

David Haig

FOREWORD BY
DANIEL C. DENNETT

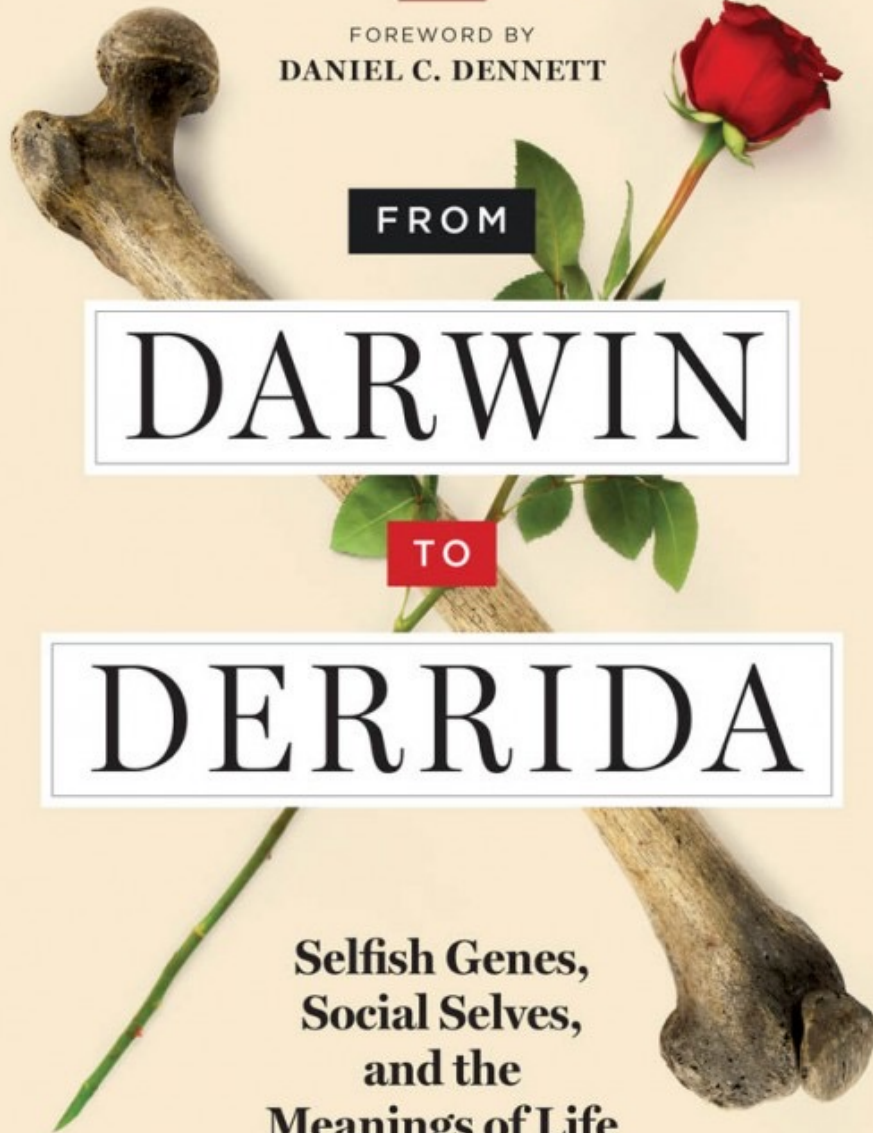
FROM

DARWIN

TO

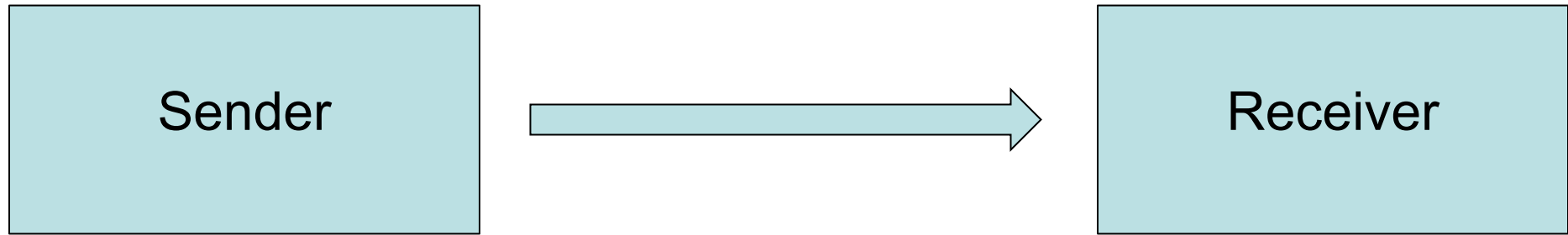
DERRIDA

**Selfish Genes,
Social Selves,
and the
Meanings of Life**



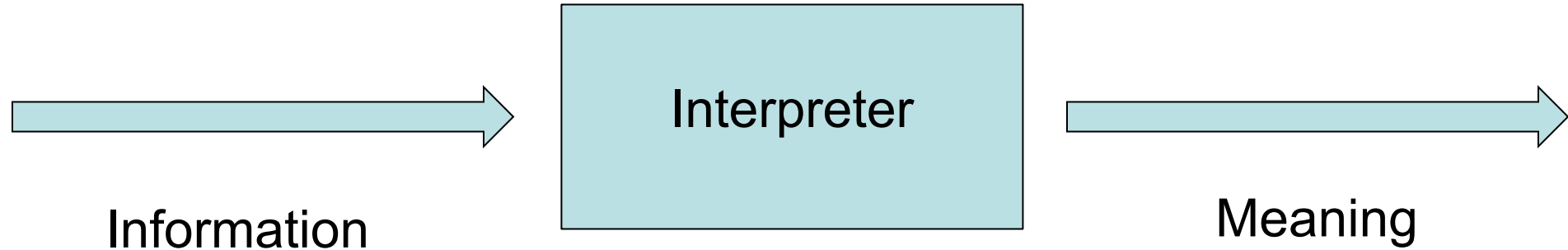
Reorganization of a linguistic space

What is the relation between
information and meaning?



The information (reduction of uncertainty) of receiving a particular message is measured by the number of other messages it could have been

Interpretation is the *use* of information in choice



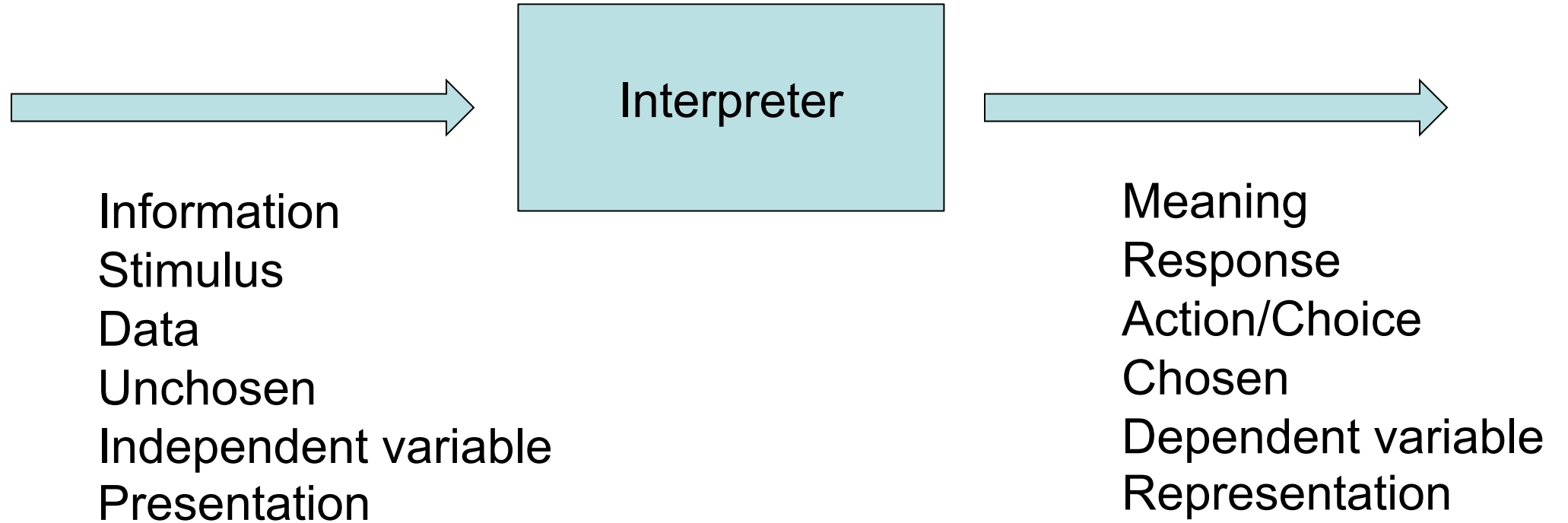
An interpreter couples an *uncertainty* about the state of the world
with an *indecision* about how to act in the world

Uncertainty is dispelled by observation of the world (information)

Indecision is dispelled by a choice of action in the world (meaning)

The choice of action is the meaning *of* the information *for* the interpreter

The intentional coupling of uncertainty and indecision



An interpretation (meaning) is a thing in the world (a memory, percept, action, action potential, speech, ...)

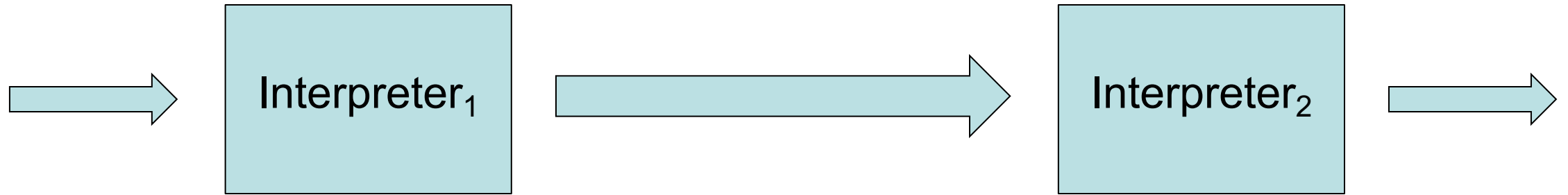
The same information can 'mean'
different things to different interpreters

One does not need to decide what
is the 'true' or 'real' meaning

The relation between information and meaning is determined by the evolved or designed mechanisms of interpreters

A text is an interpretation of an interpreter
(sender) intended to be used as information
by another interpreter (receiver)

A 'text' is an interpretation intended to be interpreted



Information *presented* to interpreter₁ is *represented* to interpreter₂

A text is a meaning *of* interpreter₁ and information *for* interpreter₂

A representation is superior to the original presentation if it has 'value added' (or the interpreter does not have access to the original presentation).

‘Value added’ includes simplification (elimination of irrelevant details) and integration with other information.

Complex interpreters (with more degrees of freedom) are made up of simpler interpreters (with fewer degrees of freedom)

Lower-level interpreters compose texts
(representations of their inputs) to be passed
on to higher-level interpreters

