The Semantics of Metaphor

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1.1. Semantic representation of The stone died

In chapter IV we shall describe in detail the formal mechanisms required for the construal of deviant expressions. In this chapter we present some preliminary considerations and proceed to an informal discussion of the modes of construal that are a priori possible given a deviant expression. As has been stated in chapter II, it is not obvious just what relation obtains between deviance and metaphor. That there is a relation is clear; just what it is, is not. In any case we will be concerned in this chapter with deviance primarily as a linguistic and not necessarily a poetic phenomenon, and our examples will be selected for the purpose of providing a basis for discussing the linguistic processes involved in its construal. For the time being then, we leave open the question of what precisely is metaphor. Implicitly, we proceed on the assumption that there is a range of figurative phenomena to be accounted for, restricted to be sure, on the one hand, so as to exclude minor and peripheral types but yet broad enough to comprise possibly synecdoche and metonymy. It is for this restricted but still polyadic range that we use the term "metaphor." In our investigation into what types of figure occupy this range we will proceed not by framing a set of definitions but by developing a schema based on certain linguistic processes, seeing what consequences this schema has, and matching those consequences with received opinions (chapter V) as to the nature of the various kinds of trope or metaphor.

We may approach the construction of a schema by considering first what kinds of empirical facts a theory of metaphor must comprehend. We seek, that is, to ascertain the range (or a range) of interpretations that a deviant expression can support linguistically and we seek, further, to determine the various construal routes that the speaker/author or
hearer/reader employs in arriving at this range of interpretations. Whatever linguistic capacity emerges from these investigations should then be reflected in some component of the linguistic theory. Whether the accounting for this capacity should be made a responsibility of the grammar proper or be assigned to a component subsidiary to the grammar is a question that we leave open.¹

As we have seen (chapter II, 2.4), the construal of a deviant expression may proceed by moving in either direction between the elements in the construction that are involved in the deviation. Consider then the sentence

\[(1) \quad \text{The stone died.}\]

We have to do in (1) with relations obtaining between the noun (Subject) stone and the verb (Predicate) died. For purposes of semantic representation let us employ the form introduced by Katz (1972.104ff.).² The reading for stone would then be something like

\[(2) \quad \text{stone}; (((\text{Object})(\text{Physical}))(\text{Natural})(\text{Nonliving})(\text{Mineral})(\text{Concreted})))\]

The reading for die would be

\[(3) \quad \text{die}; (((\text{Process})(\text{Result})(\text{Cease to be})(\text{Living})))X)\]

\[X ((\text{Human} \vee \text{Animal} \vee \text{Plant})).\]

The readings for verbs (Predicates) contain semantic markers and a variable. Associated with the reading is a selection restriction in the form of a categorization of the variable. The segment above the variable specifies the syntactic environment (derivatively, the grammatical function) in which it (i.e., its value) must appear relative to die, and the segment below the variable enumerates the set of semantic markers that its reading must be compatible with.³ The reading for stone contains the set of (derivative) grammatical functions that it can enter into (Subject and Object sufficing for our purposes) and the set of its semantic markers.

Applying the above considerations to (1), it is the reading for stone (2) that is to function as the value of the variable X in the reading (3). We see that, although the reading (2) satisfies the grammatical specifications of the variable in the selection restriction of (3), it is not clear that it is consistent with the latter’s semantic requirements. We must therefore consider in somewhat greater detail the relation between inherent semantic markers and the markers in selection restrictions.
2.1. Anomalous and contradictory sentences

For our purposes inconsistencies involving major syntactic categories are of relatively little moment. Sentences like "Scientists study the if" and "He trues the rumor," discussed by Weinreich (1966, 463ff.) pose no problem of principle beyond those posed by sentences in which the inconsistency is a function of lower-level grammatical (or semantic) features and, moreover, they do not effectively represent the kind of anomaly that is characteristic of metaphor. It is, rather, in inconsistencies involving semantic features that the interest for us lies. In this restricted connection the incompatibility can appear in several guises. Two such guises are described and contrasted by Katz (1972, 90ff.), wherein he draws a distinction between anomalous sentences (exemplified by (4)) and contradictory sentences (5):

(4) My red afterimage is waterproof.
(5) My red afterimage is colorless.

The difference between the two sentences is, essentially, that in (4) the Subject is not consistent with (in the sense of falling outside the range of) a selection restriction of the Predicate, whereas in (5) the reading of the Subject contains a marker that is antonymous to a semantic marker in the reading of the Predicate (cf. the contradictory sentence "That bachelor is married"). In (4) the Subject has in its reading the marker "(Perceptual object)," whereas the range of applicability of the Predicate is restricted to "(Physical object);" in (5) the (amalgamated) reading of the Subject contains the marker "(+Color)," which is antonymous to a marker in the reading of colorless. In the foregoing framework a sentence like (1) would fall into the same category as (4). Thus, if we compare the representations (2) and (3), we see that the markers in the reading of die are not antonymous to any of the semantic markers in the reading of stone; rather, its selection restrictions are not satisfied—in that stone is neither "(Human)," nor "(Animal)," nor "(Plant)." The difference between the two types of sentence is thus that in the case of contradictory sentences the criterion applied is that of distinctness (in the sense of Chomsky, 1965), whereas for anomalous sentences the criterion is that of satisfaction.

In the face of this difference we might feel that contradictory sentences represent some kind of limit on the selection process, the case in which selectional requirements are formally and diametrically opposed in some reading of the underlying phrase-marker. Anomalous sentences would then, on this view, fall inside this limit, representing the case where such requirements are not satisfied but not explicitly opposed. Katz maintains, however, that it is anomaly which is the limit. He reasons that most underlying phrase-markers involve a fairly large number of
potential senses for the sentence as a whole, and that most of these senses are weeded out by the selection restrictions in the course of the projection operations. From this point of view the limit is anomaly, the case where all potential senses are blocked at some stage of the compositional process; ambiguous sentences and sentences accorded a unique interpretation (thus including contradictory sentences) fall within this limit. Katz goes on to say that “unless we accept the distinction between semantic anomaly and contradictoriness, we will have to make the absurd claim that every fifteen- or twenty-word sentence is ambiguous in hundreds of ways with almost all the multiplicity of its senses being [contradictory]” (1972.93). The issue, however, is not whether there is a difference between contradictory and anomalous sentences; there clearly is. The question is whether anomalous sentences have a sense and thus should receive readings. Katz’s argument that anomalous sentences represent the limit of the selection process is intended to lend support to his view that such sentences have no sense.

On the other hand, according to Katz, contradictory sentences have a sense, namely (6):

(6) “The expression of truth conditions that cannot be satisfied” (p. 93).

The formulation (6), however, seems not so much to describe a sense as it does to define a semantic property, that of contradictoriness. We could say that the sense of a contradictory sentence expresses truth conditions that cannot be satisfied; what its sense is, however, remains to be specified. The sense of a contradictory sentence would be specified by the particular reading(s) that the projection operations give when applied to its underlying phrase-marker. Thus, although all contradictory sentences would share the semantic property of expressing truth conditions that cannot be satisfied, their individual senses would vary as the truth conditions varied. The sentences (7) and (8)

(7) My uncle is female
(8) That tall man is short

would share the property of contradictoriness, glossed as “the expression of truth conditions that cannot be satisfied,” but would have different senses.4

To parallel the distinction drawn above between the senses of contradictory sentences and the semantic property that they express, we might informally define as the semantic property of anomalous sentences

(9) The expression of truth conditions that contingently are not satisfied.
In line with the formulation (9), Katz’s definition of contradictory sentences given above as (6) should be made to read

(10) The expression of truth conditions that analytically cannot be satisfied.

We could then claim that, like contradictory sentences, the sense of anomalous sentences vary as the truth conditions expressed by them vary. Of course, the question of whether anomalous sentences in fact have a sense remains to be considered (see below).

The reformulation (10) must be considered further in light of the discussion that Katz provides for another semantic property, that of contradiction (1972.180f.). An example that Katz gives of a contradiction is

(11) John has a hairy bald head.

The difference between a contradiction and a contradictory sentence is that in the former, (11), the antonymical relation is entirely in the Predicate, whereas in the latter, (7) and (8), it holds between the Subject and the Predicate. In contradictions there thus can be no object in any possible world that instantiates the property expressed by the Predicate, whereas in contradictory sentences, since there is no antonymy (among the elements) in the Predicate, there is no a priori bar to instantiation of the property expressed by the Predicate; it is only that, in the occurrence, the object of which the property is being predicated is debarred from being an instance. As Katz puts it (1972.181), “... cases of contradiction predicate properties or relations that cannot be instantiated in a possible world; cases of contradictory sentences, on the other hand, predicate properties or relations that can be instantiated, but not under their conditions of determinateness”. In his discussion Katz states that the term “contradiction” is to be understood “in its basic logical sense, namely, the attribution of a property or relation that cannot apply to any object(s) or n-tuple of objects” (1972.181). If then, as seems indicated, we formulate as the semantic property of contradiction (12),

(12) The expression of truth conditions that logically cannot be satisfied,

then the formulations for anomalous and contradictory sentences given above as (9) and (10) may be considered well motivated. We thus have, as expressing the respective semantic properties of contradictions, contradictory sentences, and anomalous sentences the definitions (13–15):

(13) The expression of truth conditions that logically cannot be satisfied.\(^5\)
The expression of truth conditions that analytically cannot be satisfied.

The expression of truth conditions that contingently are not satisfied.

If we now approach the question of the senses expressed by our respective sentence types and their possible interpretations, we see that in this regard anomalous sentences are more favorably situated than are either contradictions or contradictory sentences. In considering the individual senses of contradictions and contradictory sentences, it turns out that whatever their individual senses may be, the interpretation of these sentence types is always the same—the statement of their respective properties. Thus, in the case of (7) and (8), even though their individual senses may be different, they are interpreted equally as contradictory sentences. In the same way, the interpretation of all sentences like (11) is simply that they are contradictions. That is, in contradictions and contradictory sentences, even though they may have individual senses, no scope is offered for interpreting them as anything beyond contradictions and contradictory sentences. This follows from the logical and analytical unsatisfiability respectively of their truth conditions. In the case of anomalous sentences, however, since the unsatisfiability of their truth conditions is only contingent, they permit of interpretations that are not simply a restatement of their semantic property. Thus, interpretations may be imposed on an anomalous sentence either by modifying the sense so that its truth conditions are made contingently satisfiable or so that its conditions are made satisfiable under different contingencies; i.e., either the sense of the expression is changed or the structure of the world. Since these modifications are effected through selectional relationships that allow scope for modification, it is not to the point to object that similar modifications could be claimed possible for contradictions and contradictory sentences, since for these sentence types the selectional relationships, by their nature, allow of no such scope. The preceding distinction is a corollary of the difference between the distinctness and satisfiability conditions referred to above.

2.2 Restricted feature transfer

The transfer of features from one linguistic form into another has a significant but limited function in Katz's theory (1972.93ff.). It is the same function developed first in Katz and Postal (1964.81ff.), according to which transfer of selection restrictions is limited to movement into pro-forms (cf. chapter II, 2.1). Thus the interpretation of (16),

The man is reading something,
will be that the something which is being read is a physical object with writing on it (Katz and Postal, 1964.83), where this interpretation results from transferring the selection restriction of \( \text{read} \) (\{Physical object with writing on it\}) into the reading of something. Aside from the fact that this analysis gives the proper interpretation of sentences like (16), it has also the virtue that its formalization offers little difficulty. Since the reading of a pro-form is semantically empty, it can incorporate transferred selection restrictions without inconsistency; i.e., the question of satisfiability is otiose in this case. If we temporarily disregard the problem of formalization, however, the limitation on transferring selection restrictions to pro-forms does not seem well motivated. Consider the following sentences:

(17) John was reading a manhole cover.
(18) Mary was reading his mind.

In the interpretation of (17) we must assume the same transfer of the selection restriction as is necessary for (16). In interpreting (18), on the other hand, we must reckon with a modification of the sense of reading occasioned by transfer of a feature from the reading of mind. Although the sentences (17) and (18) are not strikingly anomalous, they both qualify at least as anomalous, inasmuch as selection restrictions are not satisfied. They illustrate, however, the way in which anomalous sentences allow scope for sense modification. In the case of both (17) and (18), moreover, the modification of sense leads to an interpretation in which the expression's truth conditions are made contingently satisfiable.

2.3. Need for freer functioning of feature transfer

The discussion of sense modification presented in the preceding suggests that if we want (metaphoric) readings to be assigned to anomalous sentences, it is necessary not simply to ascertain that the selection restrictions are not satisfied, this being merely an act of omission, but to consider further what kind of inconsistency is, as it were, positively committed in the operation. For the construal of anomalous (deviant) sentences will turn out to depend on, to be a function of, just this inconsistency.

Thus, as long as the function of selection restrictions is that of a template, accepting or rejecting features of the combining forms, nothing more can be done with sentences like (1) but to mark them as anomalous. If we want selection restrictions (and other features) to figure in the actual construal of deviant expressions, they must be freed to function in a more active way. We must permit the transfer features to combine with markers of the host semantic representation and thus
make possible the construal of new readings. These combinations will take two basic forms: the transferred feature (either selectional or inherent) will be adjoined to the semantic representation of the item into which it is shifted, or it will displace a feature in that representation.

3.1. The positioning of transfer features

Before proceeding to discuss the construals following upon the ADJUNCTION and DISPLACEMENT of features, we have to consider in somewhat greater detail the actual operation of the transfer mechanism. Assuming a phrase-marker of the type \([s[NP[N]][V_{P}[V]]]\), in which (2) is the reading assigned to the N (stone) and (3) that assigned to the V (died), we consider first the transfer of selection restrictions from V to N. In effecting this transfer we do not shift all of the selection restrictions from the reading for die (3) into (2). Since those restrictions are disjoined exclusively, we are entitled to shift only one. Although in theory each one of the disjuncts could be shifted singly into (2), thus combining with “(Mineral)” either “(Human)” or “(Animal)” or “(Plant),” we will discuss here only the result of transferring the feature “(Human)”; in principle, the results will be the same if “(Animal)” or “(Plant)” should be selected instead. Selecting “(Human)” then as the feature to be shifted, this move

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Fig. 4
would change the reading of N (omitting the syntactic specification, which is here satisfied in any case) to

(19) \textit{stone}; \(((\text{Object})(\text{Physical})(\text{Natural})(\text{Nonliving}) \ [(\text{Human}) \ldots (\text{Mineral})] \ (\text{Concreted}))\).

A reading like (19) allows for more than one mode of construal. At this stage, however, we need to justify the positioning of the transferred feature in the host semantic representation. The transferred feature, as can be observed by comparing (19) with (2), has been inserted between the original markers “(Nonliving)” and “(Mineral).” This decision derives from a conception of semantic markers as occupying positions in a hierarchy of such markers. This hierarchy is simply the global representation of all the redundancy rules needed to enable semantic representations to be cited in their most economical form. These rules and, equivalently, the hierarchy would be a part of the general linguistic theory. A portion of the hierarchy (of Objects) might look something like that displayed in Fig. 4. Among the redundancy rules implicit in Fig. 4 are the following:

\begin{align*}
\text{(Canine)} & \rightarrow \text{(Animal)} \\
\text{(Equine)} & \rightarrow \text{(Animal)} \\
\text{(Feline)} & \rightarrow \text{(Animal)} \\
\text{(Human)} & \rightarrow \text{(Living)} \\
\text{(Animal)} & \rightarrow \text{(Living)} \\
\text{(Plant)} & \rightarrow \text{(Natural)} \\
\text{(Natural)} & \rightarrow \text{(Physical)} \\
\text{(Physical)} & \rightarrow \text{(Object)}
\end{align*}

The positioning of transferred features is based on considerations of relative depth in the hierarchy. Inspection of Fig. 4 reveals that the features “(Human),” “(Animal),” “(Plant),” “(Mineral),” and “(Liquid)” are all at the same depth (the same number of nodes from the top) in the hierarchy. The node immediately dominating these features is “(Natural).” Further, when the branching is hierarchical (as in the restricted case under consideration) rather than cross-classifying, it follows that the features at the nodes terminating those branches are mutually exclusive with respect to one another. We may therefore regard each feature as being marked redundantly minus for each of the other features collateral with it at the same level. Thus, the feature “(+Human)” implies “(−Animal),” “(−Plant),” “(−Mineral),” “(−Liquid),” and reciprocally for each of the latter features. A hierarchy like that in Fig. 4 thus represents both the positively entailed redundancies for a feature, based on the relation of inclusion, and the negatively entailed redundancies,
based on the relation of exclusion, understood as described above. From these considerations it follows that the proper place to insert a transferred feature is just at that point in the semantic representation of the host reading where its collateral feature is situated. This decision has the consequence that the insertion will place the transferred feature into precisely that part of the host reading at which the incompatibility is manifested.

The latter point can be viewed also in another way. Let us assume that, instead of matching the positive features in a reading with the negative redundant features that they entail as the latter are (implicitly) represented in the hierarchy of Fig. 4, those negative redundant features are actually stated in the semantic representations of lexical items. Then the transfer of selectional features in the case of deviant expressions will result in contradictory values (plus and minus) of the same feature appearing in the reading of that lexical item. We may specify that when this occurs the transferred feature, with its value (coefficient) deletes and takes the place of its homomorphic feature in the host reading. Inasmuch as the negative redundant features will appear at the same place in the semantic representation as the feature with respect to which they are (negatively) redundant, the transferred feature (with its coefficient) will then also appear, as in the earlier approach, alongside its incompatible congener.

There is of course a further problem. In the semantic representation the incompatibility is not just between “(Mineral)” and “(Human)” but also between the latter and the marker “(Nonliving).” Whereas all the markers to the left of “(Nonliving)” are redundant as well for “(Human)” as for “(Mineral),” such is not the case for the marker “(Nonliving).” If the semantic representation of (2) had been given in its lexical entry form, i.e., nonredundantly, then the marker “(Nonliving),” being redundant given “(Mineral),” would have been omitted. Since, however, semantic interpretation proceeds on the basis of full readings, the same must be required for metaphoric construal. Some account must therefore be given of the additional incompatibility reflected by “(Nonliving).”

The way out of the difficulty lies of course in recognizing the fact that “(Nonliving)” is a redundant feature. That being the case, any incompatibility between the markers “(Human)” and “(Nonliving)” will be merely reflective of the incompatibility between “(Human)” and “(Mineral);” it will not augment that incompatibility. We may regard the incompatibility between “(Human)” and “(Nonliving)” as being absorbed by the incompatibility between “(Human)” and “(Mineral).” Or, looking at this in a slightly different way, we may entertain the fact that “(Hu-
“(Human)” is redundantly “(Living)” and thus that the opposition “(Living)”/“(Nonliving)” is reflected in that of “(Human)”/“(Mineral).” In fact, we might carry the feature “(Living)” along in the transfer and thus have all four relevant markers in the host representation. The point is that in the final analysis any construal possible out of the combination “(Human)” and “(Mineral)” will be unaffected by—in the sense that it will be consistent with—the opposition “(Living)”/“(Nonliving).” All this follows from the nature of redundancy.

The preceding discussion provides a sidelight on the difference between contradictory and anomalous sentences. In contradictory sentences the incompatibility appearing in a reading is a direct function of nonredundant markers; in anomalous sentences it implicitly involves redundant markers. The incompatibility embodied in anomalous sentences is thus not frontal but, as it were, attenuated. This attenuation of the incompatibility is the formal analogue of the claim advanced earlier that anomalous sentences allow scope for modification.

On the basis of the considerations presented above, the transferred feature is inserted into the position of “(Mineral)” in the reading (19); arbitrarily, we decide to place it before rather than after the associated feature. We will refer to that part of the reading consisting of the transferred feature and its hierarchical congener in the reading of the augmented host representation as the **production set** (PS) and enclose it in square brackets (cf. n. 6).

**4. The six modes of construal**

Having decided on the proper positioning of transfer features, we now move to consider the manner in which the elements in the production set are to be combined with one another and with the other markers in the host semantic representation. All told, there will be six such combinations, four involving adjunction of features and two involving displacement. Under adjunction a transferred feature can be analyzed as being either disjoint or conjoint with its congeneric feature in the host semantic representation. Consequent on adjunction, then, we refer to the disjunctive and the conjunctive reading of the production set. Since, further, the transfer of features may move in two directions, the process of adjunction will yield four possible readings. In displacement there is no question of junction, since deletion eliminates the marker in the host semantic representation that would dis- or conjoin with the displacing feature. (There is thus also no production set, in the strict sense.) Displacement thus yields two possible readings. All six of the readings are viable, and the construal of (1) will differ depending on which of the six readings we adopt.
4.1. Adjunction

4.1.1. N ⇐ V; disjunctive reading

The features “(Human)” and “(Mineral)” taken disjunctively, [(Human) v (Mineral)], are incompatible on a reading. This incompatibility is reflected in Fig. 4 in their both occupying the same level in the hierarchy. In order to arrive at a reading for disjunctively incompatible features, one must find the least general feature that they have in common. If we look at Fig. 4 we see that the feature “(Natural)” is the least general feature dominating the incompatible features; it is therefore consistent with both. We might say that the semantic incompatibility of “(Human)” and “(Mineral)” (and their respective redundancies “(Living)” and “(Non-living)”) is neutralized in the common feature “(Natural).” This neutralization has the effect of canceling the contributions that the two incompatible markers make to the reading (19). The resultant interpretation of (19) on this construal would then be “The natural physical object died” or “Something died.”

4.1.2. N ⇐ V; conjunctive reading

In the conjunctive reading the composition of the production set is [(Human) & (Mineral)]. The semantic markers of the production set are understood on this reading to be combined or fused. This construal yields for (19) the meaning of a humanized stone and is the construal embodied in the poetic figure of personification. It would appear that the difference between a construal of personification and one of animation depends on the level at which features are shifted: if instead of transferring “(Human)” one should transfer “(Living),” alongside “(Nonliving),” into the host representation, the resulting interpretation would be that of animation.

The same result achieved in 4.1.1 taking “(Human)” as the shifted disjunct would be achieved if either of the other two disjuncts in the selection restriction of (3) had instead been selected for shifting, i.e., the reading “The natural physical object died.” On the conjunctive reading, however, the result would change if the selectional disjuncts other than “(Human)” were to be shifted; thus, the resultant readings would be, in addition to that of personification, those of animalization and “plantification.”

4.1.3. N → V; disjunctive reading

We consider now the construals following upon shifting of a feature from the noun to the verb. This feature, of course, will be an inherent feature. Here again there is a disjunctive and a conjunctive reading to be
considered. Moreover, in this maneuver also, we face the problem, although in a somewhat different form, of deciding which feature is to be transferred. In the reverse transfer (N ← V) the problem involved the choice of one from among several possible selection restrictions, and we concluded that in principle any one of them could be chosen. In the case of transfer from nouns, however, we typically do not have disjoined semantic features; the problem therefore becomes one of deciding which of the independent markers to choose. There is a straightforward answer to this question. We choose that inherent marker which is on the same level in the hierarchy of semantic markers as are the features in the selection restriction of the verb. This follows because, since the selection restrictions are designed to be satisfied by features at their own level, it will be an inherent feature (of the noun) at that same level that either satisfies or fails to satisfy those restrictions.

When the marker “(Mineral)” is transferred to the semantic representation of the verb, it will be shifted alongside its congeners, i.e., into the selection restriction. As was indicated for the reverse transfer (4.1.1), we need to consider the action of the transferred marker in connection with only one of the disjuncts in the selection restriction; the results will be the same in principle for all of them. We select the restriction “(Human)” as the feature for “(Mineral)” to combine with. After the transfer then, the reading of (3) will appear, augmented, as

\[
\text{(20) } \text{die; } (((\text{Process})((\text{Result})((\text{Cease to be})(\text{Living})))) X) \\
[\text{NP,S}] \\
X \langle \langle \text{Human} \rangle \ldots \langle \text{Mineral} \rangle \rangle.
\]

In construing (20) disjunctively the meaning of \textit{die} must be modified so as to be applicable to either human objects or mineral objects. Since each of the two types of object can undergo processes having results, the modification of meaning will have to be effected on the markers “(Cease to be)” and “(Living).” In the case under consideration a generalized sense will have to be construed out of the two markers, one that comprehends both human and mineral objects. This generalization will yield a meaning like “Cease to be being, or existing.” Thus (20) on the disjunctive reading, combined with (2), has as an interpretation

\[
\text{(21) The stone ceased to } \left\{ \begin{array}{l}
\text{be} \\
\text{exist}
\end{array} \right\}.
\]

The same meaning (21) would be construed out of (20) if “(Animal)” or “(Plant)” had been selected as the feature for “(Mineral)” to combine with.
It can be seen that the interpretation (21) is achieved simply by dropping the marker “(Living)” from the reading (20). Insofar as it effects a generalized meaning the disjunctive construal on verbs operates in the same fashion as it does for nouns. Concomitant with the different directions of transfer, however, certain details in the respective construal processes differ (see chapter IV, 2.1.2 for discussion of this difference).

4.1.4. N → V; conjunctive reading

If the augmented combination of selection restrictions in (20) is taken conjunctively, the meaning of the markers “(Cease to be)” and “(Living)” is modified in a different way. Here the meaning to be construed must fuse the sense of “(Living)” with the sense of a comparable activity holding of minerals. In the case of (1) this particular construal does not admit of an obvious characterization. The construal could perhaps be better described in connection with a sentence like, say,

(22) His ego died.

Taking (22) on the conjunctive N → V reading, the meaning of die would be construed so as to mean what die means but of an object that was both human and abstract. This is the mode of construal that may originally have been imposed on sentences like

(23) The grass died.
(24) His hopes died.

In (23–24) the constructions have become aggrammatized. The example (22) may still permit the desired reading; (1), however, seems less amenable to this construal.

In fact, this particular mode of construal offers certain difficulties. Whereas conceptualization of personified nonhuman objects is possible, even though, with few exceptions, the language contains no specific words for these conceptions, conceptualization of activities and processes specific to such entities seems more difficult. Such conceptualization, however, is certainly possible. It could be prompted, for example, by a sentence like

(25) The mermaid died.

In describing most of the construal modes in these and the following sections (4.1–4.2), we find that it is possible to express the derived meanings of the construed constituents by means of another word (or phrase). This possibility is largely foreclosed, however, in the case of personification. A few nouns have been coined for these purposes (“centaur,” “mermaid,” etc.) but by and large personification remains a conception—a conception that can be expressed paraphrastically, of
course. The same situation would seem to obtain with respect to the verbs in the process being described here. We shall see later, however (4.4.4), that linguistic means for the expression of such predications have been provided, but that subsequent historical developments have obscured the process.

4.2. Displacement

In displacement the transferred feature is not shifted alongside its congener(s); it displaces it. There is thus no basis for a distinction between disjunctive and conjunctive readings. At the same time, however, it remains necessary to consider the effects of displacement as it operates in both directions.

4.2.1. $N \leftarrow V$

Here again selecting “(Human)” as the representative feature, we shift it into the reading (2), deriving

\[(26) \quad \text{stone}; (((\text{Object})(\text{Physical}))(\text{Natural})(\text{Nonliving})(\text{(Human) (Concreted)}),\]

where “(Human)” displaces “(Mineral).” The construal here involves the feature “(Human)” and the markers to its right in the reading (as for the marker “(Nonliving)” the same considerations apply as were discussed in 3.1)). It is this combination, we may say, that functions as the (degenerate) production set in this construal. Thus, an entity must be construed out of the features “(Human)” and “(Concreted).” A variety of interpretations is possible: an unfeeling, an indurated (with old age, with arthritis, etc.) person; a stupid person, a dolt.

4.2.2. $N \rightarrow V$

If displacement moves in the opposite direction, we get a reading of die as follows:

\[(27) \quad \text{die}; (((\text{Process})(\text{Result})(\text{Cease to be})(\text{Living}))X)((\text{Mineral})),\]

where now “(Mineral)” has displaced “(Human).” The production set in (27) consists of the markers “(Cease to be)” and “(Living)” and the contextual feature “(Mineral),” the treatment of redundancies as before. In construing (27), therefore, the markers “(Cease to be)” and “(Living)” are modified to produce as sense a result which applies to something mineral. The interpretation here would then be “disintegrate” or “crumble.” Combined with (2) then, (27) would yield “The stone disintegrated.”
4.3. Six interpretations of The stone died

We have derived the following six interpretations for our deviant sentence “The stone died”:

By adjunction

(a) \( N \leftarrow V \); disjunctive reading: The natural physical object died.
(b) \( N \leftarrow V \); conjunctive reading: The stone (as if human) died.
(c) \( N \rightarrow V \); disjunctive reading: The stone ceased to exist.
(d) \( N \rightarrow V \); conjunctive reading: The stone died (as though die were predicable of objects jointly human and mineral).

By displacement

(e) \( N \leftarrow V \): The dolt died.
(f) \( N \rightarrow V \): The stone disintegrated.

4.3.1. The six underlying transformations

Underlying the six interpretations of (4.3a–f) are the following six transformations:

(4.3.1a) Adjunction: \( N \leftarrow V \); disjunctive reading:

\[
X \rightarrow N(+a, +\alpha, +b)/V(((+c, +d, +e)X)((+\beta))) \Rightarrow N(+a [+/3 v + a] +b)
\]

(4.3.1b) Adjunction: \( N \leftarrow V \); conjunctive reading:

\[
X \rightarrow N(+a, +\alpha, +b)/V(((+c, +d, +e)X)((+\beta))) \Rightarrow N(+a [+\beta & +\alpha] +b)
\]

(4.3.1c) Adjunction: \( N \rightarrow V \); disjunctive reading:

\[
X \rightarrow V(((+c, +d, +e)X)[+\alpha v + \beta])
\]

(4.3.1d) Adjunction: \( N \rightarrow V \); conjunctive reading:

\[
X \rightarrow V(((+c, +d, +e)X)[+\alpha & +\beta])
\]

(4.3.1e) Displacement: \( N \leftarrow V \)

\[
X \rightarrow N(+a, +\alpha, +b)/V(((+c, +d, +e)X)((+\beta))) \Rightarrow N (+a [+\beta] +b)
\]
Modes of Construal

Displacement: \( N \rightarrow V \)
\[
X \\
N(+a, +\alpha, +b)/V(((+c, +d, +e)X)((+\beta))) \\
X \\
\Rightarrow V(((+c, +d, +e)X)([+\alpha]))
\]

The parentheses in the transformations above enclose schemas of semantic representations. The Greek letters in the schemas represent the transfer features—of the shifting and the host representations. The lower-case letters stand for semantic markers (their number is kept to a minimum for the sake of simplicity). The square brackets in the structural changes enclose the element(s) in the production set.

4.4. Ordinary language exemplifications of the six construal routes

The readings (4.3a–f) have been shown all to be theoretically possible construals of (1), “The stone died.” We can confirm further the feasibility of these construals by looking at expressions in ordinary language which exemplify the individual construal routes or interpretive strategies embodied in our analysis of (1) into the readings (4.3a–f). The fact that the individual construal routes have indeed been implemented in the ordinary language provides empirical evidence for the correctness of the analysis.

In evaluating the following examples it is to be borne in mind that the construals we describe are those that took place on the advent of these (or the models for these) examples. Inasmuch as we are discussing ordinary language examples, i.e., constructions that have been aggrammatized, the fact of their being originally deviant and hence requiring construal is not always obvious. Moreover, since historical processes are involved, processes that cannot always be reconstructed in their original careers, there may appear here and there in the analyses a mistake in detail, an erroneous fact. I do not believe that such errors, if they occur, detract from the validity of the analysis. In what follows, it is the principles of construal that are being described; wherever there may be an error of historical fact, the means are available for making the error good, and the exercise of rectification will leave the principle undisturbed.

(a) = 4.1.1

(1) I wouldn't do that for love or money = anything
(2) He was left without a penny to his name = anything
(3) He spent his days (and nights) in misery = time

(b) = 4.1.2

(1) Fate laughs at us all = Personification
(2) Justice is blind = Personification
(3) The lion reigns in the forest = Personification
In the examples above, the word into whose reading the feature was originally transferred, i.e., in its original construal, has been italicized, and its resultant interpretation is given after the “=” sign. The expressions used in the examples have today a more or less prosaic flavor; one is hardly conscious of the need to interpret them in any special fashion. It is important to recognize, therefore, that the evidence they provide for our analysis derives not from their present usage, but rather, from what a hearer/reader who first encountered them would have had to perform by way of construal. It might be said, further, that the expressions in (4.4) allow in themselves for a variety of possible construals—in the manner shown for “The stone died.” At the time of their coinage, however, the intention of the author of the expression, and the context in which he used it, would largely determine the unique construal that was effected. Possibly, on the other hand, the expression in its original use may have been intended as ambiguous but subsequent usage codified it in a unique meaning. In any event it is in (4.4) taken in the aggregate,
not in the individual examples, that the logic of our analysis is expounded.

4.4.1. Discussion of 4.4a

It is also not to be expected that the examples of (4.4) should match in every particular the results obtained in our analysis of (1), “The stone died.” In (1) the various possibilities of construal that we have examined are concentrated in close quarters and enjoy full viability. (1) is not aggrammatized (is still regarded as deviant) and the context motivating the full range of construals is immediately and operatively present in the expression. I have tried in selecting the examples of (4.4) to make them also self-sufficient, i.e., to include in them whatever constituents are needed in order that the triggering of the construals should be a function of the sentences themselves. For all types except the first, (a), no particular problem is posed. More apposite examples may be available; but the fact that in the examples of (a) the immediate context does not provide a constituent motivating the transfer of features does not invalidate the exemplary force of its illustrative sentences. The construal follows the path described in (4.1.1) in that a feature is shifted into a noun, and the meaning of the noun is then generalized in consequence.

Most of the ordinary language examples that come to mind as illustrating the process 4.1.1 seem to generalize into quantification; thus (a1) and (a2). Cf. also “He checked every jot and tittle,” “Mind your p’s and q’s,” which generalize to “everything.” In such examples, although it is clear that generalization takes place, it is not immediately evident where the feature(s) comes from that is presumably transferred into the noun(s) so as to trigger the construals. As the process was described in (4.1.1) the transferred selection restriction was incompatible with an inherent feature of the noun, and when the resultant pairing was taken disjunctively the construal moved to a more general feature that was compatible with each of the incompatible disjuncts. Such a move obviously takes place in the examples of (a). Frequently in such examples the sentence contains a compound noun phrase the members of which are opposed to one another—“love or money,” “day and night.” The members of the compound in such expressions are understood as representing extremes or exhausting the field. When such expressions are not taken literally, construal moves toward generality. Compounds are not necessary, however, to effect this move toward generality; cf. (a2) or “I wouldn’t give him the right time” = “anything” or “I’d give him poison” = “nothing.” The opposition in such cases seems to consist in what might be expected in the circumstances, i.e., some amount or degree of whatever may be in question, and the extreme or limited offer made in the actual statement. Thus pragmatic factors may very well be involved in such construals.
But the expected operation of the transfer mechanism perhaps allows itself to be described for (a3). If we regard *spend* as containing in its reading the markers “((To pay out)(Of money)),” where the second marker is a selection restriction, and if *day* has in its reading the markers “((Time)(The period of the earth’s revolution on its axis)),” and if we then regard the selection restriction “(Of money)” as canceling the second marker in the reading of *day*, we are in a position to effect the proper construal. This analysis may appear to be ad hoc as to details, but that should not be surprising. We are, after all, trying to reconstruct processes that have long since been completed, at times and under conditions that we have no hope of recapturing. For one thing, even the use of *spend* with *time*, so common today, may very well have been an innovation at one stage, and may have been responsible for the sense of *spend* that we are using in our analysis—namely, in which it means “to pass (the time of).” There thus may be layers of historical processes that have to be uncovered in order to arrive at a correct analysis.

The discussion of (a3) may be used also to illustrate an aspect of the problem that we have not yet dealt with. We have proceeded to this point making use of only a restricted set of features in our discussion of the transfer process. In (3.1) we set out principles for the selection of the features to be shifted and conventions for their placement in the host representation. In the analysis of (1) we have dealt almost exclusively with the features “(Human)” and “(Mineral)” (and subsidiarily “(Animal)” and “(Plant)”). These are all rather deep (as opposed to superficial) features and, as we have seen, occupy the same level in the hierarchy of semantic markers. In the analysis of (a3), however, the features involved in the construal are different ones—thus “(Time)” for example. It is obvious that features other than “(Human)” and those collateral with it figure in metaphoric construal; in particular, features that lie closer to the surface in the scheme of things represented in Fig. 4. Frequently these features will be more superficial than “(Human)” and its congeners, i.e., more idiosyncratic (cf. the marker “(The period of the earth’s revolution on its axis)”). This possibility must clearly be allowed for.

Another question that arises is whether the collaterality restriction is too strong. It appears, indeed, that it is. To take a common example, the construal of an expression like

(28) He barked his answer

involves a process in which the features “(Human)” and “(Canine)” figure. Since the latter feature is a branch off “(Animal),” collaterality does not hold. Inasmuch as (28) is typical of a great many deviant expressions susceptible of interpretation, collaterality, in general, cannot be required. It is not clear at this stage whether any systematic treatment can be given to this problem.
4.4.2. Discussion of 4.4b

The examples in (b) illustrate the process of Personification. In their original construal the (personified) noun becomes jointly human and nonhuman (i.e., abstract, animal, etc.). On aggrammatization the noun is no longer personified. At this stage its semantic representation is modified so that it is privileged to occur either with predicates consistent with its original (nonhuman) specifications or with predicates (at least one) requiring nouns marked with the feature “(Human).” It is because of the process of aggrammatization that the nouns in our examples do not evince their personified character very strongly, and it is for the same reason that the verbs seem rather natural (cf. Webster’s line “Fortune’s right whore,” which still sustains the metaphorical reading).

4.4.3. Discussion of 4.4c

The examples in (c) are the counterpart of those in (a) and represent a common type of transfer. It is thus an interesting question why this process is so much more productive in its N → V than in its N ← V aspect. In this maneuver the disjunction of selection restrictions, produced by the transfer of an incompatible feature from the noun to the predicate, results in the meaning of the verb being generalized so as to comprehend in its range entities having either of the features in the disjunction. Thus, whereas in (cl) evaporate may originally have contained in its reading the selection restriction “(Concrete),” the transfer shifts into it as another selection restriction the feature “(Abstract).” One must now construe (cl) with a verb that is broad enough to comprehend either type of entity. The result is to produce a verb of more general range, say, vanish or disappear.

4.4.4. Discussion of 4.4d

The process evidenced by the examples in (d) is opposed, on the one hand, to that of (b) and, on the other, to (c). Viewing the process in its N → V aspect, it is opposed to (b); it is on this view that I have labeled the process Dispersonification. Where in Personification the selectional feature “(Human)” has been shifted into a nonhuman noun, in the converse process (Dispersonification) a nonhuman inherent feature has been shifted into a verb that selects human nouns. In Personification the noun originally becomes jointly human and nonhuman, after which, on aggrammatization, it can occur either with verbs requiring nonhuman nouns, as per originally, or with verbs requiring human nouns. In Dispersonification the verb originally becomes a predicate that applies to and has a meaning consistent with a noun that is jointly human and nonhuman. On aggrammatization, the verb occurs with either human or
nonhuman nouns. In the process the verb develops an additional sense that is applicable to nonhuman nouns. In construing for example (d1), we understand the earth in fact to tremble; i.e., it is not necessary to proceed to a more general verb (of movement).

If we view the process illustrated by (the examples of) (d) in its conjunctive aspect, then it is opposed to that of (c). In the original construals of the examples of (c) the verb becomes a predicate that applies to either human or nonhuman nouns. On aggrammatization, the verb then may occur with nouns of either type. It retains its original sense, however, only when used with nonhuman nouns; applied to human nouns it develops a general, more comprehensive sense. Thus freeze, for example, means “turn to ice” when used of water, but it has the meaning “become rigid or immobile” when used of a man. The difference between the construals of (c) and (d) is thus that in the former we do not think of the subjects as evaporating, freezing, or flying—we think of them, rather, as involved in more general actions, such as are expressed by the verbs at the right of the equations. In (d), on the other hand, we think of the earth as in fact trembling, conviction as faltering, and the bark as wounded; the meanings of these verbs have been extended so as to predicate of the nouns in question.

4.4.5. Discussion of 4.4e

In (e) a feature of the verb is shifted into the subject noun and displaces its congeneric feature. Thus in (e1) the feature “(Animal)” in wolf is displaced by “(Human).” Wolf on this reading thus becomes a human characterized by rapacity, ruthlessness, etc., i.e., a human characterized by all the semantic markers in the reading of wolf that follow “(Animal)” in its semantic representation. The same process applies to the other examples in (e).

If we compare (e1) with (b3) we see clearly the difference in the operation of adjunction transfer as compared with displacement. In (b3) the feature “(Human)” has been shifted from the selection restriction of reign into lion and has been combined with the latter’s inherent “(Animal).” The result is a lion that has been personified. In (e1), on the other hand, the feature “(Human)” has displaced the inherent “(Animal),” making of wolf now a human with the characteristics of a wolf. In a sentence like

(29) The lion reigned over his subjects

we have an ambiguity as between these two modes of construal: if we adjoin and combine features, in the manner of (b), we are dealing with a lion (originally, but no longer, personified); if we displace, as in (e), we are dealing with a king. In the former reading, (b), aggrammatization (of
both *lion* and *reign*) is rather complete; in the (e) reading some metaphoric force is still maintained.

### 4.4.6. Discussion of 4.4f

The process in (f) reverses that of (e): a feature of the noun displaces a feature of the verb. The feature shifted is that one congeneric to the feature in the selection restriction of the verb. Thus in (f1) the Subject *wheat* transfers the feature “(Plant)” to *sing*, displacing the selection restriction “(Human).” The result is a construal in which the marker of *sing* “(To produce a melodious sound)” is combined with the remaining markers of *wheat*, including the marker “(Collective),” to produce the reading “rustle.”

### 4.5. Extension of meaning

The processes that we have been describing leave their traces in modified meanings of the lexical items involved. Each time a new construal is effected by a deviant expression, the meaning of one or the other (or both) of the lexical items figuring in the semantic incompatibility is extended—as a necessary concomitant of the construal. It has been pointed out by scholars since classical antiquity that one of the functions of metaphor is the filling in of lexical gaps. Thus expressions like “foot of the mountain,” “leg of the table,” and so on. It is clear that in such processes a lexical item’s range of occurrence has been extended. What is also clear, but perhaps not so obvious, is that the same item’s meaning has also been extended in the process. Thus the meanings of *foot* and *leg* must both now contain the senses that they have when used in construction with *mountain* and *table*, respectively. This same extension of meaning results whether the coinage is introduced to fill a lexical gap or whether it is introduced for color or vividness. Thus the senses to the right of the equations in (a–f) are all new senses which the italicized items at the left of the equations have acquired in the process of construal.

### 5.1. Comparison of our six modes of construal with the modes of van Dijk

The transformations presented in (4.3.1) as underlying our six construals for deviant expressions bear some resemblance to those appearing in the treatment of van Dijk (1972). It thus may be worth our while to compare the two treatments and determine the respects in which they correspond and those in which they differ. It will be recalled that van Dijk describes two processes as being called into play by incompatibility in the feature specifications of constituents in a construction and making possible a (metaphoric) construal. These two processes are Extension
The Semantics of Metaphor and Deletion. We will repeat here van Dijk’s schemas for Extension that we have already presented in chapter II, 3.3,

(a) \[ AB' \left[ [+\alpha, +\beta, \langle +\gamma \rangle, +\delta \right], \]
(b) \[ A'B \left[ [+\alpha, +\beta, \langle +\delta \rangle, +\gamma, +\delta \right], \]
(c) \[ A'B' \left[ [+\alpha, +\beta, \langle +\delta \rangle, +\gamma, +\alpha, +\delta \right], \]

and add the schema for Deletion (p. 261), which was not presented in chapter II,

(d) \[ A \left[ +\alpha, +\beta \right], \ B \left[ +\alpha, -\alpha \right], +\gamma \Rightarrow AB' \left[ [+\alpha, +\beta, \phi, +\gamma \right]. \]

The schema (c) may be omitted from consideration, as the transfer of features in both directions is just as possible theoretically in either system, and it will reflect in any case the same properties that characterize schemas (a) and (b). Similarly, it is necessary to take up of (a) and (b) only (either) one, since any difference between the two will be of the mutatis mutandis type. Let us therefore consider (b), regarding \( A \) as the noun (Subject) and \( B \) as the verb (Predicate). A feature, “\( \delta \),” has therefore been transferred to the reading of the noun, and we may thus assume that it is a selection restriction. One difference between the two systems is then that (b) does not make clear the status of the inherent features \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) in relation to the transferred feature, i.e., there is nothing to indicate which, if any, inherent feature is incompatible with the transferred feature; there is thus nothing in (b) corresponding to the production set of our system. As pertaining to mere differences of notation this is not too important a point. But the substance of this notational difference is important, in that underlying the notion of production set is the analysis given in 3.1 (above) leading to the bracketing of just those elements that are locally or immediately incompatible. This bracketing, and the rationale for it, exercises a control over the types of features that may figure in a construal and thus has important consequences for the types of construal that are made possible by the two systems. Before going into those differences, however, let us consider more closely the question of which construal mode in our system the process (b) corresponds with.

As we can see from the interpretation that process (b) yields for van Dijk when applied to the line of poetry that he analyzes thereby,

(b') \[ Le \ vent \ "pliable" \ se \ deploie, \]

the noun \( vent \) has had the selection restriction \([+\text{Pliable}] \) extended into it. The process thus corresponds technically to our Conjunctive \( N \leftarrow V \) mode (4.1.2 above). The difference is that whereas in 4.1.2 the selection restriction that was transferred was \([+\text{Human}] \), in van Dijk’s example it
is the more superficial feature [+Pliable]. In the same way, and with the same qualifications, van Dijk's (a), exemplified by

(a') Le vent se déploie “atmosphériquement,”

corresponds with our Conjunctive $N \rightarrow V$ mode (4.1.4 above).

If we move now to examine van Dijk's Deletion, this operation turns out to approximate most closely the Disjunction process of our system. The difference is that whereas our process yields a disjunction of incompatible features, van Dijk's Deletion leads in such cases simply to the absence of any feature. This difference has consequences for the construals that are possible in the respective systems. If we look at the discussion in 4.1.3 above, and in particular at the representation (20), we can appreciate the difference. In our analysis we were led, on the basis of the disjoint features “(Human)” and “(Mineral),” to a construal in which the markers “(Cease to be)” “(Living)” were generalized to yield the reading “(Cease to be).” On van Dijk's approach the feature “(Human)” in the selection restriction of die is simply deleted. Moreover, there being no transfer of a feature, the reading for the verb is left with no selection restriction (at least in the operative sense). There is thus nothing in the selection restriction of die to exert any influence on the markers “(Cease to be)” “(Living).” The sense cannot be generalized; it must be taken at its face value. What this means in effect is that, although deletion has, in this case, operated on the reading of the verb and hence, theoretically, it is the meaning of the verb that is to be modified in the construal process, no such modification has been or can be effected.

Van Dijk's remarks on his deletion process are rather sketchy (pp. 260f.). At one point he says, “If we eliminate [delete] the selection restriction \([+\text{Pliable}]\) from se déployer by transformation we are left with a lexeme with features which are perfectly compatible with vent.” Inasmuch as earlier (p. 254) he has stated that se déployer presupposes \([+\text{Object}, +\text{Concrete}, +\text{Pliable}]\), it is not clear, without some discussion of possible redundancy conditions, how deletion of the selection restriction \([+\text{Pliable}]\) will, by itself, make se déployer compatible with vent. Furthermore, even granting the deletion of the entire set of selection restrictions, it is still not clear what the construal would be. On page 255, in what is apparently a description of the deletion process that van Dijk is referring to above, he presents a diagram (Fig. 5). In connection with the representation in Fig. 5 van Dijk writes, “in the collocation le vent se déploie we have first the ungrammaticalness caused by \([+\text{Concr}]\) in the co-textual specification of se déployer, while vent does not possess such a feature, nor does it have a feature \([+\text{Pliable}]\). However, we may analyze se déployer further and arrive at such basic features as
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Fig. 5

[+Movement] and [+Open], and possibly [+Gradual]—in order to mark the opposition to *to outburst*, for instance. These features, then, are not incompatible with *vent* and we may therefore postulate a set of lexicoids having these features in their specification, like *to blow* or *to rise* (of the wind). Such hypothetic lexemes are to be viewed as surface realizations of a well-formed deep structure.

Thus the sense in which the reading of *se déployer* is compatible with that of *vent* following deletion of the selection restriction in the former is one on which the reading “to rise” is yielded for *se déployer*. But this reading is certainly not to be found in the features remaining (after deletion) in the reading of *se déployer*, i.e., those above *rise* in Fig. 5. It would seem that in order to arrive at this reading some feature or features of *vent* have to be taken into account. But this recourse is theoretically precluded, since the transformation that is presumably to render construal possible has already been applied, namely, that of deletion.
It appears then that the type of transformation that is required if either “to rise” or “to blow”—van Dijk’s two candidates—is to be a possible construal is one which both deletes and transfers a feature. This is precisely what is accomplished by our Displacement process. Thus, if we allow the feature [+Atmospherical phenomenon] to displace the feature [+Pliable] in the semantic representation of se déployer, we are in a position to effect the construal suggested by van Dijk. Van Dijk, however, does not include Displacement in his system.