

SOCIAL TERMS AND SOCIAL REALITY

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The diachronic semantics of individual words has been described as erratic and unpredictable. Williams (1975) suggests that only three processes have been identified: narrowing, widening and semantic shift. Here it will be argued that new generalizations emerge when a sociohistorical methodology is employed to trace the interaction between semantics and social history.¹ A more refined approach to the semantics of various types of vocabulary increases the number of historical predictions which can be made. In particular, social kind terms, such as KING² and FARMER, which denote groups of people with particular functions and positions in the social hierarchy, are fundamentally different from natural kind terms. The difference originates in the essential natures of the classes of objects they denote, and leads to significant psychological differences affecting lexical semantics. As a result, social kind terms change meaning in predictably different ways. First, the distinct semantics of social kind terms will be analyzed briefly. Then the particular diachrony of several Anglo-Saxon terms will be traced. Finally the predictions that can be made about the likely semantic changes in social terms relative to other kinds of terms will be summarized.

I. SOCIAL KIND TERMS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT

Dahlgren (1983a) proposes that there are fundamentally different types of concrete nouns which correspond to different

¹ Many thanks to Karen Kossuth, Ronald Macaulay and Elizabeth Traugott for suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper.

² In this article objects and classes of objects will have no special typeface (a lemon), psychological categories will be underlined (*lemon*), and lexical items will be in caps (LEMON).

subjective categories of reality. These claims will be summarized to lay the basis for arguments concerning prediction in historical semantics.

a. Ontology

Consider two classes of things in reality denoted by the English words **SECRETARY** and **TIGER**. Tigers and secretaries differ ontologically in that tigers are independent classes in nature, while secretaries are in some sense created by human society. In other words, the class of tigers would exist whether human society classified them as a separate category or not because the essential nature of the class is determined by chromosome structure. By contrast, the class of secretaries would not exist at all unless human society had created a set of social practices which determine what the class of secretaries is and does. There could be no such thing as a secretary without the institutional and social framework in which the function of a secretary is defined. This is similar to Searle's (1969) notion of a constitutive rule, so that it is appropriate to say that the class of secretaries is constitutively defined. In some cases there is an explicit social decision to create a social kind, and the decision is recorded in a law on personnel policy. In other cases the social practice evolves.

b. Psychological categories

This ontological difference affects human categorization of the classes of objects. The psychological difference corresponds to Rawls' (1967) distinction between rules which define practices and summary rules. The rules which define the practice of baseball, for example, make possible the concept of "strike" and "ball". There is no such thing as "strike" without the rules (these are like Searle's constitutive rules). On the other hand, summary rules are based upon experience and corresponds to realities which are independent of the existence of the rules. The maxim "when the count is 3 - 0, don't swing" exemplifies a summary rule of baseball.

The psychological concept *secretary* is based upon constitutive rules which define a practice, while *tiger* is a summary of experience. Since secretary categorizes a constitutively-defined class of

objects, the psychological category is a folk version of a constitutive definition. The psychological category includes ideas about the institutions in which secretaries function, the goals of the institution, the role and function of a secretary within them. It includes a folk version of the constitutive rules which defines the practice of "business", for example, and a secretary's function in a business. Only in that context is the category *secretary* meaningful.

Folk sociology differs from folk biology in that the concepts in the latter tend to be summary concepts of givens. In general, society and culture don't determine what a biological category is, but rather one learns this from experience. Notwithstanding the effect of social importance for natural categories as described by Dougherty (1978) and the existence of culture-relative categories such as *vegetable* and *weed*, natural categories are, in general, more dependent on the structure of the given physical world, while social categories are more socially-determined. In fact, while social decision doesn't affect natural kinds at all, social categorization affects social reality as well as being affected by it. In summary, there is a reciprocal relationship between human categorization and social reality.

Another important factor affecting categorization of social kinds is that persons are perceived differently from all other objects. Findings of social psychologists (Cohen (1976), Schneider, Hastorf and Ellsworth (1979), Gelman and Spelke (1981)) indicate that persons are conceived in terms of their internal states as well as their appearance and behavior. Implicit personality theory, and possible intentions and emotions are included in conceptions of persons. Persons are also understood (and misunderstood) in terms of cultural stereotypes.

c. The structure of social categories

Recent developments in human categorization indicate that concrete categories such as *fruit* are organized around prototypical members such as *apple* and *orange* Dalgren (1983b) investigated the structure of social categories using the same methods as the original prototype research which dealt only with natural kinds and artifacts. The latter types of objects were found to be categorized in terms of attributes of form ("round", "red")

and function including typical motor movements of the object or humans interaction with it ("you eat it", "it flies"). As in the studies of natural kinds, social kinds were found to be categorized in terms of attributes of form ("pretty women") and (physical) function ("sits at desk"). In addition, attributes describing social function ("assistant", "heals people") and social relations ("works for someone") were consistently listed by subjects. Internal qualities of typical persons in the social kind were important, e.g. professors are considered "erudite", and others are "not intelligent". Subjects shared cultural stereotypes such as "doctors play golf on Wednesday". Social kinds, then, are conceived not only in terms of form and (physical) function, but also in terms of social function, relation to the social hierarchy, implicit personality theory and cultural stereotypes. If the analysis reviewed above is correct, folk sociology involves all of these types of attributes. Note that some of this is constitutive information while some of it is summary information (secretaries are typically female but they aren't constitutively defined as such). Figure 1 illustrates these types of information in the concept of secretary shared by present day students.

Figure 1. Folk Sociological Information in a Social Category *Secretary*

	constitutive	summary	cultural stereotypical
physical appearance	human, adult	female	
physical function	types, answers phone		
social function	furtherers institutional goals of boss correspondence appointments keeps papers in order		acts as surrogate wife to boss
social relations	works for someone	socially inferior to boss in a general sense (eg. income)	
internal qualities	knows stenography		thinks about clothes

d. Lexical semantics

Differences in psychological categories are reflected in lexical semantics in ways which can only be guessed at this stage of linguistic investigation. Incorporating the above theoretical analysis and psycholinguistic data, the lexical differences between social terms and other concrete nouns can be summarized as follows: 1) Social terms contain more information. 2) Social terms contain more types of information: constitutive, summary and cultural stereotypical. 3) Constitutive features are sometimes necessary and known to the non-expert (e. g. "has a medical licence" for DOCTOR). 4) Social terms are inherently relational among each other and sometimes come in systems of terms because they name ranks in a social hierarchy. 5) There is a causal relation between social history and lexical semantics of social terms: social categories tend to be defined in historical acts of law-making and personal policy making; evolutionary change in society affects folk sociology and hence social terms. 6) On the other hand, the prototype can have a far-distant relation to the reality (e.g. the prototype of doctor comes from TV programmes). People seem very willing to suspend prototypes for social terms when using language actively, probably even more often than for lemon or tiger. By contrast, natural kind terms are not constitutive, have less information, are not inherently relational, have prototypes which are closer to the reality, and tend not to have as apparent a history biological evolution isn't apparent to a generation of English speakers. These lexical differences between social and natural kind terms lead to predictions of diachronic differences, as will be demonstrated by a case study of the socio-historical semantics of some Old English social rank terms.

II. HISTORY OF ANGLO-SAXON SOCIAL RANK TERMS

Folk sociology changes in relation to changes in social policy and practice. As a result, the lexical semantics of social terms is directly affected by social history. In Dahlgren (1976), I investigated the set of Anglo-Saxon social ranks at three points corresponding to three significant stages in Anglo-Saxon history:

1) the earliest point for which laws survive which define the social ranks (the Laws of Ine, 690 AD); 2) the period just before the Norman Conquest (1050 AD); and 3) the period just after the Conquest (the Laws of William, 1100 AD).

a. History

Underlying the set of social rank terms is the folk sociology reflecting the social reality of the times. The following historical summary is derived mainly from Stenton (1947). Early Anglo-Saxon England consisted of some seven kingdoms of Germanic invaders who had defeated the Britons in the fifth and sixth centuries. All were ruled by men called CYNINGAS who had achieved and maintained their positions by virtue of military success. A CYNING was a warlord who had defeated the Britons in the original invasions. In the early period there were frequent wars between rival invading groups as well as against the native population of Britons. Between wars the population was engaged in agriculture. Though there was a class division of EORLISC vs. CEORLISC reflecting differences of status, all landholders, including the ceorls, were free men and had a personal relationship with their CYNING. His function was to provide protection (MUND) in return for taxes in the form of food-rent (FEORM). The kings ruled in concert with other members of the eorlisc class, not by decree. Sometimes kings were elected. Similarly, justice was carried out by groups of equals of the accused.

As the settlements of invaders became more secure militarily, the social structure became more complex and stratified. Kings granted landholdings to their retainers (GESITH, THEGN and EALDORMAN), many of whom had originally been part of the group of conquering invaders and had been personal companions of a king. Another historical process leading to stratification was the consolidation of kingdoms by war, so that by 1066, all of Southern England was under the control of a single Anglo-Saxon king (Edward the Confessor). The state was still unstable and the king did not have absolute power of the kind William the Conqueror would have. Instead Edward the Confessor ruled with the advice of his councillors, the GETHUNGENES WITAN, which consisted

of the king's reeves, earls and archbishops. By this time the throne was partially hereditary.

The lowest group in the social hierarchy, the ceorls, was gradually subjugated. At first ceorls were free, taxpaying men who owned one hide, or section, of land, which they worked themselves. (The equivalent modern measurement of a hide is unknown.) Over a period of four centuries before the Conquest the position of ceorl was slowly eroded. As society stratified, the ceorls gradually lost a personal relationship with the king and came to pay food-rent to a lord, who in turn paid the king. Later, they began to lose ownership of their land to the lord, and paid rent to him in the form of weekly labor (WICE-WEORC) in exchange for the use of the land. This system represented the beginnings of feudalism. The major social division came to be called THEGNLISC vs. CEORLISC rather than the earlier EORLISC vs. CEORLISC, and was based upon the distinction between persons of inherited rank (DEORGEBOREN lords) and the common farmers who at this point were semi-serfs. After the Conquest ceorls were further subjugated to real serfdom, in which they and their land were property of a lord.

When the Normans invaded England they brought feudalism with them. The main features of the new social system were that the king was a hereditary monarch who held absolute power in his court. Church and state combined and the king was said to derive his authority from God. All land was held of a lord in return for service. Each level of landholder owed allegiance (LIEGE HOMAGE) to a lord, and knights, military service or weekly service on the lord's land in return for use of the land. The system of land tenure involving the knight's fee (CNIHT-FEOH) meant that the king had a standing army with which to maintain power, making the state more secure than the Pre-Norman state had been. Justice was carried out individually by lords upon their tenants. The king decided in cases involving nobles.

b. Constitutive changes in social ranks

The Anglo-Saxon laws and charters provide evidence that terms for social ranks were affected by these changes in society. In the laws, each social rank was defined. Position in the social

hierarchy, monetary value in case of murder (wergeld), amount of land held, and some of the duties were listed.

The limited data on the social position and functions of the ceorls paint a picture of gradual subjugation from freeman to semi-serf in the Pre-Norman era. In the Laws of Ine (690 AD; Liebermann 1903), a ceorl is the lowest rank of freeman as evidenced by his wergeld value of 200 shillings (as compared with 1200 for gesith and 6000 for king's thegn). The ceorl owned one hide of land, his house and his farm implements. He paid food-rent (FEORM) to the king. Every village was required to pay to the king each year prescribed amounts of honey, ale, cheese, fish, oxen, and fowl. Their early freedom is underlined in the Laws of Gethyncūto (Liebermann 1903), which describe ceorls as being able to earn thegnship:

And gif ceorl getheah, theat he hafde V hide fullice agenes, bellan and burhgeat, setl and sundornote on cyhnges healle, thonne weas he thaenon forth thegenrightes wyrthe.

And if a ceorl prospered so that he fully owned 5 hides, bells and gate, house and special office in the king's hall, then he thenceforward had the privileges of a thegn.

In a land charter of Edward the Elder of 900 A.D. (Earle 1888), the ceorls of Hissburne were required to pay a tax of 40 pennies per hide and a certain amount of week work (WICE-WEORC) as well as food-rent of ale, bread, barley, sheep and lambs. Later, in the Rectitudines (Liebermann 1903), dating just prior to the Norman Conquest, the services ceorls were required to perform in return for use of their land had increased to include more week-work, ploughing, providing seed for the lord's land, and standing watch in addition to food-rent. The ceorlish class had subdivided into three categories, the kotsetla, who owned only 5 acres and spent most of his time in service to his lord, the gebur, who owned a quarter hide and owed the services described above, and the geneat who owned one hide and was not required to do week-work.

Figure 2 summarizes the constitutive changes which affected three social rank terms in the Anglo-Saxon and Post-Norman periods (see Dahlgren 1976 for others).

Figure 2. Differences in Definitions of Social Ranks

690 AD Laws of Ine	900 AD Edward's Charter	1050 AD Laws of Edwyrd	1100 AD Laws of William
holds 1 hide of land	feorm and wice weore	ceorl subdivides into kotsetla - 5 hides gebur - 1/4 hide geneat - 1 hide more wice weore hergeate ² 2 pounds CYNINGS THEGN	holds no land all labor is for lord wergeld 100 shillings BARUN holds a manorial estate wergeld 20 pounds controls all of southern England has earls monarch
feorm wergeld 200 shillings CYNINGS THEGN jurisdiction over land wergeld 6,000 shillings controls Wessex has ealdormen gethungenes witan		holds at least 5 hides hergeate ⁴ pounds CYNING controls Southern England has earls gethungenes witan	

* The hergeate, or inheritance tax, is the only surviving evidence of the money value of these ranks in the immediate pre-Conquest period. It comes from the Laws of Cnut (1025 of AD).

c. Folk sociology can change qualitatively

Social ideas must have changed qualitatively during the period in question. These changes produced a new folk sociology incorporating the new concepts of divine right, absolute monarchy, land tenure in return for knights, "liege homage" and the newly reorganized landholdings (manors controlled by barons). The new concepts involved in the new state affected the entire set of social terms.

Traugott and Romaine (this volume) have raised the question whether there are semantic sames which persist over time, though perhaps associated with different forms at different times. Such sames undoubtedly exist for some kinds of vocabulary. The English vocabulary classifying the biological world seems to have retained associated concepts such as 'animate', 'plant' or 'human' over a long period. The lexical changes reflecting the social changes described above indicate that for at least some kinds of vocabulary associated concepts can be quite volatile. Entirely new meanings for social terms come into existence as a result of social change.

d. Lexical change

The predominant effect was the gradual shift of meaning reflecting changes in the social status, functions, and way of defining of the class of persons named by the term. Of course, the actual persons changed, but there was a continuity by family and a continued existence of the ranks over the centuries, at least as defined relative to other ranks. The terms CEORL, THEGN and CYNING illustrate this kind of semantic shift resulting from social history.

CEORL. Originally a general term for 'man', it became a legal term for 'the lowest rank of freeman' in the Anglo-Saxon laws. The earliest attestation of this sense to be found is in the Laws of Ine 690 AD. After the Conquest, *CHEORL* (with a new spelling) came to refer to a 'tenant in pure villeinage' — still a legal term. At this time it also had a more general sense of 'rustic'. Towards the end of the early medieval period, when the status of ceorls had been even more decisively depressed for two centuries, a new sense of the term developed which has survived to modern times, that of 'rude, low-bred fellow'. Similarly the corresponding adjective

ceorisc originally meant 'of or pertaining to the rank of ceorl'. By 1386 it had a negative connotation — 'intentionally boorish or rude behavior'.

THEGN. THEGN originally meant 'boy', then 'servant, attendant', then 'military retainer'. By the time of the Laws of Ine a CYNINGES THEGN was a military retainer and a servant to the king who had a wergeld of 6,000 shillings. Persons called CYNINGES THEGN rose considerably in stature thereafter due to the fact that kings thegns were granted land by charter of the king, and as a result became the aristocrats of Anglo-Saxon society (Stenton 1947). At the end of the Anglo-Saxon era a king's thegn had risen to a major landholding lord who had a fortified dwelling place, ceorls who paid feorm and vice-weorc to him, duties in the king's household and certain judicial rights. The descendants of personal companions to kings became the aristocracy of Anglo-Saxon society, with the result that a number of English words (GE-NEAT, GESITH, THEGN) which originally meant 'attendant' came to name high social rank.

CYNING. The term CYNING must have shifted meaning constantly since early Analo-Saxon times when it mean 'warlord, protector'. At that point a king was not a monarch, but ruled in consultation with thegns, reeves (tax collectors) and archbishops. In the Laws of Aethelberht, a Kentish king, an archbishop's life had a higher value than the king's (Macaulay 1969). In Mercia there were lesser kings under the king. In 731 AD Aethelbald took control of a number of Southern English kingdoms. The kings remained as local chiefs, who were still called CYNING. The office of the highest king was not hereditary. Ine, for example, ruled while his father was living. The successor was elected by a group of lords, though by the time of the Conquest there was an attempt to place a near relative of the former king on the throne. The earliest kings controlled small kingdoms whose boundaries frequently changed as the kings fought among themselves for territory. The king was basically a warlord. By the time of the Conquest, the Southern English kingdom was relatively larger. The king stood as head of a large, differentiated class of "dearborn" lords⁴. At this point the

⁴ For the definition of this term, see IIa.

meaning of CYNING must have been somewhat different from 'warlord', perhaps something on the order of 'chief lord'. After the Conquest, as a result of the introduction of feudalism, the king became an absolute monarch, had control of a standing army, and the kingship was inherited. Further, the king was said to be in direct contact with God.

III. FORMALIZATION OF THE CHANGES

There are four kinds of semantic change involved in these examples: socio-historically-motivated continuous semantic shift, discontinuous, abrupt change in constitutive definition, borrowing and shift into and out of constitutive definition. Each results from a specific interaction of social reality, legal constitutive definition and subjective understanding of the facts by English speakers.

a. Socio-historically motivated semantic shift

The facts of social life continuously change and as they do, human conceptualization of society changes reflecting the new facts, often somewhat later as folk sociology can be powerful and conservative. The term ceorl underwent pejoration in the period before the conquest reflecting the gradual subjugation of the ceorls and the stratification of Anglo-Saxon society. From the psycholinguistic data cited above we know that social kind categories include some features concerning social status such as "respected", "works for someone", "high status", etc., and it is safe to assume that CEORL, THEGN and CYNINGAS included them also.

Changes in social facts gradually and tardily effect folk sociology and therefore language. Changes in legal definition can either reflect or cause social changes. In the case of CEORL and the social ranks it appears that the Anglo-Saxon kings used the laws to codify existing relationships which were the result of decisions by the group and social evolution, rather than to structure society.

CEORL illustrates the relationship between social evolution and lexical semantics. The subjugation of the ceorls took place through the imposition of overlords between them and the king and of vice-weorc, as described above in II.a. In the early Anglo-Saxon period a lexical prototype with features "freeman", "landowner", "answers to king" and "respected" would have been a fairly

accurate reflection of the social facts. Vice-weorc was imposed at first on only a few ceorls, after which the prototype feature "freeman" would have remained the same. At a certain critical point a large enough proportion of the population of ceorls was paying vice-weorc and had lost ownership of their land to affect the subjective probability that a ceorl was a semi-serf. Only then would English speakers have come to think of ceorls as typically semi-serfs (persons who do vice-weorc) and no longer as freemen. That is, the conception of the typical ceorl as a freeman resisted the facts at first, but finally gave in to overwhelming evidence and changed. On the other hand the feature "respected", probably changed gradually to reflect social stratification.

This hypothesis concerning the relationship between social evolution and lexical semantics is illustrated in the Venn diagrams in Figure 3. Fact A is true of an entire class of persons at t_1 ; later at t_2 . A is true of most of the class of persons, but B is true of a few of them, and so on. Reflecting this social reality, the average speaker's prototype description of the class of persons associated with the term denoting that class has feature A at t_1 . At t_2 and t_3 , though the facts are that some of the class of persons have feature B instead of A, the average speaker's prototype continues to have A (or in some cases the feature changes to A or B). Only when the facts overwhelmingly dictate the feature B for the class of persons does the prototype change for the average speaker. This hypothesis follows the work of Kahneman and Tversky (1973) on the relationship between true and perceived probability. Figure 4 illustrates the difference between the true and subjective probabilities of the feature being for a person in the class.

Figure 3. Features in the Prototype Tardily Reflect Social Evolution

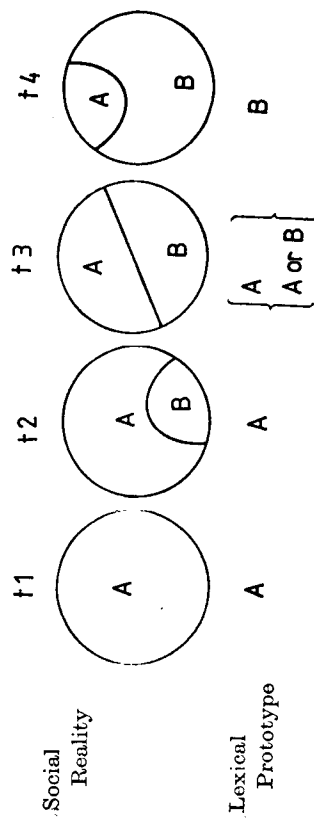
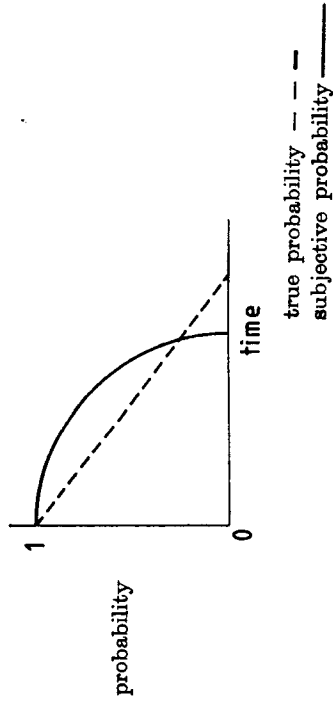


Figure 4. True and Subjective Probability of Feature A



The essential nature of a social kind involves the social functions and relative social rank. In continuous semantic shift of social terms, much of the function and relative social rank remains the same in reality, and is perceived as the same. In the case of ceorl, there was gradual subjugation and, for the king and thegn, gradual social elevation. This kind of continuity explains why the later Anglo-Saxon lawgivers (and the Norman translators of the laws of William) could use the same words for these ranks despite social change. There was enough continuity between the previous and the new social kind to make use of the same word for the new one cognitively justifiable. In other words, people had a feeling for the sameness (of relative rank and function) as well as the difference (less power, pays vice-weorc, etc.).

b. Constitutively motivated discontinuous change

In contrast to the gradual changes described in III.a., the restructuring of Anglo-Saxon society and redefinition of the functions of king, ceorl and thegn in the laws of William the Conqueror were abrupt constitutive changes. The kingship instantly became a hierarchy, and William used these powers from the beginning. The kings and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy were wiped out physically and replaced by Normans, eliminating a social group altogether.

In the case of the king, society's change of the constitutive rules governing the social kind king abruptly changed the nature of king. The average English speaker was probably unaware of this fact, so that the number of people whose subjective category for

king corresponded well with the reality suddenly became very small. Similarly, when ceorl was plunged from semi-serf to serf by the laws of William, the ceorls themselves didn't realize this and since they were the bulk of the remaining English speakers, it took a long time for the English to reflect this change. This type of change is illustrated in Figure 5. Property A is abruptly changed

Figure 5. The Average Speaker's Prototype May not Reflect Abrupt Constitutive Change

Constitutive Change		t1	t2	t3
Abrupt Change	Constitutive	A	B	B
	Lexical Prototype			
Average speaker		A	A	B
	Expert speaker	A	B	B

to B at t2 by social decision, and non-expert speakers are unaware of this at first, so that only the expert speakers change lexical prototypes at t2. Some time later (t3), the folk knowledge of non-expert speakers catches up.

It is interesting to speculate why KING and CEORL remained in English while other social rank terms were replaced by Norman terms. In both cases, the relative rank stayed more or less the same (top and bottom) respectively, though the king became vastly more powerful and the ceorl vastly less powerful and much of the function stayed the same. The most likely explanation is that since ceorls spoke English, they called themselves CEORL. As for KING, the difference in the rules for king after the Conquest may not have been apparent to ceorls at first because of the social distance between them and the king.

A case in which a discontinuous change was probably known to English speakers right away was the change in the land-holding system which meant that under William every landholder held land in return for a certain number of knights, so that the legal constitutive definition of EARL spelled out a number of knights owed the king.

c. Borrowing

The Normans translated their BARUN in the laws of William as THEGN. But THEGN was displaced by BARUN in English as a term denoting a particular social kind and leaving only one sense of

THEGN denoting a general social status. Why was BARUN borrowed while EMPEREUR and VILAIN were not? Three factors seem to have been involved. First, there was an abrupt change in the constitutive definition of THEGN (BARUN). William reorganized the landholdings around new buildings (the term for which, MANOR, was also borrowed), installing Normans in them. These barons were in charge of new groups of ceorls, and had new powers over them. Second, the persons and their descendants in the class of ceorls remained the same after the Conquest, while the Anglo-Saxon thegns were wiped out and the barons were all Normans. Third, unlike the situation with the changes to king, these changes in the constitutive rules and the resultant change in social practice were readily apparent to the ceorls. In other words, the denotation of THEGN was so different (physically and socially) that rather than use the English words the ceorls used the Norman word.

d. Shift into and out of constitutive definition

A number of Anglo-Saxon words changed from summary to constitutive definitions:

	Summary	Constitutive
ceorl	"man" →	"lowest rank of freeman"
gesith	"companion" →	"holder of 5 hides"
gebur	"dweller" →	"ceorl of a particular rank"
geneat	"companion" →	"landholder"
thegn	"servant" →	"military attendant"
hlafweard	"head of household" →	"protector" →
		"proprietor"

The reverse change also occurred where a word once used constitutively comes to have only a summary meaning.

	Constitutive	Summary
ceorl	"serf" →	"country bumpkin"
thegn	"landholding lord" →	"country squire"

IV. PREDICTIONS

The analysis and data presented above can be summarized as a set of predictions for the kinds of semantic change which are likely for social terms.

1) Social terms are more volatile semantically than natural kind terms. CEORL was more likely to change meaning than GOLD or LEMON.

2) Folk sociology changes continuously reflecting social evolution, and so that social terms change meaning continuously in response to social evolution.

3) Social kinds can change essential nature abruptly when new governments come to power, new laws are instituted or new personnel policies are written. This is because social kinds are constitutive. Artifacts can also be constitutive, especially at the beginning, and so they are subject to the same discontinuous change. For example, when the auto was invented, the British added senses to certain artifact words to name the parts and the Americans added senses to other words to name the same parts: "lid over engine" was added as a sense of BONNET in British and of HOOD in American.

4) Abrupt constitutive change in social kind leads to discontinuous semantic change which can manifest itself in the following ways:

i. Most speakers of the language are unaware that the change has taken place, leading to an immediate reduction in the number of persons expert (or even nearly correct) in their description of the typical member of the social kind. For example, when the legal voting age in America was changed from 21 to 18, immediately most people were unaware of the constitutive rules underlying the term ADULT.

ii. A new term is borrowed (or coined) because there is insufficient continuity between the conceptions of the old and new kind.

iii. The amount of time involved is important. Over a long period the same word can come to have opposite meanings. For example, over centuries THEGN changed from "servant" to "lord", CEORL from "freeman" to "serf", CNIHT from "servant" to "lord". But over a short period, social decision or imposition of change more often requires the use of a different word.

5) Whichever class of people perpetuates a language in a bilingual situation will leave the imprint of their class perspective embodied in their folk sociology on the content of the language. In the Anglo-Saxon/Norman case this group was the Ceorls (but see Richter (this volume) who argues that some of the aristocracy spoke English as well).

6) Since social kinds are essentially relational, every social term will involve evaluation. As relations change, so will the evaluations. Pejoration or elevation of social terms will follow the fate of the denoted social group. (Cf. pejoration of many terms for women listed by Williams 1975).

7) The cultural stereotype associated with a social term can live on as the meaning of a word long after the group of people it once denoted has ceased to be part of the social structure (e.g. the "country bumpkin" sense of *ceorl*).

CONCLUSION

The above summary indicates that a socio-historical methodology combined with a recognition of fundamental differences among types of vocabulary makes possible discovery of a larger number of predictable processes in diachronic lexical semantics.

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