

## Metaphorical Riddles as Conceptual Blends:

### A Look at the Riddle Solving Process

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Throughout the years, riddles have been an object of interest for both linguists and anthropologists. This unique speech genre is independent of the surrounding discourse in which it is presented, and follows specific rules which both riddler (i.e. the person presenting the riddle) and the riddlee (i.e. the person attempting to solve the riddle) can expect. Though there are many types of riddles, the type discussed in this paper is referred to as a 'true riddle' (Dienhart 1998) or a metaphorical riddle (Pepicello and Green 1984). The purpose of this paper is to analyze the process of solving a metaphorical riddle using the model presented by Turner and Fauconnier (1995) in their theory of conceptual blends.

This model of conceptual blends contains three constituent parts. First, there are at least two input spaces which contain separate frames. Aspects of these two frames will combine to contribute to the blend. The blended space is the result from the combination of these inputs. The final space, the generic space, extracts common underlying and abstract concepts shared by elements that exist within the input spaces.

This paper demonstrates that the clue given by the riddler can be determined to be the blended space. Because of the violation of certain maxims of Grice's (1975) cooperative principle, one of the input spaces is not made explicit in the clue. The riddlee can use concepts in the generic space, extracted from the given input(s) to fill in the components of the unknown input space and thus solve the riddle by applying potential frames until a 'best fit' is found.

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