

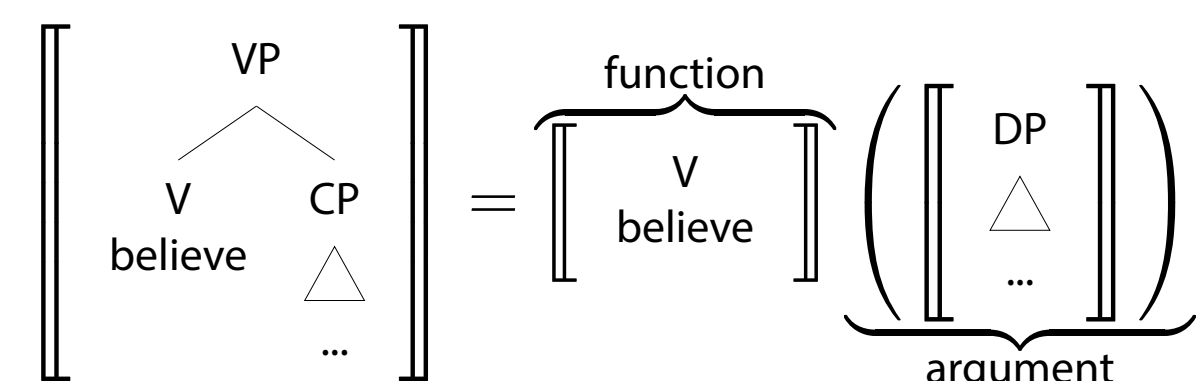
# SELECTION WITHOUT SYNTAX: DPS VS. THAT-CLAUSES

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## CPs AS ARGUMENTS(?)

**Some received wisdom:** *That*-clauses, much like DPs, can function as arguments.



**Observation:** many verbs can embed both DPs and CPs. *Explain* (Pietroski 2000) and other verbs (Prior 1971, King 2002, Uegaki 2015 a.o.) give rise to systematic meaning alternations.

- (1) Abed explained [<sub>CP</sub> that Shirley is upset].  
≈ *Abed's explanation (for something) was that Shirley is upset.* *CONTENT* reading
- (2) Abed explained [<sub>DP</sub> the fact that Shirley is upset].  
≈ *Abed's explanation was of the fact that Shirley is upset.* *THEME* reading

An embedded *that*-clause specifies the propositional content of the eventuality expressed by the verb, whereas an embedded DP is interpreted in a potentially idiosyncratic way.

- (3) a. Jeff fears [<sub>CP</sub> that he is balding].  
b. Jeff fears [<sub>DP</sub> the rumour that he is balding].
- (4) a. Jeff imagined [<sub>CP</sub> that he is balding].  
b. Jeff imagined [<sub>DP</sub> the rumour that he is balding].

## ANALYSIS 1

**First attempt:** verbs such as *explain* assign a THEME  $\theta$ -role to a nominal argument and a CONTENT  $\theta$ -role to a clausal argument (Pietroski 2000, Kastner 2015).

**NO:** Evidence from *propositional DPs* (propDPs):

- ▶ DPs headed by *thing*: *the same thing, a different thing, most things, two things, something, everything*, etc.
- ▶ The simplex *wh*-phrase *what*.
- ▶ Anaphoric expressions, such as *it* and *that*.
- ▶ Null operators in comparatives.

Propositional DPs can be embedded under *think*-type verbs, which disallow content DPs (such as *the fact*) but allow *that*-clauses:

- (5) \*Jeff thinks/says the rumour Britta will be late.
- (6) a. Jeff thinks/says that Britta will be late, and Shirley thinks/says *the same thing*.  
b. Jeff thinks/says that Britta will be late, and Shirley thinks/says *that* too.

Case diagnostics indicate that propDPs really are nominal.

- (7) a. It is believed {\*[<sub>DP</sub> the rumour] [<sub>CP</sub> that Jeff has a new bicycle]}.  
b. \*It is believed *the same thing as Abed* – namely, that Shirley will leave soon.

**Prediction (false):** propDPs are always assigned the THEME  $\theta$ -role.

- (8) Abed explained [<sub>DP</sub> something] – namely the fact that Shirley is upset.
- (9) Abed explained [<sub>DP</sub> something] – namely that Shirley is upset.

## ANALYSIS 2

**Second attempt:** only DPs can be genuine thematic arguments. *That*-clauses are always modifiers and specify the CONTENT of the eventuality expressed by the verb by virtue of their semantic value, and facts about semantic composition.

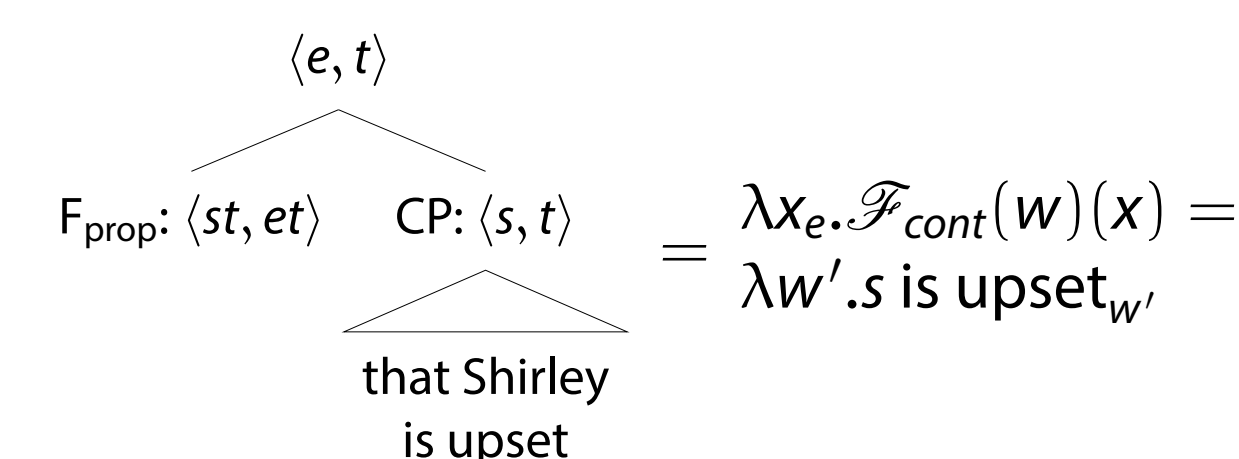
## BACKGROUND

**Ontological assumptions:**  $D_e$  contains abstract objects like *stories* and *facts*. These objects are *contentful* – the propositional content of an abstract object is retrievable via the function  $\mathcal{F}_{cont}$  (cf. Kratzer 2006, Moulton 2015, Uegaki 2015).  $D_e$  also includes eventualities, which are potentially contentful, e.g. a *belief state* is a member of  $D_e$  with propositional content (Hacquard 2006).

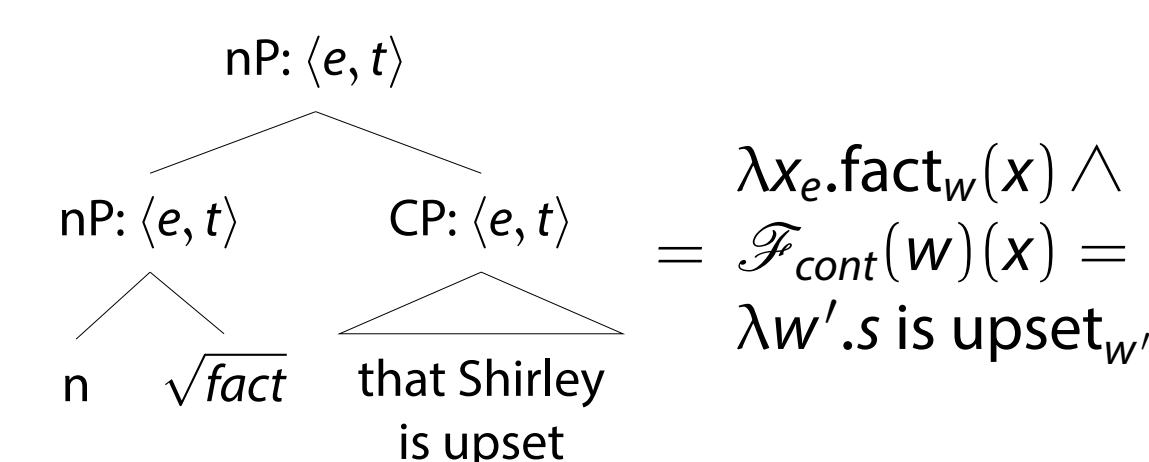
$$\mathcal{F}_{cont}(\textcircled{\text{img}}) = \left\{ w' : \text{P. McCartney is dead}_{w'} \right\}$$

**Proposition-to-property shift:**

$$\llbracket F_{prop} \rrbracket = \lambda p_{st} . \lambda x_e . \mathcal{F}_{cont}(w)(x) = p$$

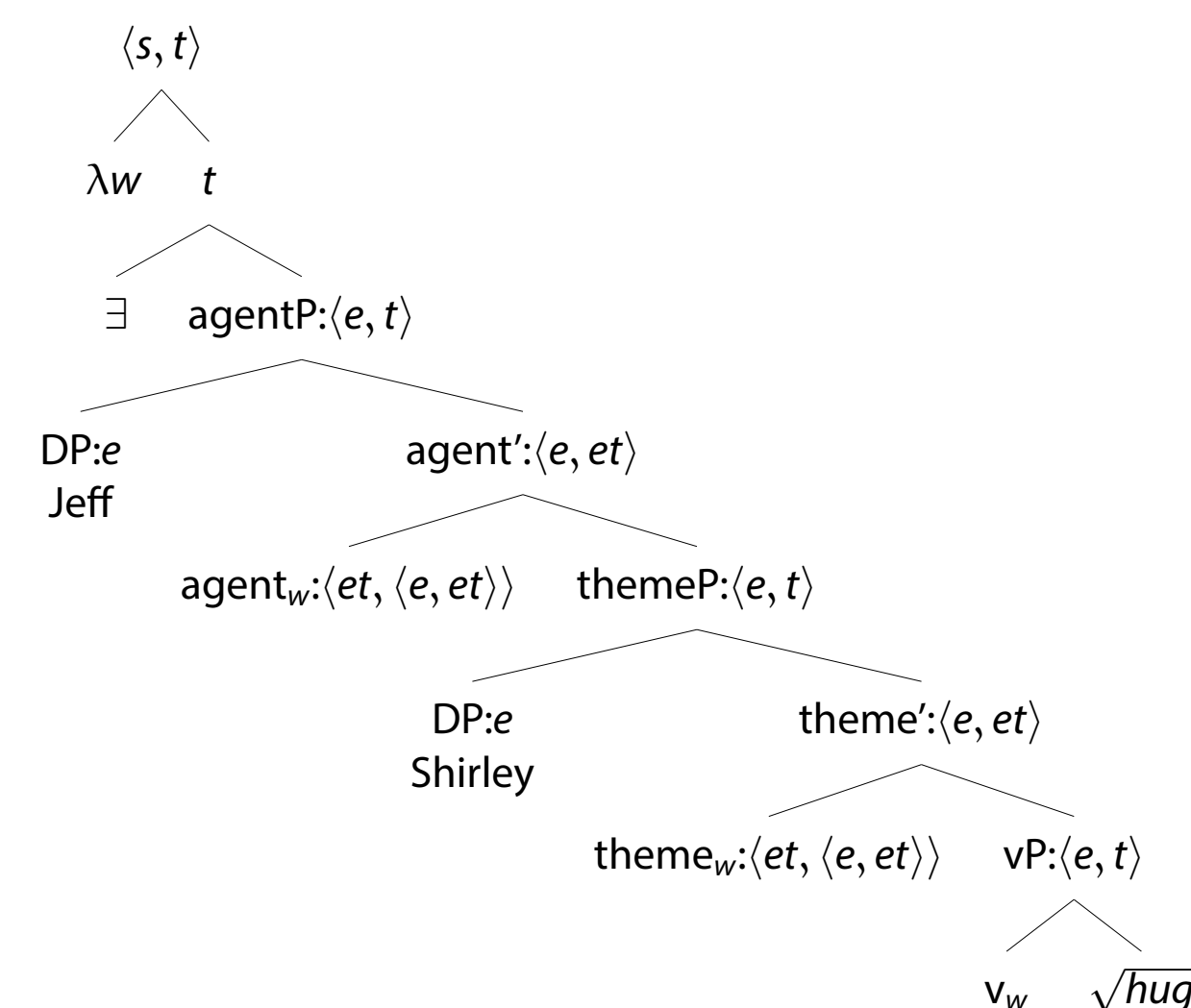


*That*-clauses compose with content nouns via Predicate Modification (PM) (Moulton 2015).



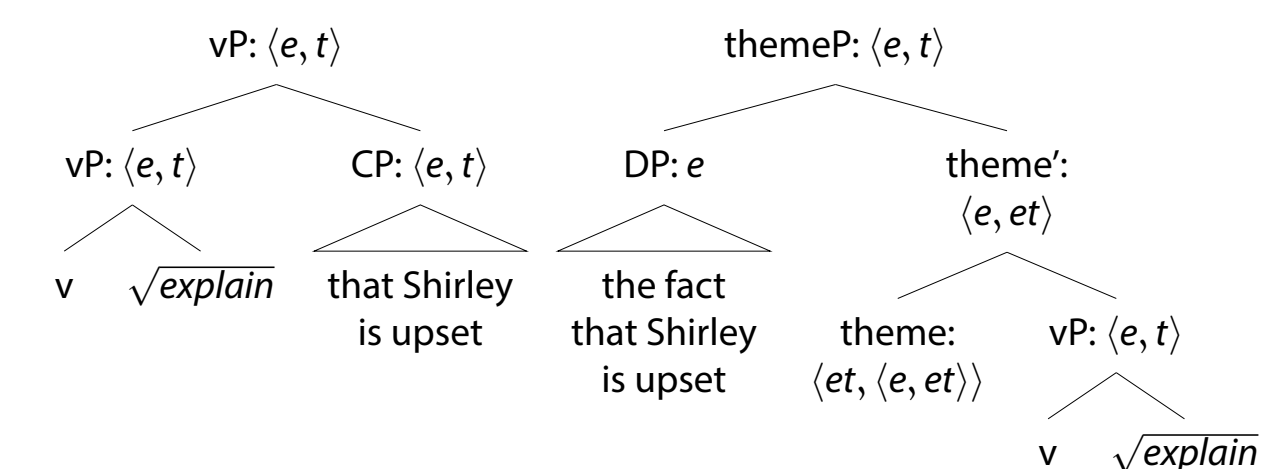
**Neo-Davidsonian event semantics:** illustrated below for “Jeff hugged Shirley” (ignoring tense):

$$\lambda w . \exists e [\text{AGENT}_w(e) = j \wedge \text{THEME}_w(e) = s \wedge \text{hugging}_w(e)]$$



## SEMANTICS OF EMBEDDING

**Central idea:** all attitude verbs are properties of eventualities of type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ , and may combine with an embedded *that*-clause via PM. Content DPs denote individuals, and therefore must be integrated via a thematic function.

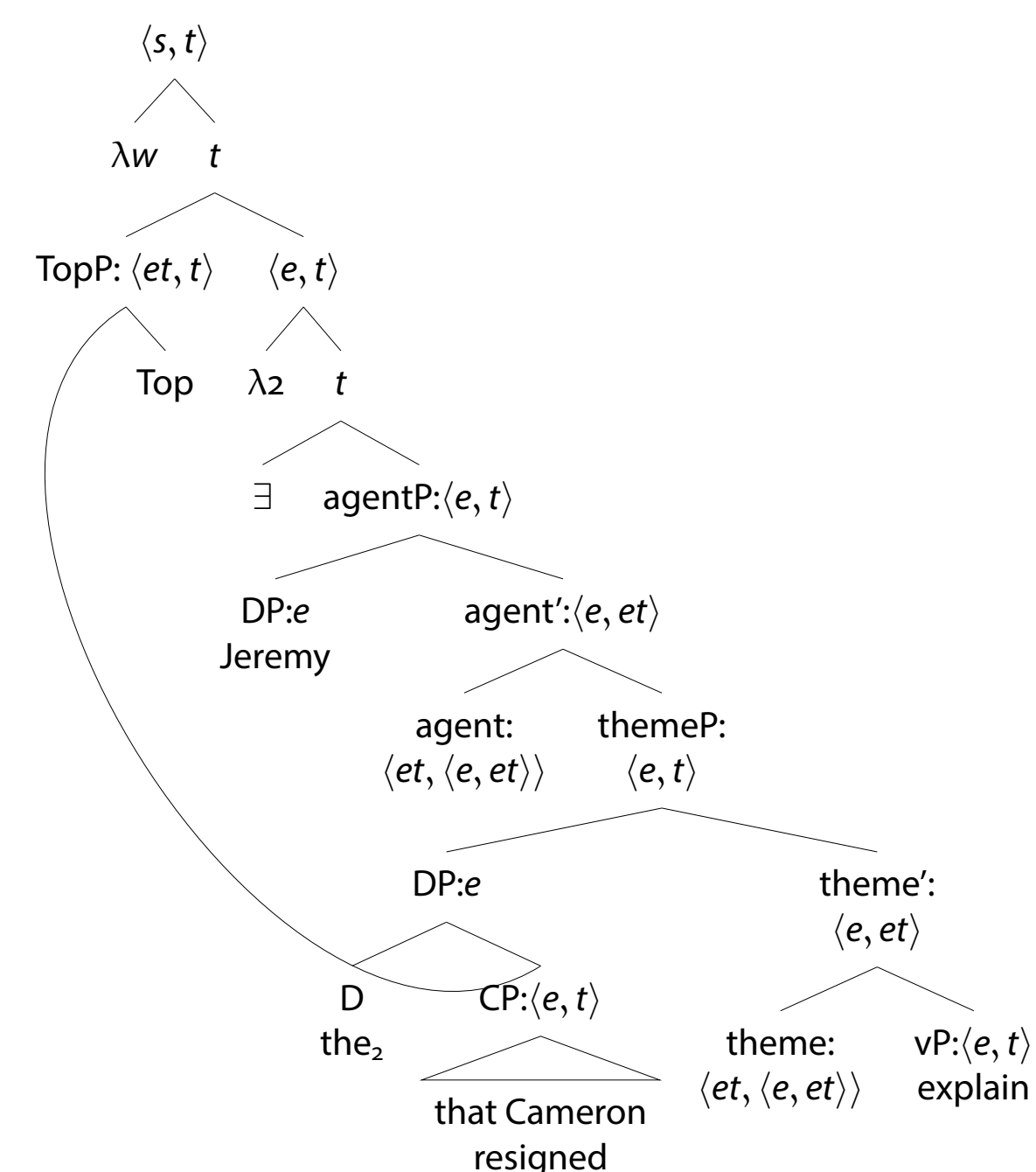


**Further consequences:** this system provides an elegant account of “the DP requirement” (Moulton 2015), which can be more accurately dubbed *the type e requirement*. The unacceptability of (10a) shows that semantic type, not syntactic category is at issue, since *hope* allows a propDP complement.

**The type e requirement:** The gap of a fronted CP (sentential subject or topic) must be a DP type  $e$ .

- (10) a. ?\*That Mary will leave, John hopes <that Mary will leave>.  
b. That Mary will leave, John hopes for <that Mary will leave>.
- (11) That Shirley is upset, Abed explained <that Shirley is upset>.  
✓ *THEME*, \**CONTENT*

Since the lower copy of the CP is type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ , *trace conversion* predicts this (Fox and Johnson 2016). Insertion of a bound definite determiner implements a *property-to-entity shift* of the lower copy. A multidominance implementation of this idea after Fox and Johnson:



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