

# Anatomy of a Metaphor

**What is a  
metaphor?**

**Some metaphors in action**

**The 78 leapt out of the  
Harvard Station bus tunnel.**

**How do you think  
the 78 bus came out?**





<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gaulke/3788033202/>



**Hamlet: To be or not to be?**

**Lenka: Be!**

**“To be, or not to be, that is the question: Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them?”**



"roll with  
the  
punches"

**“When life tries to knock all the wind out of you, you’ve got to roll, roll, roll with the punches.”**

**Thinking about one thing  
in terms of another**

Hamlet: **destiny as adversary**  
To be or not to be?

Lenka: **Be!**  
**circumstances as opponent**

**Balaji** but seriously, the competition stuff is just...nonsensical at this point. let's have the students build our brand or business plan rather an app.

**Albert** I agree—the brand and business plan are much more valuable at this point! Making an app with a half-baked brand and limited content seems flirting with disaster—or more like coming on really strong to disaster with bad pickup lines, so disaster doesn't even in the end care, and this thing just fizzles.

**Balaji** can't we at least have a one-night stand with disaster?

**Albert** That could be really awesome (therapeutic, among other things), if TEL can do it responsibly and avoid having illegitimate offspring or other long-term problematic consequences...

**Sandra** You 2 are completely ridiculous.



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**disaster as romantic partner?**

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# Personification

**Magnetic North: Dear Hip-Hop**

**Hip-Hop as an old friend**

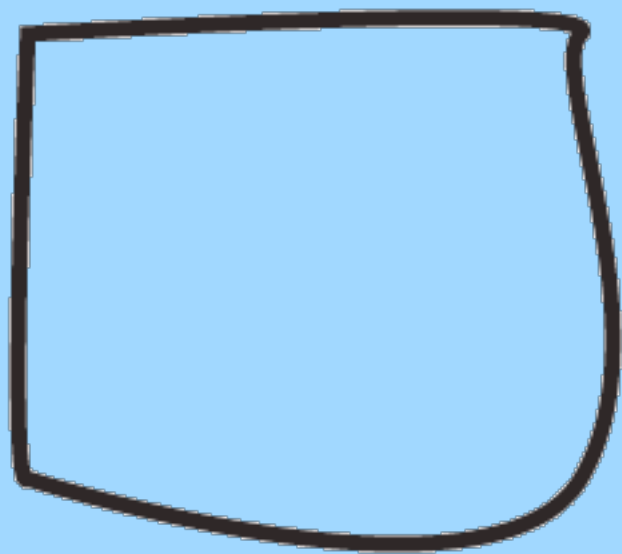
**Changes in hip-hop  
as estrangement**

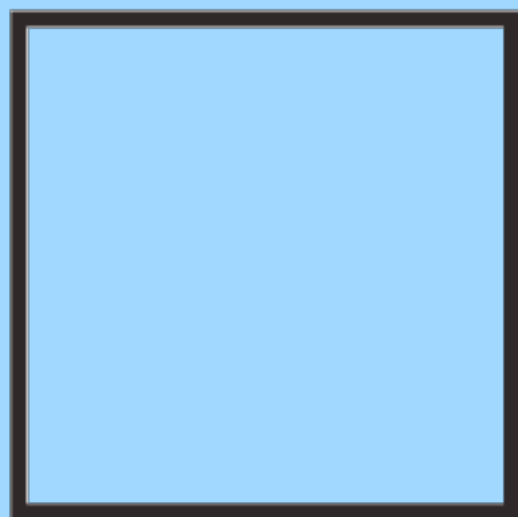
**Song as letter**

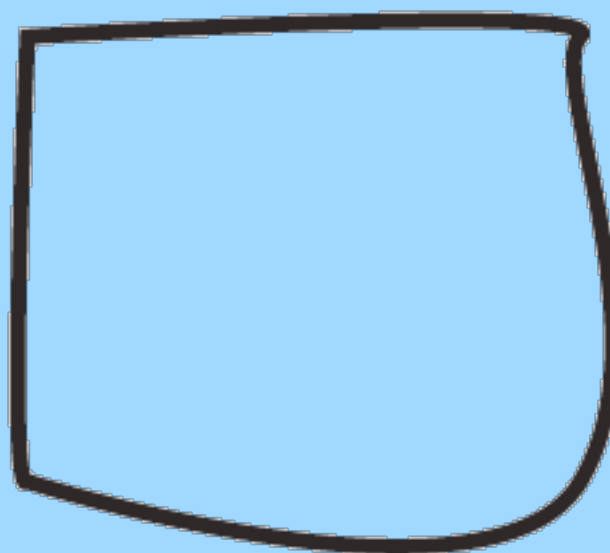
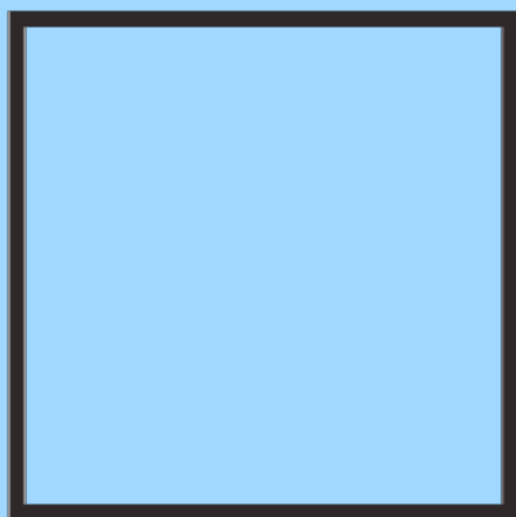
**Thinking about one thing  
in terms of another**

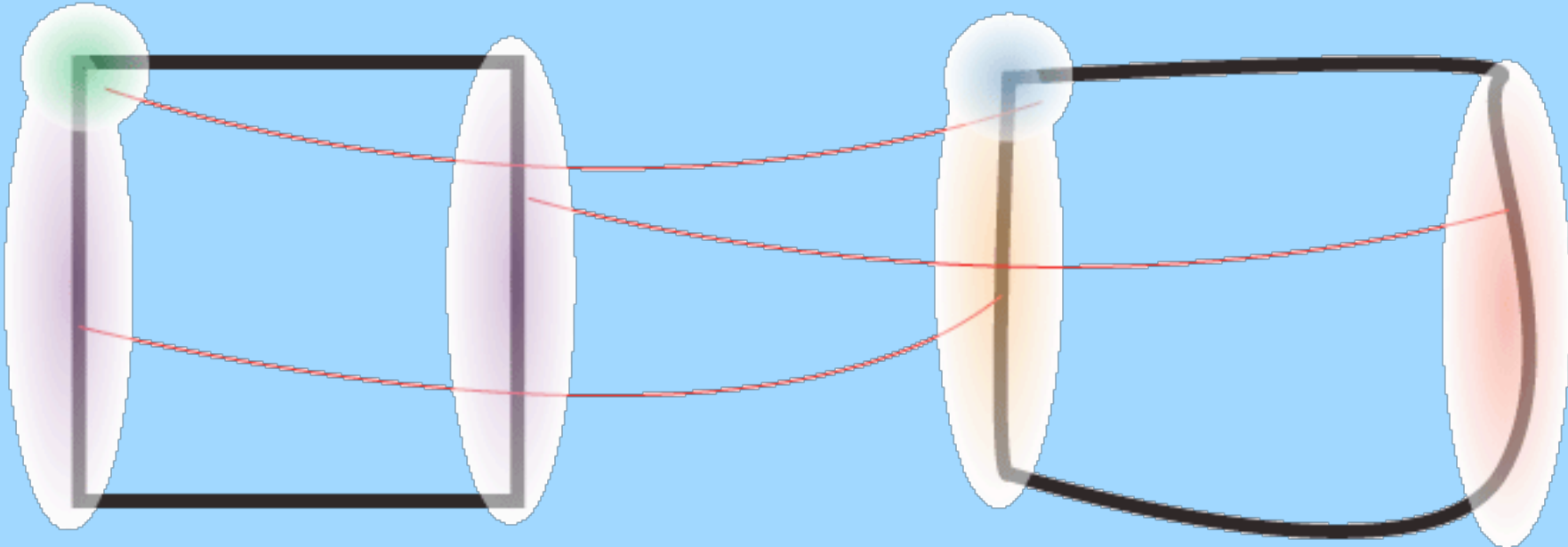


# Conceptual Metaphor











**Thinking about one concept  
with the structure of another**

**often unconsciously**

**Example: She has a warm smile.**

**Are these words  
getting through?**

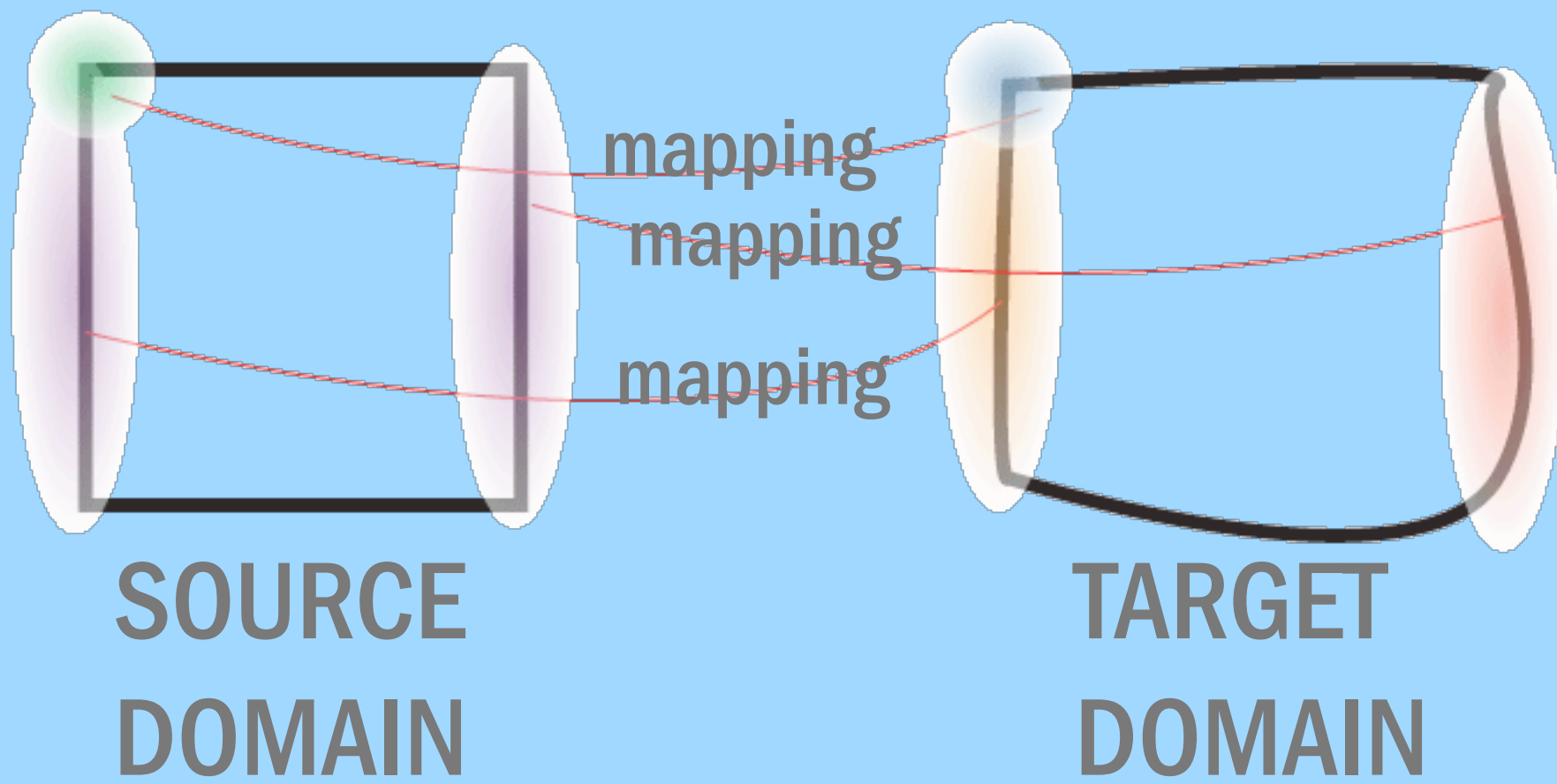
**Do they get the  
message across?**

**Thinking about one concept  
with the structure of another**



**Target Domain**  
Thinking about one concept  
with the structure of another  
**Source Domain**

**The source domain structures  
the target domain via mappings,  
correspondence relationships.**





# Mac Commercial Mappings

people → computers

cold virus → computer virus

being sick → computer function compromised

# Primary Metaphor

**Source Domain: sensorimotor experiences**

**Target Domain: subjective experiences**



Reasoning about affection in terms warmth  
(e.g. She has a warm smile)

Reasoning about goals as destinations—achieving a goal  
conceptualized as reaching a destination  
(e.g. After intense discussion, we arrived at a good  
solution).

**Metaphor Shorthand:**

**TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN**

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solution).

## **AFFECTION IS WARMTH**

Reasoning about affection in terms warmth  
(e.g. She has a warm smile)

## **GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS**

Reasoning about goals as destinations—achieving a goal  
conceptualized as reaching a destination  
(e.g. After intense discussion, we arrived at a good  
solution).

**Prices rose.**

**The car is low on gas.**

**We stocked up on snacks  
during the sale at the grocery store.**

Prices rose.

The car is low on gas.

We stocked up on snacks  
during the sale at the grocery store.

**MORE  
IS UP**

**She was so mad, she looked like she might blow up at any moment.**

**I was seething with anger.**

**He has an explosive temper.**



Her anger was building up,  
and she looked like  
she might blow up at any moment.

I was seething with anger.

He has an explosive temper.



**ANGER IS A  
(COMBUSTABLE)  
SUBSTANCE**

# Complex Metaphor

He's almost reached  
financial independence  
but is nowhere near  
getting married.

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financial independence  
but is nowhere near  
getting married.

**An assembly of multiple primary metaphors  
(possibly in combination with beliefs and values)  
to form more sophisticated metaphors used to reason  
about more complex subjective experiences.**

# A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY

formed by combining GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS  
with ACTIONS ARE MOTIONS and the belief that  
people should have purposes in life  
and thus should act in ways that achieve those goals.



# A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY

## Mappings:

A PERSON IS A TRAVELER

LIFE GOALS ARE DESTINATIONS  
(such as graduating from college)

A LIFE PLAN IS AN ITINERARY

# Frames

**the structure of concepts**

**Objects and words  
might be able to  
exist in isolation  
but concepts cannot.**

**Example: Chalk**

# Frame

A system of concepts in which understanding one concept requires understanding the system of concepts to which it belongs.

# Roles

the people, objects, places, etc.

# Relations

how those roles are connected

# Scenario

a simple story describing interactions among roles

**Example: Commercial Transaction**



# Roles

seller, buyer, goods, payment

# Relations

a seller has goods, a buyer wants goods and can give the seller payment for them

# Scenario

a seller in possession of goods agrees to transfer possession of goods to a buyer in exchange for payment furnished by the buyer

# Background Frames

possession, exchange, agreement

# Frames and Metaphors

“He really thinks I should do the study abroad program with him. He made a strong pitch, and it was kind of convincing, but in the end, I just couldn’t buy the whole thing of spending an entire school year doing things unrelated to my major thousands of miles away.”

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# ACCEPTING AN IDEA IS BUYING GOODS

goods → ideas

seller → person with an idea

potential buyer → person without the idea

pitching → attempting to persuade

Scenario: a person with ideas tries to persuade another to accept his ideas.

**Notice what isn't mapped.**

**Use your time wisely.**

**Time management is a crucial skill.**

**Do you have any spare time?**

**Don't let other people waste your time.**



Use your time wisely.

Time management is a crucial skill.

Do you have any spare time?

Don't let other people waste your time.

**TIME IS A RESOURCE**

# The Resource Frame

# Roles

resource, user, purpose

# Relations

the purpose is something the user wants to achieve and thus has value to the user; the resource can be used to achieve the purpose and may be limited in quantity.

# Scenario

the user utilizes the resource to achieve the purpose.

# TIME IS A RESOURCE

resource → time

user → person using time

purpose → a goal requiring time to achieve

value of resource → value of time

Scenario: a person uses time to achieve a goal

**But this isn't the only way  
to think about time.**

**Meet me at the library at 4pm.**

**I'll have the documents to you  
within the hour.**

**Five years from now, everything will be  
different.**

Meet me at the library at 4pm.

I'll have the documents to you  
within the hour.

Five years from now, everything will be  
different.



**TIME IS SPACE**

**Abstract nouns  
are understood with  
conceptual metaphors**

# Barry Yourgrau: The Sadness of Sex

**Bokura Ga Ita**

# Metaphors Matter

**Understanding freedom, rights,  
government and more relies upon  
using conceptual metaphors.**

**THE NATION IS A FAMILY**

# Beyond Metaphors: Blends





# Suggested Reading

# Metaphors We Live By

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson

# The Political Mind

George Lakoff

# Philosophy in the Flesh

George Lakoff

# Metaphor: A Practical Introduction

Zoltan Kövecses

# The Stuff of Thought

Steven Pinker