



Deliteralization and the Birth of Emotion

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Research question

deliteralization:

classificatory categories may lose their literal motivation as a result of changing worldviews and scientific progress

e.g. Medieval Dutch **walvis** “whale”

a fish, but what happens when we know more about fishes and sea mammals ?

→ reinterpretation in a metaphorical or otherwise derived sense

Research question

a challenge for theories of categorization:

not just “finding an approximating model for something that we do not understand very well”

but also “finding an appropriate interpretation for a category whose motivation has become unclear”

two types of metaphorical thinking:

making sense of the world vs making sense of the language

(metaphor as a primary vs as a secondary effect)

Research question

a case study:

where does the word **emotion** come from?

there would seem to be a link with **motion** (movement),

but if we think about emotion as 'internal turmoil', is that an original metaphorical link, or rather a deliteralizing reinterpretation?

TOC

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- Semasiological analysis: **Emouvoir** in Old French
- Onomasiological analysis: **(E)mouvoir** through time
- Conclusions and further questions

Background

in general: [diachronic semantics in Cognitive Linguistics](#)

three dominant lines

- prototype research: Geeraerts (1997), Koivisto-Alanko (2000), Molina (2000), Fabiszak (2001), Tissari (2003), Soares da Silva (2003)
- looking for regularities: Traugott (and Dasher 2002), Koch and Blank (2003), Heine (1997)
- metaphor research: Allan (2009), Gevaert (2007), Trim (2007)

Background

specifically: the **universality of embodiment** ?

Geeraerts & Grondelaers 1995 “Looking back at anger” (in Taylor & McLaury, eds., Language and the cognitive construal of the world) showed that ANGER IS THE HEAT OF A FLUID IN A CONTAINER is not a universal physiologically motivated conceptualization, but a culturally specific one, reflecting the historical importance of the theory of humours

The theory of humours

Hippocrates of Kos (5th ct BC): physiology + psychology (four temperaments)

Aristotle (4th ct BC): adding a cosmology (micro/macromos correspondences)

Galen (2nd ct AD): adding a dietary pharmacology

disappearance: only very gradually after the Renaissance

cp. the persistence of blood-letting

Virchow 1858 *Die Cellularpathologie*

The theory of humours

	PHLEGM	BLACK BILE	YELLOW BILE	BLOOD
CHARACTERISTIC	cold and moist	cold and dry	warm and dry	warm and moist
ELEMENT	water	earth	fire	air
TEMPERAMENT	phlegmatic	melancholic	choleric	sanguine
ORGAN	brain/bladder	spleen	liver/stomach	heart
COLOR	white	black	yellow	red
TASTE	salty	sour	bitter	sweet
SEASON	winter	autumn	summer	spring
WIND	North	West	South	East
PLANET	moon	Saturn	Mars	Jupiter
ANIMAL	turtle	sparrow	lion	goat

The theory of humours

cholera 'anger', gall 'anger', rouse one's cholera 'to elicit anger',
stir one's bile 'to elicit anger', galling, 'vexing, causing anger',
choleric 'irascible', liverish 'irascible', splenetic 'ill-tempered',
hot-blooded 'irascible', fiery 'irascible', hot-headed 'irascible'

obvious lexical relics; cross-linguistically:

The theory of humours

	ENGLISH	FRENCH	DUTCH
phlegm	phlegmatic 'calm, cool, apathetic'	avoir un flegme imperturbable 'to be imperturbable'	valling (dialectal) 'cold'
black bile	spleen 'organ filtering the blood; sadness'	mélancolie 'sadness, moroseness'	zwartgallig 'sad, depressed' (literally 'black-bilious')
yellow bile	bilious 'angry, irascible'	colère 'anger'	z'n gal spuwen 'to vent (literally 'to spit out') one's gall'
blood	full-blooded 'vigorous, hearty, sensual'	avoir du sang dans les veines 'to have spirit, luck'	warmbloedig 'passionate' (literally 'warm-blooded')

The theory of humours

SO, ANGER IS THE HEAT OF A FLUID fits the humoural pattern

seamlessly:

anger \approx fire

fluid \approx humours (specifically blood as the carrier of the others)

→ a historical, culturally specific relic rather than a universal metaphor

Research question

where does the word **emotion** come from?

→ given that we have been able to establish that so many specific emotion expressions involve the theory of humours, could it be that the word **emotion** itself has humoral origins?

Research strategy

PhD 2008 by Annelies Bloem under the supervision of Michèle Goyens and Dirk Geeraerts; characteristics:

- focus on French **émouvoir** / **mouvoir**
(**émouvoir/émotion** is a French innovation;
the noun **émotion** appears later than the verb)
- basis of the investigation: a very broad basis of philological materials, among them two works by Evrart de Conty (ca. 1330-1405) that we will draw our examples from

Research strategy

[EdC:P]

Evrart de Conty's translation of Aristotle's *Problemata* (ined.)

[EdC:EAM]

= Guichard-Tesson Françoise, Roy, Bruno (éds). 1993. *Le livre des eschez amoureux moralisés* (Bibliothèque du moyen français 2). Montréal : CERES.

Steps in the Argument

- [1] the psychological reading of **émouvoir** derives from the literal one not by a metaphorical jump, but via humoural bridging contexts
- [2] initially, the humoural readings are not exclusive for **émouvoir**: the specialization of **émouvoir** for psychological readings and of **mouvoir** for literal ones is a gradual diachronic process

Semasiology: The question

in MFr, psychological readings clearly exist:

Mais, dit il, ire n'est mie du tout sans aucune raison, non mie que raisons commande c'on se courouce, mais elle moustre et allege le injure. C'est la cause qui le courage fait a ire esmouvoir [EdC:P]

abstract causes, abstract results,

but a physiological frame (the heart)

→ where does this reading come from?

Semasiology: The question

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abstract causes, abstract

but a physiological frame

→ where does this react

But, says he, anger is not without cause, and it is not so that reason commands that one becomes angry, but anger makes the injury explicit and softens it. This [the wrong suffered] makes the heart move towards a state of anger.

PS courage: both "heart as organ" and "heart as mood, soul"

Semasiology: The question

the **metaphorical scenario**: a direct mapping of the spatial 'movement' reading to the psychological reading

the **deliteralization scenario**: a semasiological chain from the spatial reading over humoural readings to the psychological reading

→ the latter scenario obtains

Emouvoir: Spatial movement

spatial movement of physical objects and masses :

Pour quoy est ce que les undes esmeues en grans yaues et
parfondes se cessent et apaisent plus tart que celles qui sont
esmeues en petites yaues et sont poy profondes [EdC:P]

Emouvoir: Spatial movement

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Pour quoy est ce que les undes esmeues en grans yaues et
parfondes se cessent et apaisent plus tart que celles qui sont
esmeues en petites yaues et sont poy parfundes [EdC:P]

Why is it that waves that are stirred up in vast and deep waters come to a halt and quiet down later than those that are brought into movement in small and undep waters

Emouvoir: Physiological movement

spatial movement of humours and bodily fluids:

Pource devons nous savoir que li prins tans [...], quant il troeuvre le cors trop plain et que la vertus ne s'en poet mie bien delivrer lors pour sa chalour et son humidité, il les esmoet et est souvent cause de pluseurs maladies. Et pource dit ausy Ypocras que u prin tans les melancolies se esmoeuvent [EdC:P]

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That is why we have to know that in spring, when the body is too full and the life spirit cannot easily get rid of them [the melancholic humours] because of its warmth and humidity, it stirs them up and this is often the cause of several illnesses. And that is why Hippocrates also says that in spring the melancholies are in movement.

Emouvoir: Physiological movement

.... not just reflexive constructions, but also intransitive:

Quant les superfluités reumatiques de la teste se commencent a esmouvoir et a distiller, adont se font les obtalmies et les maladies des yeuls [EdC:P]

... and transitive :

C'est pour ce que le humidité esmeue par le chaleur du grant fu se degaste et resolve insensiblement et non pas en sensible sueur [EdC:P]

Emouvoir: Physiological movement

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[EdC:P]

When the rheumatic fluids of the head start to move
and be secreted, at that moment inflammations and
illnesses of the eye emerge

se

Emouvoir: Physiological movement

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... and transitive :

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[EdC:P]

That is why the humidity created by the big fire is removed and dissipated in an unnoticed way, and not in easily perceptible sweat

se

Emouvoir: Physiological movement

.... not just the body fluids, but also spirits:

La multiplication des esperis qui, pour la chaleur desus dite, s'esmeuvent et asamblent [EdC:P]

.... and metonymically, the organs containing/producing the physiological substances :

La chaleur naturele qui en peur se moet des parties de dehors et superficieles du cors et se retrait dedens et de haut en bas oeuvre semblablement et fait le ventre et le orine emouvoir [EdC:P]

Emouvoir: Physiological movement

.... not just the body fluids, but also spirits (evaporated humours):

La multiplication des esperis qui, pour la chaleur desus dite, s'esmeuvent et asamblent [EdC:P]

.... and metonymically, the organs containing/producing the physiological substances :

La chaleur naturele qui e
superficieles du cors et s
semblablement et fait le

The multiplication of spirits that, as a result of the aforementioned heat, start to move and come together

Emouvoir: Physiological movement

.... not just the body fluids, but also spirits:

La multiplication des esperis qui, pour la chaleur desus dite, s'esmeuvent et asamblent [EdC:P]

.... and metonymically, the organs containing/producing the physiological substances :

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The natural warmth that, in case of fear, moves from the outer and superficial parts of the body, and withdraws inward and from the top downwards, works in the same way and makes the belly and urine move

Emouvoir: Psycho-physiological movement

concrete physiological processes are explicitly presented as the cause of psychological phenomena:

Ire donc est une passion de l'ame qui esmoet et encline le coraige humain a desirer vengeance de aucune iniure faite [...]

la naturele chaleur e ire se retrait et asamble de le ordenance de nature aussi comme toute entour le coeur [...]

et pour ce est il aussi dit que ire est une maniere de ebullition de sanc chaut entour le coer pour le desir de la vengeance [EdC:P]

Emouvoir: Psycho-physiological movement

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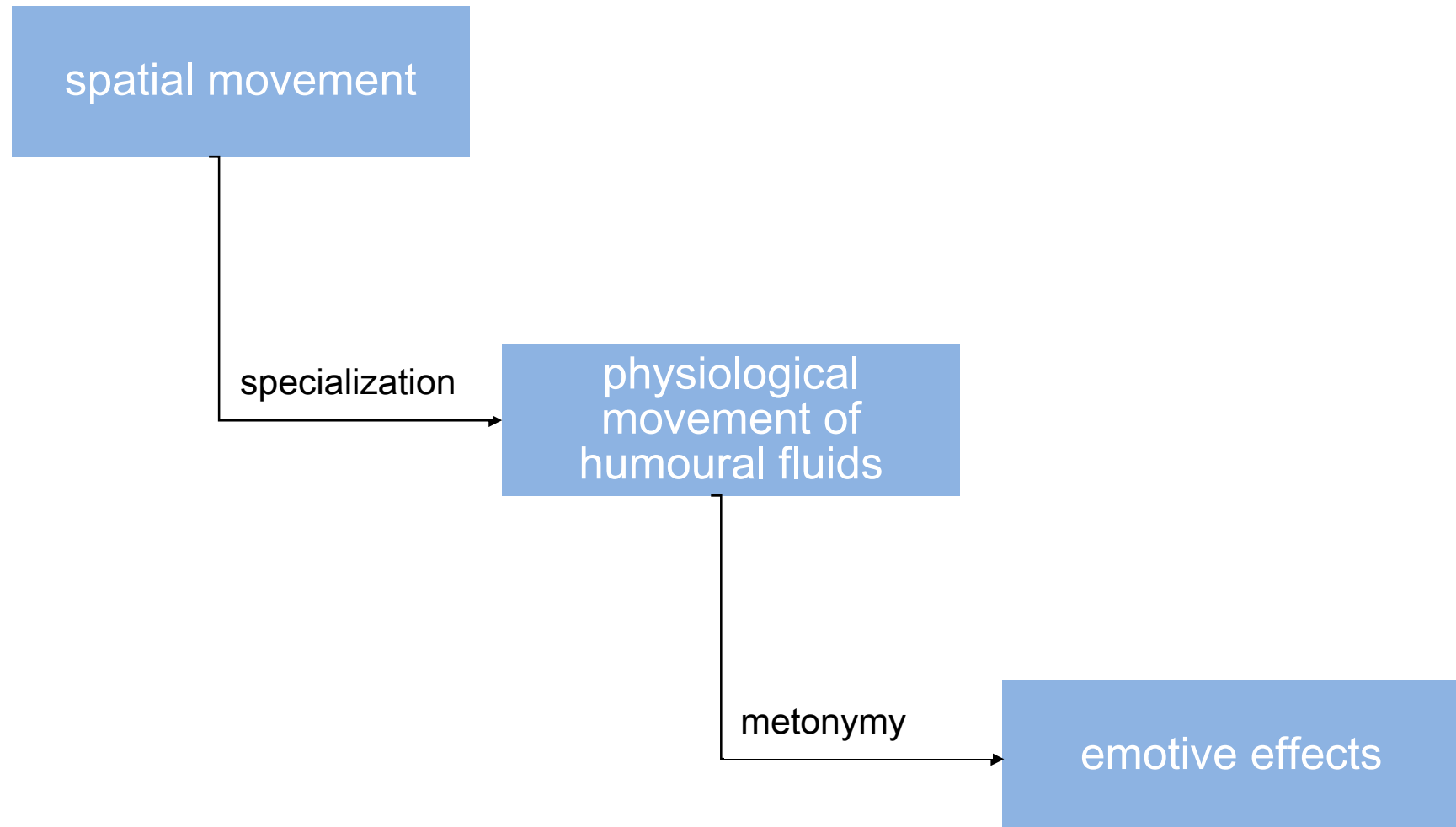
la naturele chaleur e ire se retrait et asamble de le ordenance de nature aussi comme toute et pour ce est il aussi dit c sanc chaut entour le coer

Anger is a passion of the soul that moves and directs the human heart to wish vengeance from whatever wrong that has been done ... The natural warmth of anger withdraws and comes together round the heart in a natural way ... And that is why it is also said that anger is a form of boiling of the blood around the heart due to the desire for vengeance

Semasiology: Conclusions

- 1) a polysemy analysis of **émouvoir** reveals the existence of bridging contexts between the purely spatial 'movement' reading and the psychological 'emotion' reading
 - 2) the causal link between the literal movement of concrete physiological substances and psychological events is explicitly explained in the texts
- emotion is (an effect of) physiological movement

Semasiology: Conclusions



Steps in the Argument

- [1] the psychological reading of **émouvoir** derives from the literal one not by a metaphorical jump, but via humoural bridging contexts
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Onomasiology: The question

an analysis of **mouvoir** reveals that in Ofr and MFr, it exhibits the same polysemy as **émouvoir**, with a semasiological chain from the purely spatial 'movement' reading to the psychological 'emotion' reading

→ can we trace the evolution leading to the current specialisation of **émouvoir** for psychological readings, and of **mouvoir** for spatial readings?

Mouvoir: Spatial readings

spatial movement of physical objects and masses :

Et pour ce veons aussi que la Mer Occeane est obeissans a la lune et que elle flue et reflue deux foiz, que jour que nuit [...] et en moult d'autres et diverses manieres se meut elle et debat

[EdC:EAM]

Mouvoir: Spatial readings

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Et pour ce veons aussi que la Mer Occeane est obeissans a la lune et que elle flue et reflue deux foiz, que jour que nuit [...] et en moult d'autres et diverses manieres se meut elle et debat

[EdC:EAM]

And so we see that the Sea Ocean obeys the moon and flows and reflows twice, during the day and during the night ... and in many other ways does it move and be restless

Mouvoir: Physiological readings

spatial movement of humours and bodily fluids:

Et c'est pour ce que les passions et les accidens de l'ame font la chaleur naturele et les esperis transmuer et mouvoir en moult de manieres diverses [EdC:P]

Mouvoir: Physiological readings

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Et c'est pour ce que les passions et les accidens de l'ame font la chaleur naturele et les esperis transmuer et mouvoir en moult de manieres diverses [EdC:P]

And that is why the passions and the different states of the soul cause the natural warmth and the spirits to change and move in many different ways

Mouvoir: Psycho-physiological readings

psychological events caused by humours and bodily fluids:

Ire est une des passions de l'ame et est une maniere de inflammation et de ebullition de sanc chaut et de esperis entour le coeur [...]. Et pource se moet en ceste passion la chaleur au dehors du cors impetueusement [EdC:P]

Mouvoir: Psycho-physiological readings

psychological events caused by humours and bodily fluids:

Ire est une des passions de l'ame et est une maniere de inflammation et de ebullition de sanc chaut et de esperis entour le coeur [...]. Et pource se moet en ceste passion la chaleur au dehors du cors impetueusement [EdC·P]

Anger is one of the passions of the soul, and a form of inflammation and boiling of warm blood and spirits round the heart ... And that is why in this passion warmth moves out of the body in an impetuous way

Mouvoir: Psychological readings

psychological events caused by other abstract events:

Et pource que li legislateur qui voient le acusé telement opprimé,
soubsmis et abaissié u regart de l'acteur sont meu de pitié et li sont
favourable [EdC:P]

Mouvoir: Psychological readings

psychological events caused by other abstract events:

Et pource que li legislateur qui voient le acusé telement opprimé,
soubsmis et abaissié u regart de l'acteur sont meu de pité et li sont
favourable [EdC:P]

And hence the legislators, seeing the accused in such a depressed, subdued and humiliated state in view of the prosecutor, are moved by pity and act favourably towards him

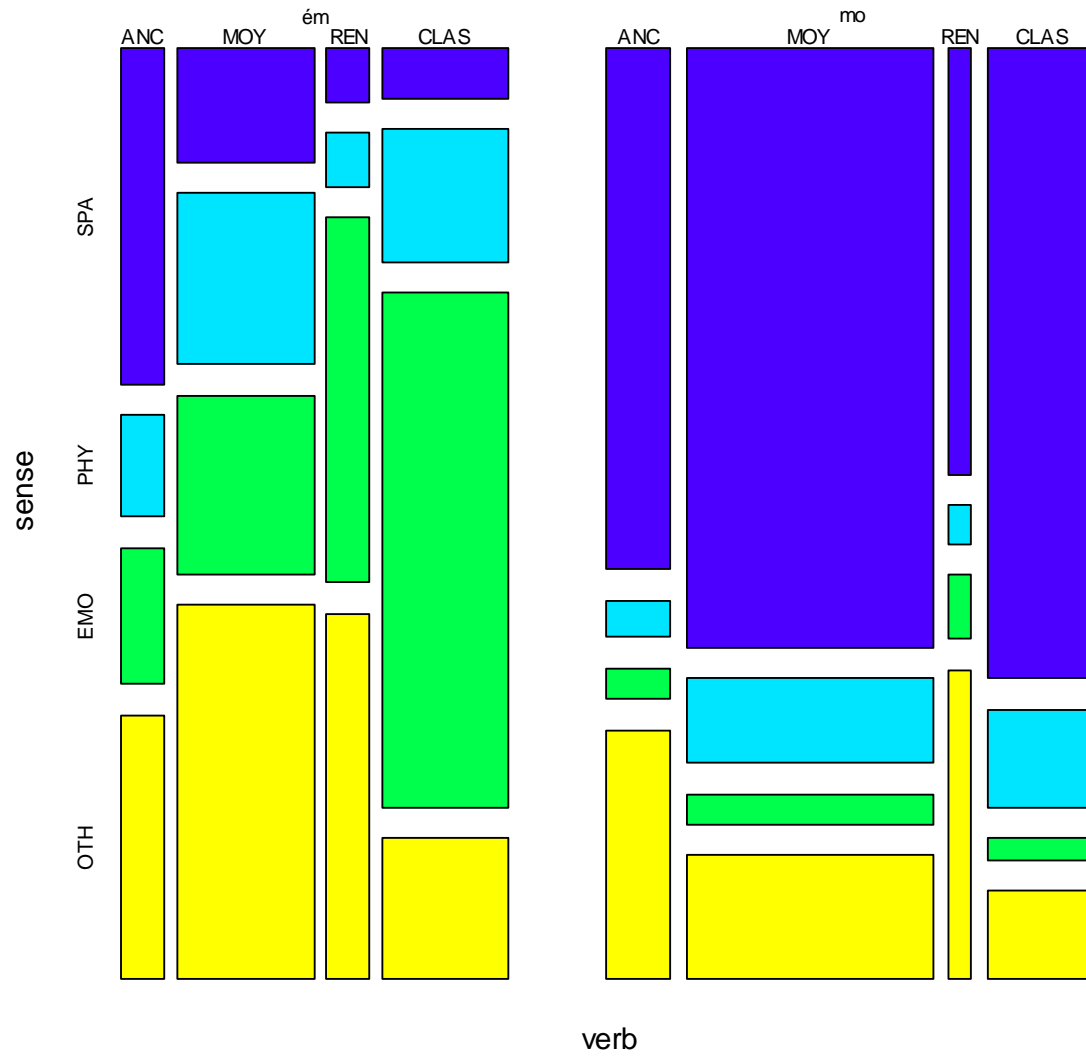
Chronology

SPA	= spatial movement
PHY	= (psycho-)physiological movement
EMO	= emotive readings
OTH	= a number of minor readings not treated here
ANC	= (Ancien français) Old French
MOY	= (Moyen français) Middle French
REN	= (Renaissance) 16th century French
CLAS	= (Classique) 17th century French

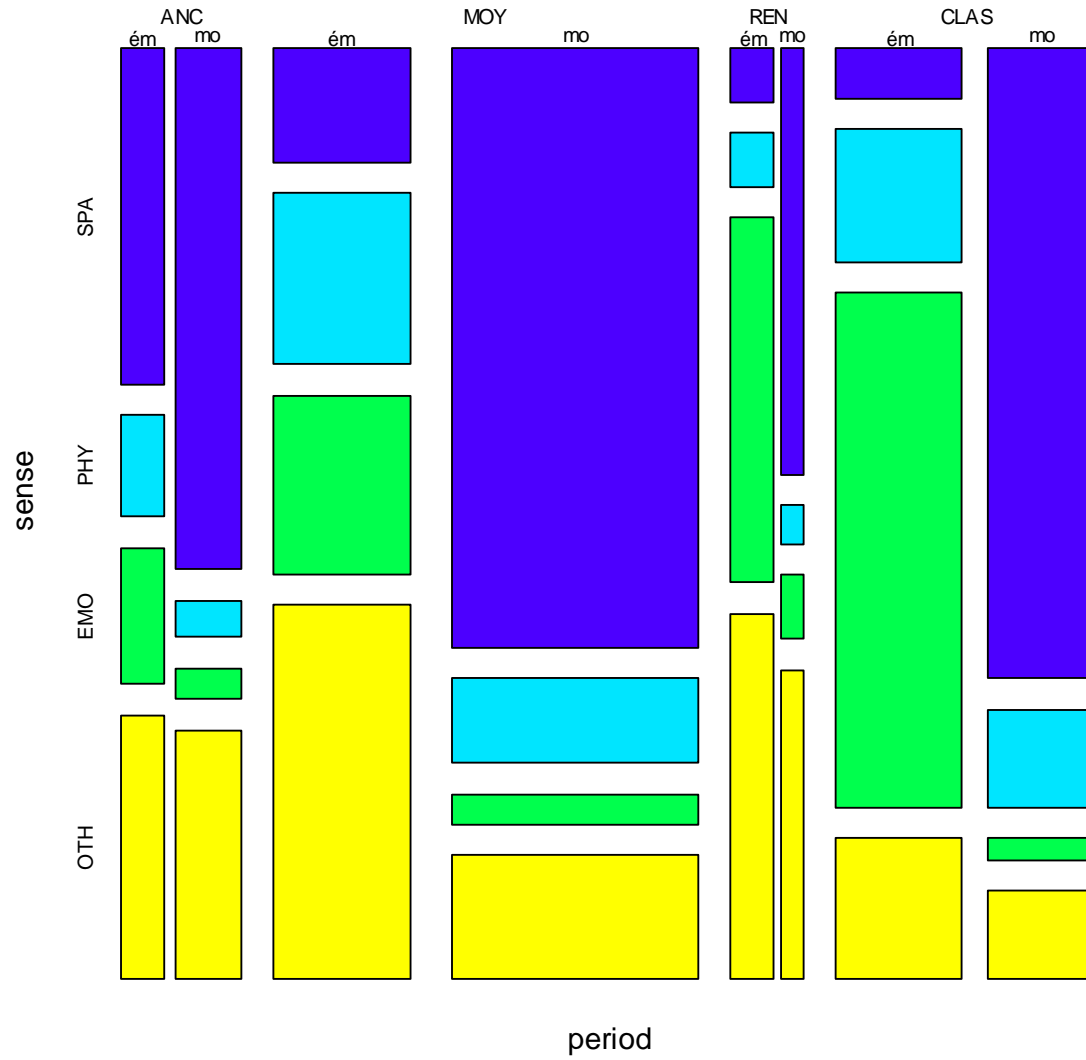
Chronology

		SPA	PHY	EMO	OTH
ANC	mouvoir	306/435	13/45	20/78	143/241
	émouvoir	129/435	32/45	58/78	108/241
MOY	mouvoir	415/442	16/26	57/113	203/349
	émouvoir	27/442	10/26	56/113	146/349
REN	mouvoir	55/67	8/16	9/110	52/173
	émouvoir	12/67	8/16	101/110	121/173
CLAS	mouvoir	446/496	37/187	26/589	32/173
	émouvoir	50/496	150/187	563/589	141/173

(E)mouvoir Semasiologically



(E)mouvoir Onomasiologically



Further questions

- why exactly does **émouvoir** rather than **mouvoir** specialize for the emotional reading?

hypothesis: **émouvoir** < ex-movere 'to move out of', 'to set in motion' → an inchoative reading that seems to go together well with the application to fluids (and masses in general): not 'move from A to B', but 'set in motion, stir up, cause internal turbulence'

- how does the relation between verb and noun (**émouvoir** / **émotion**) evolve ?

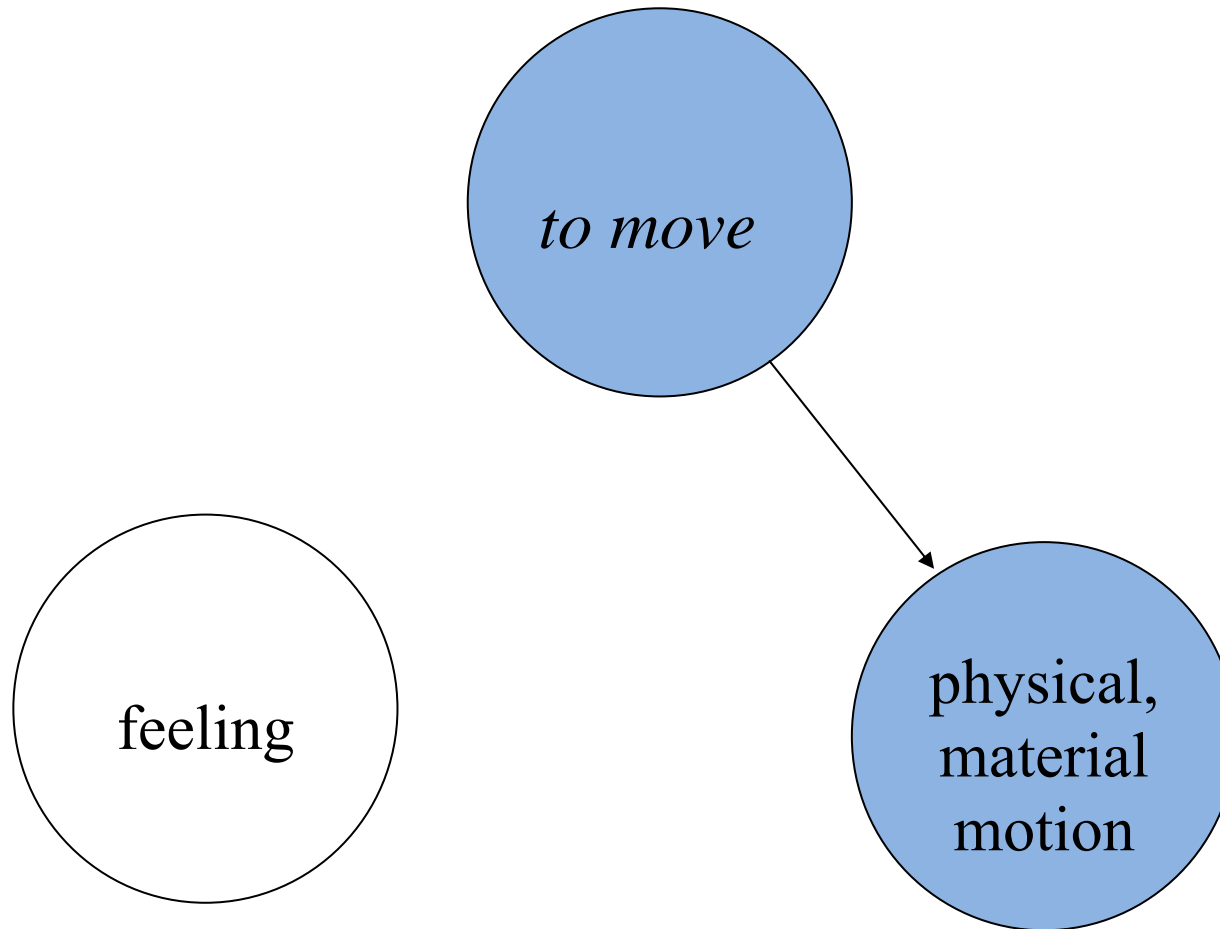
Conclusion 1

- the concept of embodiment originally involved in *émouvoir* and *émotion* was a directly physiological one, determined by a long-standing scientific tradition, that of the humoral theory
- as such, embodiment is not (always) a universal physiological phenomenon, but rather a culturally specific phenomenon that is sensitive to historical influences

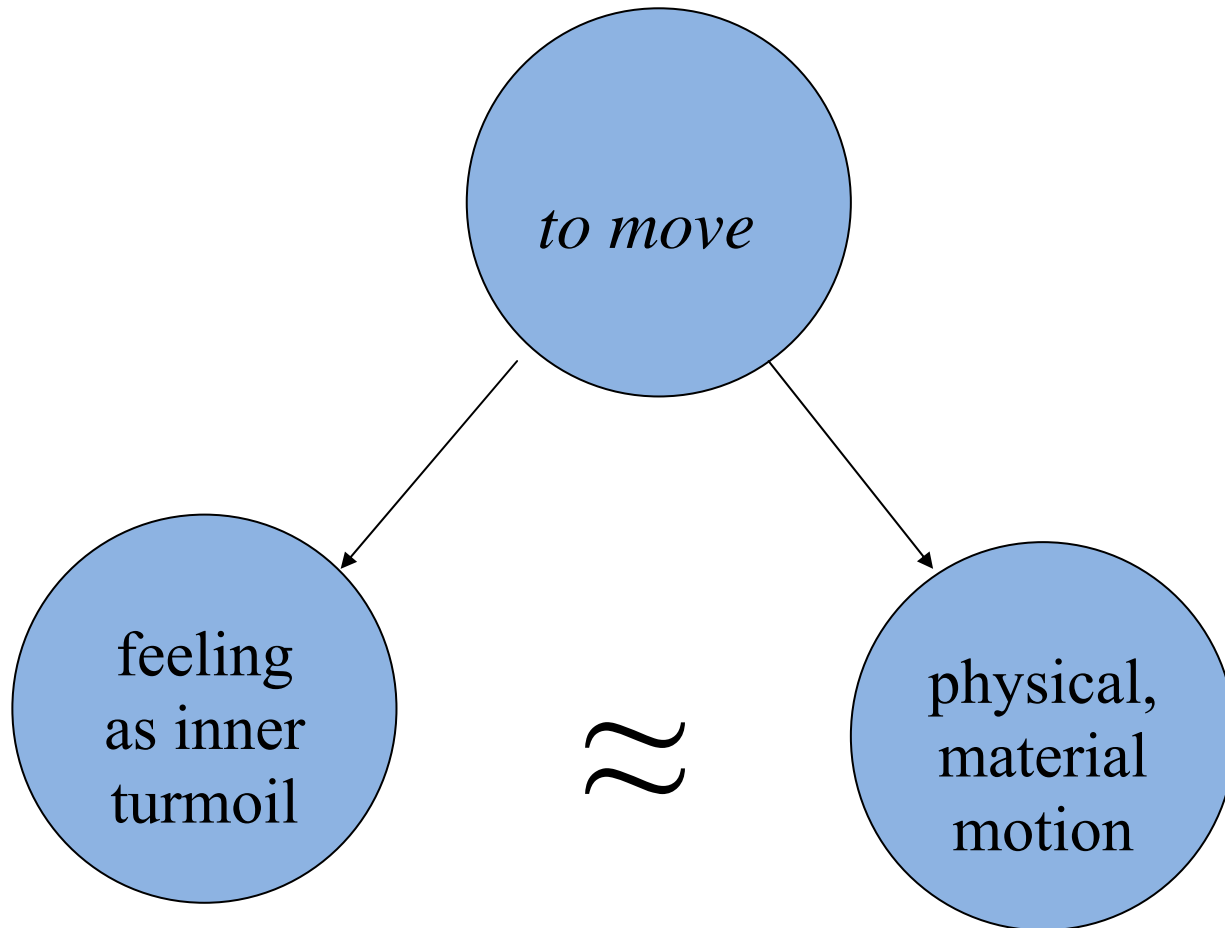
Conclusion 2

- to the extent that contemporary French **émouvoir** and **émotion** (or their cognates in English) are felt as figurative at all, they are so through a process of deliteralization and not as a result of an original metaphor
- different types of metaphorical processes need to be distinguished: metaphor as figuration versus metaphor as deliteralization

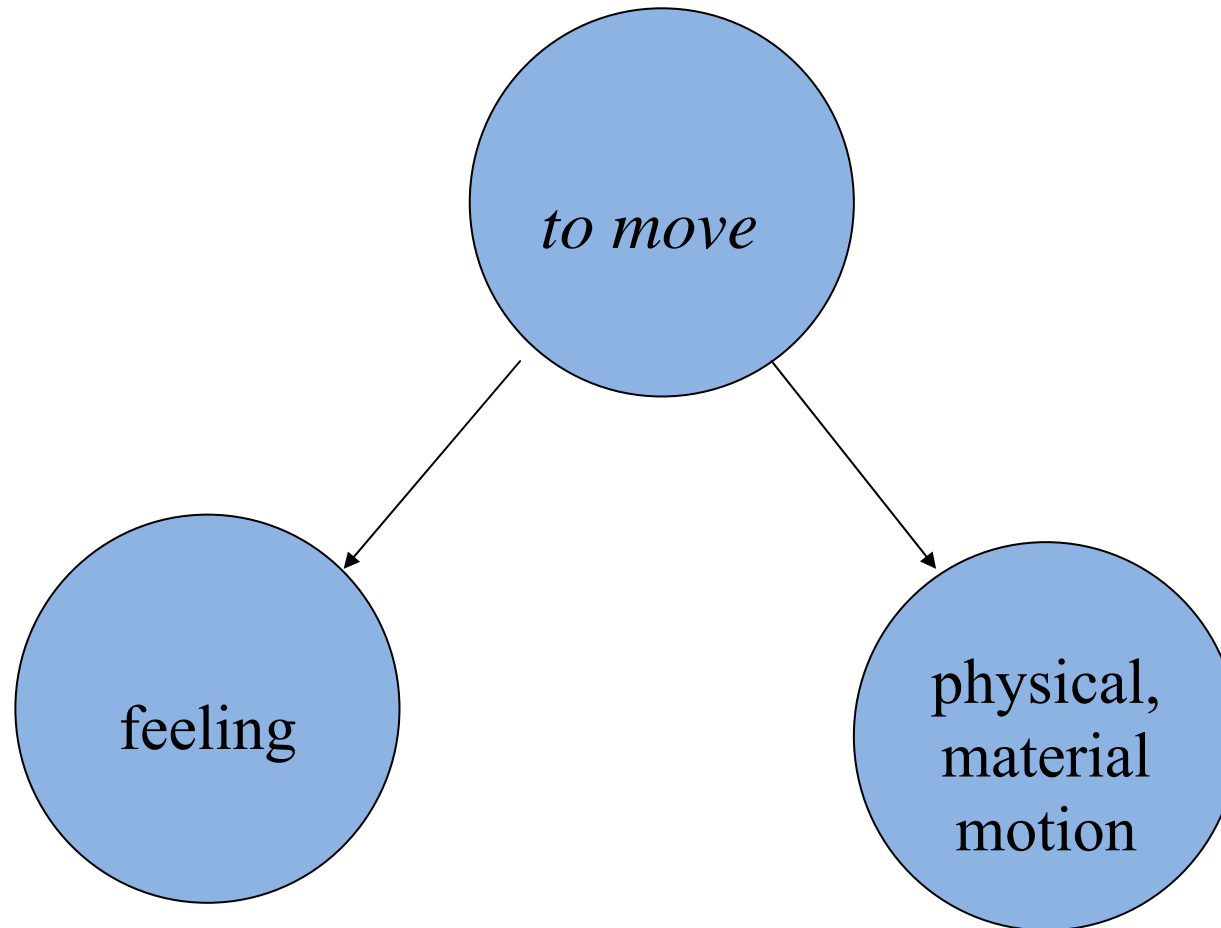
Conclusion 2



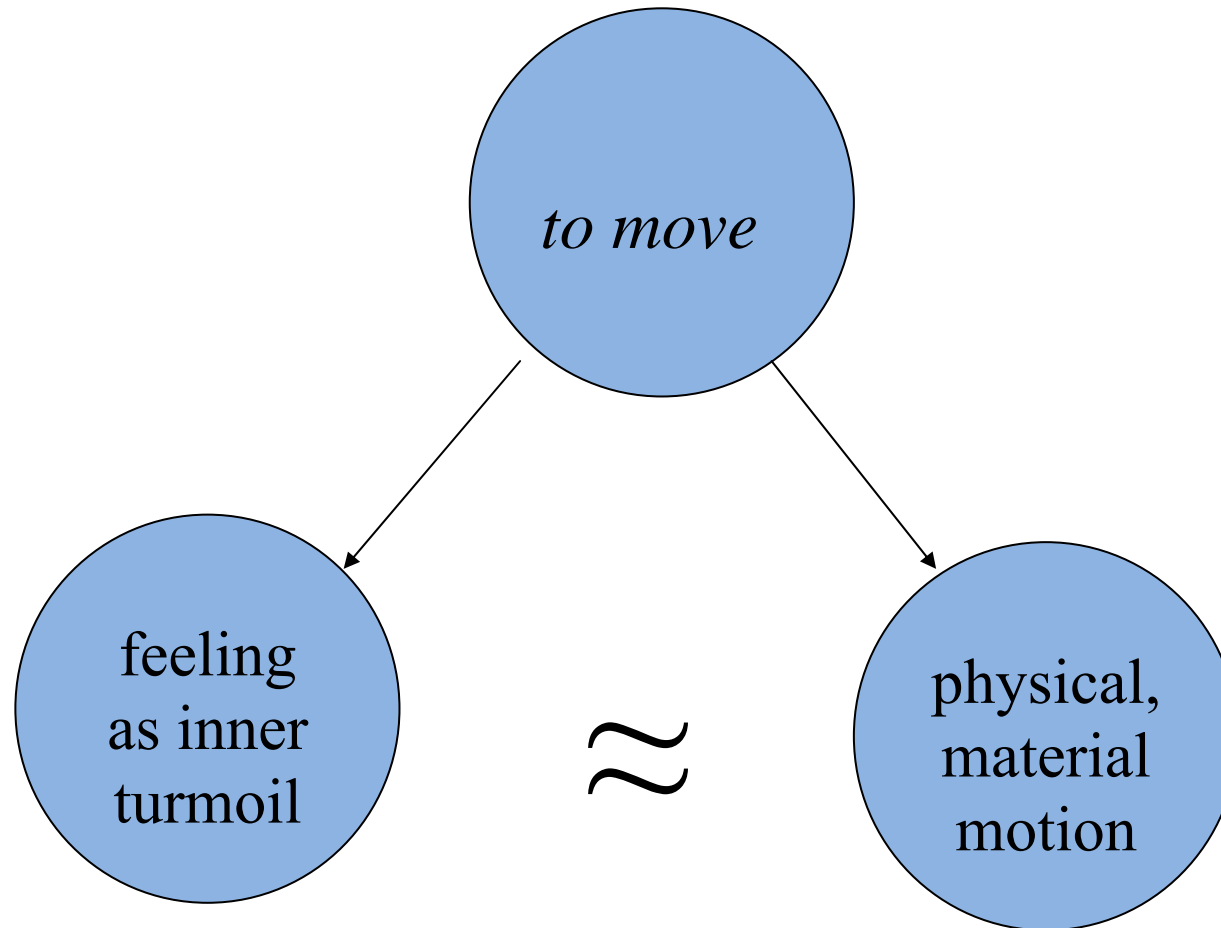
Conclusion 2



Conclusion 2



Conclusion 2



The wider picture

major steps in the evolution of metaphor studies in Cognitive Linguistics:

- from experientialism and embodiment
(with a tendency towards universalism)
- to situated embodiment (Zlatev, Sinha, Ziemke a.o.)
and cultural metaphors (Kövecses)

but a further step needs to be taken:

The wider picture

if metaphor is a cultural phenomenon,
the cultural and linguistic history of metaphors needs to be
studied;

if you accept that metaphors may not only express thought but
may also shape it, you need to study how language is
transmitted:

there can be no cognitive linguistics without historical linguistics



for further information:

<http://www.ling.arts.kuleuven.be/qlvl>

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