**A DIGITAL MIND, by St. Pinker**

Why does human mind treat /classify regular and irregular verb forms differently (even when of the same number of syllables)?

Why does regular pattern make itself more readily available to our memory?

Why does access to memory (of e.g. irregular verbs) often fail and retrieval is difficult?

PINKER: **Regular inflection is computed by a mental operation that does not need access to the contents of memory**

RULES derive their power from the very nature of child’s mind and the way children learn them by deducing and computing rather than memorizing

Regular and irregular forms reveal mental mechanisms behind 2 brain/language systems:

1. **Memory system** stores and retrieves (even if what’s memorized is arbitrary such as the matching of meanings to forms to get words)
2. **Computation system** generates grammatical combinations that are infinite& creative but based in rules that are finite

we construct MENTAL CATEGORIES out of words stored in our mind

we store DEFINITIONS of members that fit into a certain category (what makes a turtle that crawls a tree fit into the category TURTLE just like a turtle that swims?!)

that are based on FAMILY RESSEMBLANCE and PROTOTYPE

but that have fuzzy boundaries sometimes

**Classical categories** (such as of grammar) are by-products of the **rules in the mind**:

the rules allow us to predict how things in the world work;

people in all cultures transcend the experience of concrete events to ferret out laws and recombine them in mind to manage their surroundings;

because our mind is, in part, DIGITAL;

and using it can generate new mental products.

This capacity depends on abstract combinatorial reasoning.

**Words and rules give rise to the expressive power of language that’s related to the creative power of thought.**