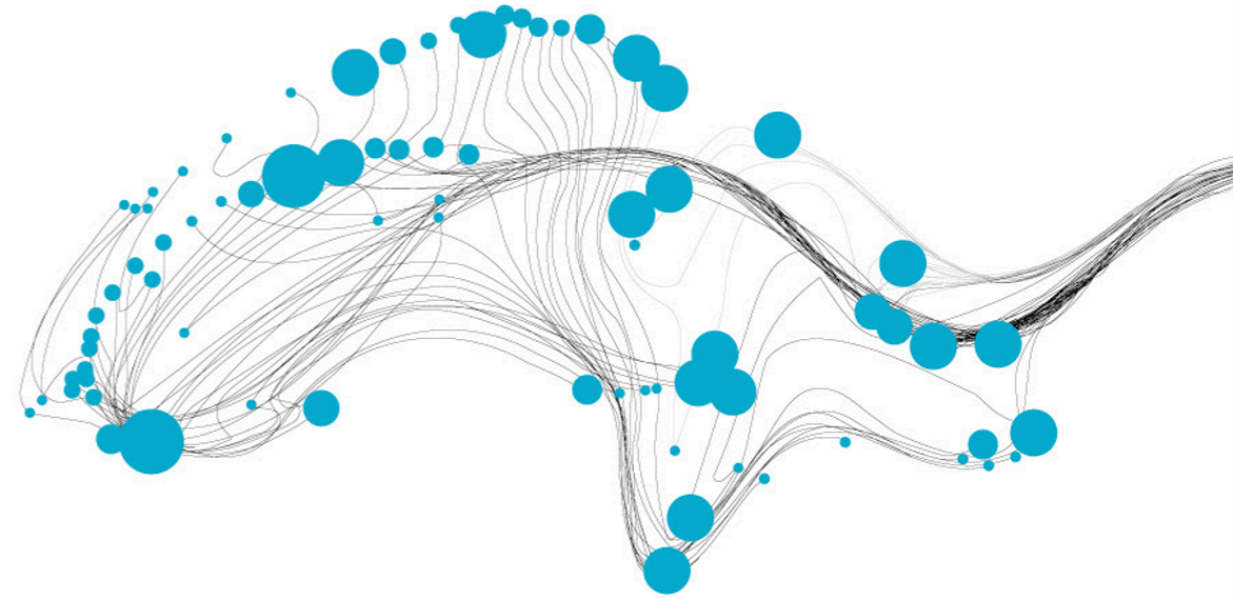


A Meaningful Road to Explanation



CAiSE 2023
Zaragoza, Spain

Giancarlo Guizzardi
Semantics,
Cybersecurity
& Services

UNIVERSITEIT
TWENTE.



meaning

1 of 2

noun

mean·ing

'mē-niŋ



[Synonyms of meaning >](#)

1 a : the thing one intends to convey especially by language

| Do not mistake my *meaning*.

b : the thing that is conveyed especially by language

| Many words have more than one *meaning*.

2 : significant quality

especially : implication of a hidden or special significance

| a glance full of *meaning*

meaning

1 of 2

noun

mean·ing

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[Synonyms of meaning >](#)

Semantics

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meaning

1 of 2

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Goal-Based

[Synonyms of *meaning*](#) >

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Conceptual Modelling I

[Adding Agent-Oriented Concepts Derived from Gaia to Agent OPEN](#)

[PDF](#) ↓

Brian Henderson-Sellers, John Debenham, Q. -N. N. Tran
Pages 98-111

[An Ontologically Well-Founded Profile for UML Conceptual Models](#)

[PDF](#) ↓

[Giancarlo Guizzardi](#), Gerd Wagner, [Nicola Guarino](#), Marten van Sinderen
Pages 112-126

[Measuring Expressiveness in Conceptual Modeling](#)

[PDF](#) ↓

Susanne Patig
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Enterprise Modelling II

[Goal-Driven Analysis of Process Model Validity](#)

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Pnina Soffer, Yair Wand

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Pages 536-549

[Interactive Models for Supporting Networked Organisations](#)

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John Krogstie, Håvard D. Jørgensen

Pages 550-563

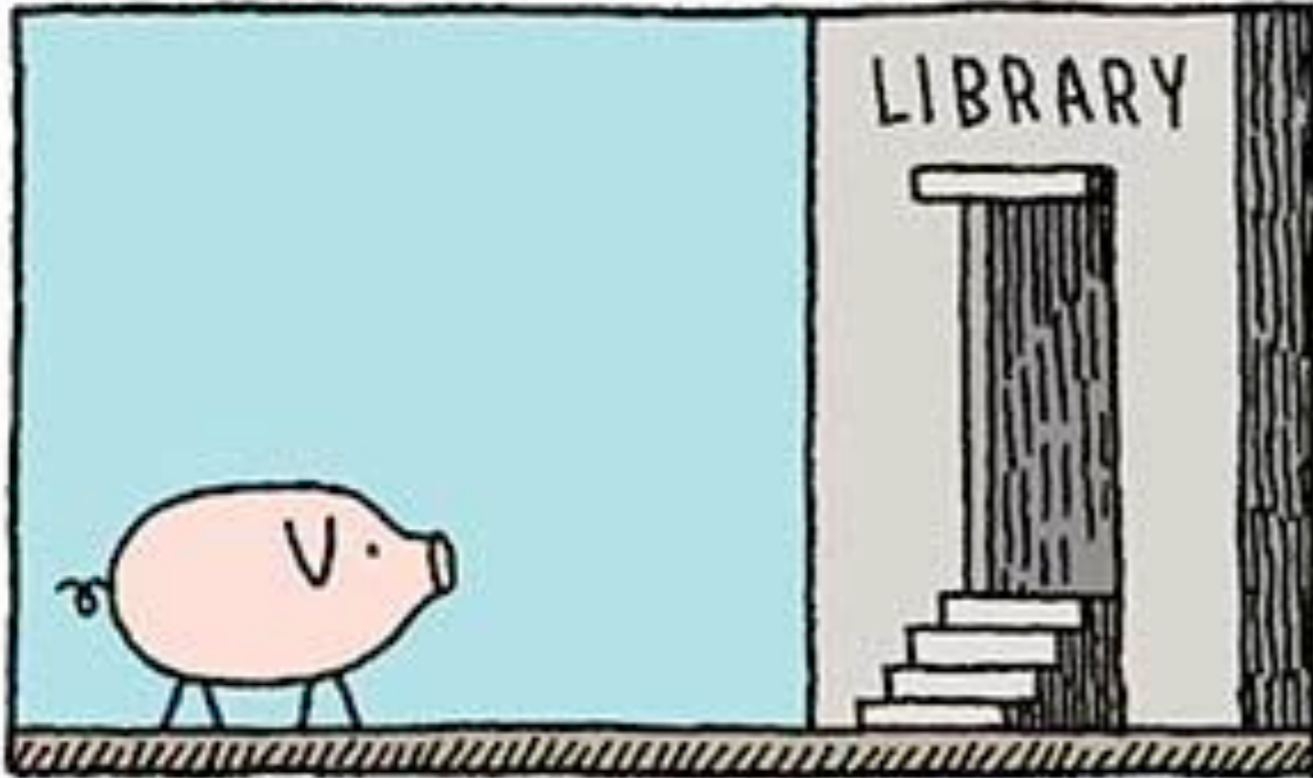
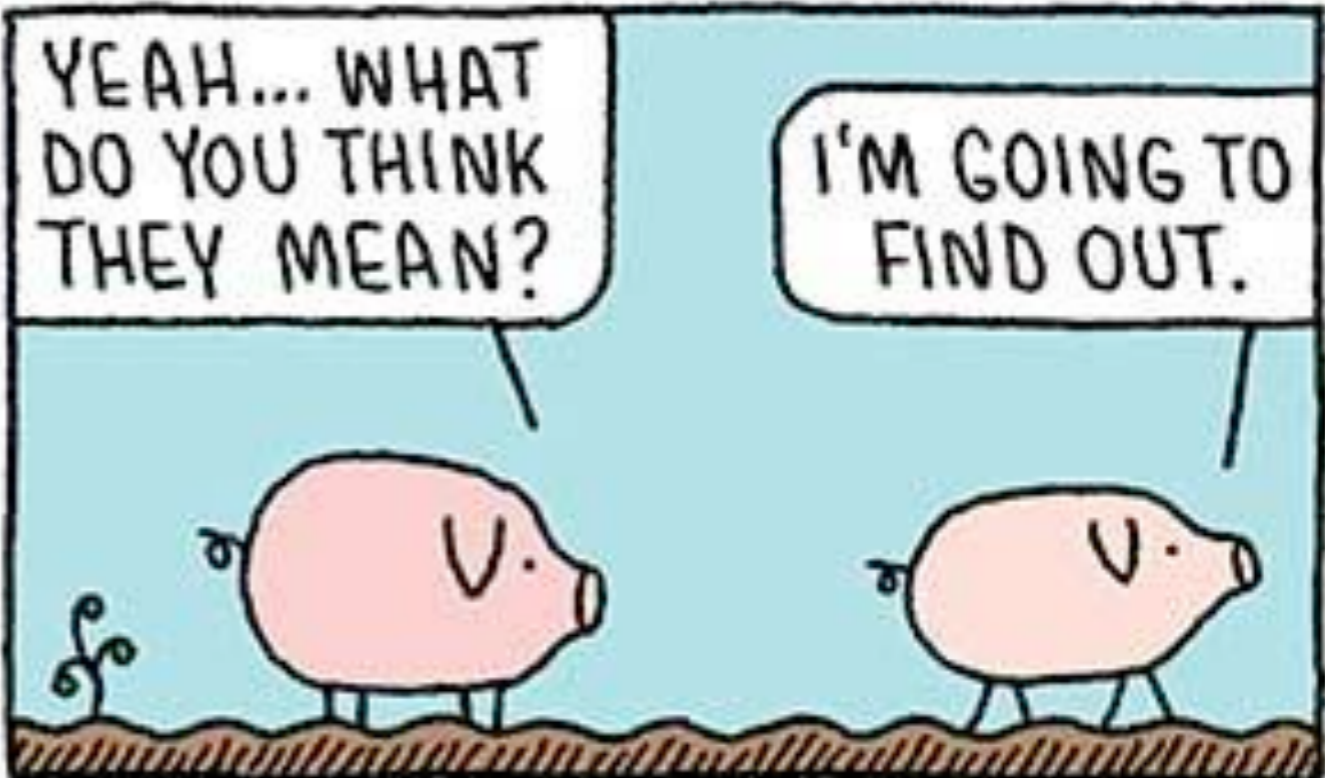
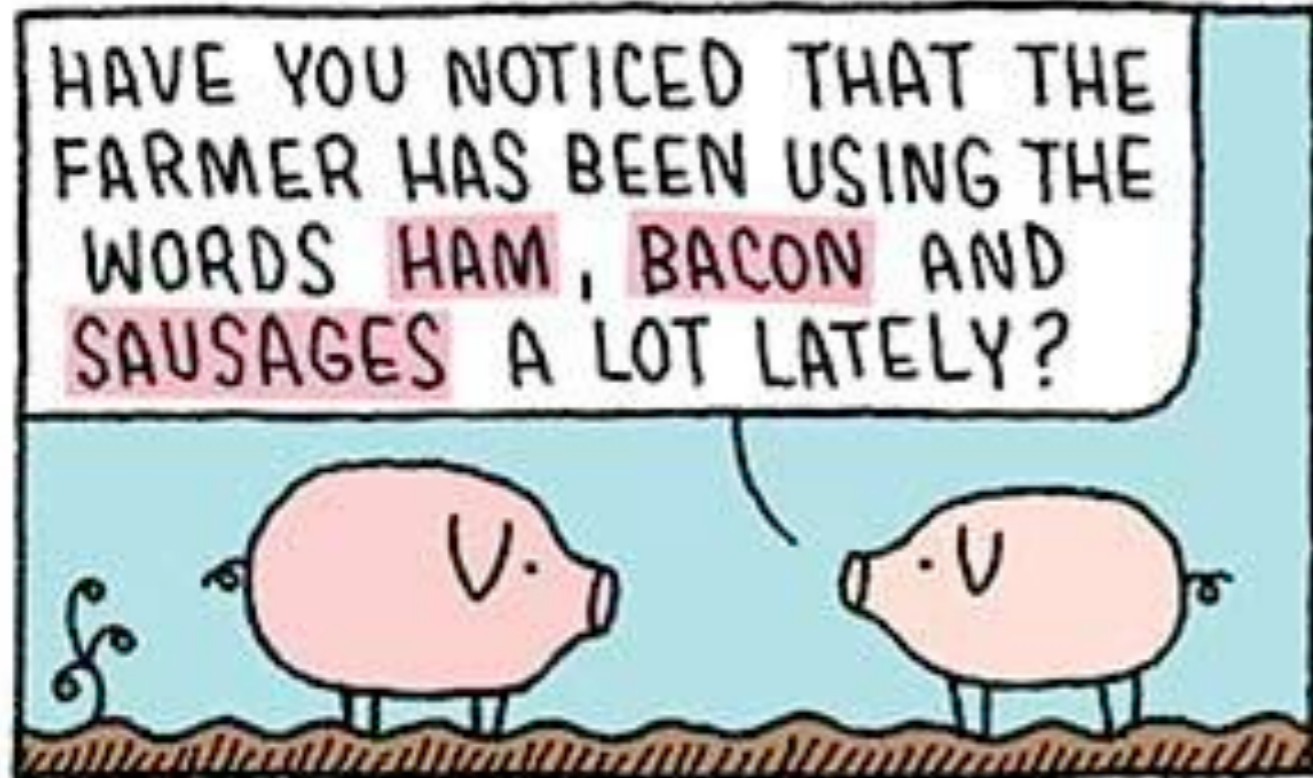
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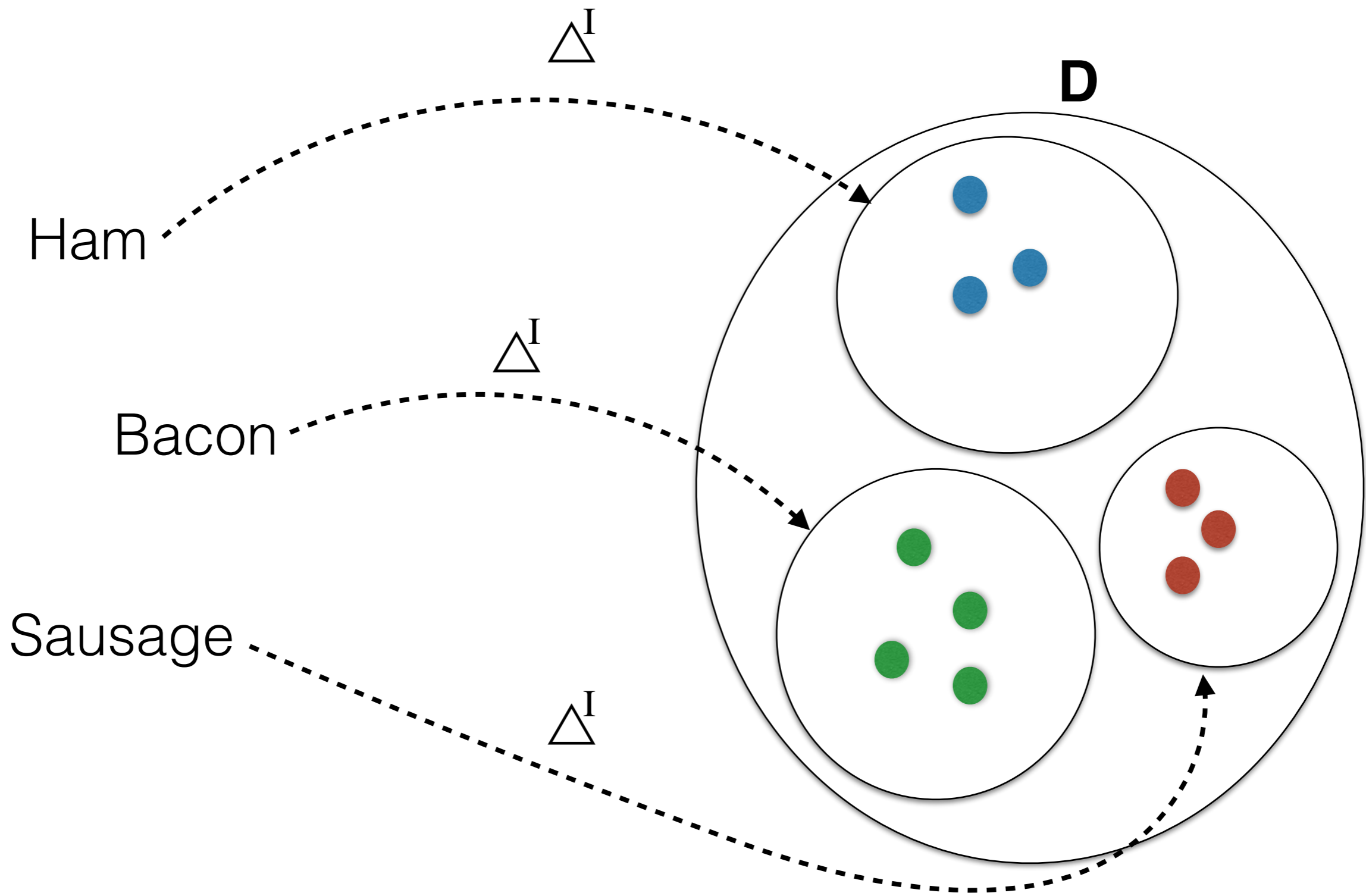
Semantics, $\binom{0}{0}$ ntology and **Explanation**

Semantics, Ontology and Explanation

Giancarlo Guizzardi, [Nicola Guarino](#)

The terms 'semantics' and 'ontology' are increasingly appearing together with 'explanation', not only in the scientific literature, but also in other domains. However, all of these terms are also being significantly overloaded. In this paper, we discuss their strong relation under particular interpretations. We introduce a notion of explanation termed ontological unpacking, which aims at explaining symbolic domain descriptions (conceptual models, knowledge specifications) by revealing their ontological commitment in terms of their assumed truthmakers, i.e., the entities in one's ontology that make the descriptions true. To illustrate this idea, we employ an ontological theory of relations to explain (by revealing the hidden semantics of) a very simple model encoded in the standard modeling language UML. We also discuss the essential role played by ontology-driven conceptual models (resulting from modeling processes) in properly supporting semantic interoperability tasks. Finally, we discuss the relation between ontological unpacking and other concepts in philosophy and science, as well as in the area of Artificial Intelligence.





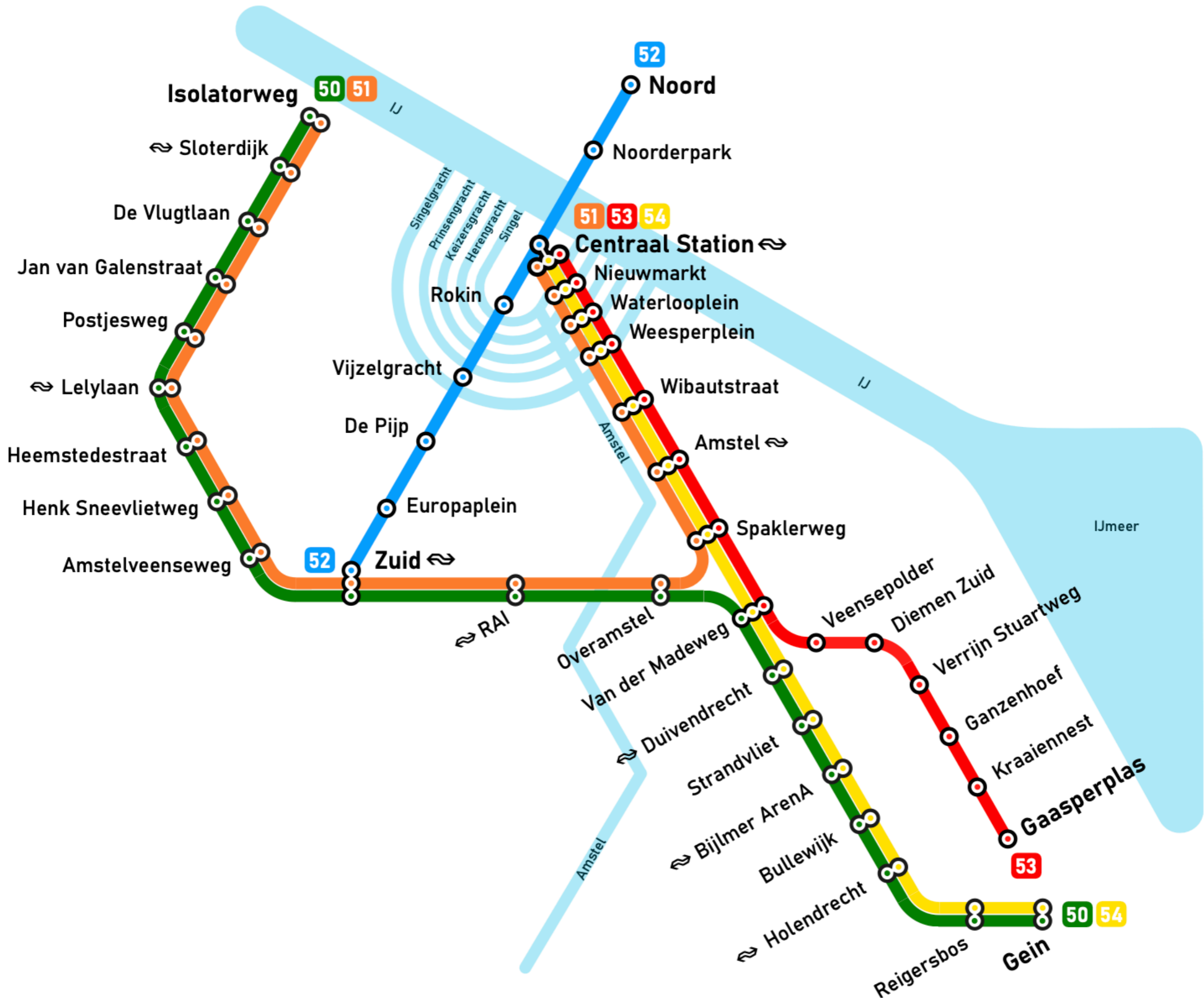
Formal Semantics

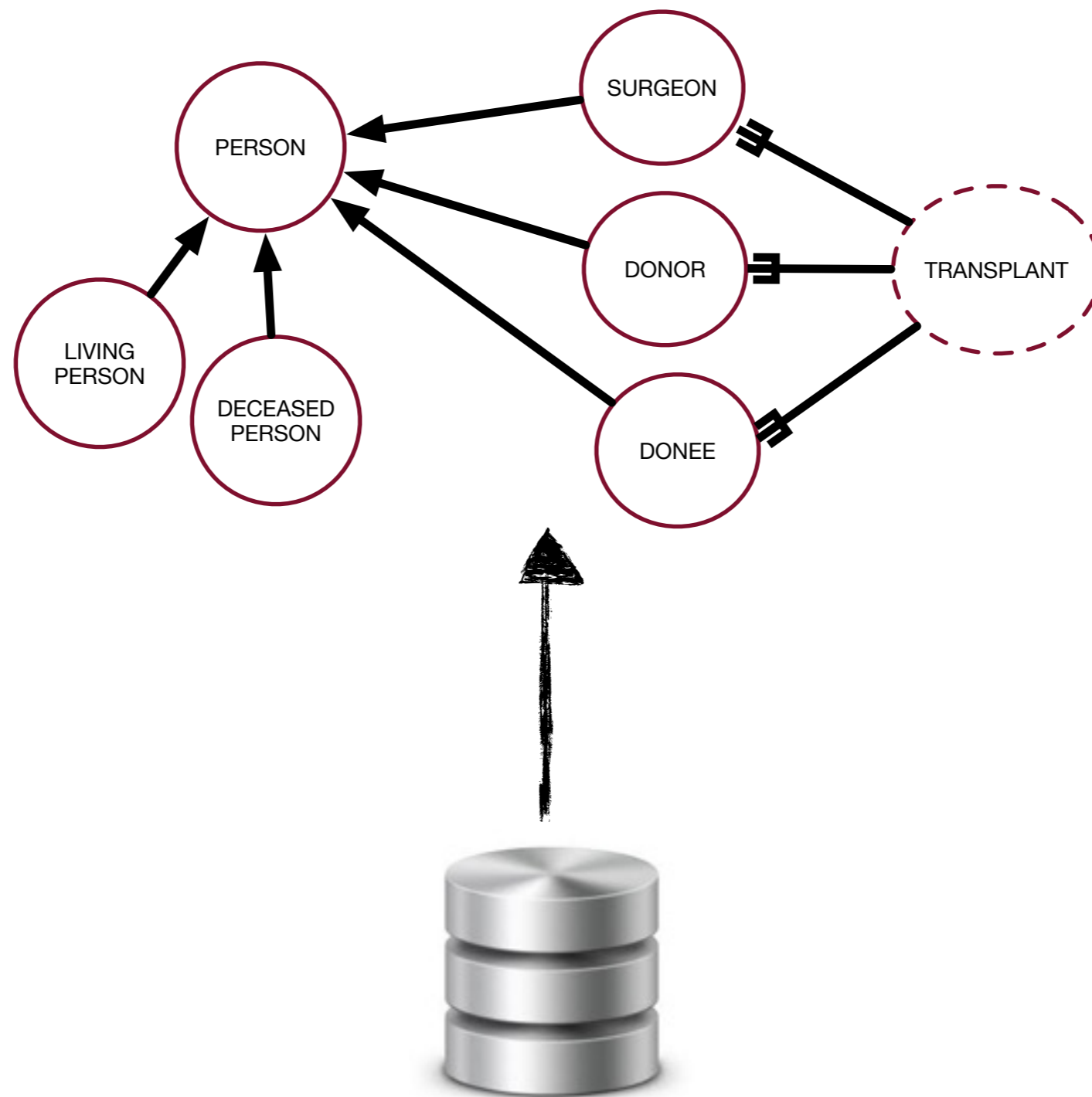
X

Real-World

(or **Ontological**)

Semantics





Another look at data

by **GEORGE H. MEALY**
Computer Consultant
Scituate, Massachusetts

INTRODUCTION

particular ontology, we can avoid a quarrel by adopt-

*“data are fragments of a **theory of the real world**, and data processing juggles **representations of these fragments of theory...**”*

them in a somewhat new form may prove to be at least suggestive.

To begin on a philosophical plane, let us note that we usually behave as if there were three realms of interest in data processing: the real world itself, ideas about it existing in the minds of men, and symbols on paper or some other storage medium. The lat-

Toward a theory of data

Relations

To fix our ideas, consider the following example of genealogical data, taken from Reference 2:

Another look at data

by GEORGE H. MEALY
Computer Consultant
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INTRODUCTION

particular ontology, we can avoid a quarrel by adopt-

*“data are fragments of a theory of the real world, and data processing juggles representations of these fragments of theory... **The issue is ontology, or the question of what exists.**”*

them in a somewhat new form may prove to be at least suggestive.

To begin on a philosophical plane, let us note that we usually behave as if there were three realms of interest in data processing: the real world itself, ideas about it existing in the minds of men, and symbols on paper or some other storage medium. The lat-

Toward a theory of data

Relations

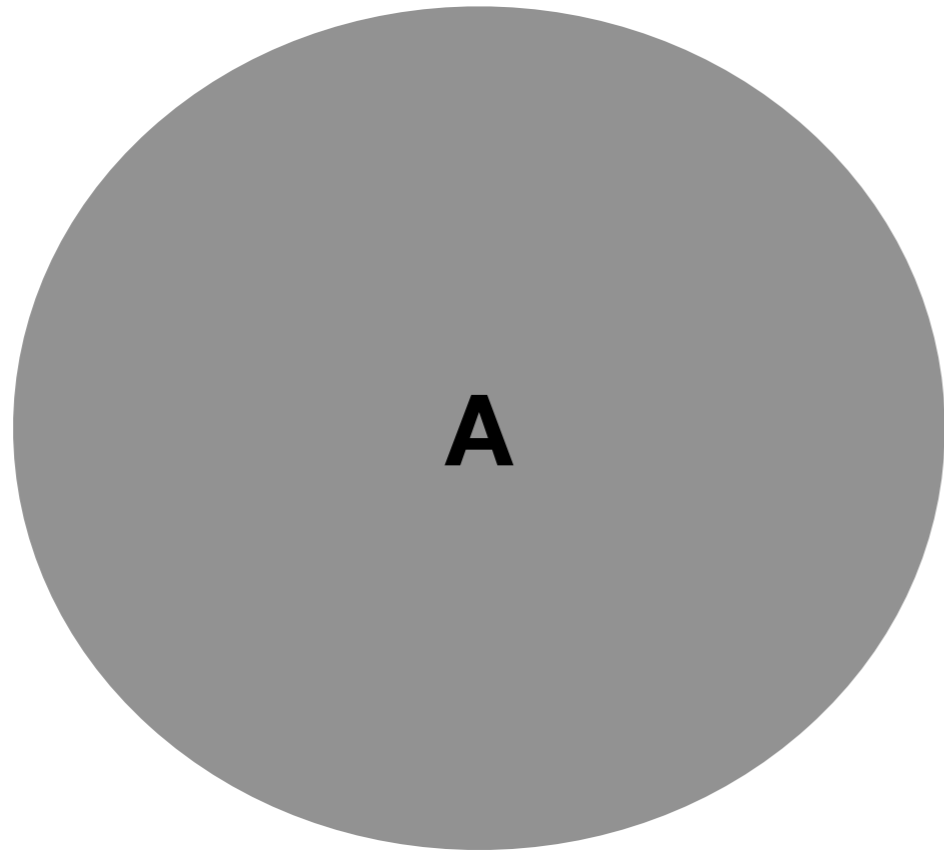
To fix our ideas, consider the following example of genealogical data, taken from Reference 2:

ontology \approx

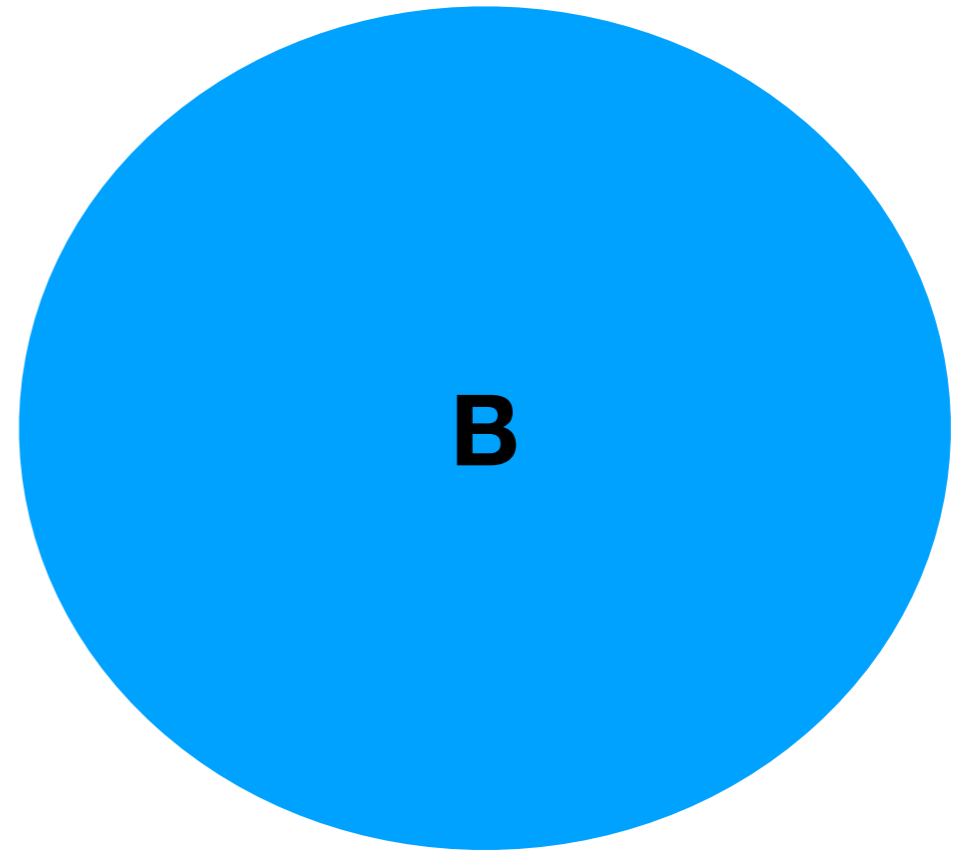
A theory about the kinds of entities and their ties that are assumed to exist by a given description of reality

ontology \approx

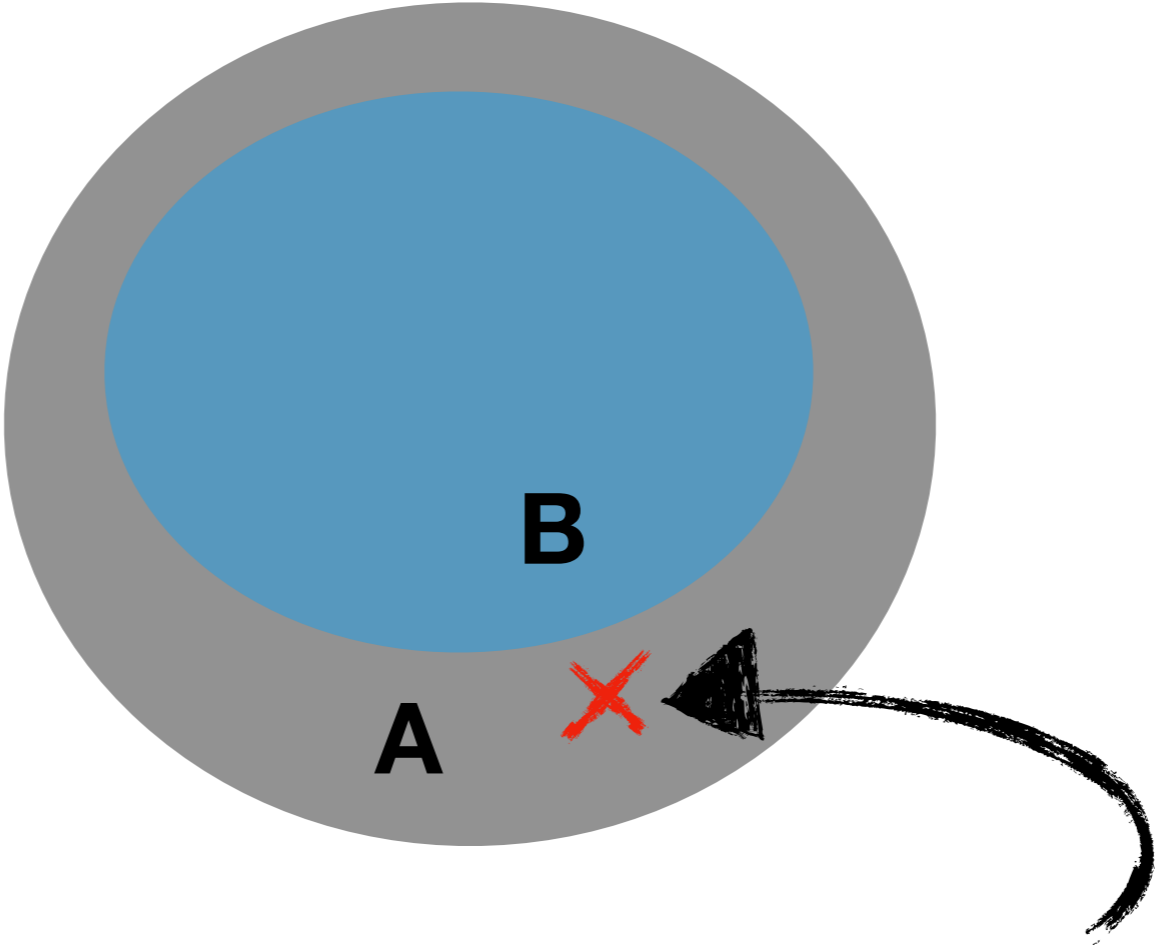
~~A theory about the kinds of entities and their ties that are assumed to exist by a given description of reality~~



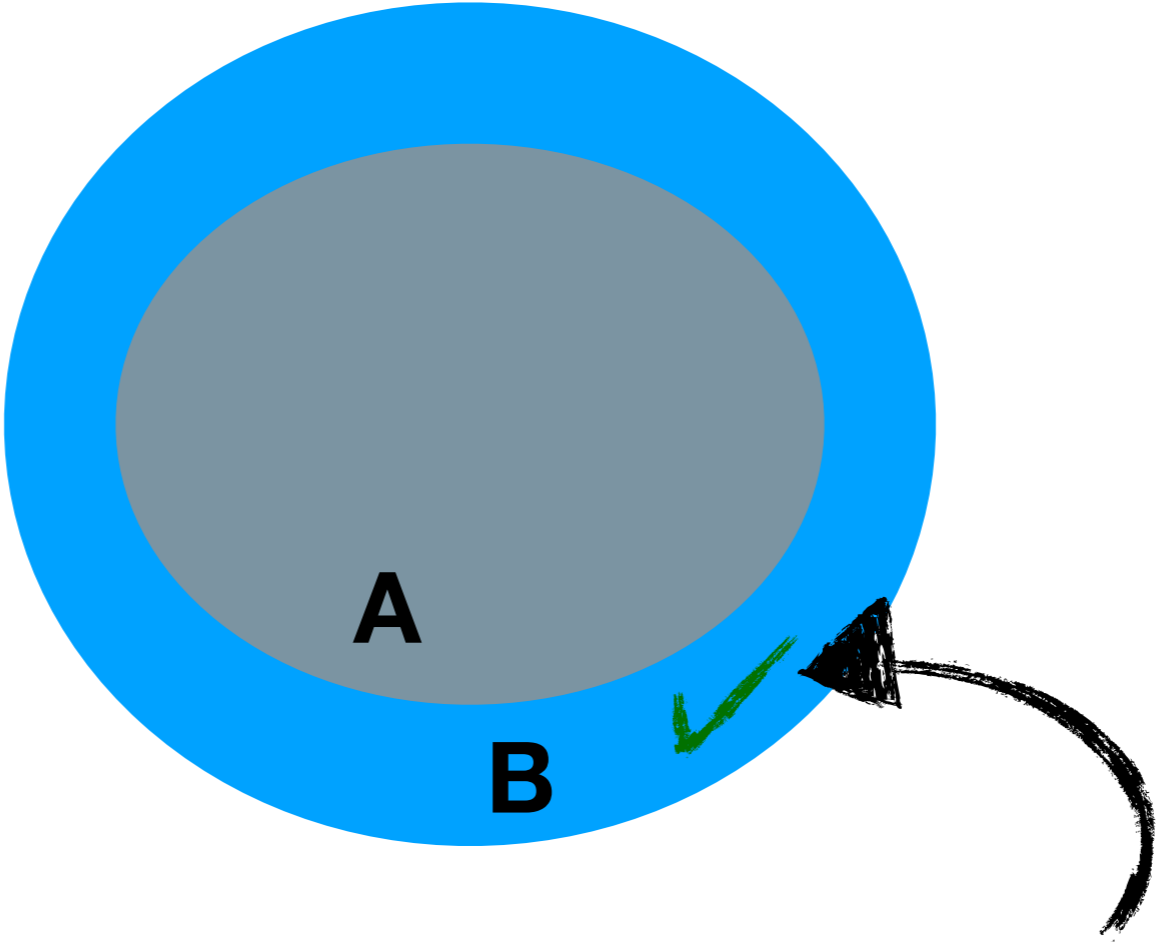
**Possible
Interpretations
of a
Model**



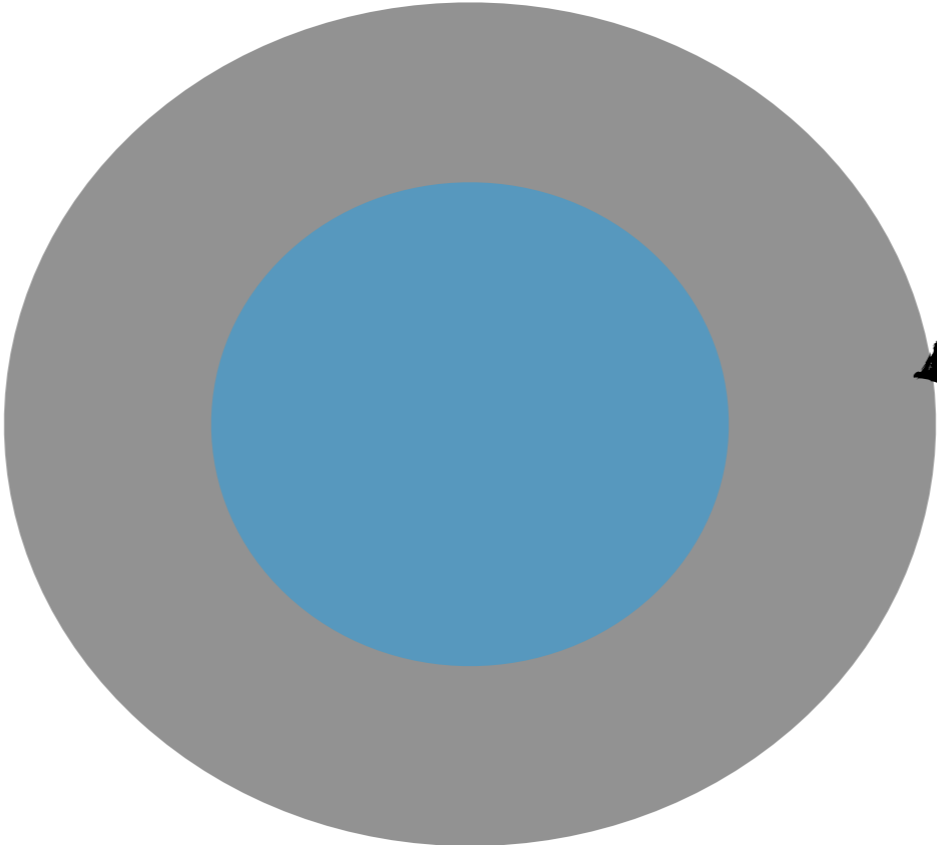
**Intended
Interpretations
of that
Model**



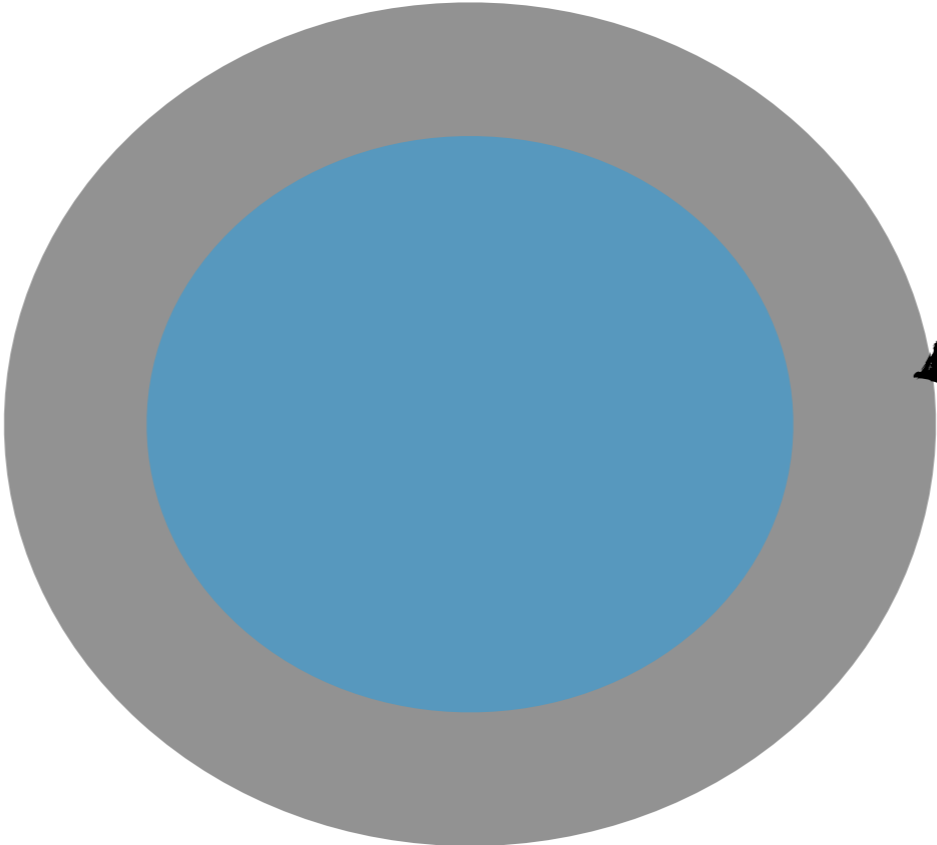
**Under-constrained
Model**



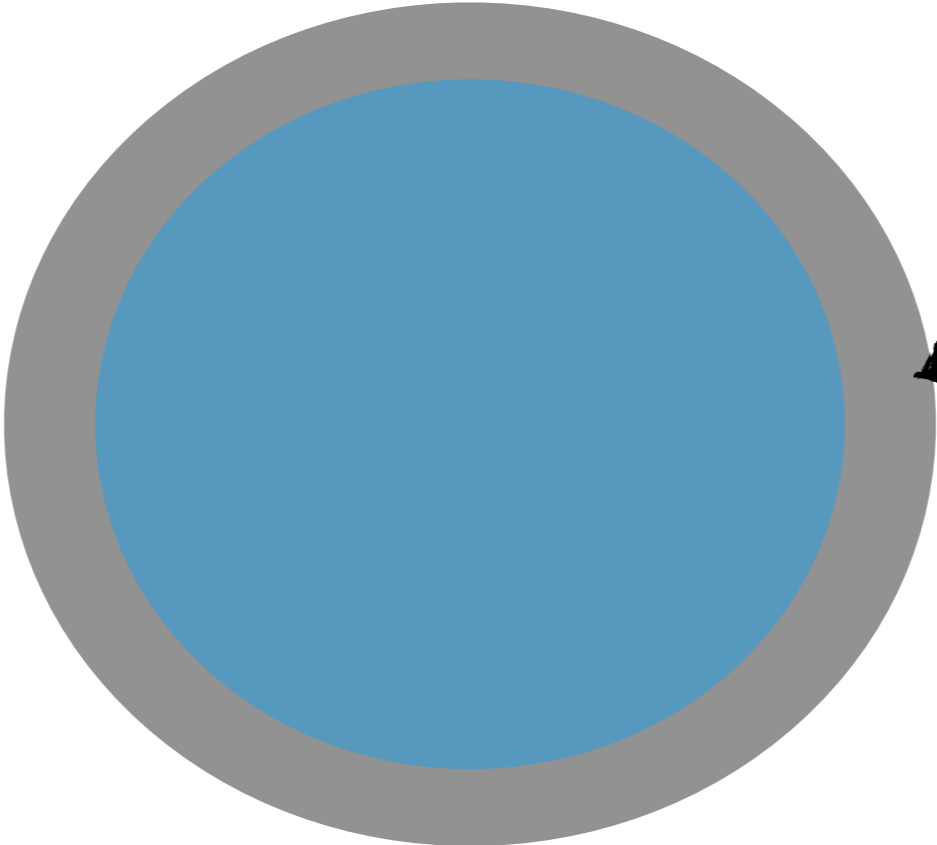
**Over-constrained
Model**



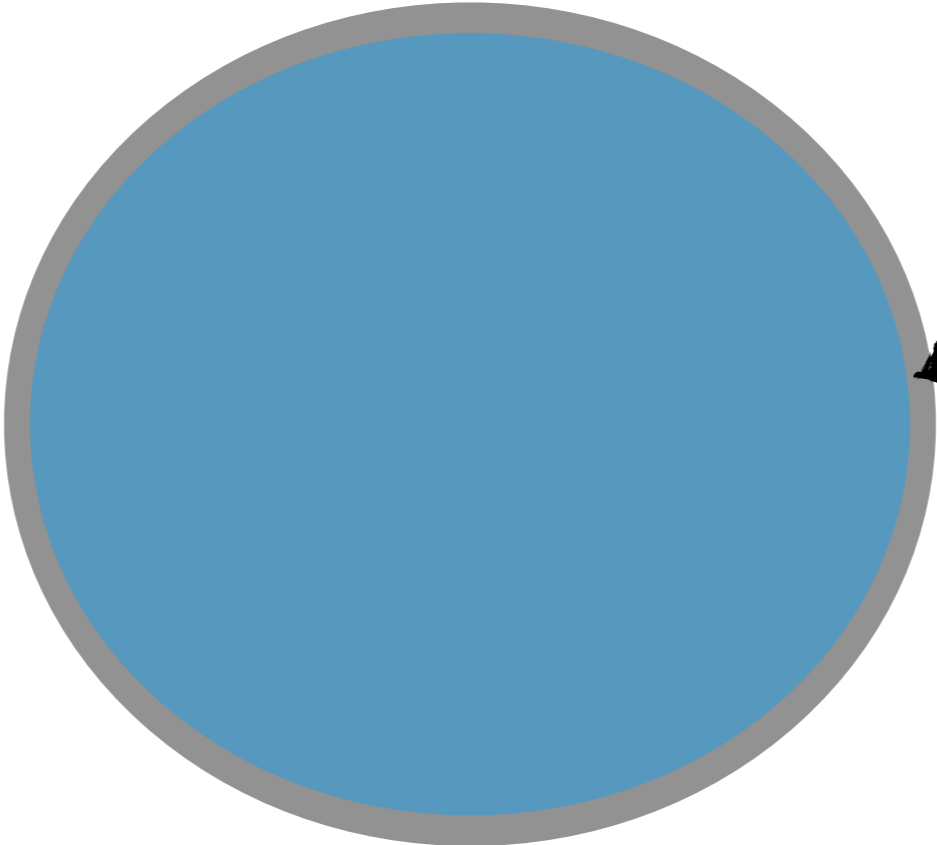
Constraints



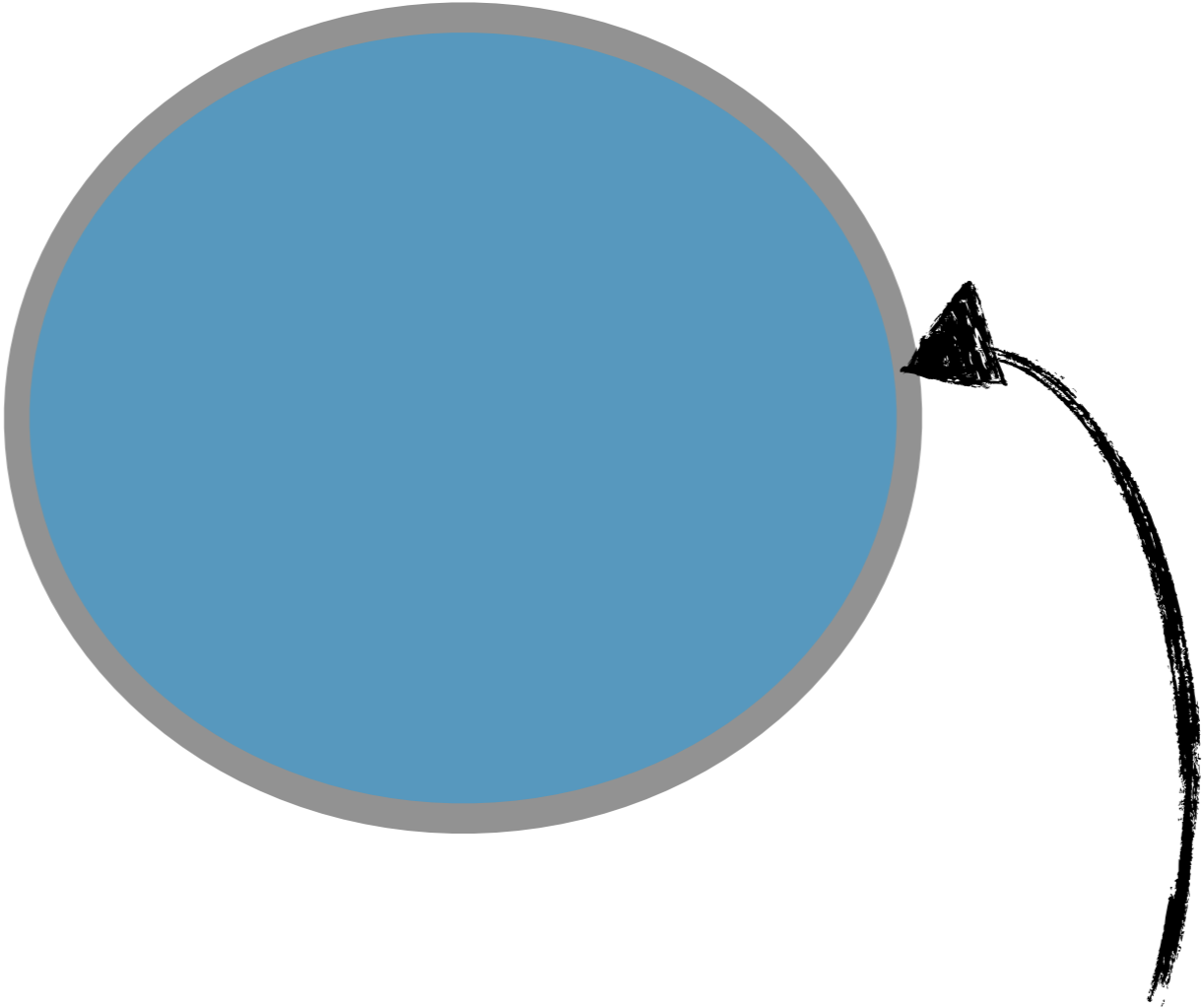
Constraints



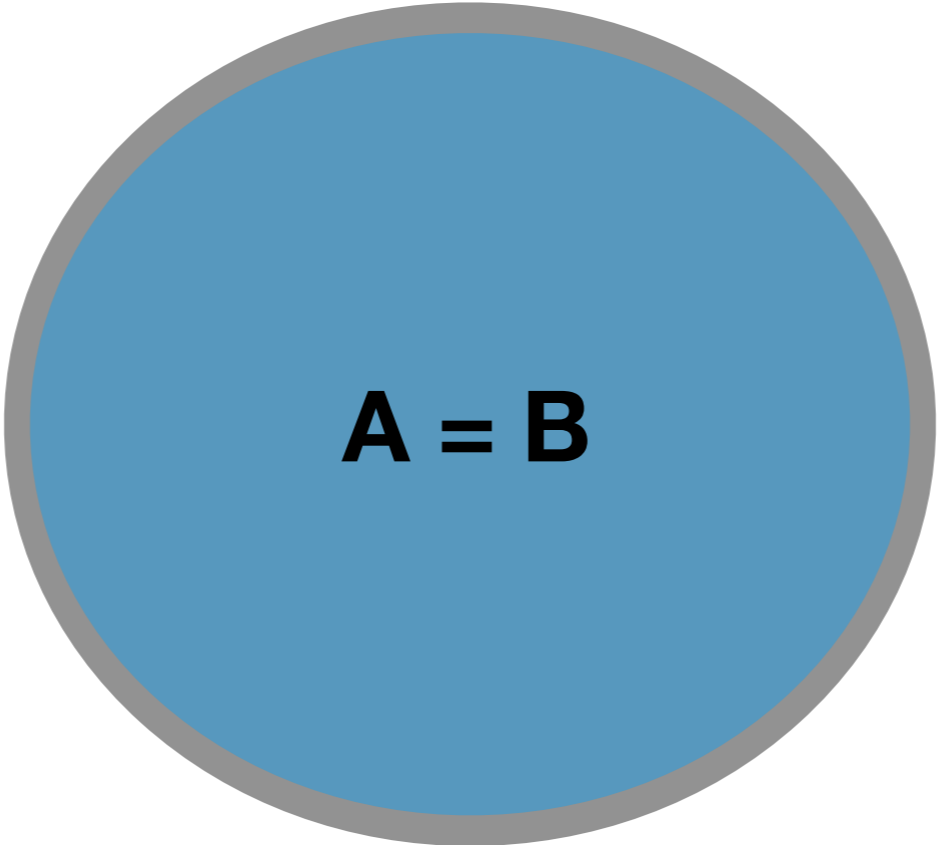
Constraints



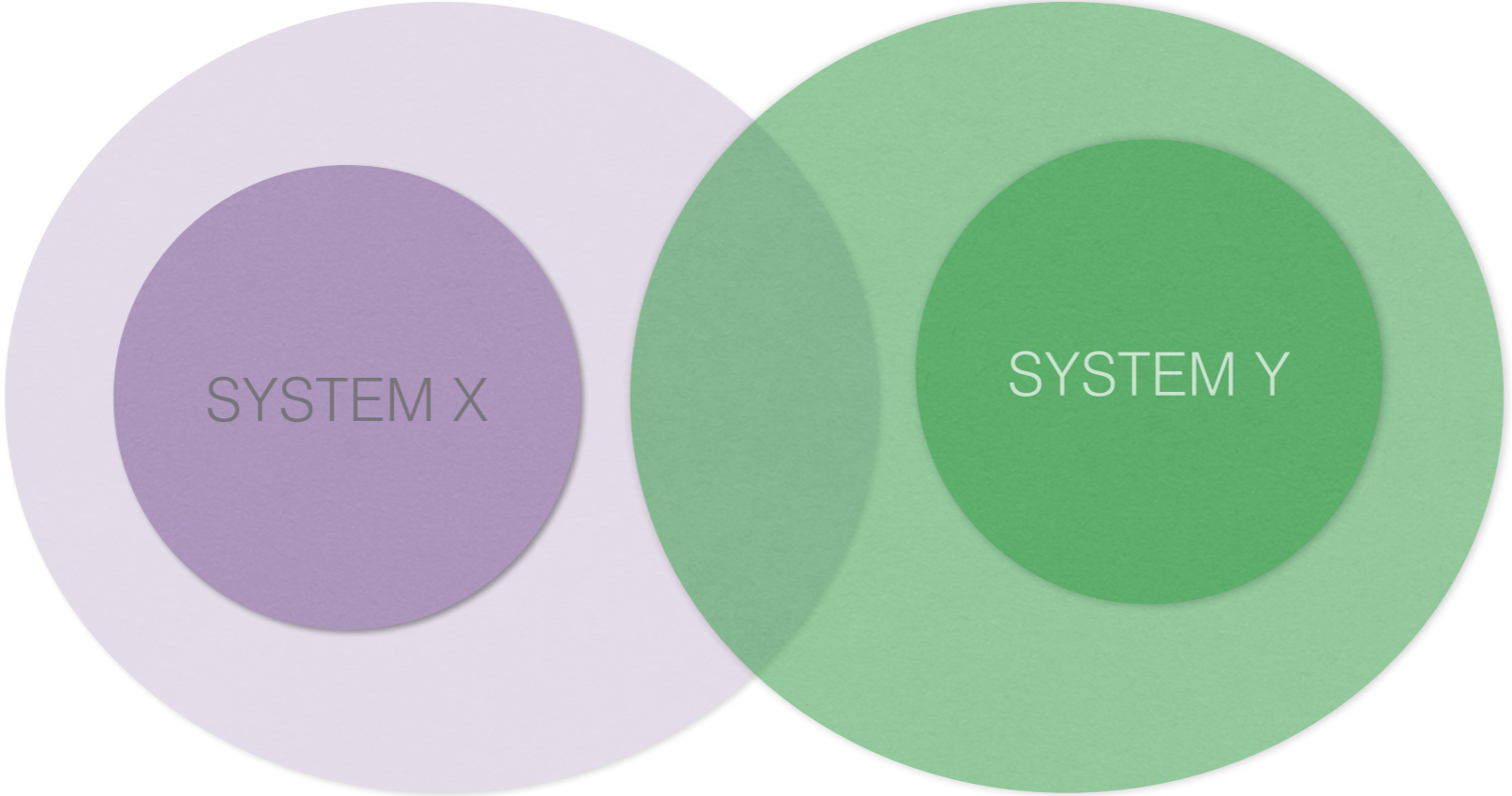
Constraints

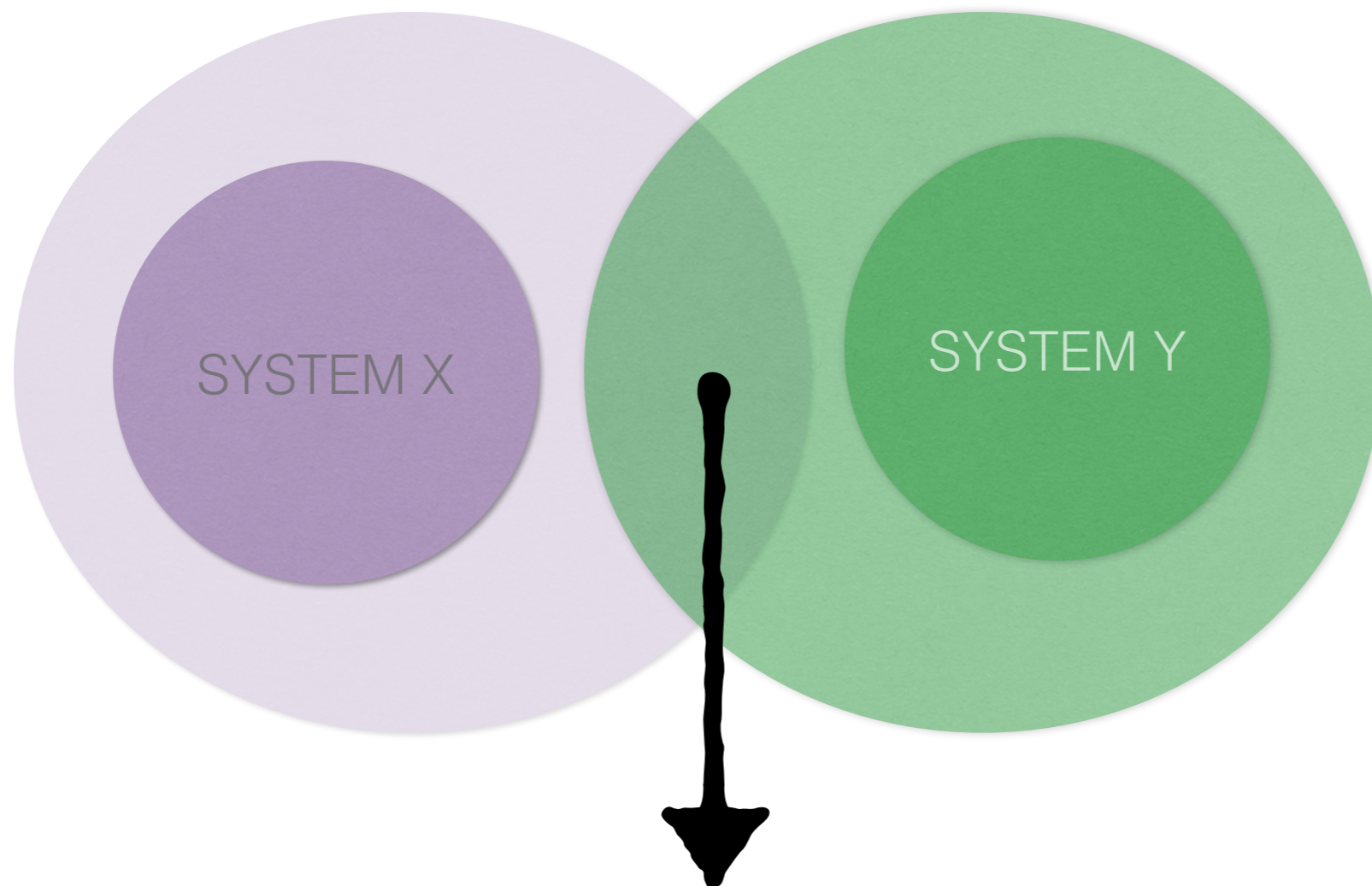


**Ontological
Commitment**







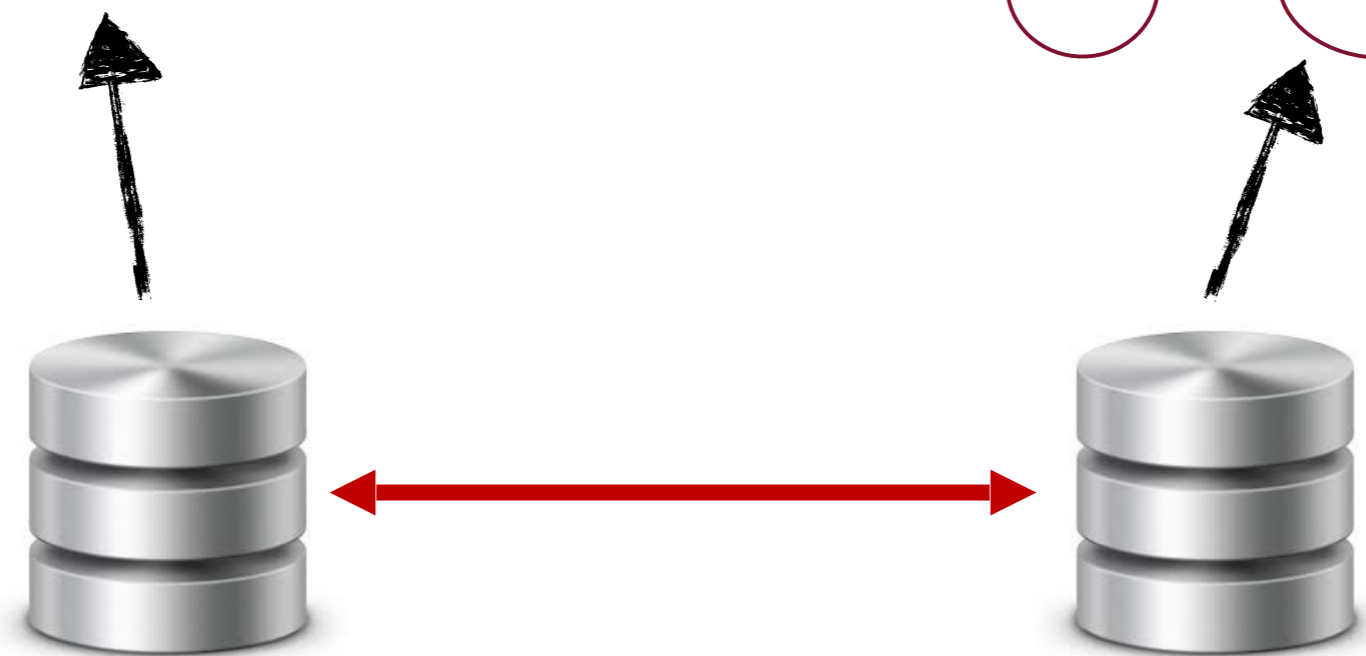
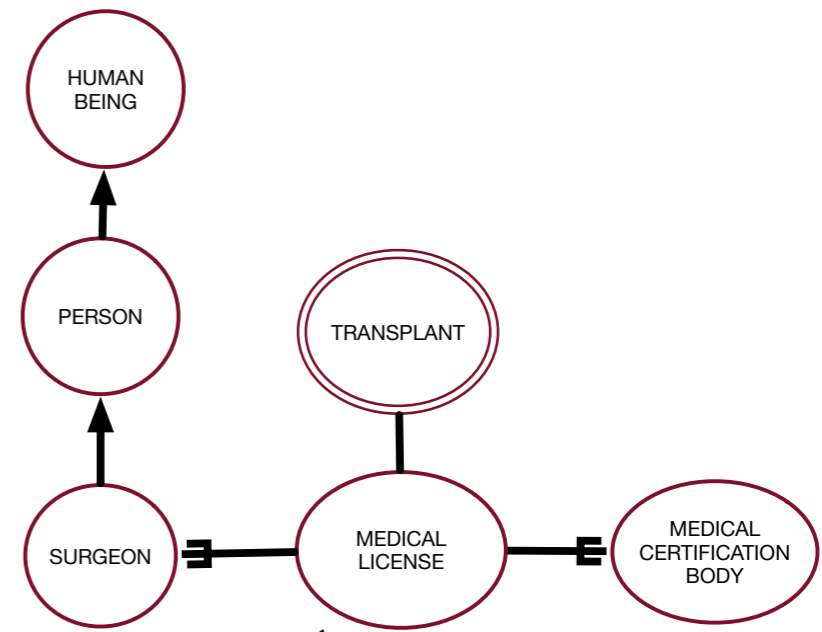
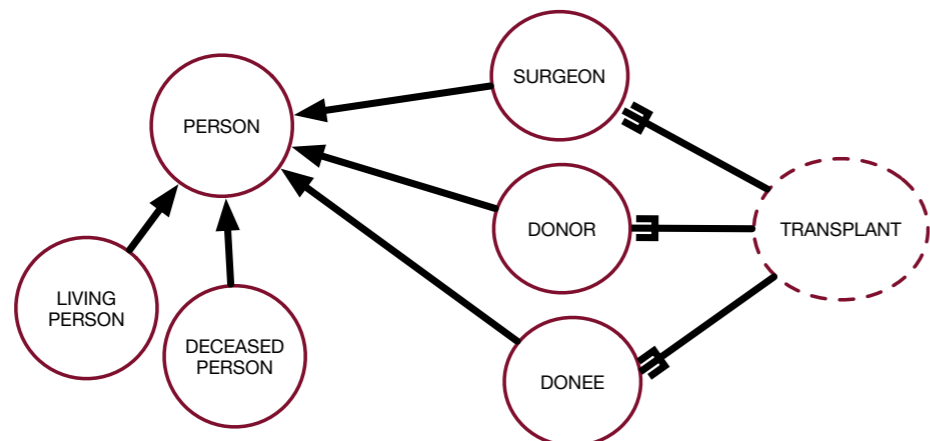


FALSE AGREEMENT

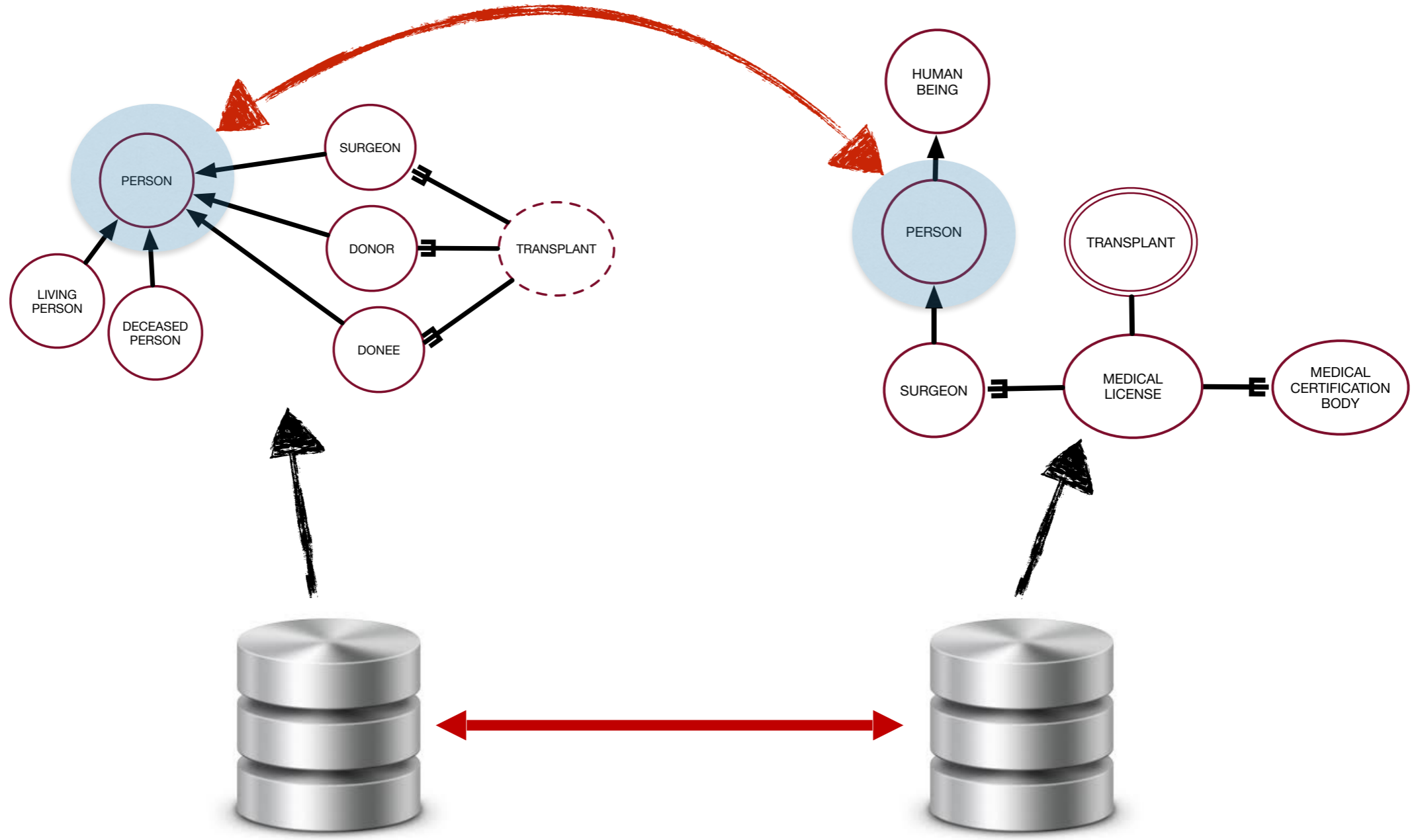
Semantic Interoperability

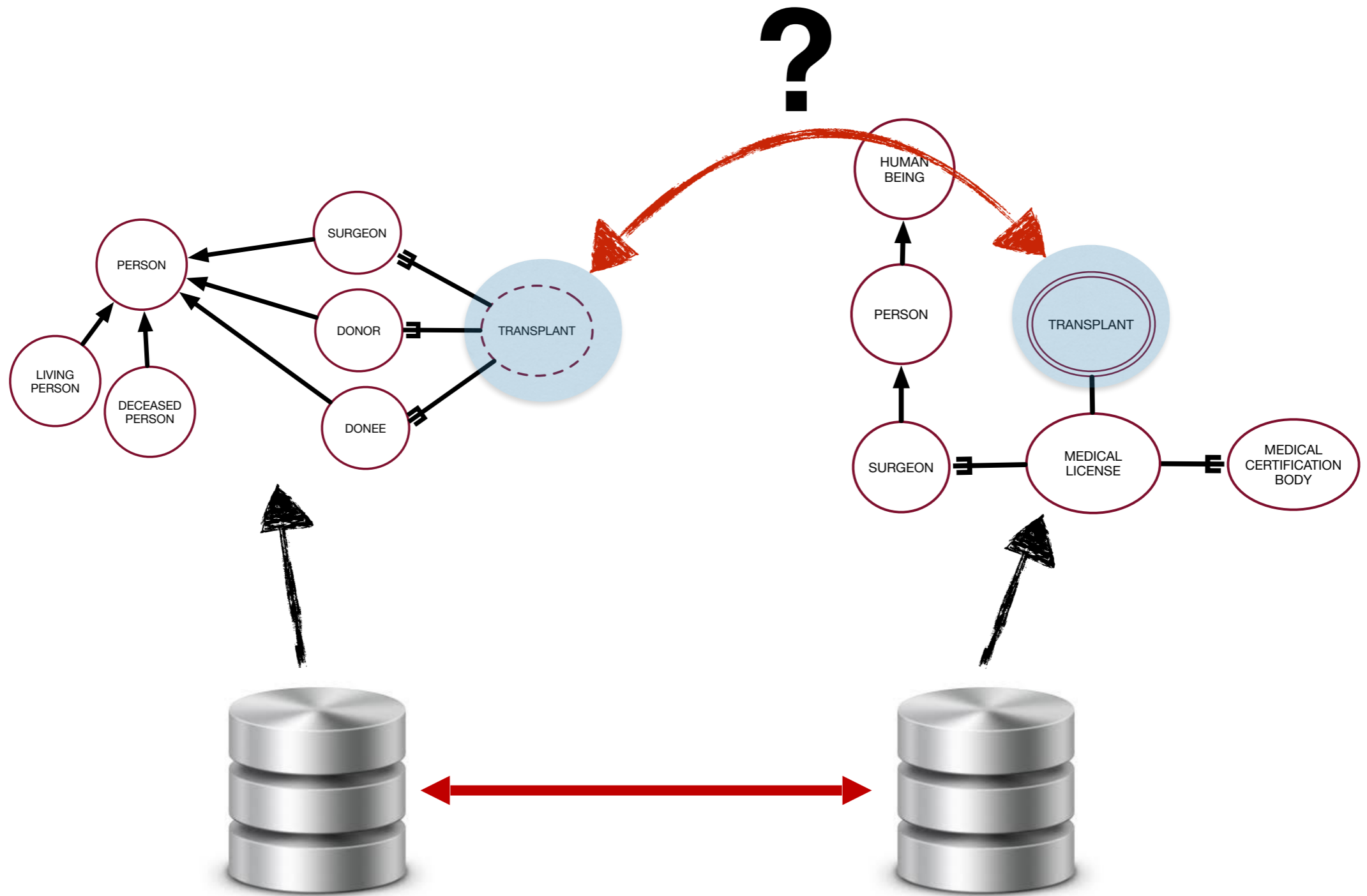


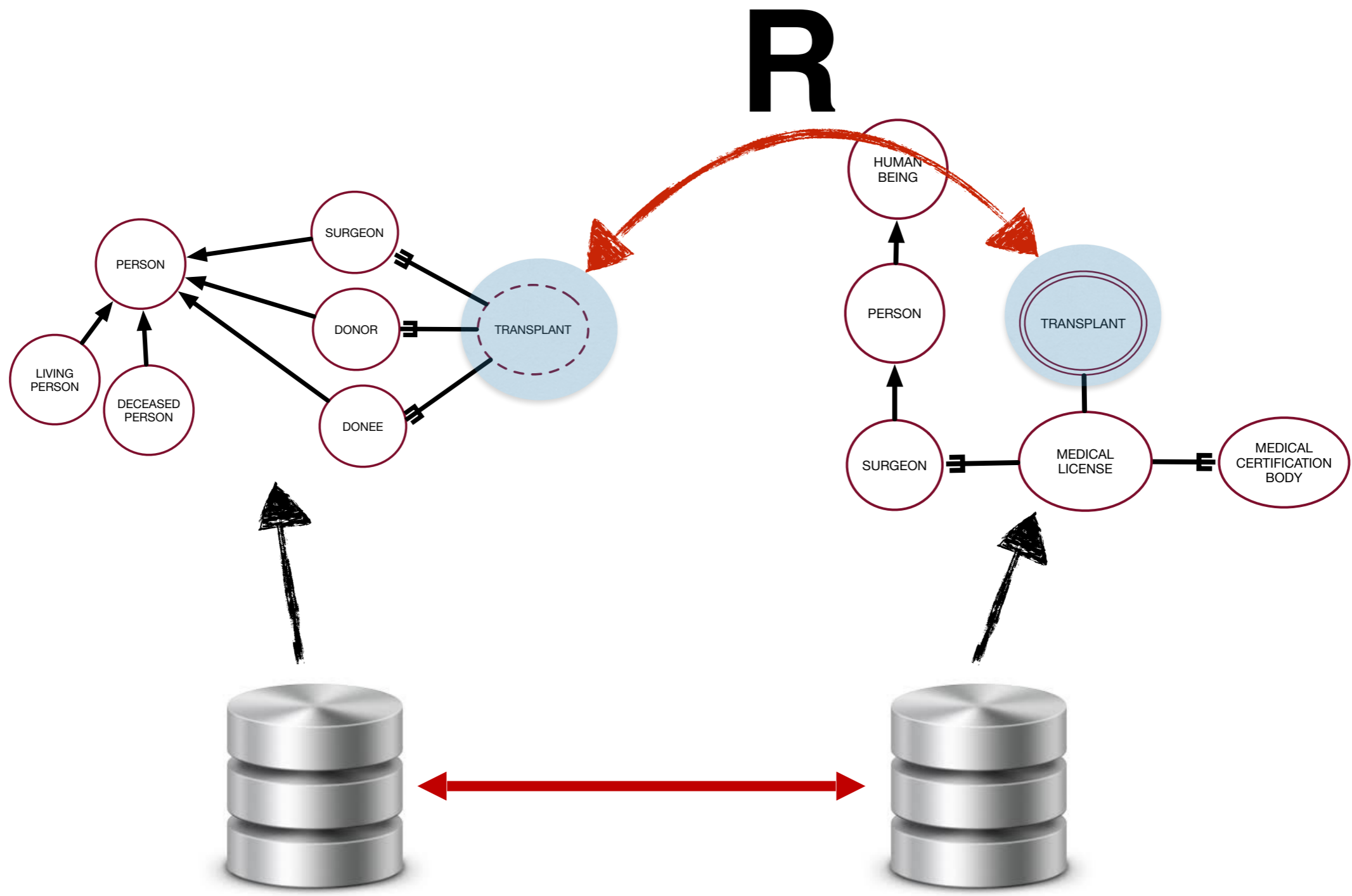
relating different
worldviews, i.e., different
ontologies



?

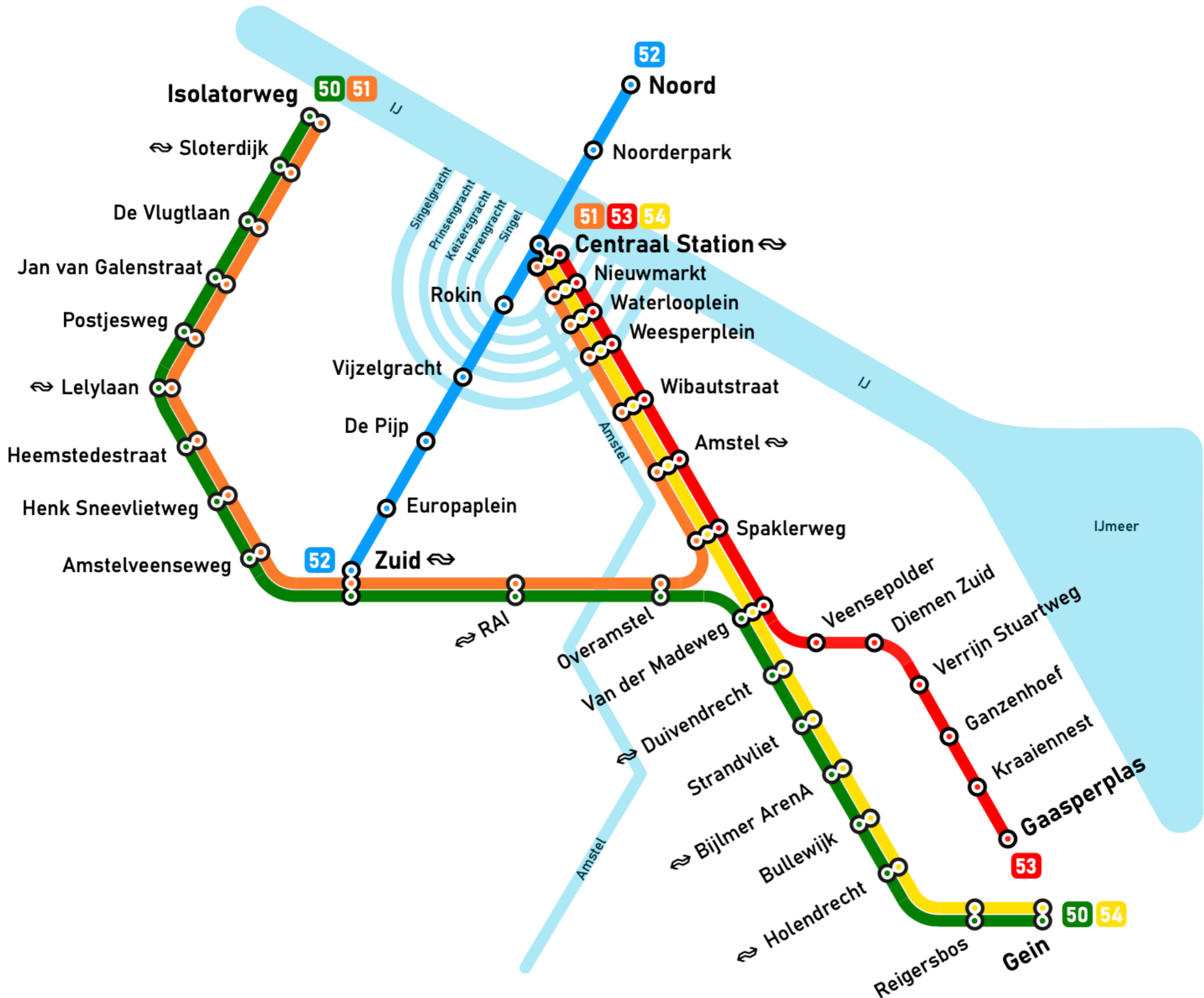


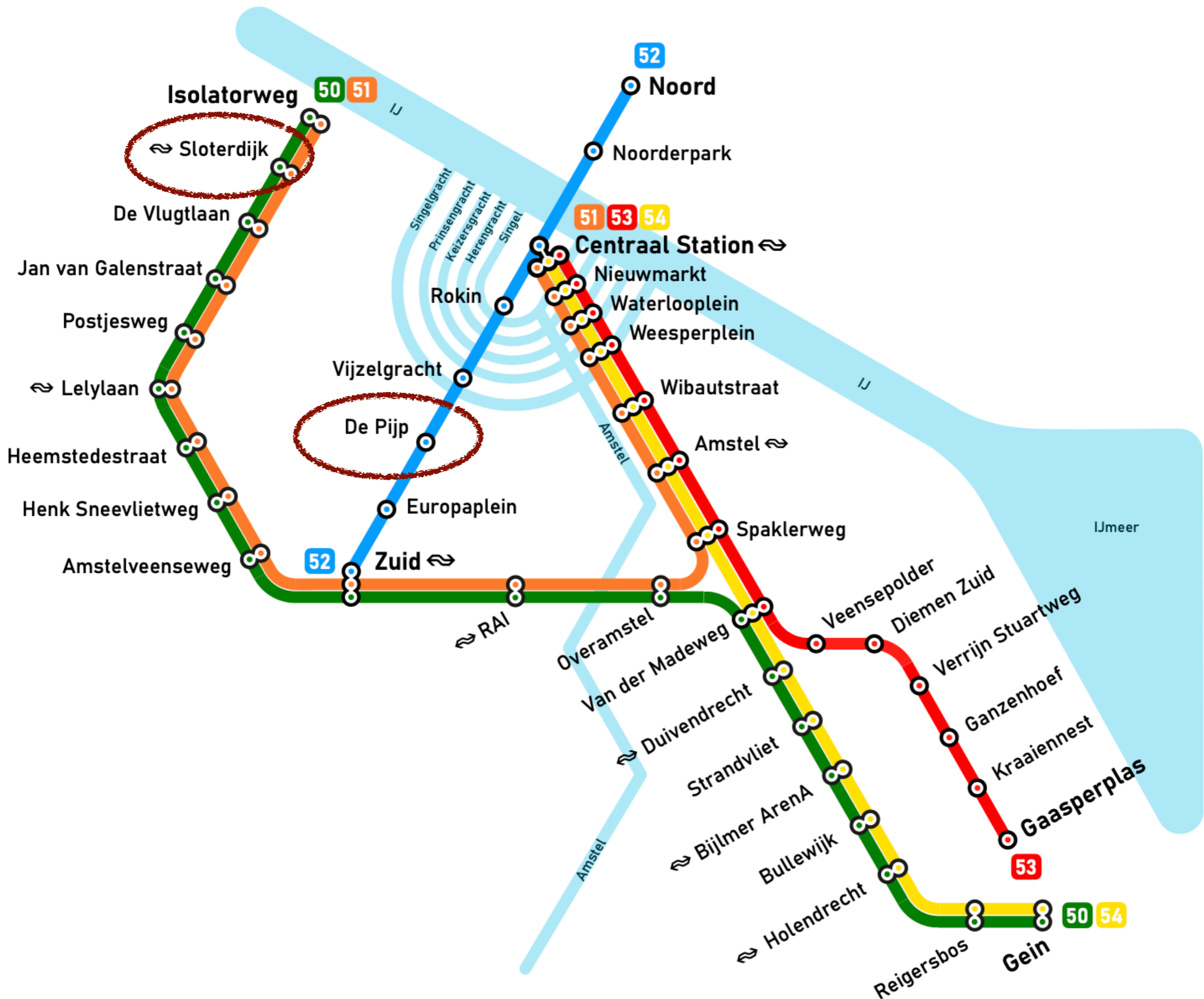




Ontology \approx

An area devoted to developing these domain-independent “toolboxes” with “tools” for supporting ontological analysis





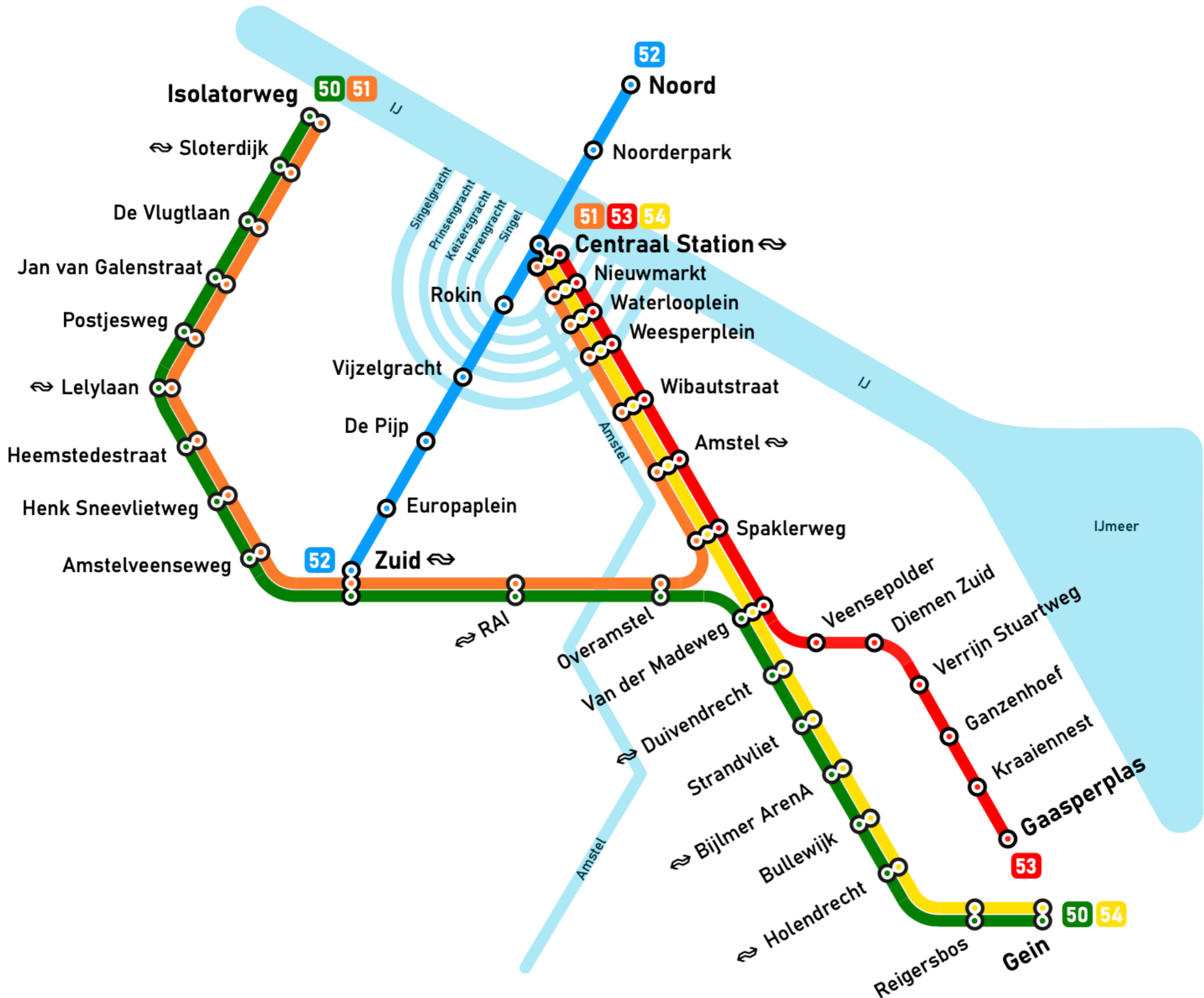
“The **ontological**
approach to
explanation” by

T.Y. Cao(2004). Ontology and
scientific explanation. Oxford
University Press

“whenever we have something important but difficult to understand, we should focus our attention on finding what the **primary entities are in the domain** under investigation are...”

“...Discovering these **entities** and their **intrinsic and structural properties**, rather than manipulating uninterpreted or ill-interpreted mathematical symbols, or speculating on free-floating universal laws and principles, is the real work of science...”

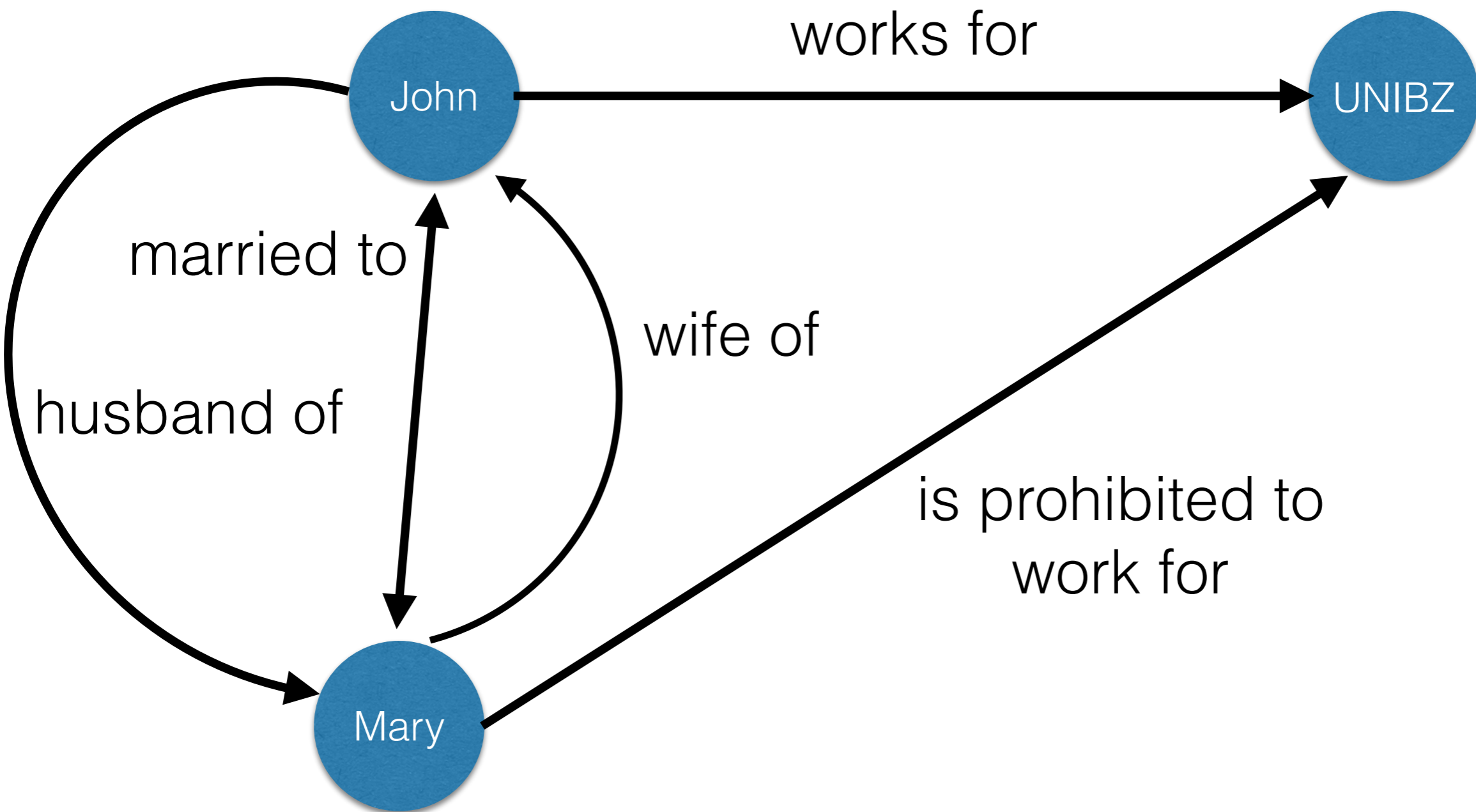
“Mathematical formalisms and universal laws and principles are relevant and important only when they have a firm ontological basis.”



Truth-bearers

X

Truth-makers





works for

John

UNIBZ

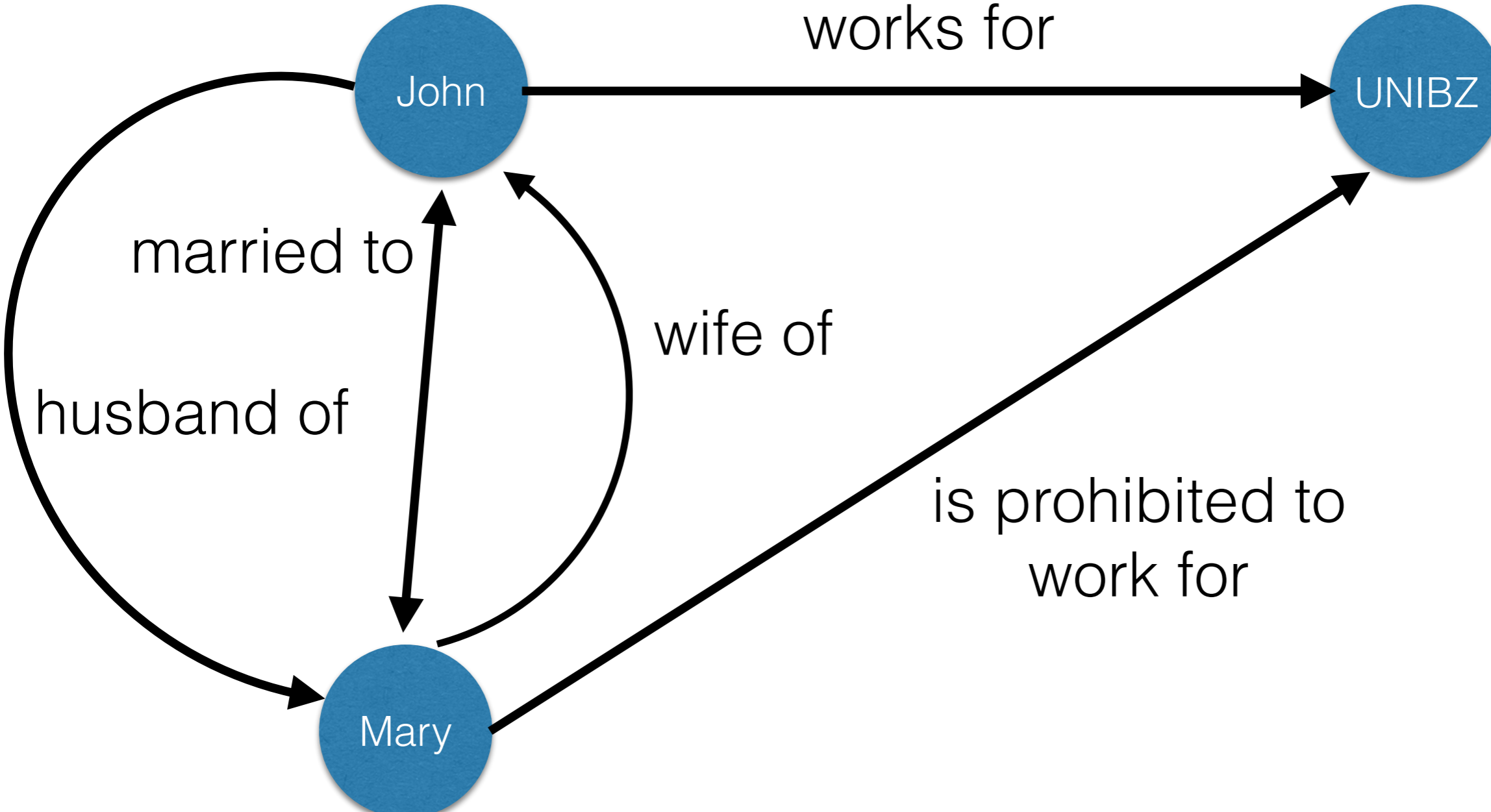
married to

wife of

husband of

is prohibited to
work for

Mary





works for

John

UNIBZ

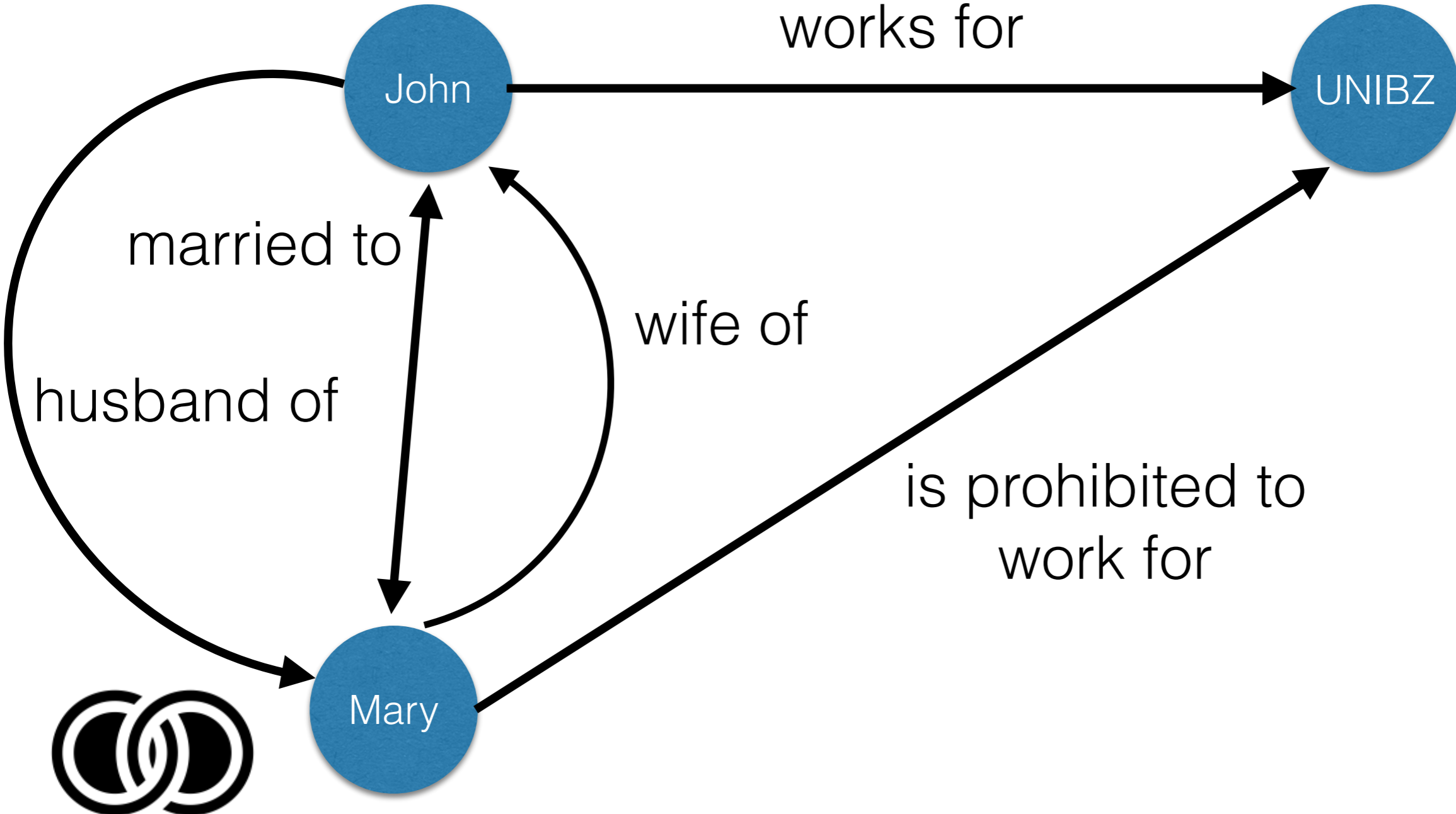
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works for

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UNIBZ

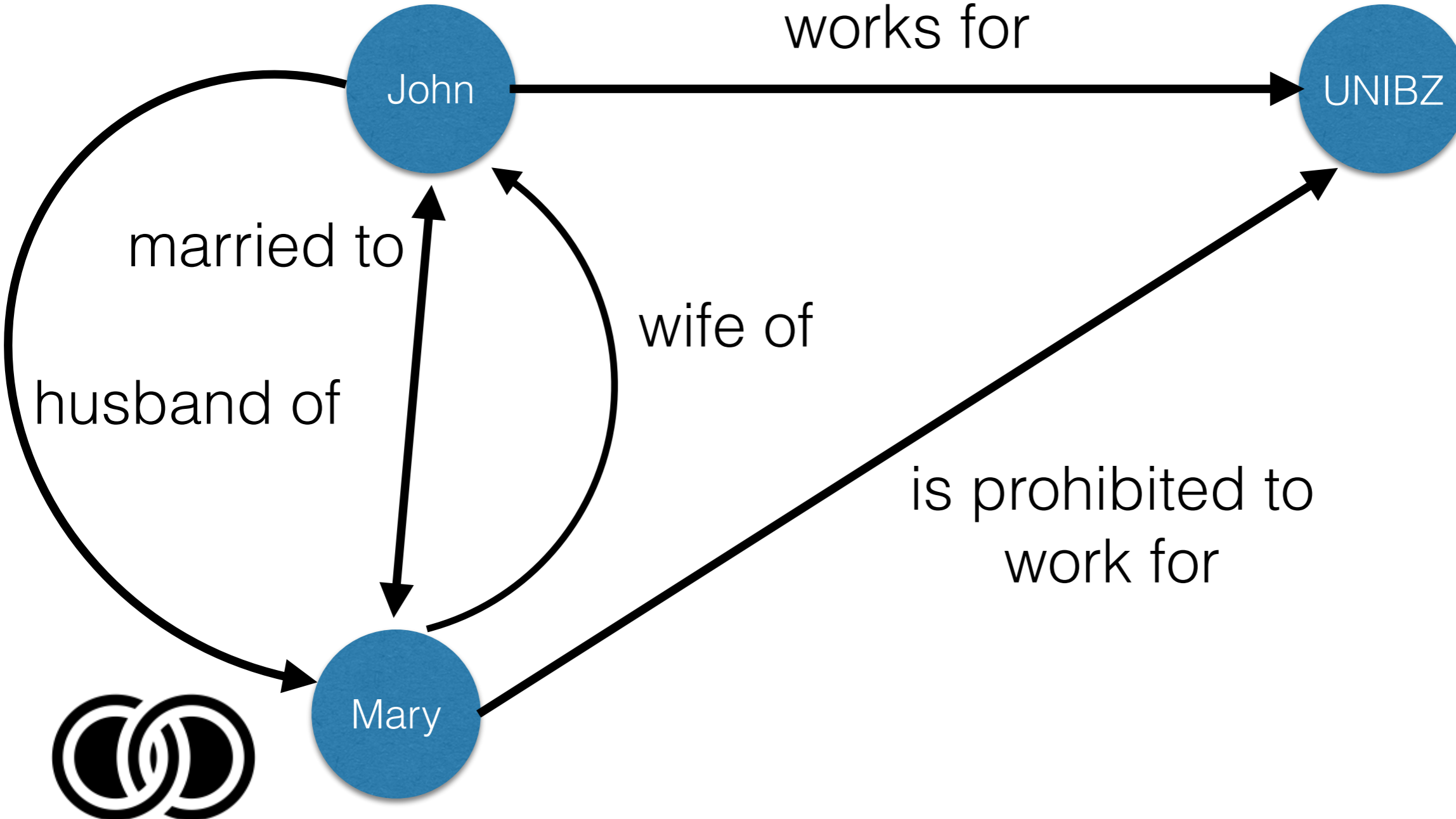
married to

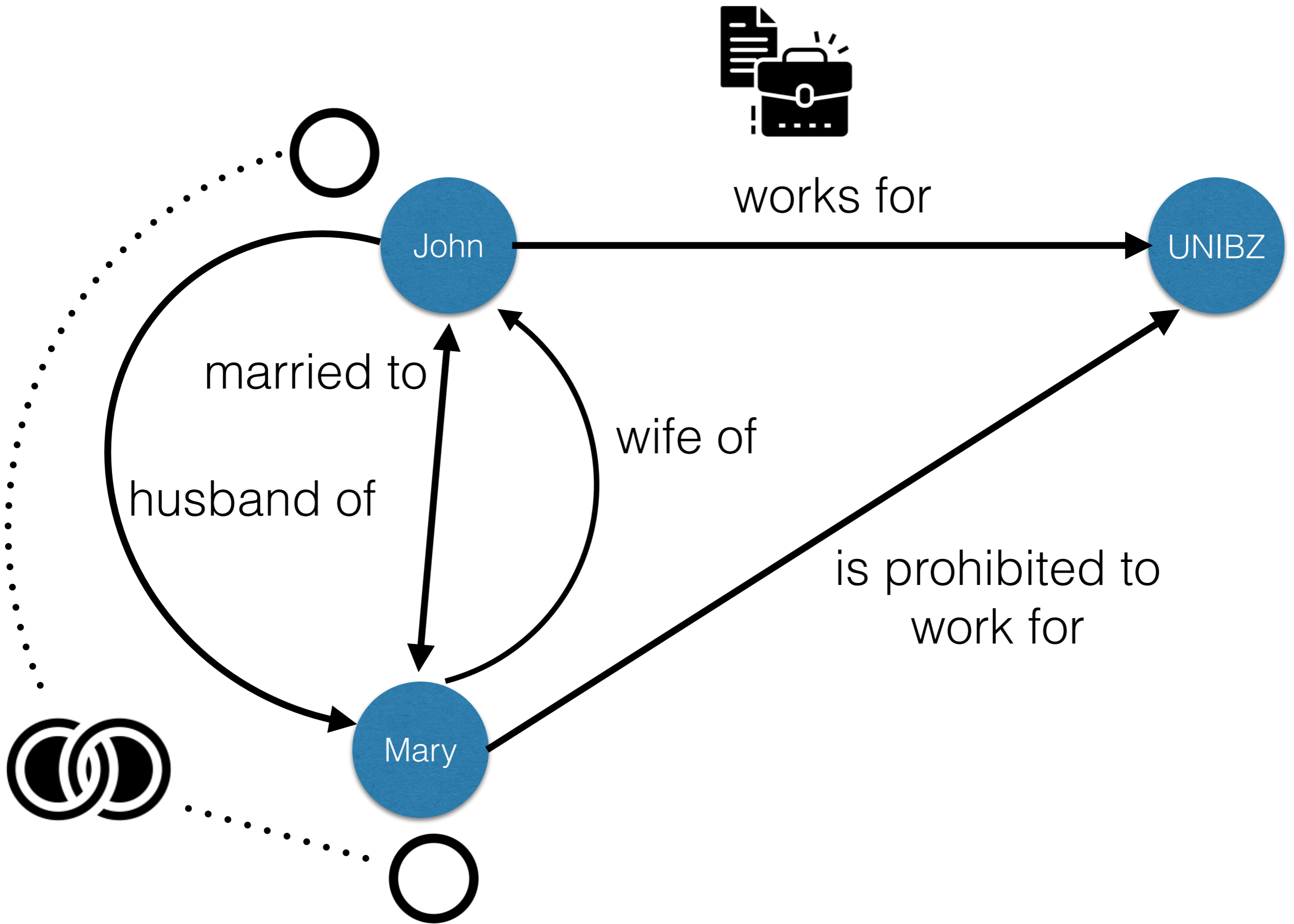
wife of

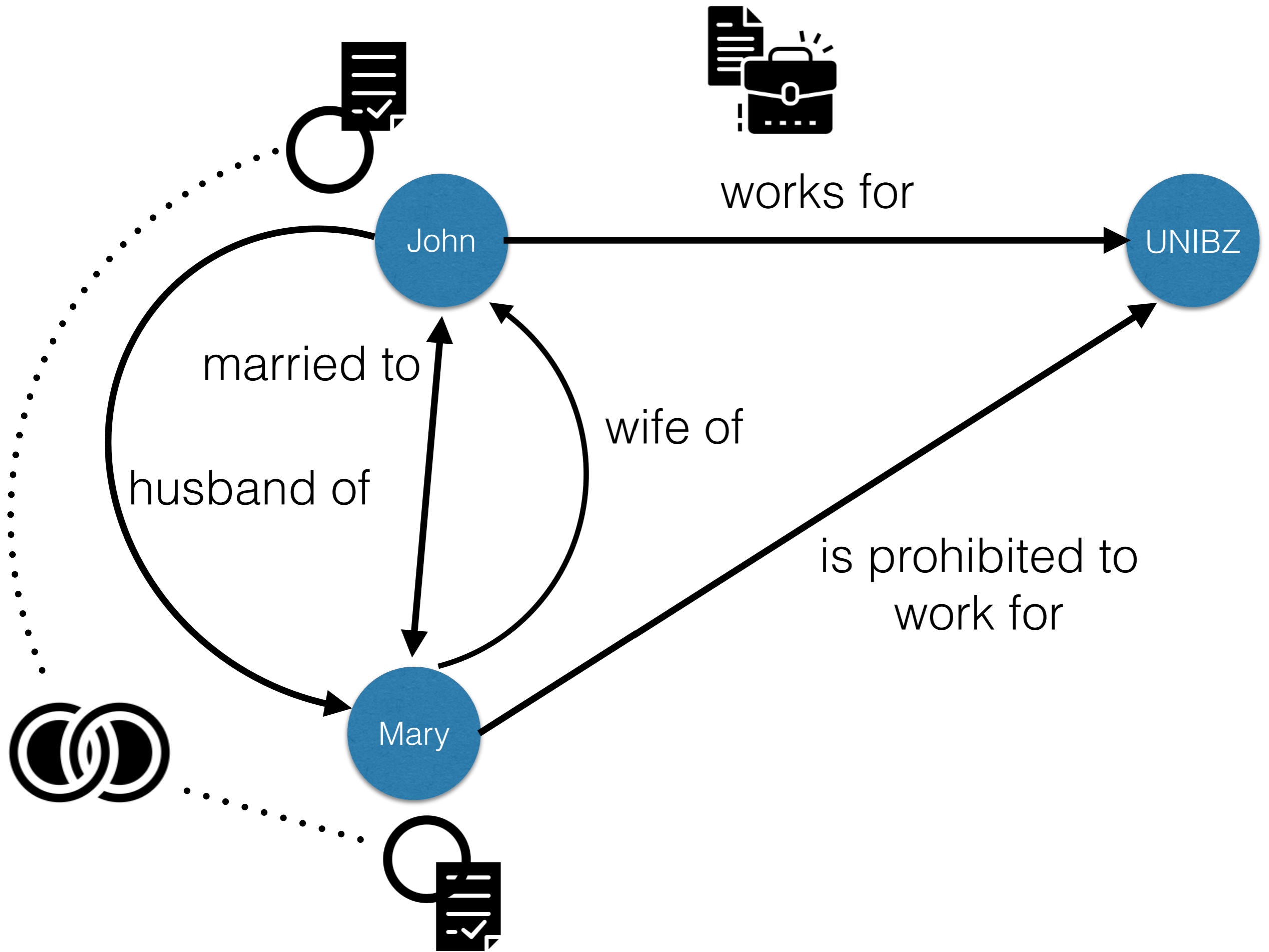
husband of

is prohibited to
work for

Mary







Structuring Function

(of a Conceptual Model)

X

Ontological Function

(of a Conceptual Model)

**Truth-bearers
(Descriptive)**

X

**Truth-makers
(Explanatory)**

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Semantic Interoperability: Ontological Unpacking of a Viral Conceptual Model

Anna Bernasconi^{1,4*}, Giancarlo Guizzardi^{2,3}, Oscar Pastor⁴ and Veda C. Storey⁵

*Correspondence:

anna.bernasconi@polimi.it

¹Department of Electronics, Information and Bioengineering, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy

⁴PROS Research Center & VRAIN Research Institute, Universidad Politècnica de València, Valencia, Spain
Full list of author information is available at the end of the article

Abstract

Background: Genomics and virology are unquestionably important, but complex, domains being investigated by a large number of scientists. The need to facilitate and support work within these domains requires sharing of databases, although it is often difficult to do so because of the different ways in which data is represented across the databases. To foster semantic interoperability, models are needed that provide a deep understanding and interpretation of the concepts in a domain, so that the data can be consistently interpreted among researchers.

Results: In this research, we propose the use of conceptual models to support semantic interoperability among databases and assess their ontological clarity to support their effective use. This modeling effort is illustrated by its application to the Viral Conceptual Model (VCM) that captures and represents the sequencing of viruses, inspired by the need to understand the genomic aspects of the virus responsible for COVID-19. For achieving semantic clarity on the VCM, we leverage the “ontological unpacking” method, a process of ontological analysis that reveals the ontological foundation of the information that is represented in a conceptual model. This is accomplished by applying the stereotypes of the OntoUML ontology-driven conceptual modeling language. As a result, we propose a new OntoVCM, an ontologically grounded model, based on the initial VCM, but with guaranteed interoperability among the data sources that employ it.

An Ontology-Based Approach to Engineering Ethicality Requirements

Renata Guizzardi¹, Glenda Amaral¹, Giancarlo Guizzardi¹, and John Mylopoulos²

¹ University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands

{r.guizzardi,g.c.mouraamaral,g.guizzardi}@utwente.nl

² University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

jm@cs.toronto.edu

Abstract. In a world where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is pervasive, humans may feel threatened or at risk by giving up control to machines. In this context, ethicality becomes a major concern to prevent AI systems from being biased, making mistakes, or going rogue. Requirements Engineering (RE) is the research area that can exert a great impact in the development of ethical systems by design. However, proposing concepts, tools and techniques that support the incorporation of ethicality into the software development processes as explicit requirements remains a great challenge in the RE field. In this paper, we rely on Ontology-based Requirements Engineering (ObRE) as a method to elicit and analyze ethicality requirements³. ObRE applies ontological analysis to ontologically unpack terms and notions that are referred to in requirements elicitation. Moreover, this method instantiates the adopted ontology and uses it to guide the requirements analysis

2

Ontological Unpacking as **Explanation**

▼ has more serious medical condition



▼ has more serious medical condition





John



Bob



has-more-serious-medical-condition(Bob,John)
iff both x and y have medical conditions
and x has at least one medical condition
that is more severe than all the medical conditions of y

has-more-serious-medical-condition(Bob,John)



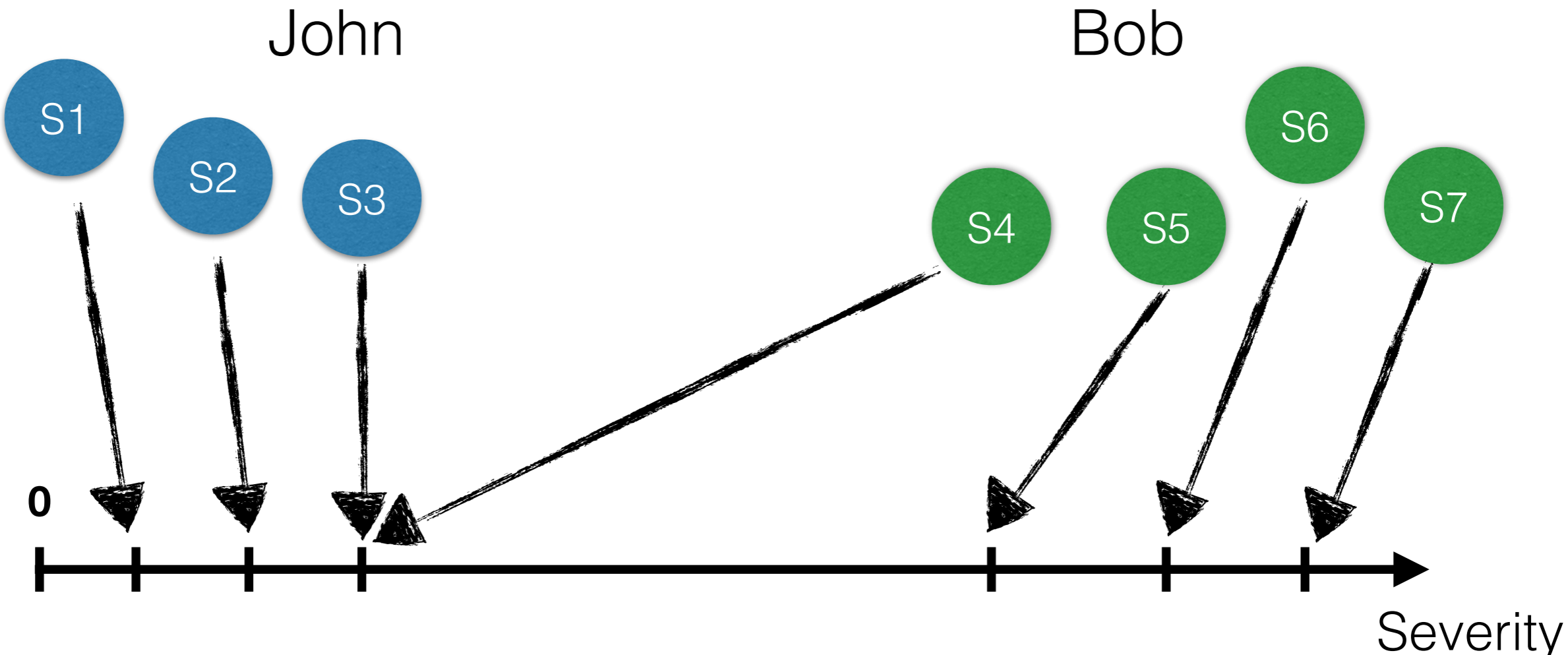
John



Bob



has-more-serious-medical-condition(Bob,John)



has-more-serious-medical-condition(Bob,John)

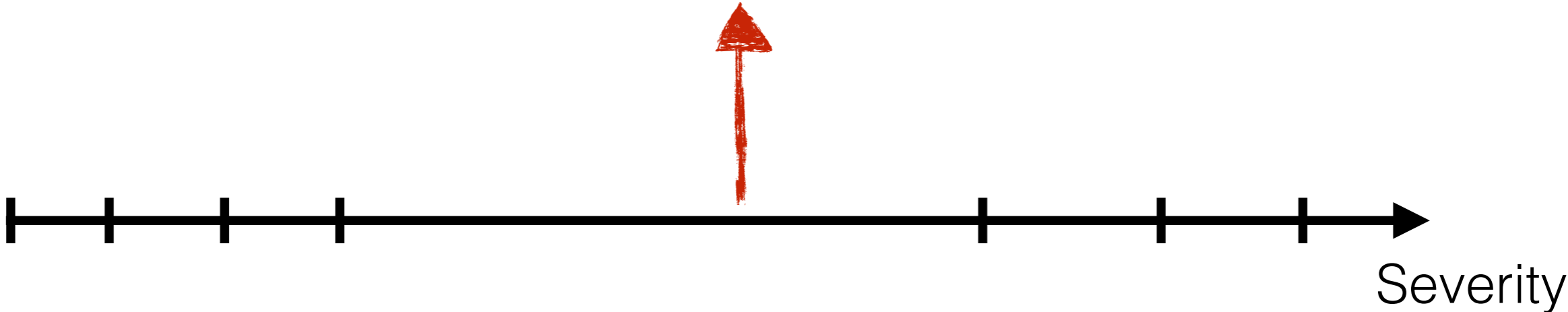


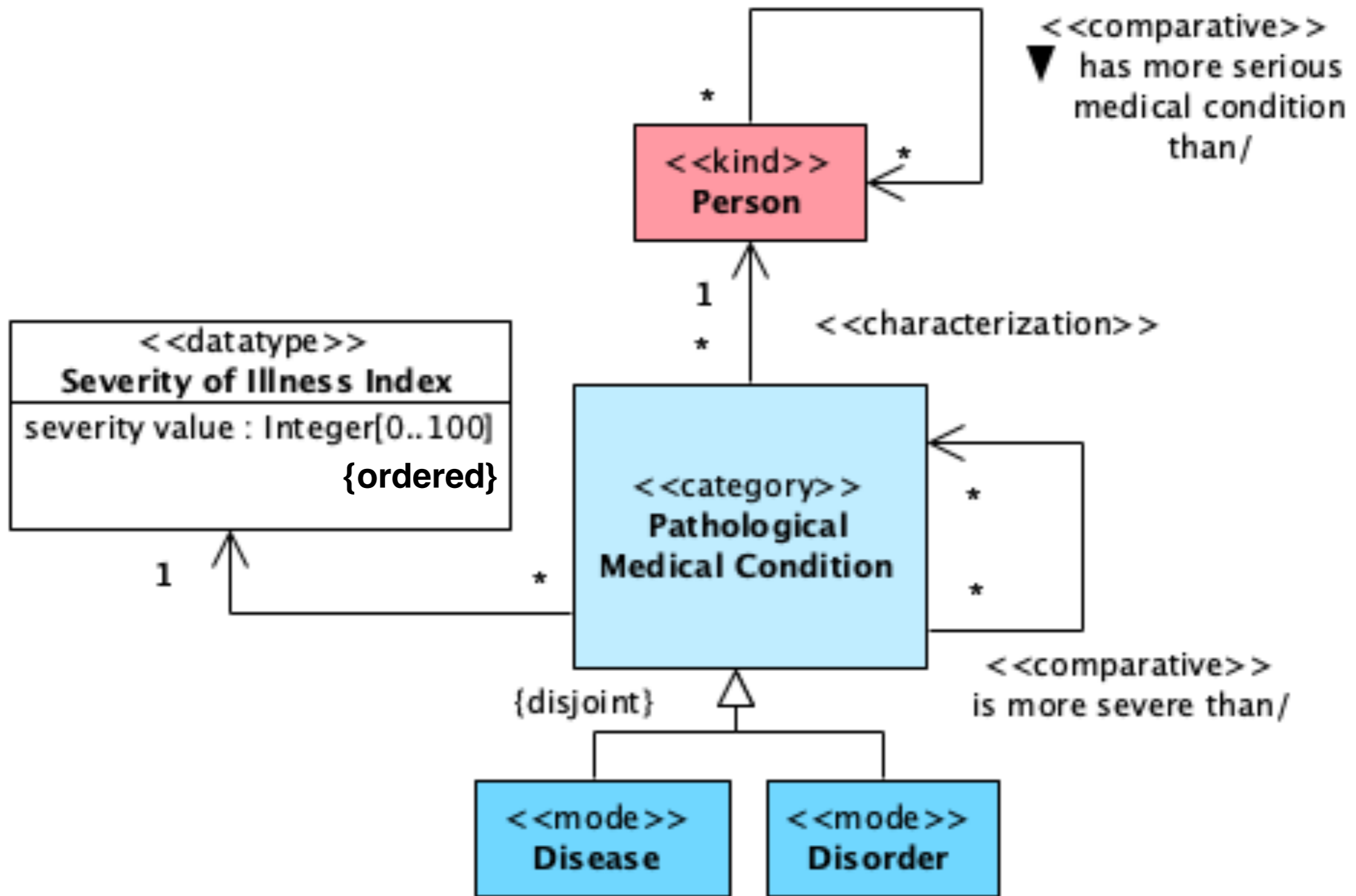
Totally Ordered
(Non-reflexive
Asymmetric
Transitive
Total)

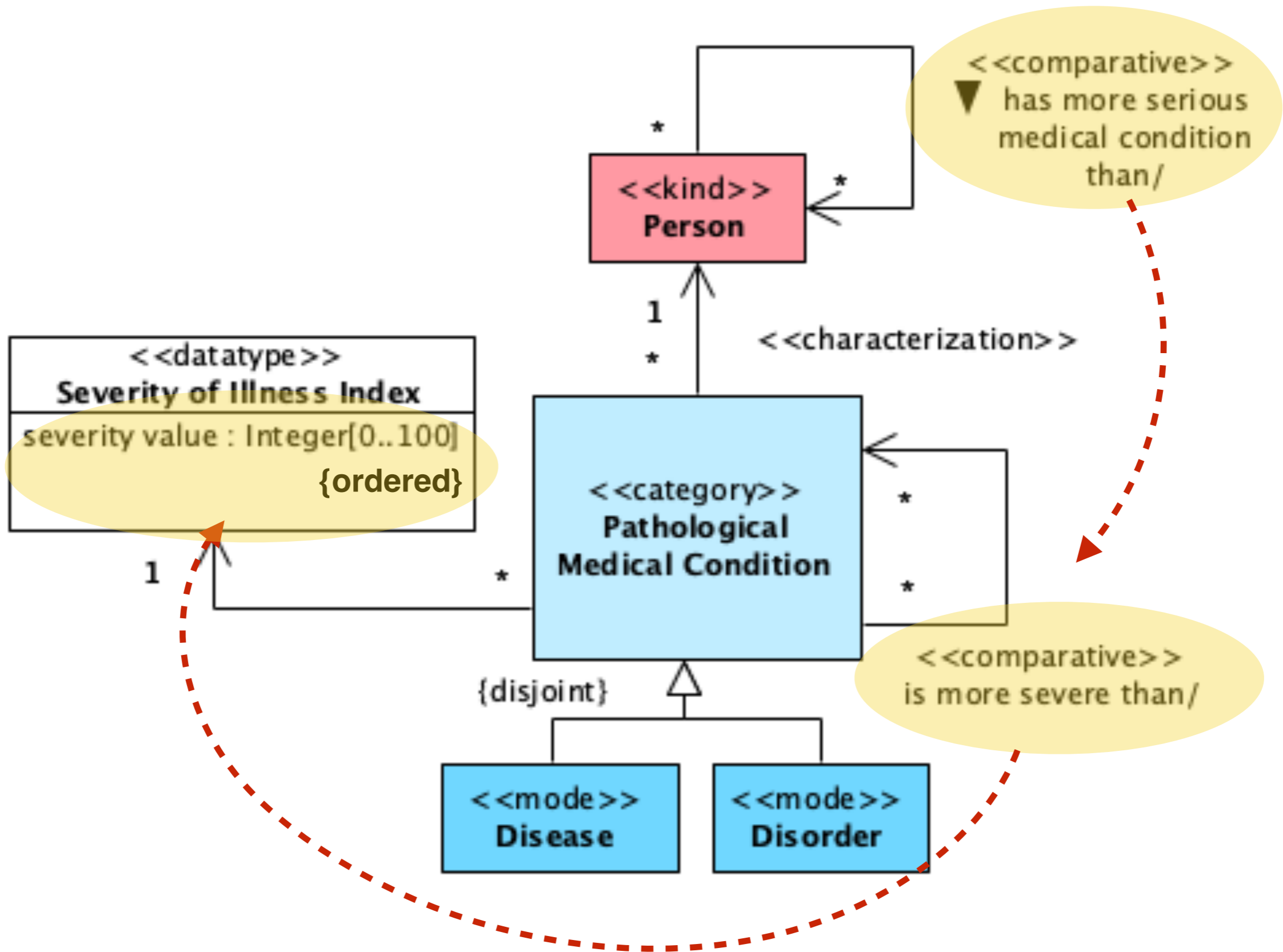
has-more-serious-medical-condition(Bob,John)

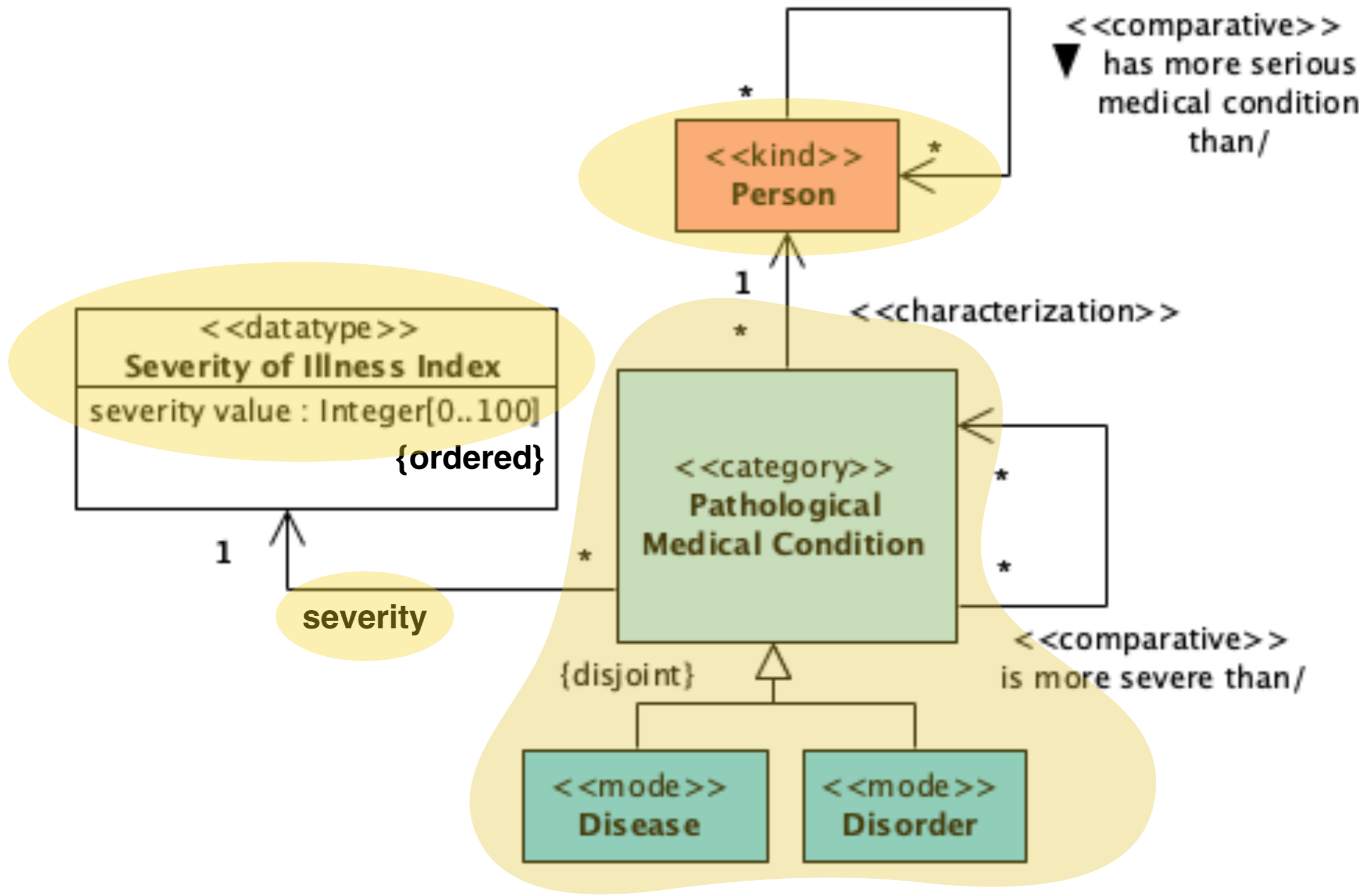


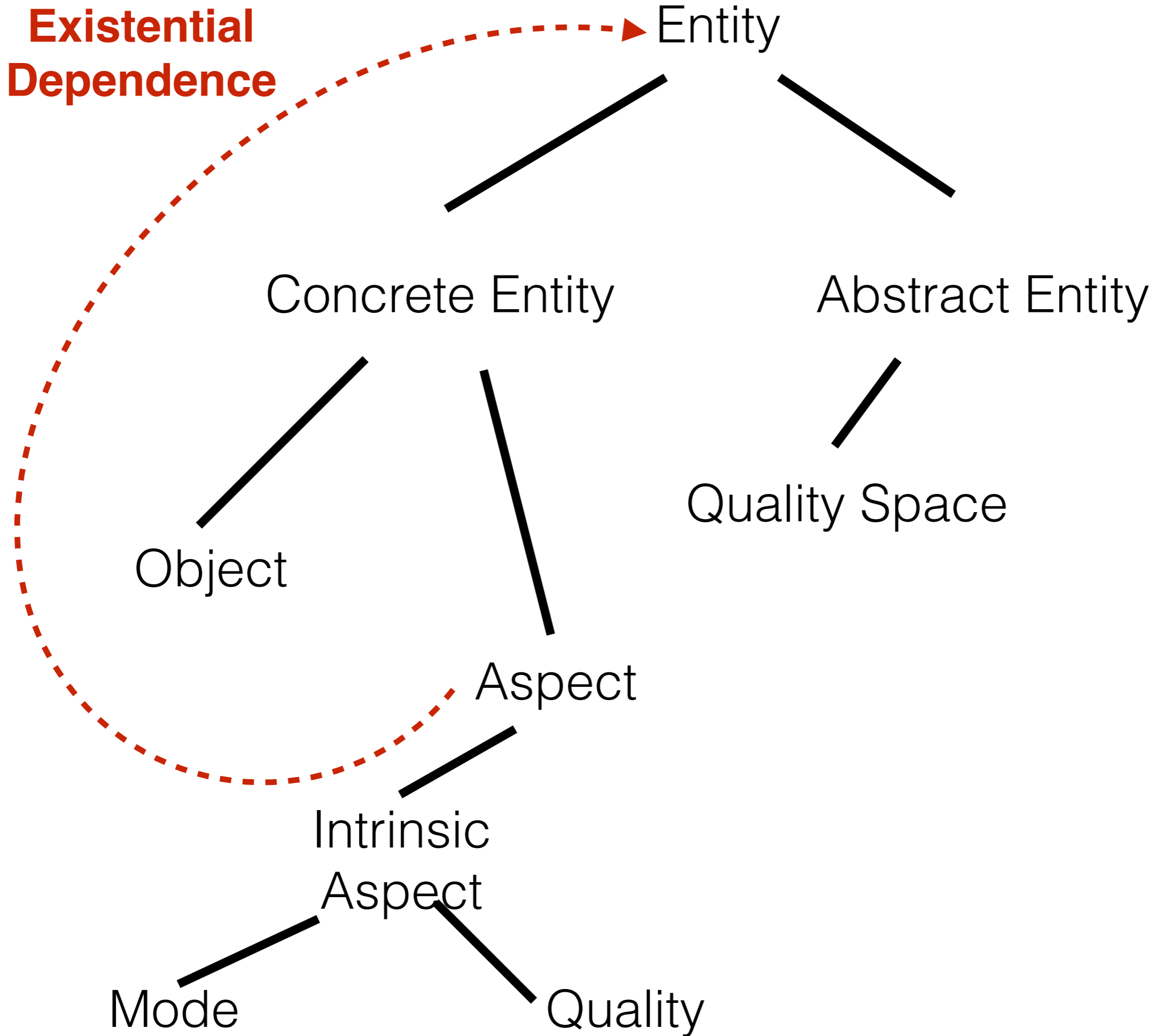
Totally Ordered
(Non-reflexive
Asymmetric
Transitive
Total)

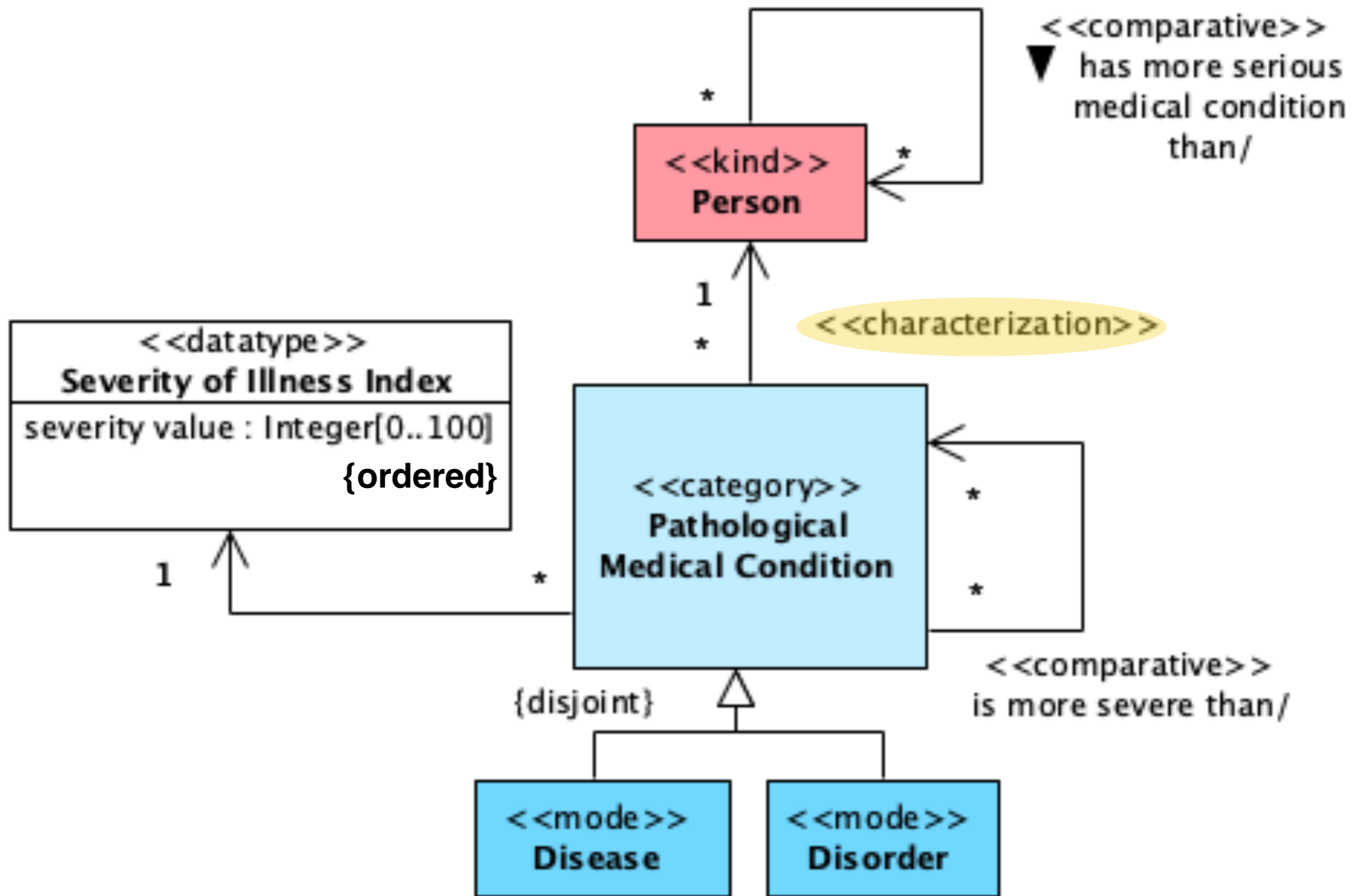


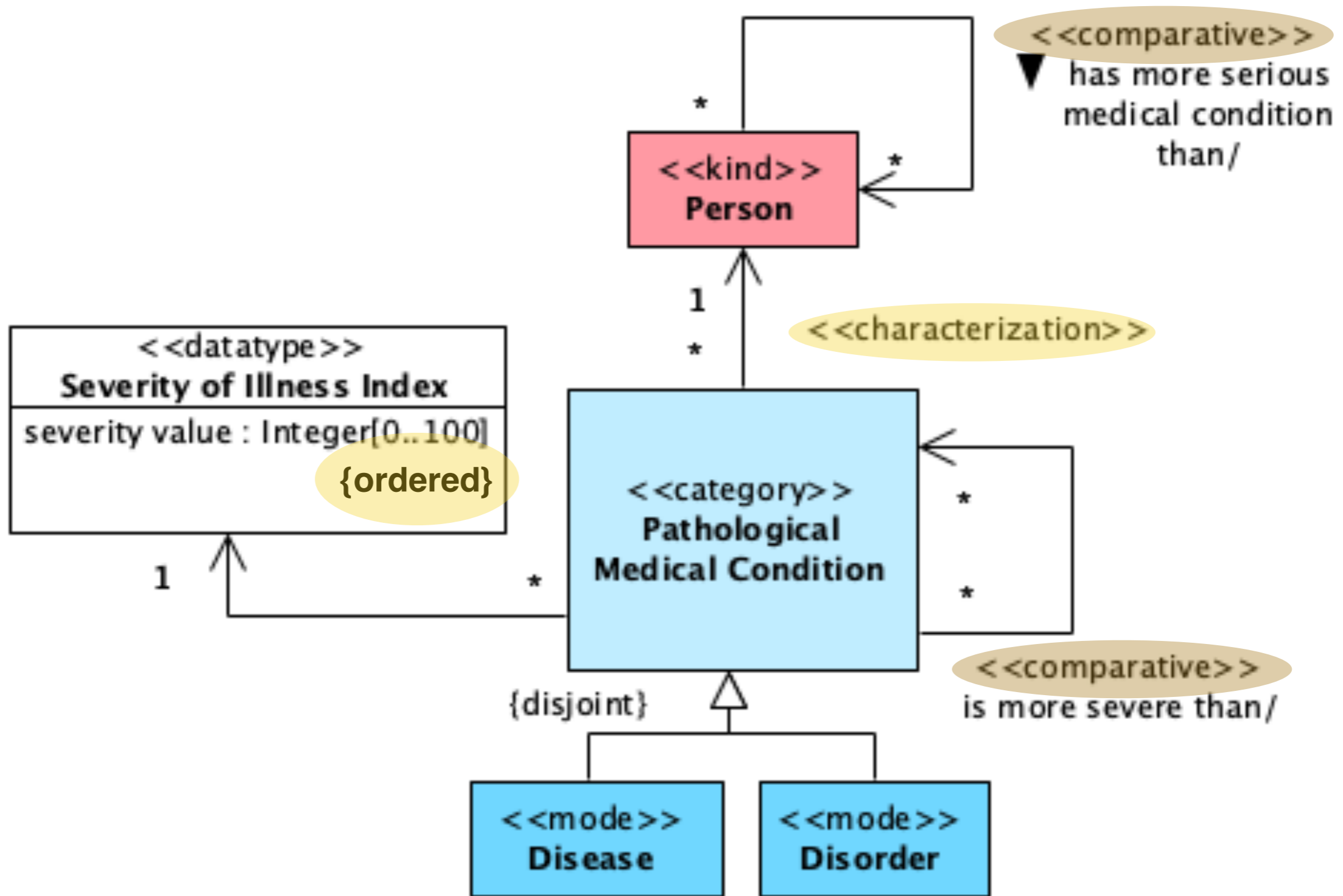




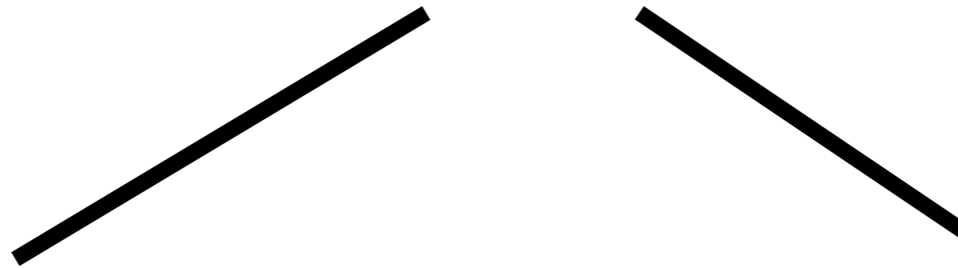






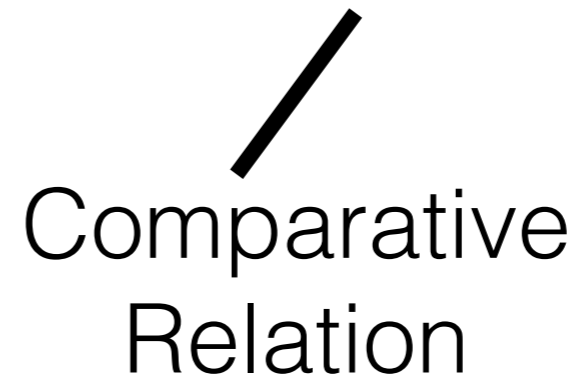
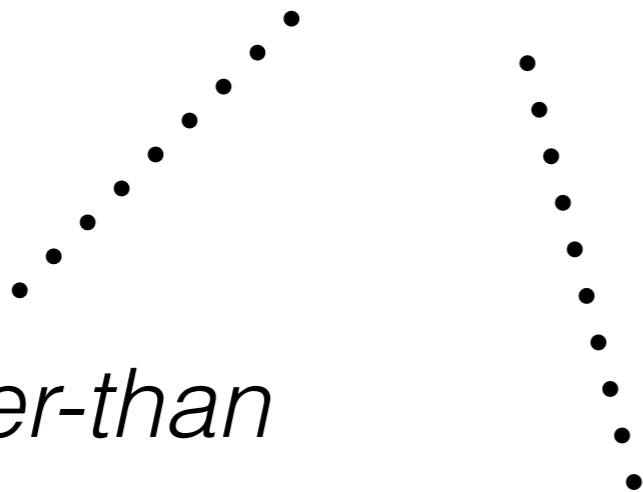


Relation



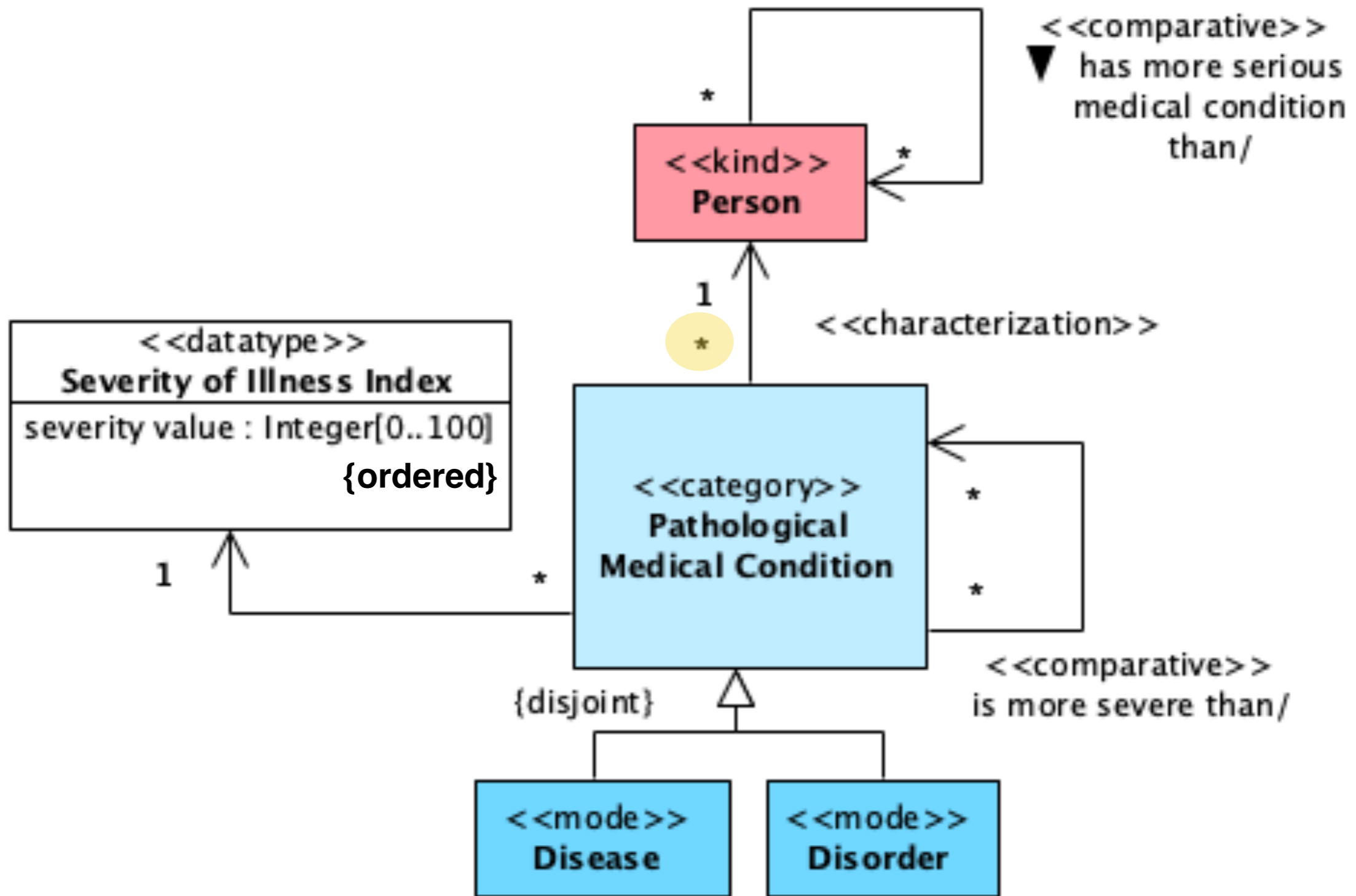
Primitive
Relation

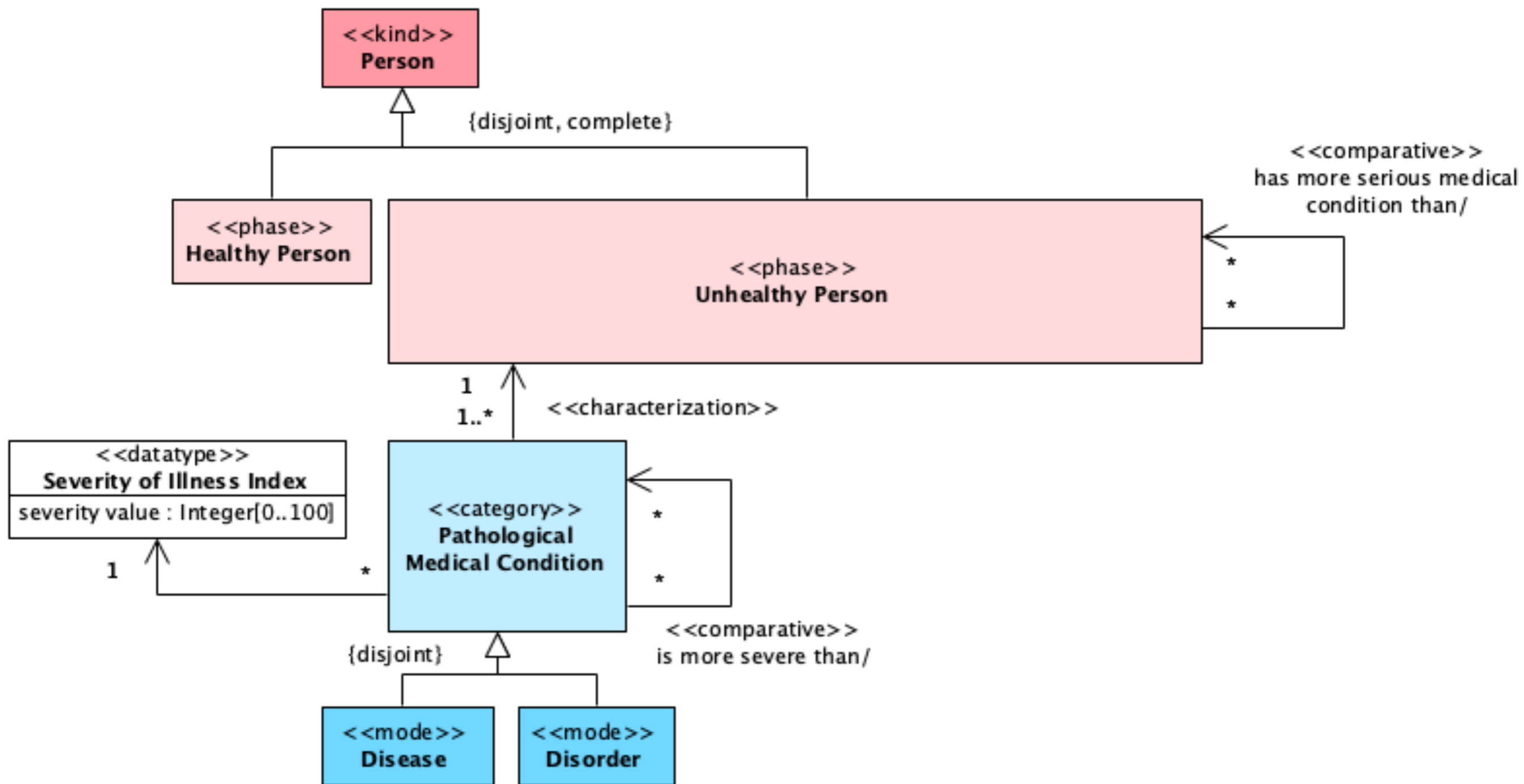
Grounded
Relation

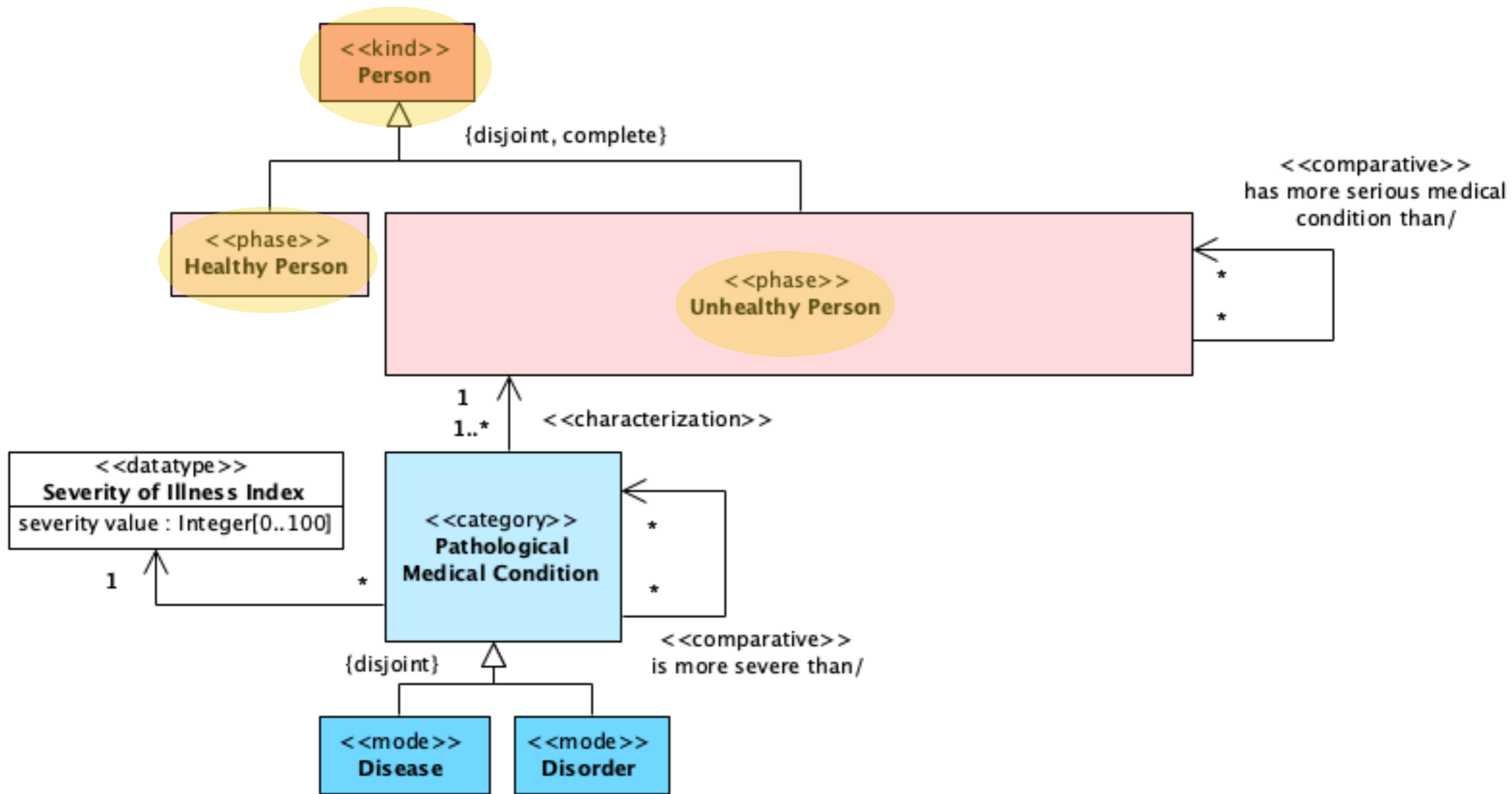


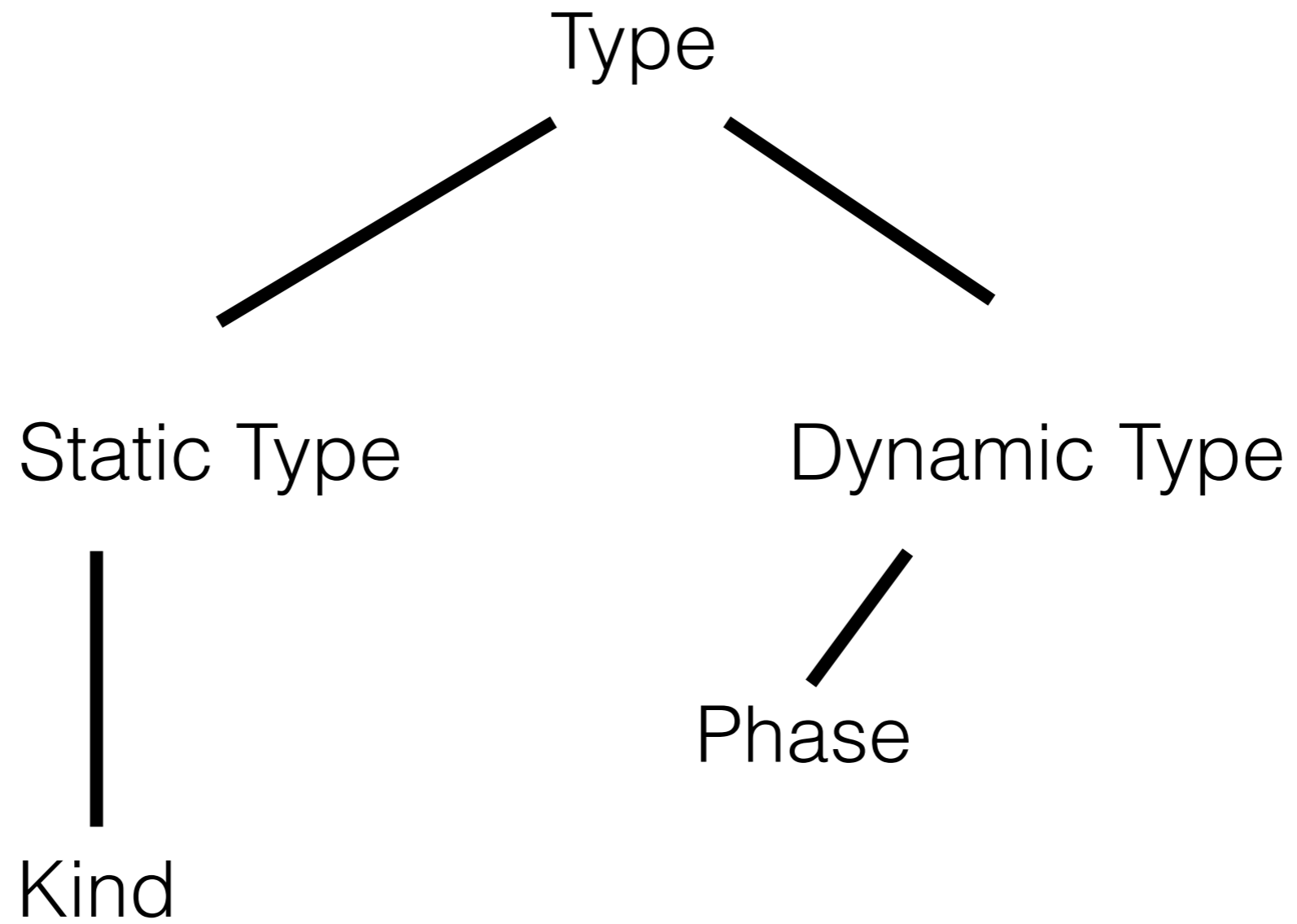
Comparative
Relation

characterization
(Existential Dependence)





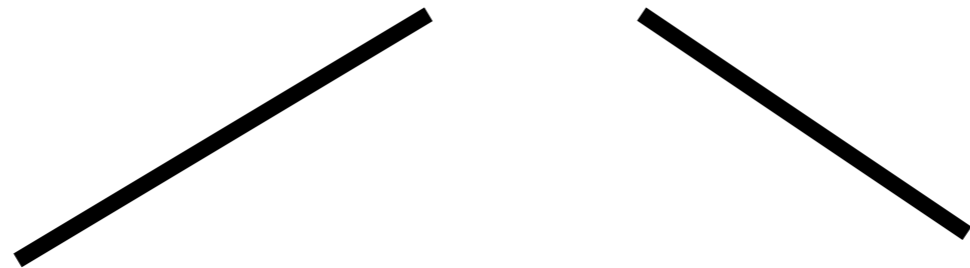




▼ has more serious medical condition

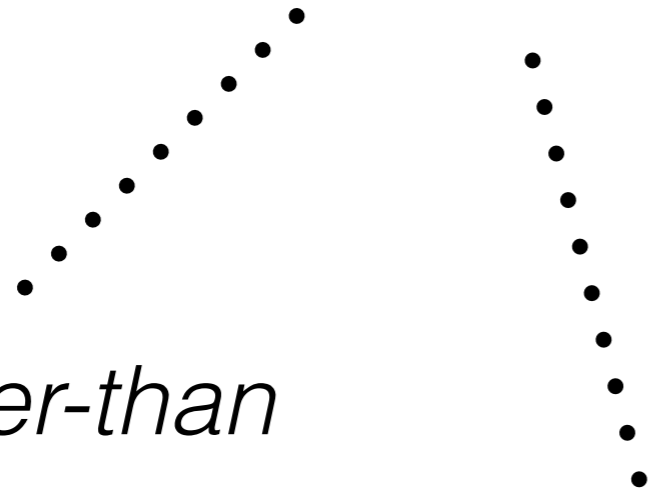


Relation



Primitive
Relation

Grounded
Relation



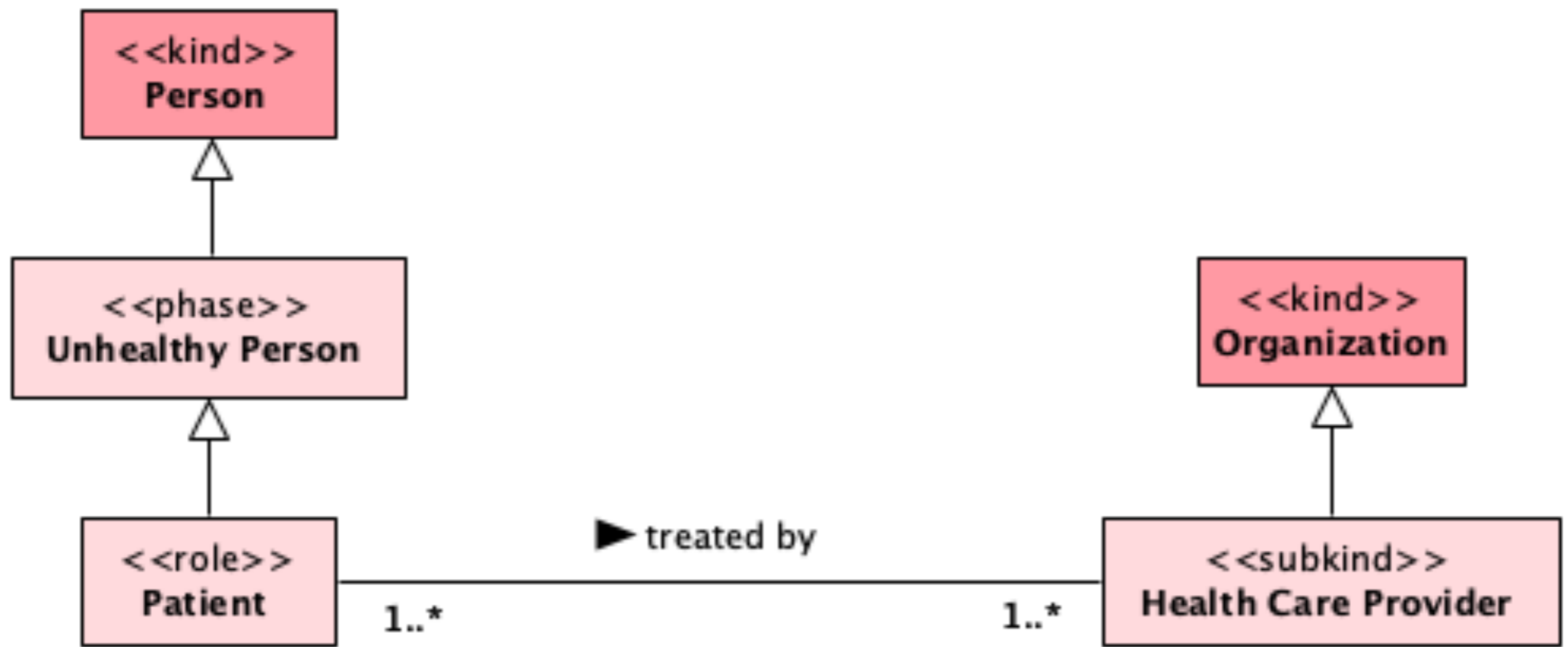
Comparative
Relation

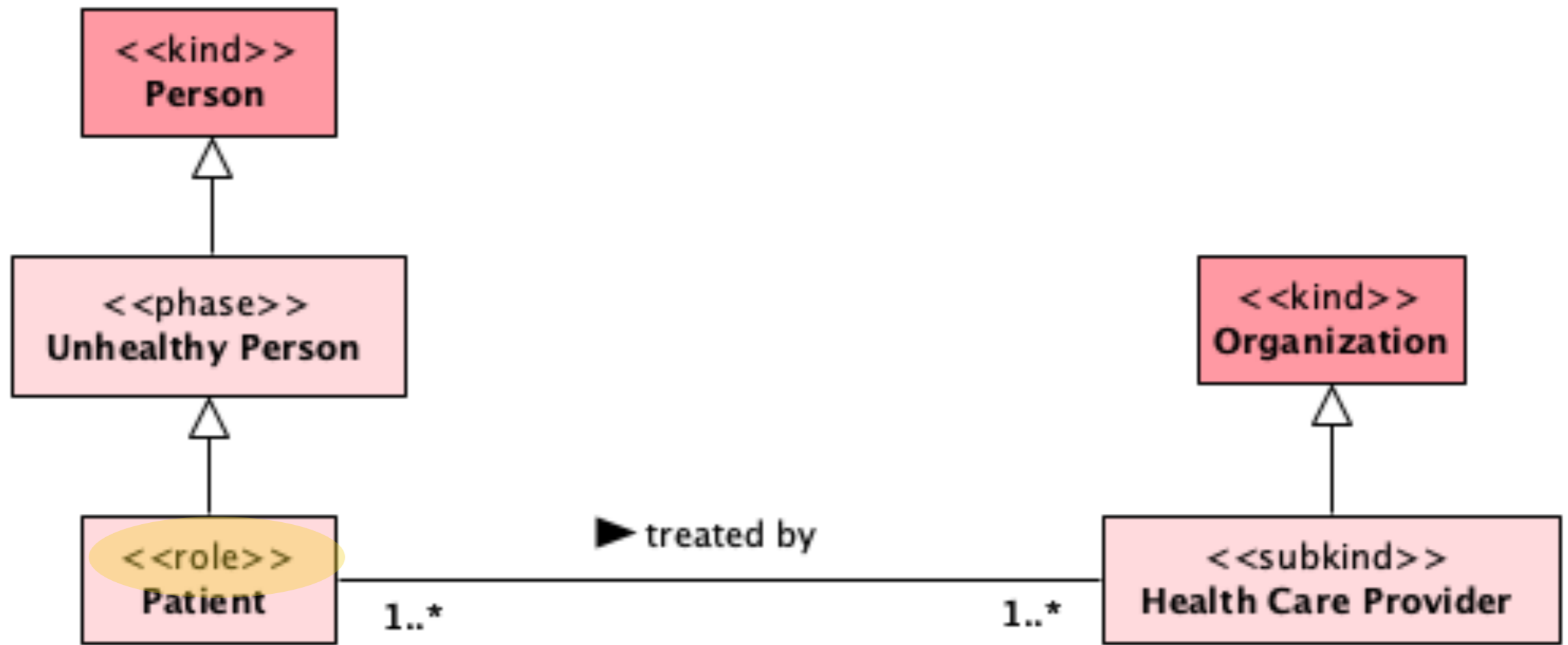
**Material
Relation**

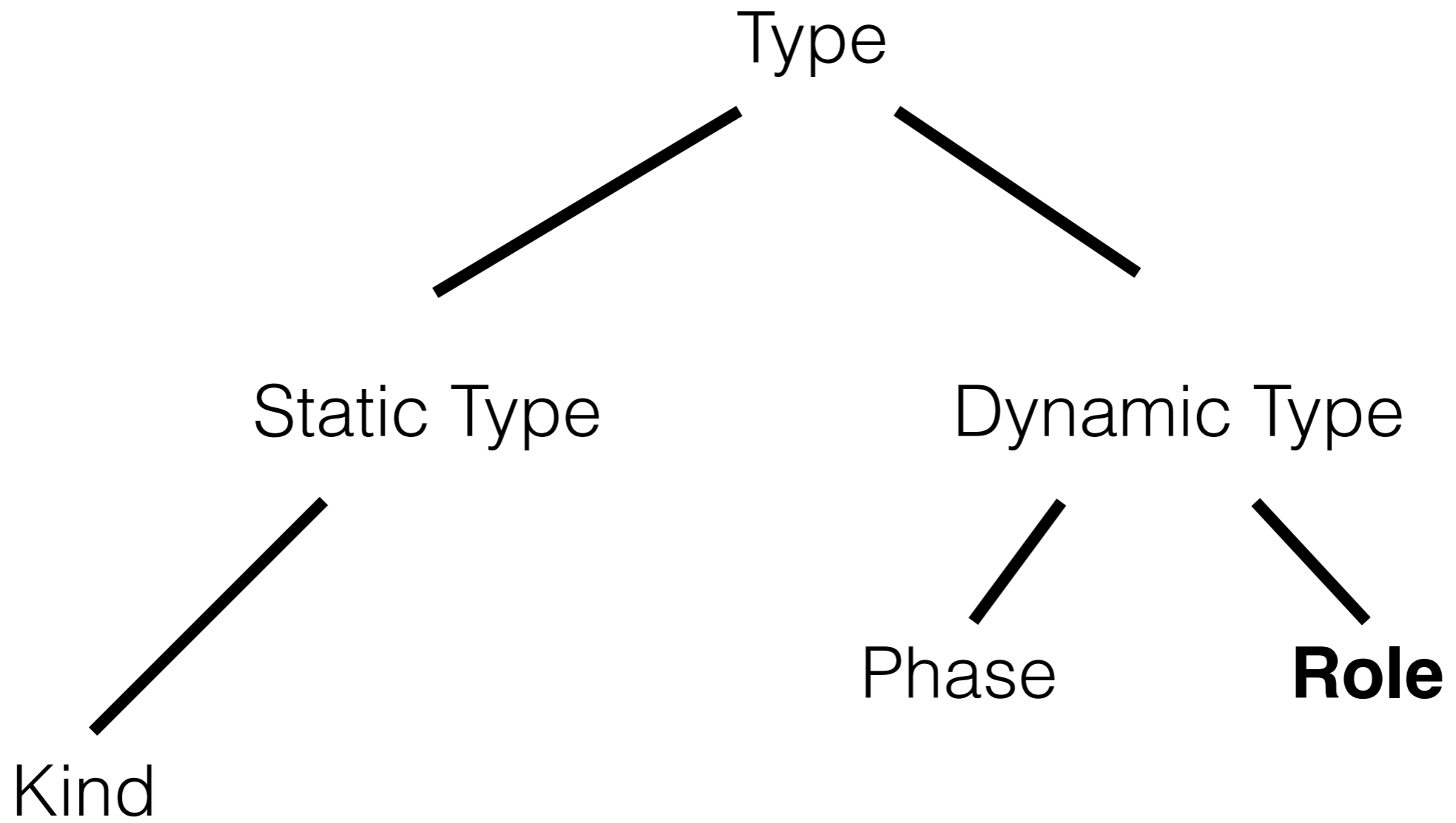
characterization
(Existential Dependence)

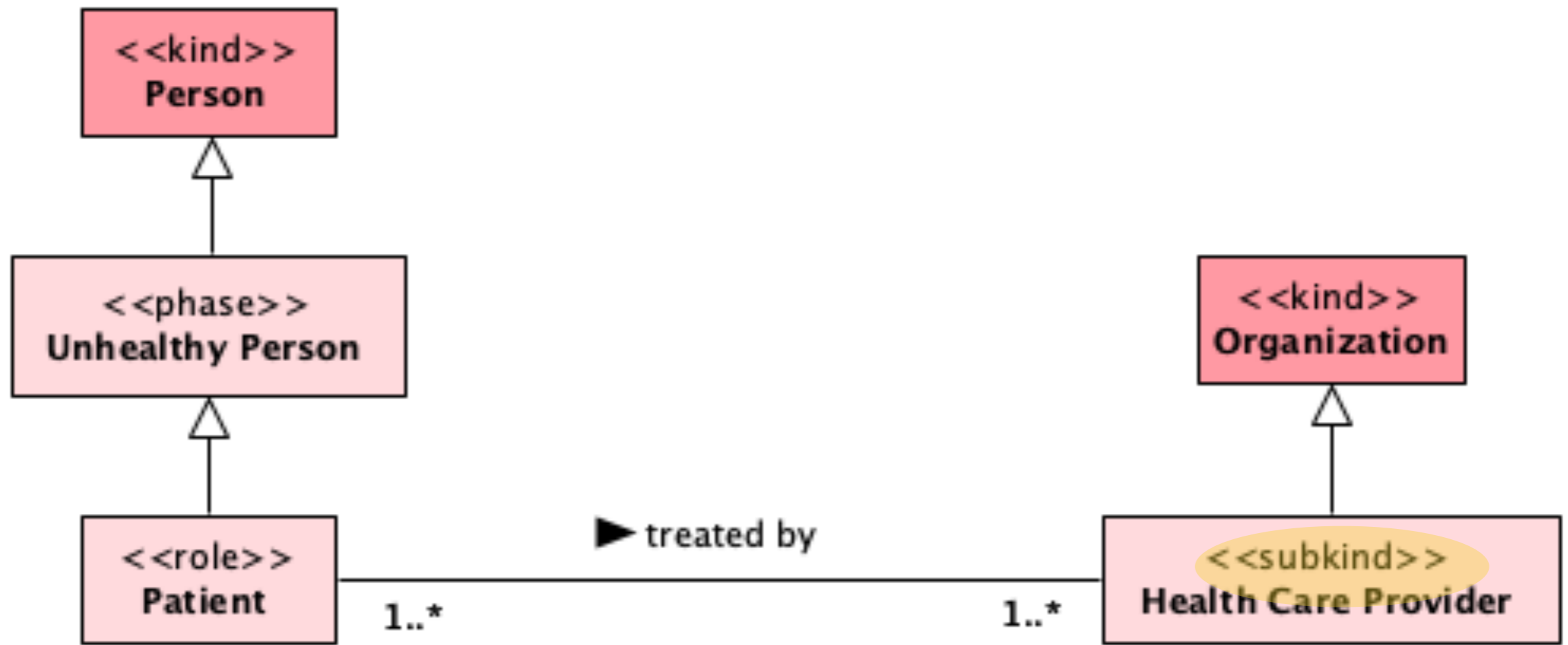
▼ has more serious medical condition

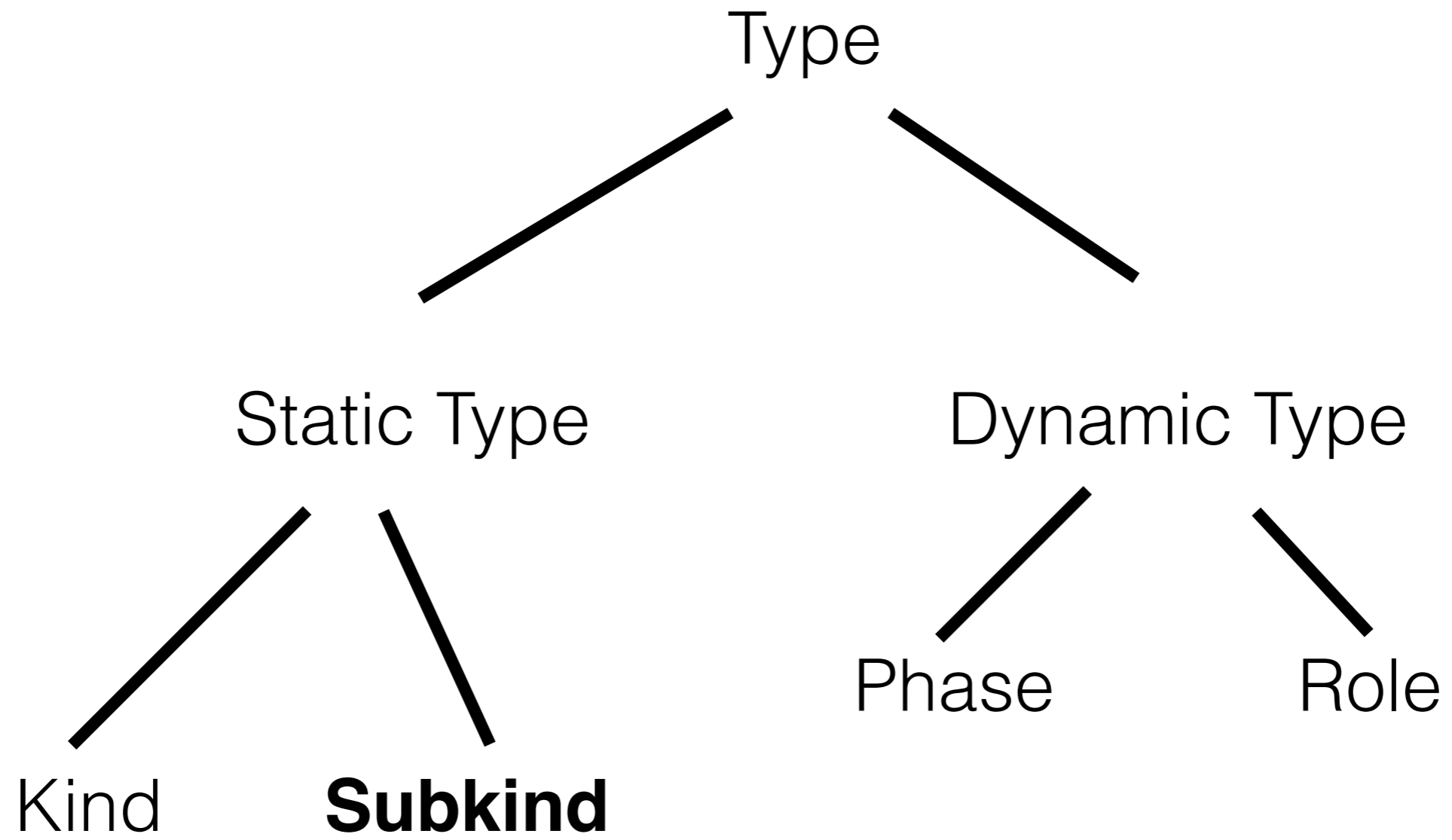


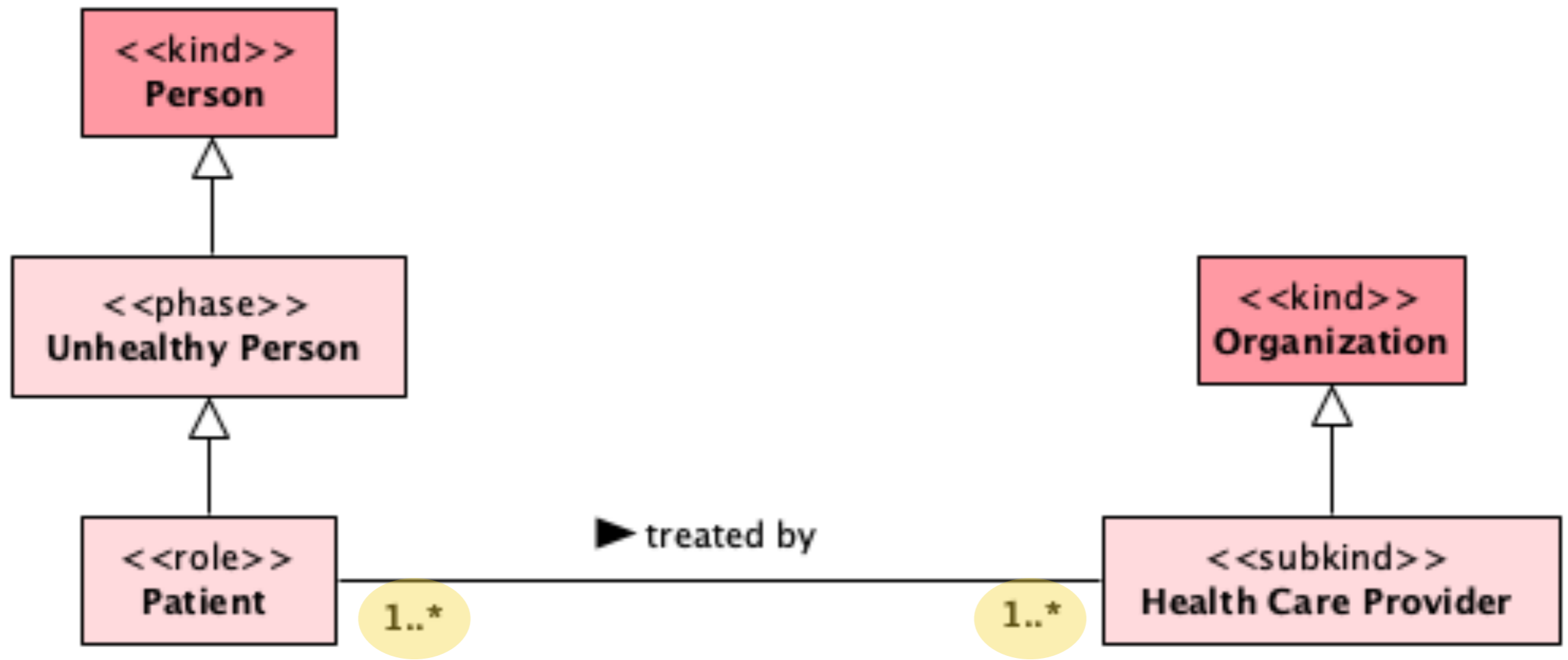












How to interpret 1..* ?

- Given a treatment, there is **exactly one patient, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**

How to interpret 1..* ?

- Given a treatment, there is **exactly one patient, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there are **possibly many patients, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**

How to interpret 1..* ?

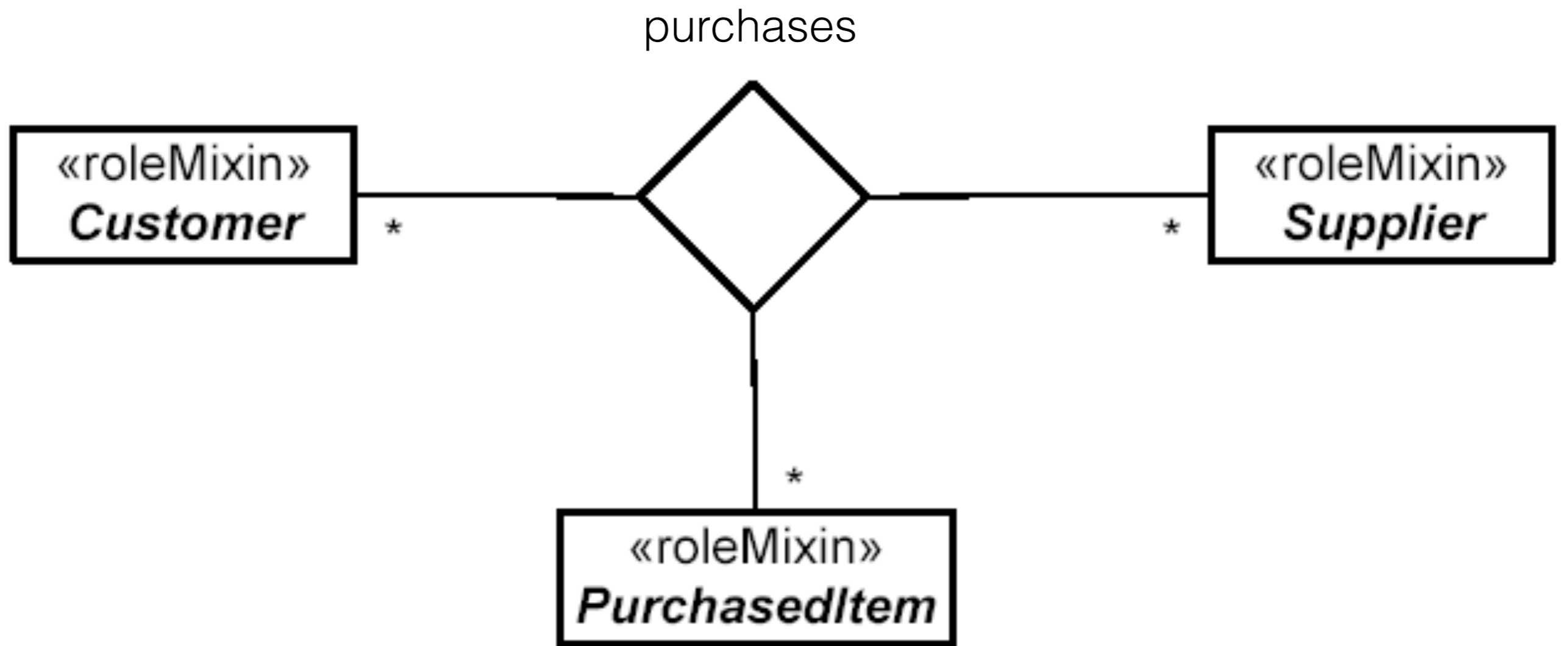
- Given a treatment, there is **exactly one patient, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there are **possibly many patients, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there is **exactly one patient, possibly many healthcare providers** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**

How to interpret 1..* ?

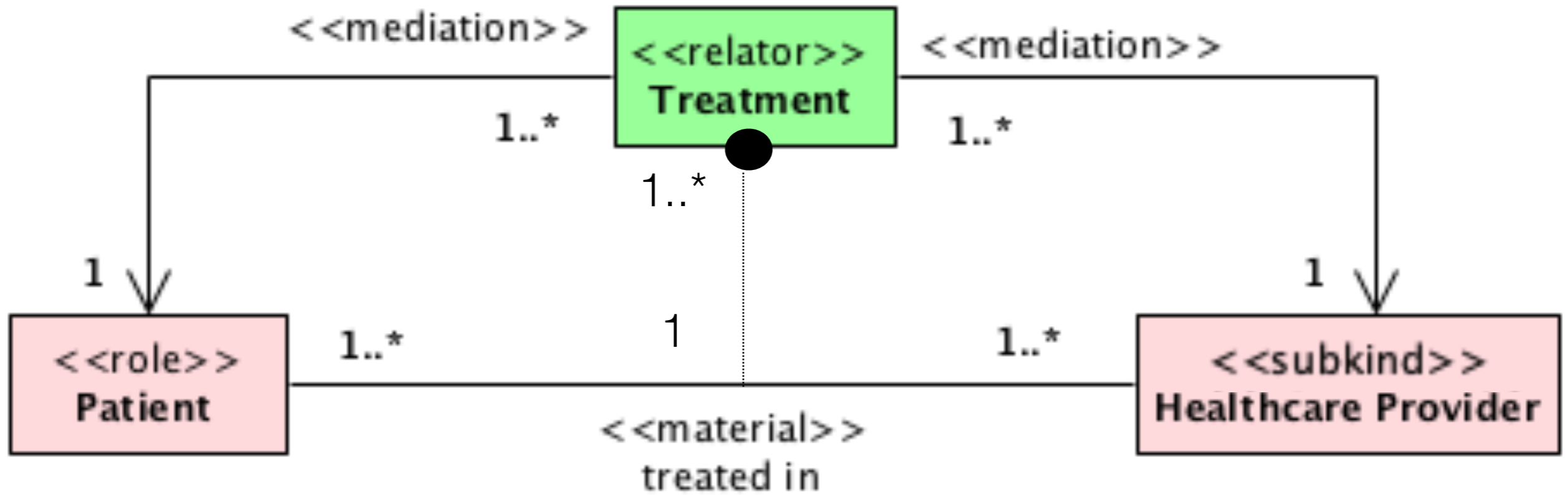
- Given a treatment, there is **exactly one patient, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there are **possibly many patients, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there is **exactly one patient, possibly many healthcare providers** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there are **possibly many patients, possibly many healthcare providers** and **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**

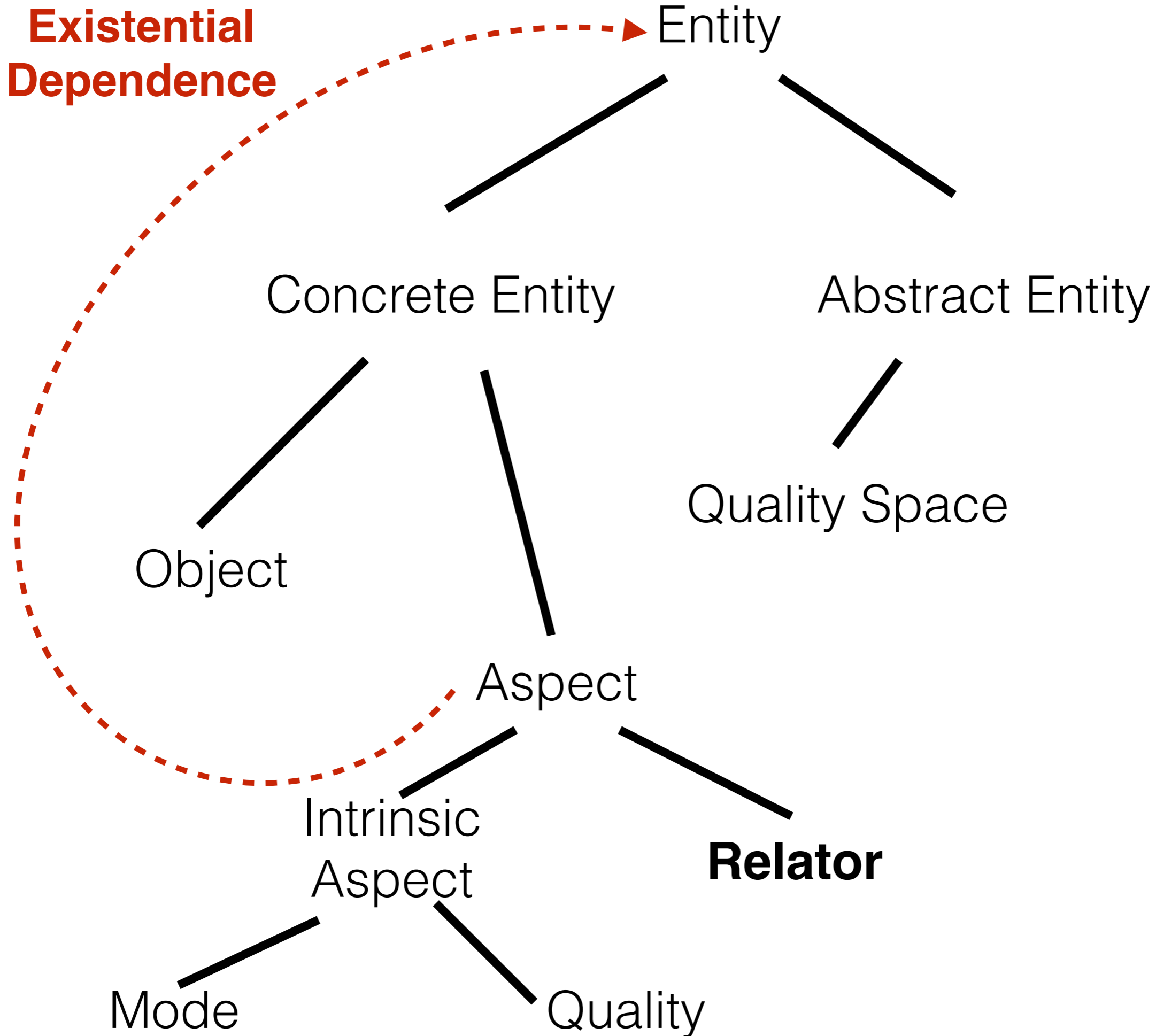
How to interpret 1..* ?

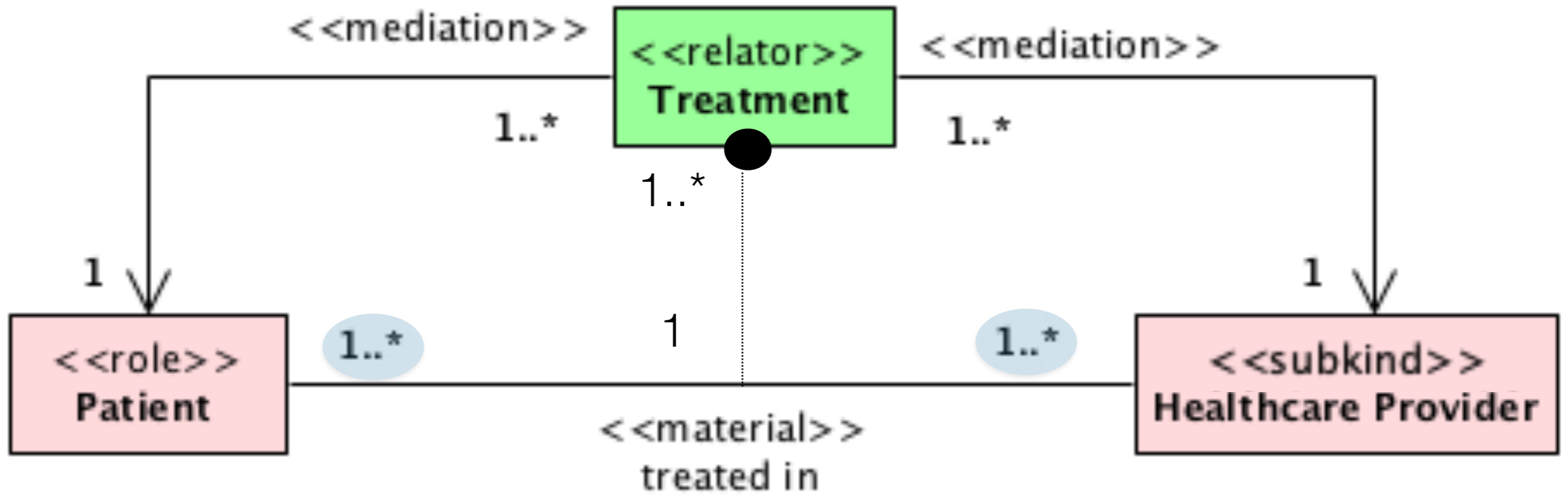
- Given a treatment, there is **exactly one patient, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there are **possibly many patients, exactly one healthcare provider** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there is **exactly one patient, possibly many healthcare providers** but **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there are **possibly many patients, possibly many healthcare providers** and **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in many treatments**
- Given a treatment, there are **possibly many patients, possibly many healthcare providers** and **both** patient and healthcare provider **can participate in exactly one treatment**
- ...

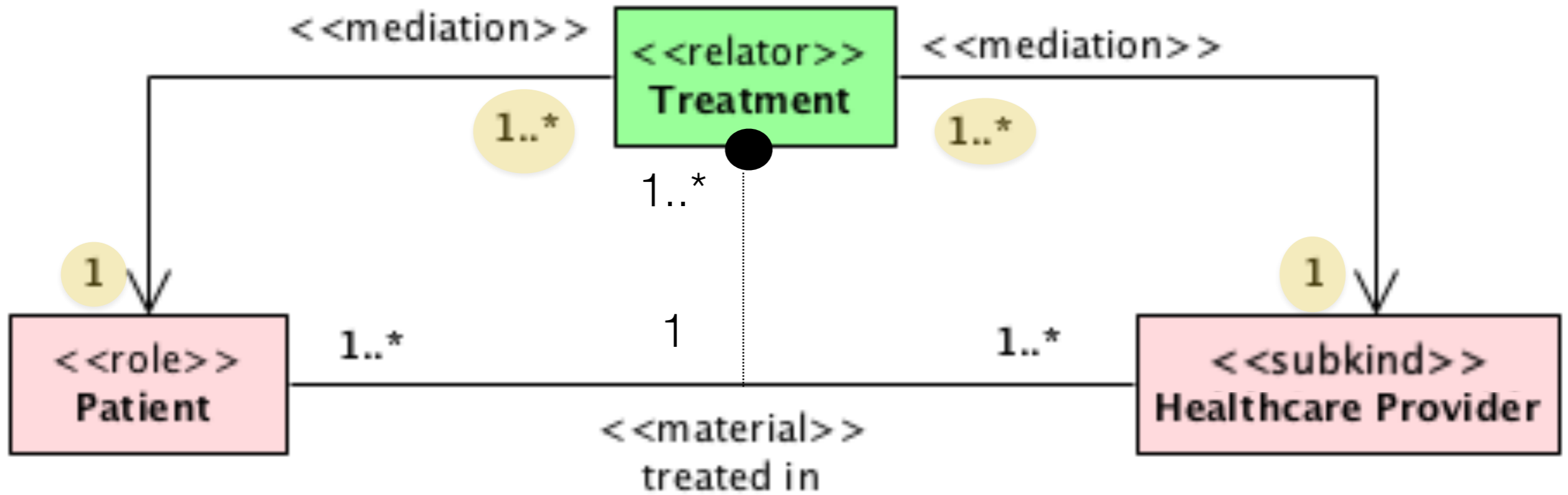


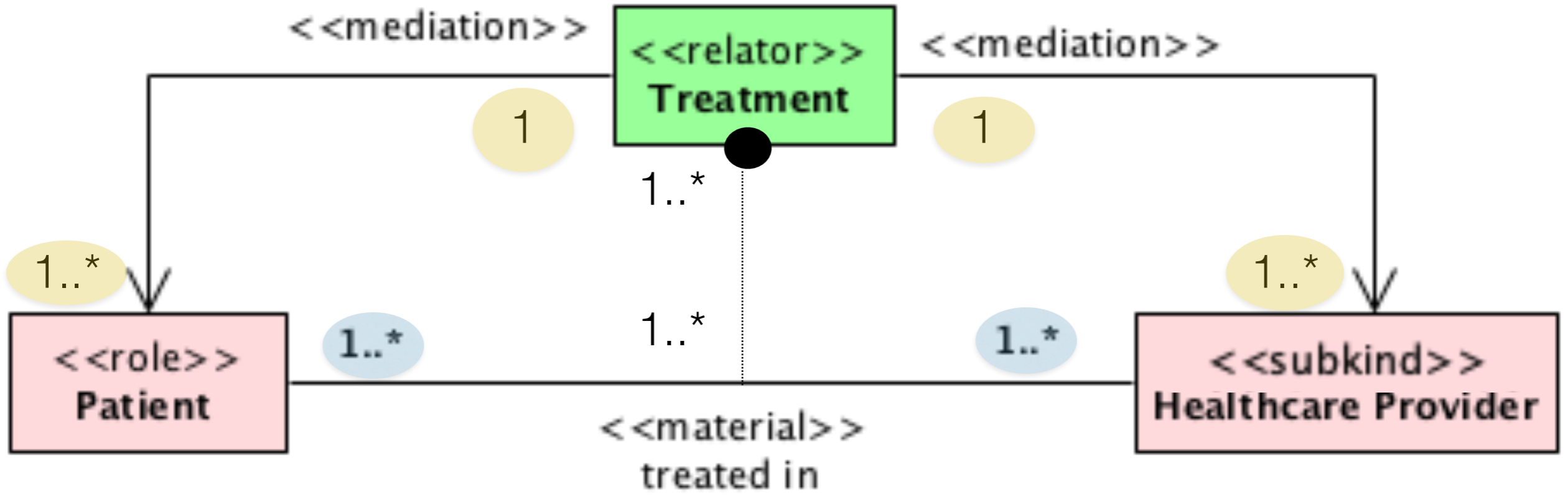
1. In a given purchase, a Customer participates by buying many items from many Suppliers and a customer can participate in several purchases;
2. In a given purchase, many Customers participate by buying many items from many Suppliers, and a customer can participate in only one purchase;
3. In given purchase, a Customer participates by buying many items from a Supplier, and a customer can participate in several purchases;
4. In given purchase, many Customers participate by buying many items from a Supplier, and a customer can participate in several purchases
5. ...

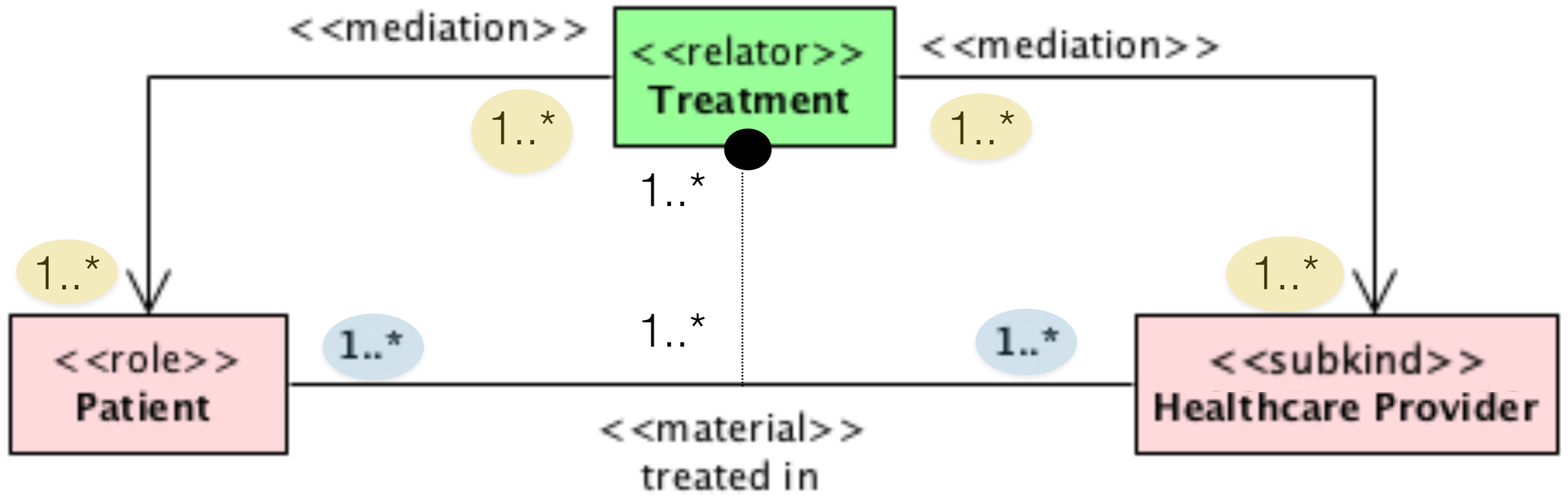


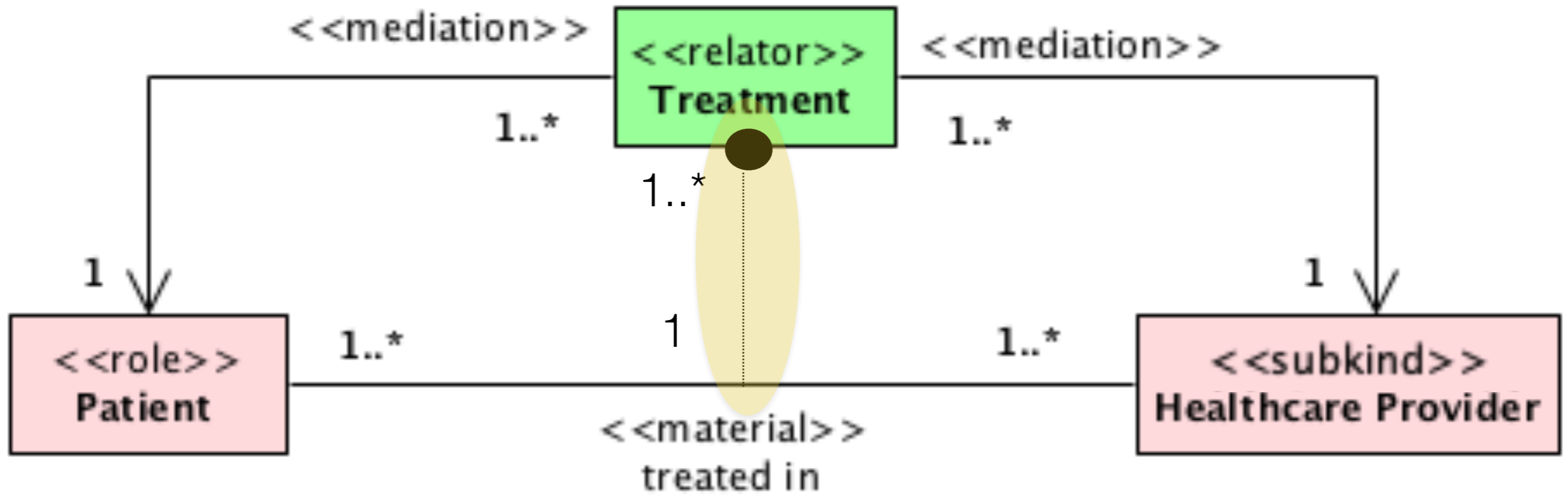


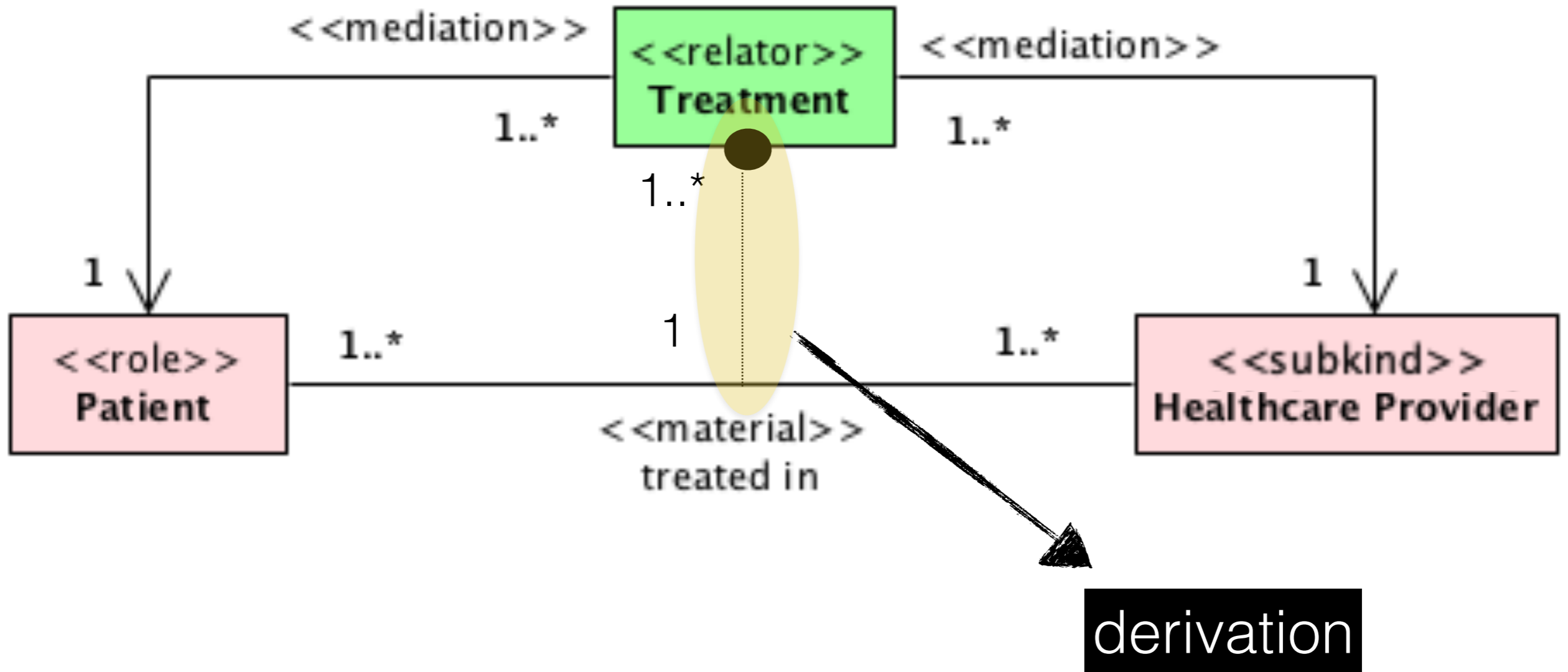


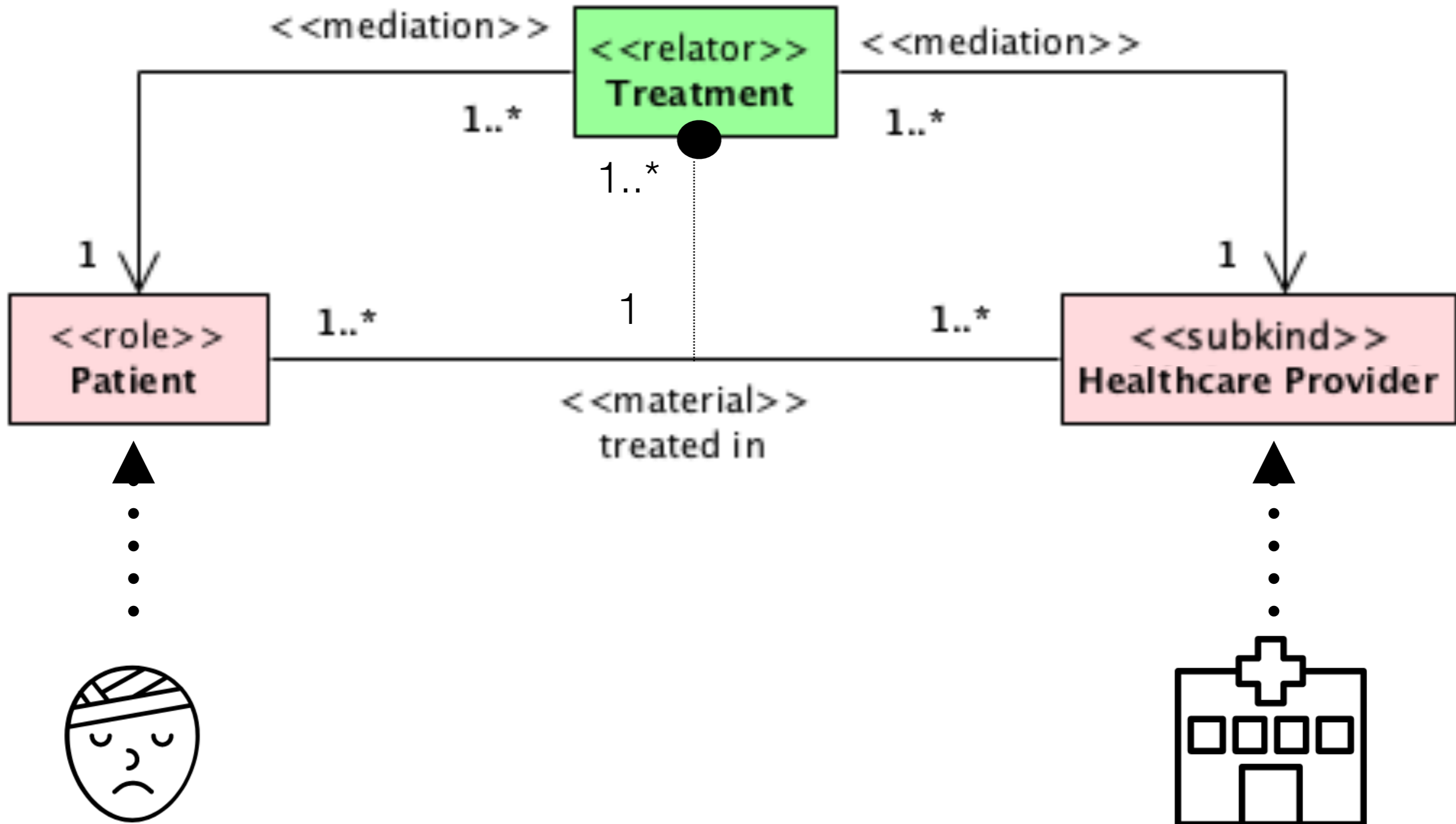


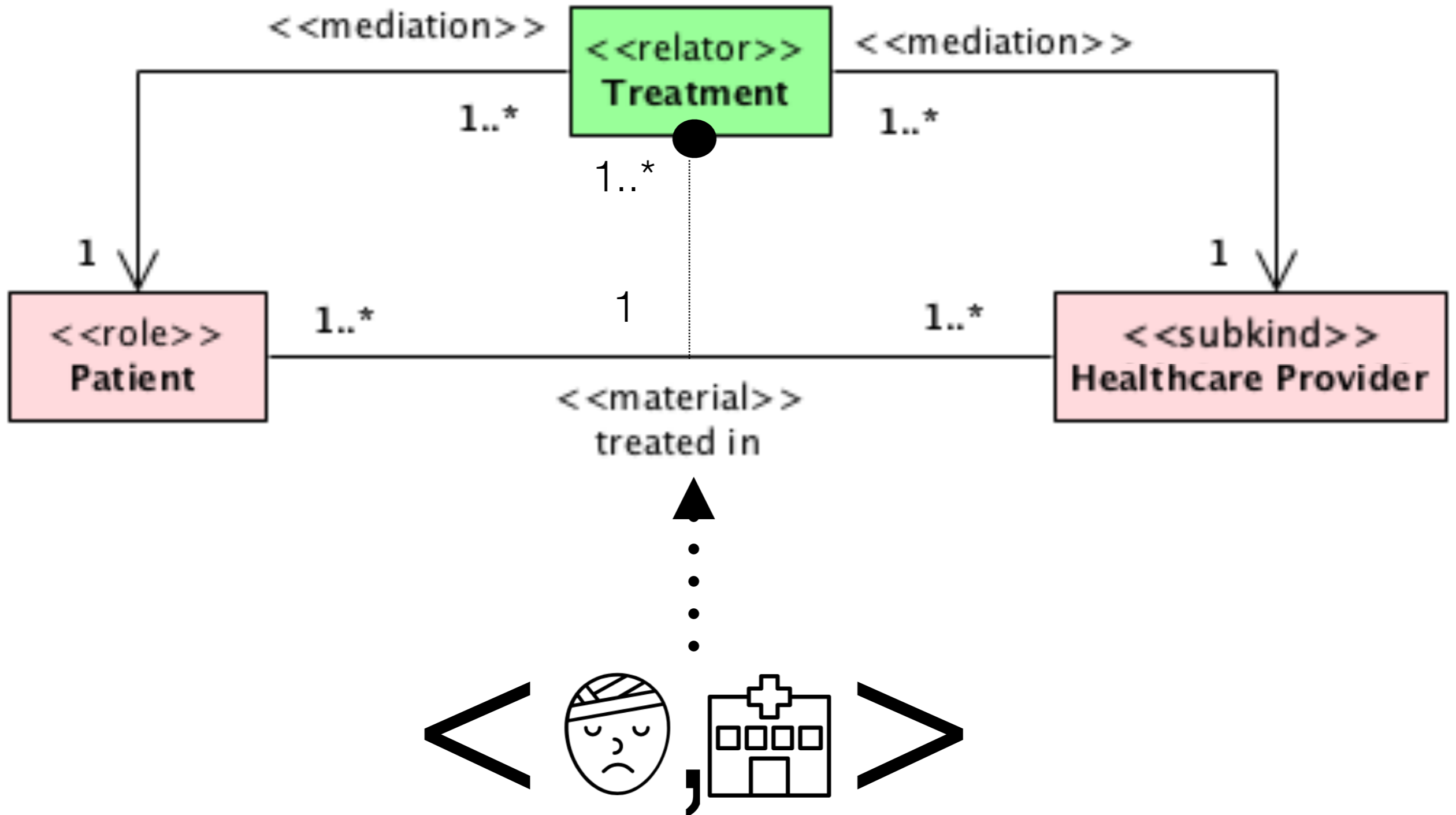


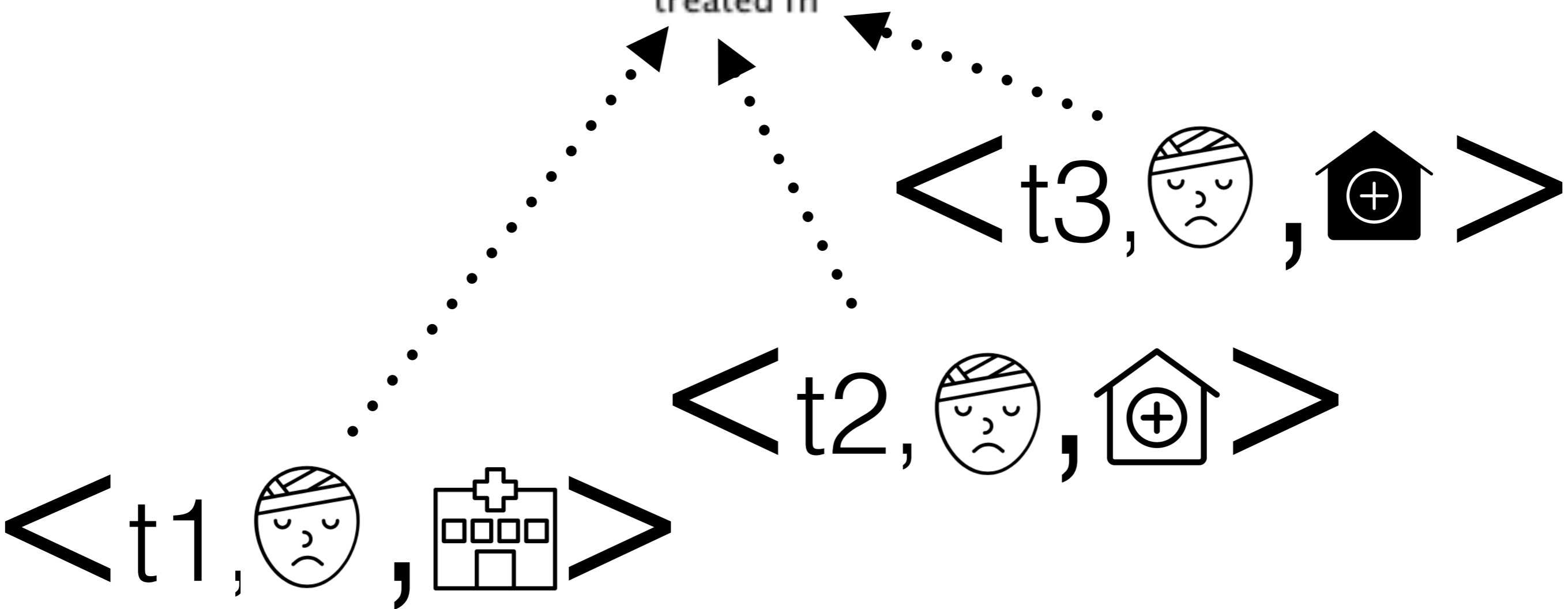
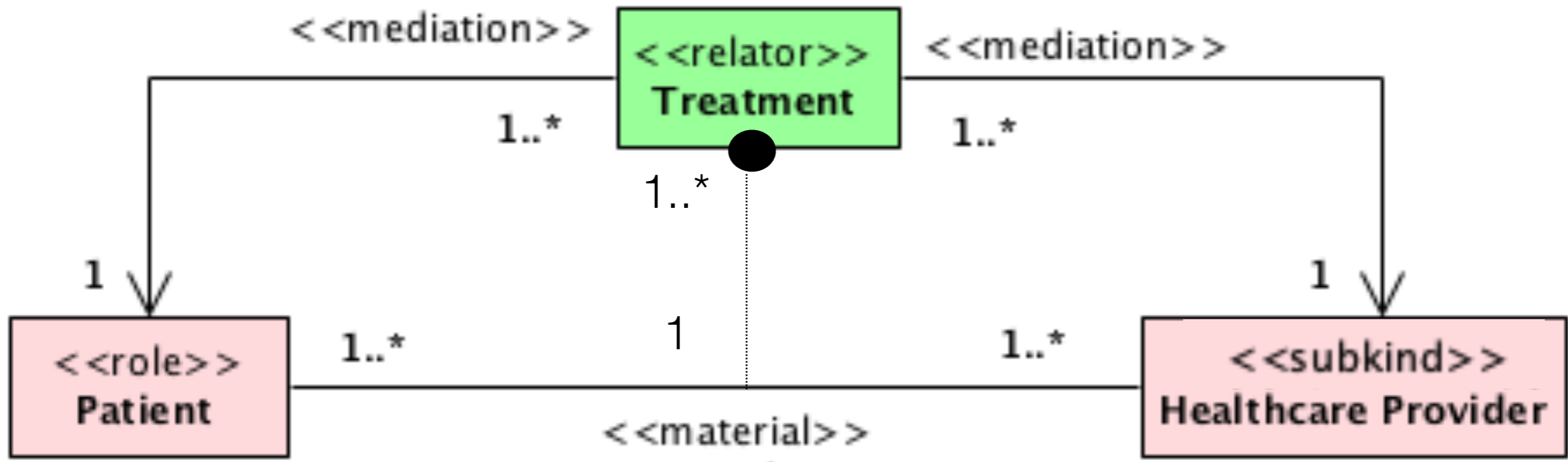


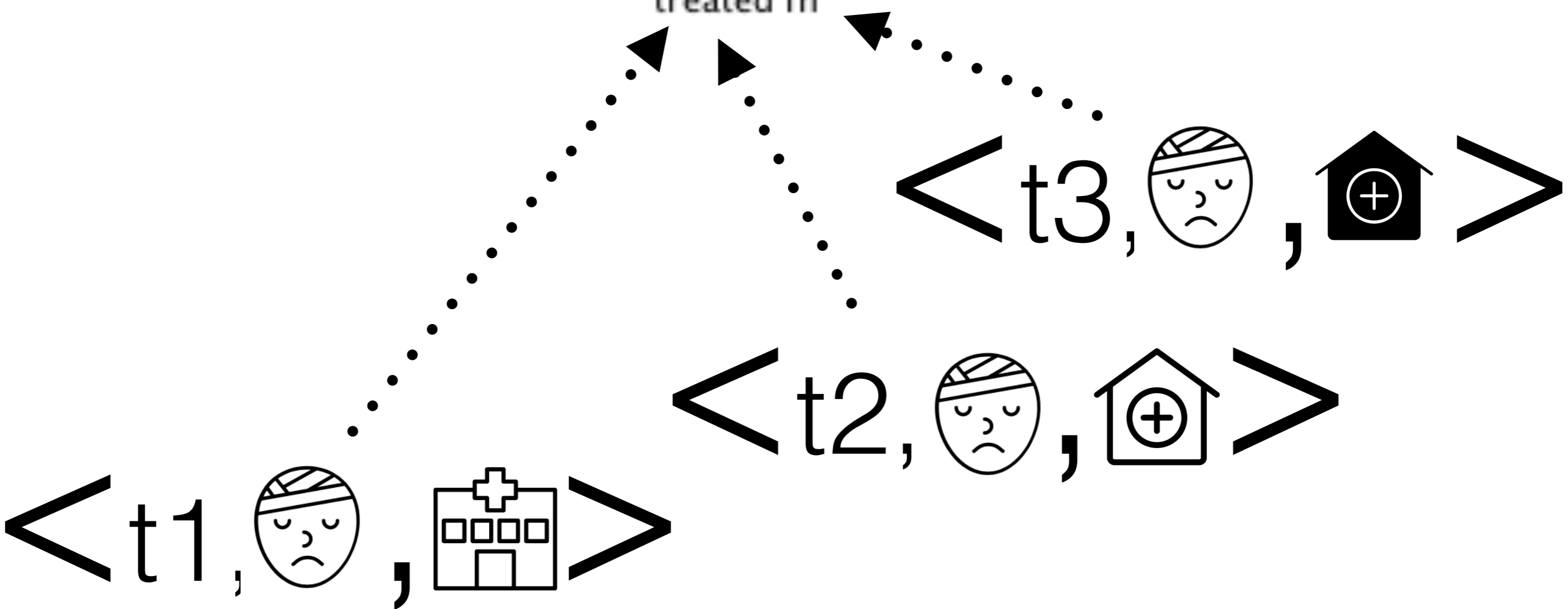
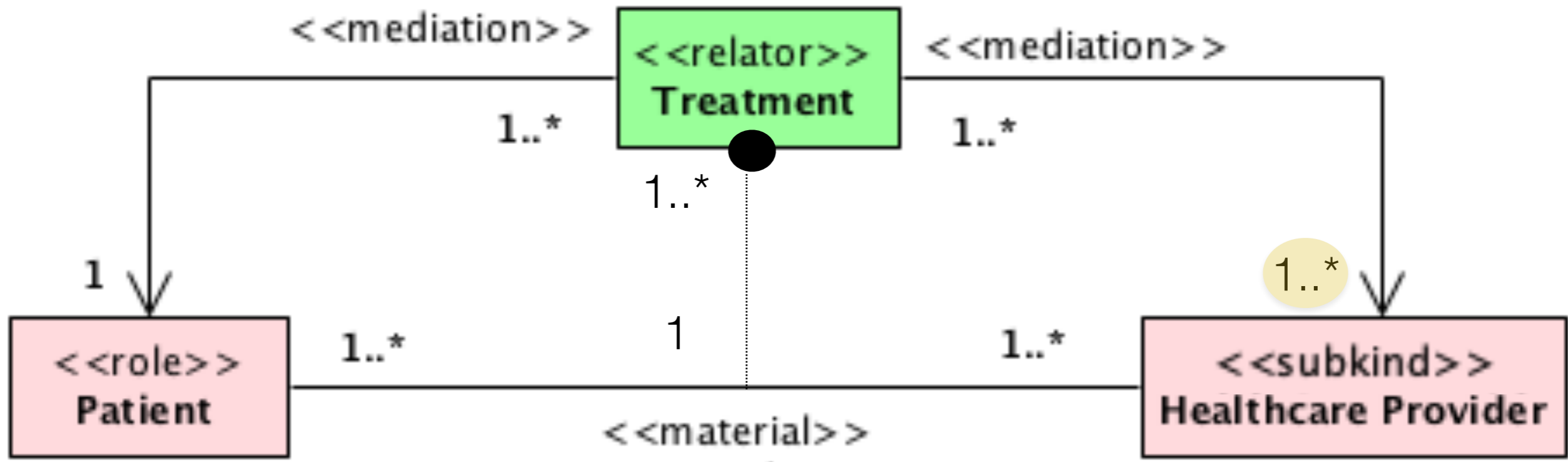




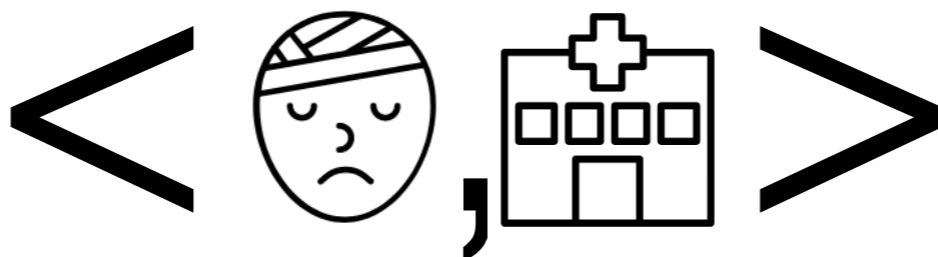
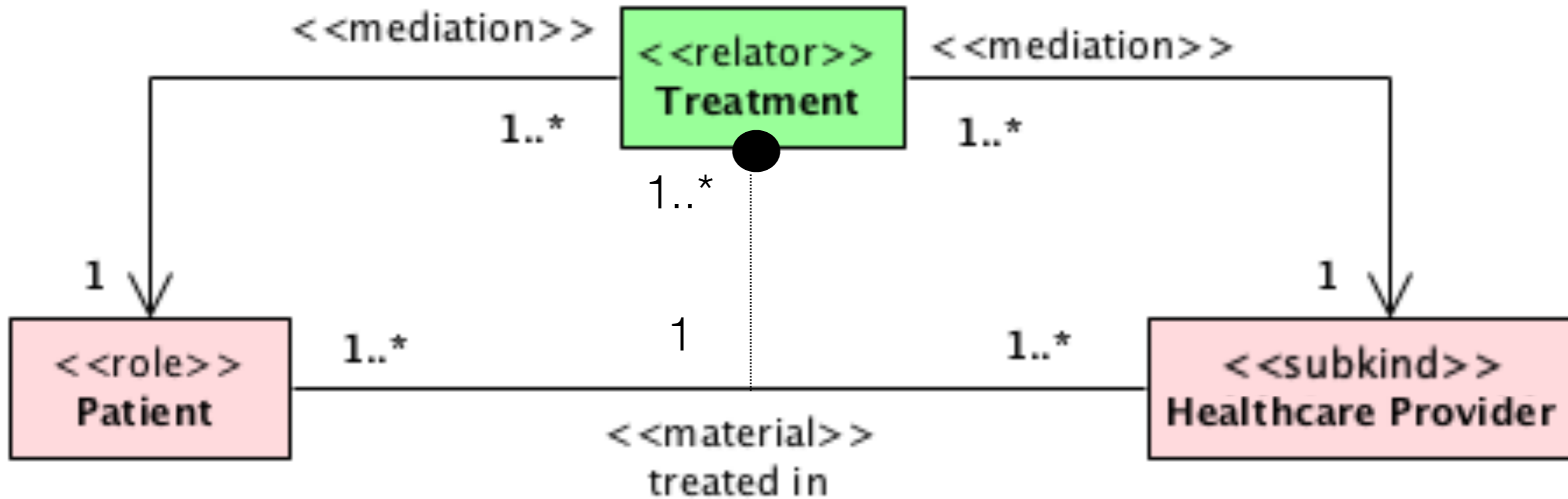


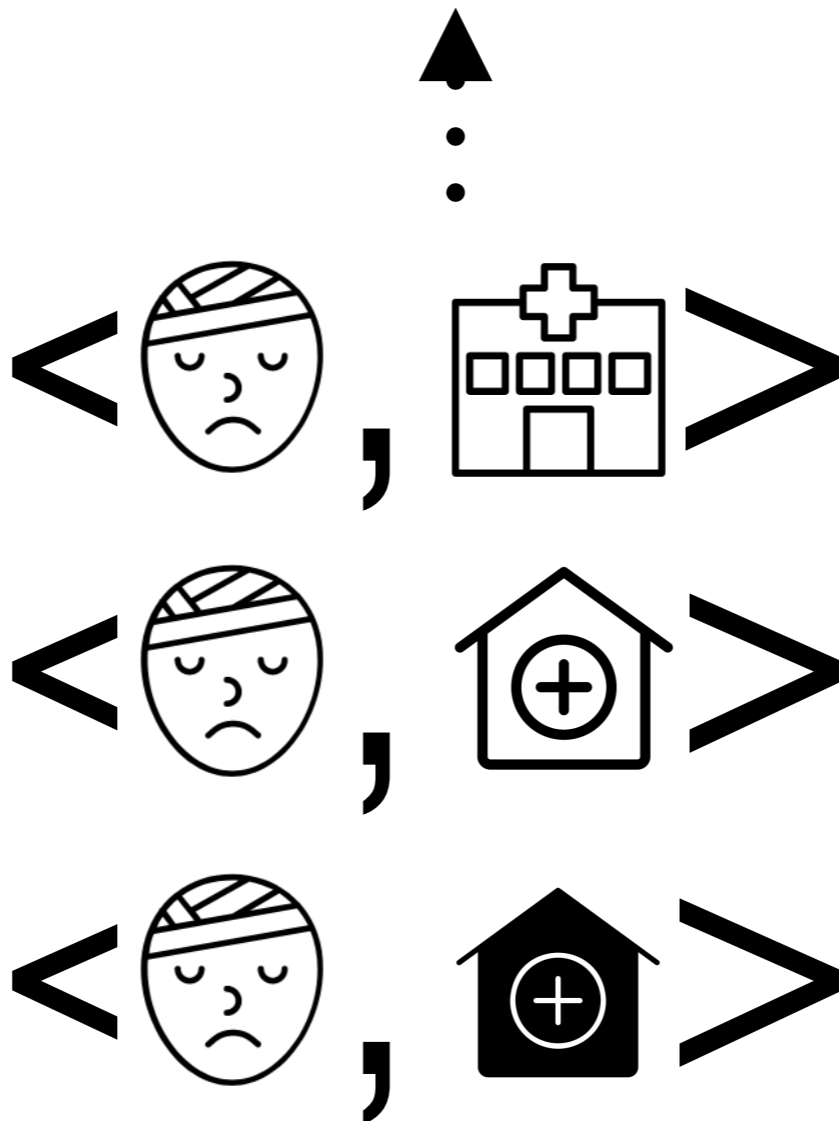
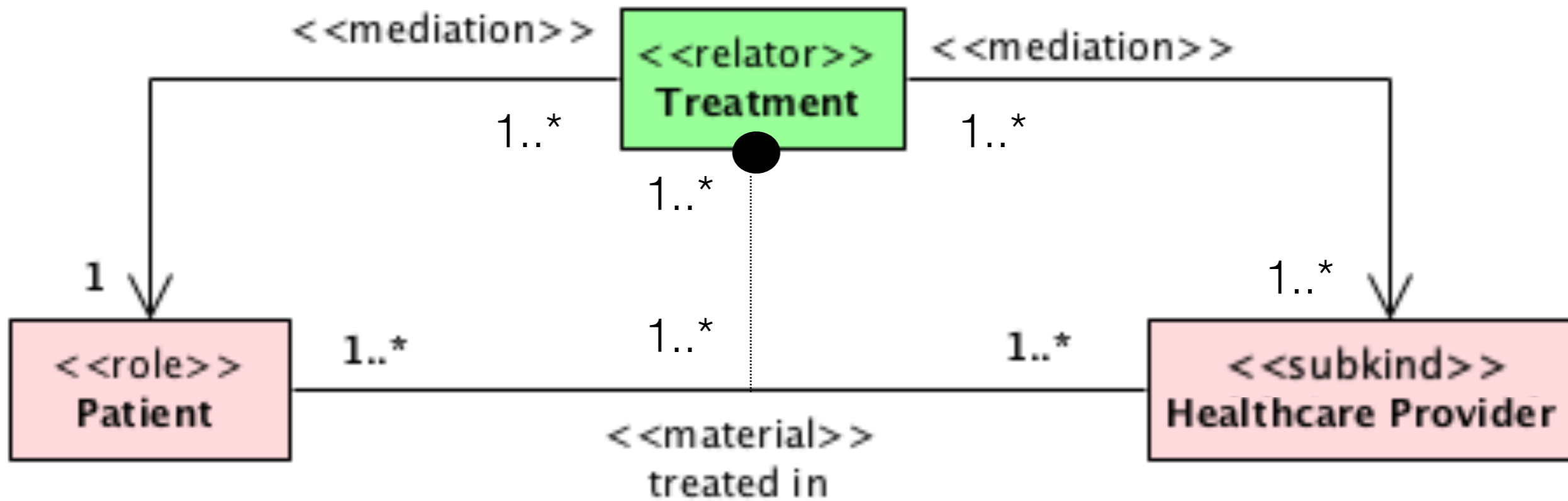


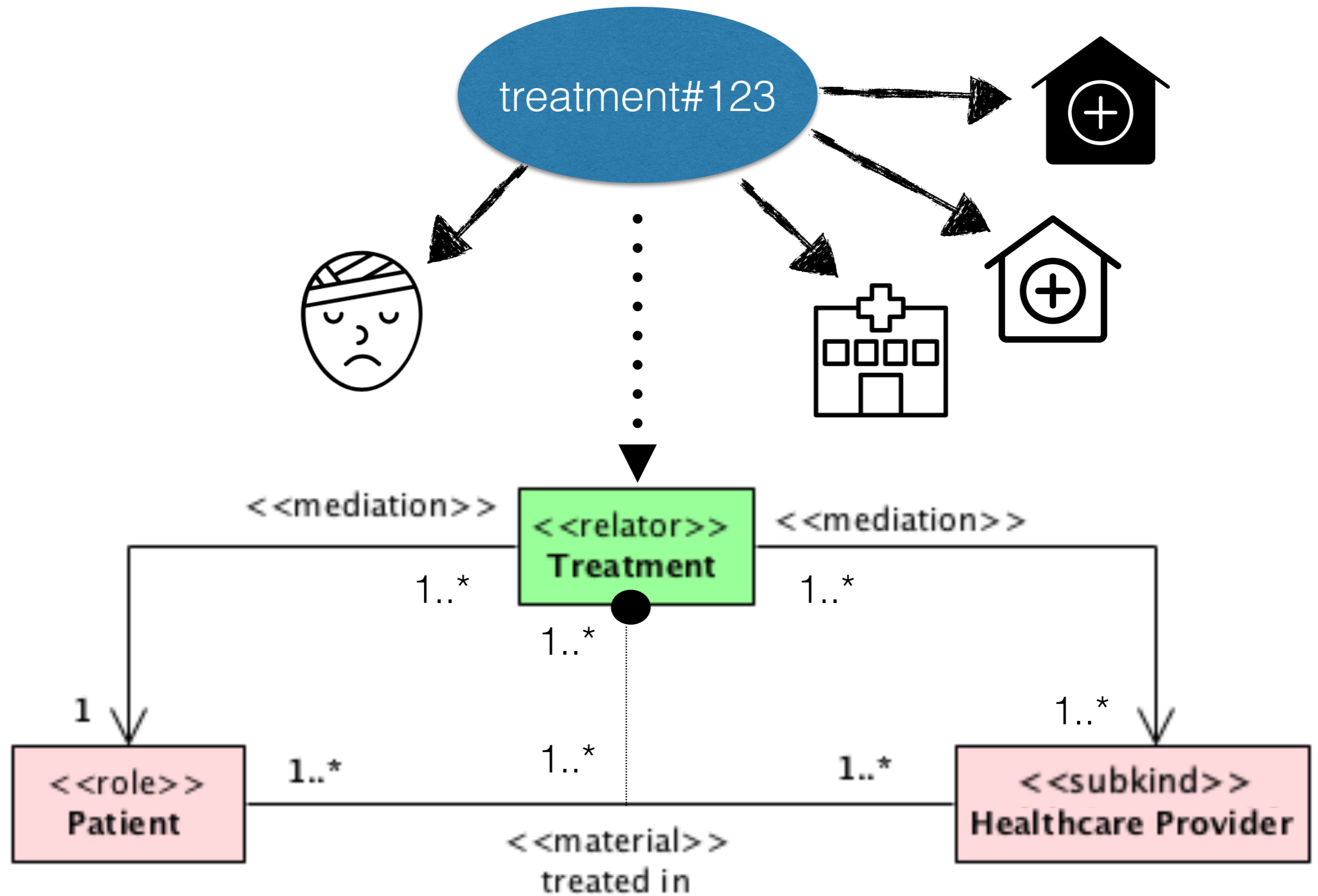


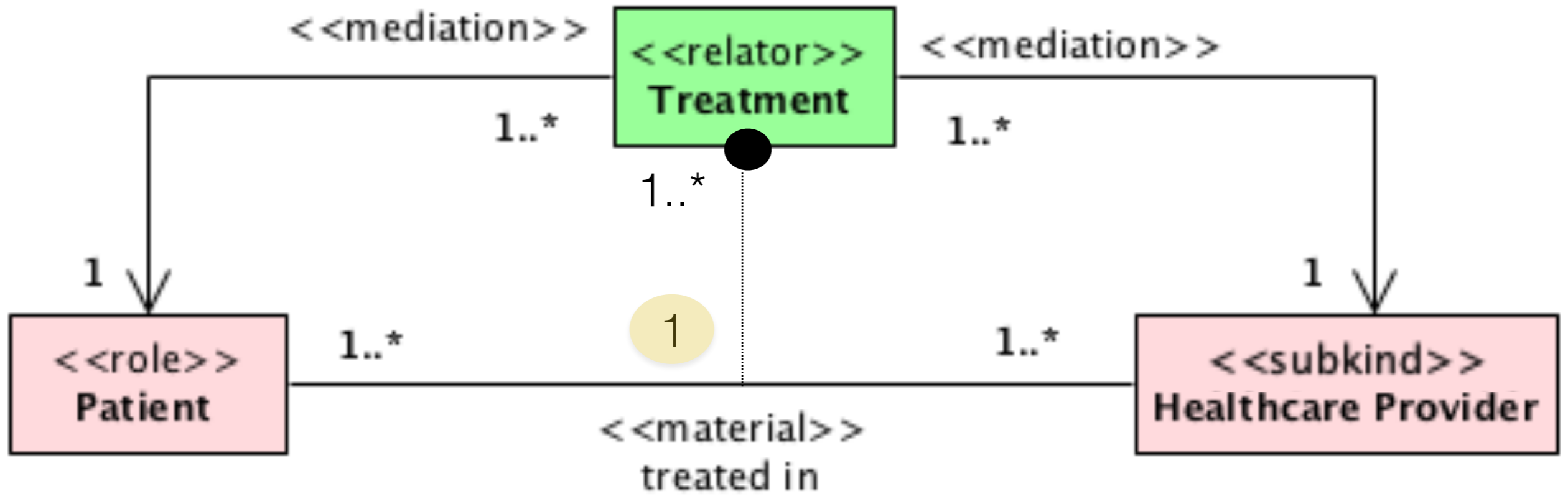


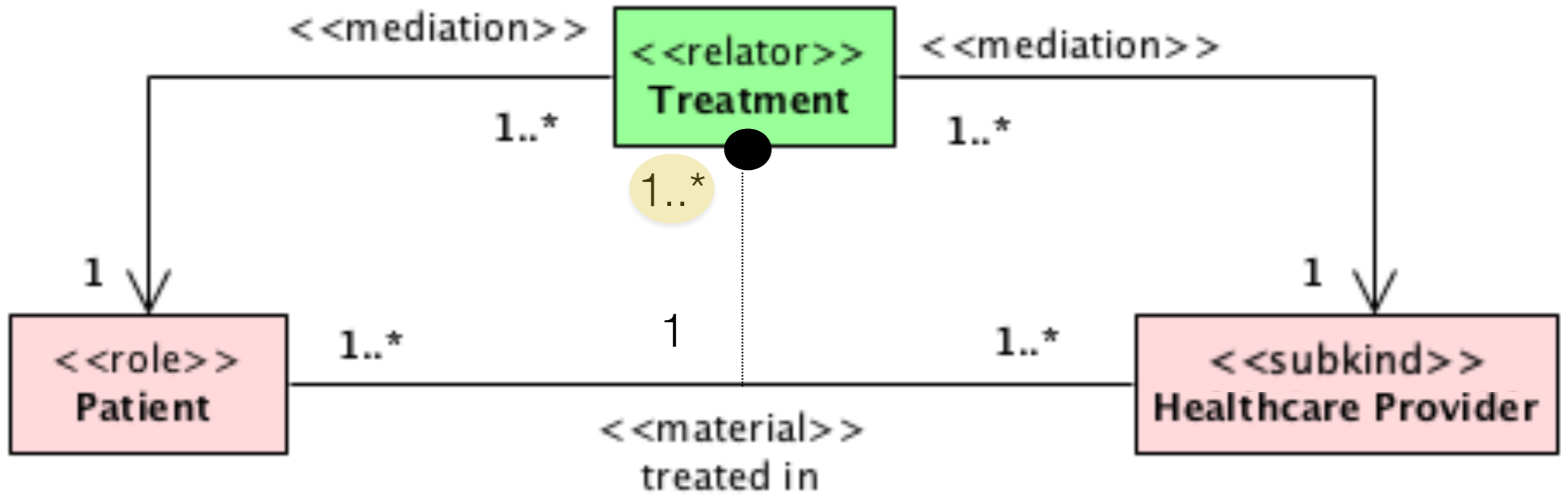
treatment#123

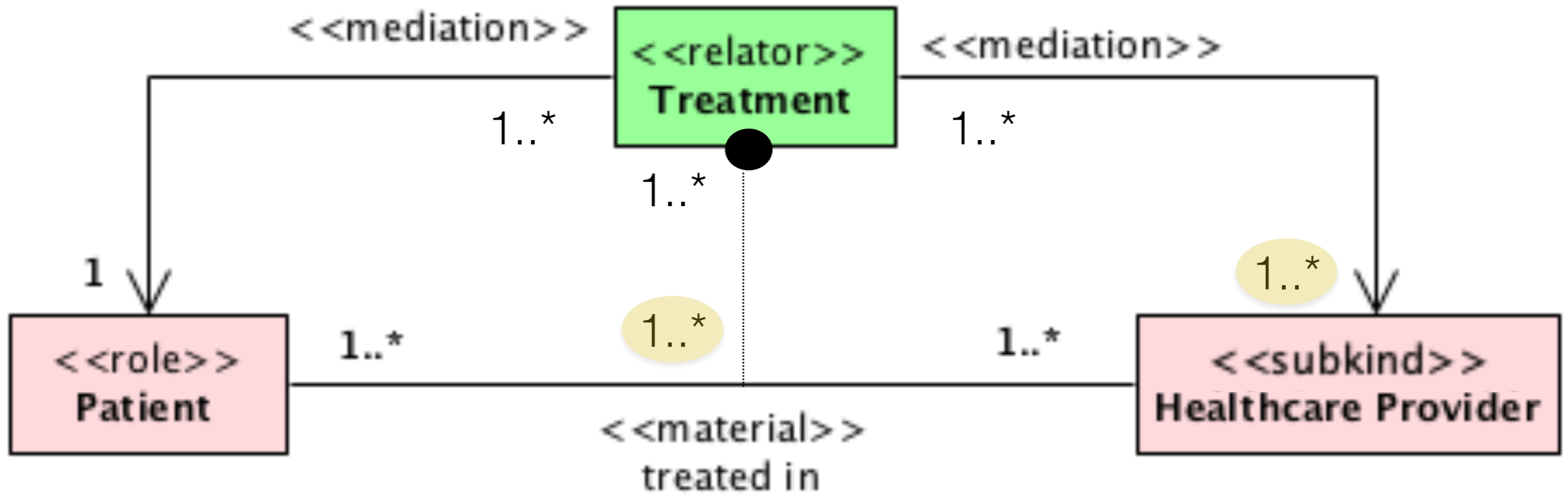


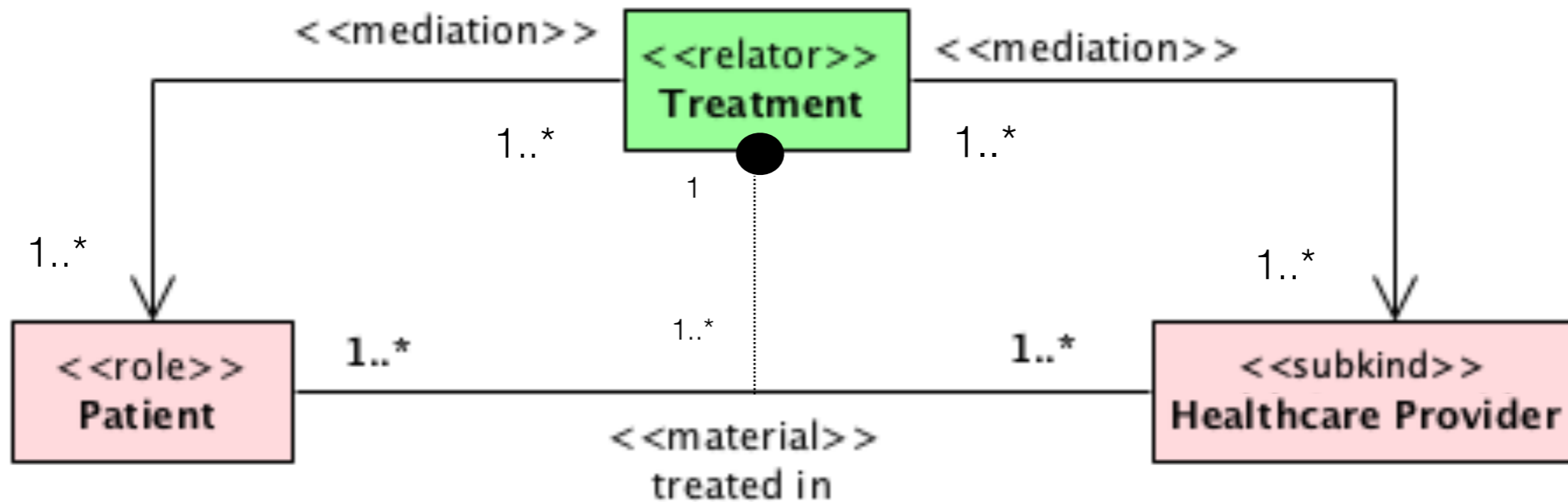
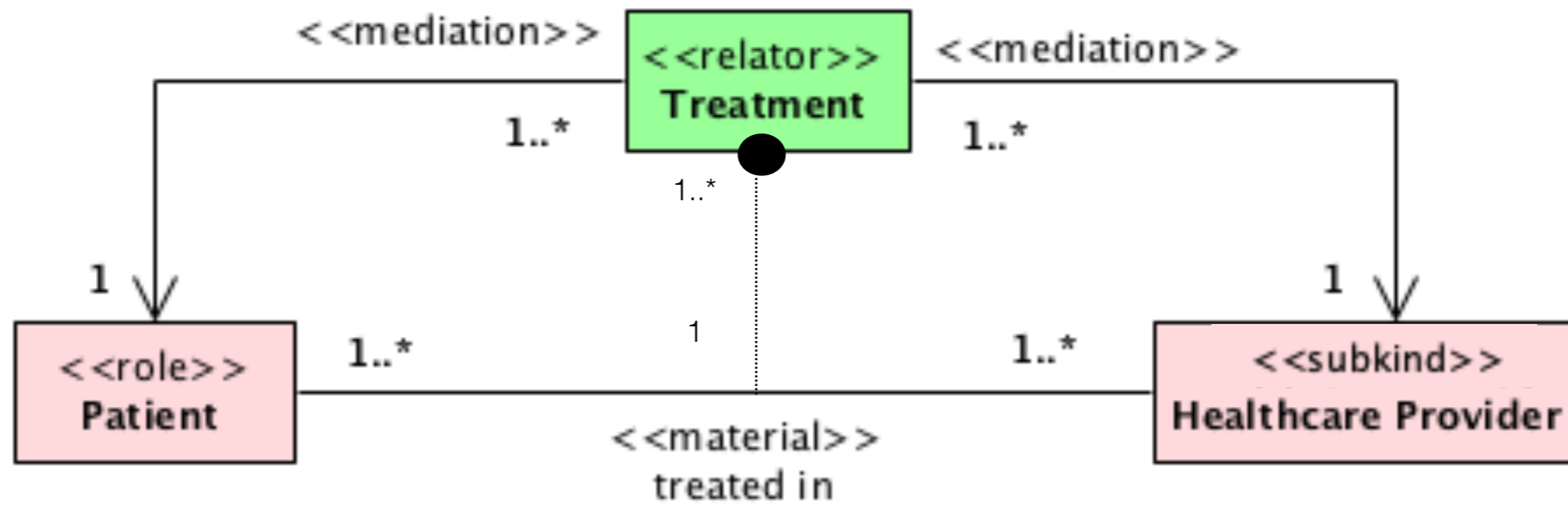


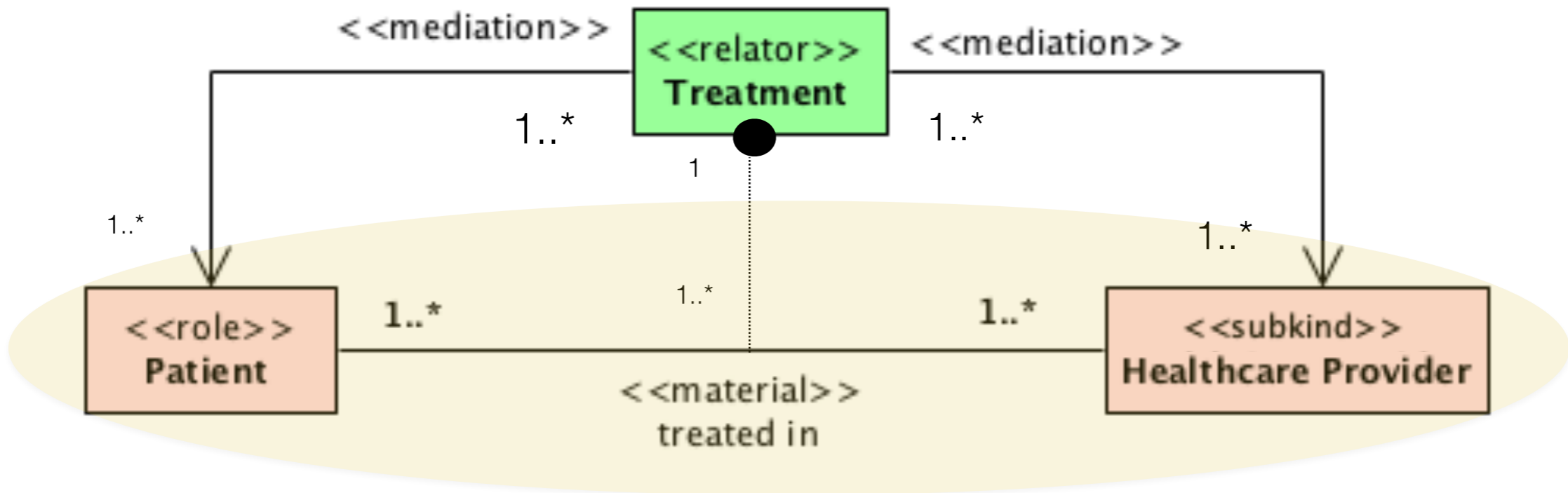
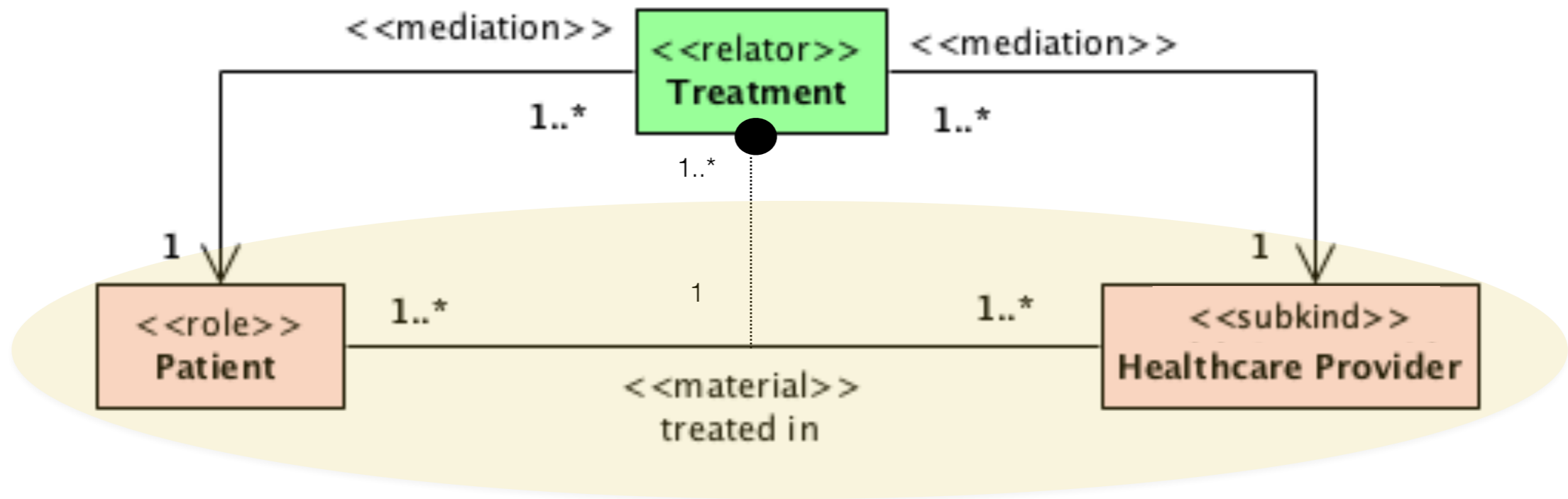






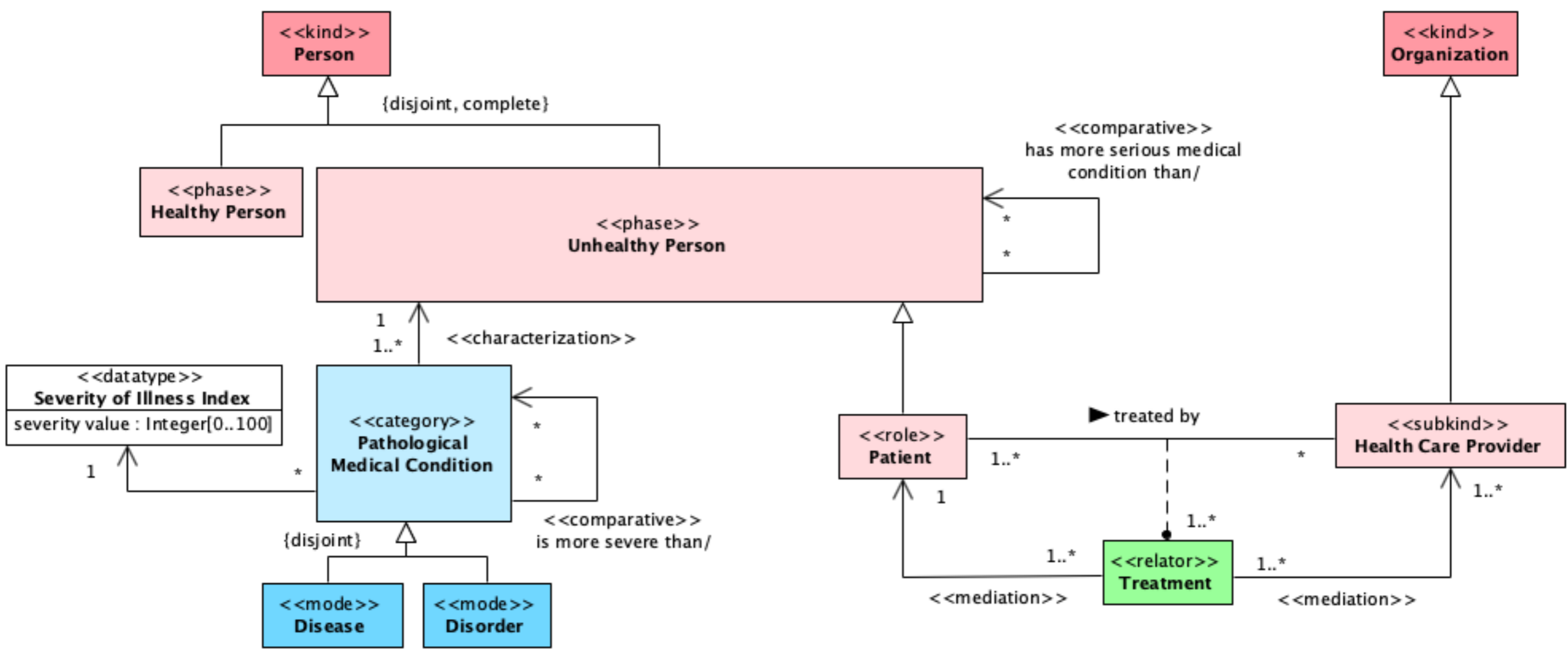


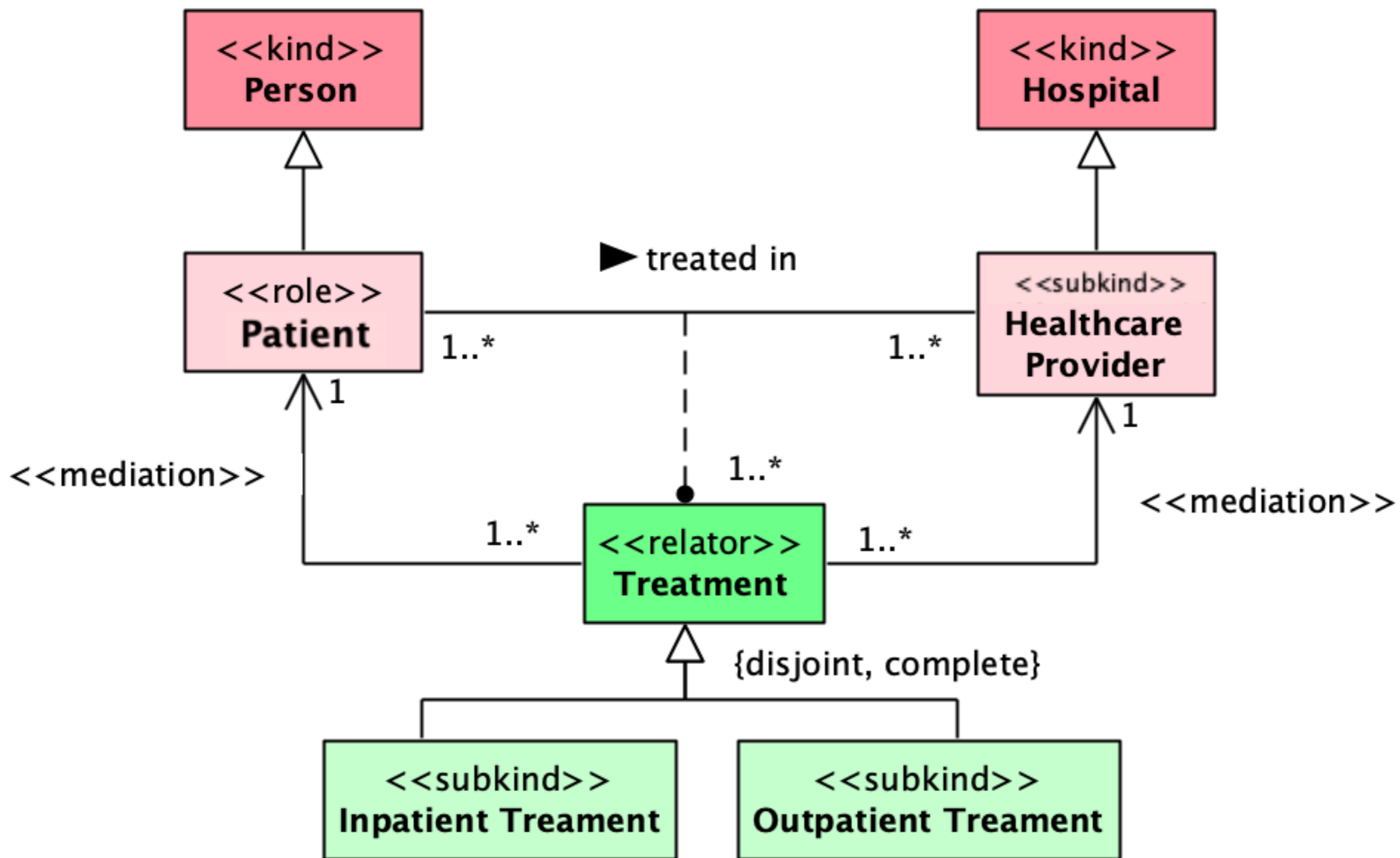


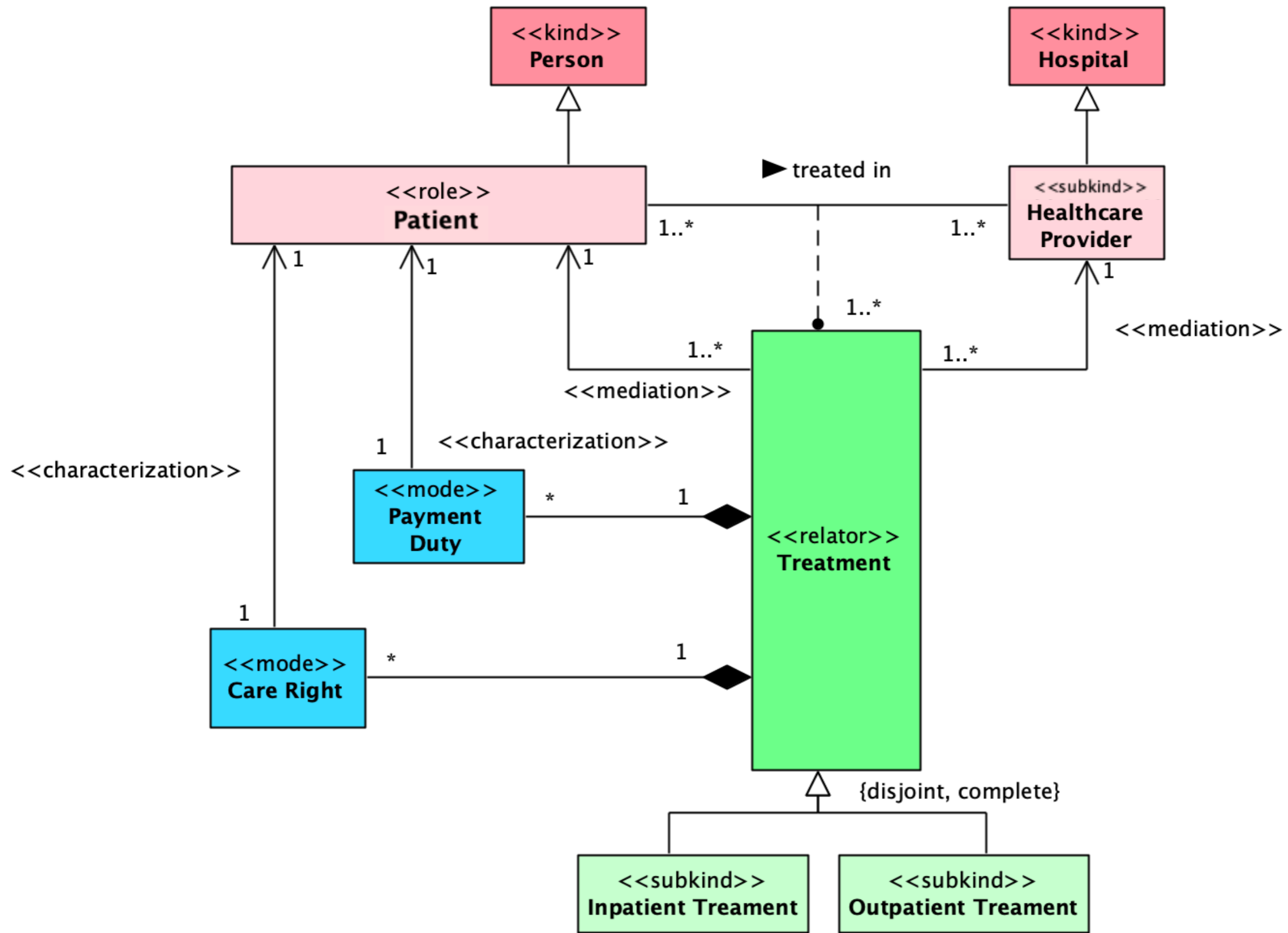


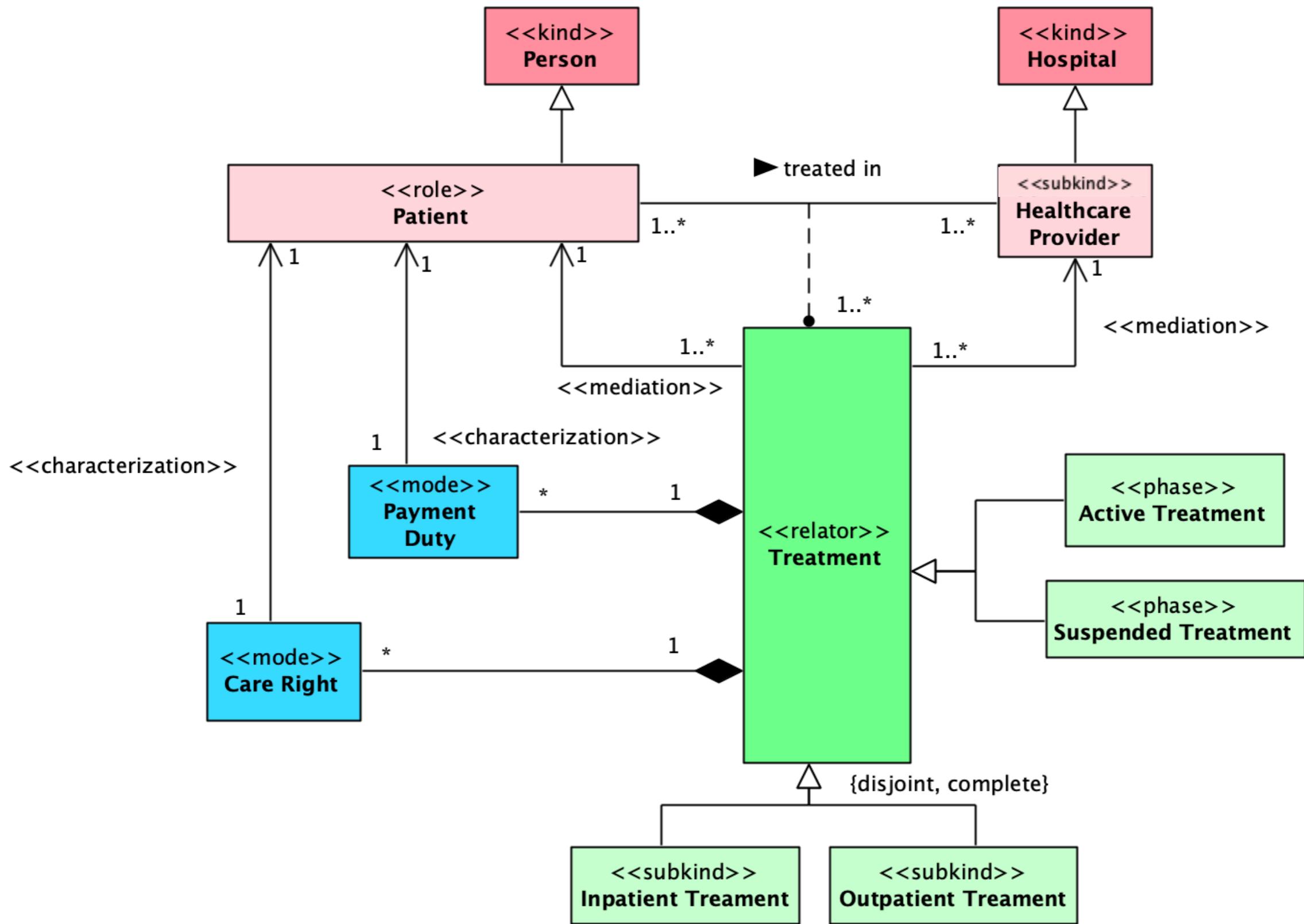
▼ has more serious medical condition

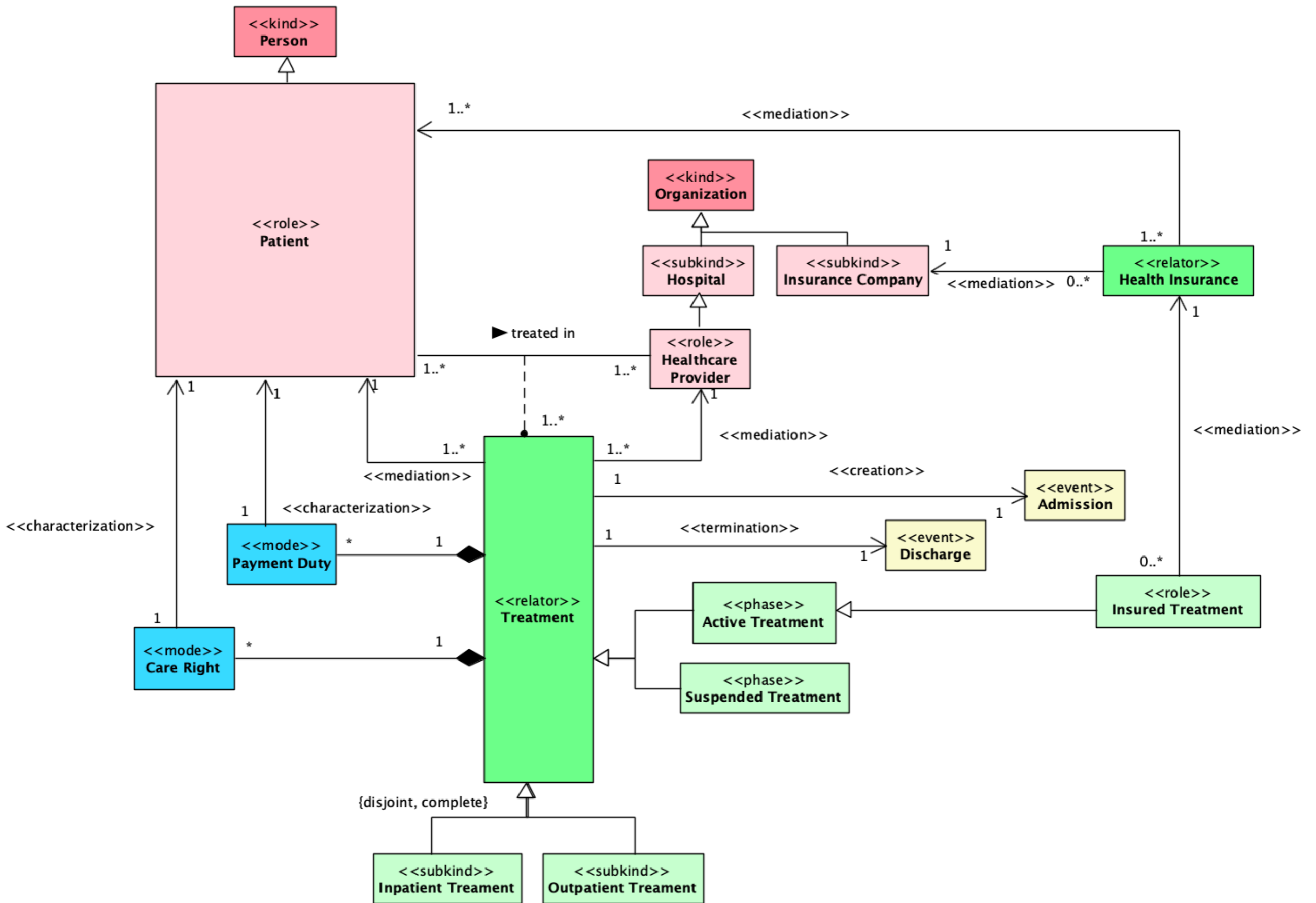












Unpacking Relations

1. Truthmaking
2. Disambiguation (**Semantic Clarity**)
3. Helps to elicit tacit knowledge that would otherwise remain tacit (**Completeness**)
4. Makes justice to the complexity of the relational phenomena (**Precision**)
5. It helps differentiating subsetting, redefinition and specialisation between relations
6. It solves the problem of transitivity of parenthood
7. It disambiguates between relators and events

The difference between
these models is not just
one of **expressivity** but
one of **nature!**
(Descriptive x Explanatory)

“Traditionally, theories are said to bear two sorts of relation to the observable phenomena: **description** and **explanation**. Description can be more or less accurate, more or less informative; as a minimum, the facts must ‘be allowed by the theory’ (fit some of its models), as a maximum the theory actually implies the facts in question.”

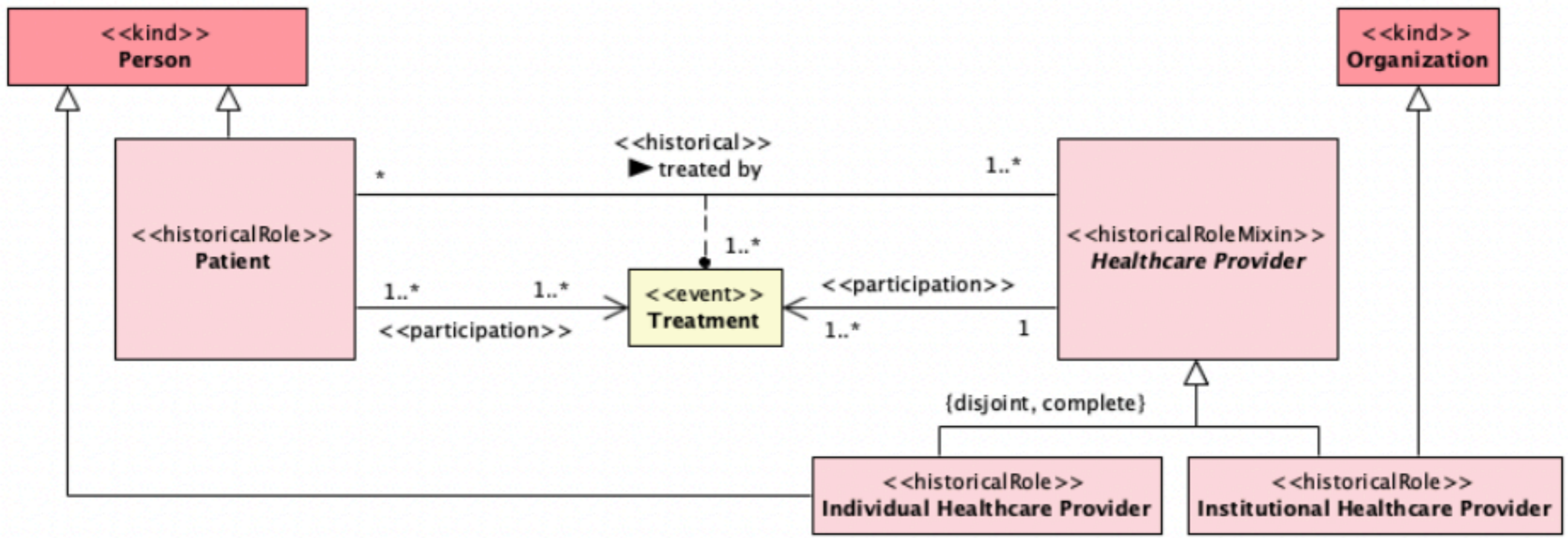
**“Explanation is... ‘over and above’
description;** for example, Boyle’s
law describes the relationship
between the pressure, temperature,
and volume of a contained gas, but
does not explain it - kinetic theory
explains it”

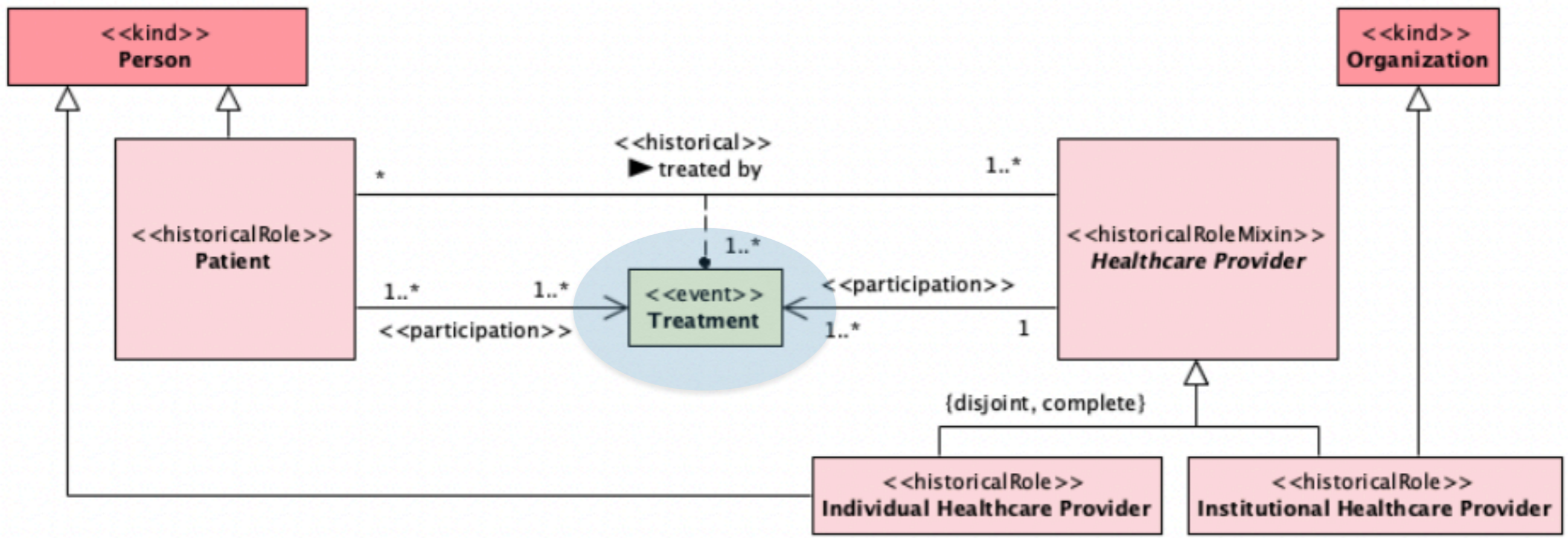
(Bas van Fraassen)

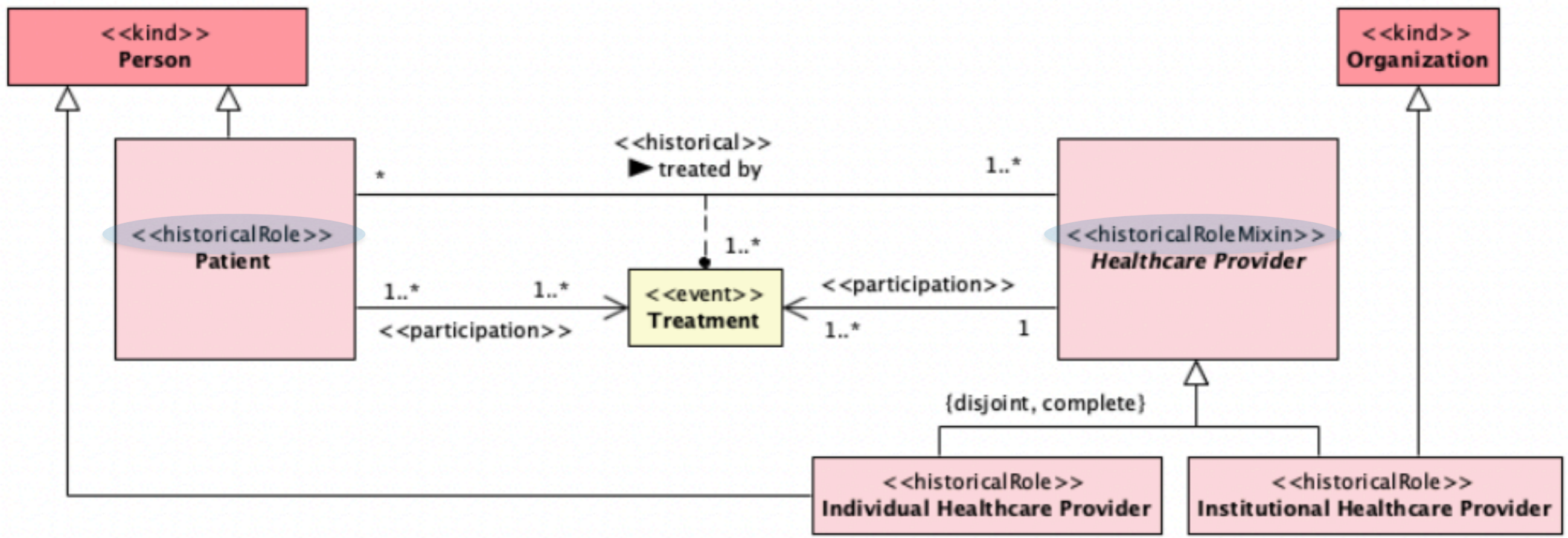
To **explain** is to **reveal** one's
ontological commitment
(real-world semantics) and
that is what is **needed for**
semantic interoperability

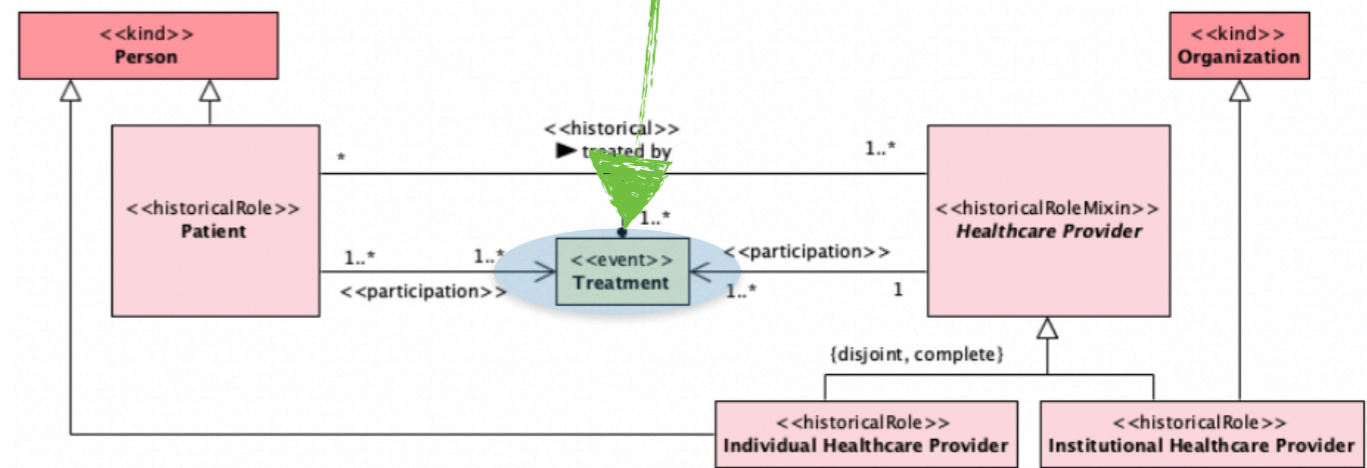
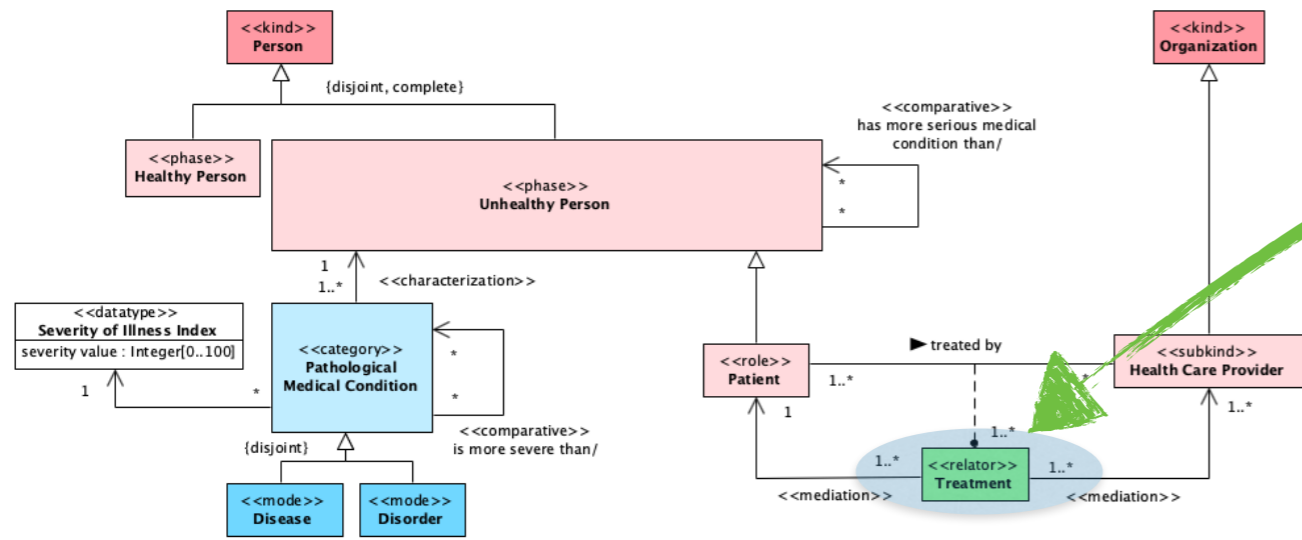
▼ has more serious medical condition



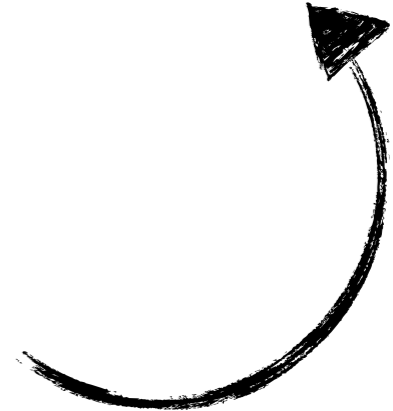
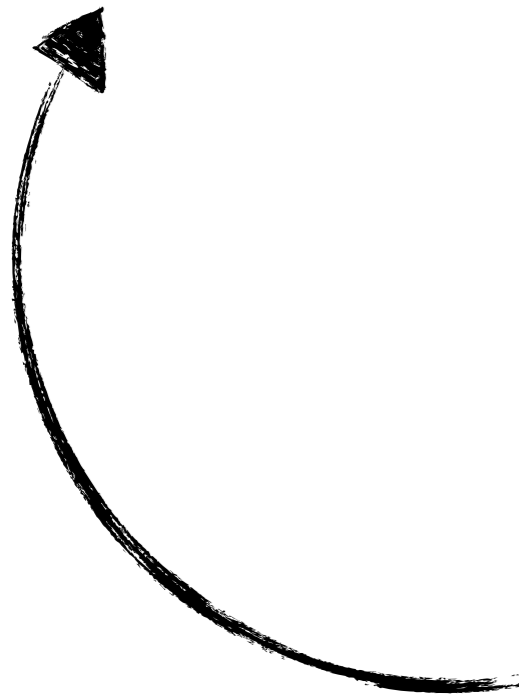


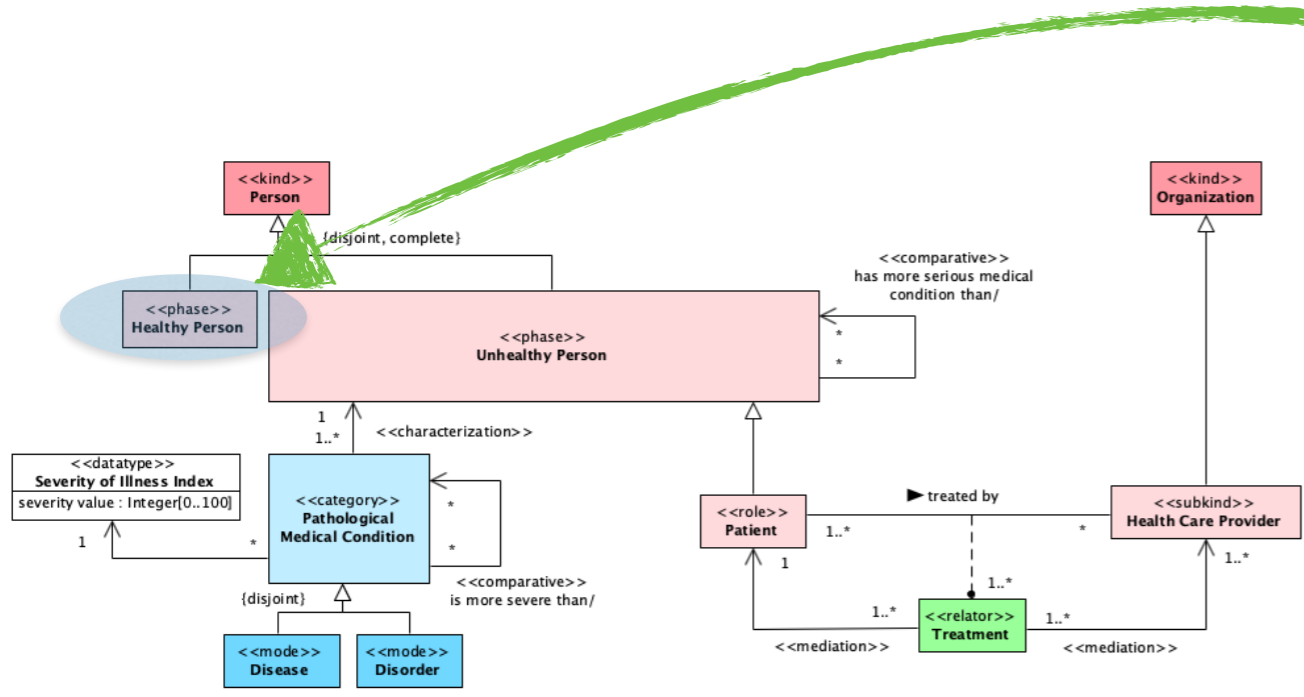




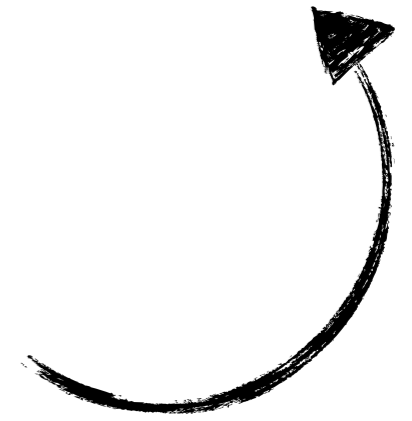
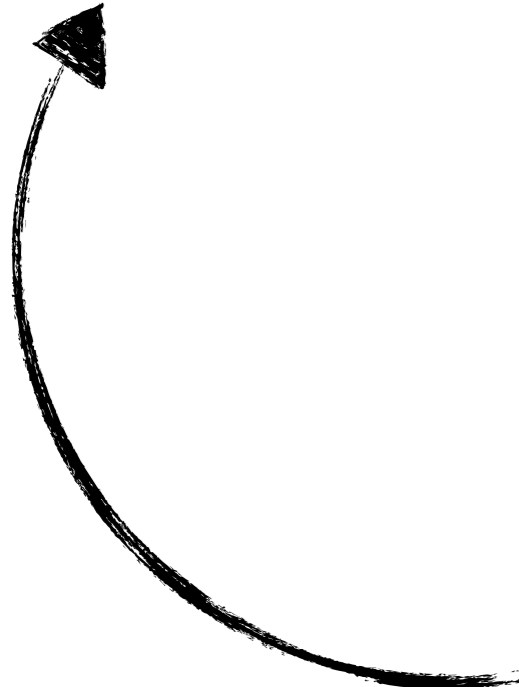
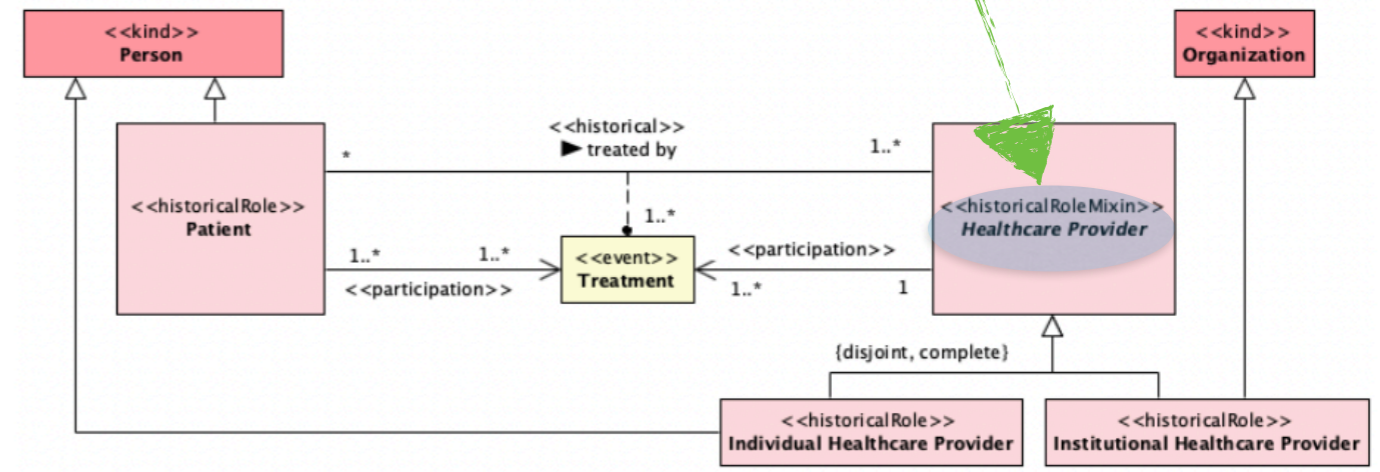


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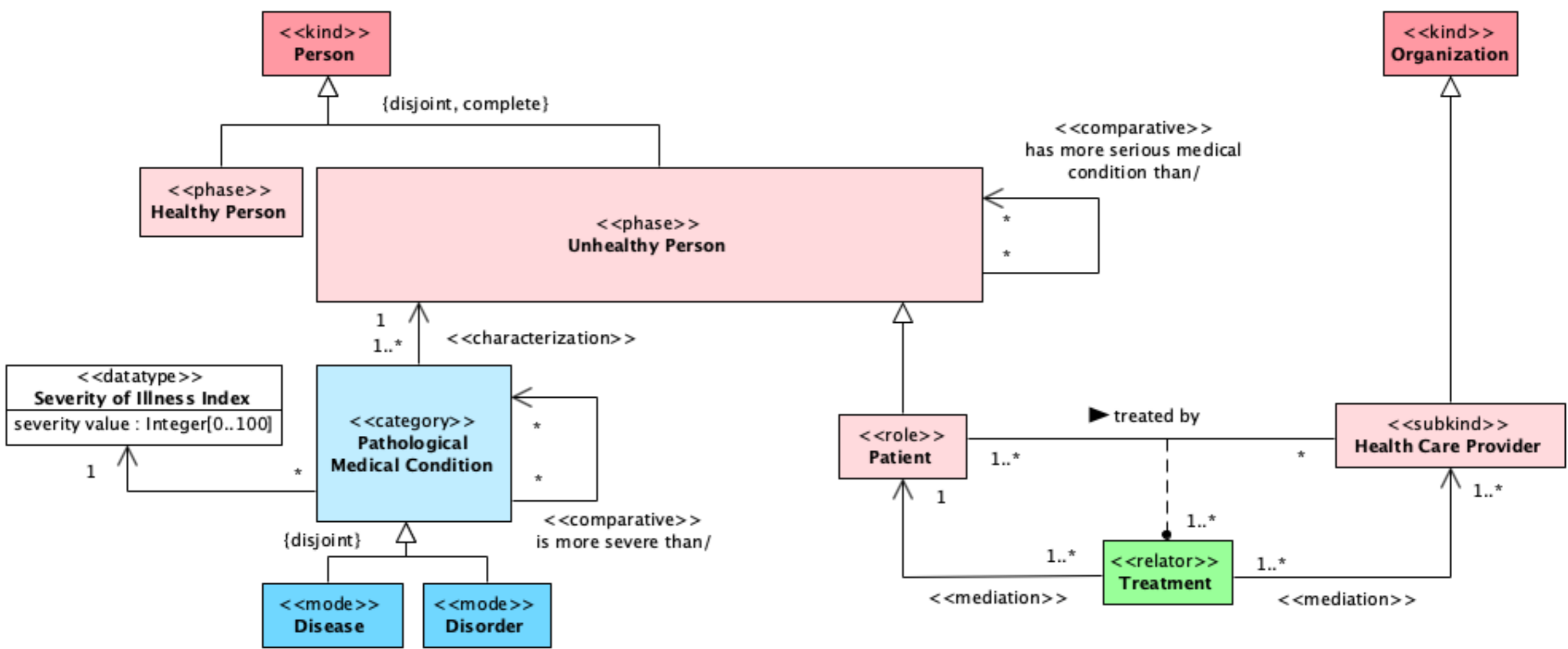




Unified Foundational
Ontology



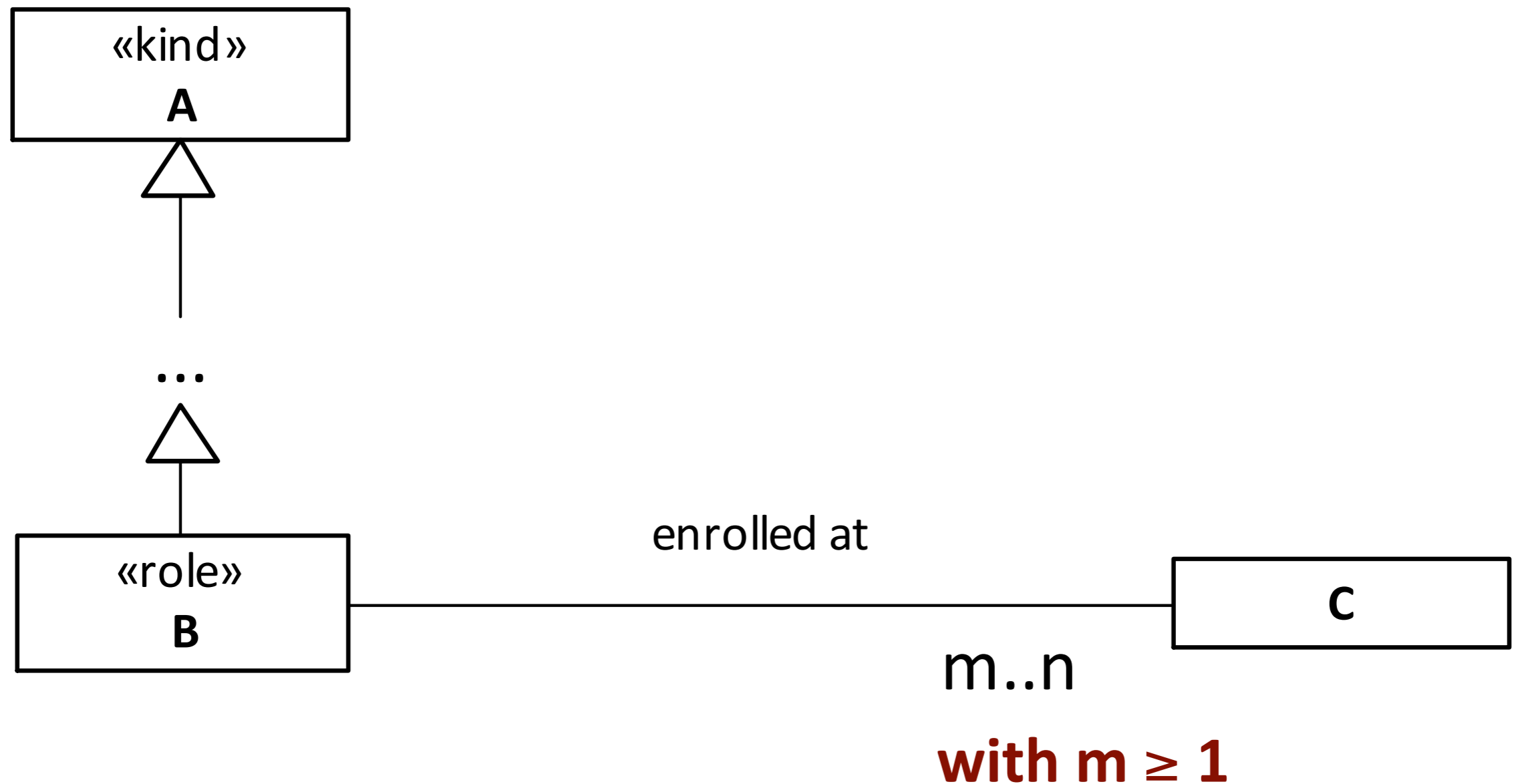
1. Primitives reflecting ontological distinctions
2. Grammar reflecting ontological axiomatisation
3. Patterns reflecting ontological micro-theories

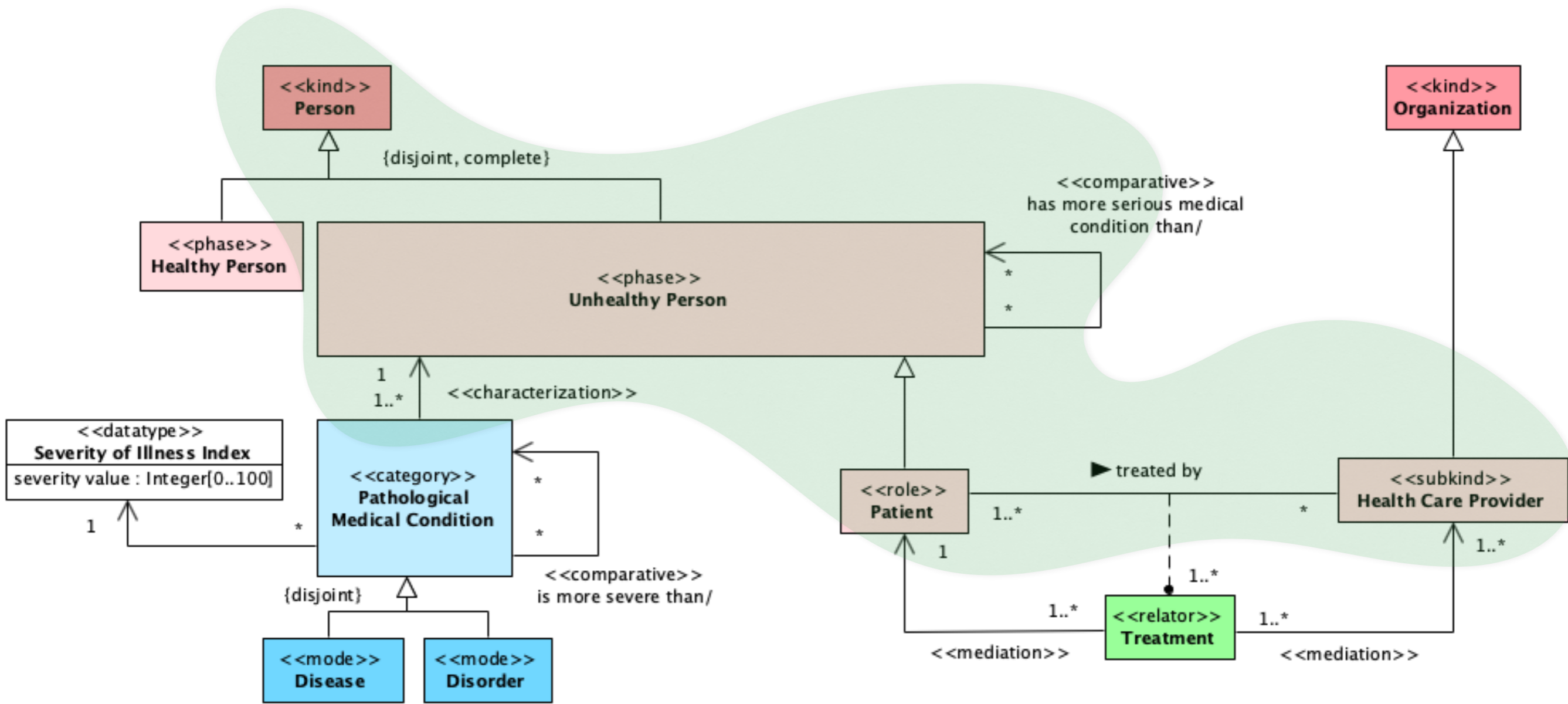


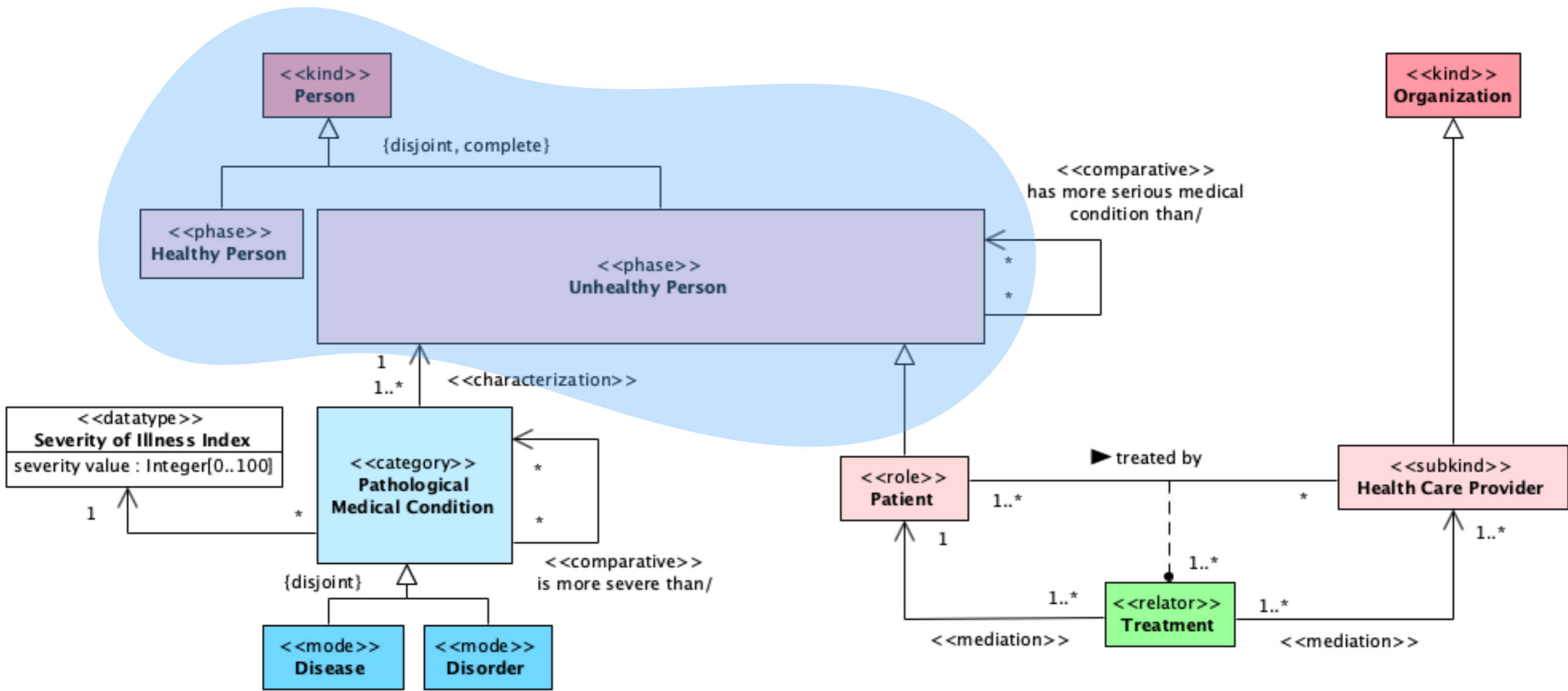
Role

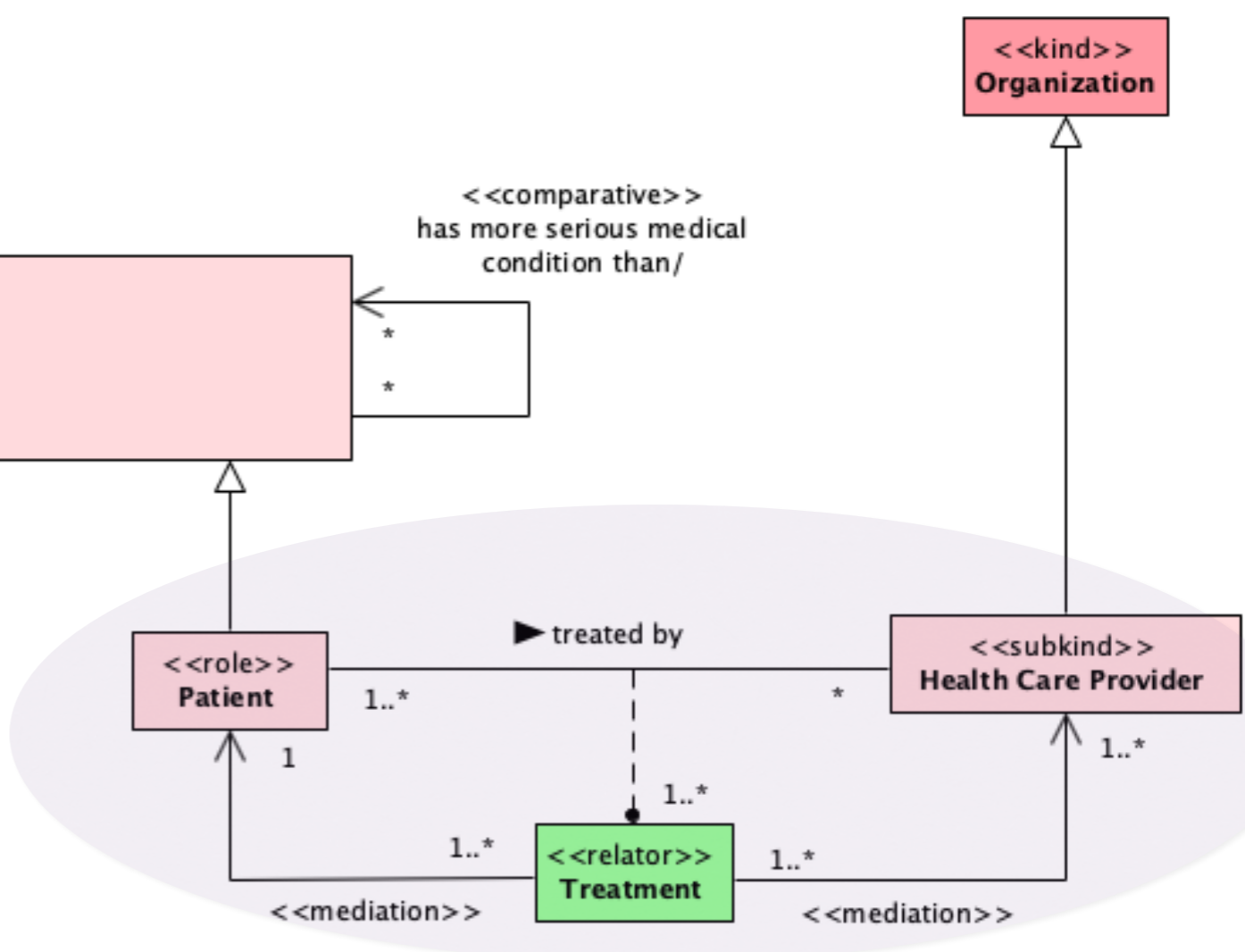
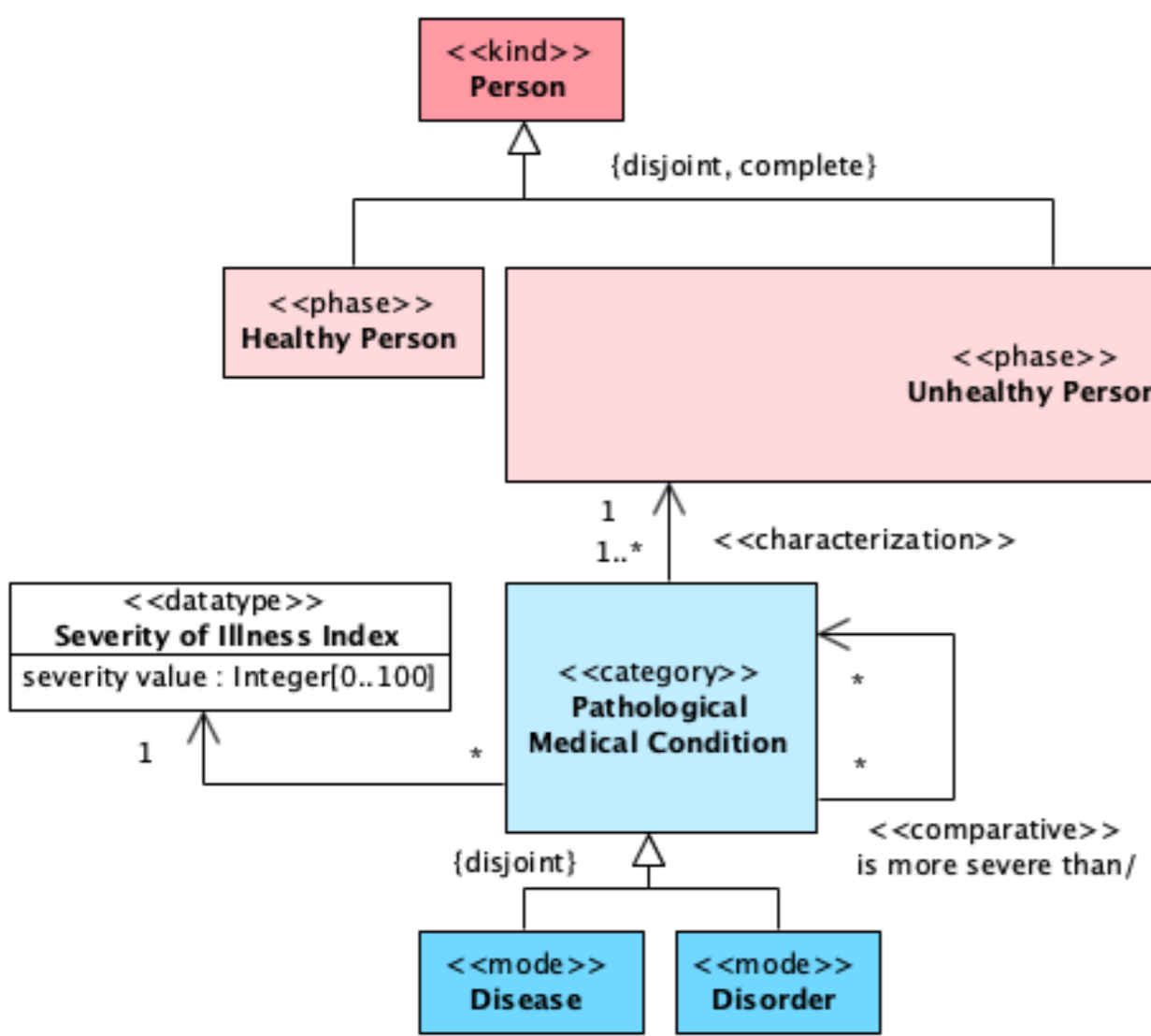
1. All instances of a given ROLE are of the **same KIND** (e.g., all Students are Person)
2. All instances of a ROLE instantiate that type only **contingently** (e.g., no Student is necessarily a Student)
3. Instances of a KIND instantiate that ROLE when participating in a certain **relational context** (e.g., instances of Person instantiate the Role Student when enrolled in an Educational Institution)
4. A ROLE cannot be a supertype of a KIND

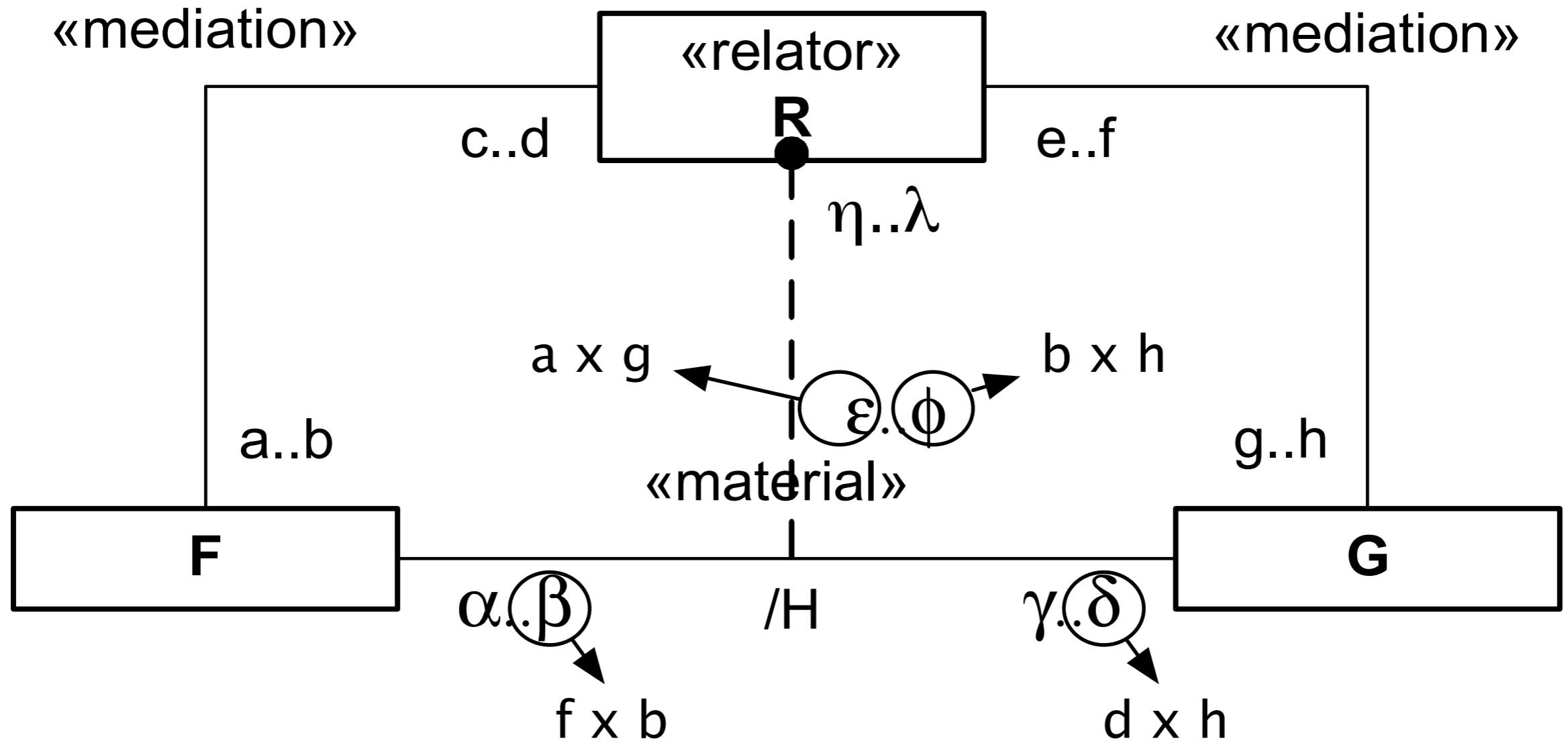
The Emerging **Role** Pattern



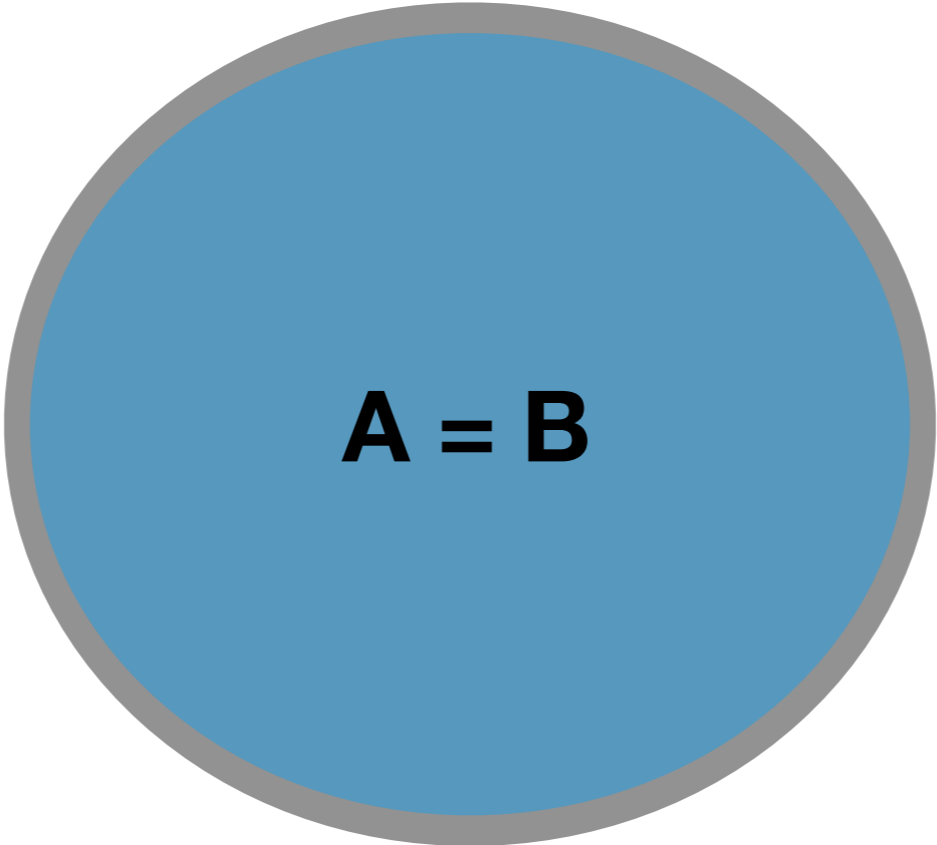




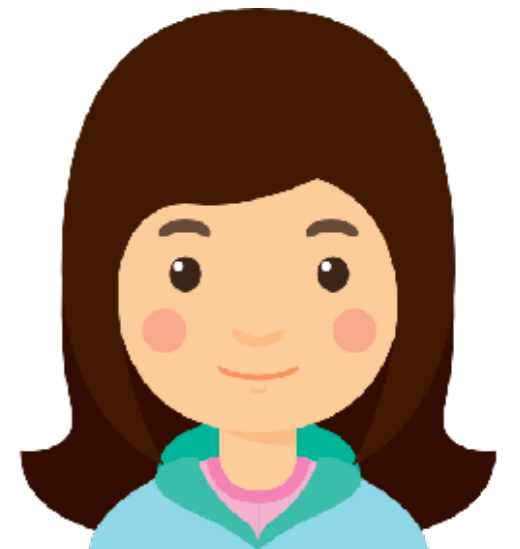
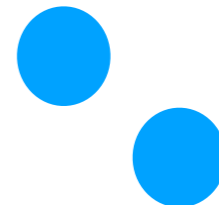
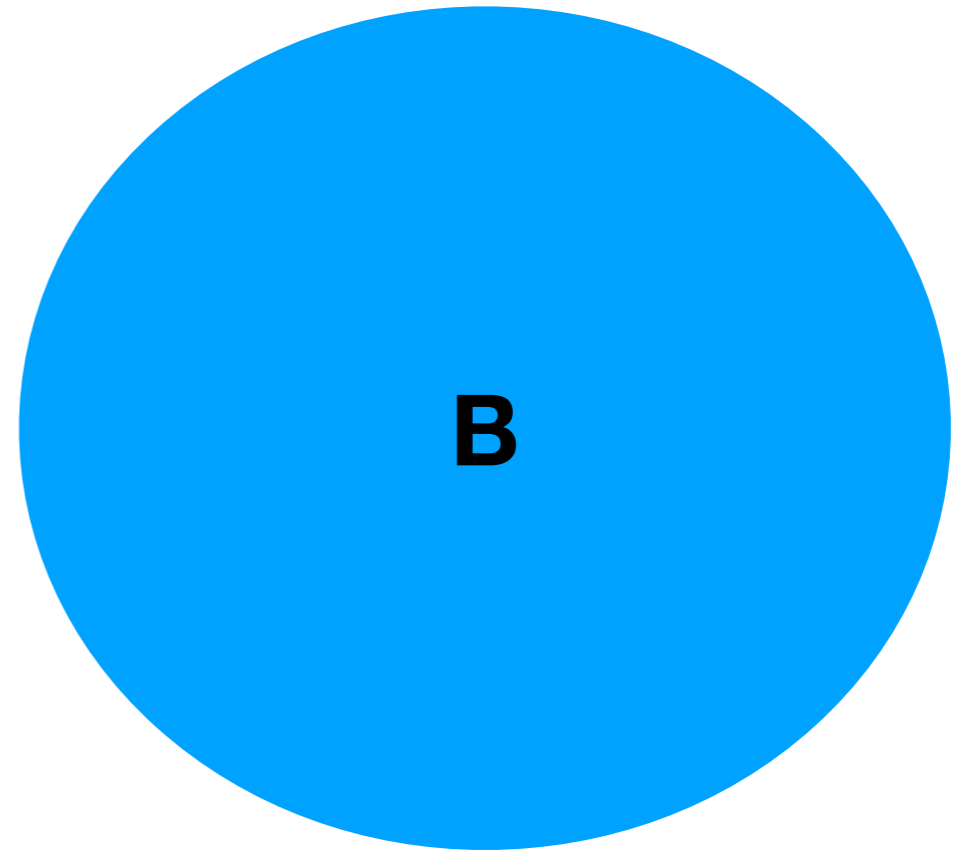
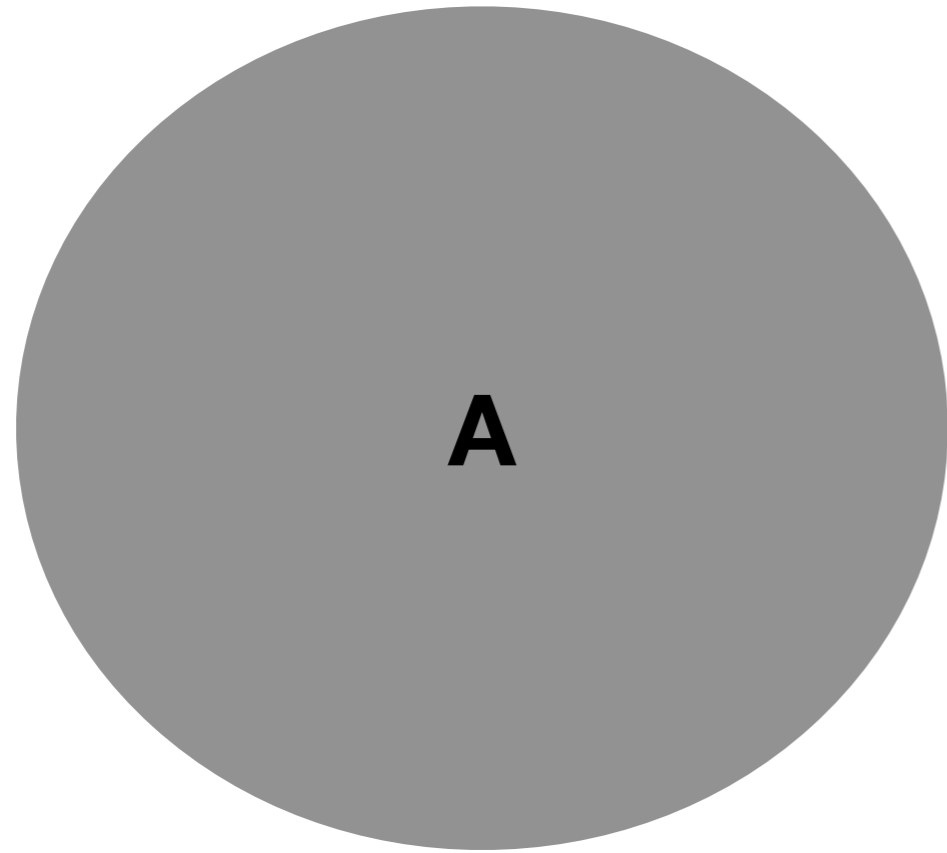


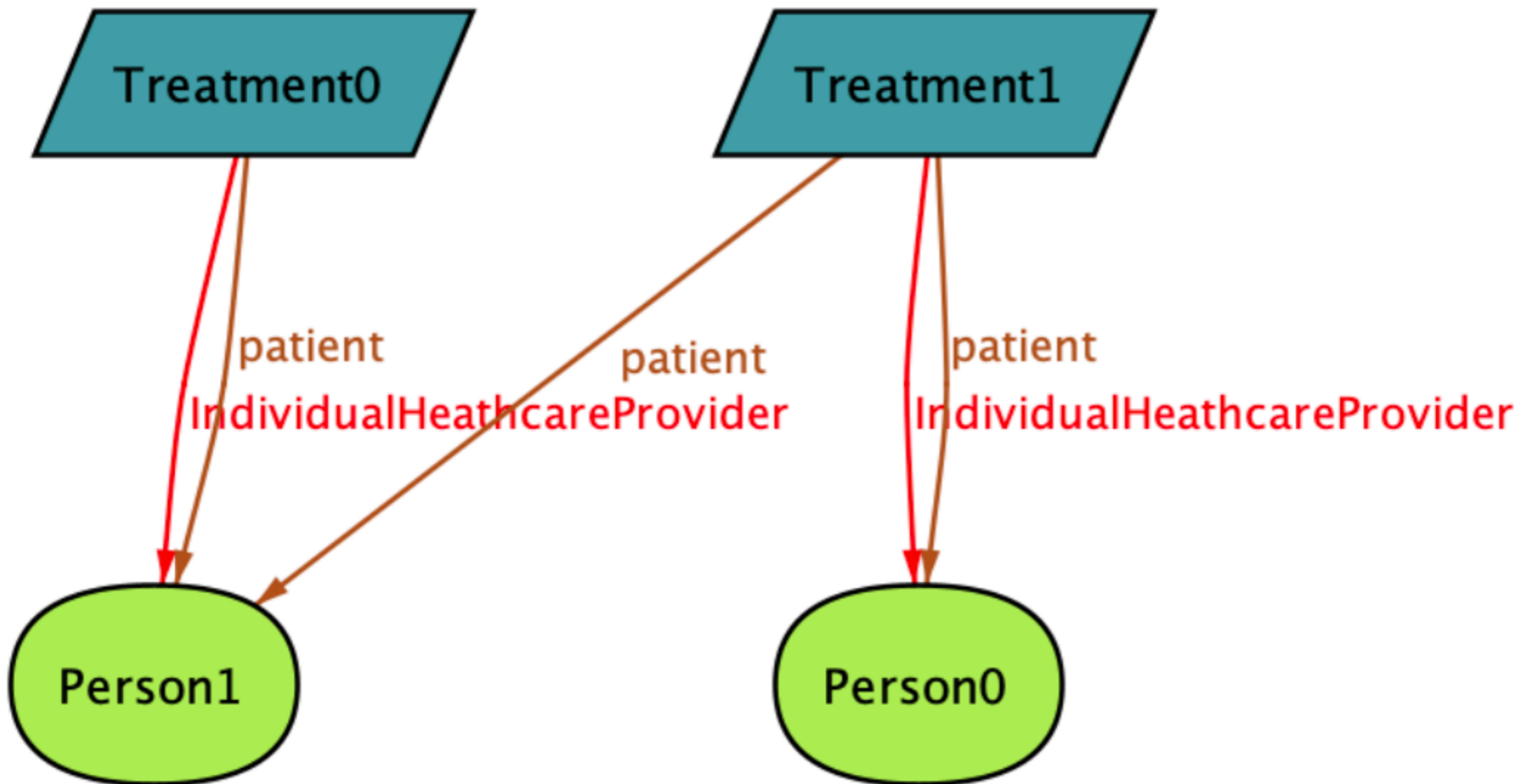


$$\forall x : F, y : G (H(x, y) \iff \exists r : R (mediation(r, x) \wedge mediation(r, y)))$$

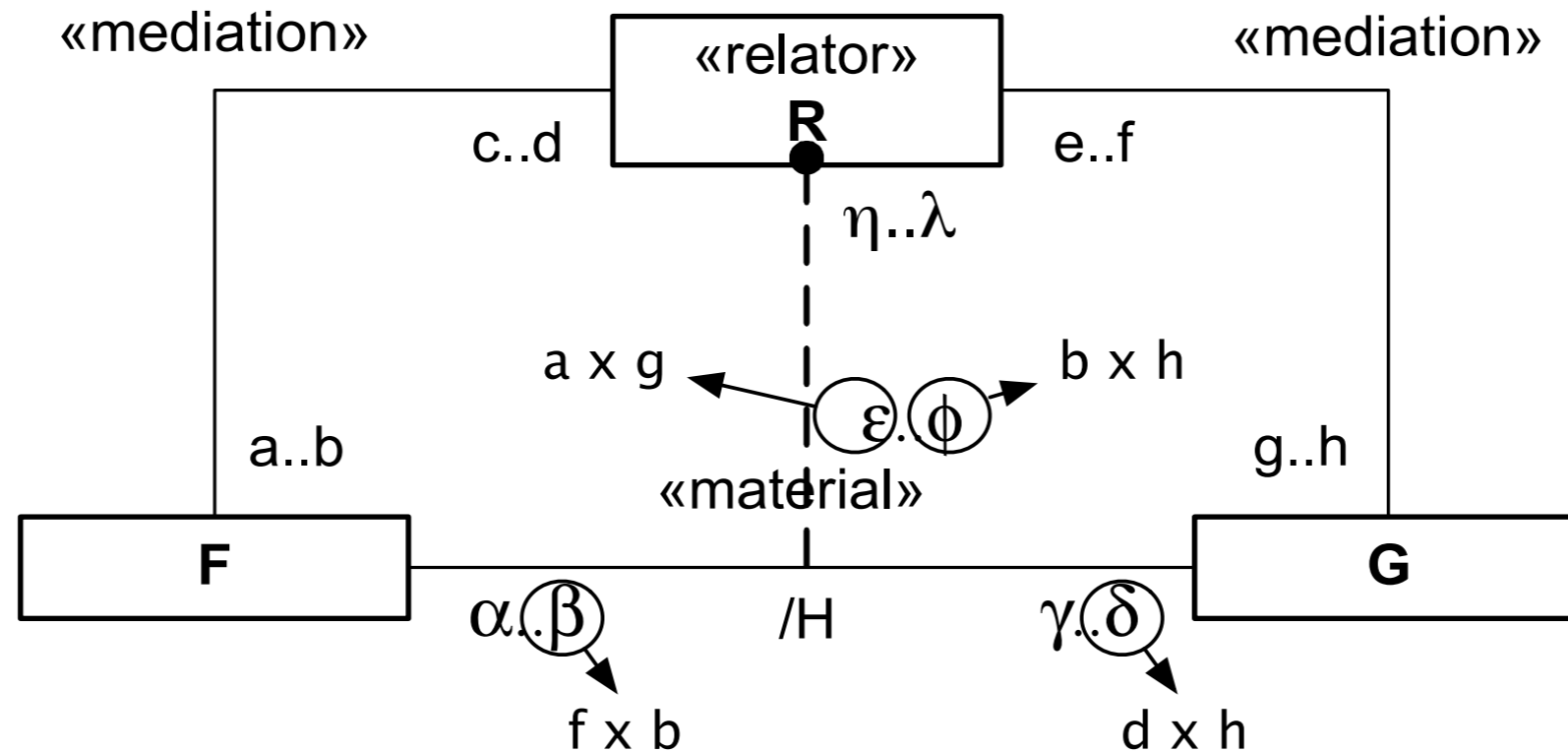


$$A = B$$





Unificatory Approach

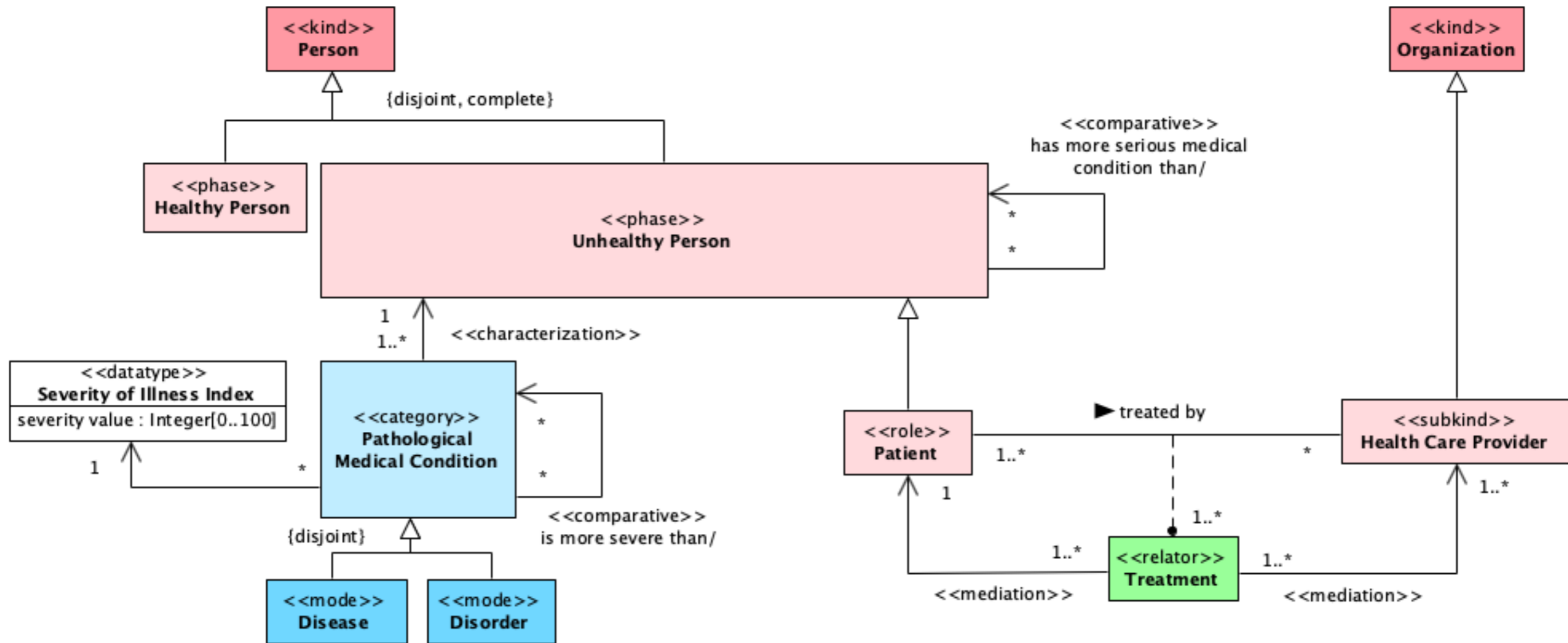


“Science advances our understanding of nature by showing us how to **derive descriptions** of many phenomena, using the same **patterns of derivation** again and again” (P. Kitcher)

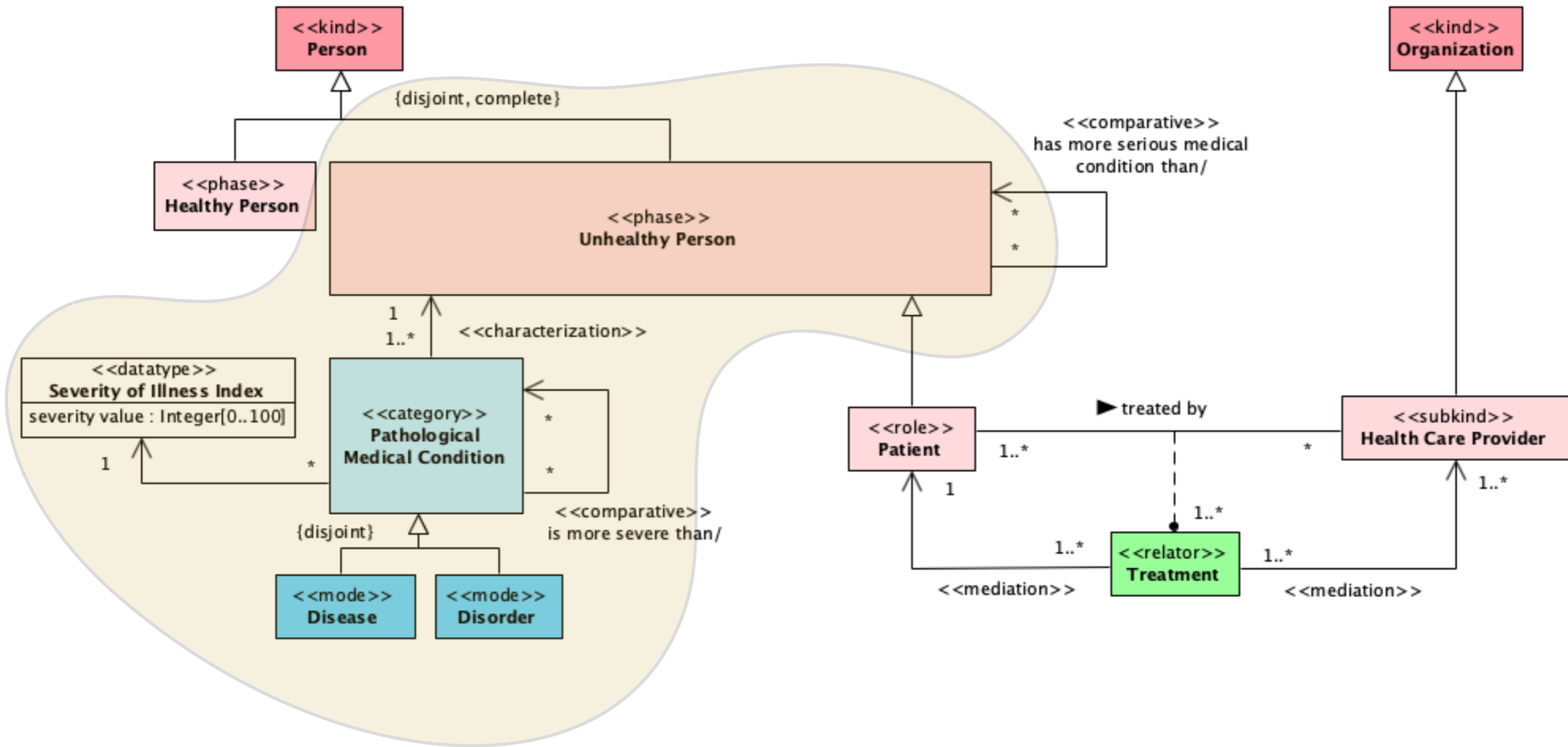
Pragmatic Explanation

1. **Requests for Explanation**, i.e., to explain is to satisfy information seeking goals of an **explanation seeker**
2. **Competence Questions** as Requests for Explanations
3. **Contrastive** Questions

Why is a person treated by a given healthcare provider?

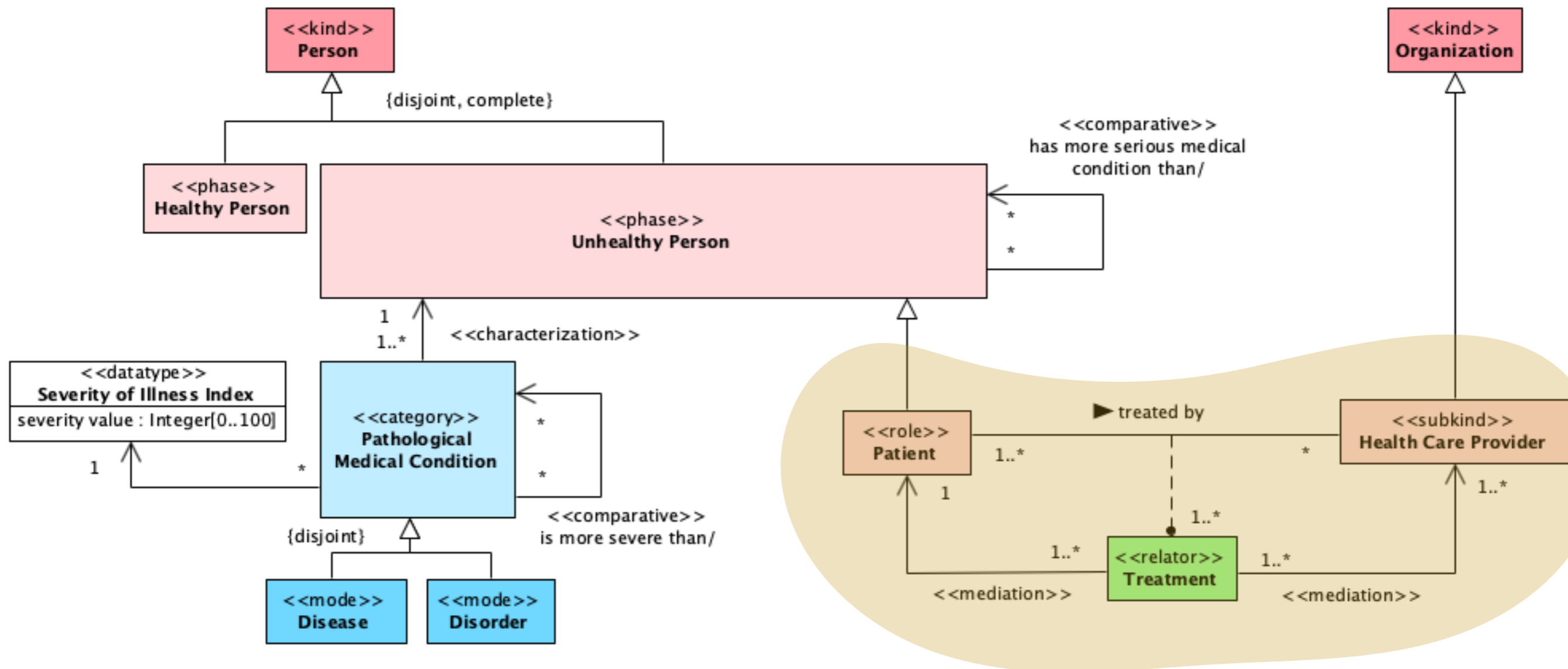


Why is a person treated by a given healthcare provider?



...**as opposed to** not being treated

Why is a person treated by a given healthcare provider?



...**as opposed to** being treated by a different healthcare provider

Pragmatic Explanation

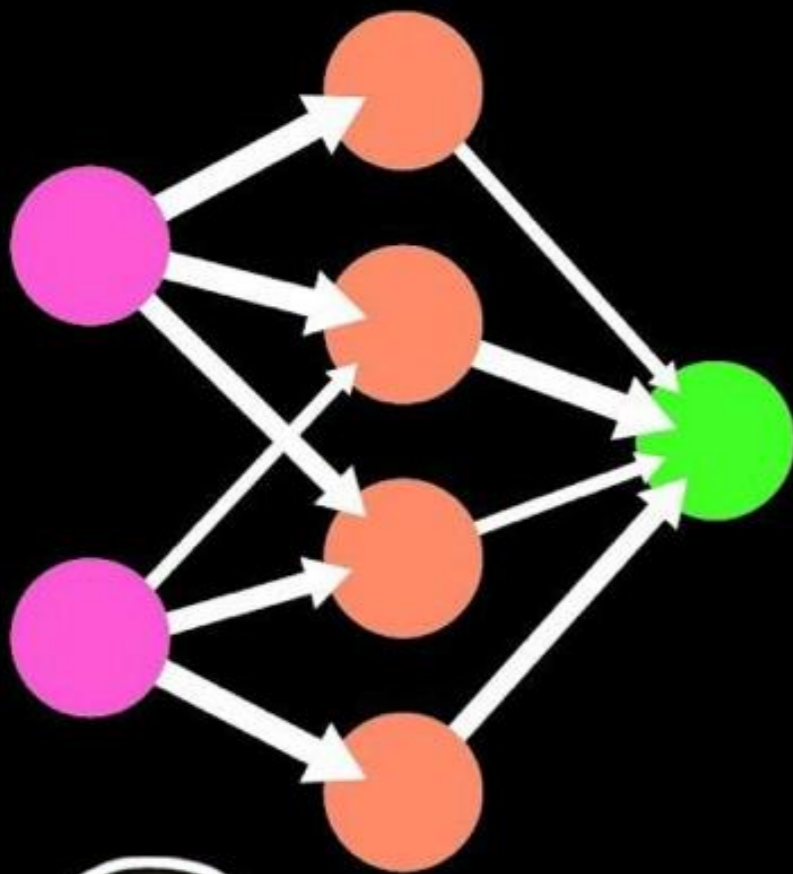
1. **Requests for Explanation**, i.e., to explain is to satisfy information seeking goals of an **explanation seeker**
2. **Competence Questions** as Requests for Explanations
3. **Contrastive** Questions
4. So, it is also about complexity management (**abstraction**)



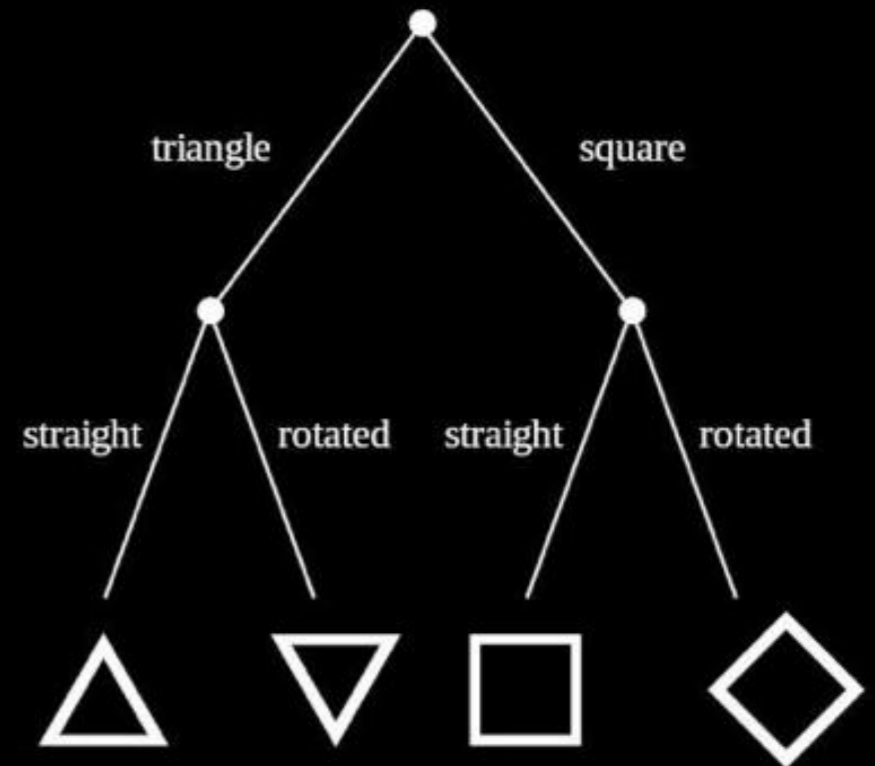
XAI

Explainable AI

1. Interpretability Framework or Complete Model View (“**Inherently Interpretable Models**”)



VS.



black box mystery
finally solved???



Neural Networks are Decision Trees (w/
Alexander Mattick)

youtube.com

Symbolic Artifacts are **not**
Self-Explanatory just in
virtual of being symbolic!

▼ has more serious medical condition



Explainable AI

1. Interpretability Framework or Complete Model Approach (“**Inherently Interpretable Models**”)
2. Explainability Framework Partial-Model Approach

Counterfactual Explanations

“You were denied a loan because your annual income was £30,000. If your income had been £45,000, you would have been offered a loan.”

Semantics and explanation: why counterfactual explanations produce adversarial examples in deep neural networks

Kieran Browne*

Research School of Humanities & the Arts
Australian National University
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Ben Swift

Research School of Computer Science
Australian National University
ben.swift@anu.edu.au

“counterfactual explanations consisting only of **semantically dense** and contextually relevant dimensions in the network’s feature space...in order to do that, we would need to be able to **reveal the semantics** of hidden network units (‘hidden neurons’)...**there can be no explanation without semantics**”

“representations in NNs are not really ‘signs’ that correspond to anything interpretable — but are distributed, correlative and continuous numeric values ...a hidden unit cannot on its own represent any object that is metaphysically meaningful”

(Walid Saba)

Counterfactual Explanations

“You were denied a **loan** because your **annual income** was £30,000. If your income had been £45,000, you would have been **offered** a loan.”

“What good is an explanation?”

(Peter Lipton)

1. Knowing-that x Knowing-why
2. Why-Regress
3. Self-Evidencing

Final **Take Away** Messages

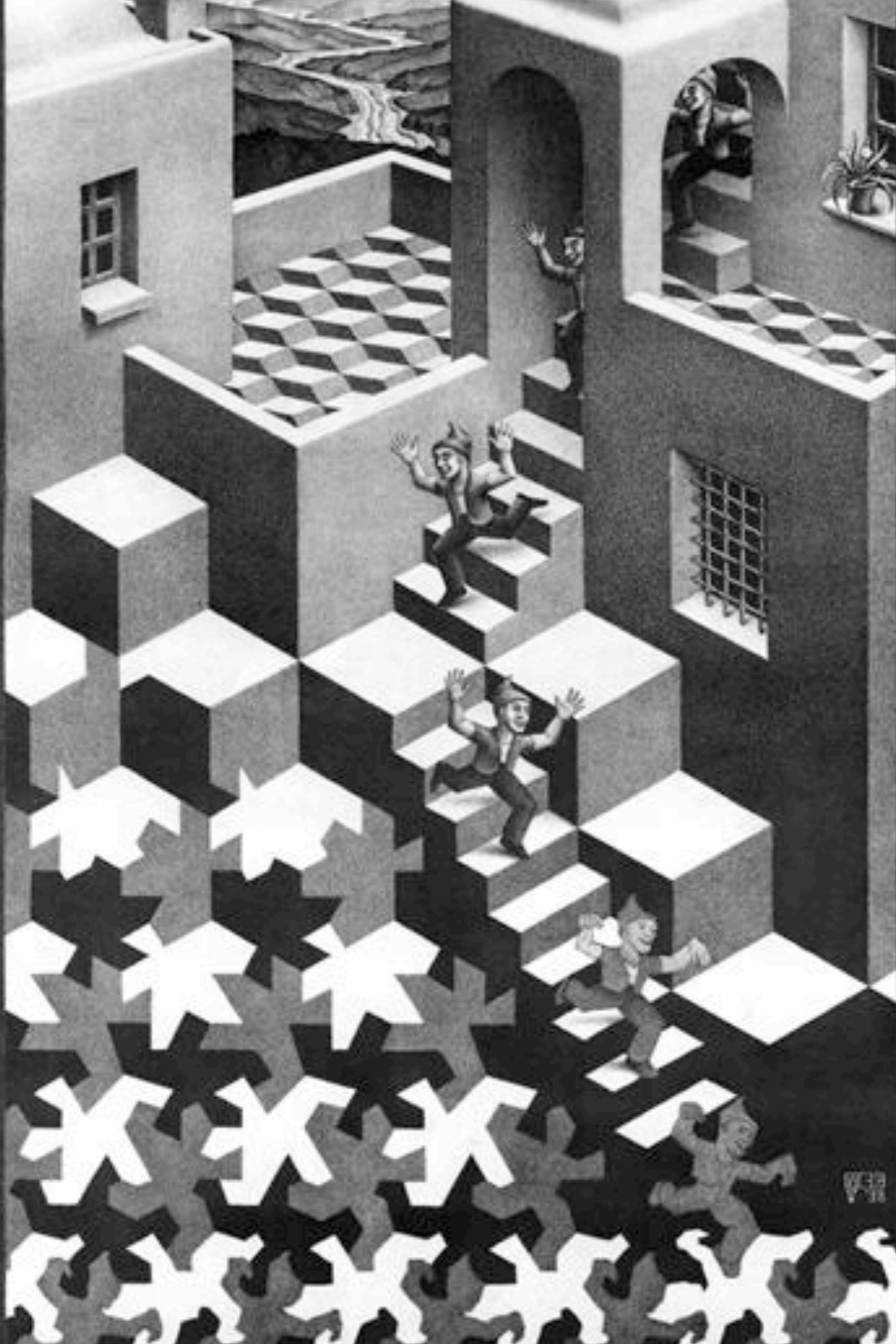
1. “No **Explanation** without **Semantics**”

Final **Take Away** Messages

1. “No **Explanation** without **Semantics**”
2. No **Semantics** without **ontology**

Final **Take Away** Messages

1. “No **Explanation** without **Semantics**”
2. No **Semantics** without **ontology**
3. No **ontology** without **Ontology**



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