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## Conceptual Blending and the Amalgamated Mind: A “Pivot” Toward Philosophy of Distributed Cognition

Conceptual blending has emerged as an influential framework for the study of meaning construction, especially among practitioners in cognitive linguistics and semiotics. Part of the appeal is its systematic treatment of diverse semiotic phenomena according to processes and principles that achieve internal consistency, such that one builds a plausible account of how words, images, sounds, words and images, words and images in specific places conspire to generate scenes and scenarios that constitute thinking, speaking, and action (cf. Fauconnier & Turner 2002 Coulson & Oakley 2000; Oakley 2012). These are broad, perhaps exuberant claims, but the point of this talk is not to defend CBT as a particular theory, for which there are ample arguments for and against. My intent is to “pivot” away from specific applications toward the philosophy of mind.

If one surveys the range of phenomena that count as “blending,” especially cases in which the non-neural body, artifacts and social institutions comprise the proper object of analysis (cf. Hutchins 2005; Oakley 2009) one sees ample reason to believe that the framework embraces distributed cognition, the notion that the most interesting questions about cognition and meaning lie at the intersection of brain, body, and world. Even so, there are many in the blending community who take a firmly “embedded” view of cognition, whereby all the interesting work occurs intra-cranially, even as they laud the fact that the principles of blending highlight its external vehicles as a proper scope of analysis.

Given that there are at least 4 different varieties of distributed cognition (Wheeler 2013; Rowlands 2010), each of which embrace potentially incommensurate claims about the nature of mindedness, it is time for a sustained interrogation of distributed cognition and conceptual blending. My aim is to show that familiar notions of embodiment and embedded cognition are insufficient, but that it is possible to specify an explicit philosophical position that does justice to range of phenomena captured by blending if we adopt a philosophical position of Rowlands’ (2010) *amalgamated* mind: minds are both embodied and extended. While most philosophy of mind arguments rely on simple case studies (e.g., seeing a “tomato”) this presentation grounds discussion in a fully-complex of the actor and director, Clint Eastwood, engaging in a fictive exchange with an absent Barack Obama, during the keynote address at the 2012 Republican National Convention.

### References

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