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## "Justice is blind": A model for analyzing metaphor transformations and narratives in actual discourse

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**Justice is blind:**

**A model for analyzing metaphor transformations and narratives in actual discourse**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this article I present a model of how metaphors are transformed and re-presented as narratives, how this process helps shape communicative interactions, and how it contributes to relevance effects and the generation of meaning, often by simultaneously affecting multiple cognitive contexts. I demonstrate the application of the model to samples of discourse from current research and show how it can contribute to understanding troubled communicative relationships and potentially to improving communication in situations of misunderstanding and conflict.

**Keywords:** Stories, metaphors, perceptual simulations, conversation, social interaction, discourse analysis, community.

**Justice is blind:**

**A model for analyzing metaphor transformations and narratives in actual discourse**

**1. Introduction**

Previous work (Ritchie, 2008; 2010a) has shown that metaphors used in actual discourse often imply stories, and are often transformed and re-presented as stories. Related work (Ritchie, 2006; 2008; 2009) has shown how a conceptual approach combining insights from Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995; Wilson & Sperber, 2004) with Perceptual Simulation Theory (Barsalou, 2007; Gibbs, 2006; Ritchie, 2006; 2009) can illuminate the cognitive processes involved in creating, transforming, and understanding metaphors. In this article I extend and formalize these insights and show how the resulting model can be applied to examples of discourse from current research, including informal conversations as well as a public meeting between police officials and members of the community.

I begin by reviewing a general model of metaphor comprehension, Context-Limited Simulation Theory, then illustrate how the model can be extended to incorporate transformation into a metaphorical narrative using an example from Ritchie and Schell (2009). I apply the expanded model to examples from recent and current research on talk about police-community interactions, including samples from a public meeting between police officials and members of the community in Portland, Oregon, following the fatal shooting of a young, unarmed African-American woman by police officers in spring, 2003.

**2. Metaphors and metaphorical stories.**

Semino (2008, p. 1) defines "metaphor" as "the phenomenon whereby we talk and, potentially, think about something in terms of something else." Applying this definition to an example that appears later in this paper, *ivory tower* would be considered a metaphor because the *vehicle*,<sup>1</sup> *ivory tower*, is often used to express an abstract quality sometimes associated with scientists and other academicians. This quality, which might be described as something like "a lack of engagement with practical affairs," is the *topic* of the metaphor. A slightly different definition of metaphor appears on the Metaphor Analysis Project<sup>2</sup> web page: "A linguistic metaphor is a stretch of language that has the potential to be interpreted metaphorically." The Metaphor Analysis Project web page defines the metaphor vehicle as "a word or phrase that somehow contrasts with (is incongruous or anomalous with) the topic of the on-going text or talk" and yet can be connected with the topic. A word or phrase can be identified as a metaphor if its basic or customary meaning is incongruous with the apparent contextual meaning. Thus, in another example that appears later in this article, *justice is blind* applies a concept, *blind* for which the basic contemporary meaning (severely visually impaired) is clearly distinct from its meaning in context: *justice*, an abstract concept, is not the sort of entity that can be visually impaired. Metaphors frequently appear in stories (sequences of causally-related events); they also often imply stories, and stories frequently serve as metaphors (Ritchie, 2010a).

### **3. Context-Limited Simulation Theory (CLST): The Model.**

#### **3.1 Perceptual Simulations.**

Barsalou (2007) claims that perceptual simulation is the primary mode of cognition. As we process language we experience simulated perceptions of external perceptions such as

vision, hearing, touch, etc. According to Barsalou, we also regularly experience simulations of internal physiological states (interoception) and cognitive states (introspection) as well as simulations of emotional responses. These simulations of internal physiological, cognitive, and emotional states, according to Barsalou, play a central role in reasoning and in language use. However, Barsalou concedes that language may also be processed at a less deep level purely through activation of lexical knowledge and links to other words and phrases. Landauer and Dumais (1997) have shown that a model of language use based purely on connections to other words and to contexts in which related words have been encountered can adequately explain both initial language acquisition and many aspects of actual language use.

Combining these approaches, Ritchie (2006) proposed that a metaphor vehicle may activate semantic links, perceptual simulations and simulations of emotional responses as well as direct emotional responses, or any combination of these. A familiar metaphor that has become lexicalized may be processed primarily in terms of links to knowledge about what it is customarily taken to mean; for example, in ‘the student could not grasp the meaning of the new word’, *grasp* might be processed primarily by simply activating its customary idiomatic meaning, ‘come to understand.’ However, Gibbs (2006) has shown that even a familiar and idiomatic metaphor will usually at least weakly activate neural groups associated with the vehicle. In the example just given, subjects will process the phrase more quickly if they have been instructed to hold tightly to an object than if they have been instructed to sit with relaxed hands. Similarly, Zhong and Leonardelli (2009) have shown that subjects who have been led to feel excluded from an interactive social game (‘have received a cold reception’) will provide a significantly

lower estimate of the temperature in the laboratory than subjects who have not been socially excluded. Thus it appears that even familiar and highly lexicalized metaphors at least weakly activate simulations of experiences associated with the metaphor vehicle.

### **3.2. Relevance.**

Sperber and Wilson (1995) have proposed a model of comprehension based on the idea that speakers and listeners are mutually aware of the cognitive contexts (ideas, schemas, general knowledge, etc.) that are activated and salient for all participants in a conversation. Speakers produce and hearers interpret utterances according to the expectation that they will be *relevant* to a mutually active cognitive context, where *relevance* is itself defined in terms of the capacity of the utterance to achieve sufficient effects on one or more mutually active cognitive contexts to justify the processing effort. The *meaning* of an utterance can be understood in terms of its *relevance* in the communicative context in which it is encountered, that is to say, its effects on the “mutual cognitive environment,” the ideas, schemas, etc. that are currently activated in the minds of speaker and hearers.

Gerrig (1993) has proposed a useful metaphor for the process of comprehending narratives: A narrative creates a ‘*story world*’ and, if the narration is successful, listeners (or readers) are transported into the story world. This metaphor can usefully be generalized to discourse generally. Participants in talk create and maintain a *discourse world* consisting of all of the mutual cognitive contexts, the ideas, schemas, understanding of their personal relationships, cultural and social norms, state of the current conversation, etc. that they mutually understand to be salient to all of them (see also Semino, 1996; Werth, 1999). Perceptual simulations activated by metaphors and

other highly expressive language particularly invite listeners to ‘*enter into the discourse world.*’

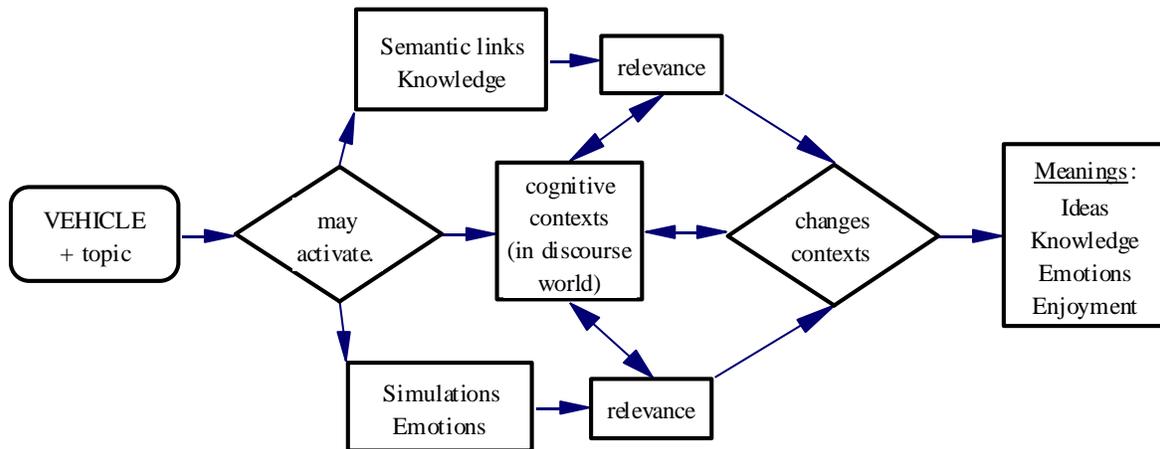


Figure 1 The Model

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Metaphor vehicles potentially activate a range of semantic links and perceptual simulations, most of which are not relevant to the topic (see Figure 1). Semantic links and perceptual simulations that have little relevance to the currently activated cognitive contexts may be either weakly activated or suppressed. Consistent with Sperber and Wilson (1995), *relevance* is assessed in terms of the capacity to affect a context (e.g. a schema) that is currently activated in the mutual cognitive environment of speaker and hearers. In the preceding example, the literal meaning, “seize hold of an object” has no capacity to affect the hearer’s understanding of, hence no relevance to, the topic of vocabulary learning, but the associated experiences of control and possession are relevant. These experiences are attached to the topic and alter the hearer’s understanding of what the student had attempted and failed to accomplish. This change to the hearer’s understanding of the topic constitutes the meaning of the metaphor.

As Ritchie (2006; 2008; 2010a) has previously argued, a single metaphor may be relevant to and produce changes in several contexts at once, affecting for example hearers' understanding of the topic, the relationships among participants in the conversation, and even the nature of the conversation itself. The activated cognitive contexts, the "discourse world" of the conversation participants, is progressively shaped and transformed as the constituent cognitive contexts are altered to incorporate new information, including new perceptual simulations.

#### 4. Example 1: Scientists talk about communication

The first example, discussed at length in Ritchie and Schell (2009), is taken from a low-structure focus group discussion among several scientists as part of a day-long conference on communicating science to non-scientists. These scientists work in the same lab, and knew each other prior to the meeting. The discussion was marked by a good deal of joking and teasing directed toward each other as well as toward the facilitator. At one point, in response to a comment about the need to be continually alert to the power of public officials over research funds, one participant, Jack, remarked, *Ya. There really is no more ivory tower.* After about a minute of talk on a related topic, another participant returned to this phrase, and the following exchange ensued:

Larry: Jack said something, one way of .. of capturing part of that, ah, change of role is ah, no more ivory tower. [initial metaphor]

It's probably, we're, we're not there now.. it's probably not too far in the future. [1<sup>st</sup> transformation]

Jim: I've never really seen the ivory tower. (Laughter) [2<sup>nd</sup> transformation]

Larry: You haven't. They never did let you in did they? [3<sup>d</sup> transformation]

Jack: Is that what you dream about, in the night, Jim? Ivory tower you just go to sleep and the first thing you get is the seven million dollar grant from.. to do whatever you want from the MacArthur Foundation? and you go up into the ivory tower. [4<sup>th</sup> transformation]

What the, open pit, unstable wall [5<sup>th</sup> transformation]

Jan: Ya the unstable.

Larry: Ya, instead of the ivory tower, we're in an unstable foundation. [*contrast*]  
(From Ritchie & Schell, 2009)

The initial metaphor was almost certainly quite familiar to the scientists participating in this discussion, and was probably not processed very deeply (Ritchie & Schell, 2009).

Initial processing may have included a weak activation of perceptual simulations (perhaps a dim image of a white structure and feelings of isolation) along with links to the lexicalized definition of *ivory tower* and to other, related words and phrases.

Memories of other discourse situations in which the metaphor was encountered may also have been weakly activated, along with schema-relevant knowledge of relevant facts about the practice of science, the difficulty of maintaining adequate funding for one's research, etc.

In the subsequent interchange, the initial metaphor was transformed at least five times, in ways that are very likely to have motivated a deeper level of processing and activated much more vivid simulations. The first transformation, *not there now... not too far in the future*, merely served to bring the metaphor back to life by framing the *ivory tower* as a place and blending it with the TIME IS SPACE conceptual metaphor. The intention here was apparently to comment on the participants' shared dilemma. In transformation 2 Jim built on the first transformation by solidifying the *ivory tower* as an actual structure, potentially activating an image that expressed the irony of their shared situation as a humorously incongruous way. In transformation 3, Larry turned Jim's quip back on him by highlighting the *ivory tower* as a desirable place from which Jim had been *excluded*. In transformation 4, Jack amplified Larry's tease into a narrative about Jim's imputed yearning for entry into the ivory tower and connected it to the previous discussion of research funding. Seconded by Jan, Jack then transformed the metaphor

once again, potentially activating images of a tower with crumbling walls and foundations next to an open pit. Larry then drew the humorously (and poignantly) ironic contrast between this final image and the original image of *ivory tower science* as something ideal and perfect (Ritchie & Schell, 2009).

#### FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The metaphor was transformed and the narrative created collaboratively (Ritchie, 2010), a process that was possible only because the initial transformation by Larry was apparently consistent with the discourse world as represented in the minds of all the participants. Each subsequent transformation appears to have enlarged and transformed this common discourse world; the various participants' reactions strongly support the inference that they experienced very similar schemas, simulations, and links to relevant knowledge throughout the interchange. Moreover, as Ritchie and Schell point out, the transformed *ivory tower* metaphor and the ironic juxtaposition of the story worlds created by the successive transformations with each other and with their experienced real worlds apparently provided a means for expressing and working through the paradoxes and contradictions of their roles as research scientists, and thus to accomplish the official business of the conference (Ritchie & Schell, 2009). The hesitations and disfluencies in the conversation suggests that in some cases a speaker experienced a simulation and produced language to express it, but the collaborative telling of the story suggests that, in many instances, the speaker and hearers may have experienced the same or similar simulations and alterations to the discourse world more or less simultaneously.

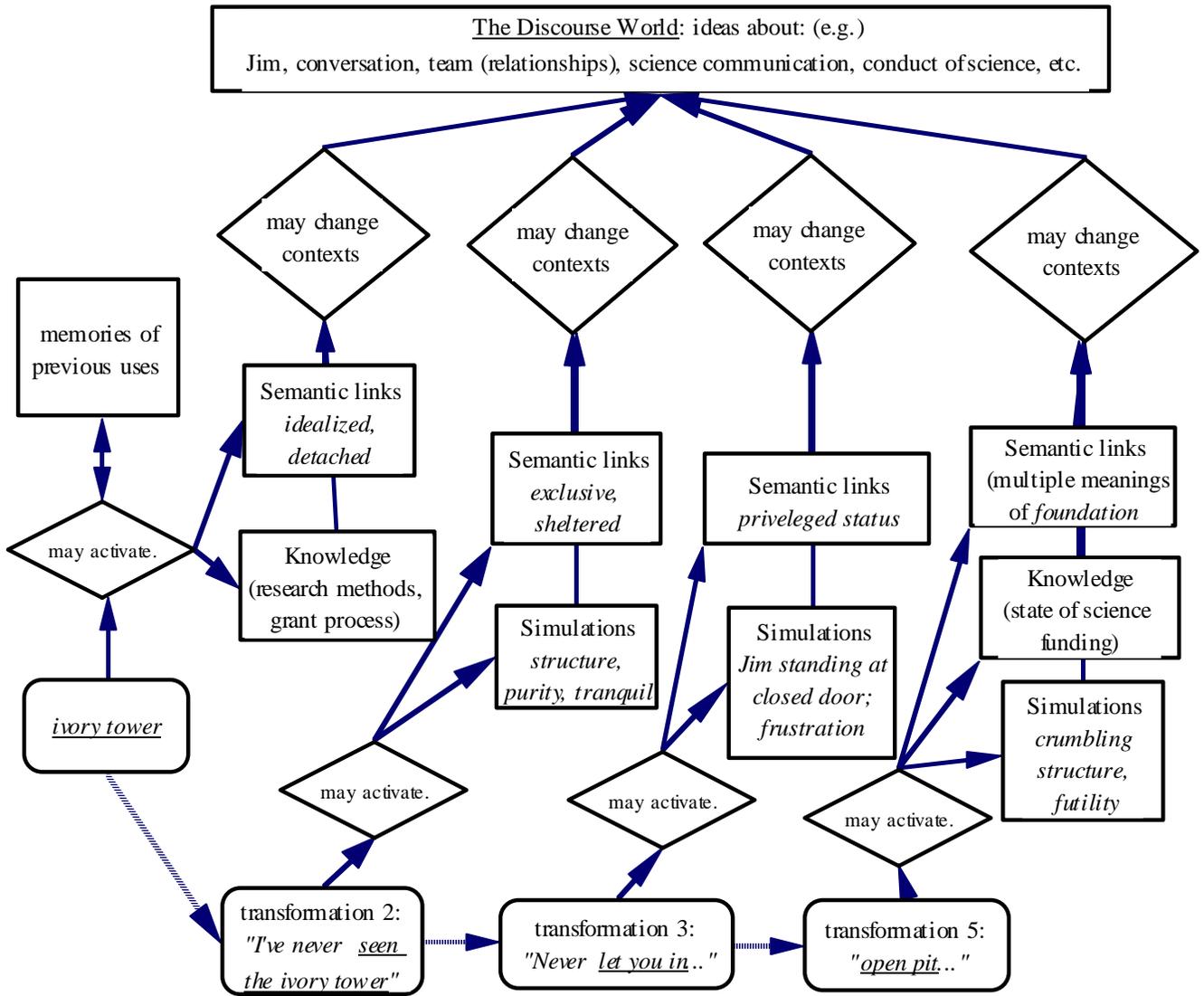


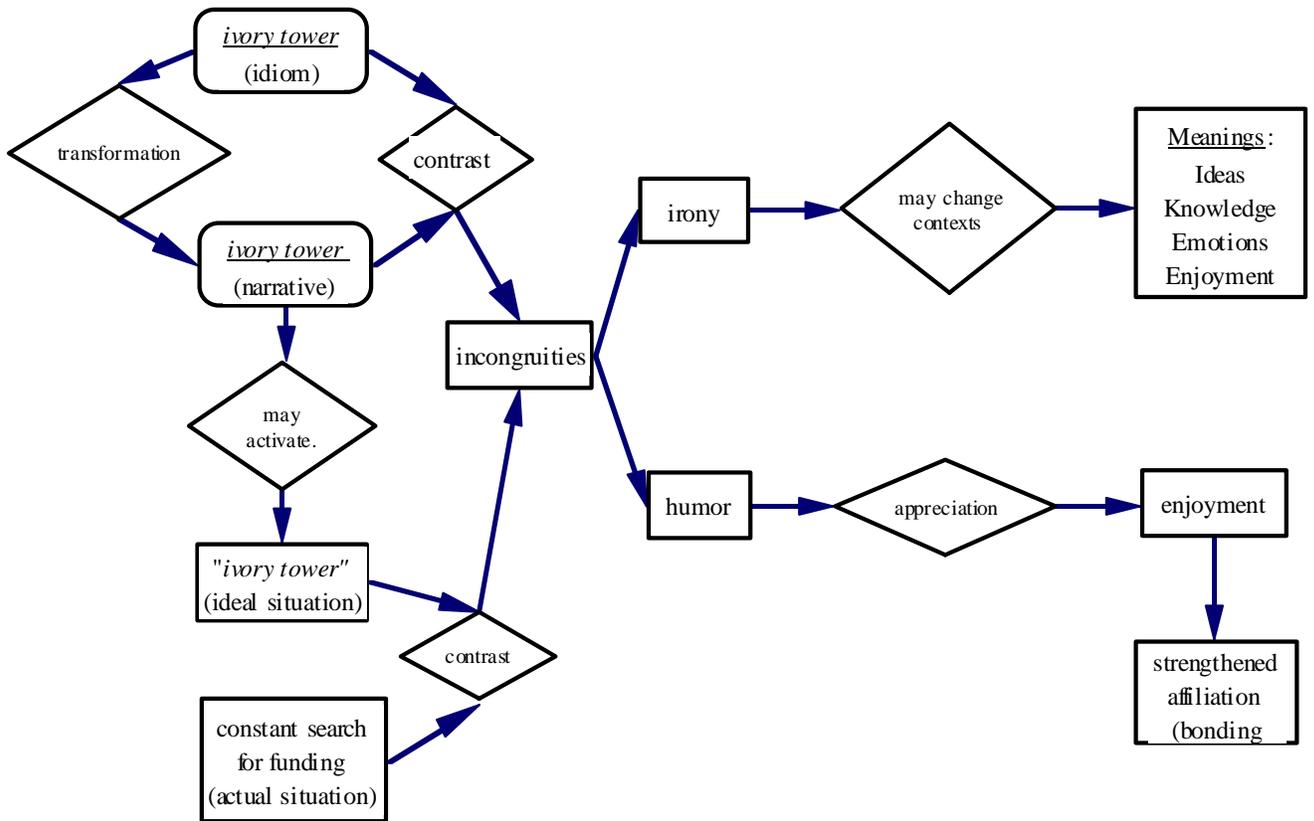
Figure 2 Metaphor transformed as a story

Figure 2 illustrates three of the five transformations. Each of these transformations potentially activated a new set of simulations and semantic links. These were likely to have become connected with the initial topic (their situation as research scientists in an endless pursuit of funding) and other active cognitive contexts in a way that the pre-existing discourse world, including the metaphor topic, *the ideal research situation*, was progressively changed and enriched through the addition of new semantic

links, new knowledge, and new perceptual simulations. At the same time, other cognitive contexts, including their relationship with each other and with the focus group facilitator and the nature of this conversation as part of a day-long conference on science communication, were also likely to have been affected by the activated perceptual simulations. The image of Jim was potentially attached to the simulations of exclusion and dreaming about a more or less miraculous “no-strings” grant. It is also likely that the participants’ knowledge of ways in which the metaphor, *ivory tower*, had been used in the past helped shape the process of activation and increased the richness of the final cognitive contexts, for example by activating links to the use of this and related phrases by anti-intellectuals as a way of denigrating the work of theoretical researchers.

#### FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Analyses that combine perceptual simulations with semantic links and with activation of peripherally relevant knowledge can also contribute to our understanding of how a creatively transformed metaphor can be used to generate irony and humor. As Figure 3 illustrates, the progressive transformation of the *ivory tower* idiom potentially activates not only incongruously contrasting knowledge but also incongruously contrasting perceptual simulations (Ritchie, 2009). In this instance, the incongruous images potentially interact with and reinforce the incongruous knowledge as well as the scientists’ underlying experience of contradictions between their role as scientists supposedly doing basic (theoretical) research in a government funded lab and their need to spend valuable time trying to communicate about their work to uncomprehending political leaders and other non-scientists in order to maintain their base of financial and political support (Ritchie & Schell, 2009).



**Figure 3 Transformations and contrasts in irony and humor**

**5. Example 2: Get out of jail free card.**

A discussion of a very different sort occurred among a group of four middle-class urban homeowners about the factors that contribute to a feeling of public safety (Ritchie, 2010c). The bulk of this conversation was devoted to identifying and strengthening the patterns of socializing and mutual watchfulness that contribute to the participants' sense of safety and security. However, about an hour into the conversation, in response to a prompt from the facilitator, the participants discussed their concerns about an on-going series of incidents in which unarmed citizens, often African-Americans or members of other ethnic minorities, have been fatally shot by city police officers during routine activities such as traffic stops.

One participant, Todd, acknowledged that he is not himself at risk of profiling, but asserted that *I definitely think it happens here.. and I.. my personal view is that they need to.. the police need to.. to kill fewer people during routine traffic stops*. Here the irony was accomplished through exaggeration, potentially implying that routine traffic stops frequently and casually lead to shootings. In response to another prompt from the facilitator, Todd ruminated about the excuse frequently given for incidents in which unarmed civilians are shot by police:

whenever I hear a an officer say ..it seems like the magic words.. like the get out of jail free card.. is.. ‘I felt.. that.. my life was in.. that I was being threatened or..’ like these <sup>^</sup>magical<sup>^</sup> phrase that police officers it’s like .. they’re <sup>^</sup>trained<sup>^</sup> that’s the <sup>^</sup>word<sup>^</sup> like if anything bad ever goes <sup>^</sup>down<sup>^</sup> say.. ‘I felt you know I felt that my life was in jeopardy.’

*Magic words* and *get out of jail free card* both have the potential to activate schemas of childhood fantasy and play, by implication re-interpreting the claim that a policeman’s life was in jeopardy as a fantasy and as a move in a childish game – hence as not to be taken seriously (see Figure 4).

Todd’s previous ironic suggestion that *the police need to.. to kill fewer people during routine traffic stops* had probably already established an ironic frame within the discourse world. His initial metaphor, *magic word*, potentially activates knowledge of stage magic and links to other associated words and phrases (e.g., ‘abracadabra’) as well as memories of childhood play and magic shows, both live and mediated; all of these potentially contribute to perceptual simulations of emotions associated with stage magic, including wonder mixed with cynical skepticism, which attach to the police officer in the discourse world. Todd’s second metaphor, *get out of jail free card*, refers to the popular board game, *Monopoly*™, in which *jail* represents a state of suspended participation, a

penalty that can be avoided by producing the named card. For those familiar with the game, this would activate associated knowledge of the game itself as well as simulations of the game board and the emotions associated with playing the game.

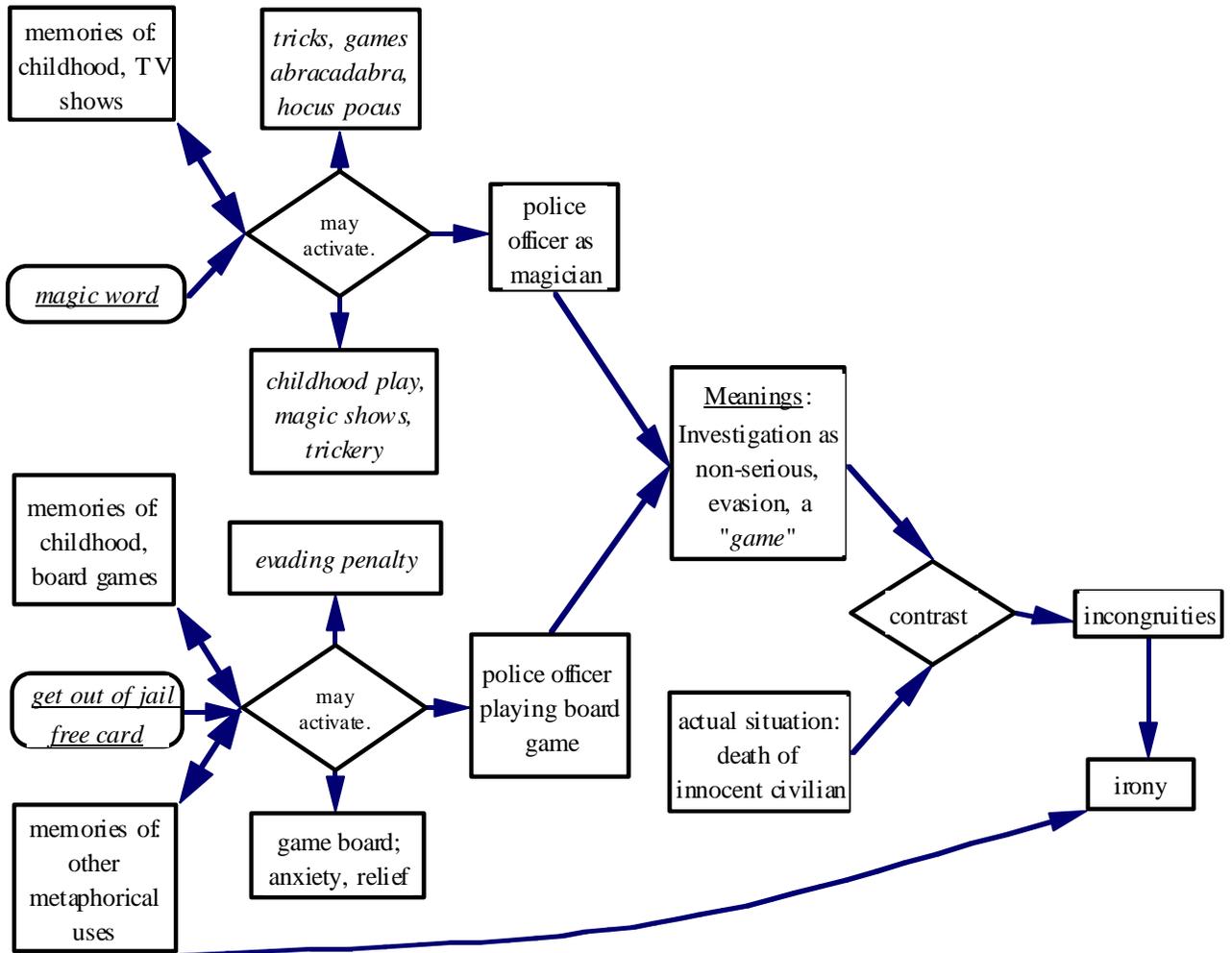


Figure 4 *get out of jail free card*<sup>3</sup>

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

*Get out of jail free card* is a fairly common idiomatic metaphor, used at least in the United States as a semantic unit to refer to any situation in which a person is able to evade ordinary penalties by producing evidence of some apparently irrelevant status or

accomplishment. Similarly, *magic word* is also commonly used as an idiomatic metaphor for an utterance that supposedly allows its speaker to accomplish some logically unrelated objective in an overtly nonsensical way. Memories of these previously-encountered idiomatic uses of the metaphors are likely also to have been at least weakly activated for the other participants, contributing to the portrayal, in the discourse world, of the police officers as non-serious, as *playing a game* and avoiding ordinary consequences for their actions.

The contrast between this discourse world situation and the real world situation produces the irony, which in turn contributes to Todd's portrayal of the police officers and their actions. At the same time, the sequence of idiomatic metaphors potentially activates common memories of childhood that may have strengthened the representation in the discourse world of the group as a social unit, and the presumption of Todd's metaphorical tone, that all participants are 'in the know' ('wolves' rather than 'sheep' to use Gibbs and Izett's (2005) terms) about the ironic juxtaposition may have further strengthened the shared representation of social unity.

### **6. Example 3: Contradictory metaphors and conflicting discourse worlds<sup>4</sup>.**

A third example comes from a public meeting. In Portland Oregon, on May 5, 2003, Kendra James, a young African-American woman, was a passenger in an automobile that was stopped by police officers and detained because she and one other passenger had outstanding warrants for arrest on drug charges. Although neither she nor any of the others in the auto were armed, Ms. James was shot and killed. The incident contributed to an on-going controversy over allegations of ethnic "profiling" and excessive use of force by the police. Community members, including Reverend W. G. Hardy (from whom we

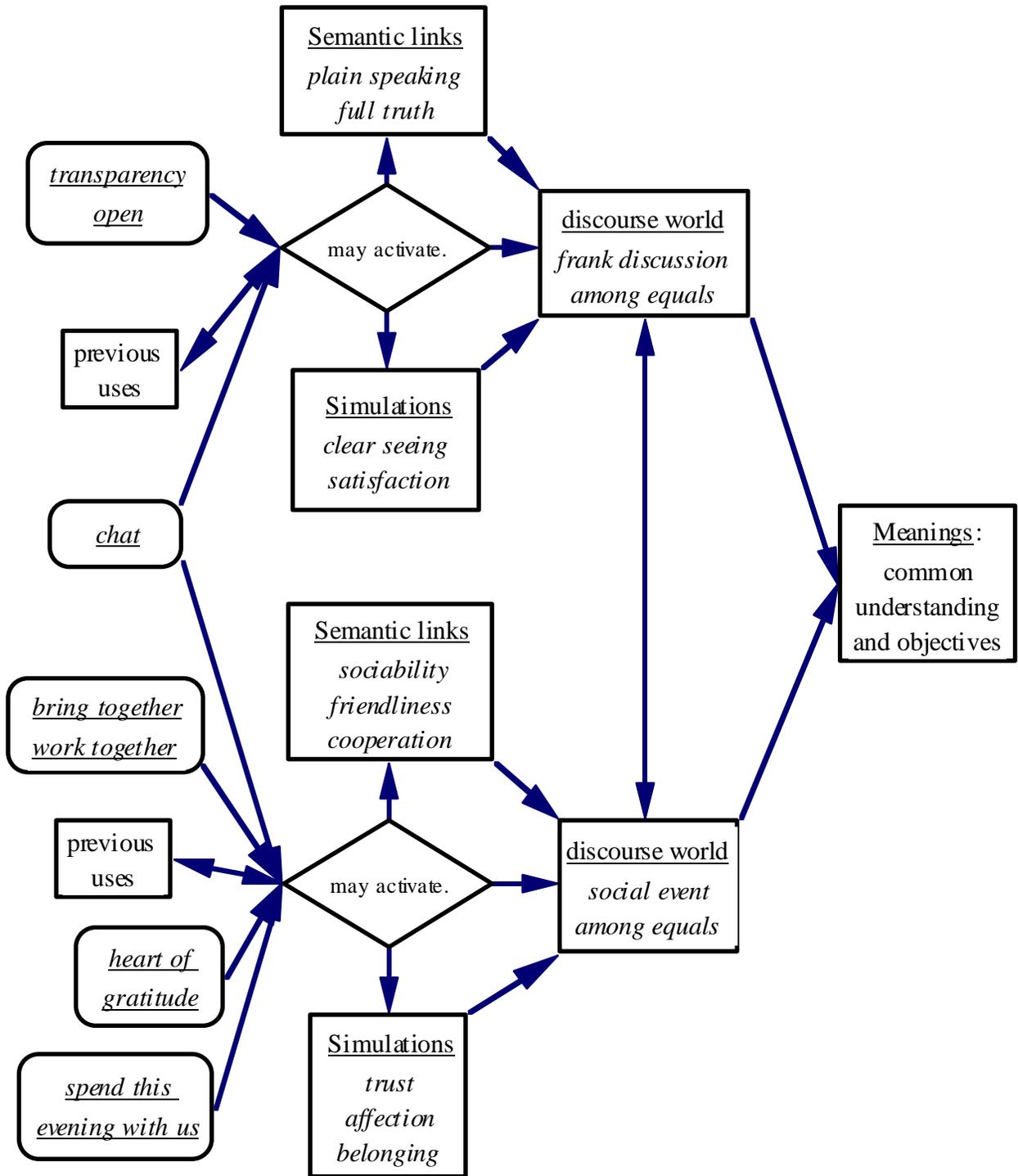
will hear shortly) and other representatives of the Albina Ministerial Alliance, a community group set up to investigate the incident, met with Mayor Vera Katz to request an open inquest into the shooting. Although she decided against the requested public inquest, Mayor Katz agreed to hold an informal meeting with concerned members of the community to discuss the case.

The meeting began with brief and informal introductory speeches by Mayor Katz, Police Chief Mark Kroeker, and District Attorney (D.A.) Mike Schunk<sup>5</sup>. Mayor Katz described how leaders of the African-American community had come to her to request a formal and open inquest into the shooting, but she had decided that an informal meeting between city and police officials and members of the community would be better. In her opening remarks, Mayor Katz promised *transparency* and hoped that everyone could *open up our minds and our hearts, and ... accept each other by communicating, by understanding, and by developing mutual trust between the police and the community*. Chief of Police Kroeker, following Mayor Katz, used similar metaphors. He described his *heart of gratitude* toward the audience, *who have come here tonight to spend this evening with us*, and followed the mayor's lead in referring to the meeting as *an example of community policing, a moment that brings us all together*.

District Attorney Schrunk spoke next. He begin in an informal, friendly tone, *let*

*me just chat with you just briefly*, but proceeded with a relatively short, factual, and

detailed account of his own actions, beginning with the immediate aftermath of the shooting and proceeding through the Grand Jury, which did not indict any of the officers



involved.

*Figure 5 heart of listening*

All three officials used language that potentially suggested actively reaching out, promising an open and responsive *chat*. Schrunk echoed several tropes from the mayor (*open / closed, movement, visual*), replaced *event* with *situation*, and used multiple tropes with the potential to reinforce *tragic*, for example in *one of the things that are going down that path of making something positive come out of a real tragic situation*.

## FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

All three officials used colloquial metaphors that seemed to promise the kind of frank discussion that a group of friends or neighbors might have over a pot of tea - Mayor Katz's promise *to bring some transparency to the closed grand jury process*, and *to open up our minds and our hearts*, D.A. Schrunk's *chat*, and Chief Kroecker's *heart of gratitude, spend this evening with us*, and *brings us all together*. As Figure 5 illustrates, these metaphors have the potential to activate simulations of cognitive and emotional states associated with truthful and frank conversation, including both direct and simulated experiences of emotions and cognitive states associated with experiences of satisfaction and social cohesion, trust, and friendship. These metaphors may also have activated semantic links to words like *friendship* and *sociability* which could potentially strengthen the activation of associated emotions and cognitive states. Thus, the metaphors used by the public officials seemed to imply a broad commonality between public officials and members of the community in how the shooting and the related events were understood, and seems to have denied any deep disagreement or conflict between the Police Bureau and the community. The public officials' introductory remarks seemed to imply that the meeting was part of an *open*, bi-directional conversation of the sort one might have with

neighbors or friends; i.e., these remarks seem to have obscured or denied the existence of differences in power and status. The public officials' remarks also seemed to imply that they, individually and as representatives of the city and the police force, were ready to seek, and had already to a great extent achieved, an empathetic understanding of the community members' experiences related to the shooting.

The opening remarks by the three public officials were followed by a few minutes of meta-talk in which the chair of the meeting and the professional facilitators hired by the city for the event laid out some ground rules for the meeting. Then Reverend Tate (the chair for the meeting) introduced Reverend Hardy, a member of the AMA (Albina<sup>6</sup> Ministerial Association) investigating committee, *to make a presentation*. It appears Hardy's primary role was to summarize the investigating committee's findings, but he cast much of his four minute speech as a response to the public officials' opening statements, and to what he perceived as an underlying pattern of official behavior.

Hardy changed the tone immediately by declaring *I am frustrated* and apologizing in advance for raising his voice and expressing his anger. After a few polite remarks, he continued, *But let me flip the coin. I am frustrated [...] I'm irritated with the double talk, the smoke and the mirrors, the perception that we are in agreement with the performance, the process, and the proceedings that have brought us here tonight.*

*Smoke and mirrors* is a common metaphor for deception or obfuscation; Hardy repeated the metaphor several times in his four minute presentation, and later speakers also repeated it. Here it seems to refer both to the investigation of Ms. James' death and the subsequent public statements of city officials and to the opening statements with which the three public officials began the meeting; both interpretations are supported by

Hardy's immediately following criticisms of the implication, in the opening statements by the mayor, D.A., and police chief, that community members were in harmony with the city and police administration and in agreement about how to proceed.

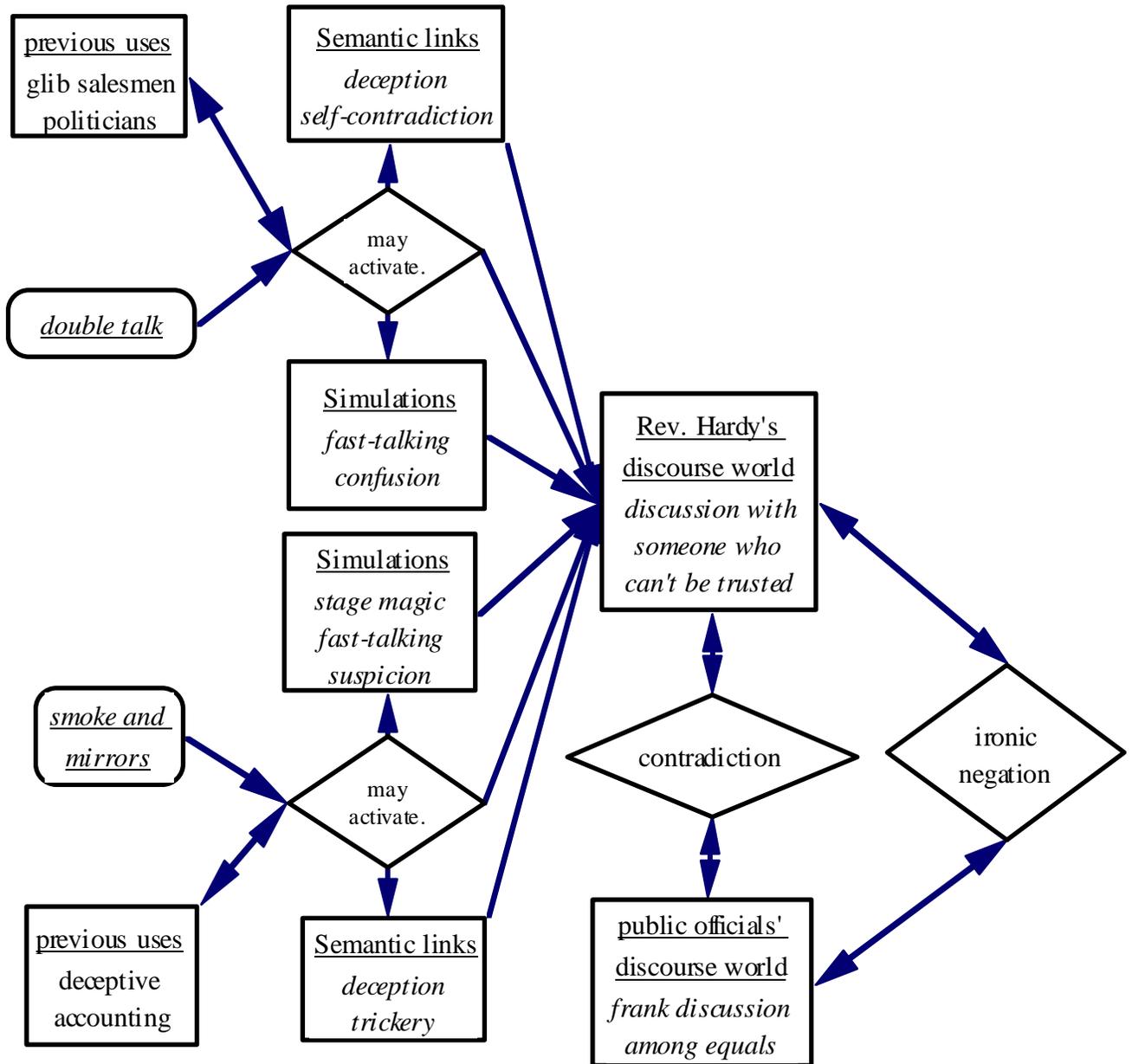


Figure 6 *Smoke and mirrors*

FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

As illustrated in Figure 6, the two metaphors, *smoke and mirrors* and *double-talk* draw on different underlying vehicles that potentially activate somewhat different perceptual simulations as well as different semantic links. Both metaphors are common colloquial idioms, but *smoke and mirrors* potentially works here as a double-layered metaphor. The original vehicle refers to the use, in fun houses, magic shows, and other stage shows, of puffs of smoke to hide what a performer is doing, and cleverly-located mirrors to create visual illusions. *Smoke and mirrors* is often used idiomatically to describe deceptive language used in accounting reports and other official reports to disguise underlying manipulations of the truth; Hardy's use here may have activated both a DECEPTIVE ACCOUNTING conceptual metaphor and the underlying STAGE MAGIC metaphor. The two metaphors together potentially contribute to a common discourse world in which the *chat* promised by the public officials is experienced in terms of a conversation with a crooked accountant. The contrast with the discourse world created by the opening statements of the three public officials (to which Hardy directly refers) has the potential to create a powerful ironic negation.

After acknowledging the District Attorney's overt cooperation with the ministerial investigating team, Hardy criticized the District Attorney for failing to pursue an indictment against the police officer who actually shot Ms. James, contrasting the District Attorney's neutral presentation of the facts of the James shooting with his aggressive presentation of the facts in other criminal investigations. He then transformed a familiar metaphor to comment on the failure to prosecute any officers in any of the recent excessive force cases: *Somebody said that 'justice is blind,' but we as Portland citizens, we need to know, or I need to know, that our elected and sworn*

*officials are not taking advantage of her or us just because she's blind*. Here he transformed the meaning of "*blind*" from its customary idiomatic association with disregarding irrelevant individual characteristics and invested it with a different but equally common idiomatic meaning of being oblivious to obvious faults or crimes.

#### FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE

As Figure 7 illustrates, the same underlying metaphor, *blind* potentially activates two very different sets of entailments (semantic links and perceptual simulations), depending on the immediate context. Hardy placed the metaphor into two very different contexts, potentially activating contrasting sets of entailments which he juxtaposed in a way that emphasized the bitter irony he has just described, in which apparent crimes are treated very differently when they are committed by a police officer than when they are committed by an ordinary citizen. This irony potentially connected with the ironic juxtaposition described in Figure 6 and discussed in the preceding, to characterize two contradictory discourse worlds, the discourse world of Hardy and the other members of the community who were present at the meeting (and signaled their agreement with him through loud cheers and approving back-channel comments) and the discourse of the public officials, who (Hardy seems to imply) treat justice as *blind* by *taking advantage of her* and who (as his preceding metaphors seem to imply) inaccurately represent the community as in agreement with their actions and their views of the Kendra James shooting.

In summary, the city officials' metaphors had the potential to activate simulations of a sympathetic social gathering, which apparently contradicted the experience of Hardy and other community members present at the meeting.

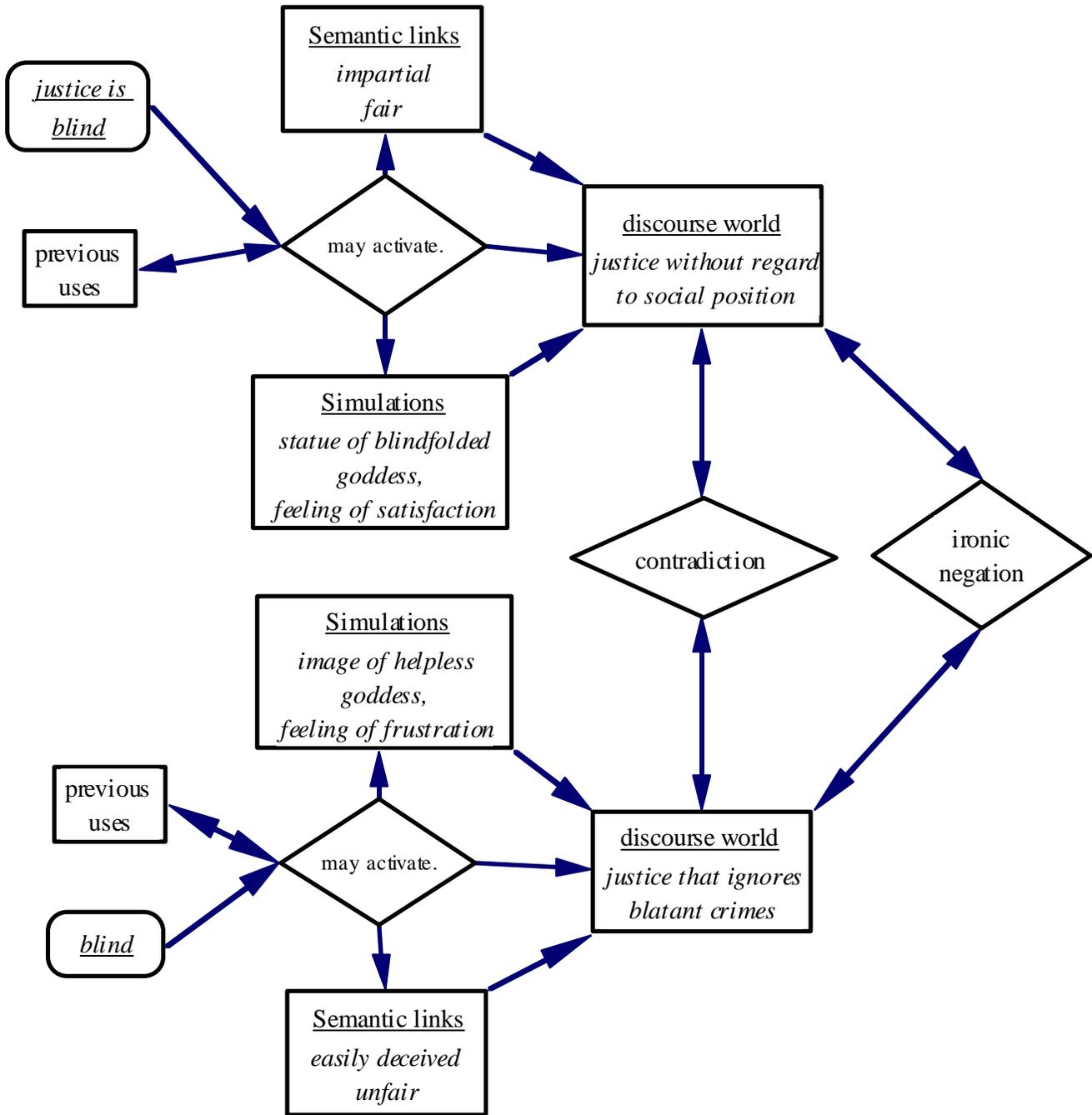


Figure 7 Justice is blind

Hardy's metaphors re-presented the meeting (and the underlying events surrounding Kendra James's death) in an oppositional way, potentially activated a very

different story simulation – stage magic, with connections to deceptive financial instruments, legal proceedings, etc., and a process in which the D.A. *took advantage* of Justice because she was *blind*, hence unable to *see* what they were doing. By considering the memories of previous circumstances in which these metaphors have been encountered and the perceptual simulations as well as the semantic links and general contextual knowledge potentially activated by these metaphors, we are better able to understand the complex effects both on the cognitive states of participants and on the interactive social context and the broader political context in which they occurred.<sup>7</sup>

## **7. Discussion.**

The primary purpose of this article is to present an approach to metaphor analysis that combines several separate but inter-related strands of theoretical and empirical investigation, and to show how the composite approach can be usefully applied to samples of actual discourse. The analysis leads to several conclusions, both regarding the overall theoretical and analytical model described in the introductory section and regarding the specific samples of discourse used as examples.

Interpretation must consider the metaphor vehicles and the range of semantic links and perceptual simulations they have the potential to activate, including simulations of cognitive states and emotions. Interpreters must also consider other contexts in which the same metaphors have been used, which may also be activated as part of the dynamically changing cognitive context. For example, *smoke and mirrors* potentially activates simulations related to both magic shows and other stage performances and to deceptive accounting practices and smooth-talking con artists. *Blind* potentially activates

simulations and semantic links both to justice meted out without regard for irrelevant individual characteristics and to a justice process that doesn't see obvious injustices.

Similar considerations apply to the speaker, but are if anything even more complicated for the speaker. Speakers do not always initially intend all of the entailments of the metaphors they use, but may sometimes subsequently recognize these additional, initially non-intended entailments, in which their own cognitive contexts may also be retroactively affected along with those of the listeners. This appears to be the case in some instances of co-narration, as for example in the *ivory tower* example discussed in the preceding.

Metaphor interpretations, including perceptual simulations as well as semantic connections and links to background knowledge, must be analyzed in the context of the audience's experience as well as the shared knowledge and the currently activated cognitive contexts. If the perceptual simulations activated by a metaphor or metaphorical story seem to contradict the experience of audience members the simulations are likely to be rejected, along with the metaphor or story itself. This rejection will often be expressed via contrasting metaphors and stories, as illustrated by Reverend Hardy's response to the public officials' opening statements in the Kendra James meeting. Hence it is quite important that metaphor analysis take account of the full context of the discourse event, including preceding utterances, as well as of the current and historical context in which it occurs.

This approach has considerable utility for unpacking theoretical relationships among metaphors and between metaphors and other forms of discourse such as stories and irony. As the brief analysis of the exchange between the city officials and Reverend

Hardy illustrates, it also has potential utility for assessing, understanding, and correcting patterns of mis-communication. Analysis of the metaphors and transformed metaphors used by members of both groups, along with the simulations and schemas they activate, has great potential to illuminate the rhetorical structure of deeply-entrenched patterns of mis-communication and to identify remedies that can be applied by either or both sides. Toward this end, these data are currently undergoing detailed analysis by the author, in collaboration with several colleagues, and will be separately reported in future work.

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

All diagrams are adapted from Ritchie (2010b); copyright is reserved by the author.

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APPENDIX A. TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS:

Transitional continuity

Completion of a thought	.
Continuing	,
question, uncertainty, or appeal	?
Speech overlap	[within square brackets]

Pauses

short pause	..
long pause	...

Emphasis

Terminal accent	!
segment of louder speech	^ ^

Vocal noises

Laughter	[ <i>laughter</i> ]
In-stream disfluencies and sounds	{transcribe phonetically, example: eh heh, umm}

Metaphors

marked by italics

NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> In this essay, metaphor vehicles are marked by underscoring. “Conceptual metaphors” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) are indicated by small capital letters and “systematic metaphors” (Cameron, 2007) are indicated by italicized small capital letters. Note that vehicle is itself a metaphor, expressing the idea that it carries meaning associated with the topic. The conceptual or systematic metaphor underlying both *vehicle* and *carry* can be identified as something like MEANINGS ARE OBJECTS and WORDS ARE CONTAINERS (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Research in Education and Educational Technology, Open University, Milton-Keynes, UK. <http://creet.open.ac.uk/projects/metaphor-analysis/procedure.cfm?subpage=discourse-data>. Most recently accessed Dec. 15, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Here and in the following, “may activate” refers to a hypothesized sequence of mental actions through which the vehicle may activate relevant schemas, memories, semantic links, and perceptual simulations and attach these to the topic.

<sup>4</sup> The examples in this section are taken from a Community Forum at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church Family Center in Portland, Oregon, held on July 1, 2003. The transcript was downloaded by Yves Labissiere, Associate Professor of Psychology and University Studies at Portland State University, in November, 2007 from the Portland Police Bureau web page, <http://www.portlandonline.com/police/>

<sup>5</sup> In the United States, the District Attorney (D.A.), an elected official of local government, is responsible for investigating and prosecuting all violations of state laws, including violations by members of the police force. Since the D.A. ordinarily relies on members of the police force in the performance of his own duties, allegations of crimes against members of the police force can place the D.A. in an extremely uncomfortable position.

<sup>6</sup> Albina is the community in which the shooting took place, and has historically been identified as primarily African-American.

<sup>7</sup> It would be difficult, but not necessarily impossible, to determine whether and to what extent any of these cognitive effects actually occur for a particular listener; it would be even more difficult, but still not necessarily impossible, to determine or at least estimate the extent to which they reflect processes in the mind of the speaker, Reverend Hardy.