

CONCEPTUAL BLENDING AND INTENTIONALITY*

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Abstract. *My original thesis was that conceptual blending was solely based on acts of individual intentionality without addressing collective or multiple intentionality (or "aboutness"). However, after reconsidering the problem, using Arthur Koestler's examples from The Act of Creation and Fauconnier's and Turner's examples that were deeply ingrained in shared social contexts, I started to change my initial thesis. What made me switch over to the idea that conceptual blending was, after all, dominantly a tacit and unconscious social act that required shared intentionality was John Searle's concept of "The Background" and Langacker's "grounding," which, although different, both pointed at the socially shared elements of internalized knowledge. Thus, on second thought it appeared to me that conceptual blending hinged a lot on social factors and/or rituals and definitely needed a wider social context. Actually it turned out that I had to try to answer Searle's question: Can an individual harbor both her own ideas and collective ones at the same time? As Searle claims that this dual capacity is a biological given that is shared by a variety of species and presupposes "a background sense of the other as candidate for cooperative agency," I could not help noticing the sheer intellectual effort it takes to break away from the Background. This meant that the only thing that blocked esoteric and weird interpretations was not the semantic content but the shared tacit assumptions. There seems to be a more or less relevant counterpart in linguistics proper, too, and that is Langacker's concept of modeling local contextual aspects of meaning (the notion of "ground"). In the end, I was able to conclude that conceptual blending must have recourse to collectivity as a shared background in situations that require it.*

Key words: *Koestler, Fauconnier, Turner, Searle, bisociative matrix, conceptual blending, the Background, topological indexicals, intentionality*

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When I first started thinking about the ideas that Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner had been working on for quite a while (the clearest and most detailed account of their collaboration being their seminal book *The Way We Think*) I thought immediately that conceptual blending simply had to be *a purely individualistic act of either quotidian or artistic nature* and that it *could not be part of socially or collectively governed* products or percepts.¹

My initial thinking about Fauconnier and Turner's work was based on the idea that conceptual blending offers conceptual integration, compression and networking, and, as such, tries to explain the 'artful mind' that had to be individualistic and could not be part of a collectivity.²

As the title of my paper contains two distinct concepts, *conceptual blending* and *intentionality* I will clarify and explore these two terms and their interrelatedness. First I will outline what *conceptual blending* is in general and then illustrate the definition in more detail; later on I plan to do the same with the concept of *intentionality*.

A. Conceptual Blending

Conceptual blending, often dubbed *conceptual integration*, is usually viewed as a 'blend' of two or more diverse entities or elements cognitively amalgamated on a sub-conscious level, eventually leading to creative and innovative thinking, without specifying the input sources of the blending process.

I hope to purposely avoid typical illustrations and examples that many 'practitioners' of conceptual blending have used. Instead I will draw on the ideas and illustrative examples offered by their precursor, Arthur Koestler, that I came across in his book *The Act of Creation*³.

Naturally, Fauconnier and Turner do acknowledge Koestler as the main forerunner of their account of conceptual blending, but first they look at Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Gorgias in Book 3 of *Rhetoric*:

"The address of Gorgias to the swallow, when she had let her droppings fall on him as she flew overhead, is in the best tragic manner. He said "Nay, shame, O Philomela." Considering her as a bird, you could not call her acts shameful, considering her as a girl, you could; and so it was a good gibe to address her as what she was once and not as what she is." (Fauconnier and Turner 2002, p. 37).

They go on to claim that Aristotle saw that performance of Gorgias "as an exotic achievement, not as an instance of a basic mental operation. [... that is ... [] why he did not look into its theoretical consequences. Evidently, insight into blending as a general and routine mental operation of the imagination was simply unavailable to classical rhetoricians" (Fauconnier and Turner, *ibid.*, pp.37-38).

Fauconnier and Turner correctly register different insights into the process they call conceptual blending by various authors (I will mention some notable names such as Goffman, Talmy, Fong, Moser, Hofstadter, Kunda). They add that these theoreticians

¹ Fauconnier, G. and Turner, M. (2002). *The way we think: conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*. New York: Basic Books.

² Turner, M. (2006). *The artful mind : cognitive science and the riddle of human creativity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

³ Koestler, A. (1964). *The act of creation*. London: Hutchinson.

consider blending as 'somewhat exotic' and marginal when compared to real meaning and find fault with such views because blending is not seen as a general capacity and thus remains unexplored by these authors.

Koestler is applauded for his deeper appreciation of the process of conceptual blending as he went beyond the particular and local features of appropriate examples of salient creativity in three domains, the sciences, arts and humor. Koestler saw one and the same feature in all of these domains and noted instances of remarkable creative invention, calling it "bisociation of matrices".

Although Fauconnier and Turner acclaim Koestler's profound understanding of the creative process they add that he never came up with a sufficiently elaborate and functional terminology and conceptual apparatus to deal with the phenomena he discussed. Still I find it difficult to criticize him as he produced a rich, if not exhausting, terminological and ideational repertoire. In *The Act of Creation* one can find the following elements that Koestler used so as to describe creativity: bisociative patterns, the acoustic pun, the optical pun, the phenomenon of displacement (shift of attention), the process of concretization (as opposed to abstraction), condensation, hidden analogies, impersonation and double identity and reversal of causal sequences.

Needless to say – it is more than obvious that Koestler's apparatus, rich as it was then, cannot account for or even supply a barely adequate model of what happens during the complex mental processes that make up instances of what Fauconnier and Turner call 'conceptual blending'. Still, some of his ideas can be explored further and might be found to match pretty well at least some aspects of the conceptual blending paradigm.

To describe this as succinctly as possible, I will start with an amazingly apt example taken from *The Act of Creation*:

"A child, watching a television thriller with flushed face and palpitating heart, praying that the hero should realize in time the deadly trap set for him, is at the same time aware that the hero is a shadow on the screen" (Ibid., 174).

What we have here is a simple blend – the time and space are blended so that the two inputs, the child in his/her living room, and the hero on the TV screen, co-exist both spatially and temporally, although in different spaces and times. Of course, it is most probable that the events depicted in the thriller were taking place much before the moment the child watched TV and that the child's favorite character, the hero, was actually thousands of miles away, even in that virtual world that has other spatio-temporal co-ordinates.

The second example from the same book by Koestler, is also very appropriate:

"The sleeper producing a Freudian dream, in which a broomstick represents a phallus, has made an *optical pun*: he/she has connected a single visual form with two different functional contexts... When Jean Cocteau underwent a drug-withdrawal cure, he drew human figures constructed out of the long, thin stalks of opium pipes..." (Ibid., 182).

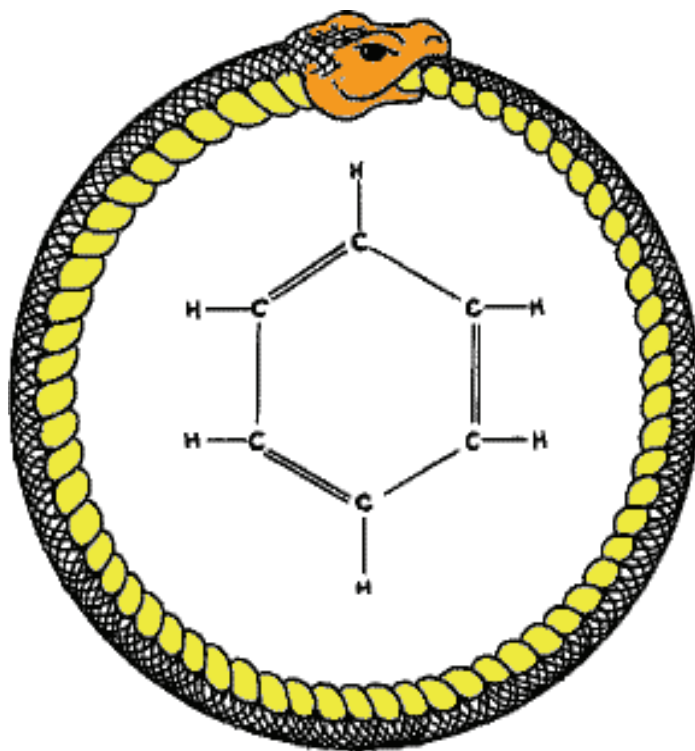
In this case the nocturnal vision produces a different blend (with two inputs coming from different functional contexts, with Cocteau amalgamating people and symbols of his repressed yearning for mind-changing substances).

Koestler produced many examples in which he exploited bisociative matrices and I found the following example to be particularly effective:

"... William Harvey, watching the exposed heart-valve at work in a living fish, suddenly visualized it as a pump – but the analogy between the gory mess he actually saw and the neat metallic gadget existed in his mind's eye only" (Ibid., 182).

The analogy that prompted Harvey to gain insight into the workings of the heart valve was based on the functioning of a pump, and, external details aside, the naked similarity is actually a clear-cut blend with two inputs: the heart (of a fish) and the pump, materializing as a completely functional and effective diagram of the medical object whose physiology he wished to describe.

Koestler also came up with a vivid example of the creative process experienced by Friedrich August von Kekule, the German chemist, who used to have a recurring dream of whirling snakes that resembled the actual structure of benzene – the organic chemical compound made up of a ring of carbon atoms. Not having been able to find the appropriate description of benzene in everyday research and analysis, Kekule grasped it in his dreams. Here is a pictorial representation of what happened in Kekule's dreams:



In *The Act of Creation* Koestler goes on to say that the incident related by Kekule was probably the most important dream in history since Joseph's seven fat and seven lean cows. Describing Kekule's dream in more detail Koestler quotes him and his account of one particular afternoon in 1865 when he fell asleep and had the revealing reverie:

"I turned my chair to the fire and dozed, he relates. Again the atoms were gamboling before my eyes. This time the smaller groups kept modestly in the background. My

mental eye, rendered more acute by repeated visions of this kind, could now distinguish larger structures, of manifold conformation; long rows, sometimes more closely fitted together; all twining and twisting in snakelike motion. But look! What was that? One of the snakes had seized hold of its own tail, and the form whirled mockingly before my eyes. As if by a flash of lightning I awoke ... Let us learn to dream, gentlemen." (Ibid., 118).

From the examples and quotes that I found in Koestler's *Act of Creation* it transpires that there are at least two matrices that bisociate (a process that resembles Fauconnier and Turner's 'blend' to a degree); one is known and the other is unknown, and, as such, the latter prompts recognition and leads to new insight, revelation, vision or solution.

Thus we have elements and vital relations from diverse scenarios that are 'blended' in a subconscious process that is now widely accepted and recognized as a conceptual blending. This process is most likely common to *homo sapiens* and central to human cognition as claimed by Fauconnier and Turner (most notably in their *The Way We Think* but also in a number of other papers).

The upshot is that conceptual blending is seen as having a central role in the construction of meaning as well as being at the core of *meaning potential* that is a catalyst for polysemy.

As Fauconnier and Turner say "It has been useful, in approaching such issues, to forget notions like "meaning of an expression", "semantic representation", "truth-function", and the like, and to think instead of the "meaning potential" (emphasis mine) of a language form. Meaning potential is the essentially unlimited number of ways in which an expression can prompt dynamic cognitive processes, which include conceptual connections, mappings, blends, and simulations. Such processes are inherently creative, and we recognize them as such when they are triggered or produced by art and literature" (p. 78).⁴

Thus it appears that simple conceptual blends cannot explain those more sophisticated and more complex instances of blends (so called 'double scope integration') that are likely to be crucial for thought and language and may just be the proper methodological framework to explain the property of 'being human'. To quote from Turner once more will help us experience Koestler's examples in a new, yet familiar, light and we will see that bisociative matrices can be interpreted as mental spaces: "Conceptual integration is an operation with principles and constraints. It creates dynamic networks. The mechanics of such networks and the emergent structure they produce are a complex branch of cognitive science that we cannot study here in any detail. The gist of the operation is that two or more mental spaces can be partially matched and their structure can be partially projected to a new, blended space that develops emergent structure. These mental spaces and their relations constitute a conceptual integration network. Human beings are especially adept at creating and using such networks routinely in thought and action."⁵

⁴ Fauconnier, G and M. Turner (2003). Polysemy and conceptual blending. In: Nerlich, B., Todd, Z., Herman, V. and Clarke, D.D. (eds). Polysemy: flexible patterns in mind and language. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 79-95.

⁵ Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner (2008). The Origin of Language As A Product of the Evolution of Modern Cognition. In Laks, Bernard et. al., eds. Origin and Evolution of Languages: Approaches, Models, Paradigms. New York: Equinox. To ask where language comes from is to raise the question of the origin of the cognitively modern human mind. Recent work in conceptual integration theory (CIT) shows that cognitively modern human beings are equipped with an advanced form of a basic mental operation that makes it possible for them to develop a number of human singularities: art, music, science, fashions of dress, dance, mathematics. This basic

When did this marvelous ability appear in humans? Fauconnier and Turner claim that evidence shows that this particular mental faculty evolved about 50,000 years ago, during the Upper Paleolithic period.

Some alternative sources state that "...artifacts are the best indication for the capacity for symbolism and no solid evidence for such artifacts appears until about 70,000 years ago in Africa and 40,000 years ago elsewhere. Surprisingly, an important anatomical change allowing speech is the reduction of the gastrointestinal tract. This developed with a change of diet from meat to cooked fibers and evidence comes from at least two other perspectives. First are animal studies including those of Bonobos and another recent study is focused on parrots who seem to understand concepts such as smaller and more just as infants seem to do.⁶

This capacity also seems to depend on the "descent of the larynx" which is necessary to facilitate these speech movements and may have started with the genus Homo. The key to this descent is the very small hyoid bone within the larynx. Because the hyoid is so small the fossil evidence for it is scarce. We do have evidence that it was a part of the Neanderthal remains unearthed in Israel (Franks, *ibidem.*).

This marvelous feat of the human mind, conceptual blending, is most likely the all-encompassing mental mechanism that can account for the whole gamut of human creativity in arts, sciences and other areas of life. It is based on 'small mental packets' that are said to contain constituent parts made up of mental spaces imbued with compressed spatiality and temporality. Thus both space and time are wondrously blended in our mind in the so-called generic space producing a new blend or a newly created mental space. It is not easy to comprehend this complexity without a fitting example, therefore just think about the following:

"Consider a prototypical counterfactual claim: *If Churchill instead of Chamberlain, had been prime minister in 1938, Hitler would have been deposed and World War II averted.* This counterfactual claim asks us to blend conceptual structures from different mental spaces to create a separate, counterfactual mental space. The input spaces include: (1) Churchill in 1938 as outspoken opponent of Germany; and (2) Chamberlain in 1938 as prime minister facing the threat from Germany. To construct the blend, we project parts of each of these spaces to it, and develop emergent structure there.

From the first mental space the blend takes Churchill. From the second mental space the blend takes the role of prime minister. In the blend, Churchill is prime minister by 1938. The blend is contrary to fact with respect to both of its input spaces. The antecedent and the consequent exist in the blend; neither exists in either of the input spaces".⁷

Another illustrative example is typically linguistic and has to do with the immanent feature of many entities – mobility or lack of it. Consider the sentence "The fence runs all the way to the river". The verb "run" is in its primary interpretation typically a signifier of mobility, but the above sentence tells us otherwise – it refers to a stable and 'static' feature of an immovable object (fence). What is clear in the example is the inherent characteristic

mental operation is conceptual integration, and the advanced form is double-scope integration. Human singularities are not independent. They precipitate as products of double-scope conceptual integration.

⁶ Franks, D. (2010). *Neurosociology: The Nexus Between Neuroscience and Social Psychology*, Berlin: Springer, p. 32. Franks mentions studies by Greenspan and Shanker on Bonobos, as well as the study by Pepperberg on parrots.

⁷ Turner, M. (1996). *Conceptual Blending and Counterfactual Argument in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. In: Tetlock, P., Belkin, A. (eds). *Counterfactual thought experiments in world politics: logical, methodological, and psychological perspectives*, p. 291.

of the lexeme "run" that can refer to both mobility and immobility, thus making it polysemous from the start. Another important feature that makes this sentence so conspicuous is the conceptual blend of two different inputs (mobility, immobility) that leads to a blended space that is essentially polysemous, pointing the way to further instances of polysemy in natural languages.

Fauconnier and Turner use another spectacularly illustrative example to explain their idea – the world record set in the so-called 'mythical one mile race'. The idea is simple: any world record is a cumulative sum of all previous world records in the same track-and-field event, or any other sports discipline. One could easily extrapolate this idea and claim that something similar holds true for many lexemes and even safely hypothesize that polysemy is intrinsic in our Gestalt-like experience of the world.

Coming back to the 'mythical one-mile-race': what could be an alternative account of the human ability to synchronously keep in mind different venues and times when the one-mile records were set (and blend them) unless Fauconnier's and Turner's hypothesis about conceptual blending were taken as a starting point? So one should keep in mind all these together: Roger Bannister of 1954, Herb Elliott of 1958, Jim Ryan of 1967, Sebastian Coe of 1979, Steve Cram of 1985 and the Moroccan Hicham el-Guerrouj of 1999, and the protagonists themselves, the runners, are not only all blended, so are the particular track fields, as well as different dates and circumstances... A perfect conceptual merging of time, space and individuals.

After shedding some light on the first term in the title of my paper, I will now focus on the clarification of the second term that is, to all appearances, more complex.

B. Intentionality

Intentionality can be viewed from several different angles. However, 'intentionality' treated in this paper is a specific and less frequently used sense of the term most notably discussed by the contemporary philosopher John Searle.

Searle claims that intentionality is the general term for all the various forms by which the mind can be directed at, or be about, or of, objects and states of affairs in the world.⁸

As the definition implies when one is experiencing a direct state of mind that should translate (roughly speaking) to someone else being able to ask a sensible question as to what that direct state of mind is *about*.

For example, if I have the mental state characterized as the belief that birds evolved from dinosaurs then the state is directed as the question 'What is the state about?' makes sense and is considered comprehensible. In a similar vein, if I have a state described as lethargy, boredom, or another emotion with *no content*, then, according to Searle, this state is not directed, as the question 'what is this state about' would not make any sense.⁹

It is only natural that there are many mental states, as Searle claims, such as anxiety or other emotions that are not about anything in particular that have *no content* and are *undirected*.

As contrast, I may have a belief that a younger colleague of mine is a Fulbright scholar currently in Cleveland, Ohio, or, on the other hand, a desire that instead of being a Fulbright scholar he be a solfeggio teacher, both of which would be intentional as they are about one and the same actual person.

⁸ Searle, J.R. (1999). *Mind, language and society: philosophy in the real world*. New York: Basic Books, Perseus, p. 85.

⁹ Searle, J.R. (1983) *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge University Pres, p 2.

Naturally, John Searle was not the first philosopher to discuss the issue of intentionality, and it was in the 19th century that Franz Brentano described mental states and intentionality as follows: "Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself..."¹⁰

I should reiterate that I started out with a clear notion that conceptual blending has nothing to do with collective or shared beliefs or collectivity in general, and that it is a singularly individualistic act based on one's own intentionality that depends solely on the mental processes originating within oneself.

However, I have started having doubts about this, primarily because conceptual blending appears to hinge greatly on social factors and/or rituals proving that it needs a wider social context. One cannot but recall one Giles Fauconnier's example from his entry on conceptual blending in the Encyclopedia of Behavioral and Social Sciences in which he describes the 'ritual of a new-born baby' still observed in some European countries. Actually, this example stemmed from Eve Sweetser who discussed the ritual of the *Baby's Ascent*, in "which the newborn baby is carried up the stairs of the parents' house. [...this ritual... is meant] to promote the child's chances of rising in life, gets its meaning by virtue of an integration network. In one space, the baby is going to be carried up the stairs. In the other space, which is schematic, someone is going to live a life of some sort. This schematic space is already structured so that living a life is moving along a path in some manner, and good fortune is up and misfortune is down. The stair ritual has been chosen because it has many elements that can map naturally to the schematic motion in the space of life. In the cross-space mapping, the path up the stairs corresponds to the "course" of life, the baby is the person who will live the life, the manner of motion up the stairs corresponds to how the person "goes through" life, and so on. The main parts of the "life course" space are projected into the blend, so that an easy ascent of the stairs determines the child's easy rise in life. The goal is of course to climb the stairs smoothly all the way to the top. Running the blend is now imbued with deep symbolic meaning, because in the blend whatever happens is the baby's future life. This has interesting effects: While it would be insignificant in actually carrying a baby up the stairs if one stumbled slightly on the third step, this manner of motion takes on enormous significance in the blend, and is quite different from stumbling on, say, the last step.

The ritual of the new-born baby and the stairs integrates in a single, very brief, concrete event the complicated and extended causal patterns of a human life. In the blend, reaching the top of the stairs is the desired effect, a successful life. But reaching the top of the stairs is also the ritual cause of the successful life because the ritual is performed to bring about success in life. The blend presents the effect directly as contained in its cause. The ritual is fairly representative of rituals in general, suggesting that such fundamental and elaborate human activities, unparalleled in the animal world, make use of the operation of conceptual blending as their basic instrument of imaginative invention." (Fauconnier and Turner, *ibid.*, pp. 80-81).

¹⁰ Brentano, F. (trans. by McAlister, L). (1995). *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. London: Routledge, pp. 88-89.

This example shows quite vividly that conceptual blending as defined by Fauconnier and Turner depends on some kind of social 'grounding' and that it is not *always individually creative*, is most often prosaic and must follow social mores. Another element is also indispensable for the existence of this principal cognitive mechanism: the underlying cognitive structure dubbed 'the Background' by Searle. This postulated mechanism is considered somewhat 'obscure' even by Searle himself and I plan to discuss it in more detail shortly. However, before that I would like to underline some issues raised by John Searle, such as his implicit query whether an individual can harbor both her own ideas and collective ones at the same time, to which he replies that this dual capacity is a biological given that he claims is *shared by a variety of other species*. He then goes on to give an account of this 'obscure' mental mechanism (the Background) stating that it is the anchor for collectivity and the crux of our spatio-temporal and causal orientation enabling consciousness in humans.

So, then, what is 'the Background' for Searle? Apart from admitting that the notion is 'obscure', he comments that it must be primarily a technical term that is necessary to explain cognitive activity and language, and, at the same time, 'presupposes a background sense of the other as candidate for cooperative agency'.¹¹ One must bear in mind that The Background as conceptualized by Searle is *not intentional because it is only a set of capacities*. Perhaps the simplest argument supporting the existence of the Background is the claim that *the meaning of a sentence can only determine its truth conditions against a Background of capacities, dispositions, know-how, etc., which are not themselves part of the semantic content of the sentence*. This is easy to see if one thinks about any sentence at all, in any language, and can be duly shown in English using common English verbs such as "cut", "open", or "grow".

Searle presents some very entertaining and mind-opening examples of what he has in mind here. Using the simple command "Cut the grass!" he adds that it would be interpreted differently by all from a similar command "Cut the cake!". "If someone tells me to cut the cake and I run over it with a lawn mower or they tell me to cut the grass and I rush and stab it with a knife, there is a very ordinary sense in which I did not do what I was told to do".¹² This is so because in the two cases above we understand one and the same verb "cut" differently, even though its literal meaning is constant, however it depends on our Background abilities, or tacit knowledge.

Searle goes on to say that there is "nothing in the literal meaning of the sentence "She gave him her key and he opened the door" to *block the interpretation* "He opened the door with her key by bashing the door down with the key": the key weighed two hundred pounds and was in the shape of an axe". Or else "He swallowed both the door and the key and he inserted the key in the lock by the peristaltic contraction of his gut".

Searle touches upon something that reminds me of 'prototypicality' stating the following: "I see this as a chair, this as a table, that as a glass, indeed any normal case of perception will be a case of *perceiving as*, where the perceiver assimilates the perceived object to some more or less familiar category." (Could 'familiar category' actually be 'prototypicality?') Here Searle presupposes a conceptual structure that is made up of familiar categories and goes on to state that "all nonpathological forms of consciousness are

¹¹ Searle, J. R. (1990). Collective Intentions and Actions. In: Cohen, J. M. P., Pollack, E. (eds.) *Intentions in Communication*. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, p. 414.

¹² Searle, J. R. (1992). *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. Cambridge: MIT Press., pp. 178-79.

experienced under the aspect of familiarity." And the all-encompassing milieu is, naturally, the Background and our capacities stemming from it. He claims that *all intentionality* is aspectual, and that all conscious intentionality is aspectual, thus the "possibility of perceiving, that is, the possibility of experiencing under aspects requires a familiarity with the set of categories under which one experiences those aspects. The ability to apply those categories is a Background ability".¹³

There is another wider issue here: the question how to steer a prudent path between the opposing extremes of subjectivism and the objectivism that is a consequence of traditional truth-conditional semantics that Searle seem to be inextricably connected to. Strangely enough, Searle's realism indirectly supports the approach of cognitive semantics that opposes the claim that language relates to concepts internal to the mind of the speaker and nothing else. Such an approach would lead to extreme subjectivism where concepts are not necessarily related to lived experience. Surprisingly, Searle's ideas appear to be in accord with cognitive semanticists who claim that semantic structure can be equated with conceptual structure, but only to a degree, as the two are *not identical*. Cognitive semanticists propose that the meaning associated with words, for example, form only a *subset of possible concepts*. On the other hand, from Searle's viewpoint, having in mind that consciousness is essential to the existence of the Background, and the Background is made up from ideas, dispositions and our readiness to utilize these two, our idea of what is true in the Background depends on some sort of a conceptual scheme.¹⁴

From the field of cognitive and developmental psychology have recently come some ideas relevant to the issue: discussions on the architecture of the early conceptual system, how concepts are generated, and the nature of their format. The results obtained at first were meager and one reason for this theoretical poverty could be that until relatively recently the dominant theoretical influence in the field of infant cognition, inherited mainly from Piaget, but helped by the history of widely accepted behaviorism in American psychology, was the belief that preverbal infants do not have a conceptual system and so before language must rely solely on sensorimotor information in their cognitive processing. Later on, and quite recently, there appeared rather dramatic signals produced by extensive empirical research that preverbal infants actually do have a significantly developed system of cognitive processing (best witnessed in the experimental work of Jean Mandler).¹⁵

In addition to this, it appears clear that we have many more thoughts, ideas and feelings than we can conventionally encode in language. For some, potentially existent entities, we do form concepts, of course. Thus, we have a concept for the place on our faces below our nose and above our mouth where moustache go. By extension we need to have

¹³ Searle, J. R. (1983) *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 133, et pass.

¹⁴ Another idea may resemble this: Pierre Bourdieu (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Bourdieu introduces the notion of habitus that he sees as the mental structure through which people deal with the social world. The acquired habitus then can be thought of as a set of internalized schemes through which the world is perceived, understood, appreciated, and evaluated. Also, it is important to realize that the habitus implies that people tend to internalize external structures thus setting up new mindsets, or sets of cognitively based mental structures.

¹⁵ Mandler, J. M. (1992). How to build a baby II: Conceptual primitives. *Psychological Review*, 99, 587-604.

Mandler, J. M. (2004). *The foundations of mind: Origins of conceptual thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mandler, J. M. (2005). How to build a baby III: Image-schemas and the transition to verbal thought. In

Hampe, B. (ed.), *Image schemas in cognitive linguistics*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Mandler, J. M. (2008). On the birth and growth of concepts. *Philosophical Psychology*, 21, 207-230.

Mandler, J. M. (2010). The spatial foundations of the conceptual system. *Language and Cognition*, 2, 21-44.

a particular concept for this part of the face in order to understand that the hair that grows there is called a moustache.

Apart from the possible similarities between Searle and some cognitive-semantic ideas the notion of the Background is still looming large, first as a still partly defined entity, but also as an everyday phenomenon. This is especially obvious in human attempts to break with our Background, most notably in contemporary art, be it visual or literary. The moment we start thinking about surrealist painters we become aware that they have tried to break with the Background, but even then the three-headed woman is still a woman, and Dali's drooping watch is nothing else but a watch, and all other dream-like objects are still objects against a horizon, together with a sky and a foreground. And this fact alone is the best and most convincing evidence supporting the cognitive-semantic approach outlined above, that tries to steer the realistic path between the subjective and objective.

One may well ask about the theoretical explanation of the impossibility of *actually* perceiving a three-headed woman or a drooping watch. *The only thing blocking such interpretations is, however, not the semantic content.* And we can safely assume and reiterate that the interpretative constraints in such attempts to break with the Background are *not* based on semantics.

What blocks such interpretations is the fact that there is a certain kind of knowledge about how the world works, i.e. that humans have a certain unconscious and shared set of abilities that help us to cope with the world.¹⁶

Approaching the end of this discussion we might feel compelled to ask if *there is a linguistic counterpart of the Background?*

There seems to be a related although somewhat different concept in linguistics proper, discussed by Langacker who came up with a ready-made device for modeling local contextual aspects of meaning construction that he named *ground*¹⁷. He uses the term *ground* to refer to the speech event, its participant, and the surrounding context. Langacker introduces a slightly expanded notion of 'ground' he calls the Current Discourse Space (CDS) that he thinks constitutes a mental space.

For him the CDS is the mental space comprising those elements and relations construed as being shared by the speaker and hearer as a basis for communication at a given moment in the flow of discourse.¹⁸

In a similar vein, one could call 'ground' a *semiotic space* populated by different spatially defined indexicals and this sounds very logical as the Background or Ground is *not a proper referent in a linguistic sense*, being mostly a pragmatic notion.¹⁹ Tangential to this idea is also the nature of 'generic space' in conceptual blending: to all appearances it is a topologically-defined space that comprises a set of ordered indexicals that are ready to translate/transform/generate an immensely complex network of specific codified interpretations.

¹⁶ Searle, J. (2004). *Mind: A Brief Introduction*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. p. 121 et pass. Searle puts forward a provocative idea about 'network of intentionality and the background of preintentional capacities' claiming that the totality of one's intentional states forms an elaborate interacting network.

¹⁷ Langacker, R. W. (1991/2002) *Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*. (Cognitive Linguistics Research 1.) Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

¹⁸ Langacker, Ronald. 2001. Discourse in Cognitive Grammar. *Cognitive Linguistics* 12(2), 143- 188, p. 144.

¹⁹ Coulson, S. and Oakley, T. (2005). Blending and coded meaning: Literal and Figurativemeaning in cognitive semantics. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37, 1510-1536, p.1516.

A recent quote seems to confirm the above: "It would seem that the CDS model perfectly meets the two central requirements of a genuine cognitive approach to meaning analysis: 1. the representation of meaning in its inherent relationship to the rich, subject-related conceptual background, and 2. the incorporation of aspects of discourse."²⁰

At the end of this paper I hope to have been able to offer sufficient evidence to claim that conceptual blending does, indeed, have recourse to collectivity as a shared background in situations that require it. In spite of this, most of the time people are unaware of the shared background although they are both '*codifiers*', those who generate instances of conceptual blending when the situation demands, or '*readers*', in other words those who have to understand and interpret the code.

POJMOVNO SAŽIMANJE I INTENCIONALNOST

Đorđe Vidanović

Moja prvobitna ideja bila je da je pojmovno sažimanje isključivo zasnovano na individualnoj intencionalnosti i da nema potrebe za kolektivnom ili višestrukom intencionalnošću (ili nečim što se na engleskom jeziku naziva "aboutness"). Međutim, pošto sam duže razmišljao o ovom problemu, i posle razmatranja primera koje su dali Arthur Koestler (The Act of Creation), kao i mnoštva primera koji potiču od Fauconniera i Turnera, počeo sam da svoj prvobitni stav drugačije oblikujem. Zapravo, činilo mi se da je takav proces pojmovnog sažimanja duboko ukorenjen u društvenom kontekstu i, najverovatnije, nesvesni i neizgovoreni događaj koji podrazumeva deljenu intencionalnost a podseća na koncepciju Johna Searla poznatu pod imenom "Pozadina" (The Background), ili na Langackerovo "utemeljenje" (grounding). I "pozadina" i "utemeljenje" pretpostavljaju postojanje internalizovanog saznanja.

Na taj način uobličio sam stav da pojmovno sažimanje umnogome zavisi od društvenih činilaca, odnosno ritual, i zahteva društveno određenje. Trudio sam se da odgovorim na Searlovo pitanje "Može li pojedinac istovremeno da poseduje i svoje vlastite ideje kao i ideje koje su kolektivne?". Pošto Searle tvrdi da je ovakvo svojstvo kod čoveka biološka datost, pokušao sam da razmotrim intelektualnu snagu potrebnu da bi se pojedinac, eventualno, "oslobodio" Pozadine. Na kraju sam izveo zaključak da je ono što sprečava ezoterična i neobična tumačenja upravo kolektivni skup pretpostavki i dispozicija, a ne nekakav semantički sadržaj.

Ključne reči: *Kestler, Fokonije, Tarner, Serl, bisocijativna matrica, pojmovno sažimanje, Pozadina, topološki indeksikali, intencionalnost*

²⁰ Feyaerts, K. (2006). Towards a Dynamic Account of Phraseological Meaning: Creative Variation in Headlines and Conversational Humour. IJES, vol. 6 (1), 2006, 57-84, p. 81.