about the blended space is that it is counterfactual in an entirely different way. Whereas the BROTHER space poses a hypothetical scenario that is entirely possible—Richieu could have survived—the GHOST-BROTHER space poses an impossible scenario from a literal interpretation point of view. Objects cannot be both dead and alive, and one cannot literally compete with an object and be considered sane. In reality, it could not have turned out that Richieu both survived and died in the Holocaust. This happens only in the blend.

In this blended space, Richieu is not burdened with caring for Art while growing up, nor with caring for the aging Vladek. But he is very much alive to Art (and, Art presumes, to his parents), and represents all the desired characteristics of a son Art believes his parents found lacking in him. It is this psychological reality that elaborates the blended space,

Figure 4. *Elaboration of the blend for Ghost-Brother*

drawing on specific elements from the BROTHER and CHILD spaces, as I will now examine.

One truism exploited in the CHILD space is that children misbehave and get into trouble. The blended space exploits its negative counterpart in such a way that *Richieu* never misbehaves (sentence eleven), becoming the “ideal son”. The emergent property, *ideal kid*, develops through a meaningful interaction of two scenarios indigenous to the BROTHER and CHILD spaces. In the BROTHER space, Art competes with his sibling (even though he is an only child). This competition scenario is, in turn, licensed by the complementary scenario developed in the CHILD space, wherein Art sees *Richieu*, not himself, as his parents’ “favorite son”. The blending of these two scenarios—“competition between unequal contestants”—produces the central organizing frame for running the blend: “Sibling Rivalry”. This frame warrants the verbal play in sentences eleven through fourteen and seventeen. In sum, the running of the blend provides an explanation for why Art engages in an antagonistic relationship with an inanimate object.

3.4. Optimality principles

The previous sections gave an account of how meaning is constructed dynamically as discourse proceeds. The fact that readers understand the meaning of this passage easily suggests that the blended space for language comprehension is successful. For blends to be rhetorical and literary successes, many conditions have to be satisfied. The blend has to run autonomously while remaining connected to the input spaces in the network. Fauconnier and Turner (1998) propose six principles for conceptual integration that a given blend satisfies, often imperfectly. To round out this global analysis, I will observe how the GHOST-BROTHER blend satisfies these constraints.

Let us examine each principle and its application to the passage in turn.

1. *Integration*. The blend must constitute a tightly integrated scene exploitable as a unit. The GHOST-BROTHER space runs an imaginary mental simulation in which *Richieu* fills three distinct roles simultaneously—HOLOCAUST VICTIM, SON, and BROTHER.
2. *Web*. When running blends, language users must maintain a set of appropriate connections to the input spaces. The input spaces can function independently from each other and the blend. The GHOST space, for instance, places *Richieu* in the role of HOLOCAUST VICTIM. In this space, the photograph refers to a “dead person”. The BROTHER space, on the

other hand, places him in the role of BROTHER. In this space, the photograph refers to a “live sibling”. The CHILD space places Richieu in the role of son to Vladek and Anja. In this space, the photograph refers to their son (“It was Anja and me, and our boy, Richieu” [Spiegelman 1986: 74, i.e., *Maus*, vol. 1]). Each input space exploits the same data (Richieu and photograph), but aligns them with two distinct roles, establishing three independent organizing frames for the reader to place Richieu.

3. *Metonymy.* When the element, BROTHER, is projected from the input space into the blend and a second element, PHOTOGRAPH, is projected because of its metonymic link to the first, the “metonymic distance” between them “shrinks” in the blend (Fauconnier 1997: 186). Photographs are conventional stand-ins for brothers, but not for ghosts. For instance, the act of pointing to a photograph and saying “That’s my brother” is less conspicuous than pointing to it and saying “That’s a ghost”. Photographs are conventional metonyms for family members; but they are not conventional metonyms for ghosts. In the context established by the SURVIVOR’S TALE space, however, photographs are the only material remains of one’s family, vividly depicted on page 115 of *Maus* when, amid a pile of photographs, Vladek laments in his broken English “All what is left, it’s the photos”. The referents are all dead. In the blended space of GHOST-BROTHER, these references collapse to identity, applying equally well to the frame structure from both input spaces. This “tightening” of the metonym in the blend constitutes the basis for the construction of an integrated scene capable of being manipulated as a unit.

4. *Unpacking.* The completed blend must permit discourse participants to reconstruct the input and generic spaces, the cross-domain mappings, and the connections among them. Running the blend requires strong integration (i.e., identifying Richieu with ghost, brother and son), unpacking the blend requires weak integration. The fact that Richieu is dead in one mental space and alive in another prompts discourse participants to reconstruct these heterogeneous spaces, each with their own peculiar role assignments and temporal logics. Art claims Richieu never got into trouble, but misbehavior is a common dynamic in the parent–child relationship. The incongruity of the typical behavior of children and the atypical behavior of a ghost-brother prompts readers to reconstruct the input spaces. The perception of incongruities is crucial for explicating the language of this passage.

5. *Topology.* It is optimal for the relations of the element projected into the blend to match the relations of the element projected from

its counterpart space. It is often the case that blends preserve generic topology (conceptual structure common to each input space) and specific topology (background knowledge particular to one space). That is indeed the case here. The two input spaces keep in common the central concept that ghosts and brothers are ENTITIES either still living or once living. More specifically, the blends preserves the notion of HUMAN BEING. The blend also preserves topology specific to each input space. From the GHOST space, it preserves the inference that "ghosts are dead", and that "ghosts can inhabit inanimate objects"; from the BROTHER space, it preserves the inference that "siblings share the same parents", "grow up in the same house together", that "one sibling is older than the other", and that "they often vie for parents attention"; and from the CHILD space, it preserves the inference that "children misbehave", that "parents never really treat their children equally", and that "children have to care for their parents when they get older".

The GHOST-BROTHER blend does not preserve topology it considers incidental. It does not, for instance, recruit much culturally recognizable imagery from the GHOST space, such as "a floating apparition with an eerie voice that clanks chains and goes through walls". Nor does it preserve the setting of "Richieu's 1942 death in Hungary". It does not preserve the inference from the CHILD space that "Richieu was born in Poland". The blend exploits most of its specific topology from the BROTHER and CHILD spaces.

6. Good reason. If a seemingly incidental element appears in the blend, discourse participants will try to make it significant, usually by linking it to elements in other spaces or endowing it a particular function in running the blend. To illustrate, I will end this discussion of optimality principles with some speculation. Suppose the blend preserved the typical image of Richieu as a clanking chain ghost haunting the Spiegelman household. There would be pressure to see that activity in terms of sibling rivalry, given the dominance of that organizing frame in the running of the blend. One could identify this ghostly behavior with the teasing and taunting behavior of older brothers, as if Richieu arose from the grave only to say in an eerie voice, "You're adopted".

This global analysis shows that the many space model of conceptual projection can provide a principled account of a complex intentional state of mind that is distributed over five different mental spaces and based on three different scenarios, one actual, one possible, and one impossible. In the next section, I examine the connection between these three scenarios and the linguistic signals and argumentative strategies used to guide the reader's thoughts.

4. Local analysis

4.1. Argumentative strategies

One persistent thread throughout much of western rhetorical theory, from ancients like Protagoras, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine to moderns like I. A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, and Chaïm Perelman, is that the primary purpose of language is to promote social cohesion, to make the speaker's thoughts and feelings a part of the hearer's world. From this rhetorical perspective, this seventeen-sentence passage can be regarded as an argument for a new social category. Though its ostensive purpose is to disclose the speaker's own peculiar psychology, the speaker's primary purpose is to generalize his experience for the reader. Readers who are children of Holocaust survivors are "ratified hearers", participants engaging in the sharing of mutual knowledge; readers who do not share Art's experiences are "intended hearers", those invited nonparticipants who are "overhearing" this conversation and, perhaps, imagining what it would be like to be child of Holocaust survivors (Goffman 1981). Readers, therefore, can empathize with Art either because their experiences match his or, more broadly, because the implicit logic of this passage exploits the common frame of sibling rivalry. But another reason for its persuasiveness persists. The exploitation of sibling rivalry involves the employment of a range of argumentative strategies used routinely in common sense reasoning about values. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958, 1969) have exhaustively described the many argumentative techniques discourse participants use routinely when reasoning in language, thus giving us perhaps the most complete account to date of how human beings reason about values.

The attention to linguistic detail in the following explication seeks to describe how the speaker exploits three common argumentative techniques—the *double-hierarchy argument*, *argument from the model*, and *the perfect being as model*—that implicitly highlight Art's sense of his own status within the Spiegelman household, a status without which none of the psychological pressure would exist for category extension to take place. We will not have an adequate account of how meaning is constructed in texts without a systematic way of talking about how discourse participants reason about values.

4.2. Notation

The three scenarios, Richieu is dead, Richieu is alive, Richieu is both dead and alive, correspond to spaces R (reality), H (hypothetical), and B (blend) respectively. Space R should be thought of as the *base* for the system, the information from which is recruited from the SURVIVOR'S

TALE and SPIEGELMAN spaces. At any point in the unfolding discourse, this space can become accessible as a starting point for a new construction. Acting as the space of narration, it is our anchor. The other two spaces are subordinate to it, though, any one of these three spaces will be in *focus* as the discourse unfolds. Which space is in focus will depend on lexical and background information as well as specific pragmatic conditions (e.g. evoked relations, presuppositions, etc.) connected to the principal participants of the discourse.

Whatever space is in focus will follow the notation Rn, Hn, or Bn. For instance, if the space in focus is the third instance of space B, the notation will be B3. With the distinction of lowercase letters, the same notational system will be adopted for the elements within each space. For instance, "r" signifies the brother role applicable to Richieu and "a" signifies the same role applicable to Art. The form rn, however, signifies the value of r at any point in the discourse. At one point the value of r may be written r2 or signify the second reference to Richieu. Finally, lexical items constituting the organizing frame for each mental space will appear in a box next to the space itself. Directly below each lexical entry will appear the corresponding element. For example, appended to the lexical item *dead* will be the element r. Together they form the organizing frame for mental space R. Before beginning, I provide in one space the entire mental space model for this passage. Readers are encouraged to refer back to it as the explication proceeds (Figure 5).

4.3. *Explication*

As they ride home from Vladek's house, Art says to Françoise, "I wonder if Richieu and I would get along if he was still alive". With this utterance, Art, the speaker, begins the paranarrative of sibling rivalry. The speaker's query indicates that he is in the process of entertaining a conscious state of imagining: what would life be like if Richieu was still alive? Descriptively, sentence 1 prompts readers to construct two contrasting mental spaces: R1 and H1. Space R1 corresponds to the speaker's reality. The focal elements of this space are a1 (Art) and r1 (Richieu). The relevant category structuring this space is SON in which element a1 refers to the "living son" while element r1 refers to the "dead son". With respect to mental space R1, Art and Richieu never meet. They, in effect, have no relationship. Space H1 contrasts markedly with R1 because it helps construct a hypothetical scenario in which Richieu is still alive. In space H1, Art and Richieu would not only have met, but would have grown up together. Thus, the category structuring this space is BROTHER. In this space, elements a2 and r2 both refer to living beings. The presence of

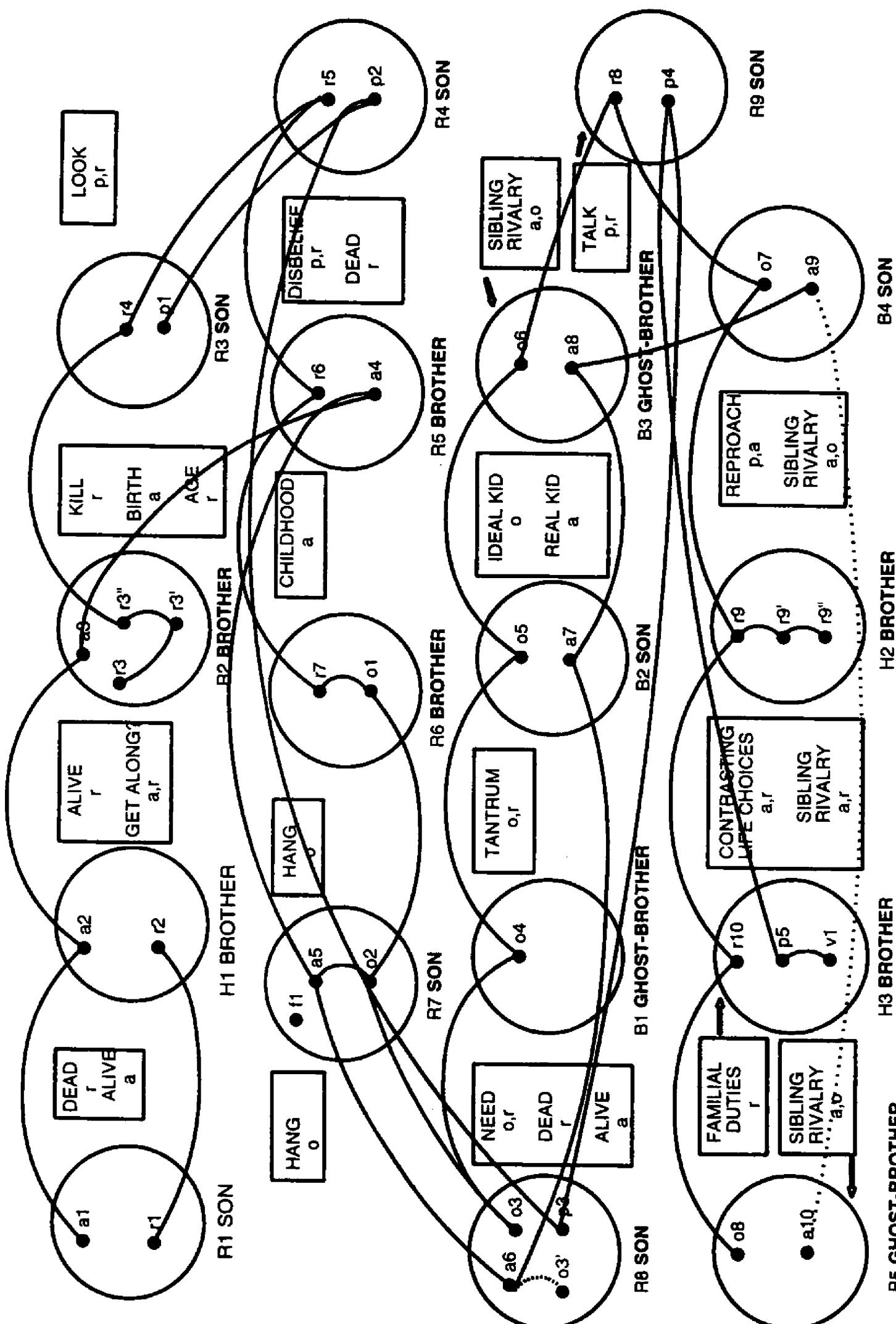


Figure 5. A complete mental space representation of this passage

the modal auxiliary *would* and conditional *if* provide grammatical cues for the construction of a mental space that not only contrasts with space R1, but creates the necessary conditions for speaker, listener, and reader to imagine a sibling relationship between the two principal characters. At this stage, however, mental space H1 lacks the necessary information for the speaker to construct a detailed conception of that relationship.

A second property of this sentence meriting attention is the speaker's use of the indicative *was* instead of subjunctive *were*. The reasons for this grammatical choice are twofold: first, Spiegelman wants to capture the flavor of spontaneous conversation, and it is well known that native English speakers often substitute *was* for *were* in informal rhetorical situations; second, Art, the character speaking, may have used the indicative form to indicate the degree of hypotheticality. As Comrie (1986: 88–96) points out, hypotheticality is a continuum, and that one job of grammar is to distinguish different degrees of hypotheticality. The speaker may have used *was* to lower the degree of hypotheticality than would have been the case had he use *were*. In other words, this linguistic choice shortens the conceptual distance between the speaker's reality and the hypothetical situation he is entertaining. As the discourse proceeds, the reader becomes aware that Richieu exerts a strong presence within the Spiegelman household, as if he were still alive. The use of the indicative form may be a verbal indicator of the degree of influence this counterfactual space has on the speaker's thoughts, attitude, and behavior. As the degree of hypotheticality decreases, its influence on the speaker's thoughts and actions increases.

If this is the case, then the listener's inquisitive response, "Your Brother?", produces the effect of tightening the connections between the narrative and paranarrative blends. The listener evokes the category BROTHER, and in doing so sets the stage for the category extension that occurs when Art responds.

The speaker's response, "My Ghost-Brother, since he got killed before I was born", constitutes the act of composing the blend (although no emergent properties of the blend develop until sentence eight). The speaker creates this novel category for the local purpose of explaining his peculiar relationship with his brother. Mental space R2 is organized by the category BROTHER. In space R2, Richieu, represented as elements r3, *brother*, r3', *ghost-brother*, and r3'', *He*, belongs to a select category, of which the speaker stipulates the conditions for category membership. In his world, a ghost-brother must die before the sibling is born. Space R2 recruits additional lexical information of *kill*, corresponding to element r3, and *birth*, corresponding to element a3, *I*. Sentence four, "He was only five or Six", provides

additional information recruited from the narrative proper. Its purpose is to reinforce the point that the speaker has a brother whom he has never met, but who nevertheless is a real psychological presence in his life.

Just as Richieu plays a central role in the speaker's childhood and adolescence, this story of sibling rivalry with a photograph needs to bring in the parents' thoughts and feelings so that the reader will be persuaded of its psychological importance. This is the purpose of sentences five and six (treated as a single unit), "After the war my parents traced down the vaguest rumors and went to orphanages all over Europe. They couldn't believe he was dead". Mental spaces R3 and R4 represent a state of affairs in which Richieu is not a brother but a son (thus evoking the category SON used to elaborate the blend) and the focal relationship is among parent and child. Element r4, *Richieu*, is connected to element r5, *He* in space R4, a space whose purpose is to attest to the speaker's view of his parents' (element p2) state of mind just after the war. This sentence provides another layer of background information for the development of the paranarrative. From the speaker's point of view, his parents never came to terms with his brother's death, which, in turn, affects him. As a result, he begins to compete with the photograph. Sentence six establishes a point of view attributable to the speaker's parents in which Richieu is the ideal Jewish son, a preparatory step for establishing the metonymic connections between brother, ghost, and photograph.

After preparing the listener and reader with the necessary background information about Richieu, the speaker proceeds to describe this peculiar relationship. Sentence seven, "I didn't think about him much when I was growing up", signals the beginning of this story of sibling rivalry. Mental space R5 contrasts in temporal dimension to that of space R1. The clause *when I was growing up*, sets up the expectation that the speaker is going to talk about his childhood and adolescence. Schematically, element a4 in space R5 corresponds to the speaker as a child and contrasts with element a1 in space R1, the adult speaker. Element a4, Art as a child, is the protagonist of the paranarrative. The speaker places himself in relation to the subject as a child growing up without a brother, element r6 in space R5. The significance of this mental space is that the speaker attests that he was not fully aware of the effect Richieu's death had on his development. In true psychoanalytic fashion, the speaker is consciously re-enacting specific events of his childhood and adolescence in order to make sense out of his life. Such a process requires the construction of a tight web of connections between mental spaces. He is simultaneously a Holocaust victim, brother, son, and photograph.

One implication the listener and reader is likely to draw from sentence seven is that the speaker knew next to nothing about Richieu. (In fact,

the precise circumstances of his death were not revealed to him until he began this project.) Because Richieu's life and death were shrouded in mystery, Art, the child, was compelled to make do with the only piece of information accessible to him: the photograph.

Sentence eight, "He was mainly a large, blurry photograph hanging in my parents' bedroom", initiates the construction and development of the blended space that is crucial for understanding sentences eleven through fourteen, and seventeen. Sentence eight possesses some unconventional features. The pronoun *he*, normally used to refer to animate beings, is used to refer to an inanimate object that will aid in unpacking the blend. The reason this sentence makes sense is because mental space R6 comes with enough background information that *he* is understood as referring to a once animate being whose only available sensory input is an inanimate object that happens to bear an exact likeness of the subject. The photograph is a metonym for Richieu, connecting discourse element r1, *he*, and element o1, *photograph*, in space R6. This is the crucial connection for developing the blended space later in the discourse.

Another striking feature of sentence eight is the presence of the adverb *mainly*. Rather than modify the grammatical subject and verb, *mainly* modifies the topic of the mental space itself, the speaker's attitude toward the grammatical subject when the speaker was growing up. The presence of the adverb emphasizes incompleteness and ad hoc meaningfulness. Therefore, sentence eight may be paraphrased thus: "for the purpose of re-enacting my childhood and adolescence, the role of my brother will be represented by a photograph of him". It is an imperfect stand in, rendered all the more so by its fuzziness. But for lack of any other material, it will suffice.

The last striking feature of this sentence is the participial phrase *hanging in my parents' bedroom*. Reference to an object hanging presupposes the existence of an intentional agent or agents who hung it. Since the location is specified as the parents' bedroom, the listener and reader assigns agency to the speaker's parents. Everything in their bedroom is assumed to have been placed there for a reason. In the speaker's mind, the placement of the photograph of his brother in their bedroom is a defining moment for him.

The speaker's GHOST-BROTHER occupies a particular place in the Spiegelman household, and thus produces the rhetorical effect of evoking a scale of value between Art and Richieu in the speaker's own mind. The picture is not in the living room, or kitchen, communal spaces for every family member, but in perhaps one of the most private spaces in a house. Vladek's and Anja's placement of the photograph in this location symbolizes an important, if unstated, indication of Richieu's place

within the family. From his parents' perspective, Art concludes, Richieu is not a brother but a son. (Interestingly, Vladek, the narrator proper, never refers to Richieu as Art's brother in either volume of *Maus*). Construed this way physical locations in space possess intellectual and emotive value.

The value of private over public space is reinforced by the listener's response "I thought that was a picture of you, though it didn't look like you", and the speaker's sharp reply, "They didn't need photos of me in their room ... I was ALIVE!". Sentences nine and ten, taken as a single unit, set up what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca refer to as a *double hierarchy argument*. Whether speaking or writing, language users rely on a correlation of terms of an accepted pragmatic inference of scale, e.g., the ends over the means, as a basis for supporting a correlation of terms of a contested pragmatic inference of scale, e.g., an idealistic proposal over a pragmatic proposal (1969: 337–338). In this case, the speaker uses the pragmatic inference, "what is private is more valuable than what is public", to structure the more contested pragmatic inference, "the son that is dead is more valuable than the one that is still alive". Richieu's status as dead, therefore, justifies his enshrinement in the most private area of the house. Space R7 corresponds to the listener's view of the situation, represented as element f1, *I*, in this space. The focal element of this space is o2. Spaces R6 and R7 are contrasted in their precise linguistic values attached to element o. In space R6, element o refers to Richieu, but in space R7 element o refers to Art as a child. Space R7 represents the listener's misinterpretation of the photograph, revealing her ignorance of the corresponding situation and reinforcing the narrative distance between Vladek, Anja, and Richieu's experiences in wartime Poland and Art's and Françoise's actual experience and knowledge. Sentence ten, the speaker's corrective response, is designed to emphasize the significance of Richieu's presence to an interlocutor who, up until now, could not appreciate the significance of the corresponding situation because Richieu's presence was not known. In space R8, the speaker's parents, element p3, need to have a photograph of Richieu, element o3, but do not need to have a photograph, element o3', of Art, element a5, in space R7. (The dashed line connecting elements a5 and o3' represents a negation of the same connection made by the listener, element f1, in space R7.) The speaker's response sets up the completion and elaboration of the blend that is to occur in the sentences to follow.

Sentence eleven reads, *The photo never threw tantrums or got into any kind of trouble*. The speaker develops the blend by endowing the photograph with subjectivity. In space B1, Richieu is neither alive nor dead. He is a ghost-brother with whom Art competes for his parents' affection.

Element o3, *picture*, in space R7 is connected to element o4, *photo*, in space B1. In this space, however, the picture is not simply an object but a subject endowed with human characteristics. Recruited into this space is the notion of misbehavior, thus evoking once again the category SON and profiling the potential relationship between the speaker, his parents, and the photograph. Linguistically, one striking feature of this sentence is the adverb *never*. Sentence eleven seem infelicitous, because, from a literal point of view, it appears to violate the maxim of quantity; it goes without saying that photographs of children do not misbehave. This sentence is meaningless in the sense that it does not provide new information. In the present context, this sentence is indeed meaningful. The use of the adverb *never*, while preserving real-world truth conditions (maintaining the tight web of connections among the GHOST-BROTHER blend and GHOST space), permits the construction of an imaginary set of behaviors that are instrumental for importing specific attitudes and emotions that help speaker, listener, and reader better understand the psychodynamics of Holocaust survival.

Sentence twelve, “It was an ideal kid, and I was a pain in the ass”, presents readers with an even more dramatic problem. In English there is a selection constraint on what a neuter pronoun can take as its predicate. However, discourse participants override this selection constraint by constructing a mental space in which an inanimate object signifies not only the likeness of a human being, but is a cipher for that being’s personality and character. Like space B1, space B2 recruits frame structure from the category SON and matches it with conceptual structure from the category BROTHER, generating the new category GHOST-BROTHER. The two independent clauses produce a conceptual contrast between ideal and real children, which in turn produces the rhetorical effect of setting up an implicit evaluation schema in which the *ideal kid*, element o5, is used as a criterion for measuring the values of the “real kid”, element a5. At this point, the listener and reader are aware that this is the speaker’s conception of the situation and that he is projecting this sentiment onto his parents.

The next sentence, “I couldn’t compete”, completes the blend by explicitly evoking the sibling rivalry frame. Sentence thirteen completes the blend by cuing discourse participants to call up specific frame structure and relations from the mental spaces and integrate them into the blend. Readers now imagine Art, the child, as competing with a photograph, but it is a photograph endowed with a character, signifying a three-dimensional being. With this sentence, the speaker introduces the rhetorical concept of a contrasting model. Following Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, sentences eleven, twelve, and thirteen constitute an *argument from the model* (1969: 362–371).

As a genus of argumentative techniques, models are persons whose prestige confers added value on their acts. “The [recognized] value attached to the person”, explain Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, “is the premise from which will be drawn the conclusion encouraging some particular behavior” (1969: 363). In this case, the premise drawn is that the photograph of Richieu epitomizes the ideal child; the conclusion is that Art must be like the character projected onto the photograph in order to secure his parents’ full affections.

But the psychological bind to which the speaker testifies is that he cannot be like Richieu, because Richieu exemplifies a specific kind of model, what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca term *the perfect being*, for whom Jesus, Mohammed, and Buddha are prime exemplars. Like them, Richieu is regarded as a perfect being, who, like them, possess nearly supernatural qualities (he is a ghost), but who at one time were human beings among other human beings (1969: 370). For instance, Jesus serves as a model of absolute monarchy in the sermons of Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet or as a model of tolerance in the writings of John Locke. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explain the dynamics of the perfect being in argumentation this way:

The Perfect Being lends himself more than any other model to this [imitative] adaptation, because by his very nature and essence there is something about him that cannot be grasped, that is unknown, and because, moreover, he is not valid for just one time or one place. (1969: 371)

Like such abstract beings, Richieu is adopted for whatever specific expressive purposes Art, in part because he exhibits no undesirable characteristics. He is the family martyr. He is Vladek’s and Anja’s ideal son. He is Art’s ideal big brother.

What cannot be grasped, what is unknowable to Art, are specifics about Richieu as a human being. In the absence of such specific memories, Art projects ideal elements onto Richieu, much in the same way that we project specific idealized aspects onto these perfect beings.

The speaker provides the reason he viewed Richieu as his perfect counterpart in sentence fourteen, “They didn’t talk about Richieu, but that photo was a kind of reproach”. Growing up, Art was not told about the events of World War II. In the absence of any detailed information about the real Richieu, Art was compelled to imagine details of his brother’s life. His parents’ lack of disclosure coupled with the act of placing the photograph in their bedroom, are offered as the two prominent catalysts for Art’s creation of this imagined scenario. Sentence fourteen prepares the way for the emerging counterfactual simulation prompted by sentences fifteen and sixteen.

One salient aspect of blended mental spaces is that they are often used to carry inferences back to other mental spaces. This is precisely what happens next.

Having established a mental space in which Richieu is the ideal Jewish son as measured by the standards supposedly established by the speaker's parents, and concomitantly, that his parents disapproved of his own life choices, the speaker now meditates further on the hypothetical scenario initiated with the query, "I wonder if Richieu and I would get along if he was still alive". The attitude expressed in sentence fifteen, "He'd have become a doctor and married a wealthy Jewish girl ... the creep", invokes the scenario of a competitive relationship with a living brother. Space H2, a variant of the hypothetical situation, is now endowed with concrete conceptual structure. The speaker imagines in more specific detail what it would be like to have a relationship with a living brother, and it is not comforting. In space H2, element r9, *he*, is connected to element r9', conferring on Richieu the social status of a professional who marries within his faith (Françoise, by contrast, merely converted to Judaism in order to appease Vladek) and above his class. Thus, Richieu earns the epithet *the creep*, element r9'', evoking an attitude of hostility and resentment that is a prominent psychological product of sibling relationships based on competition for parents' affections. (Spiegelman also expresses this attitude nonverbally in panel seven with the speaker's facial expression.) Though the speaker has indicated that a contemporary sibling relationship would be characterized emotionally as one of hostility and resentment, he is able to imagine the benefits of such a relationship, when he says "But at least we could've made him go deal with Vladek". Here the speaker blends the paranarrative of sibling rivalry with the larger paranarrative of taking care of his aging father, a significant story line that runs throughout the two volumes of *Maus*.

One important aspect missing from the blend is that of family duty. Because Richieu is a ghost-brother, he is not burdened with the responsibility of caring for his father. This duty is not a pleasant one, and constitutes the main source of tension between father and son (notice that the speaker refers to his father by his first name, suggesting a less intimate and strained relationship). Spaces H2 and H3 constitute the imagined simulation of having a living brother. The space is constructed as a result of the blend, which allows the speaker to "fill in" the hypothetical spaces that would otherwise remain empty.

After the blend has been run and a web of connections established between the different mental spaces has been established, the speaker ends the exchange by commenting on the idiosyncratic nature of his experience. Sentence seventeen reads, "It's spooky having sibling rivalry with

a snapshot". The alliteration of *spooky*, *sibling*, and *snapshot* prompts readers to unpack the blend: *spooky* cues up the GHOST space, sibling the BROTHER and SON spaces, and *snapshot* the GHOST-BROTHER space. The speaker exploits the partial phonological blending to unpack the relevant inputs spaces necessary to guide readers during meaning construction. Mental space B5 epitomizes the blend and web connections between spaces by bringing together all the relevant categories used in the construction of the new category GHOST-BROTHER, with special attention to the concept of sibling rivalry, now a lexical entry in the discourse. Element o8, *snapshot*, corresponds to the photograph as Richieu, the wealthy Jewish doctor and ideal son. Element a10 corresponds to the speaker as the reflective narrator and is implicitly invoked by the grammatical subject *it*. The presence of the adverb *spooky* cues the listener and reader to project the specific elements of the category GHOST onto Richieu, namely that he is a disembodied presence that haunts the Spiegelman household in the form of a photograph. This last sentence is the speaker's attempt to indicate to the listener and reader that he is aware of the unusual nature of this relationship. The reader understands that he understands that Richieu is dead, but that his death is shrouded in circumstances that compel him to entertain a scenario in which the opposite were the case. Thus, his thoughts flow between the three kinds of imagined scenarios according to the expressive requirements at each moment of the unfolding discourse—*spooky* (dead brother), *sibling* (live brother), *snapshot* (dead-and-alive brother).

The new category, with its counterfactual properties, helps the speaker make sense of his thoughts about his family. And the act of presenting it to a readership may be thought of as a bid to create a new social category, a category that other children of Holocaust survivors will immediately recognize through lived experience, and a category that those fortunate enough not to have experienced first-hand can recognize through empathy. And the argumentative strategies he employs animate the unusual relationship children of Holocaust survivors may have with their dead siblings.

5. Conclusion

This study elucidates the principles of conceptual blending as they apply to the complicated phenomena of category extension and counterfactual inference in narrative discourse. The global analysis of part one provides a framework for the local analysis of part two, an explication of Spiegelman's text that links the "big" events associated with rhetorical matters—setting up a contrastive model—and narratological

matters—generating a story about sibling rivalry within a larger story about the Holocaust—to the “small” events of word choice and grammatical structure. When combined, these disparate areas of inquiry provide a principled account of how discourse participants construct meaning over an entire segment of discourse. Such a study produces a new kind of analysis that is much stronger than each separately.

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Case Western Reserve University

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Notes

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- 1. The generic space is a distinct mental space operating at a low level of description which can provide the category, frame, role, identity, or image-schematic rationale for cross-domain mapping.
- 2. Anja, though she survived Auschwitz, committed suicide in 1969 when Art was twenty-one.
- 3. The author often prepares the reader for the transition from narrative to paranarrative by depicting the setting of the paranarrative *before* the language of the paranarrative. In this case, the panel aligned with the last line of Vladek’s narration and the first line of his admonishing remarks depicts a change of setting from the stable in Poland to the living room in New York.
- 4. This invitation to eavesdrop is implicitly indicated by the eight-panel drawing, in which a voice emanates from inside the car, signaling the fact that a private conversation is being made public.

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