THE SEMANTICS OF THE WORD "FAIRY" IN ENGLISH BETWEEN 1320 AND 1829

by Noel Williams B.A., M.A.

Submitted for the degree of Ph.D

The Department of English Language,
University of Sheffield.

September 1983

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the staff of The Bodleian Library, Oxford, The British Library and Sheffield University Library for locating some quite inaccessible sources; to Carrol for extensive administration and support; to Professor Norman Blake for an acutely critical eye; and particular thanks are due to my supervisor, Professor John Widdowson, for exactly the right balance of commentary, criticism and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

The study examines the problems of the meaning of words used with fictional reference. It takes one particular class of such words, those used to denote or refer to the supernatural, as a peculiarly problematic set, and one example of these, fairy, as a key example. The study explores all the features of that word's meaning, including denotational, referential, stylistic, emotive and idiosyncratic aspects as well as sense relations and other linguistic relations. It argues that understanding such words occurs through understanding cotextual collocations, and that the meaning of a word such as fairy can only be known, described and explained by examination of such cotext.

By computational analysis of a large corpus of texts using fairy a semantic model is built up which on the one hand describes the semantic frame by which fairy is made meaningful and on the other hand the underlying processes and decisions employed by writers (and speakers) in using the word meaningfully. At the same time the study seeks to evaluate the usefulness of rigorous formal approaches to a body of material as complex as that represented by the corpus.

CONTENTS

LIST OF DIAGRAMS AND TABLES

CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background to the Study

The province of this study can be stated simply. It is the meaning of the single word *fairy* in English in the period between 1320 (the approximate date of its first recorded occurrence) and 1829 (two years after the death of William Blake, a poet whose complexity initially prompted this study). That statement, however, though simple, is vague. In part the vagueness is inherent in the word *meaning*. One of the purposes of this study has thus been to specify as closely as possible all the multiple aspects of meaning that a single word can enter into, for there seems to have been no such extensive study of the particularities of the semantics of an individual lexical item. But vagueness also follows from use of the word *province* - what areas of meaning are to be examined here, in what ways, to what extent and for what purpose? This introductory chapter provides outlines of the answers to these questions and the background to how that province was determined and how subsequent chapters explore it.

Broadly speaking there is only one question native speakers normally ask about the meaning of a word, namely "What is it?". This question, "What does the word *fairy* mean?" first became an important one for me in examining the work of William Blake. Initially there were other similar words in Blake's writings whose meaning perplexed me, largely words for supernatural entities, particularly *fairy*, *elf*, *nymph*, *gnome* and *genii*.[1] They were frequently used by him in a manner which

---

1. For some particularly opaque contexts see *Milton: Book the Second*: lines 17-26, Keynes (1966) pp.519-520; *Jerusalem: Chapter 3: Plate 63*: lines 13-15, Keynes (1966) p.697; *Jerusalem: Plate 3*, Keynes (1966) p.620; *Jerusalem: Plate 13*: lines 26-29, Keynes (1966) p.633.

though related to other systems in his work[1] seemed particularly difficult to explain in any language other than Blake's own.[2] In linguistic terms whilst a sense could be assigned to those words (i.e. a meaning within the text) no clear denotation or reference could be suggested[3].

Initially I believed this was an idiosyncrasy of Blake's work. Accordingly I began to examine other texts, both literary and non-literary, for comparison with his usage. It rapidly became clear that within any substantial corpus of texts involving such words (i.e. words connected with the supernatural in some way) not only was this problem of the imprecision or absence of referents and denotata widespread but also the sense relations of the words seemed confused, haphazard or overlapping to such an extent that it seemed impossible to regard any of these words as having consistent or precise meanings.[4] Imperceptibly therefore my concern shifted from the question "What does fairy mean?" to "How does fairy mean?"; beyond that to "How can a word naming any supernatural entity mean?"; and beyond that to "How can any word mean something which does not exist?". In other words what initially appeared to be a simple question about the meaning of a particular word in specific contexts gradually revealed itself to be a question about the ways of meaning of a whole class of words. The problem of the

---

1. A somewhat extreme example of the systematic correspondences that can be extracted from Blake's work can be found in Frye (1947) pp.277-8, where correspondences across twenty-nine sets of four elements, including genii, fairies, nymphs and gnomes are detailed. In fairness to Frye he does not pretend that this is more than a guide to some of the correspondences that obtain in the poetry.
2. For a full account of these difficulties see Appendix 2.
3. The terms denotation, reference and sense are discussed in Chapter 2. For a concise account which is the basis of that followed in this study see Lyons (1977a) pp.174-229.
4. Of course it may be true that any or all of other possible groups of words possess a similar overlapping or imprecision. I am inclined to believe that for many such groups this would be so, their imprecision increasing with the increasing abstraction of the words involved. Insofar as the group under discussion here is not unique it might be possible to extend the argument as valid for certain classes of words, e.g. those with fictional referents.

meaning of fairy in a specific poem by Blake is necessarily a problem concerning the nature of meaningfulness for words which do not point to real entities. The nature of this problem is outlined below in section 1.2.

Thus the vagueness of the statement with which this chapter began can be reduced as it is clear that province can be considered to apply at four different levels of specificity, namely:

1. The problem of fictional reference
2. The problem of the semantics of supernatural names[1]
3. The problem of the semantics of fairy
4. The problem of Blake's use of fairy in particular writings.

Level 3 is the focus of this study for the following reasons. Firstly, fairy seemed to be the key word in the problematic network of supernatural names encountered in Blake's work. Secondly it is a common word and thus could be expected to provide a substantial data base for study as a significant example of levels 1 and 2. Thirdly it is a word which preliminary research revealed to be semantically interesting from the point of view of several different disciplines, notably philosophy, folkloristics and literary studies.

Level 4 was the starting point for the study and also the terminal point in that the difficulties initially encountered are returned to in Appendix 2 in the light of the main discussion. It also provided the parameters for the data base insofar as it was decided that the primary axis of study should be the historical development of the chosen word culminating in Blake's usage.

Levels 1 and 2 are the theoretical background on which study of level 3 depends, and which are entailed by observations made at that level. Thus, because discussion of level 3 necessarily involves

---

1. A definition of supernatural name can be found in the glossary and on p. 11.

discussion of levels 1 and 2, the latter two must be established prior to investigation of the former; and, because generalisations can be made concerning the semantics of one example of a supernatural name which is also a word with fictional reference, inferences can be made about those two levels from that single example.

Accordingly the overarching scheme for this study is one of increasing specificity:

Chapter 1	(i) background to the study (ii) the nature of the problem (iii) the parameters of study	
Chapter 2	- theoretical ground work	How can <u>fairy</u> mean? Levels 1 and 2
Chapter 3	- methodology	
Chapter 4	- the object of study; semantic roots and phonological shape	What does <u>fairy</u> mean? Level 3
Chapters 5, 6 and 7	- the meanings of <u>fairy</u>	
Chapter 8	- Conclusion	
Appendix 1	- The corpus	
Appendix 2	- Blake and <u>fairy</u>	Level 4

Throughout the study the central object remains the same, namely the lexeme <u>fairy</u> in the period 1320-1829, but the focus changes. The two primary aims demand this shift of focus, i.e.: A, the aim to explore the meaning of a word as thoroughly as possible, and B, the aim to state the particular semantics of a problematic word as rigorously as possible. The motivation behind these aims involved a desire to determine if such a detailed study could actually be achieved, and, if not, to illustrate the problems of handling lexical semantics which require solution before such achievement can be reached, and also a desire to control the many variables inherent in such a task by exploring the possibilities of exhaustive and rigorous methodology and

formal description. There was also felt to be a need for a rigorous, formal methodology not only to test the approach (a rather abstract justification for such a study) but also, if successful, to provide a description which could be of use not only to linguists but also to scholars in the fields from which the data was drawn, notably folklorists and literary scholars.

The shift of focus across the four different problematic levels permits a number of differing perspectives on the structure. From the point of view of level 4 the entire investigation is preliminary groundwork defining the conceptual network within which Blake was working. From the point of view of levels 1 and 2 the key section is Chapter 2 and, to a lesser extent, the resultant methodology in Chapter 3. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 become exploration of a particular example, of which some aspects bear directly on level 1 and some on level 2 but many are specific to the history and usage of that chosen example. However the structure is established primarily with respect to level 3 from whose point of view Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 are central, for which previous chapters are the necessary groundwork and Appendix 2 simply an interesting but peripheral micro-study.

Accordingly the remainder of this chapter briefly establishes the nature of the problems to be examined, demonstrates the need for both a multi-level and a rigorous approach and describes the boundaries within whose those problems are to be examined.

1.2 The Nature of the Problem

Whilst it is possible in literature, particularly in poetry, to allow that a word has no more than a connotational, emotive or symbolic function which may induce a different response in every reader, such an allowance creates problems for philosophy, linguistics, and folkloristics. Those problems are interrelated and a productive discussion must necessarily take account of all three.

The philosophical question has been highlighted most acutely by the schools of logical positivism and logical atomism[1]. Although such theories did not hold that the meaning of a word or statement is equivalent to the sensory data[2] to which that word is connected they held in general that meaningfulness is dependent on sensory data (together with propositions) and therefore that any word or statement which lacks a clear sensory equivalent is meaningless. The most convenient and popular formulation of these notions can be found in the work of A. J. Ayer:

> I require of an empirical hypothesis, not indeed that it should be conclusively verifiable, but some possible sense-experience should be relevant to the determination of its truth or falsehood. If a putative proposition fails to satisfy this principle, and is not a tautology, then I hold that it is metaphysical, and that, being metaphysical, it is neither true or false but literally senseless.[3]

---

1. The key philosophers in these movements were Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein in his early work. See in particular Russell (1918) and Wittgenstein (1961).
2. I use the slightly clumsy phrase sensory data rather than the more usual sense data in order to avoid confusion with the use of the word sense in the present study. Sensory data are the unorganised impulses of light, sound etc. at the moment they reach a receiving organism but before that organism has interpreted them. (Sense is used to refer to intra-linguistic meaning).
3. A. J. Ayer (1975) p.41. It should be noted that if Ayer is taken at face value in this statement, he is only creating a tautology namely that if a proposition lacks 'sense-experience' then it is sense-less (= lacking in sense experience). Thus he requires that we understand senseless both 'literally', as 'sense-less', and normally, as 'meaning-less'. His argument to some extent depends on systematic exploitation of this ambiguity.

Or again:

> For we shall maintain that no statement which refers to a 'reality' transcending the limits of all possible sense-experience can possibly have any literal significance. (1)

Such statements make it clear that this interpretation of meaning is dependent on regarding the truth value of sentences as primary. Truth values[2] strictly speaking apply to propositions rather than sentences. However in discussing natural language it is possible to regard some sentences as propositions. A proposition or sentence may have one of two truth values. If it is true it has a value usually represented as T, if it is false it has a value represented as F. The truth value of any particular sentence will depend on certain conditions known as truth conditions. If those conditions are met (i.e. if a particular state of affairs exists) the sentence is T, if not then it is F. If however there are no relevant truth conditions, i.e. if there can be no actual state of affairs sufficient to determine T or F for a particular sentence, then no truth value can be assigned to that sentence. Thus Ayer says that those sentences which lack sensory equivalents because they lack truth conditions, hence truth values, are meaningless. The most convincing and most influential statement of the equation of meaning and truth-value is to be found in Russell's theory of descriptions[3]. By such a theory we are bound to regard statements concerning the supernatural as meaningless. The difficulties of Blake's vocabulary would be attributed to their metaphysical nature, i.e. they would be regarded as inherently meaningless.

So the basic question is: do words or statements referring to the supernatural have any meaning whatsoever? Following from this come

---

1. Ayer (1975) p.46.
2. For an account of truth value semantics see Lyons (1977) pp.141-7. Somewhat different approaches can be found in Davidson (1967); Strawson (1971); Kempson (1977).
3. See in particular Russell (1905).

questions which are more obviously linguistic. If such words are meaningful, how can that meaning be known, how can it be expressed, can tests be devised to detect or determine that meaning, and what truth value, if any, do such statements have?

However as linguists begin with the premise that all words used in normal language are in some sense meaningful, they are committed to regarding words used to refer to the supernatural as meaningful. In other words linguistics does not seek to answer the central philosophical question outlined above concerning the nature of meaningfulness but sidesteps it in upholding its concern with natural language. Essentially the linguistic problem is more specific than the philosophical. Given that any word referring to the supernatural is meaningful , linguistics wishes to know what precisely that meaning is in each case, how the different meanings are related to each other, how those meanings relate to the way(s) the words are used, and if it is possible to state the meanings of all words in such a way that 'correct' and 'incorrect' usage will be specifiable. In other words semantic linguistics is primarily concerned with assigning correct and unambiguous lexical entries for each item. An examination of the entries for such words in conventional dictionaries yields a peculiarly vague and unsatisfactory set of definitions, which largely are circular in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Blake's mutually defining entries[1]. Insofar as such linguistic problems depend on determining the applicability[2] of each word linguists are interested in the same kinds of relations as philosophers.

Thus linguistics is only concerned with the question "How does x

---

1. For example the Oxford English Dictionary (Murray 1933) defines a bugbear as a hobgoblin, a hobgoblin as a bogy, a bogy as a bogle and a bogle as a bugbear. See Chapter 2 for more elaborate examples of circularity in definition and use.
2. The notion of applicability is taken from Lyons (1977a) p.213ff and is also discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

mean?" when more practical or specific questions depend upon it. Where the applicability of x is clear or undisputed, such a question thus does not arise, but in the case of fictional reference, where the meaning of x cannot be related to an entity in the real world, then that dependence can be crucial.

Folklorists also are concerned with textual description. Indeed many of the early advances in folklore were the result of imaginative philological work[1]. However the primary interest of folklorists is not with texts as such, but with the nature and status of the phenomena described, the relations between those phenomena, and in particular the origins of those phenomena (in the psychological, sociological and historical sense of origin)[2]. Folklorists are more concerned with systems of belief and their modes of expression than with the truth value of those expressions or their objective validity. They are concerned to understand and describe the system of cultural belief of which each text is an expression rather than to study the precise manner in which that system is realised. In consequence language tends

---

1. The archetype of cross-fertilisation between interests in language and folk culture is Grimm's Teutonic Mythology (1883). As early as 1807 mythologists were advancing strong theses on philological grounds. See, for example, Bryant (1807). And the strength of the arguments of the solar mythologists depended very much on questions of language evolution and use, e.g. the works of Max Müller. More recently and more pertinent to the present enquiry several philologists have become interested in the peculiar interrelationships of meaning and origin that exist between words referring to the supernatural; see for example: Scott (1895), Kittredge (1900), Clarke (1935), Allen (1935 and 1936), Dickins (1941), Dickins (1942), Spitzer (1944), Henry (1959). Conversely many folklorists have sought to understand the system of belief underlying supernatural creatures by examination of linguistic affinities, see: Allies (1846), Serjeantson (1936), Wasson (1957), Hand (1977). For a linguistic approach to the supernatural in literature see Saleski (1939). For a popular approach to etymology and the supernatural see Edwards (1974).
2. A useful brief account of various theories of supernatural origin is Ward (1977). Other work on origins pertinent to this study can be found in Keightley (1900), Coote (1879), Harland (1891), Nutt (1897), Leuba (1912), Chambers (n.d.), Sayce (1934), Spence (1946), Nutt (1975), Winberry (1976).

to be for folklorists a superstructure rather than an infrastructure and there is relatively little concern to establish any fixed or absolute relation between descriptions and reality except in particular cases for particular cultures. The discriminatory concern of folklorists is thus to classify beliefs rather than expressions.

Linguistic semantics therefore finds itself as a bridge between the more abstract concerns of philosophy and the particular interests of folkloristics and related social sciences. Insofar as the denotata in which it is interested are real it must be concerned with the ontological status of the supernatural; insofar as those denotata are culturally determined it must be interested in the sociology and psychology of folk belief. This point, which is the central unifying principle of this investigation, cannot be overstated. Too few semanticists have acted upon this principle, though many recognise, with Paul Ziff, that:

> It is difficult to separate language and culture areas or to discriminate cultural features without attention to linguistic features.(1)

Whilst it is easy to recognise that cultural relativity is an important feature of a semantic system, it is difficult to state in any precise way how the unique features of a particular culture are encoded in its system of meaning. Yet the attempt must be made, for whilst formal or abstract semantics may go some way towards characterising intralinguistic sense relations such as synonymy or entailment, neither such relations nor their study can exist in vacuo. Natural language is not a formal, abstract system, and it exists in purposive relation with reality. Meaning is as much dependent on the world and belief about the world as it is on intralinguistic relations. In the words of

---

1. Ziff (1960) p.3

Donald Davidson:

> We do not know what someone means unless we know what he believes. We do not know what someone believes unless we know what he means. (1)

Nevertheless the central concern of linguistics and therefore of the present work must be with the intra-language relations, specifically between words denoting the supernatural and other words, and within the set of such words itself.

I propose to refer to these words by the shorthand expression supernatural names which is throughout the study to be understood as: tokens used in a language either to refer to or to denote the supernatural. Thus the problem with which this work is concerned, though an immense one, can be stated reasonably succinctly: presuming that a supernatural name has meaning, how can that meaning be characterised such that (a) it is related to the real world, (b) it is related to the world of the culture of which it is part and (c) it is distinguished from other similar words? All three of these questions have the dual components of the how and what of meaning, since the characterisation of particular relations between word and world, word and culture and word and word depend on knowing what kinds of relations these can be. Thus answers to those questions in respect of names for non-existent entities may need peripheral support from psychology, and from the anthropology and sociology of perception of belief and of culture. As will be shown in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 input from these areas may be crucial.

---

1. Davidson (1967) p.313

1.3.1 The Parameters of Study

This investigation is thus concerned to apply the above questions to a limited set of data, namely the lexeme fairy[1] as it was used in English from 1320 to 1829. Necessarily some general or speculative material concerned with wider aspects of fictional reference or the semantics of the supernatural has been omitted or relegated to parenthetical remarks. Others remain in the body of the work as pertinent to complete exploration of level 3. The study is conceived as a conceptual scheme for the semantics of supernatural names (level 2) and thus for some aspects at least of fictional reference (level 1) in the manner suggested by Grimes as controlled variation of a defined data set.[2]

One such controlled variation promoted by the number of supernatural names in the period and instigated by concern with level 4 was to determine if there was any systematic variation with style or if there was any semantic constant in the meaning of the chosen supernatural name across all styles or periods. Under the simplest possible solution to problems (a), (b) and (c) above, (p.3), in which 'real world' and 'cultural world' are identical and given form by a particular language one would expect (i) that there was such a semantic constant and (ii) that any variation in meaning would be systematic either with date (indicating a synchronic state of meaning) or style (style being, on this interpretation, an expression of a particular subcultural viewpoint). However as this solution seemed

---

1. In what follows the form ⟨fairy⟩ will be used as the citation form of the lexeme fairy in all its variant spellings and also the lexeme fay which, for the purpose of this study is not regarded as a distinct lexeme. For a list of the various spellings and variant forms encountered see below, p.159.
2. Grimes (1975) pp.157-8: "the way to confront the encyclopedia problem is not to duck around it and talk only about those aspects of language for which we do not need to know everything about everything but to develop a conceptual scheme that contains generalisations powerful enough to permit us to manage a semantic system that embraces everything".

highly improbable, in such a simple form at least, this concern required a more general formulation. Supplementary to the problems (a), (b) and (c) therefore were the related questions: (d) does a supernatural name have one meaning, several, or a continuum of meaning; and (e) if that meaning is multiple is that multiplicity systematic in any way?

The aim was thus to collect as many examples of use of the word fairy in extant English texts in the specified period as possible, and, treating the collected corpus as representative of the whole period, endeavour to characterise the constants and variations in that use.

No claim can of course be made that all the recorded uses of the word have been located. There are certainly some uses which I know of but to which I have been unable to obtain access, and others for which I have texts which are too unreliable to base such an enquiry upon. There must also be some texts I have not encountered, particularly in the periods 1590-1620 and 1800-1829 in which fairy is used frequently. A large range and number of texts were sampled in a search for examples of the word fairy which took over two years. It was obviously impossible to search all texts produced in the period under study. However three overlapping strategies were used in order to locate as many and varied examples of use of fairy as possible. Firstly dictionaries, concordances, and comprehensive surveys on works on or about supernatural beings were used,[1] and the source texts located and consulted.

---

1. The major dictionaries used to obtain references were the Oxford English Dictionary (Murray (1933)), Wright's English Dialect Dictionary (1898-1908) and Kurath's Middle English Dictionary (1956). For all the poets and playwrights of the period for whom I was able to obtain a concordance I recovered all occurrences of fairy from their works. In other works collection of occurrences was made by thorough reading of likely areas, more cursory searches in less likely areas, perusal of glossaries of all works published in the Early English Text Series, and by consulting references in other works particularly De Lattre (1912), Latham (1930), Briggs (1959), Paton (1960), Briggs (1977), Briggs (1976).

Secondly those types of text of which these source texts were examples were surveyed. Several criteria were used here in an attempt to cover as many potential sources as possible. These included examining other works by an author who had used the word in at least one text; searching varieties of text which had provided examples of rich sources, such as religious tracts, chapbooks, medieval romances, philological treatises, and many other varieties of text; examining cataloguing systems and sections within which a source text had been found; consulting texts which have been regarded as the sources of texts which were themselves source texts for this collection; and, where possible, examining lists of texts which were 'accidental' collections, on the assumption that such lists might have thematic unity, such lists including lists of publications produced by particular organisations which had included a known source, or catalogues such as auction lists or private library collections. Where valid and possible each avenue would be explored for every new source which became available. Thirdly types of text or source material which were intuitively regarded as potentially rich sources were examined as exhaustively as possible. For example as it was assumed that fairy would occur frequently in Middle English romance, every such romance and every glossary to every Middle English text published by the Early English Text society was searched.(1)

It is thus unlikely that there is a substantial body of relevant material that I have not encountered, although the physical difficulties imposed by the necessity of such a methodology (such as, for example, the idiosyncrasies of a cataloguing system or mistakes in attribution of a source text) may mean that some of the judgements made in the course of this study which depend on low frequencies for occurrence of a particular feature in the corpus may possess a slight bias due to

---

1. Amplification of some of the search techniques can be found in Chapter 3, under discussion of methodology.

insufficient evidence.

It is also possible that the study as a whole contains a certain stylistic bias in that the material of primary interest and that most easily obtained was what may broadly be called imaginative literature. However it would seem that this itself is due to a certain stylistic restriction on use of the word fairy itself. Those texts for which single-word references may most easily be obtained also tend to be literary, particularly poetry.

For those periods in which there appeared to be a relative paucity of material, particularly the period 1320-1550 the search was more intensive. A reasonable estimate of the percentage of occurrences discovered would be 95% for the period 1300-1550 and roughly 80% for 1550-1829.

It would thus not be unreasonable to claim that the judgements produced are in large part based on a thorough sample of the available records. Whilst it is possible that some observations possible from a fuller collection are not made here, those justifiable observations made from the collected corpus should be substantially valid.(1)

---

1. For a full account of the collecting and recording procedures see below, Chapter 3.

1.3.2 Summary of the Parameters of Study

This section summarises the aims and problems outlined in the preceding sections of this chapter to provide a convenient reference point for subsequent chapters. At various points in what follows reference will be made to aim (X), problem (N), question (i), or question (x) in this format. These should always be read as referring to the appropriate item summarised here. Additionally this section lists the chapters to follow and outlines how they relate to the aims, problems and questions which form the study's framework.

To summarise - the general aims of the study are:

(A) to examine the semantics of one word as comprehensively and as thoroughly as possible.

(B) to provide a semantic description of the chosen word by applying theory and method which is as rigorous as possible.

These aims are to be achieved for the object-word *fairy* in the period 1320-1829 with regard to problems at four levels of specificity:

(1) the problem of fictional reference

(2) the problem of the meaning of supernatural names

(3) the problem of the meaning of *fairy*

(4) the problem of Blake's use of *fairy*

which can broadly be summarised as two interdependent questions:

(i) how does *fairy* mean?

(ii) what does *fairy* mean?

These questions can be reformulated in the light of philosophic, linguistic and folkloristic orientations as five questions which need to be answered in order to achieve objectives (A) and (B). These are:

(a) how can the meaning of a supernatural name be characterised such that it is related to the real world?

(b) how can the meaning of a supernatural name be

characterised such that it is related to the culture of which it is part?

(c) how can the meaning of a supernatural name be characterised such that it is distinguished from other similar words?

(d) does a supernatural name have one meaning, several, or a continuum of meaning?

(e) if one of the latter two cases in (d), is that multifariousness systematic in any way?

To achieve these aims by answering these questions with regard to the appropriate levels of specificity, the following structure has been adopted:

Chapter 1 provides: 1.1 the background to the study
1.2 an outline of the problems
1.3 an overview of the approach

Chapters 2 and 3 are oriented towards levels 1 and 2. Chapter 2 elaborates a view of meaning sensitive to the problems outlined in 1.2 and develops a consequent terminology with sections oriented towards the five questions (a)-(e):

2.1(i) expands 1.2 and 1.3
2.1(ii) meets some of the requirements of (B) in outlining a terminology
2.2 relates to (b) and (e) in outlining the notion of associative meaning
2.3 relates to (a), outlining the notion of applicability
2.4 relates to (c) and (d), outlining the notion of sense.

Chapter 3 details the methodology designed to implement the

view established in Chapter 2, meeting (B).

Chapter 4 represents a shift of viewpoint in turning from levels 1 and 2 to level 3 by describing the object word (in view of objective (B) and certain semantic complexes which obtained immediately prior to the first occurrence of fairy in English (in view of objective (A)).

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 form the central focus of the study for together they elaborate the results of application of the method to the database in respect of level 3, each in turn exploring one of the semantic areas established in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 is concerned with purely linguistic aspects of meaning, primarily sense relations, related to 2.4 and thus to (c) and (d).

Chapter 6 is concerned with associative meaning, related to section 2.2, hence (b) and (e).

Chapter 7 is concerned with applicability, related to section 2.3, hence (a).

Chapter 8 draws together those conclusions which can be made about the meaning of fairy in the period, relates them to levels 1 and 2 where relevant, and also evaluates the success of the approach in respect of aims (A) and (B), the overall theoretical standpoint and the methodology. In particular it is concerned with evaluation of these four areas, as well as linking the discussion of Chapters 5, 6 and 7 into one model which is evaluated in respect of levels 1 to 4.

CHAPTER TWO: SEMANTICS AND SUPERNATURAL NAMES

2.1.1 Introductory

Investigation of levels 1 and 2 must necessarily be highly theoretical as these levels are both abstract and of debatable ontology. However with respect to the examination of actual texts such as the body of material discussed below (hereafter referred to as the corpus) that theory must be tempered by pragmatic concerns. That is, not only should the theory meet the aims, problems and levels of specificity outlined in the previous chapter it must do so in a way which can be applied to particular texts. This chapter attempts to do this by describing as clearly as possible (aim B) as many as possible of the aspects of meaning that may contribute to the meaning of fairy (aim A) in such a way that fairy can be taken as a fair example of levels 1 and 2, that all the questions (a) to (e) are taken account of, and actual texts can be analysed to yield those aspects of meaning.

Although this might seem an impossible task (and the reader should bear in mind that one of the auxiliary purposes of this investigation is to test the very possibility of such an examination) the pragmatics[1] of textual analysis effectively narrow the theoretical horizon rather than widen it. The theory outlined below is designed with levels 3 and 4 in mind. Essentially therefore the multiple aspects of meaning outlined in sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 are all theoretical justification for a collocational approach to lexemic semantics whereby the meaning of a word in a text is not necessarily held to reside in the collocations it has in a given corpus, but is held to be deducible from those collocations by analysis. The viewpoint adopted is that an analyst is very much in the same position as a reader/hearer. He is a processor of textual information, and the

---

1. Pragmatic is used throughout the study in its non-technical sense. Linguistic/philosophical pragmatics, though relevant to the material examined here, is nowhere explicitly introduced.

entirety of the knowledge he has about the associative meaning (stylistic and emotive), applicability (denotation and reference), and sense of a word in a text is derived from the surrounding words in that text and the way in which he, the reader/hearer, processes it. As will become clear in Chapter 3, the methods adopted are essentially collocational, though presented and conducted differently, and are intended to characterise in accord with aims (A) and (B) the meanings available to a reader/hearer, duplicating his behaviour and/or knowledge in a form cruder than that of actual human text processing but conversely more amenable to examination and formalisation.

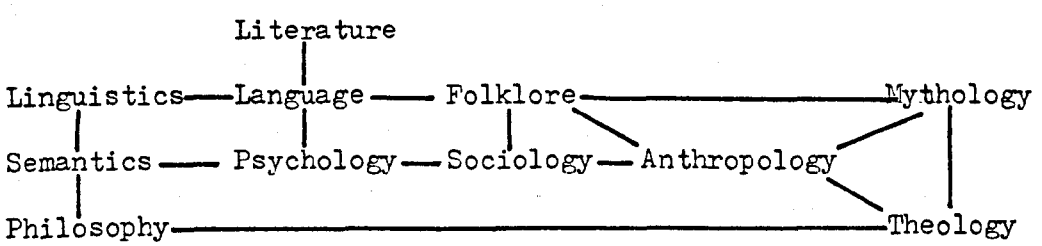
This chapter proceeds in the following manner. Section 2.1.2 establishes a broad frame for the theoretical approach of the whole study, arguing that a linguistic approach is necessarily central in examining levels 1 and 2, but must also depend on material from at least ten other disciplines; section 2.1.3 establishes some terminological and typographical conventions adopted; section 2.2 defines the two areas called here associative meaning and discusses the extent to which fairy may possess such meaning, attempting to frame answers to questions (b) and (e); 2.3 outlines applicability in the same way, directed towards question (a) and the particular problem of level 1;[1] 2.4 discusses sense and questions (c) and (d), and introduces the key semantic concept of the cluster. Finally section 2.5 provides the bridge between theory and method by justifying the collocational approach.

---

1. For a more developed approach to this problem see Williams (1981).

2.1.2 Theoretical Frame

Because there is no defined academic discipline solely concerned with the supernatural, for aspects of the supernatural manifest themselves in many fields including literature, anthropology, mythology, folklore, psychology, demonology, theology, parapsychology and the so-called 'occult sciences', the need to provide a theoretical framework within which to place this investigation necessitates attempting an integrated approach which is valid in most, if not all, of those fields. An approximate indication of the various overlapping interests pertinent to this study can be shown by the following graphic representation:



The theory need not be concerned with each of these disciplines in the same degree of detail but it seems that to be of value in any of them this investigation must be cognisant of some aspects of all. The theory must be sensitive to all these disciplines and must provide a systematic terminology which relates supernatural phenomena to each individually as well as to 'social science' as a whole.

Few of these disciplines are concerned with the supernatural as a phenomenon with its own independent reality. Only theologians and some mythologists[1] might adopt this view and even these tend to see their primary task as textual, in refining, editing and elucidating textual

---

1. For example, Evans-Wentz (1977) p.491 concludes: "We must also cease to think of the Fairy-Faith as being no more than a fabric of groundless beliefs. In short, the ordinary non-Celtic mind must readjust itself to a new set of phenomena which through ignorance on its part it has been content to disregard, and to treat with ridicule and contempt as so much outworn 'superstition'".

descriptions of the supernatural. As it is virtually impossible to study the supernatural at first hand, what must almost invariably be studied are such descriptions. For convenience this can be stated as an axiom: the invariable objects of study for an investigation of the supernatural are descriptions of phenomena in which use is made of supernatural appellation. One can, of course, find exceptions to this axiom, particularly in the field of parapsychology. However even in the so-called occult sciences much of the learning and experience involved is verbal and depends on methods of interpreting the descriptions of others. For example, the common practice of participants in ouija seances (whether they involve the supernatural or not) is not to discuss the phenomenon, but the text they are producing. Similarly in a number of seances I attended held by the Cambridge Psychic Society in 1972 in which hypnosis was used, all the observers and participants were interested in the text - the words produced by the hypnotised subject(s) - but none were concerned with his subsequent account of why he said what he did. In general it would appear that many who study or believe in the supernatural place a higher value on text than in many cases it warrants, often to the point of neglecting or rejecting mundane explanations of the phenomenon as phenomenon in favour of explanations which account for the text in its own terms, without reference to the circumstances of its production.

Similarly one finds that a great deal of the history of magical thought and belief in the supernatural is bound to texts of one kind or another. Many religious rituals have a verbal component, such as a chant, liturgy, prayer, hymn, threnody etc.[1]; many magical or

---

1. Obviously the Christian Church is as good an example as any more exotic religion. The inviolable nature of biblical authority and of the Prayer Book, the ceremonial adherence to traditions of fixed verbal form, and the adoption of a stylised form of language in sermons all indicate the importance of text in Christian religion.

superstitious practices involve verbal formulae such as curses, blessings, charms, and dites concerning the supernatural[1]; many of the developments of magic are based on misinterpretations or reinterpretation of texts from other cultures as in the magical systems of the Jewish Kabbalah and the 'sciences' of alchemy, magic and astrology derived from it[2]; or the uses of garbled foreign formulae in early English charms[3], interweavings of texts from disparate sources which produced numerous secret societies[4]; and there would seem to be a general, almost superstitious, reverence for words held by many cultures, particularly in respect of names[5].

All these factors suggest that text is of paramount importance as evidence of magical thought or supernatural belief. However the main reason why such an investigation as this must be primarily linguistic is the axiomatic one stated above, that almost all the evidence for the supernatural is verbal. A linguistic study thus has a double

---

1. Any collection of folk sayings will include many of these, and most people even in modern western society will know some of them. Good examples can be found in Addy (1973) pp.73ff; Rudkin (1973) passim; Blakeborough (1973) pp.126-153; Hawke (1975) passim. One can also note the reverse formulation, that many formulaic utterances, particularly those which are context sensitive, are regarded as sacrosanct by many users, and may be used and adhered to with a traditional fervour akin to religious or superstitious belief.
2. The best account of the Kabbalah and its influence on magic is Poncé (1974).
3. For example Storms says: "The Anglo-Saxons borrowed from diverse sources, Greek, Irish, Hebrew and especially Latin, and a number of charm formulas evidently owe their effect to the mystification of a foreign tongue". Storms (1948) p.2. For other examples see Cockayne (1864); Grattan and Singer (1952); Buhler (1964).
4. Many magical societies seem to have originated in the sixteenth century as a result of the rediscovery and eclectic interweaving of learned texts in that period, including many mystical movements such as the Rosicrucian Society. More recent examples are The Order of The Golden Dawn, and the various groups organised by Aleister Crowley. A work which deals with many of their early traditions is Raine (1969).
5. A more detailed discussion of naming and word magic can be found in section 8.2 . That names have magical properties with respect to the things they stand for is an ancient concept. Even today the device of euphemism and its constant change in the language indicate that people do not believe all words to be arbitrarily connected to things. See Clodd (1920).

value. In the first place linguistics is, or ought to be, the best tool for analysing descriptions. Secondly it should be able to provide a terminology which is neither uncritically credulous[1] nor sceptically hostile[2]. Consequently the first requirement of any study must be a neutral metalanguage[3] with which to discuss the descriptions encountered. It is to be hoped that any such metalanguage provided by the present work will create a useful basis for future work in similar areas.

---

1. Credulity towards the supernatural seems to have been common throughout the history of man. It might be supposed, however, that twentieth-century Britain has finally purged itself of any belief in fairies. That this is not the case can be seen, for example, in Hodson (1925), Hodson (1927), Evans-Wentz (1977), the continued popular interest in the Cottingley fairies. see Conan Doyle (1920), Conan Doyle (1922), Gardner (1945), and, as evidence of contemporary popular interest, Reader's Digest (1973), Sanderson (1973), Masters (1974), Arrowsmith (1978), Doughty (1978). Both the School of Scottish Studies and the Department of Irish Folklore at University College, Dublin have recently collected stories from living informants. See, for example, Tocher No. 28 (1978). Other sources indicate that partial belief in fairies still exists, e.g. some of the tales in Tongue (1970) such as "Whistling Jimmy" p.119 or "Call up the Chimney" p.157; and Fielding (1979). There is, of course, ample evidence from the popular presses that interest in the supernatural is still widespread: e.g. the journals Fate and Fortune and Prediction. I have a small collection of news cuttings about ghosts reported recently in: Oxford Journal, 1978; The Star (Sheffield) 14 February 1978, 15 February 1978, 16 April 1978; Morning Telegraph (Sheffield) 8 February 1978.
2. Scepticism and critical hostility towards belief in the supernatural and particularly belief in fairies seems to have begun at about the time of the witch trials in England, with Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft of 1584 (Scot (1973)) being the most well known of early sceptical accounts. However the idea that fairies are no longer believed in or that they have moved away because of contemporary beliefs, often coupled with the notion that such belief was the result of adherence to an earlier inferior religion, is common from Chaucer to the present day, almost to the extent of being a folk motif itself. Briggs frequently mentions this, e.g. Briggs (1977) p.3: "English fairy beliefs, which from Chaucer's time onwards have been supposed to belong to the last generation and to be lost to the present one". See Groome (1880) p.7; Courtney (1887) p.182; Dendy (1896) p.398; Nutt (1897) p.35; Palmer (1973) p.104; McNeil (1977) p.101; Briggs (1978) p.50. Also in the study corpus 1400/01/10, 1620/02.
3. Metalanguage here is to be understood in a broad sense as any defined language which can be used for discussion of a particular object-language, i.e. a theoretically definable corpus. See Lyons (1977a) pp.10-13.

Although such a metalanguage may be neutral in respect of belief in the phenomena described, it may not be neutral in respect of the linguistic attitude it embodies. Insofar as it must involve some notion of the Applicability[1] of language it may well restrict the possible forms of description available to a speaker and may therefore introduce a classification of the phenomena described despite its declared neutrality. The psychological and philosophical grounds for such a metalanguage are therefore crucial[2]. Accordingly I will first sketch some of the philosophical and psychological problems and suggest an approach which allows the possibility of a useful metalanguage.

Being linguistic this study must put aside the question: 'Do supernatural names[3] mean anything?', initially at least, and ask instead: 'Given that supernatural names are meaningful, of what does that meaning consist?'. For it is an axiom of the study of natural language that all words felt to be meaningful by native speakers are meaningful. Three broad areas of meaningfulness can be described, each or all of which may contribute to the intuition of meaning attached to supernatural names. They may broadly be termed association, applicability, and sense. If it could be shown that a particular word has no value in any of these areas, one could conclude that the only kind of meaning it may possess is syntactic, the result of its grammatical function, and that it is therefore a form word rather than

---

1. Applicability is used to characterise any semantic connection between language and the world. See below, section 2.3.1. Also Lyons (1977a) p.213.
2. The dependence of linguistics upon philosophy is frequently remarked upon, but is of particular importance in the realm of semantics. See for example Ullmann (1951), preface. It is both unproductive and futile in many semantic problems to attempt to decide if they are problems properly belonging to linguistic philosophy or to the philosophy of language.
3. The phrase supernatural name is employed throughout the discussion to refer to any noun or adjective used to indicate that a particular phenomenon is supernatural. See p.11.

a full word[1]. If fairy is no more than such a word, in any or all of its uses, its syntactic function would seem to be a modifier of some kind, perhaps with a form of deixis indicating 'elsewhere' or 'otherness'. Even if one were to deny that all supernatural names were meaningful in the areas of association, applicability and sense, it would be impossible to deny that some uses of supernatural names at least possess this kind of deixis. One might view it as a pseudo-deixis, a false analogy made with truly deictic words such as that and there, but it would be impossible to describe this 'true deixis' in such a way that it could be distinguished from 'pseudo-deixis' since the intuition of users, ultimate arbiter in debates over natural language, does not seem able to distinguish between the feeling of otherness which is attached to a non-supernatural entity, and the feeling attached to a supernatural entity, nor to distinguish the feeling of location associated with a 'real' entity from that associated with an 'unreal' one[2].

---

1. 'Full' words are meaningful in addition to their grammatical function, 'form' words only have grammatical meaning. See Ullmann (1967) p.44, Palmer (1977) pp.37-38.
2. These judgements are made from personal experience both through experience of phenomena which can only be named as supernatural (although I believe that the objective occurrences which gave me those experiences were perfectly natural phenomena) and through conversation with others who hold strong belief in the supernatural at the Cambridge University Psychic Society and elsewhere. For further discussion of the notion of location see below, section 7.3.

2.1.3 Terminology

Before continuing with a discussion of the various aspects of meaning it is necessary to introduce a number of terminological conventions which will be adhered to throughout the study. For convenience all of the terms used technically in this work are collected into a glossary at the end[1]. Most of these emerge from the argument as it progresses. However this section serves to establish those terms which are adopted conventionally, thus encoding assumptions rather than generating terms from a logical or semantic argument.

The prime difficulty of a study concerned with reality and unreality or, from a different point of view, different levels of reality is the lack of an accepted vocabulary of epistemology and ontology in which to express its particular concerns. A bewildering proliferation of terms is available, but all of them are either functional only within a limited philosophical or psychological context, or else so ambiguous as to be virtually useless. The following set of terms is designed to encode certain aspects of reality from different points of view, in order that the phrase different levels of reality can be regarded as meaningful and yield insights into those areas in which supernatural names can be regarded as meaningful.

From the point of view of an observer reality is a continuous series of sensory impressions made up of separable sensory data. From the psychological point of view there is no meaning or organisation in the physical phenomena which consitute those data, such as air waves, changes in pressure, the movement of light etc., and those phenomena can only be regarded as meaningful when recognised by an observer. This continuous bombardment of disorganised light, sound, smell etc. will be referred to as Buzz, following William James. That term will be adopted here for random, unorganised physical phenomena. The moment Buzz becomes Sensory Data, i.e. the moment any portion of the Buzz is perceived by an observer it becomes organised and, by virtue of that organisation, meaningful. In the first place the mere fact of perception; i.e. selecting from an infinite random field of Buzz, is organisation, but much more complex neurological and physiological

---

1. See Appendix 3.

processes also operate on the Buzz to organise it:

> "between the projection of this visual pattern on the brain, and our full consciousness of the world of objects, a series of elaborate mental processes takes place which converts the visual pattern into the perception of the world as we know it. Some of these processes occur spontaneously."(1)

Many of these processes are complex and interact with each other, but in respect of the supernatural four aspects can be distinguished. Firstly one can distinguish one pattern or group of Sensory Data which is regarded by the perceiver as unified, i.e. possessing identity. Whether that individuality and unity is a feature of the Buzz, the Sensory Data, or the neurophysiological organisation is unstated. This process, the discrimination of identity, results in what may be called a Rem (from Latin res = thing), a psychological but not necessarily objective, thing-in-itself.

Secondly one can distinguish an Entity, which is a Rem regarded(2) as having existence, i.e. not only an identified individual, but one regarded as existing. Entities can be regarded as of two kinds, either substantial or essential (to preserve a traditional and somewhat artificial dichotomy). The first will be referred to by the word Object, which will be regarded as retaining many of the normal connotations of tangibility, concreteness, actuality etc. The second will be referred to by the word Item, to characterise the fact that it is a member of a group of many, one item in a list, which possesses essential defining features (i.e. some aspect(s) of Sensory Data or its neurophysiological organisation which characterise it as just this Item and no other) but does not necessarily have independent substantial existence.

Thus in what follows reference to a Rem will involve no more than the subjective recognition of 'a something'; reference to an Entity

---

1. Vernon (1962) p.13
2. For the implications of 'regarded' see note to Appendix 3.

allows that Rem objective validity; reference to an Item allows the Entity an essential quality; reference to an Object allows an Item substantial existence. In addition to these terms the word Phenomenon will be used as a cover term for all of these in those contexts where the precise status of reality is either unspecifiable or unimportant.

The relationship between these terms can be expressed graphically thus:

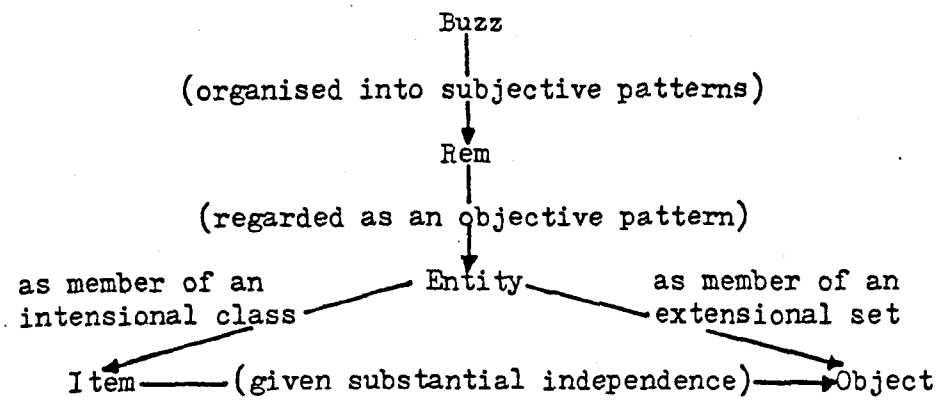


Diagram 2.1.3a Ontological Terms

It should be noted that the words Class and Set are used with specific meanings, following Gasking (1960)[1]. Class signifies a group defined intensionally, i.e. by stating a property common to all members of the group and Set signifies a group defined extensionally, i.e. by stating all members of the group. Intension implies listing by properties. Thus a member of a Class may have no existence independent of the actual Items of which it is a property. Extensional definition implies the listing of actual objective individuals with substantial independence. Therefore a member of a Class may actually be an object, but this is not assumed in listing it as an Item; however listing in a Set does presuppose actual objective independence of the

---

1. See also section 2.3.3

Entity. Therefore Entity is a neutral term for both Items and Objects, whereas Item is more specific, and Object most specific in respect of the ontological status of a perceived pattern.

In addition to these terminological distinctions the following typographical conventions are adopted. Lexemes, their types and tokens are indicated by underlining thus: dragon. Concepts (which under the assumption made in section 2.3.1 are the mental aspects of verbal forms) are represented thus: "dragon". Groups (that is Classes, Sets or Clusters regarded as structured in some way)(1) are labelled by capitals, thus: DRAGON. Finally terms which have definitions specific to this study, and are collected in the glossary have an initial capital letter, thus: Rem.

---

1. See section 2.3.3

2.2.1 Associative meaning

In explaining the deictic function of words appeal is necessarily made to a speaker/hearer's feelings. The linguist's codification of *this* as 'the (thing) here' and *that* as 'the (thing) there' are based on intuitions of difference in distance, not on any fixed scale of measurement external to a speaker/hearer[1]. Clearly it is very difficult, and perhaps impossible, to separate the actual function of a word, expression or utterance in a particular context from our feeling about that function. Semanticists have nevertheless tended to characterise two opposed kinds of meaning corresponding roughly to what a word does (or the way it is used in *langue*) and its personal, emotive use (as an aspect of idiolect, located therefore in *parole* rather than *langue*)[2]. This broad distinction is made in many different ways by many authors using several overlapping terminologies so that the general notion appears somewhat unclear. The terms *conceptual*, *cognitive* and *denotative* are most frequently used for the first aspect of meaning, and *emotive*, *affective*, *connotative*, *collocational* or *associative*[3] for the second kind. As Lyons states:

> "The distinction between 'cognitive' and 'non-cognitive' synonymy is drawn in various ways by different authors. But in all cases it is 'cognitive' synonymy which is defined first. No one ever talks of words as being 'emotively', but not 'cognitively synonymous'. This fact of itself would be sufficient to suggest that 'emotive' or 'affective' is being used as a catch-all term to refer to a number of quite distinct factors which may influence the selection of synonyms on particular occasions or in particular contexts. (4)

---

1. See Lyons (1975).
2. The distinction between *langue* and *parole* was first made by Saussure. See Saussure (1974) p.14.
3. Discussions of these terms can be found in Lyons (1968) p.448-50, Lyons (1977a) p.175-6, Leech (1977) p.14-22, Palmer (1977) p.35-6.
4. Lyons (1968) p.449.

Although he is here talking specifically of synonymy the point holds true for this distinction across all aspects of meaning. In general the semanticist is concerned with cognitive meaning, with what is presumed to be a fully formed and integrated conceptual web running through the langue, rather than the incidental accretions which may be meaningful for individuals or even for subcultures because cognitive meaning is presumed to be objective and thus measurable. Consequently semanticists have a tendency to neglect the non-systematic aspects by cataloguing them under a secondary cover term such as Lyons describes.

The present investigation is, in principle, however, concerned with such neglected aspects of meaning since it may prove that these are precisely the areas in which supernatural names are functional. Associative will thus be used as the cover term for all aspects of meaning not covered by the notions of Applicability and Sense below (following Leech (1977) pp.20-22), and the kinds of meaning incorporated in the category Associative will be enumerated here. I do not, however, wish to make a distinction between Associative meaning and cognitive meaning as it will become clear from what follows that certain types of Associative meaning are connected with Applicability, and other types with Sense.(1)

---

1. See the conclusions to Chapters 7 and 5 respectively.

2.2.2 Emotive Meaning

The term Associative is here used to characterise the fact that the meaning of a word may vary in some respects from speaker to speaker and from situation to situation. These two forms of variation could be called Emotive and Stylistic, and both may have intentional and interpretative aspects. Emotive intention would be the quality of an expression as felt by a speaker that he wishes to convey. For example a speaker may be afraid or delighted, attracted or repelled, worried or amused and may seek to convey the fear, delight, attraction, repulsion, worry or amusement he feels. To a large extent such meaning will be carried by paralinguistic features, or may be indicated by such utterances as "I am afraid", "I think that's very funny" etc. However a speaker may also choose words in such a way as to reveal his feeling and may desire, as in symbolic poetry for example, to create a feeling which he believes can be imparted in no other way than by those words in that order. Rimbaud's association of certain colours with certain vowels, and his desire to involve these associations in his poetry, would be a somewhat extreme example of emotive intention.(1)

It is an essential characteristic of such meaning that a hearer can never be certain that he has interpreted the intention of the speaker fully or even correctly. Emotive meaning cannot be inter-subjective in the way that, say, Applicability can(2). A hearer can never know if the feeling he obtains from a poem is precisely the feeling it was intended he should obtain, particularly if it is believed that the intended feeling is associated only with that unique expression (i.e. cannot be communicated in any other way). In fact one can never know if one's own subjective feelings correspond in

---

1. E.g. in "Voyelles", Rimbaud (1966) p.171. Also see the introduction to this edition pp.xxvi-xxviii.
2. See below section 2.3.1.

any way to those of someone else. All one can know is that certain observable features of someone who says "I am in pain" correspond to features of one's own behaviour in situations of a particular type:

> The essential thing about private experience is really not that each person possesses his own exemplar, but that nobody knows whether other people also have this or something else. The assumption would thus be possible - though unverifiable - that one section of mankind had one sensation of red and another section another. (1)

Consequently, Emotive interpretation of words, expressions or utterances may also be unique to an individual. One could conceive of associations between words and feelings which were perfectly arbitrary across a language, yet invariable for individuals, such that when one person hears the word art he always has a sensation of what is (for him) delight, whereas another experiences a feeling of disgust. Furthermore it seems likely that to some extent (for some words for some people) this is the case. An analogy might be that of masochism, whereby a 'normally' painful stimulus is experienced as pleasure. The stimulus, equivalent to utterance of a word, is in itself neutral. Pain is regarded as the normal experience only because it is the majority experience. But one could conceive of a masochist whose every experience of what I would call a painful stimulus was pleasure and whose every experience of what I call pleasurable was pain. Our experiences would be precisely contradictory yet, because they mapped exactly onto each other, we would use the same words for radically different experiences.

As Emotive meaning, as here conceived, is in part idiosyncratic, it would be very difficult to study or even, as the above examples show, to discuss. If one regards meaning only as "communicated

---

1. Wittgenstein (1972) para. 272.

information"[1] then one can regard failed intentions or causeless interpretations as not strictly meaningful. However it is difficult to see how one can characterise communication in normal language (as distinct from the stricter definitions of information theory) without taking into account the experience of the hearer at least. And if the hearer has experience of communication one cannot deny that communication has taken place. One can deny that the hearer's interpretation of the communication was correct (e.g. as indicated by his subsequent beliefs or actions) but not that his experience was incorrect. Such a denial would itself be meaningless since a subjective experience can be neither correct nor incorrect.

The fact that Emotive meaning can have a profound and permanent effect on a man's life must indicate that the experience of it is significant (in all senses of the word). The Bible has been a relatively fixed text for many centuries, yet there have been almost as many responses to it as there have been readers, both to the book as a whole and to individual passages such as "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"[2] or the chapters of Revelation, responses which depend very much on personal interpretation and individual feeling and which have had enormous historical, social and cultural effects.

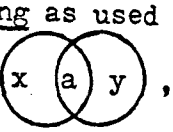
It is possible therefore that supernatural names are emotive counters of this sort characterising a kind of experience which an individual has, but not yielding any additional information about that experience. Under this interpretation we would say when someone says (1) "I saw a demon" they mean "I had an experience of a kind (x)", and the hearer will understand "He had an experience of a kind (y)" where (x) and (y) are respectively types of experience with which the speaker

---

1. See for example, Cherry (1968); Leech (1977) p.24.
2. Exodus ch.22, v.18.

and hearer are familiar.

This is the kind of account which Ayer, for example, would argue is metaphysical, hence meaningless. He would presumably reduce the statement (1) to: (2) I had an experience, and, arguing that to exist is to have experiences, reduce (2) to: (3a) I exist or (3b) I am.

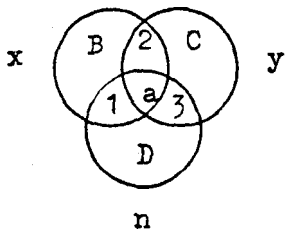
The reason that statement (1) is meaningful and cannot be reduced to (2) or (3) is that it mentions an experience of a particular kind. If a speaker says (4) "I saw an egg" or (5) "I saw beauty", he is also mentioning an experience of a particular kind. The difference between (1) and (4) or (5) is that (presumably) the experience of an egg or beauty are intersubjective, i.e. there is what Quine calls a stimulus-meaning[1] for those utterances. Whatever the individual experiences of "egg" and "beauty" all are attached to a common stimulus (or set of stimuli), whereas the experience of a demon is not attached to a common stimulus (or set of stimuli) but to stimuli which would always appear to other observers as arbitrary. But the lack of intersubjective corollaries for the experience of (1) does not invalidate the fact of a particular experience undergone. In fact Quine's notion of stimulus-meaning is more complex than represented here. Stimulus-meaning is a class of stimuli which would prompt the assent of a speaker/hearer to a particular utterance. Stimulus thus corresponds roughly with Entity, a collection of sensory data regarded as one thing and existing. The intersubjective constant is the intersection of the stimulus-meanings for two or more individuals. Thus if we represent the stimulus-meaning for egg for speaker/hearer x as (x), and that for y as (y), the intersubjective constant (here stimulus-meaning as used in the previous paragraph) can be represented as (a) in 

, the intersection of the stimulus-meanings for the two individuals. For a

---

1. Quine (1964) pp.36-38.

linguistic community the cognitive meaning of a word (to revert to the traditional simplification) would be the intersection of all stimulus meanings of that word and the Associative meanings of all those areas which are not intersected by all other simulus-meanings. Thus for speakers x, y....n with stimulus-meanings (x) , (y) ...(n) for egg, the cognitive meaning of egg would be (a) in:



with areas 1, 2 and 3 representing areas of shared association, and areas B, C and D representing unshared areas, equivalent to the account of Emotive (or idiosyncratic) meaning above.

Thus the use of supernatural names may well involve a subjective significance which is largely undiscoverable, being areas of unshared meaning. It would appear, for example, that as much as a third of the corpus examined in this study is composed of lexemes which collocate with fairy less than five times in a period of five hundred years.(1) In terms of frequency of occurrence therefore these must be regarded either as accidental concatenations (which is a somewhat peculiar interpretation considering that a written text is a conscious production) or as Emotive associations, meaningful to individuals but largely insignificant in respect of the total meaning of the word.

Conversely, as Szalay and Deese have demonstrated,(2) Associative meaning can be systematic across a culture or within a cultural group. Although their concerns and methods differ somewhat from those of the

---

1. See below p.128.
2. Szalay and Deese (1978).

present study, their general remarks on subjective meaning are pertinent:

> associations are capable of yielding significant information about the attitudes, beliefs and cognitive structures of individuals and social and cultural groups. (1)

They demonstrate conclusively that word associations can, in terms of frequency, characterise basic differences between cultural groups in respect of a particular concept, such as "education" or "war", and show that association between words is representative of more complex propositional relations (which may in turn be related to logical or denotative relations, but in many cases are not). In principle therefore although their interest was to discover psychological differences attached to a particular concept by free association with a word standing for that concept, one can describe their experiment in different terms. One can see the word standing for the concept not as a concept but as an object word, that is, a word whose meaning is unknown, and the single word associations made to that object word can be regarded as shorthand forms of the kind of typical propositions that word may enter into. That is to say, the only difference between a series of word associations to a given word, as a text using that word, is that the text makes, or attempts to make, explicit the propositions that word association leaves implicit. Therefore, if word association does indeed indicate subjective, Emotive meaning, a given text may contain as many indications. It would be possible therefore to take a text and, regarding syntactic units (for words and syntactic morphemes) as propositional counters, remove those to leave the subjective association.

It is certainly not true that the only relations between any

---

1. Szalay and Deese (1978) p.23

word in a text and all other words in that text are propositional/ syntactic or associative, but it would seem to be the case that an examination of a corpus, as presented below, may well expose significant features of meaning which are not covered by the concepts of Applicability or Sense and which are therefore Associative. Nevertheless throughout the remainder of this study should be borne in mind the fact that, particularly for someone who believes in a supernatural phenomenon, the essential quality of its name, over and above any objective features, may well be unapproachable. It may be possible, for example, to show that certain supernatural names involve 'awe' or 'fear' but not to show what 'awe' or 'fear' mean to individuals, nor how those individuals will react to, or accommodate those associations.

2.2.3 Stylistic Meaning

Leech[1] also makes a distinction between Stylistic meaning and what he terms affective meaning within the more general concept of Associative meaning. However he ignores idiosyncratic Emotive meaning as I have defined it as he argues for a notion of meaning which involves the transference of information but has no reference to the minds of speaker and hearer:

> a linguist may feel entitled to ignore the difference between the intention of a message and its effect, because he is interested in studying the communication system itself, rather than what use or misuse is made of it. (2)

This point will be taken up later. My present purpose is simply to suggest that his distinction between stylistic meaning and affective meaning is artificial. If it was possible to distinguish social circumstance of use from the personal feelings of the speaker, which are Leech's criteria for stylistic and affective meaning respectively, then the separation of the two would be useful. However, although social and individual situations produce polarities of stylistic meaning, both interplay in any utterance. It is notable, for example, that Leech's summary of the stylistic categories taken from Crystal and Davy (1976) includes INDIVIDUALITY (i.e. idiolect) and SINGULARITY (e.g. an author's style) which are surely not social features, whereas "politeness", "biting sarcasm" etc. which Leech uses as examples of personal feeling are surely socially determined. Consequently Stylistic meaning will be used here to cover all those forms of meaning which are dependent on the situation of use whether social or individual. Thus all utterances will be regarded as possessing a Stylistic meaning of some kind. However Stylistic meaning is not a lexical feature, i.e. different Stylistic meanings are not in general

---

1. Leech (1977) pp.16-18.
2. Ibid. p.24.

attached to individual lexemes. Thus there is little point in trying to determine the 'stylistic meaning' of any particular supernatural name. However it may well be that different names are associated with different styles, i.e. the distribution of a supernatural name across styles is systematic and to that extent the name contributes to the stylistic meaning of a passage, although we could not exclusively locate that meaning in that word. Therefore whilst it is not possible fully to determine the Emotive aspect of Associative meaning, for a supernatural name it may be possible to determine most Stylistic aspects, and if it is possible to show that a particular supernatural name is systematically distributed within the Stylistic range it may be possible to offer a definition or description of it in terms of its use. Thus although the pursuit of stylistic meaning will not produce an absolute definition of a particular name, it may yield discriminatory classifications.

Indeed it has been argued, in particular by proponents of the notion of semantic fields, that a word's entire meaning consists of its distributional restrictions.(1) If, for example, there were a fixed and specifiable number of stylistic variations such that, in theory, all possible styles could be listed, it is supposed that all words would betray an organisation that mapped onto this list and that the meaning of any individual word, therefore, was a function of the styles it pointed to. Although this theory is clearly too extreme to be valid as a complete account of meaning nevertheless it seems to be true that for some words at least their utterance expresses an attitude on the part of the speaker and encourages a reciprocal attitude in the hearer, and to the extent that a word L is attached to (used to

---

1. As expressed here this corresponds to no specific semantic theory, but those of Firth (1957) and of W. Porzig, as presented by Lyons (1977a) are similar in regarding meaning as contextually dependent. See Lyons (1977a) pp.261-6, and (1977b) pp.607-613.

express) such an attitude, thus excluding a number of otherwise synonymous words, that word could be said to be meaningful. However it is not clear whether that meaningfulness arises from the chosen word's paradigmatic relation to the set of other possible choices or from the fact that it is used in a particular syntagmatic (stylistic) pattern. Probably it is best to conceive of a lexical choice as signalling a particular style by the fact of that choice, and of the signal being confirmed by the proximity of other similar choices (and by non-lexical signals). However there are only a few lexical items that are thoroughly restricted stylistically. Most have a substantial range of potential styles and many have a great deal of stylistic freedom. In these cases we might say that the Stylistic meaning of the surrounding context adds to or modifies a word's meaning in that context, but that outside such a determining context that additional meaning is lost. In the case of such words, therefore, an examination of stylistic distribution, rather than indicating the meaning of a word, will show the kinds of meaning with which that word is compatible or, from a different point of view, the kinds of meaning that it may assume.

Thus if a supernatural name has a restricted distribution, we may say that it has Stylistic meaning provided that we recognise that Stylistic meaning is not something that necessarily inheres in an isolated lexeme. It would then be possible to give a minimum definition of a particular supernatural name as: a lexeme possessing Emotive meaning for the utterer and used in contexts of the kind x (where x is a description defining the possible situations of use). One aspect of the analysis must therefore test various hypotheses of stylistic distribution.

There are two aspects of context which may be restrictive in determining use of linguistic elements. These may be called Context

and Cotext. The former denotes the nonlinguistic features which are associated with a particular choice. In principle these may be any features, many of which may be indeterminable, such as the knowledge, beliefs or intentions of a speaker/hearer; in practice the more limited notion of context-of-situation, which treats the immediate situation in which an utterance or text occurs as defining most of the relevant choices, is usually adequate, given the framework provided by sociolinguistics of Field, Tenor and Mode[1]. Field refers to the setting of an utterance, and the activities of the participants, Tenor to the relationship between participants, and Mode to the channel of communication. Cotext denotes all linguistic features occurring in the environment of any particular linguistic element.

As the object of study for the present work is entirely written text and noncontemporaneous, certain aspects of context are irrecoverable. However sufficient signals are available in most of the texts for a general description of the style of each to be discernible. Each of the texts used was given a label for Field[2], which in many cases corresponds to a literary genre, and for Mode, in terms of the form of the text, such as prose, blank verse, rhyming couplet etc. In most of the texts Tenor was regarded as identical, i.e. an author informing an audience, although there were certain differences. For example the text of a Middle English romance may have been a scribal copy of an original intended for a restricted audience, whereas that of a Renaissance tragedy may be a pirate copy of a text originally spoken for a large and variegated audience. In most cases it seemed that the Tenor was implied in the label used for Field, although in any particular case its individual history could involve deviations of Tenor from that

---

1. See Halliday (1978); Gregory and Carroll (1978).
2. For the assignation of these labels see Section 3.4.

typical of its Field. It was not felt that such deviations would have a significant effect across the corpus, as with idiolectal features of Emotive meaning. However unlike those features, the method employed in the main analysis theoretically allowed the recovery of significant anomalies which could then be correlated with known differences of Tenor. Thus texts were not labelled according to Tenor because it was felt that differences were slight, and any of significance could be detected.

2.3.1 Applicability

The notion of Applicability is crucial in the semantics of natural languages. It is possible to imagine a language consisting only of Associative meaning - a series of grunts and exclamations with markers signifying the role of the participants in each particular situation would be one such language. It is possible to construct languages which, apparently at least, consist only of sense relations and are not connected to a real world in any way(1). However no discussion of the semantics of natural language can ignore the fact that in the belief of speakers if not in actual fact language is connected to the real world, and in many different ways. Indeed it is difficult not to feel that if language could not have been connected to, and used in, the world it would never have existed. Intuitively and to ordinary language users language is of value because it enables us to speak of the Items and Objects that make up our environment.

The connections between language and the world are of several different types. In the first place the word language itself seems to imply both a speaker and a hearer. Secondly a real language has a physical manifestation i.e. substance, and will be affected by the character of its speakers and hearers. But historical, phonetic, and physiological considerations are not covered by the term Applicability. It is used only to cover semantic connection between word and Entity, that is, the ways in which aspects of the actual world may be symbolised. Broadly speaking there are three areas in which such symbolising occurs. They are the syntactic, the Referential and the Denotational. The precise nature of the syntactic connection is a

---

1. See below section 2.4.1

question of dispute amongst linguists and for this and other reasons[1] I shall largely ignore this area in the remainder of the study. The only major syntactic categories which figure largely in the later chapters of the study are those of the preposition, and a discussion of the relation(s) between noun and adjective. Accordingly the notion of Applicability will be restricted to the twin concepts of Reference and Denotation.

Applicability implies that language is in some sense a bridge between mind and world, but this implication is the source of many philosophical and psychological problems. Those problems can be summarised as four questions:

(i) What is the mental status of meaning? (Does it have a physiological basis? Is there such a thing as mind? etc.)

(ii) What is the connection between 'mental meaning' and its verbal expression? (Do we have concepts independent of their expression? Are words associated with mental images? etc.)

(iii) What is the connection between 'mental meaning' and the actual world? (Do we have 'concepts' of 'objects'? Are perceptions made up of discrete elements? What is the mental status of a 'thing'? etc.)

(iv) What is the connection between verbal expression and the actual world? (Do words name things? Is predication a representation of inherent reality? etc.)

---

1. No particular grammatical theory is adopted in this study, as none has yet proved adequate for a description of the whole language, and no particular theory is peculiarly suited to the approach adopted here. Being primarily a discussion of lexical semantics rather than syntactic semantics the refusal to debate rival theories seems justifiable. Furthermore if this study can provide useful judgements independent of any specific grammatical theory those judgements should be the more valuable (and perhaps, to some extent, validated) by the fact of their theoretical accommodation in any grammatical system.

The most convenient and well-known summary of these relationships is the triangle of signification of Ogden and Richards[1]. There have been many revisions and modifications of this triangle[2]; most philosophers and semanticists have their own theories on one or more of the relationships. However there are some approaches which are clearly inadequate, although they are equally clearly correct in some measure. Four such types of theory are commonly held and it would seem a mistake wholly to reject any of them. Firstly there are theories of naming under which words, sentences or expressions name either mental versions of real Entities, or the Entities themselves[3]. There are theories under which words, sentences or expressions are representations of mental Rem (images or concepts) which are only partially dependent on the real world[4]. There are theories under which a word's meaning is held to be a function of its use[5]. Finally there are theories under which natural language is a means of expressing logical relationships and/or truth values and is in greater

---

1. Ogden and Richards (1969) p.14.
2. E.g. Lyons (1968) p.104; Palmer (1977) p.26.
3. This is probably the simplest and the commonsense view. The most respectable versions are those maintained by the philosophical schools of logical atomism and phenomenalism, which replace Objects by sense-data or particulars (irreducible experiences of the actual world). See Russell (1918); Wittgenstein (1961); Ayer (1975). Insofar as Applicability implies a real world, there must be a sense in which words name that world.
4. Such theories are generally allied to idealist philosophies and thus go back to Plato. The theory outlined by Ogden and Richards (1969) is essentially conceptualist. It would seem that if techniques such as the semantic differential truly measure meaning, they must be measuring a mental phenomenon as the same measurements cannot be applied to a physical world. See Osgood et al (1967).
5. Use theories of meaning largely follow Wittgenstein (1972). Independently of the philosophical validity of the use theory (which, however, seems well established in philosophical circles) stylistics and sociolinguistics would seem to validate the approach from a practical point of view. The developments of speech-act philosophy also seem to support this kind of view. See Austin (1962); Searle (1969); Brown (1974).

or lesser degree imperfect in this expression[1]. All of these conceive of the relationships between the world, mind and language in different ways, and there are good arguments in support and denial of all[2].

Probably the simplest compromise which allows the advantages of several apparently conflicting theories is to regard mental as verbal, that is, accept that meaning has a mental aspect but regard that aspect as inseparable from its verbal expression[3]. The most convincing arguments in favour of such a compromise treat the equivalence as existing at the level of sentences (or expressions) rather than that of words, but I shall argue that in at least two respects the argument will also hold at the lexemic level.

The main counter-argument to an equation of mental and verbal meaning is that it is possible to have mental events which are not verbal. In particular we can have visual, aural and also, presumably, tactile, olfactory and gustatory images. However it is difficult to conceive of a mental event which is neither pseudo-sensation nor pseudo-verbal. It might therefore be possible to claim that mental events are of three kinds. Firstly there is actual sensation - that is, neurological activity prompted by a particular stimulus. Secondly there is replication of that sensation, that is, the capacity to repeat a particular neurological pattern independent of the stimulus

---

1. A recent proposal of this kind is made by Kempson (1977). Truth-value semantics encounters many difficulties in talk of fictional or absent phenomena. Nevertheless without some formulation of logical relations and truth-values many of the key lexical relations would be unnecessarily complicated. These problems are discussed in Cooper (1973); Platts (1979).
2. Two useful discussions of the conflicting theories of meaning are Cooper (1973) and Kempson (1977).
3. See Cooper (1973) p.25; Wittgenstein Blue and Brown Books p.37 (quoted in Cooper (1973) p.27). The notion of an interlocking net of sentences in Quine (1964) p.12 et passim expresses a similar idea, but does not allow simple relations of word to 'word-idea' except in special cases.

that first caused it. Thirdly there is organised neurological activity, which has a verbal equivalent. We might call those three activities 'perception', 'memory' and 'conception' (or 'thought'), although these labels are in no sense precise. 'Conception' would be distinguished from other neurological activities by the subjective experience of organisation associated with it. We could furthermore say that our recognition of that organisation is equivalent to recognising that we can give that mental activity a verbal expression. In other words we could define 'thought' in such a way that only neurological activities with verbal equivalents were included in the class 'conception'. Such a definition may be a description of the actual state of affairs or it may be seen as no more than a simplifying convenience. Either way it will be accepted as valid for the remainder of the study. In terms of the account in section 2.1.2 we can say that the psychological process of making a Rem into an Item or Object also involves creating a paraverbal equivalent. By paraverbal is meant a linguistic form or expression which could be realised in actual parole, though it may never actually be so realised.

Of course such a simplification cannot explain how the silent becomes aural. But if we rewrite this difficulty as: how does neurological activity (x) become physiological activity (y)? we can conveniently ignore the difficulty as a problem for students of brain mechanism rather than of language. The same problem is met in a slightly different form in the distinction between competence and performance made by Chomsky[1]; but there is no need for such a distinction if the

---

1. Chomsky (1957).

two simplifications outlined above are accepted, namely equating mental and verbal activity, and postulating that their differences are physiological rather than psychological. Of course the experiences of speaking and of thinking are subjectively different but, as Wittgenstein's experiment seems to show[1] the differences are more apparent than real. In removing (ii) by sleight of hand not only do we divide (i) into a problem for physiologists and a problem for linguists, we presume that the linguistic portion of the answer can be provided by examination of actual utterance and in particular the relations between utterance and the world, for the simplification also reduces (iii) and (iv) to one. Consequently the introduction of these simplifications throws the burden of meaningfulness onto the shoulders of reference and denotation[2].

---

1. Wittgenstein Blue and Brown Books p.37, quoted in Cooper (1973) p.27.
2. A substantial portion of this burden is in fact borne by Associative meaning as indicated above and as will become apparent in later stages of the argument. This could only be argued for the material covered in this study, however, whereas the theoretical approach as here presented must necessarily regard Applicability as the most important area of linguistic meaning for any language or any corpus.

2.3.2 Reference

The study of semantics is plagued with conflicting terminology but the terms denotation and reference are more confusing than most. As noted above denotation is used in contradistinction to connotation, the former being used to mean 'conceptual' or 'cognitive', the latter 'emotional' or 'affective'. In philosophy a similar distinction is made, following J. S. Mill, which is however much more precise. Denotation is an extensional definition of a word, connotation its intensional definition(1). That is, the denotation of cow would be 'all objects having the property of cowness'; the connotation would be 'an object having four legs, horns, an udder, female etc.'. These differences will be discussed in 2.3.3. Denotation is also used, however, in the same sense as reference, and vice versa, and both terms have been replaced by, or have replaced, such terms as signification, symbolisation, naming etc.

The use I wish to make of the terms Denotation and Reference is probably that most commonly adopted, in one form or another, by linguists. This account takes as its starting point Lyons (1977a) pp.175-229, in which reference and denotation are distinguished as the property of an utterance and the property of a lexeme respectively.

Reference, therefore, is an intentional act on the part of a speaker, not a property of the langue as such (i.e. not coded in the system of language). A speaker will utter a word or expression with the intention of referring to a particular item or object in the universe of discourse and thereby call a hearer's attention to that Item/Object as, in part, the topic of his utterance, the thing he is talking about. Thus, strictly speaking, one does not speak of a word's Reference or its Referent, but of the Reference of a speaker, and the Referent he

---

1. The terms intension and extension are defined on p.29.

uses the word to Refer to. Reference is an act not a property. In principle any word can be used to Refer to anything. If I say of our dog, "There's the cat wanting to go out again", the expression will almost certainly be understood if we have no cat, and will probably be understood if the hearer is aware which animal wants to be let out given that there is a choice of such animals, but there is no sense in which "dog" can be called the referent of the word cat.

Thus the connection between any particular sound and the Item it is used to Refer to is, in principle, accidental[1]. Any particular connection might only be made once in the entire history of the language. The Object Referred to by any particular token of a lexeme may alter with its every utterance (for example, in the Referential function of the deictic pronoun I). There need be no necessary connection between Referent and Referring expression. In fact, there is no reason why utterances not in the langue, such as gibberish or foreign expressions, may not be used to Refer. For example, a speaker says "The watchamacallit's in here", and holds up a box.

One necessary aspect of an act of Reference, however, would seem to be that there must be something (in the universe of discourse) for the speaker to refer to. If a speaker says "The gold cup in my hand is for the winner", it is reasonably certain that we will know the Referent if he is holding a gold cup. If he is holding a gold medallion or a silver cup, we may believe he has made an error (either of fact, or a slip of the tongue) but we will still believe it is the item in his hand he is Referring to. If he has nothing in his hand, but a gold cup is about to be given to him, or is on the table at his

---

1. In essence this is one of the basic principles of structural linguistics, the Saussurean principle of the arbitrariness of the sign. See Saussure (1974) pp.67-70.

side, we may still understand him to be Referring to that Object. If he has nothing in his hands, and only a silver medallion by his side we may conclude either that he is a fool, or has made several errors, or is joking, but we may also gather that the silver medallion is the Referent. But if there is nothing in his hands, and nothing in the vicinity which resembles gold or a cup, we will probably wonder what he is talking about. And this literal question "What is he talking about?" has puzzled philosophy for many years, in particular since 1905 and Russell's well-known essay On Denoting[1]. For how can someone Refer to an Entity which does not exist? This is surely one of the central problems of the semantics of supernatural names. For the large majority of utterances of supernatural names the Referents are either absent or non-existent. Can they thus be called Referents at all? And if they cannot how does a speaker/hearer understand a Referring expression (or psuedo-referring expression) using a supernatural name? For we may understand a meaningless word, "whatchamacallit" by applying itto a particular situation (i.e. looking in the box in the above example and seeing something) but we cannot apply an apparent meaningless word, which a supernatural name would be under Ayer's dictum, to a situation which does not exist.

Problems such as this have tormented English philosophy for seventy years. Russell's initial argument, adopted by many philosophers subsequently, ran roughly as follows: (i) A denoting phrase[2] denotes one thing and one thing only. (ii) Such phrases occur in propositions which are either true or false. (iii) If the proposition

---

1. Russell (1905). Also reprinted in Russell (1956).
2. Russell's use of denotation is something of an amalgem of reference and denotation as used in this study. Consequently I use his terminology here. A proposition for Russell consists of at least a name or denoting expression, and a predicate. He describes more complex propositions in Russell (1918).

is true, then the denoting phrase is meaningful because there is an Entity of which the predication of the proposition is true.
(iv) If the proposition is false, the denoting phrase is meaningless, there being no such Entity. Russell concludes that a denoting phrase is inherently meaningless and only acquires meaning by virtue of the true propositions of which it may be a part.

This is a powerful logical argument and its logic is difficult if not impossible to refute. But it will not do for natural language largely because its premises are incorrect. As Strawson pointed out in his reply to Russell[1] it is not an expression which Refers but someone who uses that expression, and the failure or success of the act of Referring does not depend on there being one thing and one thing only which that expression is used to Refer to, but on the suitability of that expression for singling out or identifying a particular individual Entity within the universe of discourse. Furthermore the success or failure of Reference depends to a large extent on the beliefs and knowledge of the speaker and the hearer(s) and the extent to which those beliefs and knowledge are shared[2]. The meaningfulness of a Referring expression (and names are to be included in this class) is dependent on the truth or falsity of the statement it is used to make, or even more remotely, on the speaker's belief about the truth of the statement which he makes. For example, if I say "The Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R. is coming to England", the fact that there is no such Entity as 'the Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R.' does not prevent me from believing that I have identified a particular Entity, nor does it prevent others from recognising the Entity I mean. It would be incorrect to regard such an instance as

---

1. Strawson (1950).
2. The debate about failure of Reference is extensive in the literature. Useful accounts occur in Cooper (1973) and in Linsky (1969).

mistaken Reference. The use of the language may be incorrect, but it is meaningless to call the purpose for which it was used either correct or incorrect; it can only be successful or unsuccessful. One could also argue that there are degrees of success in Reference. If I say "My grandmother is coming tomorrow", and I have two grandmothers, I have not failed to Refer completely, but have identified two Entities as possible topics of my sentence. That such an ambiguity does not count as full failure may be seen by the fact that the likely response of a hearer would not be "What (Entity) do you mean?" or "Who did you mean?" but "Which one?", i.e. the hearer has successfully identified two possible Referents. One could imagine, furthermore, a speaker with two grandmothers, one of whom lived three streets away whilst the other lived in Australia. In this case the utterance "My grandmother is coming tomorrow" would almost certainly correctly identify the grandmother living nearby and one would expect such a speaker habitually to use the phrase "My grandmother", to Refer to the nearest and "My Australian grandmother" (or something like it) of the more distant relative.

The point is that a supernatural name used to Refer may produce different degrees or kinds of Reference on different occasions or for different hearers. It may identify one unique Phenomenon for another individual who has experienced it. Thus the name Skriker will identify "that creature I heard the other night" or "the creature (or whatever it was) that produced a noise I have heard"(1). Or it may identify a Phenomenon as "the Phenomenon associated with that place/time/activity" as, for example, The Hedley Kow which seems to have been a cover term

---

1. On Skriker see Wright (1913) p.194-5; Harland and Wilkinson (1973) p.91; Briggs (1976) p.370; Briggs (1977) p.222.

for any accidental Phenomenon associated with Hedley, near Ebchester[1]. Or it may identify a Phenomenon as one of a class of Phenomena so that "the Devil" may be an expression which can be used to Refer to a finite Class of Objects/Items, larger than but analogous to the Class Referred to by the phrase "my grandmother". The important fact is that a Referring expression need not specify precisely or uniquely in order to be used in a successful act of Reference. A phrase such as "The Devil took my child" may be understood perfectly well as Referring to one kind of Phenomenon and not another, without the need for either speaker or hearer to have a clear conception of the age, sex, height, place, abode or characteristics of the Devil. If in no other way, an expression may be used to Refer by exclusion (e.g. The Devil= not God) or may be used only to Refer to Emotive meaning: "There was a thing in the room" could be understood as meaning no more than "I had an experience (of a particular kind)".

In principle, therefore, from a record of any utterance it is not possible for an observer to determine the Referent without at least being aware of the context of utterance and such an observer would need access to a speaker's mind to be absolutely certain of the intended Referent. The fact that most acts of Referring are sufficient for their purpose in actual practice depends to some extent on the Denotation and Sense relations of the words used [2], but also on the shared experience of users and their shared habits of typical Reference. Thus if we do not know the possible Reference of the lexeme girl in "I

---

1. See Henderson (1973) p.234ff; "it is said to have constantly imitated the voice of the servant-girl's lovers, overturned the kail-pot, given the cream to the cats, unravelled the knitting, or put the spinning wheel out of order". See also Jacobs (1967) p.50ff; Balfour (1967) pp.17-18; Briggs (1976) p.218; Briggs (1977) p.227.
2. See below, sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 respectively.

went to the supermarket and after I had bought all I wanted I paid the girl at the till" we are at least able to obtain an idea of the kind of Entity Referred to, whether or not we have encountered a token of the lexeme girl before, provided the experience is familiar to us. We will understand girl to Refer to the kind of Entity which is familiar to us in that situation though, of course, we may habitually pay a man, an old lady, or a computer. Although we may know nothing about Sense-relations, the syntactic position of girl tells us the Referent is at least "the Entity to which one gives money in a supermarket", and, to this extent, we will be correct in our understanding of the Referent. Similarly that act of Reference will be successful to that extent. In an isolated utterance: "The girl moved", we can know no more of the Referent than the fact that it moves, but the greater the extent of Cotext, the fuller the description of the situation in which the Referent occurred, the more likely we are to be able to fit the description to our experience and guess the Referent. It would probably not be too extreme to regard all interpretation of Reference as informed guesswork. It is easy to think of even very short sentences which can sufficiently identify a Referent, even though the word used is gibberish. For example in "I tried to unbutton my coat, but the button wouldn't go through the glok", we are almost certain to identify the Referent of glok as "buttonhole" or "hole". Naturally we could not be certain, but it seems it is impossible to be certain about any act of Reference as there is, in principle, no way of telling if a name or Referring expression is being used idiosyncratically or not.

If, therefore, we are to regard Reference as an aspect of meaning we must conceive of meaningfulness as inhering in a typification of the kinds of Referent for which a particular word is normally used. That is to say, for a corpus of occurrences of a lexeme L, if it were possible

to list the Referents for which tokens of the lexeme were used those Referents which occurred most frequently would be regarded as determining the meaning of L across the language. Of course it is not possible to list Referents, but it is possible to list their characteristics, (or rather, the characteristics of the situations in which such Referents occur) and, on the assumption that such characteristics will reveal the nature(s) of the Referents to native speakers, an analysis of verbal Cotext should promote those intuitions. Consequently if one regards the metalanguage for description of a particular object-word as all words in a particular language save the object-word, an appropriate classification of the Cotexts of the object-word's occurrence ought to reveal the dominant features of typical Referents and thus, by inference, the nature of the Referents themselves[1]. This theoretical approach is accordingly given a methodology in Chapter 3.

---

1. For a parallel argument which outlines a truth-value semantic theory based on the relations between intuitive knowledge of metalanguage and hypothetical ignorance of object-language, see Davidson (1967). It is possible to argue that any metalanguage, whether it is a constructed set of symbols or a strictly defined area of a pre-existing language, is dependent on intuitive knowledge for, though the object-language is defined and discussed by the metalanguage, the metalanguage itself is defined by a language which is intuitively understood, a language which is itself frequently the object-language.

2.3.3 Denotation

Denotation is distinguished from Reference as being a property of lexemes rather than of utterances. Rather than resulting from the intention of a user, it exists by convention for a group of users (a language community) and is thus, to follow Saussure's distinction, a property of *langue* rather than *parole*. We can regard the Denotation of a lexeme L as a relation between a Set of Objects and a Set of sounds which is predetermined for any particular language-user (i.e. exists before he learns the language) and is virtually immune from alteration resulting from idiosyncratic or arbitrary use.(1)

The Denotatum of a lexeme is thus not like the Referent of an utterance, for it is not an individual item but a Set, Class or Group of items(2). The members of the Group are socially determined but may be added to by individual usage. Thus we could say that the Denotation of the lexeme *car* is the Class of Objects having certain properties (such as fourwheeled, mechanical, vehicular etc.), or the Set of Objects (Rover, Mini, Rolls..... etc.). An individual user, however, is not usually given, or able to offer, a complete definition of the Class or enumeration of the Set in most cases. In fact he probably has a mixed 'definition' which is partly extensional and partly intensional.

Some linguists believe that some words lack denotation, and they would include supernatural names in this category(3). If this is so,

---

1. Saussure (1974) p.71ff.
2. Hereafter I will use *Group* to signify any collection of Items, Objects, aspects, individuals, *Class* to signify such a Group defined intensionally, i.e. by stating a property common to all members of the Group, and *Set* to signify a Group defined extensionally, i.e, by stating all members of the Group. This terminological convention follows Gasking (1960) p.1, replacing his *aggregate* by *Group*. See section 2.1.2.
3. E.g. Lyons (1977b) p.210ff. Lyons' position here seems somewhat inconsistent, however, as he claims his notion of Denotation is philosophically neutral with respect to extension and intension, and then proceeds to cite *unicorn* as an example of a word lacking Denotation because it lacks extension.

then there arises the problem of how we can know the meaning of such words independently of any particular Context. For it is clearly true that we can say, hear or read unicorn, goblin, fairy or witch in an isolated Context and know something about the meaning of that word. Yet Stylistic and Referential meaning are Context-dependent, and Emotive meaning is not in principle systematic, so it would seem that there is an additional element of meaningfulness inhering in isolated lexemes.

There are at least three possible approaches to this problem, all of which, I believe, are interrelated although their inter-relationships do not seem to have been previously outlined. In the first place one could point out that such lexemes are not met in isolation but are always used in a particular Context, e.g. folk tales, and if we do meet the isolated lexeme, we understand its Denotatum as a fictional creation, i.e. as a reality within a particular Context (or, to use the philosophical jargon, in a possible world). We could say: these lexemes have Denotata with no extension in the actual world, but with extension in a fictional world, i.e. when they are used in their normal textual environment they Denote a Set of fictional entities(1). However one can object that a fictional Entity is not an Entity at all, that extensional definition can only apply to encountered Entities, i.e. these lexemes 'Denote' Rem not Entities and are therefore not Applicable to an objective world but expressive only of Associative meaning.

— Consequently a second approach, used by Lyons(2), removes 'Entity' one stage away from the Denotation-less lexeme. It regards that lexeme's meaning as derived from knowledge of the sense-relations of other lexemes which are related by the Denotation-less lexeme, and these

---

1. This is the approach sketched out in Linsky (1969).
2. Lyons (1977a).

other related lexemes do have Denotata. Thus we understand the meaning of unicorn as a number of Sense-relations between component lexemes whose Denotata we know, such as horse, horn etc. From this it is but a small step to a third explanation which states that, though the Denotatum of a supernatural name has no extension, it is made up of Items which do have extension (viz. horn, horse etc.) but which do not co-occur in actuality. It would be possible to regard the invariable co-occurrences of such items as the concept of "unicorn".

Thus we have a theory which finds the meaning of unicorn in a relation between Items, a theory which finds that meaning in a relation between lexemes attached to those Items, and a theory which finds the meaning in the kind of Context in which such lexemes occur. In the last analysis these theories are probably identical. For if we consider how such a meaning as that of unicorn might be learned, it is most likely that a child would be reading or hearing a folktale, with a sentence such as: "She was walking through the forest when suddenly she came upon a great white horse with a horn in the centre of its forehead. A unicorn!". Are we to say that a child in hearing this is putting together memories or images or concepts of "horn", "white", "horse" etc.: or understanding the sense of the words horn, white, horse in some way independent of the 'concepts'; or, making allowance for the kind of Context, suspending disbelief and accepting the hypothesis of a possible world? Clearly the child does not take a real horse and a rhino horn and paint the creature white in the living room. What we must say, until some convincing grounds for discrimination are offered, is that the Context suggests a kind of verbal/conceptual reality, just as other Contexts suggest different realities. Charm and strangeness in subatomic physics are of the same order as unicorns, they are verbal concepts appropriate to, and made meaningful by, a

particular Context.

In other words the theories which hope to provide an extensional Denotation for a supernatural name are in fact providing intensional definitions. Just as car Denotes the Class (four-wheeled, combustion engine, petrol driven), let us say, so unicorn Denotes (horned, horse, whiteness). To say that car has an extensional Denotation whereas unicorn does not is to say that there are Objects in the world which I can list which have the properties listed in the intensional Denotation of car, whereas for unicorn there are not. But the criterion for recognising and isolating those Objects is the possession of properties in the intensional definition as much for car as it is for unicorn. If we accept Denotation as applying only to Sets, there is no way to account for the meaning of unicorn. If we accept that Denotation applies only to Classes, there is no difference between car and unicorn. If Denotation applies to both Sets and Classes, then we can say car and unicorn Denote in the same way but car also Denotes actual Objects (i.e. it also Denotes extensionally). Once one allows that extension is subordinate to intension (i.e. that our ability to list Objects is secondary to our ability to create Items to be listed) one can also offer an extension of a kind to unicorn either through interpreting the intensional definition as implying extension 'of a sort' (i.e. if having properties entails existence then unicorns exist, albeit in some secondary manner) or by the distinction between primary and secondary extension(1). By either method we capture the notion that lexemes supposedly lacking in Denotation are constructions analogous to, but not extensionally

---

(1) Goodman (1969) elaborates this latter distinction.

equivalent to, lexemes Denoting actual Objects. To put it more crudely, Objects are more real than fictions, but both are creations(1).

An interesting corollary of this would seem to be that the Denotation of a fiction tends to remain constant whereas that of entities usually changes. The difference arises from the nature of individual acts of Reference. If I wish to Refer to an aspect of an actual encountered situation I will probably choose a token of a lexeme whose intensional Denotation includes properties I recognise in that aspect of the situation I wish to Refer to. As that situation, being novel and thus unlisted in the extensional definition, will now become a member of the Set of Items Denoted, the extensional Denotation is extended. If, furthermore, the situation possesses properties additional to those listed in the intensional definition, it may well be that the intensional Denotation will also be expanded by those additional properties (particularly if those properties are confirmed in other future acts of Reference). Thus the lexeme's Denotation alters.

However there is no possibility of Referring to a fiction by using a lexeme with appropriate Denotational extension. The appropriate lexeme will be selected by the Class of properties it Denotes. As a particular fiction is 'defined' as only containing those properties, no new properties will be added. There can be no

---

(1) In fact the distinction is not even as clear as this might suggest, for detailed examination of the reality of Objects and the fictitiousness of fictions would almost certainly suggest that there are degrees of both and, furthermore, that both vary from subculture to subculture, even from individual to individual as a function of knowledge amd belief. See Berger and Luckmann (1971) and Ford (1975).

new situations to be Referred to by fictions (or rather, by tokens of lexemes Denoting fictitious entities) as the Entity only exists by virtue of its traditional typification. An interesting implication would therefore seem to be, though of course it does not follow necessarily from the above discussion, that the less variation there is in a corpus containing a particular lexeme, the more fictitious its Denotatum. As we shall see in the main body of this study, in many respects this seems true of fairy.

Of course this conclusion could hardly be tested, as other factors enter into the process of lexical change. Indeed this judgement seems counter-intuitive, for we believe the things we encounter in normal situations to be unchanging. However the fact that any new experience containing a car, a cow, a table etc. is likely to resemble all previous experiences of those Objects more than it will differ from them, does not alter the fact that, over centuries, not only do extensional but also intensional definitions of real Items alter as those Items alter. It would be necessary today to include in an intensional definition of table the properties [legless, glass, stainless steel, formica, wipe-clean] which would not have been included in the Denotata five hundred years ago.

Be that as it may, there is one further problem with the notion of Denotation which bears directly on the problem of supernatural names. This is the nature of the connection between Denotation and Reference. For no speaker ever Denotes an Entity; he/she Refers by using a token of a lexeme which Denotes a Group containing that Entity. Although this is adequate as a linguistic description, it is not a description of what an individual actually does in speaking. Presumably what a speaker does in Referring is to recognise an Entity

in the current situation as similar to an Entity or Entities he has previously identified and Referred to (or heard Referred to). Thus we must make a distinction between the Denotation of a lexeme across the language and its Denotation for an individual. The full Denotation of a word in the language may be a Group of Entities [a,b,c,d]. However it may well be that an individual speaker has only encountered situations in which the word is used to Refer to a, b and c; whereas another individual has encountered only b, c and d. Consequently those individuals know different Denotations. Thus it may be that no individuals know the full Denotation of the lexeme and to that extent the 'full Denotation' is an artificial construction of the linguist) and furthermore no two speakers may know perfectly identical Denotations. For example a lexeme L Denoting [a,b,c,d,e] may be used as follows:

Speaker V Refers to [a,b,c]

Speaker W Refers to [b,c,d]

Speaker X Refers to [c,d,e]

Speaker Y Refers to [d,e,a]

Speaker Z Refers to [e,a,b]

Each of the speakers V, W, X, Y and Z possesses different notions of the Denotation of L, no speaker knows the 'full Denotation', yet all Entities are Referred to equally, and the distribution of Entities is equal across usage. Furthermore all speakers will be able to use the word meaningfully to each other, because no speaker knows a Denotation which does not include Entities included in the Denotation known to another.

If such a situation obtains in real language there is some

overlap between Associative meaning and Denotational meaning. For example, from the point of view of Z, Y's understanding of lexeme L involves two Denoted Entities [e,a] and one Associative, idiosyncratic Entity [d]. Thus the 'full Denotation' of L is also made up entirely of Associative features, all the Entities a, b, c, d and e being regarded as idiosyncratic from at least one point of view.

It may be, therefore, that the distinction between Emotive meaning and Denotative meaning is artificial and that a term such as psychological meaning (1) would be more useful in this respect. If analysis reveals certain components of meaning which, though frequently found, are by no means universal for a given lexeme it seems that it would be meaningless to call these either Associative or Denotational, for different points of view will characterise them differently. In general we could say that a given meaningful element may be Associative from a psychological point of view and Denotative from a philosophical point of view. The problems of such a description are avoided to a large extent by the use of Cluster definitions as described later in this section (2).

Admittedly the above example is artificial and somewhat extreme. It is, however, much simpler than any example found in normal language. For in natural languages it would be necessary not only to distinguish between Denotation for the whole language community, and Denotation for individuals, but also the Denotation known to sub-cultural groups, groups within the larger community. Thus although it might be possible to maintain that if an individual's Denotation of L differs from the 'full Denotation',

---

(1) The term belongs to Szalay and Deese (1978).
(2) See p. 69.

his knowledge is only imperfect knowledge of the language, à la Chomsky, it would be counter-intuitive to claim that a fully-functioning Denotation for a sub-cultural group was an imperfect knowledge of the full Denotation. That this is so can be seen by the fact that a 'full Denotation', i.e. the Set of all the Groups of Denotation within the language, may well include contradictory Items. If, for example, the intensive Denotation of music for one Group was [sound, loud, repetitive, electronic] and for another [sound, quiet, variegated, acoustic] the full Denotation of music for the language would be almost meaningless, being nearly contradictory: [sound, loud, quiet, repetitive, variegated, electronic, acoustic].

These complexities are important in discussion of supernatural names because it is unlikely that a lexeme such as fairy has a single 'full Denotation' across the language. Any definition of the word would have to include an indication of subcultural difference such as "believed by some..." or "often thought of as...".

It is probable, therefore, that intensional Denotation will vary across a language community. Consequently a more useful notion than Class, Set or Group is the Cluster(1). This term is used here to mean a Group of Items which are believed by a user to relate to one another and whose organised relation is Denoted by a lexeme. The same lexeme may be used by different sub-cultural groups to Denote different Clusters, although some of the members of each Cluster may be similar or identical. Furthermore within each Cluster there is a certain focus upon Items which are felt to be more significant or more important

---

(1) See Gasking (1960); Cooper (1972).

in its Organisation, (i.e. some Items within a Cluster are more likely to identify a situation as a potential Referent for that word[1] than others).

A Cluster thus treats some properties as more relevant to determining its utterance than others (and, of course, different Groups may employ different foci). Furthermore Clusters permit a kind of definition which neither intensional or extensional Denotation allow, namely a 'sufficiency definition'. For intensional Denotation an Item may be Referred to by a token of the lexeme if the Item contains all the properties which define the Class. For extensional Denotation, an Object may be Referred to by a token of the lexeme if the Object is one of the members of the Set. In other words an Entity either is or is not Denoted by the lexeme, and consequently an utterance of a token of the lexeme will have a truth value[2]. However in a sufficiency definition an Item may be Referred to by a token of the lexeme if the Item merely contains sufficient of the properties which define the Class. Of a certain Set of properties [a, b, c, d, e] the Item need not necessarily have a or b or c or d or e, but it must have a sufficient number of those properties. If we arbitrarily regard three as a sufficient number the Item need only have [a, b, c] or [b, c, d] etc. In other words the notion of a Cluster allows for the fact

---

(1) The terminology is kept loose here in order not to lose sight of the central point. A similar notion is that of dominance used by Szalay and Deese (1978). They cite other similar notions such as salience, centrality and ordinary hierarchy, p. 21.

(2)The notions of intensional and extensional Denotation have largely been developed by philosophers interested in truth-value semantics.

that across a language different speakers may know different Denotations and also may employ slightly different criteria on each occasion of utterance, and thus allows for the problem discussed above of the lack of full Denotation for some lexemes in some uses.

If we use the notion of a Cluster, we may be able to offer definitions of supernatural names which are not Sets or Classes, but open-ended lists of characteristics from which various combinations may be selected. If we restrict ourselves purely to the linguistic point of view, we can offer a Cluster Denotation for each supernatural name (providing, of course, analysis reveals such a Cluster); if we extend the viewpoint somewhat, we can regard the Cluster as a typification, i.e. a Group of features which actually occur in reality but which are traditionally associated by a principle of organisation, and perhaps by a principle of focussing, in different sub-cultural Groups. From any such typification only a limited number of features (Items) need be selected by circumstance to prompt Reference, but the features, their number and the Reference made may vary from speaker to speaker, group to group and situation to situation. It would be possible to treat folk motifs(1) as features of this nature, and regard any folk narrrative as suggesting different Denotations by the Clusters of motifs it relates, and thus, with respect to the supernatural certain tales may be classifiable in respect of the typification of the supernatural they encode.

But, of course, any text can be regarded in the same light, as a selection of features which contribute to a particular Denotation.

---

(1) See Thompson (1955-8).

This returns us to the pseudo-extensional explanations of meaningfulness for 'denotationless' lexemes. The Cluster concept, because it involves only partial listing of features is a more useful approach to such lexemes than any of the three alternatives suggested above. For whilst it is true that in the case of lexemes such as unicorn it seems possible to list an intensional Class defined by [white, horse, horn etc.], for many other supernatural names this would be impossible. It would be difficult to list an exclusive Class for goblin or pooka for example. However it is possible to mark partial and overlapping lists by examining the features of the Contexts of such words' occurrence. Whilst it may not be true that any lexeme, token, feature or Item is invariably associated with fairy (for example) it may well be true that there are principles of focus, by which some lexemes, tokens, features or Items are more often associated than others; and there may well be some principles of organisation by which if certain Groups of lexemes, tokens, features or Items collocate, fairy is invariably the Denoting lexeme. Consequently in order to determine what the Denotation of a supernatural name is, if it has one, it is necessary to establish what those Clusters could be.

2.4 Sense

One influential theory of meaning[1] is based on the dual notions of extensional Denotation and Sense relations. Essentially the theory holds that meaning is derived from the Denotational relation of some words to the real world, together with the Sense relations which hold between those words and words which lack extensional Denotation. It was argued above (section 2.3.3) that words lacking extension do not necessarily lack Denotation. However it is possible to maintain that what we know of the world is expressed by extensional Denotation, and lexemes supposedly having intensional Denotation only possess it by virtue of their Sense relations to extensionally Denotative lexemes. If one abandons the notion that Clusters in some sense reflect the Items a speaker actually selects, one can still offer a Cluster-type description of a lexeme based on the Sense relations between it and other lexemes. For example, we might abandon a Cluster definition of book which claims that if sufficient of the properties [made-of-paper, written on, bound, legible, titled] were evident we would call an Item a book, in favour of a definition which held that the lexeme book acquired its distinctive meaning from its relations to such lexemes as paper, writing, leather, title, reading, etc. Presuming that those lexemes have extensional Denotation, the latter theory would describe book as a lexeme uniting the Sense of paper, writing, leather, title etc.

Clearly there are lexemes whose meaning derives largely from the relational qualities they express.

---

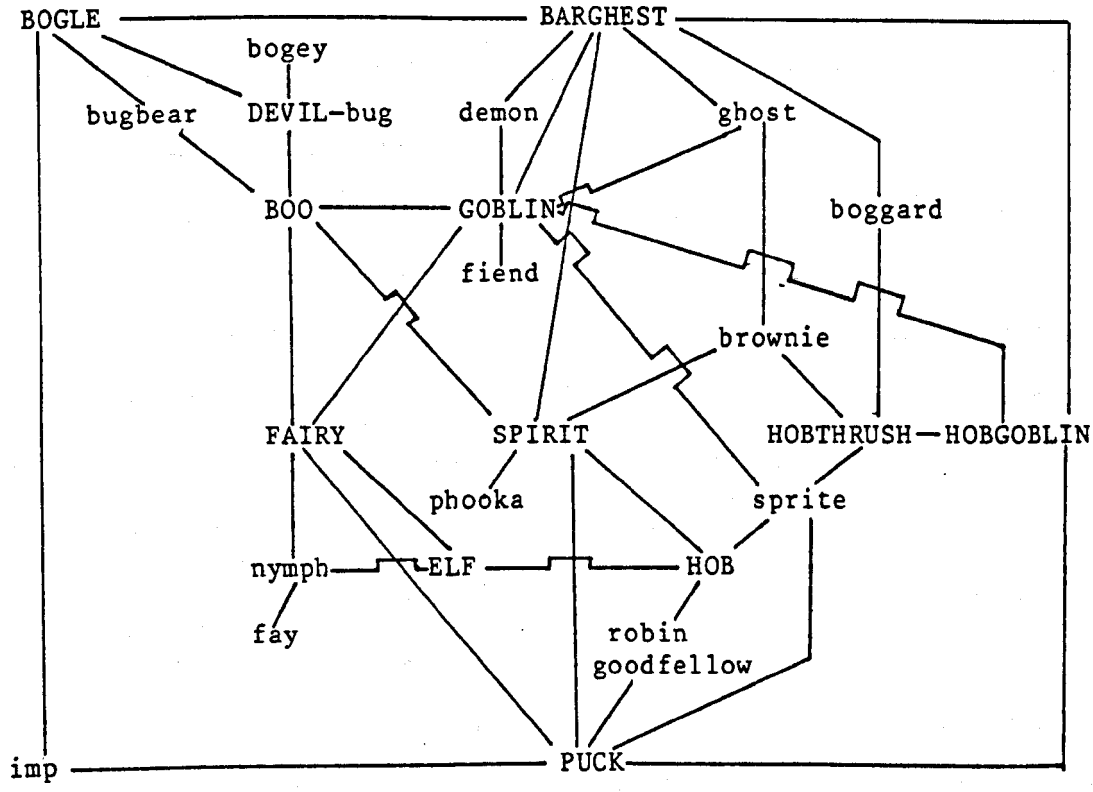
(1) See for example Lyons (1977a) pp. 210-211.

Child for example possesses a Sense-relation with father and it seems one could point to no actual physical feature in which that relation could be located. Cat, dog, mouse are all related in Sense, and related to the lexeme animal, though there is no sense in which the fact that a cat is an animal entails there being an animal other than the cat. What is really in question here, therefore, is whether Sense-relations can be expressions of properties (the cat being an animal, the father being a parent) or only of purely lexical relations (we call all cats, dogs and mice animals because it conveniently groups them but does not represent anything inherent in or common to cats, dogs and mice). In view of the decision to accept verbal and mental meaning as equivalent (section 2.3.1) this question could probably be ignored in this study. However one can demonstrate that simply noting Sense relations which hold between supernatural names does not in itself necessarily tell us anything about the meaning of any of those names. Diagram 2.4.a for example, shows the relations of identity which were said to hold between some supernatural names in a small corpus of texts[1]. There are certainly no clear statements of meaning to be derived from this diagram and, though one might believe that a larger corpus would produce clearer sets of relations, it seems to be the case that the reverse is true. If one adds to this diagram an indication of the frequency such a relation is mentioned, some such

---

(1) The diagram was derived from a collection of forty texts which included a supernatural name. If a text recorded one name as equivalent to another, e.g. "Goblins are fairies", or a member of a set which was also supernatural, e.g. "A goblin is a kind of fairy" the relation was recorded as an identity relation on the diagram. Names in capitals were the key-words by which the texts were selected, those in lower case are incidental supernatural names occurring in the same texts. The diagram incidentally supports the earlier point, that there is a great deal of overlapping and confusion in use of supernatural names. See Chapter 1.

Diagram 2.4.a Statements of Identity of Supernatural Names



judgements can be made, but the addition of the notion of frequency shifts the description away from the 'pure' notion of stating Sense-relations towards the notion of focussing, i.e. towards the concept of Clusters.

Furthermore it would seem difficult to claim that the relation between father and child or cat and animal is of the same order as that between table and wood, or cat and mewing. It may be true that the former have no real equivalent, the relations may not be properties of the Items Denoted, but in the latter it would surely be false to say that we understand the lexeme table because we understand the lexeme wood and its lexical relation to table. Surely the relation between the lexemes is understood because we understand the relation between the Entities they Denote, not the other way around.

So, at best, Sense relations are only partly independent of actual relations, and it may well be that in order to say anything useful about the Sense-relations between any two lexemes appeal must be made to a Denotatum of some kind. We must accept a picture close to Quine's[1], in which some lexemes (sentences for Quine) are attached to the world, as it were[2], whilst others are attached to those primary lexemes by Sense relations, more remote from the world, which can only be understood by the tracing of the interlocking links back to the real world. Thus in order to describe Sense relations which supernatural names hold one must ultimately be able to attach them to actual situations or possible phenomena in order to understand the Denotata, the Clusters, which such names depend upon.

---

(1) Quine (1960)
(2) See Applicability, section 2.2.1

2.5 Conclusion

It will be seen that all the foregoing sections present arguments which suggest that a systemisation of cotexts across a corpus is sufficient to reveal most of the important aspects of lexemic meaning (of a supernatural name at least). This possibility follows from accepting as a metalanguage all words in the object language other than the object-word(s). Rather than offer a structural description of underlying forms (which says nothing of meaning, though it may reveal much of structure) or a statistical display (which says nothing of meaning, though it reveals much about frequency) the use of ordinary language as a metalanguage relies on intuitive understanding of native language to express 'meanings' and, though the methods and results outlined below make use of structural and statistical descriptions to some extent, the offering of extensional definitions is intended to convey the semantic features detected. For most local semantic investigations it is necessary only to establish a few axioms and otherwise rely for the remainder of the task of classification and definition on Items drawn from the object language itself, on the assumption that the meaning of those Items is known. This is essentially the method of conventional dictionary definition. For each definition certain other Items in the object language are treated as basic. In other words each dictionary selects a different metalanguage for the description of the Items in the Object language. Thus for these purposes object language and metalanguage are simply terms used to Denote different attitudes to the words involved, the first indicating the assumption that the meaning is unknown, the second the assumption that the meaning is known.

Consequently the assumptions made for the discussion of supernatural names are twofold. Firstly it is assumed that words Denoting or used to Refer to the supernatural can be identified, but their meanings not understood, and secondly it is assumed that the meanings of all other words can be understood. The object language is therefore a Set of lexical items Denoting the supernatural, and the Metalanguage, for this study, all words in English which do not Denote the supernatural.

It would seem that accepting Ayer's statement of the meaninglessness of 'metaphysical' statements entails such an attitude as this for if supernatural names have no actual sensory equivalents, then both the ordinary speaker and the linguist are dependent on Contextual or Cotextual information for their definition of such a name, whether we treat the Cotext as yielding clues about the types of situations which promote Emotive meaning, statements of Stylistic distribution, clues to notions of possible Referents, descriptions of the properties which are brought together (in any of several possible ways) to create Denotata or a list of lexemes whose Sense relations contribute to the notion of the name.

The central problem then becomes one of establishing the specifications for applicable Context, together with the need to establish a methodology which reveals the elements which may be significant (in both senses). It would seem that the term Context can only be useful as a vague concept, and that for different purposes it is necessary to specify Context in different ways (or, from a different point of view, to examine different kinds of Context). Furthermore because any systematic reordering of words in a corpus necessarily breaks down the original structure of which they were

part, particularly the syntactic structure, certain irregulariites necessarily would be included in analysis. For example it is necessary to distinguish homographs which are not homophones. Again, if structures such as "not a man" are split into the lexical components not and man it is possible to lose sight of the negation and treat man as a predicate (or whatever) of the object-word. Consequently it was decided to apply several different analytical approaches in the hope that (i) they would together overlap in such a way that different criteria for Cotext would reinforce each other to give an overall notion of the term, (ii) they would contain different classes of error if errors occurred by virtue of the method. Thus it was hoped that the correct judgements offered by each analysis would reinforce each other and the error-based judgements be correspondingly weakened. The actual methods employed are described in Chapter 3. Essentially they seek to establish a kind of Cotext in each case which can yield significant observations about the object-word without incorporating an inherent semantic bias(1). The three kinds of neutral relation postulated were (i) logical relations, (ii) relations of proximity and (iii) relations of phonological affinity. In addition each text was given a broad stylistic classification in the hope that systematic distributions within each of those relations could be noted.

---

(1) Such bias might result, for example, from examining only one syntactic category that collocated with fairy, or from regarding fairy itself as a word exclusively of one syntactic category.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have outlined the nature of the semantic problems to be explored and established a theoretical groundwork and associated terminology for handling those problems at Levels (1) and (2). Essentially the argument has been that a supernatural name acquires meaning and readers/hearers understand such a name's meaning, by virtue of the Cotext of that name in actual texts. It was held that for a name whose meaning is unknown in a text Emotive meaning may be so idiosyncratic that the only clues to its value for a particular name will lie in the words it collocates with; Stylistic meaning does not inhere in individual lexemes but in collocating Groups of lexemes; Denotation and Reference are constructed, learned and known (in default of Referents in the situation of use) by inference from known meanings in the surrounding Cotext; Sense relations are inter-lexemic relations which may be foregrounded(1) by selection in an actual text.

Such a theoretical frame is obviously constructed with a view to the analysis of texts isolated from their situations of use, i.e. to the exploration of level(3). It remains therefore to describe the actual procedure of collecting those texts as examples of fairy, and

---

(1) Foregrounding is a term from Prague School linguistics signifying calling attention to a particular piece or aspect of a text by virtue of its difference from the background of the remainder of the text.

how the theoretical approach was manifested as a procedure in accord with it in order to describe the particularities of the meaning of fairy. This chapter firstly details the method whereby data were collected, then describes two successive analyses of the data. The preliminary analysis aimed to identify important areas of meaning for further investigation through a method necessarily partly dependent on intuition. The main analysis sought to achieve aims (A) and (B) by a fuller and more formal analysis. The chapter concludes with a sketch of two additional analyses and an outline of how the results of the analyses may be evaluated. The following chapters then explore the intricate networks revealed by the analyses in respect of the five aspects of meaning described in Chapter 2 and in accord with the aims and questions proposed in Chapter 1.

3.2 Collection

The search for occurrences of *fairy* in the period 1300-1829, undertaken over a period of eight months, provided a corpus of 1,964 occurrences in a total of 468 texts[1]. Text here means an extracted body of discourse, which may be an entire work or only a portion of it and is taken to contain all words of Cotextual relevance for each occurrence of *fairy* within it. A particular local Cotext which contains only one token of the object-word *fairy* is a *quote*, each mention of *fairy* being an *occurrence* .

The object of study was thus defined extensionally as all items in this corpus[2], and the corpus was taken to be representative of the period. Although all the collected texts were within the period, in many cases there were problems in obtaining precise dates for each, particularly the early texts. For Middle English texts it was often difficult to obtain even an approximate date and the problem was often complicated by the existence of manuscript variants which were themselves of uncertain date. In some cases it was impossible to assign exact dates to the variants and thus impossible to determine an order of precedence amongst them. Indeed the entire chronology of texts taken from the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is impossible to date precisely and even at the end of the period it is sometimes difficult to determine the date at which a text was written (as distinct from the date of its publication).

Thus in cases where there has been any doubt, and this is roughly one third of the collection, I have had recourse to detailed accounts

---

(1) For a note on sources of collection see note (1) page 13.
(2) A full specification of the corpus can be found in Appendix 1.

of the works' dating and attempted to select, whenever possible, the date most generally accepted by recent scholarship. In cases where two or more dates are possible, or the dating can be no more precise than, say, a decade, the latest date in each case has been selected for the purposes of the chronology. It seemed preferable to use the latest rather than, say, the earliest possible date as one can then be reasonably certain, in talking of the semantic development of the word, that a particular usage or semantic element had occurred by that date, even if its first occurrence was substantially earlier. Certainly in many cases the first occurrence would probably be oral rather than written, so that even with very accurate textual dating, we can never know precisely how long a particular usage or element had been current in the language. In some cases, particularly for material pre-1500 the manuscript date was used rather than the suggested date of composition as the former date can more often be stated with a reasonable degree of precision and the latter is frequently purely conjectural(1).

Whenever possible each occurrence was dated separately rather than, for example, all a poet's works being grouped under their date of collected publication. Where it has not been possible to obtain individual dates (and investigation of some of the possibilities has necessarily been limited because it often entails detailed biographical and bibliographical research) occurrences have been dated by the first known date of publication. In the case of texts

---

(1) For these early works either the most authoritative edition available was used, which was generally that of the Early English Text Society, or the manuscript dating found in Guddat-Figge (1976) which contains the estimates most recently made for most of the manuscripts in which the word fairy occurs.

published posthumously the date of death of the author was taken as the terminal date rather than that of the posthumous publication.

In only a few cases were manuscript originals consulted as reliable facsimiles are available for most of the texts in the collection. For many of the occurrences post-1600 it was possible to consult and copy first editions. However in some cases it has not been possible to obtain a first edition or to find an edition which is as scholarly as might be wished. If for these reasons the text obtained seemed particularly uncertain or, for example, impossible to date it has been excluded from the corpus although it may have been used as supportive material if it was useful to do so. In those cases in which a text has been included in the citation and, if it is used in the body of the study, a note has been included to the same effect.

Having determined that identification of the meaning of fairy may be possible within the corpus by a formal examination of the Cotexts, it became obvious that several existing semantic methods would in the immediate instance be inapplicable, e.g. that which employs what is known as a semantic differential [1] or the various kinds of componential analysis[2]. By examining various approaches and experimenting with their application to the material it was found that no existing semantic method was developed enough to be useful in this exercise. I had therefore to devise my own method which meant, in effect, examining and finding solutions to several of the problems

---

(1) For this technique of analysis see Osgood (1967). It is inapplicable here because it depends on the subjective responses of informants to a graded test which obviously cannot be applied diachronically. It would also yield only quantification of Associative rather than Denotative meaning. See Leech (1975) pp.20-22.
(2) For discussions of and variations on componential analysis see: Bierwisch (1970); Leech (1975) pp.94-125; Palmer (1976) pp. 85-91; Lyons (1977a) pp. 317-335.

which much more experienced semanticists have as yet been unable to solve. To the extent that I have come against the same barriers my method has been inadequate. In some cases partial solutions were found which are adequate for the limited purposes of this study. In others an attempt was made to assimilate or integrate different ideas from different sources. However in general there are difficulties about the method which could perhaps be expanded to form a critique both of results and conclusions. Where I have been unable to solve or avoid them I have tried to point out the various objections that may be made in order to indicate my awareness of them, but it has been necessary to ignore some of these difficulties (and make, therefore, intuitive decisions which may appear arbitrary) in order that a method of some rigour could be created. If I had sought a method free of all such difficulties I would still be searching. In order to compensate for any bias that might creep into the study as a result of such problems it was decided to employ at least two independent methods, and integrate the results arrived at into one total description. This, in accord with aim (A), allows us to regard meaning as the sum of all the valid analytical statements that can be made about the use and Cotext of the object-word. It was intended that the different approaches would reinforce each other where valid observations resulted and counteract any conclusions based on error. It was also intended that the Cotextual relations examined would themselves be semantically neutral, i.e. should possess no inherent semantic bias, and should together cover all relations that might be called collocation. Thus three kinds of relation were postulated which seemed semantically neutral in themselves yet possessed possible semantic relations within individual texts.

These were: (i) logical relation

(ii) relations of proximity

(iii) relations of phonemic/graphemic affinity

These three types of relation led to the analyses described in sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 respectively.

In addition it was originally proposed to examine collocation by virtue of "syntactic relations" but this was clearly an error since different kinds of syntactic relation embody different meanings. The mere fact of there being a syntactic relationship of some kind between fairy and another word, aside from being impossibly difficult to specify without strict adherence to a single grammatical model, often appears to have no semantic significance beyond that encoded in the actual syntax. It would be necessary therefore to possess a complete description of the different relations between syntax and semantics in order to attempt this approach, a description which does not yet exist and which is beyond the purpose of this study(1).

Thus only three semantically neutral approaches were used. By logical relation is meant a relation between the object-word fairy and another word in each text such that one necessarily depended upon the other. By relation of proximity is meant a relation between the object-word and every word in each text within a certain distance. By phonemic/graphemic affinity is meant a relation between the

---

(1) The most successful attempts at unifying semantics and syntax seem to have been made as developments of transformational generative grammar. However there are fundamental differences between the major approaches of generative semantics and standard theory which have developed from early TG, in particular whether the semantic component of the grammar is independent of or incorporated in the syntactic component. Until such questions are resolved, there can be no clear theoretical basis for such a complete description as this investigation would require. See Fodor (1977).

object-word and any other words in a particular text such that both are similar in form. As will become clear these approaches as initially formulated were altered in the course of the analyses as problems modified intent. From the outset however this formulation contained one concealed hypothesis, namely that a word can only yield semantic information about the object-word if it is also in some other relationship with it. Although this would seem a reasonable hypothesis, particularly as the notion of proximity can incorporate every relation we may call collocation (and thus potentially every word in a text), it is possible that words in a text possess significant semantic relations with each other which are not reflected in other relations. These however would only be recognisable to a reader (as opposed to an analyst) if they formed Associative links with which the reader was familiar or were part of the Sense relations of a language. As such they would not necessarily form any systematic structure in a text except for a native speaker aware of such structures outside the text.

The present analysis has two safeguards which should incorporate, if not reveal, such relations. Firstly the assumption under which English as intuitively understood by the analyst, being a native speaker, is regarded as the metalanguage allows the analyst to indicate any such relations of which he is aware. He may do so using only a degree of formalisation which is appropriate to his particular purpose, such that he need only appeal to the intuition of others if the relation seems obvious. As will become clear in subsequent chapters, this becomes necessary where aim (A) conflicts with aim (B), i.e. where rigour entails formal description, exclusion of important

relations may result. Secondly if the specification of proximity is sufficiently broad it should incorporate most words with 'hidden' relations, and these may subsequently be identified within the larger analysis.

3.3 Preliminary Analysis

The first analysis of the data was an examination of the logical relation between fairy and another element (word or phrase) in the Cotext. It was the first analysis conducted because it enabled a reasonably precise specification of Cotext and thus reduced one major problem of collocational analysis namely determining the amount of Cotext which is relevant Cotext; because also it would yield only about two thousand pieces of information, thus an amount amenable to exploration by one analyst in a relatively short period, and also could provide an indication of the number of such pieces which might be required to support a particular semantic description; because even if it showed no substantially significant semantic systems itself, it should indicate those areas which a wider analysis should concentrate upon; and because it would provide a testing ground for balancing formal and intuitive description. It was recognised therefore that the analysis might fail with regard to aims (A) and (B), but that even so it could be subsumed in subsequent analyses, and that overall failure would not prevent subsequent reinforcing judgements being successful as described in 3.2, nor the kind of tests described above.

The proposed logical relation may be expressed by the formula N→P or P→N, where → means "is followed by", either N or P is fairy and the remaining element is that identified as logically related to fairy. The rules of the relation can be written as follows:

1) N is an expression upon which another expression, called P, depends.
2) P is an expression dependent on N.
3) Dependency is taken to mean: a relationship between two expressions necessary to the occurrence of the dependent expression.
4) Although the meaning of N may be undiscoverable, or N may

be inherently meaningless, N is taken to possess a meaning in terms of P.

5) The sign → indicates the order of occurrence of the expressions N and P in a text.

The procedure involved is similar to immediate constituent analysis(1). By dividing a sentence into units which depend on one another it was hoped to identify the expression on which fairy was immediately dependent in each case, or the expression immediately dependent on fairy. It was proposed that there was a logical priority between the two expressions such that N could exist in that Cotext independently of P, but P could not exist in that Cotext independently of N. Hence N was logically prior to P in each case, the presence of P being governed by the presence of N, but the presence of N being governed by other factors. Thus in a wider Context N would itself be dependent on another unit, which could be called M (but this might not be a linguistic unit) and one could propose a series of receding dependencies as the relevant Context was expanded.

However the problems of determining the independent unit multiply exponentially with each recessive stage. Even at the relatively simple level of N and P there were some problems. Fortunately however by far the majority of occurrences of fairy were of a type amenable to immediate constituent analysis, consisting of subject and predicate, or noun and modifier.

---

(1) Immediate constituent analysis involves the division of sentences into a hierarchy of grammatical units to yield a phrase structure and is thus analogous to the traditional grammatical pastime of parsing. The most well-known example is probably Chomsky (1957), although this was not strictly a work of analysis. The technique was introduced by Bloomfield (1935). For a brief survey of the attractions and disadvantages of the method see Crystal (1976) pp. 203-208.

In cases where fairy could be N or P it was always taken to be N, i.e. independent. Also in some cases a particular N had twoequivalent expressions dependent on it, e.g. P→N→P. In such cases where no judgement could be made between them both dependent expressions were recorded as equally relevant. In a few examples it was difficult to decide which component was N and which P. The difficulty of decision does not invalidate the relation of dependency between them. In such cases fairy was always taken to be N.

In order to obtain an idea of the kind of function N and P represent one can read N as 'name' and P as 'predicate'. This reading frequently, but not invariably, corresponds to the traditional interpretation of the relation between the words isolated, N being frequently a noun and P an adjective. However there is no stipulation within the analysis that this should be the case. The categories N and P are somewhat wider, and certainly more ambiguous, than any reasonable definition of noun, adjective, name or predicate. This generality is particularly useful in analysis of fairy, especially in its earliest occurrences, as there are several instances of use in which the word seems to act in no clear grammatical capacity, in the manner of what might be called an 'intensifier', as the phrase 'cats and dogs' in "It's raining cats and dogs". For example the following passage by Miss Mitford (1828/01/010 and 011).

> What a piece of fairy land! The tall elms overhead just bursting into tender vivid leaf, with here and there a hoary oak or a silver-barked beech, every twig swelling with the brown buds, and yet not quite stripped of the tawny foliage of autumn; tall hollies and hawthorn beneath, with their crisp brilliant leaves mixed with the white blossoms of the sloe, and woven together with garlands of woodbines and wild-briers; - what a fairy land!

The general procedure for the whole collection was thus:

1) For each occurrence of fairy identify an expression N-P or P-N such that either N or P is fairy.

2) Record all N - fairy.

3) Record all P - fairy.

4) For all N - fairy record P.

5) For all P - fairy record N.

Having listed all N and P for the collection the data was then subjected to various classifications as detailed below. Because of the presumed logical relation between N and P and because, in most cases, P was adjacent to N, it may be possible to assert some form of priority for the conclusions derived from this analysis. Accordingly some of the final conclusions may be affected by this implication of priority.

The procedure can be objected to on several grounds. For example, intuition necessarily played a large part in assigning the value N or P to some tokens of fairy, and in determining the units of immediate dependence, particularly where fairy was embedded in a particularly complex syntactic structure. It could thus be said that the relations detected are not logical but simply expressions of the disposition of my intuition. Conversely it is difficult to see how any semantic study does not rely on intuitive grammatical knowledge at some level of analysis(1), but whilst my interpretations remain implicit there is always the theoretical possibility that I have misunderstood or misinterpreted any or all of those structures.

---

(1) It is arguable that no semantic analysis can be free of intuition unless it is prescriptive, i.e. excludes from the language those utterances not accomodated by its system - see Lyons (1977b) pp. 384-5.

This method of analysis produced a number of examples each of which recorded a phrase in which fairy was replaced by N or P, e.g.

1) He gave his horse to the fairy king (quote).

2) the fairy king (abstract).

3) the → P → king (card entry).

These examples were arranged chronologically. Then all the tokens taken as form words rather than function words, representative of types of diachronic lexemes, were listed under a citation form for that d-lexeme. By diachronic lexeme is meant a lexeme which has a diachronic dimension. This involves the premise that between any two synchronic states of a lexeme there is some semantic relationship, i.e. the diachronic lexeme involves a semantic continuum from which any lexicological work extracts a discrete segment (i.e. a synchronic lexeme). This concept is the basis of all etymology and as such is an essential one, but it may involve severe difficulties. In fact the assumption that the lexeme child in 1300 has a meaning sufficiently closely related to that of the lexeme child in 1800 may be little more than a terminological convenience, a way of grouping similar uses together.

On the principle that one occurrence of a lexeme may be idiosyncratic, and two coincidental, all lexemes which occurred three or more times were listed, categorised according to frequency, and charted on a graph against time to discover any pattern of

development, concentration etc. Table 3.3.a is a list of the most frequently occurring d-lexemes.

TABLE 3.3.a

D-Lexeme	Total	1st Date	D-Lexeme	Total	1st Date	D-Lexeme	Total	1st Date
Land	58	1325	Trip	10	1596	Kind	5	1566
Queen	56	1330	Circle	9	1607	Light	5	1600
Has	54	1503	Knight	9	1325	Old	5	1620
Was	39	1330	Our	9	1598	Origin	5	1809
Are	35	1530	Form	8	1708	Realm	5	1530
Be	35	1330	Little	8	1611	Seem	5	1390
It	30	1330	Shall	8	1440	Those	5	1605
King	28	1330	Such	8	1390	Who	5	1530
Dance	27	1527	Them	8	1568	Train	5	1600
He	26	1350	Thou	8	1320	Can	4	1596
They	25	1400	Away	7	1330	Certain	4	1568
I	23	1390	Child	7	1598	Concern	4	1653
This	20	1390	Give	7	1505	Country	4	1400
Ring	19	1598	Lady	7	1410	Existence	4	1651
She	19	1350	Love	7	1605	Great	4	1607
Call	17	1500	Man	7	1500	Hall	4	1676
Do	17	1500	Dream	7	1769	Inhabit	4	1651
Is	16	1330	People	7	1530	Keep	4	1608
Come	15	1330	Play	7	1607	Lord	4	1530
That	15	1320	Belief	6	1320	Meet	4	1597
Elf	14	1567	Enter	6	1585	Money	4	1613
Tale	14	1691	Favour	6	1595	Mother	4	1596
Haunt	13	1593	Hear	6	1320	Name	4	1600
Make	13	1350	Know	6	1566	One	4	1500
Take	13	1390	Morgan	6	1400	Other	4	1500

(continued on p.94)

TABLE 3.3.a (cont.)

D-Lexeme	Total	1st Date	D-Lexeme	Total	1st Date	D-Lexeme	Total	1st Date
There	13	1330	Many	6	1330	Page	4	1627
You	13	1530	Prince	6	1596	Pinch	4	1591
Ground	12	1606	Round	6	1598	Put	4	1621
See	12	1570	Send	6	1420	Respect	4	1801
Song	12	1591	Use	6	1598	Skip	4	1595
We	12	1513	Which	6	1390	Speak	4	1704
All	11	1440	Work	6	1520	Spell	4	1718
Court	11	1548	Would	6	1580	Story	4	1685
Folk	11	1400	Being	5	1550	Talk	4	1605
Foot	11	1550	Bower	5	1567	Treasure	4	1606
Power	11	1530	Bring	5	1597	Woman	4	1500
Some	11	1460	City	5	1530	Wand	4	1792
Spirit	11	1500	Eyes	5	1350	Danger	4	1600
Thing	11	1410	Forest	5	1607	May	4	1530
Will	11	1595	Grace	5	1595	Should	4	1611
Hand	10	1500	Here	5	1609	Spright	4	1595
Say	10	1500	Hill	5	1567	Steal	4	1330

The full graph of lexemes against time is unfortunately too large to reproduce here and its reproduction is unnecessary for it yields relatively little information.

However a simplified version of the graph is included as Diagram 3.3.b. This shows the date of each occurrence of the twenty-five most frequent lexemes, i.e. those occurring eleven or more times. It records the dates of the first occurrence of each d-lexeme and the subsequent frequencies of occurrence for comparative purposes.

It can be seen, for example, that whilst most of these d-lexemes first occur before 1600, implying that the meaning(s) they represent have become associated with fairy by this date, different lexemes cluster together at different periods, suggesting that the importance of some meanings varies with time, and that at different times certain lexemes were more significant semantically than others. Comparing lexemes in this way however is relatively unprofitable for two reasons. In the first place most lexemes have relatively few occurrences in the corpus. Even the most frequent, land, occurred on average little more than once a decade. Secondly many lexemes seemed semantically related, and therefore a more satisfactory comparison ought to result from listing semantic elements encoded in the lexemes rather than simply listing the lexemes themselves.

Accordingly, the next stage was to group all the d-lexemes into categories of some kind. Several methods were attempted but no systematic method could be found which seemed even approximately to accord with intuitive classification. It was decided to propose a series of categories which seemed frequently to occur in the lexemes,

and to group under each category the lexemes which seemed to belong to that category. This procedure was, therefore, almost entirely intuitive. A series of test sentences for some categories was devised but as these amounted to no more than an elaboration of intuition and a somewhat inaccurate one at that, and as it had already been determined that all words which were not object words were comprehensible, it seemed best to adopt intuitive categories and record their members, so that any other observer could test his intuitions against my own. It may be the case that some lexemes have been omitted which other analysts might have included, but by attempting to be rigorous in exclusion it was hoped that the validity of the majority of inclusions would be acceptable.

This was probably the central stage in the analysis. The fact that only intuition seemed to provide adequate classes is probably significant, suggesting as it does that none but the most tightly constrained registers of ordinary language (as distinguished from the constructed languages of linguistic philosophy or the descriptions of ideal competence made by grammarians such as Chomsky) are solely and thoroughly systematic. It seems to be true that the larger the body of empirical evidence, the greater is the degree of variation and the number of exceptions which are encountered. This has a number of consequences. The most obvious is that the list of categories, summarised here as Table 3.3.c, collects lexemes which are related in different ways. For example although the majority, perhaps all, of the lexemes which are taken to include a semantic feature CREATURE

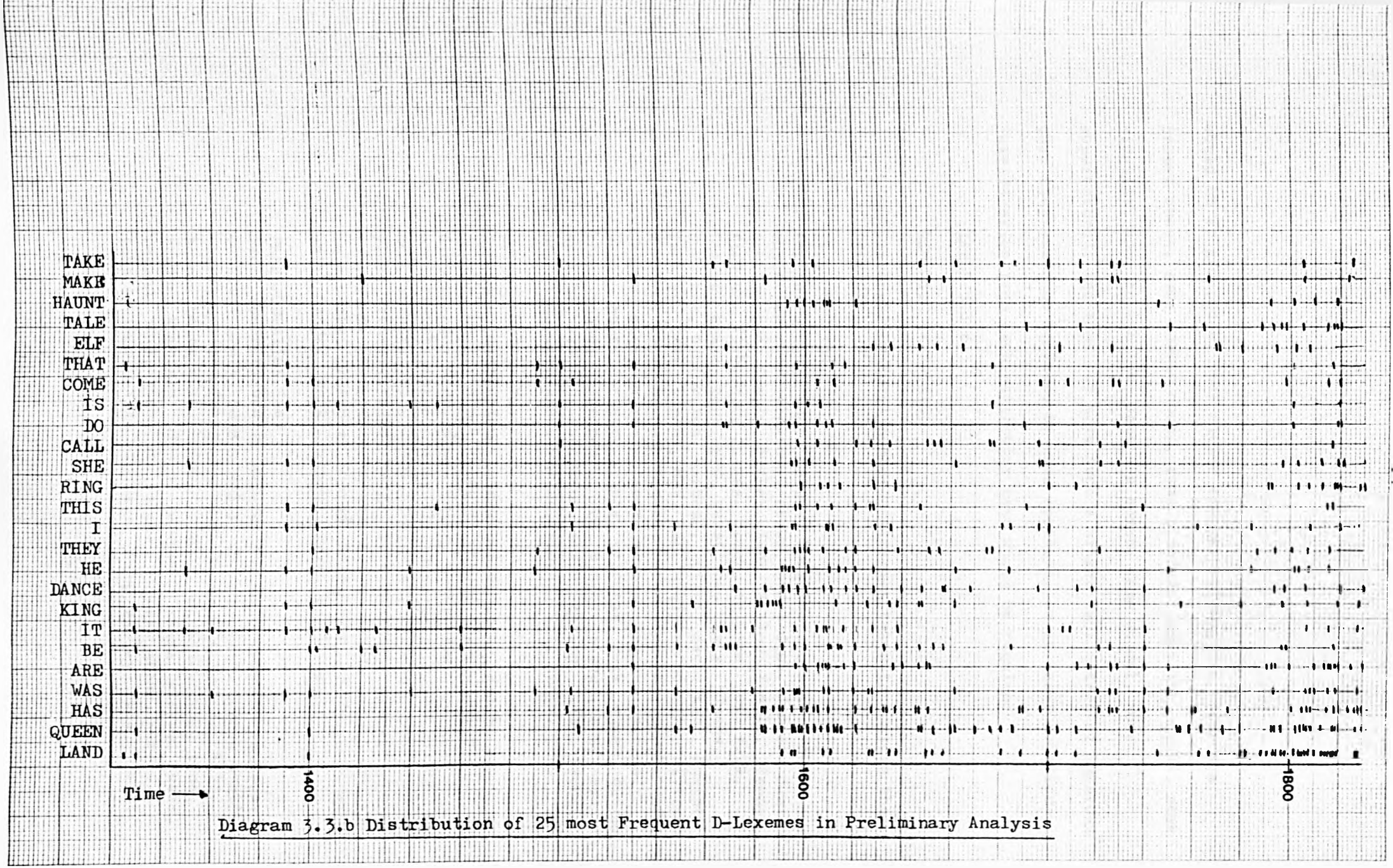


Diagram 3.3.b Distribution of 25 most Frequent D-Lexemes in Preliminary Analysis

would be so grouped by most native speakers of English, some are proper nouns, some common nouns, some pronouns; some are plural, some singular, some collective; some are human, some animal, some supernatural; and some may have such a slight implication of CREATURE that they would be excluded by some speakers, or at least detailed justification from each particular text would be required.

TABLE 3.3.c

SEMANTIC CATEGORIES

(Arranged by total number of lexemes taken to contain that category)

CREATURE (106)
Adders, Arthur, aunt, barons, body, boy, brother, champions, child, company, creature, crowd, crew, dame, damsel, dwarf, devils, elf, family, father, faun, fellow, female, ffendys, fiddler, fisherman, fishes, flock, felloun, foe, folk, friend, giant, gent, god, guest, he, hosts, humans, huntsmen, huntswomen, husband, infant, Jack, king, knight, lackeys, lady, lemans, Mab, man, Melissa, midwife, mistress, monarch, monk, Morgan, mortal, mother, nation, nymph, oaf, Oberon, page, partners, peer, people, Pegasus, person, peris, poets, priest, prince, princess, Puck, queen, quires, race, rogue, Shakespeare, she, sister, slaves, slut, spirit, spright, subject, successor, swain, throng, tribe, troop, us, virgin, voyager, whales, whores, wif, woman, you.

MOTION/ACTION (78)
Approach, bend, blow, bring, build, carry, catch, cause, charge, chase, come, conduct, convey, dance, depart, disport, do, draw, drop, enter, enterchange, exchang'd, exit, fetch, fight, flee, fly, get, give, glide, guide, go, hop, invade, join, lead, live, make, mix, nip, pace, pinch, play, proceed, raise, range, return, rally, remove, rove, run, send, shun, skip, seize, sport, steal, stoop, stretch, swim, take, transport, tread, trip, turn, twist, use, waft, walk, wander, work, wrought, wave, weave, went.

PLACE/LOCATION (54)
Bank, boudoir, bower, castle, chappell, church, cottage, country, court, dales, dairy, desart, dome, downs, dwell, earth, empire, forest, ground, grove, habitation, hall, haunt, here, hill, holms, inhabit, kingdom, lake, land, meadow, mountain, palace, pavement, place, plains, realm, region, rock, room, sea, shore, stream, stone, strond, temple, thorn, tomb, terrace, town, valley, wood, world.

UTTERANCE (47)
Address, anecdote, answer,ask, bless, chant, choral, call, command, confess, conversation, cry, decree, discourse, explain, fable, fiction, greet, insult, language, lore, lyric, legend, name, oyes, poet, prediction, prologue, promiss, query, question, quoth, relate, reply, request, rhyme, say, shout, speak, song, tale, talk, tongue, tell, written, word.

AURAL (40)
Address, answer, ask, bell, call, chant, choral, conversation, confess, cry, discourse, echo, explain, greet, hear, insult, language, listen, lore, lyric, mention, music, poets, query, question, quoth, rhyme, reply, request, shout, silent.

VISUAL(32)
Appear, apparition, bright, colour, dream, disappear, display, eyes, glimmer, glance, image, looks, light, moonlight, painting, perceive, radiance resemblance, see, seem, shining, shades, shadows, shapes, show, sighte, sparks, smart, twilight, vanishes, vigilance, vision.

NUMBER/QUANTIFICATION (27)
All, abundance, demi, dwarf, each, enough, every, few, giant, great, half, lesser, many, much, most, nothing, often, one, once, only, pair, part, quarter, short, some, such.

NATION/GROUP (27)
Band, bevy, brood, company, court, crew, crowd, empire, family, folk, jury, legion, nation, people, quires, race, rout, species, throng, train, troop, tribe, us, we.

MALE (25)
Arthur, barons, boy, brother, father, fellow, fisherman, gent, god, he, huntsmen, husband, Jack, king, knight, lord, man, monk, Oberon, page, priest, prince, son, Shakespeare, swain.

FEMALE (23)
Aunt, dame, damsel, female, huntswomen, lady, Mab, Melissa, midwife, mistress, Morgan, mother, nymph, princess, queen, she, sister, slut, virgin, whores, wif, woman.

ROYALTY (22)
Barons, castle, court, crown, empire, king, kingdom, knight, lady, lord, monarch, page, palace, prince, princess, queen, realm, royal, reign, state, sovereign, throne.

GAIETY (20)
Ball, dance, delight, disporten, enjoy, festivity, fun, gay, happy, lightfoote, merry, nimble, overjoy'd, play, pranks, revelry, round, skip, sport, trip.

INJURY(18)
Blast, danger, destroy, harmless, hinder, hurt, injur, insults, malicious, malignant, menaces, misfortunes, nip, oppose, pinch, suffered, treachery, vext.

ANATOMY (17)
Body, bosoms, brain, claws, eyes, face, fingers, foot, form, hand, heart, lids, limbs, skeleton, throats, tongue, wings.

WATER (14)
Fisherman, fishes, fountain, lake, tear, sea, shell, shore, spring, stream, strond, swim, water, whales.

GO (13)
Away, depart, disappear, exeunt, flee, forsook, gang, gone, leave, remov'd, ryder, vanishes, went.

VEGETATION (13)
Bank, bower, cucumber, fig, flower, forest, grove, holms, leaf, meadow, root, thorn, wood.

MAKING (13)
Arranging, art, cause, craft, invention, make, profession, raught, render'd, use, weave, work, wrought.

MISCHIEF/PLAY (12)
Disport, displease, fun, game, mischievous, peeve, play, pranks, revel, rogue, sport, toys.

BEAUTY (12)
Beauty, delicate, fair, favour, fine, grace, handsome, lovely, matchlesse, paradise, pretty, sweet.

TAKE (12)
Convey, enterchange, exchange, fetch, keep, reft, remov'd, seize, snatch, steal, take, theft.

RELIGION (12)
Annoint, benediction, bless, chapell, church, faith, god, mass, priest, psalter, quires, temple.

POWER/ABILITY (11)
Art, can, cause, craft, control, do, harmless, nygromancye, power, strongly.

FALSENESS/ILLUSION (11)
Apparition, deceive, delusions, dream, fable, fancy, feign, fiction, frawdfull, legend, phantasies.

MUSIC/SONG (10)
Air, chant, choral, lyric, music, opera, quires, rhyme, song, tone.

FEAST/FOOD (9)
Banquet, butter, cucumber, feast, festivity, junkets, lickorish, salt-seller, wine.

OFFSPRING/CHILD (9)
Boy, child, infant, off-spring, page, prince, princess, son, young.

MOUNTAIN/VALLEY (8)
Bank, dale, down, hill, knowe, mountain, terrace, valley.

COMBAT (8)
Fight, foe, invade, oppose, peace, shot, warfare, weapons.

EVIL (8)
Bad, evil, felloun, malicious, malignant, rogue, tyranous, wicked.

DECEIT (8)
Beguile, deceive, delusion, false, feign, secret, seem, treachery.

NAMING (7)
Address, call, deem, denominate, denote, name, term.

LOVE (7)
Beloved, cherished, friend, lemans, love, lovely, wooing.

DRESS/COVERING (6)
Bows, cap, coverlet, dress, gowne, robe.

NIGHT (6)
Midnight, moonlight, night, sleep, star, twilight.

ENCHANTMENT (6)
Charm, conjur, enchant, miracle, nygromancye, spell.

DANCE (6)
Ball, dance, glide, round, skip, trip.

BRING (6)
Bring, enterchange, exchange, give, leave, send.

TREASURE/WEALTH (5)
Groats, hoard, money, rich, treasure.

AID/HELP (5)
Aid, boon, friend, guard, guide.

COME (5)
Approach, bring, come, enter, return.

GOOD (5)
Good, harmless, honest, kind, vertu.

STONE (4)

Pavement, rock, stone, mountain.

RING (3)

Circle, ring, round.

FOOT (3)

Foot, footsteps, lightfoote.

Words which might be particularly problematic which exist in the Group CREATURE are body, champions, company, dwarf, fellow, hosts, page, partners, peer, quires, race, spirit, subject. CREATURE is furthermore one of the simplest and least problematic Groups.

Secondly the Groups themselves are of different orders. For example titles such as creature, number, motion or visual seem like semantic features, but anatomy, water, religion or night do not. Some lists approximate to lists of "lexemes which encode the feature x", others are more like "lexemes which are associated with the feature y". One could argue that the difference between these two kinds of listing is more apparent than real, a function of cultural orientation which favours abstraction and hierarchical organisation over, let us say, extensional association or similarity by contiguity. Be this as it may, categorisation by implicit and non-exclusive categories conflicts with aim (B), and thus the practical consequence was a

determination to employ tighter, more formal categories in the following analysis.

This does not mean that the extensional categories of Table 3.3.c are worthless, however. In the first place they provide the indication of areas for future investigation which was required of this analysis. Most of the categories proposed here recurred in slightly different form in the major analysis. Secondly the decision that determined that the metalanguage should be normal English involves the assumption that most of these categories would be recognised by native speakers as prominent in the corpus. Thirdly they provided a grouping which, however loosely based, could be used as a framework within which individual features, trends, texts or patterns could be examined. In addition it seemed that part of the problem of these Groups was that the level of generalisation required could not be extracted from only two thousand pieces of information.

Most of the aims of this particular analysis were thus realised, method, formalisation, intuition and corpus being tested. The categories were thus examined in order to expose trends and patterns, although the simplest conclusion could be made without further examination, namely that the forty-five Groups listed in Table 3.3.c were the key semantic elements whose interrelations constitute the meaning of fairy. For each category the total N, total P, and grand total N + P was recorded (Table 3.3.d) and the distribution of occurrences was plotted against time. Three sample graphs are included as Tables 3.3.e, f and g. They illustrate three different types of distribution - FEMALE (Table 3.3.g) occurs throughout the period studied, and the majority of occurrences are as N; CREATURE (Table 3.3.e) shows very similar curves to that for FEMALE, but

roughly twice the number of occurrences; DANCE (Table 3.3.f) in contrast shows much fewer occurrences, commences only in 1570, and has roughly equal distribution between N and P. Such graphs as these were taken as indicative of general trends which the fuller analysis was to explore.

The order of importance of the categories, which can be taken as a description of the relative significance of semantic Groups with respect to fairy, can be assessed in several ways, each producing somewhat different results, largely because many of the Groups have so few members. Categories could be ordered by total N, by total P or by total N + P (Table 3.3.d). Or the orders obtained for total N could be added to the orders obtained for total P to give an aggregate figure, an alternative which actually seems to give misleading results. Or the occurrences per category could be described in terms of the percentage of those totals (Table 3.3.h) or as a percentage of the real total (Table 3.3.j). (The difference between the recorded totals and the real totals is explained by the fact that the categories were not exclusive i.e. any lexeme could be included in more than one category). It is also possible to combine all these figures and obtain an aggregate picture, but this would probably be too complex to interpret.

Also prepared was a graph of total number of texts against time (Table 3.3.k) and of total number of occurrences against time (Table 3.3.l) for comparison with the graphs of category occurrence. As an indication of the relative frequencies of occurrence of each category the average number of occurrences of each category per year were calculated (to two decimal places) as was the average number of occurrences per decade in approximate figures (Table 3.3.m).

In addition a tree diagram was prepared which related the categories hierarchically (Table 3.3.n). It was intended that the major analysis should examine the same categories as far as possible in order to clarify, and possibly to modify, this hierarchy. As will be seen it is little more than a description of levels of generalisation moving from the level of NAME and ENTITY (which can be regarded as text existing at Level (2)) through postulated aspects of Entity to a level of description which corresponds roughly with that of systemic sentential roles (Agent, Action and Object) to the particularities of actual text. It will be seen that even at the most specific level, there are a number of Groups which must be considered as related to other Groups (indicated by arrowed lines) because of Sense relations which hold between their members. This hierarchy provided the key for the arrangement of the larger and more numerous groups produced by the subsequent analyses. Thus the intuitive process of the preliminary analysis serves as intended as an explanatory foray which laid bare the difficulties of analysis and produced descriptions of only limited usefulness, but established the route to be followed by the more rigorous procedures of the main analysis.

In addition the various graphs provided suggestions which subsequent analysis sought more rigorously to confirm or refute.

Table 3.3.d

Number of N + P Occurrences per Category

CATEGORY	TOTAL N	TOTAL P	GRAND TOTAL (N+P)
Creature	515	69	584
Royalty	340	5	345
Place	263	50	313
Motion	99	159	258
Female	218	19	237
Male	162	17	179
Utterance	90	33	123
Aural	69	40	109
Nation	91	6	97
Quantification	36	50	86
Gaiety	33	49	82
Visual	37	36	73
Anatomy	44	11	55
Dance	23	29	52
Power	23	22	45
Ring	39	2	41
Make	19	21	40
Naming	29	8	37
Injury	13	21	34
Take	12	21	33
Offspring	26	5	31
Come	10	20	30
Go	13	16	29
Beauty	22	7	29
Music	16	9	25
Vegetation	21	3	24
Mischief/Play	10	13	23
Bring	13	10	23
Love	7	14	21
Water	12	9	21
Falseness	13	5	18
Mountains	12	4	16
Religion	12	3	15
Enchantment	12	1	13
Foot	10	3	13
Deceit	5	8	13
Good	5	7	12
Aid	3	9	12
Night	1	11	12
Wealth	9	2	11
Combat	6	4	10
Feasting	8	2	10
Dress	4	5	9
Evil	1	8	9
Stone	4	4	8

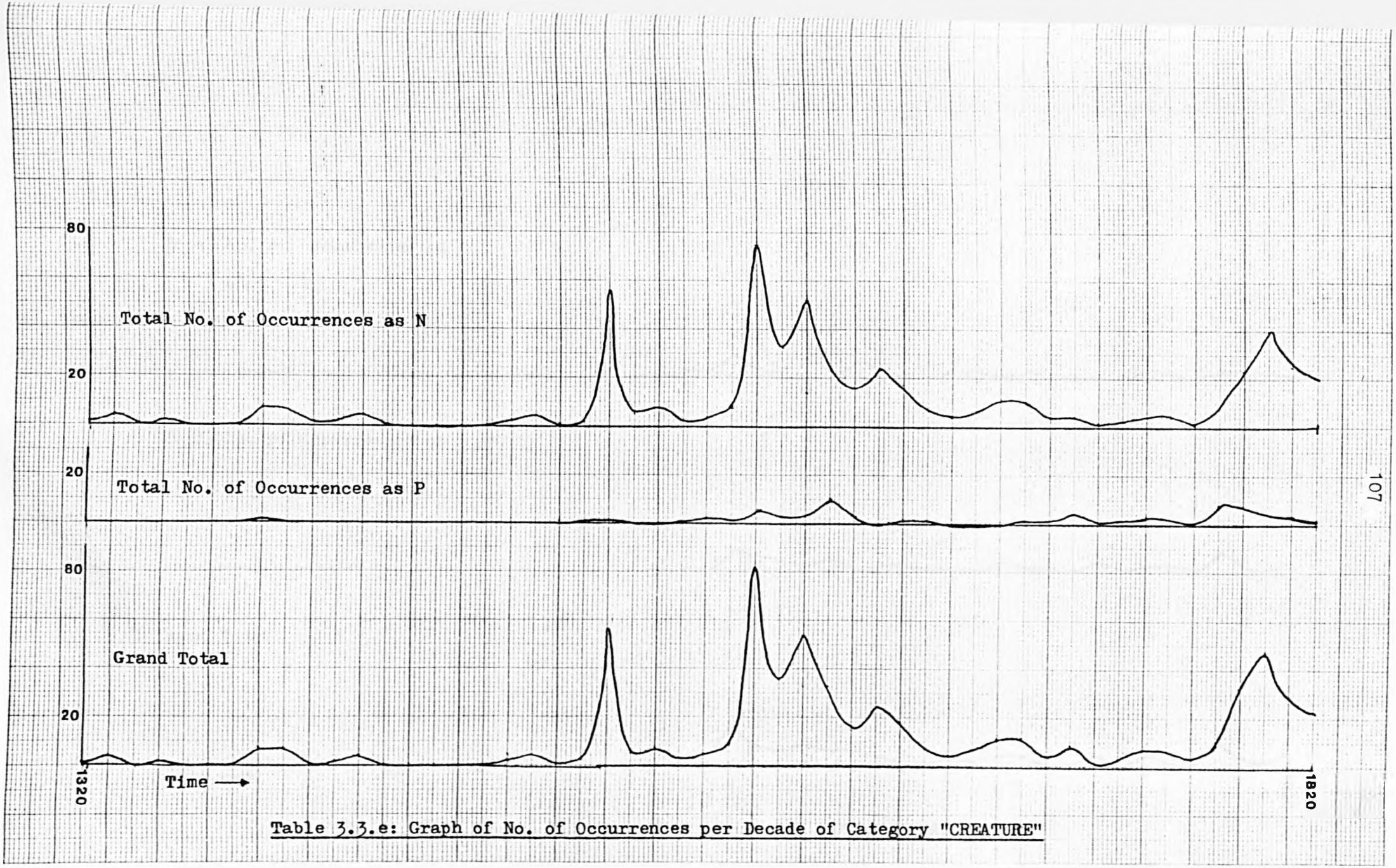


Table 3.3.e: Graph of No. of Occurrences per Decade of Category "CREATURE"

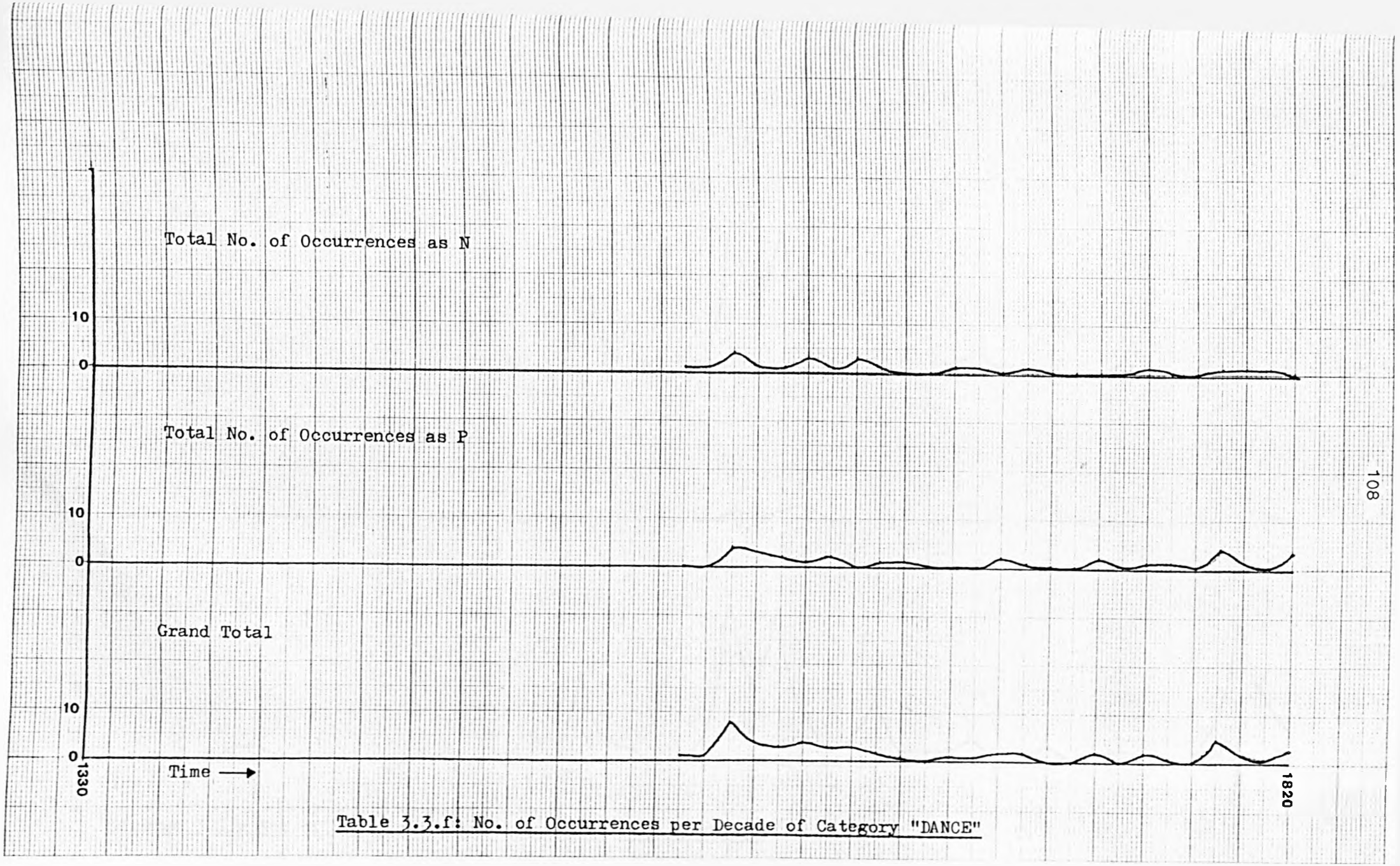


Table 3.3.f: No. of Occurrences per Decade of Category "DANCE"

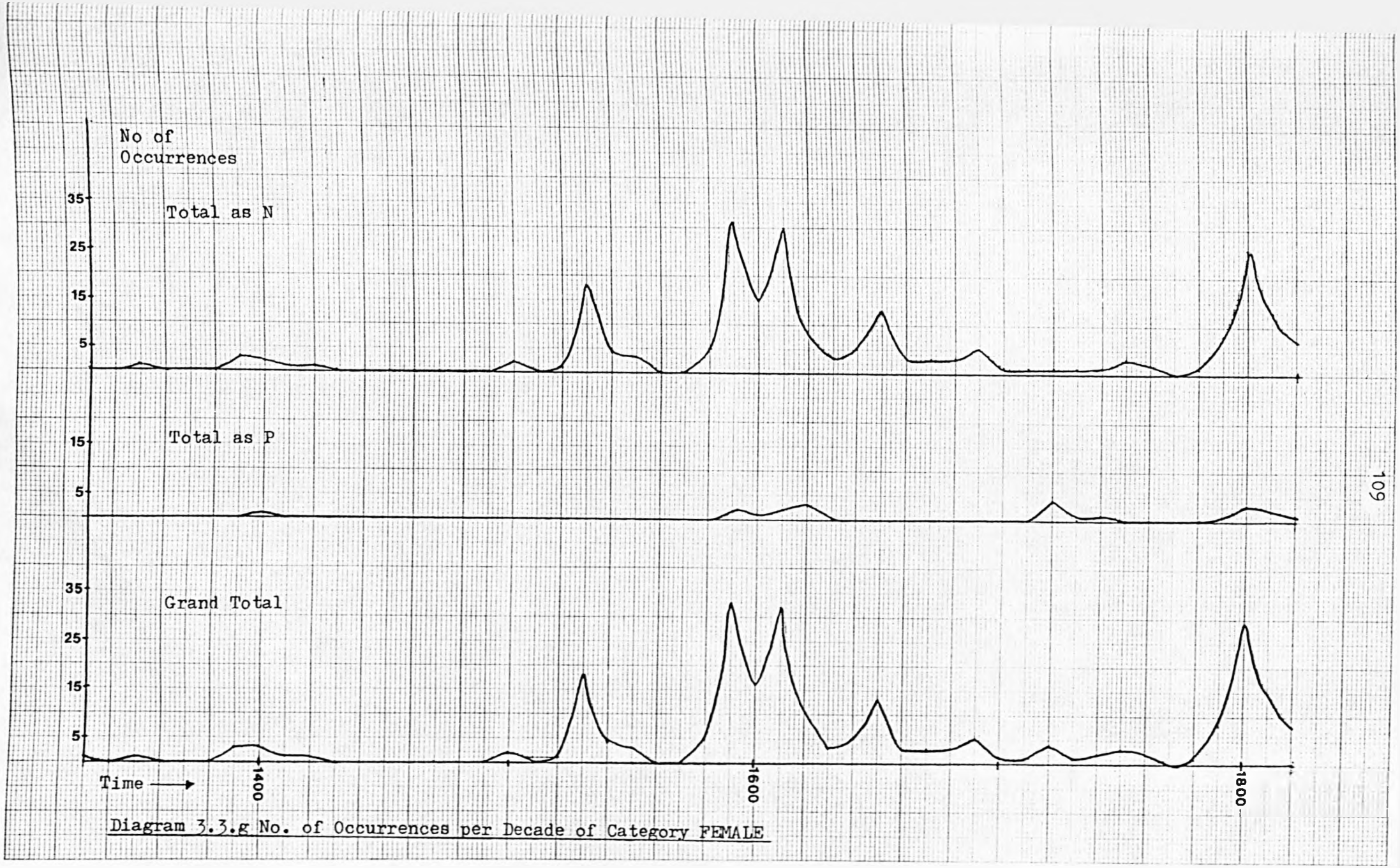


Diagram 3.3.g No. of Occurrences per Decade of Category FEMALE

Table 3.3.h
Absolute totals of semantic groups as a percentage of all groups.

Group	% of total Ns	% of total Ps	% of total (N+P)s
Creature	36.04	12.97	29.78
Royalty	23.79	0.94	17.59
Place	18.40	9.40	15.96
Motion	6.92	29.89	13.16
Female	15.25	3.57	12.08
Male	11.34	3.19	9.13
Utterance	6.30	6.20	6.27
Aural	4.83	7.52	5.56
Nation	6.37	1.13	4.95
Quantification	2.52	9.40	4.39
Gaiety	2.31	9.21	4.18
Visual	2.59	6.77	3.72
Anatomy	3.08	2.07	2.80
Dance	1.61	5.45	2.65
Power	1.61	4.14	2.29
Ring	2.73	0.37	2.09
Make	1.33	3.95	2.04
Naming	2.03	1.50	1.89
Injury	0.91	3.95	1.73
Take	0.84	3.95	1.68
Offspring	1.82	0.94	1.58
Come	0.70	3.76	1.53
Go	0.91	3.00	1.48
Beauty	1.54	1.31	1.48
Music	1.12	1.69	1.27
Vegetation	1.47	0.56	1.22
Mischief/Play	0.70	2.44	1.17
Bring	0.91	1.88	1.17
Love	0.49	2.63	1.07
Water	0.84	1.69	1.07
Falseness	0.91	0.94	0.92
Mountains	0.84	0.75	0.82
Religion	0.84	0.56	0.76
Enchantment	0.84	0.19	0.66
Foot	0.70	0.56	0.66
Deceit	0.35	1.50	0.66
Good	0.35	1.32	0.61
Aid	0.21	1.70	0.61
Night	0.07	2.07	0.61
Wealth	0.63	0.37	0.56
Combat	0.42	0.75	0.51
Feasting	0.56	0.37	0.51
Dress	0.28	0.94	0.46
Evil	0.07	1.50	0.46
Stone	0.28	0.75	0.41

Table 3.3.j
Relative totals of semantic groups as a percentage of all groups.

Group	% of 2410 (N)	% of 858 (P)	% of 3268 (N+P)
Creature	21.37	8.04	17.87
Royalty	14.11	0.58	10.56
Place	10.91	5.83	9.58
Motion	4.11	18.53	7.89
Female	9.05	2.21	7.25
Male	6.72	1.98	5.48
Utterance	3.73	3.85	3.76
Aural	2.86	4.66	3.33
Nation	3.78	0.70	2.97
Quantification	1.49	5.83	2.63
Gaiety	1.37	5.72	2.51
Visual	1.53	4.20	2.23
Anatomy	1.83	1.28	1.68
Dance	0.95	3.38	1.59
Power	0.95	5.24	1.38
Ring	1.62	0.23	1.25
Make	0.79	2.45	1.22
Naming	1.20	0.93	1.13
Injury	0.54	2.45	1.04
Take	0.50	2.45	1.01
Offspring	1.08	0.58	0.95
Come	0.41	2.33	0.92
Go	0.54	1.86	0.89
Beauty	0.91	0.82	0.89
Music	0.66	1.05	0.76
Vegetation	0.87	0.35	0.73
Mischief/Play	0.41	1.51	0.70
Bring	0.54	1.17	0.70
Love	0.29	1.63	0.64
Water	0.50	1.05	0.64
Falseness	0.54	0.58	0.55
Mountains	0.50	0.47	0.49
Religion	0.50	0.35	0.46
Enchantment	0.50	0.12	0.40
Foot	0.41	0.35	0.40
Deceit	0.21	0.93	0.40
Good	0.21	0.82	0.37
Aid	0.12	1.05	0.37
Night	0.04	1.28	0.37
Wealth	0.37	0.23	0.34
Combat	0.25	0.47	0.31
Feasting	0.33	0.23	0.31
Dress	0.16	0.58	0.28
Evil	0.04	0.93	0.28
Stone	0.17	0.47	0.24

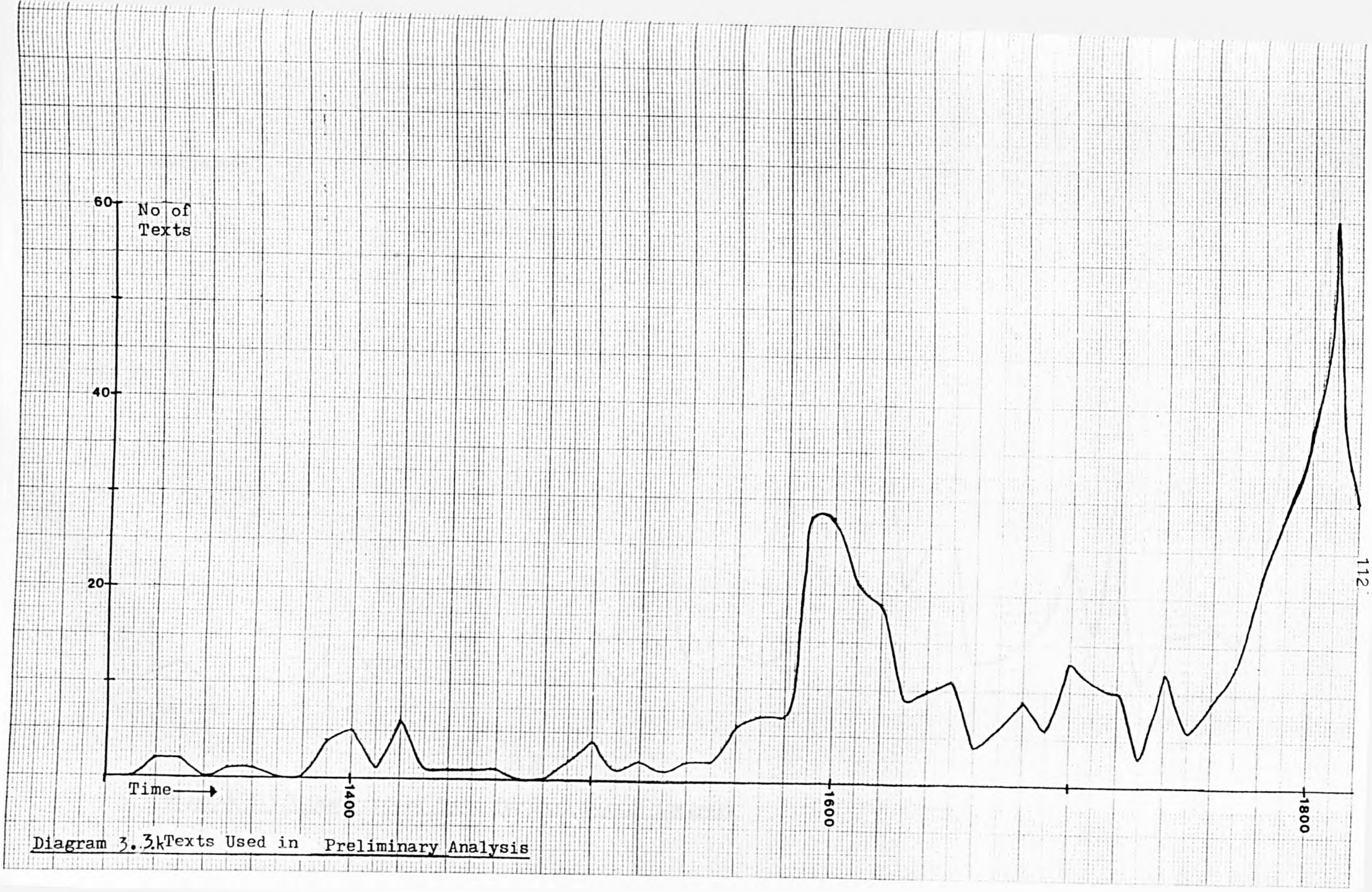


Diagram 3.3k Texts Used in Preliminary Analysis

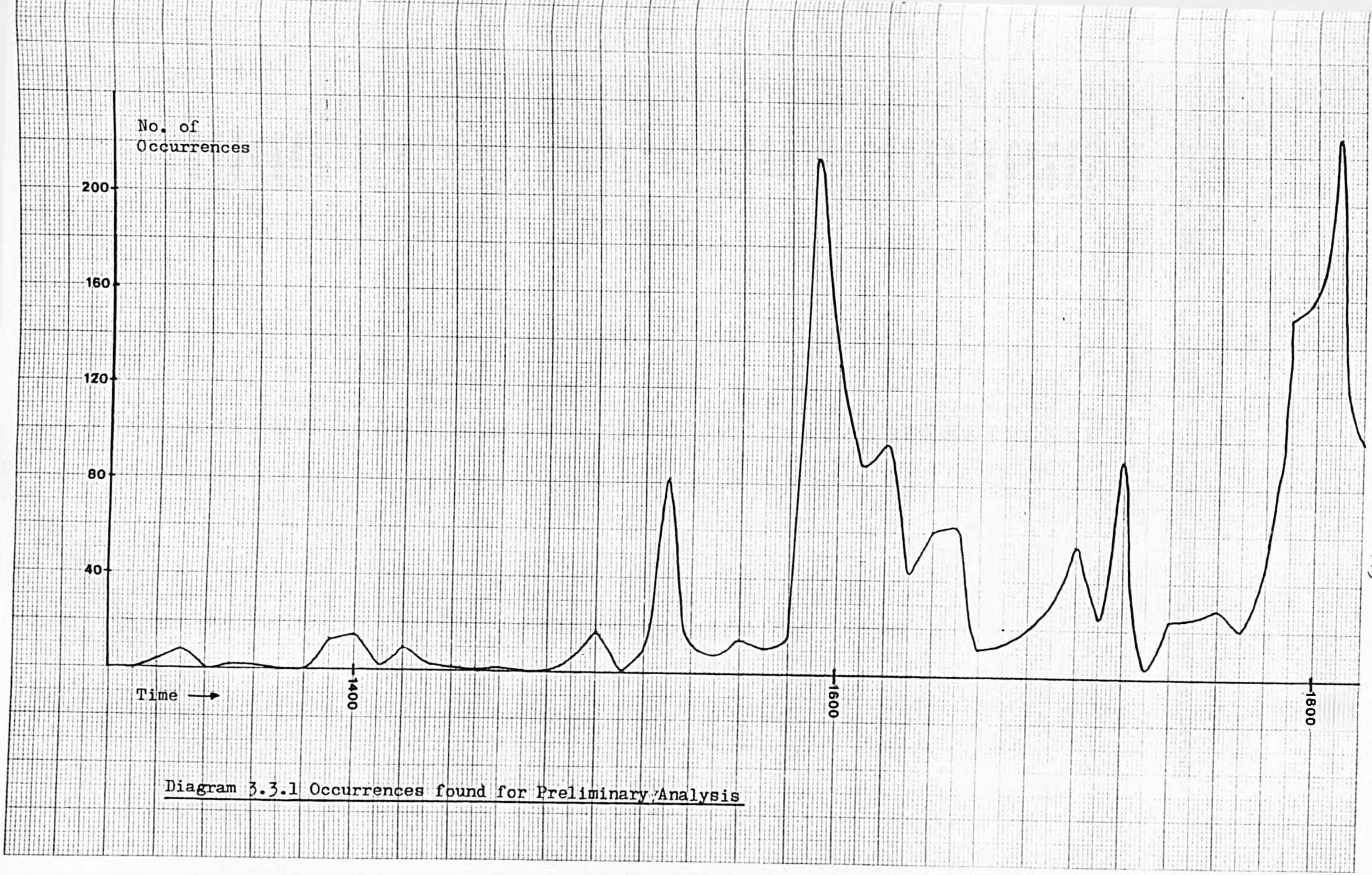
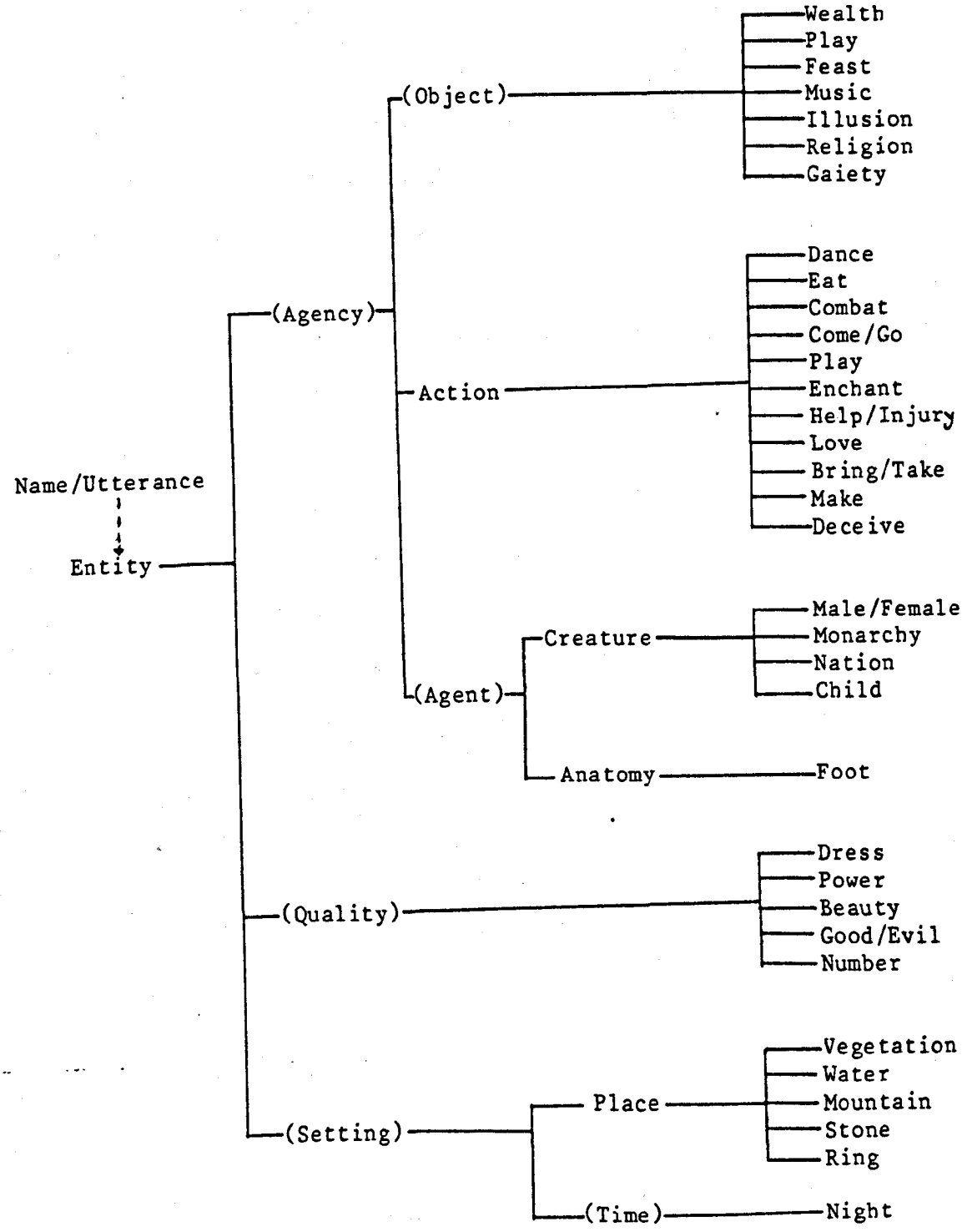


Diagram 3.3.1 Occurrences found for Preliminary Analysis

Table 3.3.m
Average number of occurrences of each semantic group per Decade.

Group	Average per Decade
Creature	12.00
Royalty	7.00
Place	6.00
Motion	5.00
Female	4.50
Male	4.00
Utterance	2.50
Aural	2.00
Nation	2.00
Quantification	1.50
Gaiety	1.50
Visual	1.50
Anatomy	1.00
Dance	1.00
Power	1.00
Ring	1.00
Make	0.75
Naming	0.75
Injury	0.66
Take	0.66
Offspring	0.66
Come	0.50
Go	0.50
Beauty	0.50
Music	0.50
Vegetation	0.50
Mischief/Play	0.50
Bring	0.50
Love	0.50
Water	0.50
Falseness	0.50
Mountains	0.33
Religion	0.33
Enchantment	0.25
Foot	0.25
Deceit	0.25
Good	0.25
Aid	0.25
Night	0.25
Wealth	0.20
Combat	0.20
Feasting	0.20
Dress	0.20
Evil	0.20
Stone	0.20

TABLE 3.3.n.


Name/Utterance
Entity
(Agency)
(Object)
Wealth
Play
Feast
Music
Illusion
Religion
Gaiety
Action
Dance
Eat
Combat
Come/Go
Play
Enchant
Help/Injury
Love
Bring/Take
Make
Deceive
(Agent)
Creature
Male/Female
Monarchy
Nation
Child
Anatomy
Foot
(Quality)
Dress
Power
Beauty
Good/Evil
Number
(Setting)
Place
Vegetation
Water
Mountain
Stone
Ring
(Time)
Night

3.4 The Central Analysis

Initially the idea which prompted the second analysis was a rather naive notion of proximity under which the distance between the object-word and any other specified word in the Cotext was taken to be a measure of the semantic relevance of one word to the other. That is, the hypothesis was that the nearer a word was to fairy in a text, the more important its meaning would be to the Sense, Reference or Denotation of fairy. It was hoped that by assigning a 'value' to each word according to its distance from the object-word a pattern would be obtained which would reveal which of such words were the most important within a particular corpus. It is possible that this will prove a useful means of analysing a corpus. Each word in the corpus could in turn be treated as the object-word, with values being assigned for all other words according to their relative distances in each text, obtaining across a corpus a table of the form:

Object word / Other words	A	B	C	...N
A	*	x	y	z
B	x	*	v	q
C	y	v	*	w
...N	z	q	w	*

where each column contains a different object-word, each row another word in the corpus, and each number (represented as v, w, x, y, z) is an expression of the cumulative distances between those words in the corpus. One would thus obtain a chart giving a numerical statement of the interrelating relevancies of all words in each text and in the

corpus and it would be possible to draw maps of the affinity of or attraction between any two words for comparative purposes.

However such a procedure faces two major difficulties. In the first place although in many cases it is clearly true that in a vague sense the closer together two words are the more meaningful is the relationship between them it is usually possible to alter the syntactic structure of such cases so that the relative order and proximity of the words is altered without altering the meaning of the text. Thus in a majority of cases the syntactic relations between words are probably more important than mere relations of proximity. Secondly it is not clear that the notion of distance can be stated in any satisfactory way. A measure in terms of words (or types or tokens) faces the usual problems of defining word, and also such methodological problems as determining the status of hyphenated words, function-words, and morphemes; counting characters involves problems with punctuation, including hyphenation, and a complex of problems caused by the lack of correspondence between phonemes and graphemes; any measure at a rank higher than the word based on clause, sentence, group, line etc., tends to obscure the obvious features of proximity which prompt such a hypothesis, and encounters problems in attempting to deal with any text of unusual form such as a poem, an inventory or an index.

Such an elementary analytical approach as this is thus unlikely to produce any useful results without the solution of such problems. Success would depend on a fully functional account of textual cohesion, which is not yet available[1]. Any systematic analysis of

---

(1) Although steps towards such an account have been taken. See Gutwinski(1976), Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Cotext must therefore be more general than this. Although it would be theoretically possible to mark a catalogue of items in a corpus according to syntactic function and thus obtain a cross-textual pattern, this would depend on being able to assign those syntactic functions, which would entail many decisions on crucial grammatical questions beyond the scope of this study and which would probably build a further degree of uncertainty into the conclusions. Accordingly it was decided that no form of marking of words within Cotexts could be sufficiently free of problems to ensure results which were clearly interpretable. Thus all words within a particular Cotext were initially considered as equivalent, irrespective of their syntactic functions.

The reasons for proposing an analysis of Cotext in addition to the lists of associations proposed in the preliminary analysis depend partly on the results of that analysis and partly on the arguments of such theoretical standpoints as those of semantic fields[1], collocational meaning[2] and Quine's sentential net[3]. Broadly speaking these approaches regard meaning as partly or wholly inhering in the associations or 'attractions' between words and between sentences. Such Cotextual approaches regard meaningful relations as complementary to the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations between words which can be stated with a reasonable degree

---

(1) The term semantic field has come to be used rather vaguely to mean any group of related lexemes. Its original use was more specific, referring to distinct sets of lexemes which fill one clearly defined area, such as colour terms. See Ullman(1951); Palmer(1977) pp.71-2;Lyons(1977a) pp. 250-261.
(2) Collocational meaning is usually described as part of a semantic theory rather than as a total theory. See Firth(1957) p.197; Palmer (1977) pp.94-94; Leech (1975) p.20.

of precision(1). Insofar as such verbal associations are reflective of 'real' associations in the world (i.e. asociations between Objects) or, in such views as Quine's, productive of associations which users take to be real (such as by assigning a Rem the status of Object) it is clear that the Referential or Denotational aspects of meaning will be closely connected to collocational meaning whether the Sense of such words is related to collocation or completely independent of it. For example one could regard the meaning of rancid as totally conditioned by its invariable association with one or other of the lexemes butter and bacon. Insofar as rancid Denotes or is used to Refer to an Item which invariably is associated with an Object Denoted or Referred to by butter (or bacon) (i.e. a quality or property of butter or bacon and no other Object) then the collocational account would appear valid.

However it is also true that in any given text many of the collocations will be semantically neutral, although it is seldom possible to predict in advance precisely those words which will not collocate significantly with any given object-word(2). It is therefore necessary to analyse all of the relevant Cotext in order to discover which words are significant although such an

---

(1) Although different refinements of these approaches treat such relations, particularly paradigmatic relations, in different ways.
(2) For example, one might expect that function words in lacking any Applicability would be collocationally insignificant and therefore occur near an object-word only in a random manner. However for fairy in the period 1300-1500 of 74 occurrences the word of occurs immediately before fairy 29 times and in a further seven cases one word previous. This seems significantly more frequent than one would expect. For example, for the other three nouns which occur most frequently in the corpus in this period, namely knight(8 occurrences), men (8 occurrences) and queen (7 occurrences) of does not occur in either position.

analysis initially must include words which are not syntactically connected to the object-word.

Accordingly it was decided to apply an analysis to the whole Cotext for each occurrence using a more rigorous form of the analytical method employed in the preliminary analysis. There were two major methodological problems, however. In the first place it was necessary to determine in each case how much of the recorded text should be allowed as relevant Cotext. In general the clause in which the object-word occurred was recorded together with any adjacent material which seemed directly connected to the object-word. In the absence of any rigorous rules none could be applied but in general where sentences intuitively seemed connected those connections were allowed only where the kinds of textual cohesion described in Gutwinksi (1976) could be demonstrated. Generally this occurred where there was clear anaphoric relation to fairy. In doubtful cases the decision was made to exclude rather than include that material.

This yielded in some cases only a few words, in others one or two paragraphs, but in the majority of cases only a single sentence or clause. The total volume of material was therefore substantially in excess of that examined in the first analysis. The preliminary analysis examined a total of 2,064 tokens taken from 468 texts whereas the main analysis examined 30,283 tokens taken from 487 texts. The second methodological problem was a consequence of this, namely the time that a thorough analysis of this volume of material requires. Fortunately the duration of the analysis was substantially reduced by employing a computer. By the use of a package known as COCOA, which was specifically designed for the concording of texts[1], it was

(1) Berry-Roghe and Crawford (1973).

possible to list all the allowed Cotexts and obtain concordances and word frequency counts both for the total corpus and for selected portions of it[1].

The procedure was as follows. Each text was numbered, the first four digits being its date of occurrence, the last two a numbering within that date to distinguish different texts of the same date. In addition each text was given coded labels for title, author, verse form and genre. Thus a typical label was <D 153001><T HUONBD><A BERNER><V PROS><W ROMAN>, signifying; "the text number one for 1530, Huon of Bourdeaux, by Lord Berners, in prose, a romance". The use of such labels enables the specification of date, title, author, mode (e.g. rhyme, alliterative verse, blank verse, prose) and genre or stylistic field (e.g. romance, narrative poem, witch trial, novel) in the recall of material from the file. Within each text each fragment of Cotext in which one token of the object-word could be found, (i.e. an occurrence) was also numbered although without reference to the actual line or page reference in the text. As far as possible the listing of the total corpus included as Appendix 1 follows the same numbering scheme, with the addition of page and line references.

As far as possible texts were recorded with the spelling, punctuation and orthography of the originals[2]. Only two orthographic details caused programming problems. It was not possible to reproduce capitalisation, and it was necessary to decide for each occurrence of a hyphenated compound whether it should be regarded as

---

(1) It would have been possible to conduct the preliminary analysis by means of this programme saving much analytical time, but I was unaware of that possiblity when I began the analysis.

(2) A notable exception was the Middle English characters ȝ and þ for which no computer code exists. The symbols £ and % respectively were substituted for these characters.

one word or two. Only in those cases where the compound appeared to be idiosyncratic or unusual was it counted as two words. Diacritics such as umlaut and acute accent were also omitted for ease of transcription(1).

Once all texts had been recorded in a filestore it was possible to obtain concordances or word frequency counts for any date, period, author, text, mode or field. Thus once the analysis was completed for the full period it was possible to obtain samples for comparative purposes from any of these areas. It was also possible, for example, to compare the word frequencies for different authors, or different fields, or to compare different fields in the same period, or the same fields in different periods.

The major disadvantage of using a computer to list words is that it can only list word-forms, not lexemes. It is, in principle, possible to pre-edit texts so that homographs can be separated and different forms of the same lexeme can be listed together, but for a vocabulary of the size dealt with in this analysis such a task would require so much work that the time saved by employing the computer in the first place would almost be lost. It was considered more practical firstly to list the frequency of forms and then discover, through concording the relevant texts, if any form which occurred frequently was in fact a combination of more than one lexeme. Thus instead of pre-editing an entire text only those parts of the results which were salient or anomalous were post-edited. From a theoretical point of view this seemed preferable as pre-editing could be regarded as prejudicial, whereas selective recombinations after a computer

(1) In principle they could have been recorded but it seemed inefficient to add characters to the alphabet recognised by the programmes for the sake of tokens forming .0003 of the corpus.

analysis could, if necessary, be justified in each particular case. Thus only one lexeme, the object-word, was pre-edited. This was simply for methodological convenience as such pre-editing caused all forms of fairy to be listed together in the printout. As the specification of fairy as the object-word is itself a form of pre-editing, and the object-word is by definition not considered to contribute to its own contextual meaning, pre-editing of it creates no difficulties.

The material input into the computer for this analysis was not precisely the same corpus as used on the first analysis. In the latter, quotations from earlier texts had been included, as it was thought that the kind of quotation used in a period would indicate the area of meaning highlighted in that period, but it was decided that such indirect indications of meaning were difficult to demonstrate and that inclusion of quotations in the corpus would incorporate a bias. Consequently all texts which could be identified as quotations from earlier texts were excluded, together with entries such as titles and indexes, which had no definable Cotext, and also dictionaries and glossaries, on the grounds that these were metalinguistic statements rather than statements within the object-language.

Furthermore the first analysis showed that some periods were poorly represented in the data. Thus a second short investigation was begun, concentrating on those periods. In some cases this search produced no more occurrences and therefore supported the view that recorded occurrences in that period were in fact few (particularly in the sixty years 1420-1480). In other cases, particularly the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the search revealed more occurrences, mainly in poetry, and these were included in the second

corpus. It was decided that as the preliminary analysis had been less rigorous in some ways than the main one, had dealt with a slightly different corpus, and had revealed a few errors of analysis from the methodological point of view, it was to be regarded as a preliminary foray establishing the general areas to be examined in the subsequent analysis. As the procedure in the second analysis was more rigorous, more susceptible to control, and also admitted only a comparatively small degree of human error, and as furthermore it dealt with a much larger corpus which incorporated most of that used in the first analysis it was decided that the second analysis should be regarded as superior to the first and its results would be regarded as the core of the research, with the results of the other analyses to be regarded as supplementary and supporting.(1)

Thus the corpus of the second analysis consisted of 487 texts containing a total of 2019 occurrences giving a total word volume of 30,282 tokens, which the computer analysed as containing a vocabulary of 6,384 different forms. Thus the average occurrence of a form in the corpus was approximately five times (4.7436). One could say therefore that any word which occurred five or more times in the corpus possessed a significant frequency. Of course any frequency figure could be used arbitrarily to define <u>significant</u> here. It is necessary to use some criterion for exclusion in such a large corpus and that of being more frequent than average seemed most suitable.(2)

---

(1) The list of texts and occurrences used in this study (Appendix 1) records against each entry those used in either or both of the analyses. All subsequent partial analyses were conducted within the corpus used for the main analysis. See the introduction to Appendix 1.
(2) At a later stage a further exclusion was applied. See below p.126.

It must be remembered however that this is a vocabulary of word forms and consequently different forms of the same lexeme were listed initially as different words. For example <queen>, <queene>, <qveen> and <quene> were all listed separately. Thus it was necessary to group together all forms which counted as the same lexeme before analysis could be continued. Forms which reflected only the markings of accidence, such as tense, plurality etc., or difference of spelling were gathered together as one lexeme. As the list of these lexemic groups exceeds seventy pages it could not be included here. An example of the type of variation encountered is:

Lexeme DANCE	Recorded token	No. of occurrences
	dancd	3
	dance	50
	danced	7
	dances	6
	dancing	20
	danct	2
	dancynge	1
	danse	1
	dauncd	2
	daunce	7
	daunced	3
	daunces	1
	dauncing	3
	daunst	2
		Total = 108

Table 3.4.a

Excluding therefore all lexemes occurring less than five times, the corpus was reduced from 6,384 forms to 742 lexemes, those accounting for 22,800 occurrences, i.e. 75.29% of the corpus. The core of the analysis is thus concerned with roughly three-quarters of the total word volume. Although some of the lexemes in the remaining quarter seem to be related to others occurring more frequently, it was deemed methodologically preferable in view of aim (B) to ignore all lexemes in that quarter, in view of the fact that the recognition of similar vague associations in the preliminary analysis had led to rather loose extensional categories (TABLE 3.3.c). However such associations were noted in the resultant discussion at any relevant point.

As the impulse behind the main analysis was to provide a more extensive and more rigorous examination of the corpus than that in the preliminary one, it was felt that stricter definitions of semantic categories should be applied in this case in order to test the validity of the more intuitive categories suggested in the initial analysis. Athough for the reasons outlined in Chapter 2 and section 3.3, intuitive categories are easier to produce and to work with, because they depend on the natural functioning of ambiguity in the object language; although formal semantic definitions would necessarily exclude several lexemes which intuition would wish to include; although it seemed likely that the application of different criteria would produce a different hierarchy of categories (at least in terms of relative quantities), it was felt that part of the purpose of this work was to suggest and attempt to establish such categories and that if they could be established then they could provide the basis for future less formal classification, but that if the formal

definitions proved inadequate, the informal categories would still be available to facilitate analysis. Thus each of the semantic categories proposed for grouping the lexemes generated by this analysis is stated in terms of a formal definition, for which the headword should be regarded as only a citation form, not as a summary of the meaning involved. Initially all function words were excluded from this semantic classification. Although several function words were clearly of importance in terms of their frequency of occurrence by definition they possess no Denotation or Reference being merely syntactic markers. Consequently they cannot be grouped according to a classification of lexemic semantics (the primary interest of this study) although an examination of syntactic semantics would necessitate their inclusion. Exclusion of function words left a total of 628 lexemes, together accounting for 33.4% of the total word volume of the corpus. It can be seen here that function words form a substantial proportion of the corpus, approximately 42% (12,765 tokens). A large portion of the corpus is thus concerned with purely syntactic information. In general syntactic semantics can be ignored in discussing the lexemic semantics of a particular language, thus from the point of view of this work 42% of the corpus is irrelevant. Subtracting this from the total corpus leaves what may be called a semantic corpus of 17,518 occurrences. Thus the lexemes occurring five or more times account for 57.28% of the semantic corpus.

Having obtained a list of the most important lexemes at least three alternative procedures were possible. Firstly the list of lexemes could simply be regarded as a description of the meaning of the object-word, on the principle that those lexemes most freqently used were most significant semantically and thus most likely to be

distinctive in description of phenomena, i.e. in the ascription of the meaning "fairy" to a phenomenon, or most significant in concrete situations. That is to say, the set of all important lexemes is treated as one Cluster from which any selection of members may be made, but those with the highest frequency are most likely to be selected.

This would thus be a parallel description to that derived from the preliminary analysis save that it was taken one stage further and an attempt was made to reduce the lexemes to semantic components in order to derive the single Cluster from a limited number of semantic elements (which would thus possess both higher frequencies and a greater range of frequencies) rather than a larger number of lexemes. Thus the second possible alternatve was to attempt to group the lexemes in terms of formal semantic similarities.

As it seemed intuitively clear that such similarities did exist, this second alternative of semantic classification was adopted. It was intended that the remaining lexemes should be grouped in a manner which used more formal criteria than the looser grouping employed in the preliminary analysis. Two methods of grouping were used, one based on synonymy and one based on entailment. Synonymy was defined formally by means of test sentences such as:

A(n) x is a(n) y and a(n) y is a(n) x.

or:

To x is to y and y is to x.

An example of such a test is:

A ring is a circle and a circle is a ring.

Any apparent synonyms not conforming to this test were excluded.

Entailment was defined formally by means of such test sentences as:

A(n) x is a(n) y

To x is to y.

An example of this test is: A king is a monarch.

Of course king and monarch are not synonymous for the reverse test would not apply: a monarch is not necessarily a king.

At this stage no lexemes were included in entailment groups which could be included in synonymous groups, nor were synonymous groups subsumed in larger entailments. This procedure gave 351 groups, a total which from a methodological point of view was too large for adequate examination. Therefore an arbitrary bar was imposed under which any group containing ten or fewer occurrences was regarded as insignificant. This gave 181 groups, which together account for 30.55% of the total corpus, that is 52.8% of the semantic corpus.

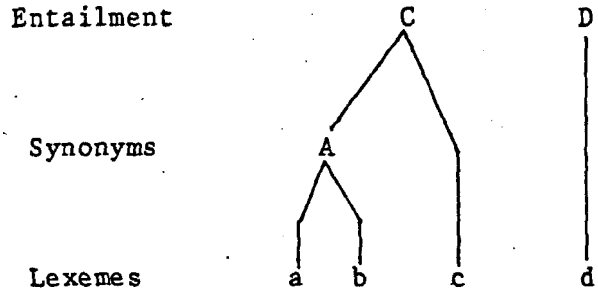
It must be observed therefore that within this corpus there exists a great deal of unsystematic, idiosyncratic, perhaps Emotive, variation around the notion "fairy", for across the corpus it is associated with at least 2,600 different lexemes, yet over half the 'meaning' of the corpus is encoded in only 483 of those lexemes. Thus the central meaning of fairy can be regarded as inhering in 483 lexemes, yet it collocates with a large number of peripheral meanings.

It should be noted, in passing, that the various stages of exclusion described above not only serve to pare the corpus down to a central significant core, but also to remove any extraneous material which might have resulted from occasional liberal decisions concerning Cotext, or lexemes included in error (e.g through misspelling in the original text). Any particular mistake would need to have been

repeated at least ten times for it to have a significant effect on the analysis. Furthermore the operation of these successive exclusions results in a much more solid data base than that produced by the initial analysis. If the same rigour had been applied in that analysis, twenty-one of its forty-five semantic categories would have been excluded.

Where entailment Groups or Groups of synonymous lexemes were found one member of the Group was selected as headword. The resulting list of Groups thus contained three kinds of Group, namely synonyms, entailments and single lexemes. These Groups treated as semantic categories thus differ from those established in the preliminary analysis in being intensionally rather than extensionally defined. All the members of a lexemic Group have the property "token of the lexeme x". All the members of a synonymous Group have the property "meaning the same as other members of the Group". All the members of an entailment Group have the property "entailing the element y". In each case therefore the headwords can be regarded as of more value than the generally arbitrary labels employed for the Groups in the initial analysis, in that they are citation forms for a lexeme, a meaning with which all members of the name Group are synonymous, or a meaning which all members of the name Group contain. Generalisations based on these headwords therefore have firmer foundation than those in the previous analysis.

The Groups are listed in Table 3.4.e, being marked as L, S and E respectively. From a formal point of view entailments are a higher level of organisation than synonyms, for two synonyms contain identical (or near identical) semantic elements (although any two synonyms will usually differ in Associative meaning) but any lexeme entailed by any other is semantically subsumed in that lexeme, i.e. it contains fewer semantic elements, its meaning is less specific. Thus, if a lexeme entailed by another is regarded as superordinate, the interrelationships can be expressed graphically as follows:



e.g.:

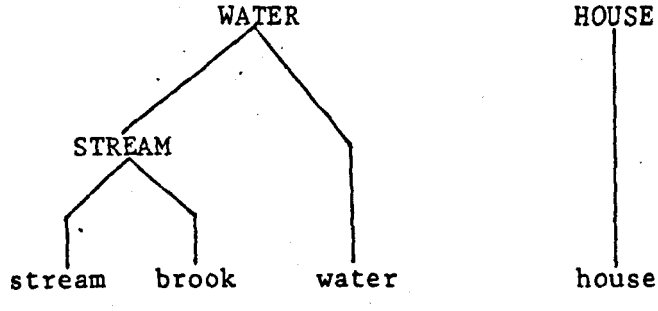


Diagram 3.4.b

Conversely certain synonymous Groups can themselves be collected together as entailed by one lexeme.

An example from the corpus is:

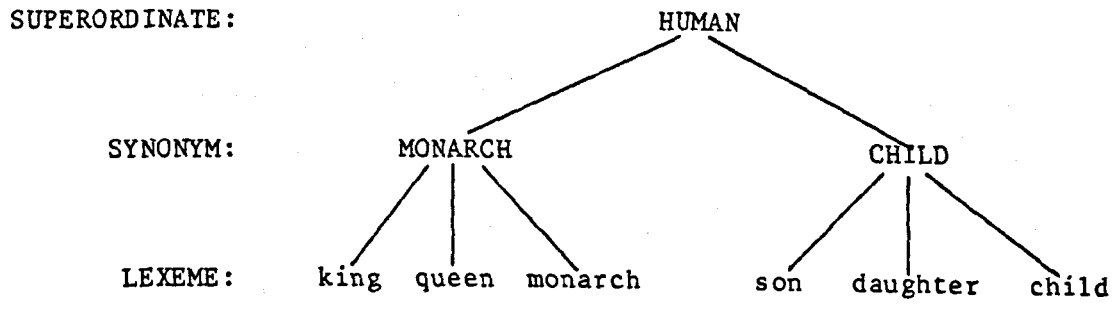
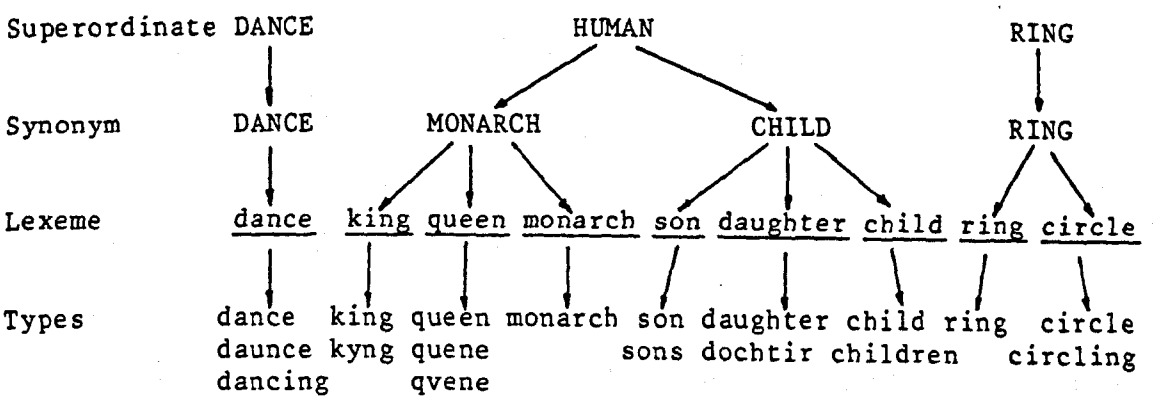


Diagram 3.4.c

Consequently the synonymous Groups should be regarded as 'lexemic' but the superordinate Groups as 'semantic'. It was finally possible to draw up a full hierarchy of lexemes, synonyms and entailments which indicated the several different levels of encoding of the semantic elements of fairy. Thus, to reverse the description, one could write a list of major categories, these being entailed Groups, realised as a list of minor categories (either synonymous or lexemic), of which the synonymous Groups are in turn realised as lexemes, and the lexemes as particular formal types, tokens of which are recorded in the corpus. An example of this arrangement is given in diagram 3.4.d. The categories at the highest level (i.e. those represented here as superordinate), are regarded as primary.

DIAGRAM 3.4.d. An Example of the Semantic Organisation of the Corpus.



Some of these primary categories are realised in the corpus in different ways, i.e. by different lexemes or different synonymous Groups, and these in turn are realised by different printed forms. The primary categories are regarded as the main topics for discussion in the discursive portion of this work, subdivided according to the Groups and lexemes they are realised by. They are arranged in order of frequency in Appendix 2 which thus gives a statistical statement of the relative importance of the semantic categories in the corpus. This can be regarded as a description of the meaning of fairy, and it provides a tabulated description which can be expressed as a percentage of the total corpus of lexemes and therefore can be used for comparative definition for any other corpus of whatever size which is analysed by the above method.

The final stage of this procedure was the drawing of a complete hierarchical tree relating all three types of Group, on the assumption that the hierarchical scheme generated by the preliminary analysis (Table 3.3.n) was substantially valid. The result was Diagram 3.6.b[1]. As can be seen, the more rigorous method of the second analysis results in a somewhat more complex hierarchy. However it would seem that certain categories are frequently realised, some by a few and some by many lexemes. It was felt that this hierarchy summarised the meaning of fairy in the corpus and therefore that it described the meaning of the object-word for the full period, 1320-1829. Essentially it schematises the Cluster which can be regarded as the 'definition' of fairy for the period. The hierarchy provides a conceptual typification which may be realised in whole or part by any of the lexemes recorded within it, but which emphasises

(1) This diagram is given on pages 152a to 152f and is described in section 3.6.

certain aspects more than others, i.e. realises some of the potential lexemes and semantic categories more frequently than others. These are indicated by the relative frequencies of co-occurrence in the corpus.

Such an account does not necessarily describe Emotive meaning as this is personal, idiosyncratic and perhaps is largely unrealised lexemically and thus unsystematic, although Emotive meaning may be subsumed in the description(1). Nor does it necessarily describe the knowledge or usage of any actual individual, rather it shows the conceptual framework within which an individual would work and the semantic resources upon which he/she would draw in using the object-word. Nor does it account for why these particular lexemes or Groups should be so associated or used with these relative frequencies. The discursive bulk of this work is intended to examine this framework with these omissions in view, in order to explore possible reasons for such associations and for the frequency of occurrence of particular elements.

The third alternative approach is not based on this one large Cluster but on the notion of typification. Under the assumption that uses of fairy will depend on a limited number of typical experiences (i.e. certain Clusters, certain lexemic combinations are favoured because Referring situations are typified) an attempt may be made to discover the most frequent typification(s). This can be done using the techniques of cluster analysis.

Although there would seem to be no necessary similarity between the philosophical notion of the cluster as presented by Gasking and

(1) For discussion see section 6.3.

others[1] and the statistical method given the same name as presented for example, by Everitt[2], the theory and the method do in fact marry well providing it is accepted that the meaning of an object-word can be regarded as inhering in the kind of words in the environment of which it typically occurs. Philosophically the concept of the cluster states that the meaning of at least some words lies in the range of selections actually made from a set of possible selections. To this I have added the notion that certain selections though not obligatory will be preferred (i.e. be found to occur more frequently in actual usage). The statistical procedure of cluster analysis seeks to group elements together according to their similarity in terms of a number of variables, i.e. whilst philosophy says that a cluster is a typification made up of a number of lexemes (or their Denotata, Referents etc.) statistics says that a cluster is a typification made up of number of variables. The semantic analyst recognises that the variables in semantic clusters are lexemes (or the items they present or represent). Thus descriptions can be matched according to their variables by cluster analysis, and attempts can be made to discover those clusters which are most significant, i.e. most frequently used.

An attempt was therefore made to discover if such typifications existed. Unfortunately certain purely physical limits on the capabilities of the COCOA program prevented any throrough investigation of this nature. Therefore the typifications discussed in subsequent sections are not statistically derived. They were initially suggested either by intuitive recognition or by descriptions

(1) Gasking (1960).
(2) Everitt (1974).

in background texts and were subsequently confirmed or refuted by examination of the corpus. Although this method potentially would be most useful in this work it has thus not been systematically applied and the central statistical descriptions are those of the frequency lists (Table 3.3.h and Appendix 2) and the hierarchical trees (Diagram 3.3.n and Diagram 3.6.b).

3.5 Partial Analyses

The third relationship proposed in 3.1 as semantically neutral was that of phonemic/graphemic similarity. As the material for this analysis is a subset of the corpus established for the second analysis, it would not of itself yield any information not already obtained by that analysis. However it was thought that Stylistic meaning may well be encoded in certain of the lexemic choices made in the corpus, particularly in those texts of a literary nature, which formed a high proportion of the total number of texts. It was felt, for example, that the frequency of collocation of certain lexemes might be influenced by such features as alliteration or rhyme.

Accordingly all forms which alliterated with fairy were recorded, as were all forms which might be taken to rhyme. Although the procedure for the former selection was not difficult, it being necessary only to list forms commencing with the graphemes <f> and <ph>, rhyme is somewhat more difficult to recover. In particular the actual pronunciation represented by any grapheme or group of graphemes can seldom be discovered. Therefore rhyme must be understood to mean "sight rhyme" (graphemic identity) although the actual process of reading may involve psychological sound-rhyme in addition to or instead of sight rhyme.

Thus <fairy> was analysed into two parts <f>, and <airy>[1] and tokens of other lexemes were recovered which possessed one of these graphemic patterns, and the other forms recorded were treated similarly. The results of these additional analyses are incorporated into the relevant sections of the discussion, notably 6.2.3.1.

---

(1) This accords with the formal account of rhyme, alliteration and other phonic/graphic parallellisms given by Leech (1969) pp. 89-90.

3.6 Introduction to Analyses

Clearly there can be little in analytical methodology per se which takes explicit account of the considerations outlined in Chapter 1, other than in respect of aims (A) and (B). Aim (A), exhaustiveness, is met by the use of overlapping analytical procedures, by applying both formal and intuitive methods, and by attempting to gather as large and as comprehensive a corpus as possible. Aim (B), rigour, is met by stating and following clear rules of analysis at every stage in the main analysis, by treating this analysis as that central to the study, and by excluding occurrences low in frequency. As has been noted however the two aims are in conflict. For example the exclusion of some Cotext whose direct attachment to fairy could not be formally stated yet was intuitively recognised meets (B) but reduces (A). One observation that can be made at this stage is thus that increasing the degree of rigour in the analysis to such an extent that any statements made or semantic descriptions offered could be regarded as unquestionable would so reduce the number and kind of observations that could be made that they would serve no useful purpose at all. This point will become clearer in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, where it will be repeatedly shown that formal descriptions of a kind are often possible, but are equally often inadequate.

Conversely, however, aim (B) is not shown to be pointless. It leads to greater precision, to objective grounding in at least some areas for the statements that can be made, to the discovery of crucial elements, areas and patterns, to the exposing of information which may previously be known (intuitively as part of our knowledge of the

language) but never articulated, and to establishing a framework against which intuition can be tested and upon which modifications can rest their justification. These points will all re-emerge in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Regarding the different levels of specificity outlined in Chapter 1, as previously stated the method was directed entirely to level (3). Levels (1) and (2) are implied therefore insofar as fairy encodes those levels, and level (4) is subsumed (and also disguised) by providing one of the sets of data constituting the corpus. The two general questions posed together with the five more specific ones affected the analysis insofar as they determined the focus of the theory in Chapter 2 and also seemed to dictate the Cotextual approach to meaning, both of which established parameters within which the analysis was conducted. However no particular analysis or section of an analysis was directed towards a particular question, with the exception of those sketched in 3.5 which are largely oriented towards Associative, specifically Stylistic, meaning. It is in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 that the results of the analysis are processed with regard to these questions.

It is not claimed here that either the theory or its resultant analysis would be sufficient for a full account of the semantics of any language, although it may be the case that an elaboration of a Cluster theory of meaning would be sufficient to account for or describe the semantic properties of all lexical items in a given language. Application of theory and method to supernatural names does not depend on such comprehensiveness.

In essence the analyses employed generate lexemic lists according to different principles. These lists can be approached in different

ways. The most liberal interpretation is to accept the notion of a vague concept[1] which is recognised intuitively but is impossible to define intensionally and can only be defined by such extensional lists of all such lexemes which are "to do with" that concept. Thus the semantic Groups of both major analyses can be regarded as extensional definitions of such vague concepts. A more demanding view is that specification of the meaning of fairy cannot depend on Groups which are themselves unclear in specification and that we should therefore regard extensional Groups as imprecise specifications of semantic areas of which intensional Groups are the only useful descriptions. This view would discount the Groups provided by the preliminary analysis.

The Groups themselves can be regarded in at least three ways. Firstly they can be regarded as artificial constructions, or abstractions, made by a linguist as aspects of his total construction, which he calls the langue. As such they can be regarded as, to some extent at least, fictional rather than real, incorporating theoretical decisions and therefore a degree of explanation rather than being purely descriptive. Or they can be regarded as some of the many possible subsets of the total set of lexemes which are essentially descriptive (i.e. no more than lists). Under this interpretation explanation occurs with just those subsets which are designated, but it is intuitive explanation, based on a recognition by the analyst of those prominent semantic features in the corpus and which he uses as selection principles. This lacks rigour to the extent that its justification depends on accounts of processes which cannot be offered, i.e. the neurological activity of the analysts, and his

(1) See Chapter 2; Wittgenstein (1972) paragraphs 76-77.

understanding of the meanings of other words, but perfectly rigorous under the assumption of ordinary language as metalanguage(1). Both these views do not look beyond language, but a third view is possible, namely that some of the Groups at least are applicable to the real world, i.e. they are definite descriptions, they specify recognisable phenomena(2). (A fourth view is also possible, namely that these lists are arbitrary concatenations and possess no semantic significance. There is no adequate refutation of this view save the commonsense or intuitive one which says such lists are relevant in some sense. Chapter 2, consists in elaboration and refinement of this common sense opinion).

One can thus read these lists (definitions) as if prefaced with one of three statements: (1) this is a semantic category inherent in the corpus under the above interpretation of semantic theory; (2) this is a postulated semantic category which seems to the analyst to be of importance, semantic being used pretheoretically; (3) this is a description of a phenomenon (or kind of, or Class of, phenomena) which prompts assent to, or may induce use of, the lexeme fairy. If one considers the analyst now to be a native reader/hearer, these three attitudes can be equated with the three major aspects of meaning outlined in Chapter 2, the first seeing the lists as expressive of Sense relations, inherent in the system of the langue, the second as Associative, dependent on participants' attitudes, and the third as Applicability, related to actual Entities. Discussion in subsequent chapters therefore takes into account all three points of view, examining the results not only as data about langue but also about

---

(1) See above, p.58.
(2) See section 2.3.1 on Applicability. Also Russell (1956).

belief systems and phenomena. This is consequent on the theory established in Chapter 2, and on the necessary framework of considering supernatural names as the province of several overlapping disciplines.

The most interesting aspect of the data resulting from the two major analyses is the fact that they can be organised hierarchically into sets of relations which correspond remarkably with one set of formal categories of sentence analysis proposed by systemic grammar[1].

It must be emphasised that the analyses outlined above were conducted independently of any particular syntactic analysis. The hierarchy schematised in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 is the result of (a) isolating semantic categories which occur most frequently in the two corpora, and (b) ordering those categories according to the criteria specified in the relevant sections.

The suggestion is, therefore, that there is a linguistic formula (which may in fact be representative of a fixed psychological imperative) used to describe supernatural phenomena and that either the formula is adequate for any descriptive/expressive corpus (in which case accounts of the supernatural cannot be said to differ in form from any other descriptive accounts, consequently the status of a supernatural name cannot differ from that of any other name in this respect) or that the formula is specific to supernatural phenomena (in which case accounts of the supernatural may be a subset of one class of descriptive accounts, or may be a unique subset of descriptions, with its own defining features). What follows is intended as applicable primarily to level (3). However it seems that Groups with a high degree of generality apply also to levels (1) and (2).

---

(1) Berry (1975).

Groups such as TIME, PLACE or BEING would seem to apply to most uses of supernatural names and many cases of fictional reference.

In relation to the systemic analysis of sentences it should be noted that fairy can take any of the roles of actor, action, goal or situation so that if the typical description is conceived of as possessing these four roles, it would be impossible to predict which aspects of the description or of the phenomena described, would be regarded as supernatural. It may be the case that some supernatural names are restricted to a particular role (e.g. the bogeyman almost invariably takes the role of actor) however it seems that many are not so restricted (e.g. ghost, spirit, god). Those names which do seem to be role-restricted also, unsurprisingly, seem to be restricted in other semantic features, e.g. a supernatural name restricted to the role of actor will almost certainly encode BEING.

In many cases it seems easier to assign roles to individual tokens of fairy than to assign syntactic categories. There is no clear correspondence between the syntactic category it realises and the role it fills, other than the tendency typical of English sentences for nouns to take the roles of actor or goal and modifiers the situational roles. For example in those cases where we might wish to translate fairy as "fairyland" or "enchanted place" it is a nominal in the role of situation; in a modification such as the fairy queen it may be taking the role of actor, although syntactically it would probably be called an adjective. Indeed there are some cases in which fairy has no clear syntactic funtion yet indisputably fills the situational role.

Nevertheless, if one ignores the nonce forms such as fairyism and faerily [1] one would still be inclined to say that fairy occurs typically with one of two syntactic functions, namely noun and adjective. Yet examination of actual use in particular contexts exposes a number of problematic uses. In some it is difficult to decide which of the two categories the token falls into, in others it seems it should fall into both simultaneously. If there were a large number of cases it would suggest that the distinction between noun and adjective is not one that can be made precise for fairy, and may in fact be misleading in some cases.

One must ask, for example, what such a phrase as the fairy king is actually expressing. Probably the most obvious analysis would be: Determiner + Adjective + Noun. Substituting P for Adjective and N for Noun produces the analysis of this phrase included in the initial analysis. Such an analysis puts forward the hypothesis that the topic of the utterance is the king and the comment is fairy. It presumes that the Entity being talked about is a "king", and that the quality attributed to him is that he is "fairy". This analysis seems the most natural because we know king is a noun and cannot be (or is not) used attributively.

Consider however a passage which is talking of fairies in general, perhaps for several paragraphs or pages, during which only one mention is made of a king e.g. Fairies do not follow laws or obey rules but they do follow the fairy king. Here the topic is not the king, it is the race of fairies. Thus one might prefer an analysis which treated fairy as the 'genitive' form of a plural, or a

---

(1) See corpus items numbers 1763/03/001; 1796/01/001,002; 1813/01/003 and 1819/04/001; 1819/07/002.

collective noun. For if we were to rewrite it to bring out the meaning more clearly in this second context it would probably seem more accurate to rewrite the fairy king as the king of the fairies or the king of the fairy race rather than the king with fairy properties, or the king with the property of fairyness. Nor does the rewriting the king with the property 'that he is a fairy' seem to be adequate, for the implication of the sentence would seem to be that there is only one king who fits the description, whereas many kings may be fairies. The implications of the antithesis of but and the meaning of follow both suggest that this one king is a particular king, and his particularity lies in the fact that he is king of the fairies who are the topic of the sentence (and the paragraph).

A further possible phrase could be the king fairy. This does not occur in the corpus. However it illustrates the point that king may also be used 'attributively', that is if this example follows a rule of English which (generally) places a modifying adjective before the noun it modifies. Of course there is also an archaic phrasal form under which king in this expression would be read as a noun. The central point is that the relation of name and attribute may be by no means as clear as it first seems even in such apparently straightforward cases as this. The actual attributive relation which is understood in any particular context may depend to a large extent on factors other than simple syntactic relationships(1). In actual usage fairy may well be ambiguous in terms of 'case', plurality, or syntactic function depending on the focus of the Cotext. Nor is it necessary to explicate or disambiguate such usage in most cases, as

---

(1) This becomes even more problematic in a corpus such as this which contains examples over a large diachronic span.

the occurrence is normally perfectly well understood. It would be possible to regard one part of the meaningfulness and/or usefulness of fairy, and perhaps other supernatural names as this very ambiguity. If it was always clear that a particular thing or a particular property was being mentioned, then straightforward objective criteria could be applied for the testing of the utterance and the application of truth conditions(1). If however a certain degree of ambiguity is possible, tolerated or even necessary to the word's meaning, no such criteria could be workable, and there is room for a great deal of expressiveness (Associative meaning)(2) in the utterance both for the speaker in using the word and the hearer in interpreting it.

Any subjective aspect of the entity under discussion can be suggested (but not communicated)(3) so that questions of belief and opinion can be suspended for the duration of the utterance. If fairy has both a distinct noun-meaning and a distinct adjective-meaning, it can be counted as "two words" and therefore be used in deviant ways syntactically. If it is only one word worth two aspects of meaningfulness, functioning in the language as necessarily ambiguous, no such deviance can exist.

This ambiguity can be captured by regarding 'the Entity named fairy' as an Item of experience rather than an Object even in its nominal uses. The essential naming quality of a word such as fairy is that it characterises a portion of experience in such a way that

(1) In the manner favoured by Ayer. See Chapters 1 and 2.
(2) It will be remembered that this is precisely the function fairy seems to be serving in the corpus, as indicated by the volume of infrequently collocating lexemes.
(3) I mean by this that it is not possible to communicate my subjective experience to you, though it is possible for me to suggest that I have such an experience and to call up a corollary in you.

questions about the nature of that experience (such as its objectivity or substantiality) and questions concerning whether the referent is Rem or Item can be ignored. If the word could not be used with such systematic ambiguity it would lose much of its usefulness in the language. It is important to remember in the remainder of this study that syntactic vagueness does not necessarily entail semantic vagueness, for syntactic categories are linguistic abstractions and may therefore falsify any kind of experience which is felt to be a cline. If fairy were the name of an experiential cline rather than of a distinct Object or quality, syntactic categories would necessarily falsify its use in the language by cutting the cline into sections (unless, of course, one takes the view that syntactic relations are purely formal and have no ontological implications).

Thus the systemic analysis of a sentence into roles would seem the most useful for capturing the full function of this object word, for to assign it the role of situation in any particular text allows it to function in terms of the remainder of the text whilst permitting its full ambiguity. Thus at the level of roles an expression consists of an actor, action and goal which occur in an environment (situation), and it is not necessary to specify precisely how the situation affects actor, action or goal although it is within the capacities of language to narrow that specification. Possibly one means by which a speaker may narrow that specification is by clarifying the syntactic function of a word in terms of the distinction between noun and adjective (or nominal and modifier), i.e. for many uses the precise relation of those tokens filling the situational role to other tokens in the utterance need not be specified for the meaning of the utterance to be understood (or at

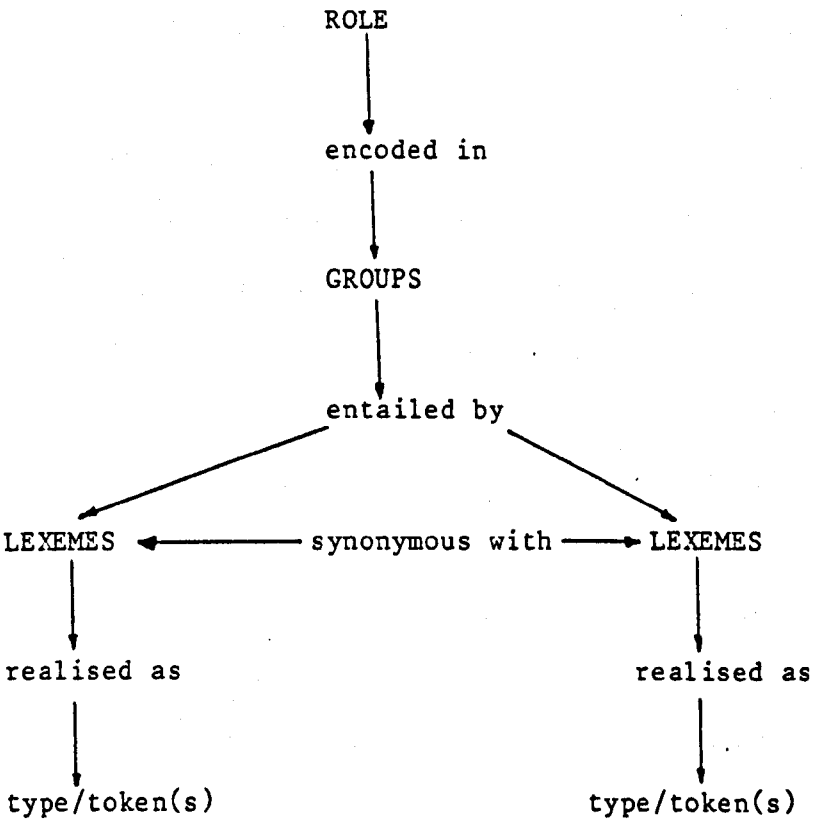
least for sufficient information to be communicated), but in those cases where the meaning or intention of the utterance depends on a clear understanding of the relation between situation and actor, action or goal, one means of achieving that clarity is by indicating whether the situational token is a noun or an adjective.

Specificity and ambiguity would thus be complementary poles of language use, and one could regard specificity as related to rational precision in Denotation and Reference, and ambiguity as related to Associative connotation. Thus one means of estimating the relative strength of the Denotative and Associative aspects of the meaning of fairy might be in terms of this dichotomy. The more ambiguous the function of the object word within an expression, the more connotative its semantic component. However it would seem impossible to quantify, or even to give a precise statement of this difference.

The appropriateness of the systemic analysis of sentences into roles was first suggested by the hierarchical arrangement of semantic Groups resulting from the initial analysis, as summarised in Table 3.3.n. Although built of intuition rather than formal argument this seemed to suggest that the 'highest' semantic categories encoded in descriptions of the supernatural were similar to sentence roles. Consequently the results of the major analysis were structured in terms of the systemic model. The remainder of this work is concerned with interpreting the results of the two analyses in terms of the three points of view outlined at the beginning of this chapter, i.e. examining those lexemes and semantic groups which occurred most frequently in terms of their interconnections, their relations to belief systems and their possible relations to phenomena, within the systemic model of roles in sentences.

The basic form of the hierarchy used as the primary structure in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 is shown in Diagram 3.6.a.

DIAGRAM 3.6.a



The diagrams which conclude this chapter are of this form. Although it can be regarded as a description of the collocational meaning such that one can treat branches of the hierarchy as schema of the actual knowledge of users, and one can trace such branches as models of the processing of users in specifying fairy, both as possessing semantic features in an environment which determines use of fairy as a Cluster definition and as creative typifications used in creating an appropriate fiction to be called fairy, it cannot be interpreted in precise terms as an exact model of any of these. The

fact that it can yield satisfying descriptions of all these aspects of use of fairy indicates that to a large extent it is an accurate and useful model. For example one can draw up a set of Chomskyan rewrite rules such that "supernatural" can be rewritten at different levels of specificity or with different degrees of detail all of which encode "fairy". This then would be a 'generative model'. It is a descriptive model of a particular corpus defined as precisely as seems possible. It is not, therefore, an absolute description of the object word, as it incorporates variations inherent in the corpus which can only be captured by rules unique to each particular case. These include several relations between Groups which are not evident in the hierarchy as such but nevertheless should be noted as Sense relations; the introduction of a small miscellaneous category; the fact that in some cases branches of the hierarchy represent exclusive, incompatible choices but in others both choices may be realised in the same Cotext; the fact that 'height' in the hierarchy does not necessarily represent greater frequency, higher priority or significance of choice, although it may do in many cases.

These problems are discussed in subsequent chapters as consequences of both the data and the approach. It must be remembered throughout therefore that this is a model pragmatically determined, arranged as a satisfactory compromise to provide a guide to most, but not all, of the major relations which hold between semantic elements in the corpus. It has the merits of providing a fixed frame within which to work and which can be duplicated, tested and used as an objective comparison with other similar corpora, and of indicating those patterns which are most prominent in determining the use of fairy. But, as will become clear as this study progresses, its

inadequacy lies to a great extent in the high degree of formalisation it possesses, for whilst it may indicate prominent patterns it does not explain them and, more importantly, it may disguise equally important patterns which obtain and which may be crucial in that explanation.

The following chapters thus have two complementary roles. Firstly they attempt to explicate the results of the analyses, particularly with respect to the hierarchical models produced, and secondly they aim to explain those models with regard to the five aspects of lexical meaning described in Chapter 2, modifying the models if appropriate, going beyond them where necessary. Their overall aim is thus to provide a complete model of the semantics of fairy in the corpus which both explains and incorporates the results of the analyses, but to do so with the wider implications of levels (1) and (2) in mind.

Chapter 4 is however something of an anomaly. It exists as a hiatus, a pause between the general discussion which has taken us to this point, and the specifics of the actual semantics of fairy in particular texts. It aims to describe the object word as fully as possible and to indicate the possible background for its subsequent development, by suggesting possible influences and origins prior to its use in Middle English. Such a discussion seems necessary in view of the strong diachronic element in this study but more particularly because several of the key areas of later meaning seem to be derived from or related to earlier supernatural names. Indeed if we are to explain much of subsequent use, especially in oral traditions, recourse to earlier material seems necessary, particularly with regard

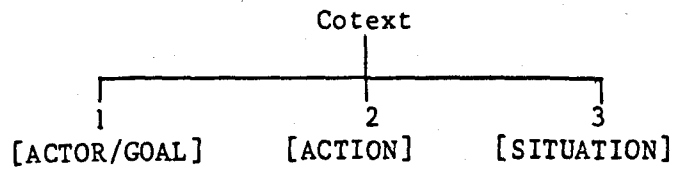
to the word's overarching notion of "fatedness"(1). In addition one might suppose that the word today has a clear, unambiguous and exact meaning such that everyone would recognise and assent to a single definition(2). This may well be the case, but it seems not to have been so for the period under discussion here. It is thus necessary to state as strongly as possible that early supernatural names were imprecise (at least as far as can be determined from the available evidence), with numerous interrelations and correspondences. Such imprecision probably derives from a high degree of Emotive meaning in earlier use where belief in the supernatural was more widespread than at present. Today, one could argue, fairy seems to be of narrow and fixed Denotation, highly restricted Stylistically, with little Emotive meaning, and only fictional Reference.

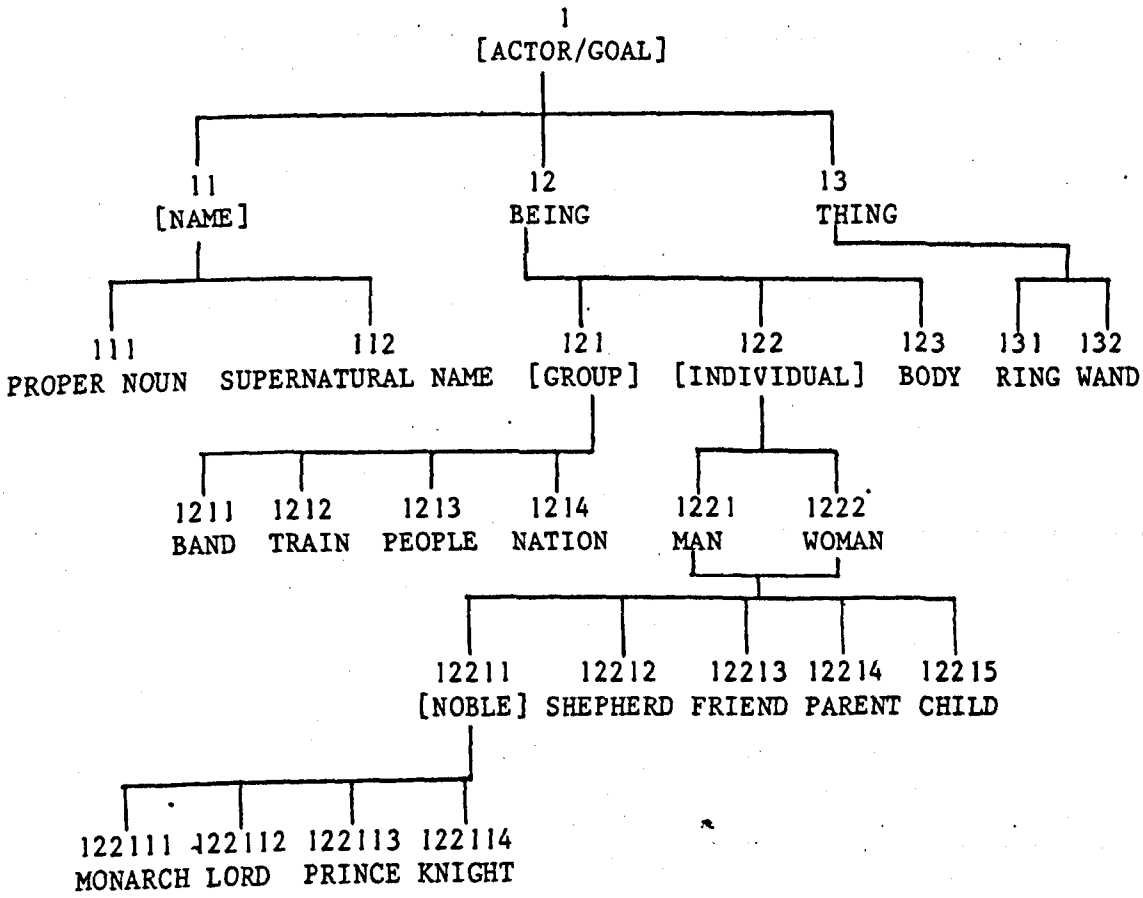
---

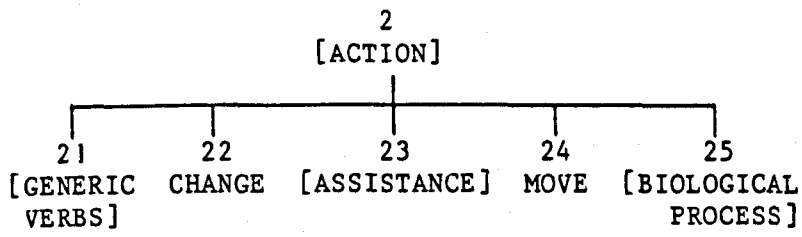
(1) Discussed below p.171-7.
(2) The evidence for this is based on conversation and a number of small oral surveys conducted amongst children, students and adults. The central question in both conversation and survey was "How would you describe a fairy?" and the responses obtained were remarkably similar. A fairy is small, female, winged, good, pretty and delicate creature whom no-one believes in. The total number of informants was forty four, so the evidence is not conclusive, but I have encountered no counter examples.

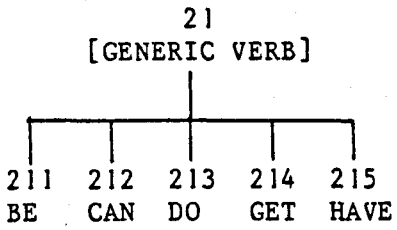
Table 3.6.b Hierarchical Table Derived from Analysis Two

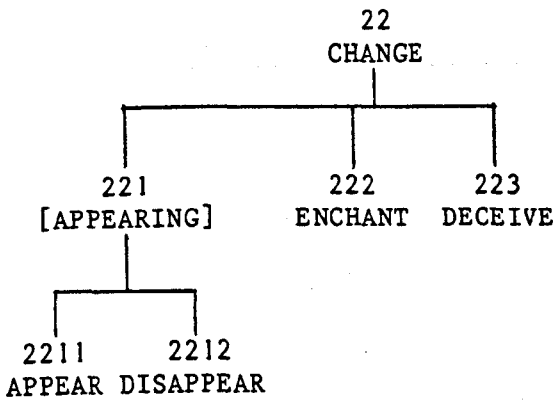
Note: Group names in square brackets are invented link terms rather than derived by the procedures described in Chapter 3.

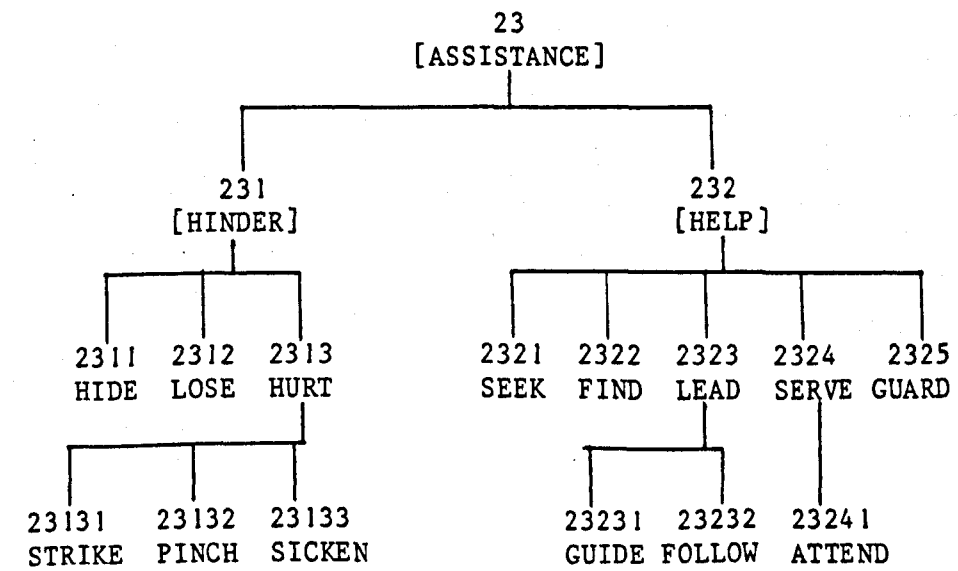


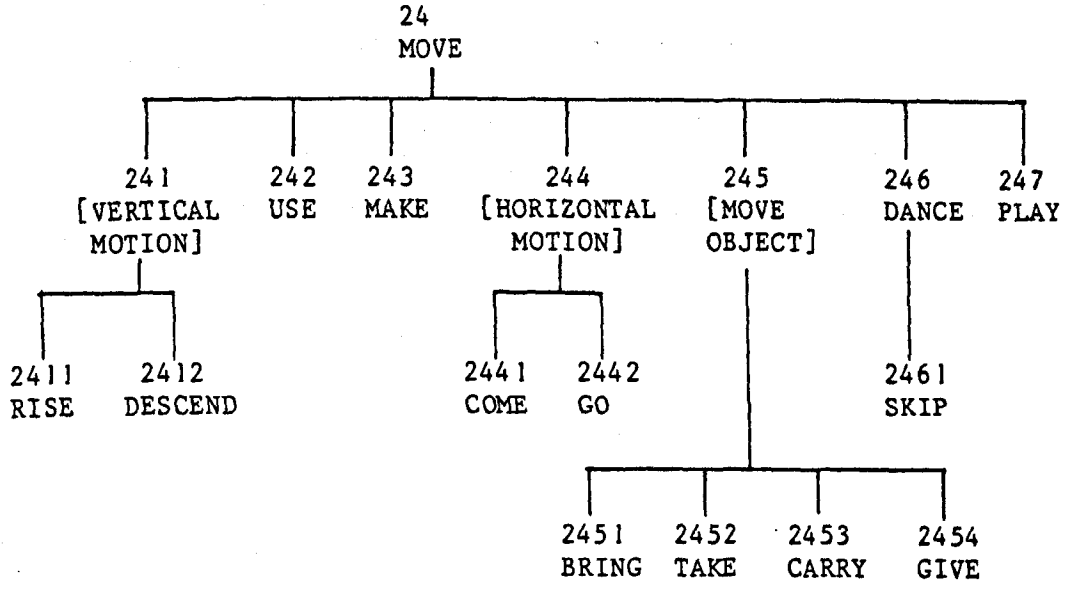


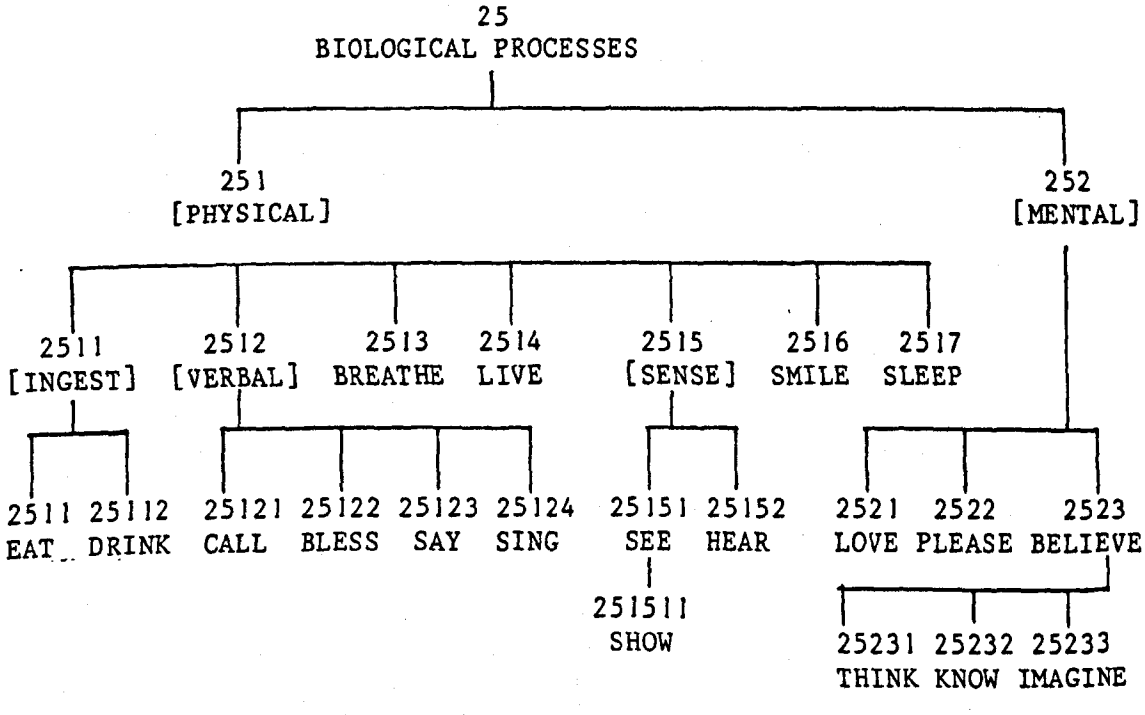

2
[ACTION]
21
[GENERIC VERBS]
22
CHANGE
23
[ASSISTANCE]
24
MOVE
25
[BIOLOGICAL PROCESS]

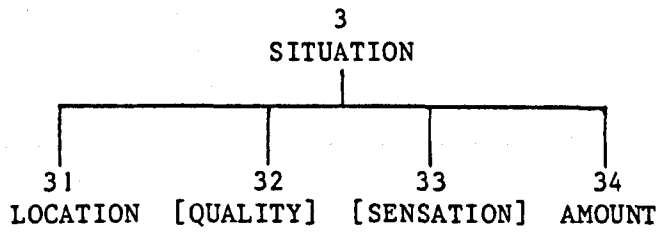

21
[GENERIC VERB]
211
BE
212
CAN
213
DO
214
GET
215
HAVE

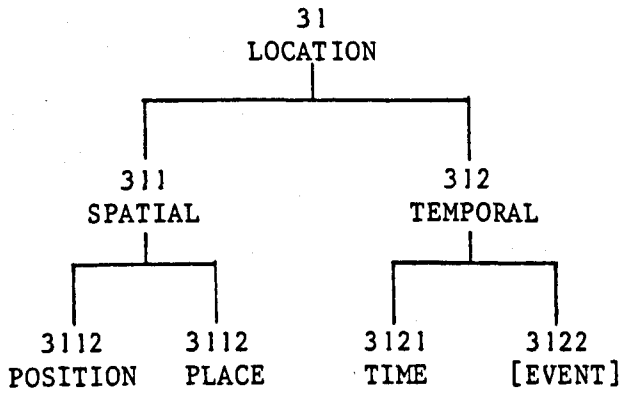

22
CHANGE
221
[APPEARING]
222
ENCHANT
223
DECEIVE
2211
APPEAR
2212
DISAPPEAR

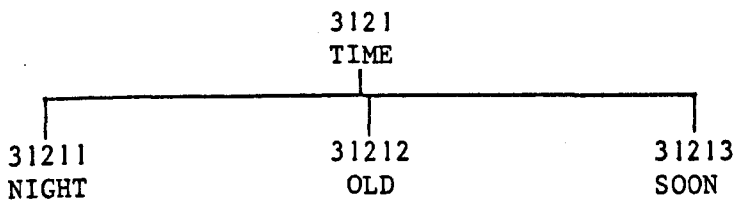

23
[ASSISTANCE]
231
[HINDER]
232
[HELP]
2311
HIDE
2312
LOSE
2313
HURT
2321
SEEK
2322
FIND
2323
LEAD
2324
SERVE
2325
GUARD
23131
STRIKE
23132
PINCH
23133
SICKEN
23231
GUIDE
23232
FOLLOW
23241
ATTEND

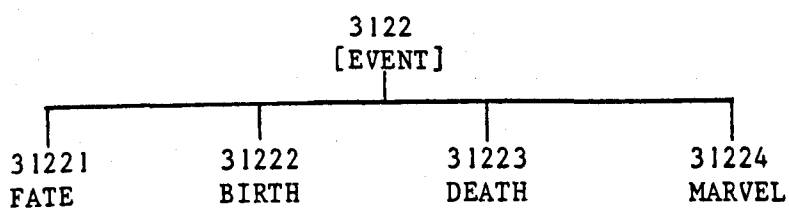

24
MOVE
241
[VERTICAL
MOTION]
242
USE
243
MAKE
244
[HORIZONTAL
MOTION]
245
[MOVE
OBJECT]
246
DANCE
247
PLAY
2411
RISE
2412
DESCEND
2441
COME
2442
GO
2461
SKIP
2451
BRING
2452
TAKE
2453
CARRY
2454
GIVE

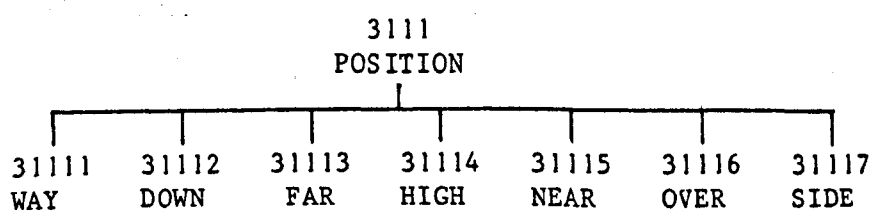

25
BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES
251
[PHYSICAL]
252
[MENTAL]
2511
[INGEST]
2512
[VERBAL]
2513
BREATHE
2514
LIVE
2515
[SENSE]
2516
SMILE
2517
SLEEP
2511
EAT
25112
DRINK
25121
CALL
25122
BLESS
25123
SAY
25124
SING
25151
SEE
25152
HEAR
2521
LOVE
2522
PLEASE
2523
BELIEVE
251511
SHOW
25231
THINK
25232
KNOW
25233
IMAGINE

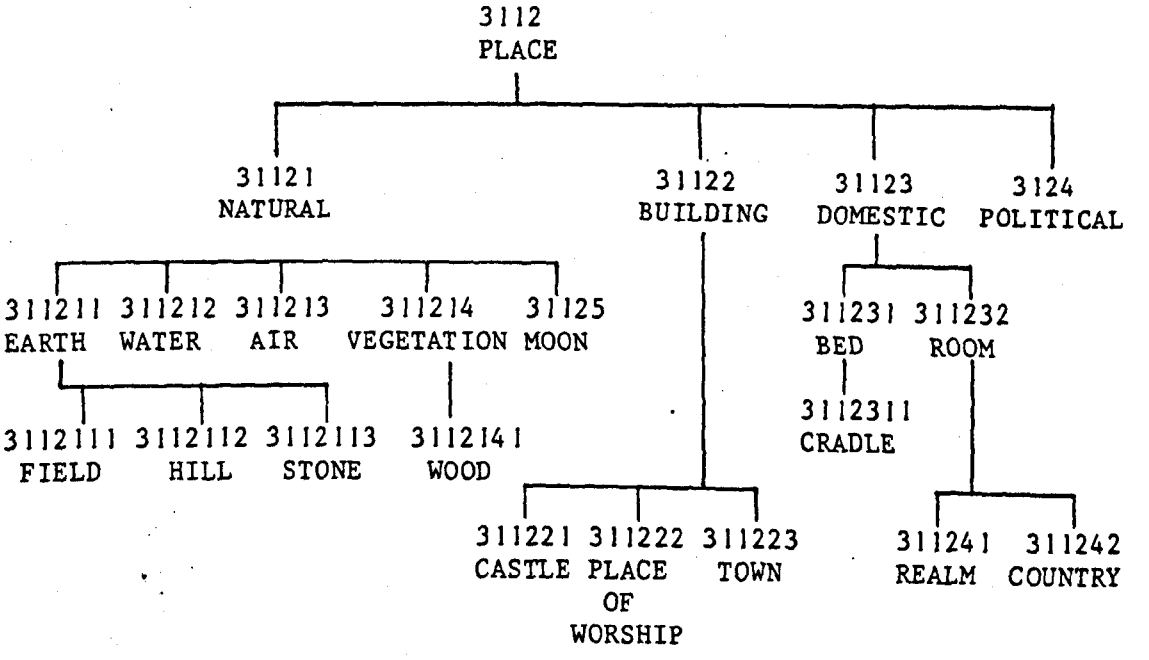

3
SITUATION
31
LOCATION
32
[QUALITY]
33
[SENSATION]
34
AMOUNT

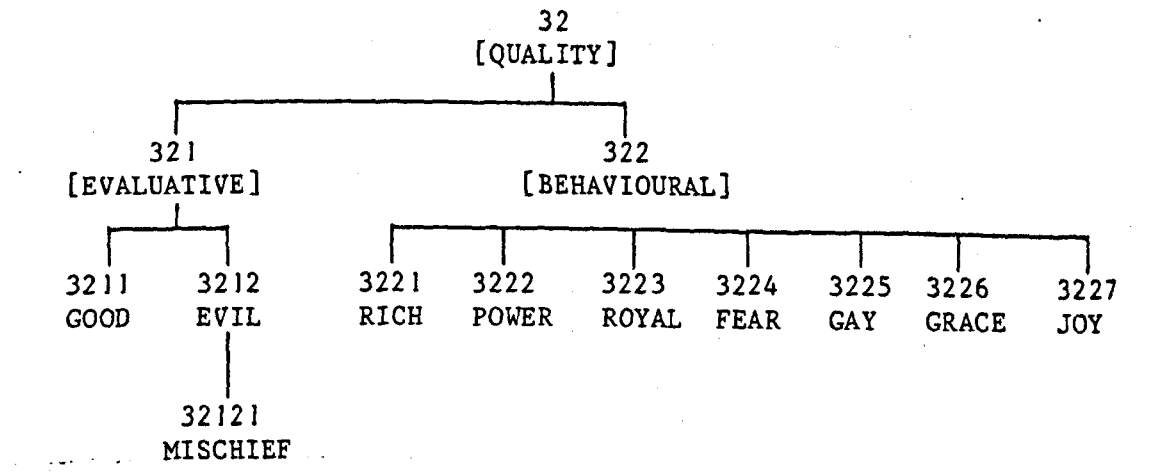

31
LOCATION
311
SPATIAL
312
TEMPORAL
3112
POSITION
3112
PLACE
3121
TIME
3122
[EVENT]

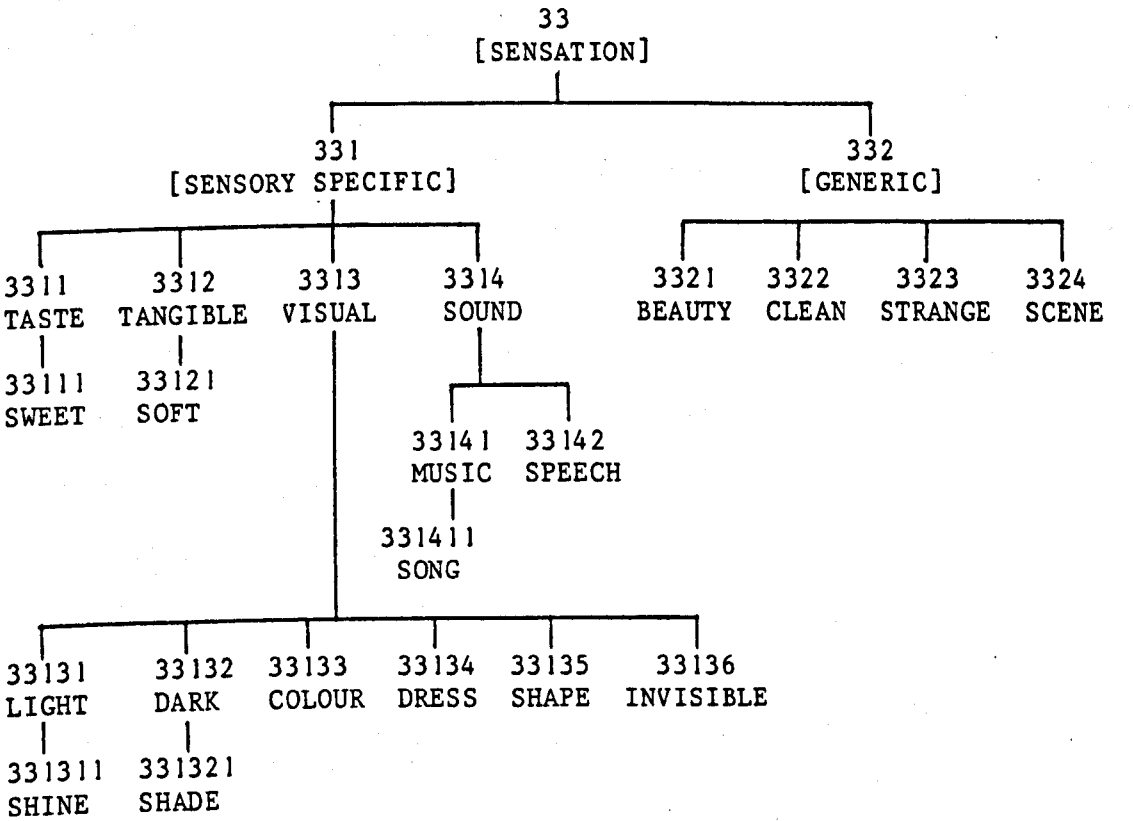

3121
TIME
31211
NIGHT
31212
OLD
31213
SOON

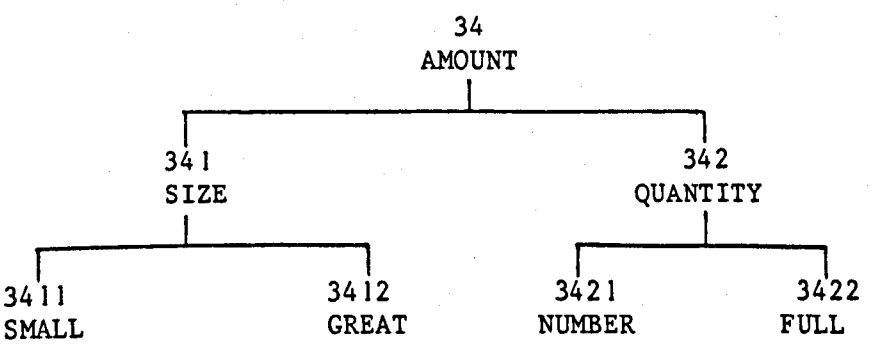

3122
[EVENT]
31221
FATE
31222
BIRTH
31223
DEATH
31224
MARVEL


3111
POSITION
31111
WAY
31112
DOWN
31113
FAR
31114
HIGH
31115
NEAR
31116
OVER
31117
SIDE


3112
PLACE
31121
NATURAL
31122
BUILDING
31123
DOMESTIC
3124
POLITICAL
311211
EARTH
311212
WATER
311213
AIR
311214
VEGETATION
31125
MOON
3112111
FIELD
3112112
HILL
3112113
STONE
3112141
WOOD
311221
CASTLE
311222
PLACE OF WORSHIP
311223
TOWN
311231
BED
311232
ROOM
3112311
CRADLE
311241
REALM
311242
COUNTRY


32
[QUALITY]
321
[EVALUATIVE]
322
[BEHAVIOURAL]
3211
GOOD
3212
EVIL
32121
MISCHIEF
3221
RICH
3222
POWER
3223
ROYAL
3224
FEAR
3225
GAY
3226
GRACE
3227
JOY


33
[SENSATION]
331
[SENSORY SPECIFIC]
332
[GENERIC]
3311
TASTE
3312
TANGIBLE
3313
VISUAL
3314
SOUND
3321
BEAUTY
3322
CLEAN
3323
STRANGE
3324
SCENE
33111
SWEET
33121
SOFT
33141
MUSIC
33142
SPEECH
331411
SONG
33131
LIGHT
33132
DARK
33133
COLOUR
33134
DRESS
33135
SHAPE
33136
INVISIBLE
331311
SHINE
331321
SHADE


34
AMOUNT
341
SIZE
342
QUANTITY
3411
SMALL
3412
GREAT
3421
NUMBER
3422
FULL

CHAPTER FOUR : THE ETYMOLOGY AND FORM OF 'FAIRY'

4.1 The Need for Description

Strictly speaking, as noted in Chapter 3, the material presented here breaks the thread of the argument and provides information which could be summarised without discussion in a few paragraphs. There are however several reasons for producing a full description of the object-word here, prior to interpretation of the results of the analyses, rather than relegating it to brief parenthetical or appendical comment.

Underlying the other reasons are the two overriding aims of this study, (A) and (B). Exhaustiveness implies a knowledge of as many aspects of the object-word as possible, rigour implies as tight a definition of the object of study as is feasible. More specifically the confusion of and manifold relations among supernatural names has already been mentioned[1]. It would seem however that modern use and commentators are reasonably certain that fairy has a clear and single meaning and a reasonable etymology which established (or retrospectively supports) that meaning. However the fact that fairy has a reasonably fixed meaning today does not mean that it did so yesterday. Nor, of course, does the general contemporary acceptance of a plausible etymology mean that that etymology is correct, or more importantly, that early users of fairy in English were influenced by a 'correct' etymology. Rather it seems to be the case both that the meaning of fairy has varied a great deal within the period 1320-1829, and that its early use, the foundation for much subsequent variation, was not simple or single but potentially at least influenced by a

---

(1) See above pp.72-3 and p.152.

large number of factors extant before its first use in written English. Such variation is also evident in the form of the word, so much in fact that one cannot define that form absolutely. Thus the object-word is itself neither an object with clear boundaries nor possessed of a meaning with clear boundaries. The arbitrary restrictions necessitated by rigorous study, of period, of language, of approach, of definition, of object-of-study actually tend to describe fairy as a word of fixed parameters whereas this does not seem to have been the case in early and oral use at least. Whether this is a feature of many or all words examined in a large data base, or a function of unusually frequent Emotive meaning in supernatural names (at least when they imply a high degree of belief in the Denoted entities by users) is beyond the province of this discussion. Whichever is true, examination of this inherent vagueness and confusion is crucial to an understanding of the word and an important caveat with which to preface the clearer observations derived from formal analysis.

More specific than this is the fact that many of the individual semantic features discussed below do not occur only within the period but prior to it, nor do they only occur in English; more importantly, understanding of some of those features and the rationale behind them in several cases depends on some knowledge of prior history of the word. This is particularly the case with repect to levels (1) and (2). It thus seems preferable to gather a number of necessary observations into one chapter than insert a series of overlapping arguments at several places in subsequent discussion.

One additional reason for the present chapter, though only a partial justification for its place here, is that several of the

points brought together here either have been ignored by commentators or not considered collectively. The general consequence is that the material presented here is apparently not available in other studies, the specific consequence, that the reader may reach this point without being aware that what appears to be a straightforward word of clear meaning and certain heritage is in fact by no means so certain. That certainty seems to be retrospectively justified by subsequent use, but not necessarily by early users of the word.

Finally there are ways of answering the questions asked in Chapter 1 which necessitate some appeal to meaning outside the corpus. For example the question "how does fairy mean?" can with respect to a fixed period be answered in terms of previous use, previous meaning, the language(s) it is derived from, its history up to the time the question was asked, relations previously held with other words etc. A possible conclusion, and one given some weight in the present study, is that fairy comes into the language with at least one meaning reasonably fixed (as with many loan-words) and that original meaning, determined therefore outside the corpus and the studied period, remains central throughout.

However important the above reasons are felt to be it is necessary when performing an analysis with aim (B) in mind that the object-word is clearly defined in order that it can be recognised and described. Purely pragmatic considerations necessitate therefore a description of fairy which is both phonological, including graphemic representations of that phonological form, and which takes into account the boundaries of the language within which that phonological form is taken to be the object-word and not a different word of another language. For example, it would be insufficient to describe an

English object-word as represented by the graphemic form <train> if it could not be distinguished from the French word of identical graphemic, though different phonological, form.

For all practical purposes the second description is normally achieved by an arbitrary restriction. As all languages are constantly changing, many are continually affected by others, and most have evolved from earlier states which, with hindsight, we call separate languages, the distinction between one natural language and another may by no means be clear. Consequently such a study as this can do no more than state that it is concerned with English and presume that its readers will have an intuitive grasp of the province of that language such that English and French homographs are not confused. In addition this study also presupposes that, in some sense, the language we call English is homogenous between its terminal dates i.e. between 1320 and 1829.

What follows is thus a description of the form of fairy and the criteria used for counting a text as containing an example of it, together with an outline of pertinent aspects of its early history. Supernatural names in the period of transition from Old English to Middle English deserve fuller study, and the early development of fairy could only fully be understood against such a background, but that is beyond the scope of this study. Rather, an attempt is made to show some of the meanings that may have accrued to fairy prior to its first recorded occurrence in English, in particular the notion of "fatedness" which is central to much subsequent discussion, to indicate the reasons why the etymology is not as straightforward as might be supposed, and to show that even if we can asign a simple history to the origination and development of the form, so many

traditions may be involved in that development that the meanings attached to that form are already varied and complex.

4.2 The Form of the Object-Word

The form of an object-word may have important stylistic implications, which could in turn affect Stylistic meaning and may also have an influence on other semantic areas, e.g. if the object-word frequently occurs as the last word in a rhyming couplet, its phonological form will influence collocation, particularly if the range of rhymes for the object-word within the language is limited. Those effects which the form of *fairy* seems to have on its environment are discussed below[1].

In terms of the corpus here studied the form of *fairy* has only two important aspects, the phonemic/graphemic and the syntactic. As the corpus is a collection of written texts it is concerned with types that have graphemic rather than phonemic shape. However purely graphemic description would suggest that this corpus contains ninety-three different object-words, or ninety-three different forms of the same word, as shown in Table 4.2.a. Even allowing for syntactic marking (generally for plurality) there are at least fifty different forms within the corpus which are regarded in this study as representing a single object-word.

The most efficient and elegant means of describing these forms as types of one lexeme is to define the lexeme phonemically and regard each graphemic token as a particular realisation of the stated phonemic shape. Establishing this corpus, therefore, involved an assumption that the analyst could recognise different graphemic representations of the stated phonemic form.

For the purposes of establishing

---

(1) In section 6.2.4.1.

TABLE 4.2.a.

Total Occurrences		Total Occurrences	
1	Faarie	1	Faee
1	Faerey	49	Faerie
37	Faeries	2	Faerily
131	Faery	1	Faerye
18	Faeryes	5	Faerys
1	Fai	5	Faie
7	Faierie	6	Faieries
8	Faiery	6	Faies
1	Fair	2	Faire
1	Fairees	1	Faires
1	Fairfolkis	4	Fairi
52	Fairie	477	Fairies
1	Fairly	724	Fairy
9	Fairye	7	Fairyes
4	Fairyism	12	Fairyland
128	Fairys	1	Fare
1	Faree	1	Fares
1	Farey	1	Fareys
20	Farie	9	Faries
7	Fary	3	Farye
2	Faryes	1	Faryies
24	Fay	4	Faye
1	Fayeree	14	Fayerie
1	Fayeries	1	Fayeriy
4	Fayery	8	Fayerye
2	Fayeryes	4	Fayes
4	Fayre	3	Fayree
1	Fayrees	3	Fayres
39	Fayrey	1	Fayri
44	Fayrie	67	Fayries
1	Fayrre	1	Fayrrey
55	Fayry	19	Fayrye
1	Fayryes	1	Fayryze
25	Fays	1	Fearie
3	Fearrie	1	Fee
1	Fees	1	Feire
1	Feirie	1	Feiries
3	Feries	1	Fery
1	Ferye	1	Feyrie
1	Feyrrye	1	Ffair
2	Ffarye	1	Ffayeries
2	Ffayre	2	Ffayrees
1	Ffayrie	1	Ffey
1	Ffeyre	1	Ffeyrye
5	Phairie	1	Phareis
4	Pharie	2	Pharies
1	Phary		

and analysing the corpus two basic phonemic forms were regarded as one object-word, these being /fɛərɪ/ and /fɛɪ/. The phonemes composing these words could be realised graphemically in any of the ways summarised in Table 4.2.b. Although this table potentially generates at least six hundred and sixty forms, comparison with Table 4.2.a will show that most of these are not realised in the corpus. Indeed many of them do not seem to have been realised in English at all. All of the forms of the object-word found in the corpus can be generated by Table 4.2.b, and most of the forms by which fairy (1) has been realised in English can be found in the corpus.

Table 4.2.b Rules For Generating all Graphemic Variants of the Object-Word in the Corpus

PHONEME	POSSIBLE GRAPHEMIC REALISATION
/f/	<f> <ff> <ph>
/ɛə/	<a> <aa> <ae> <ai> <aie> <ay> <aye> <e> <ea> <ei> <ey>
/r/	<r> <rr>
/ɪ/	<e> <ee> <ey> <i> <ie> <iy> <y> <ye> <y e> <0>
/eɪ/	<aee> <ai> <aie> <ay> <aye> <ee> <ey>

(Vertical arrows show order. 0 signifies an empty grapheme.)

(1) <fairy> is used as the citation form of the object word throughout this study as it is the form most frequently recorded in the corpus.

However there are in addition to the forms recorded in the corpus a number of borderline cases found in other texts which seem related to fairy but cannot be generated by the Table. These include farrisee(1), pharisee(2), farisee(3), pharises(4), farises(5), fairisees(6), fairesses(6), ferishers(7), fareeses(8), ferrishyn(9), fairises(10), ferrish(11), ferish(12), fairish(6), feriers(9), frary(14), fraries(15), vaairy(6), vairies(16), fairney(17), faireen(6) and farefolkis(13). Clearly some of these represent different attempts to render the same sounds, and some could be generated by a modified version of Table 4.2.b. The majority however could be accounted for by no clear rules for graphemic realisation of the defined phonemic shape. For fairy these forms represent the same kind of confusing periphery discussed in the following section for bog. Such a form as <farefolkis> would certainly seem to be derived

---

(1) Wright (1898-1905) s.v. fairy; Moor (1970) s.v.
(2) Rye (1895) s.v.frary; Briggs (1976) s.v.; Simpson (1976) p. 75.
(3) Wright (1898-1905) s.v. fairy; Keightley (1900) p.306; Briggs (1976) s.v.; Briggs (1977) p.217.
(4) Hartland (18900 p.89.
(5) Briggs (1977) p. 98.
(6) Wright (1898-1905) s.v. fairy.
(7) Wright (1898-1905) s.v. fairy; Briggs (1976) s.v.
(8) Simpson (1976) p. 75.
(9) Briggs (1976) s.v; Briggs (1977) p. 217.
(10) Briggs and Tongue (1965) p.34; Tongue (1970) pp. 78-9.
(11) Moore (1971) p. 34.
(12) Moore (1971) p. 36.
(13) Jamieson (1808) s.v.
(14) Rye (1895) s.v.
(15) Folklore VII (1896) pp.3-4; Keightley (1900) p. 306; Briggs (1976) s.v.
(16) Briggs and Tongue (1965) p.33.
(17) Heslop (1892) s.v.

from fair and folk[1], the fair folk being a common euphemism for fairies[2], yet it may well be formed with the underlying /fɛərɪ/ in mind, as the meanings or Denotata of farefolkis and fairy would pretheoretically seem to be identical. As only one example of this kind was found for potential inclusion in the corpus it was thought preferable to exclude it rather than modify the rules for specifying the object-word.

It should be noted that Table 4.2.b operates on the assumption of only two phonemic forms. In all probability this is an oversimplification. It is likely that many of the unusual graphemic forms of fairy represent different phonemic forms, e.g. Scottish <phary> or <pharie>[3] may represent /farɪ/ rather than /fɛərɪ/. It is assumed therefore that fairy entered the language with one recognisable phonemic shape and was subsequently pronounced differently in different dialects of English. The two phonemic words taken to define the object-word are thus best regarded as descriptions of an underlying or original form, on the analogy of the allophone[4], rather than a precise description of the pronunciation represented by each token. In most cases it would appear that graphemic variation

---

(1) See for example Douglas (1874). Edwards (1974) pp.25-6 suggests that it is not derived from fair but OE faran = "to go". This may have been the original euphemism but if so it seems to have developed into the more common fair folk. In the corpus fair collocates forty five times with fairy, and folk twenty one times, both totals being significantly above average.

(2) On euphemism see below, section 7.2. Examples of fair folk are 1576/01/001; Jamieson (1808) s/v. A similar euphemism is the Welsh Tylwylth Teg, i.e. "the fair family".

(3) As in 1568/02/001; 1600/05/001,002; 1610/01/006; 1685/01/003.

(4) "two or more sounds which differ non-distinctively but are in the same range on all the axes of distinctiveness are calleda allophones of the same phoneme." Sommerstein (1977) p.3. By analogy two or more phonemic forms may be regarded as realisations of one underlying form (or 'alloform'.)

is a result of the lack of universal orthographic conventions in Middle English, as the majority of graphemic variants disappear with the advent of printing. There is, however, at least one graphemic variant which appears to have stylistic associations slightly different from the standard <fairy>, namely the spelling <faery>. This is discussed below in Chapter 6.

4.3 The Etymology of Fairy

Many words used to Refer to the supernatural are of uncertain or obscure origin, often existing in an imprecise matrix of relations with groups of other words either related in form but differing in meaning, or different in form but related in meaning. This is the problem which is central to this study at level (2). Groups which best demonstrate this confusion are those centring on bog, bug and puck[1]. One could describe these three groups as one, based on the formula:

/bilabial plosive + back vowel + alveolar fricative/

which encodes such meanings as "frightening" and "revolting". However such a description must on the one hand account for possible relations with words such as boghost, barghest, phooka, bugalug, boobagger, tantarabogus and on the other for the meanings of homonyms, such as "scarecrow", "nightjar", "soft land", "pimple", "nest of caterpillars", "boastful" and "railway truck". Clearly an examination of these interrelations must consider not only standard etymology but also folk etymology, and a complex series of relations between homonyms and homophones. In principle such an explication might be possible, in practice it is not. To account for the meaning "nightjar", for example, which might be postulated as a separate lexeme from puck meaning "demon", one must be aware of the folk belief that the nightjar attacked cattle and drank their blood and/or caused disease, as did demons called pucks. The nightjar is called goatsucker for a similar reason. However such an explication also must be aware that elves, witches, hares, hedgehogs, fairies and other creatures were held to be responsible either for nocturnal attacks on cattle or

---

(1) Wasson (1957); Henry (1959)

for taking the nourishment from them[1]. Thus not only is the question of the separateness of the lexemes difficult to determine, but also the meaning(s) of those lexemes are part of a larger set of relationships between the behaviour of real creatures, beliefs about the behaviour of supernatural creatures and words used to Refer to all these phenomena.

Similarly the meaning "scarecrow" for bug(ge) might be treated as a separate lexeme from the meaning "object of dread", were it not for the fact that scaring crows is obviously related to frightening people. Yet if bug = "scarecrow" is regarded as the same lexeme as bug = "demon", what is the status of the forms bugalug, bucca, bucca-bo, bogle, boggart and boggy-bo[2] which all mean "scarecrow", but only some of which are recorded as also having a meaning approximating to "demon"?

Furthermore many other words Denoting the supernatural or similar to words Denoting the supernatural also mean "scarecrow". How are we to decide which forms are derived from "demon" or vice versa, or if both are derived from an ur-form meaning "frightening object"; which word should be listed as 'the same lexeme' and which separated; or whether it is necessary to explicate the relations between other supernatural names and "scarecrow" in order to obtain a full

---

(1) See for example: Willan (1811) s.v. toad-bit; Cockayne (1864) II. 14/15, 16/17, 156/7, 174/5, 290/1, 304/5; Courtney (1887) p.177; Atkinson (1891) pp. 87-9 and 93; Hole (1945) pp. 50, 56, 95; Stewart (1970) pp. 134-5; Moore (1971) pp. 95, 147-8; Sternberg (1971) p.133; Rudkin (1973) pp. 73-5; Evans (1974) pp. 156-8; Hackwood (1974) p. 150 col. 2; Kirk (1976) pp. 53-4; White (1976) p. 46; Andrews (1977) p. 81; MacNeil (1977) p. 108.

(2) These forms can be found in Wright (1898-1905) and Murray (1933). The problem is not as straightforward as this account suggests as there are identical forms with other meanings, forms which seem related to bug which have those meanings some of which also mean "demon" and some of which do not, and the same meanings are encoded by forms which are only distantly related to bug.

understanding of the (possible) relations in these groups?

Similar problems can be found in many other areas of lexis, particularly in vocabularies drawn largely from oral rather than written varieties. Indeed it may be true that the notions of distinct lexemes and 'etymological laws' may be more artificial than the lexicographer might like to believe. It would certainly seem that the closer a dictionary or word list comes to recording the actual oral vocabulary currently in use, the greater are such problems. Oral language makes use of many nonce-forms, lexical items subject to fashion, slang, colloquialism and vocabularies drawn from areas of casual or temporary interest, many of which, unsurprisingly, are never collected in dictionaries and, if they are collected, are often recorded with meanings somewhat more restricted than those found in usage, for usage often employs words with very vague Applicability.

Fairy is one word which enters into such a complex of relations and it is part of the task of the present work to explicate some of the possible uses the word may have been made to serve and some of the most important of the relations it entered into. In the first place its etymology is by no means clear, although one etymology now seems to be generally accepted. Etymologies for fairy have generally been suggested as derived from words Denoting female supernatural creatures in other languages. Thus it has been derived from the last syllable of Latin nympha(1), and from Arabic peri(2). Alternatively it has been derived from words with supernatural associations, or words connoting properties regarded as attributes of fairies. Amongst these are derivations from fair(3), OE fagan(4), and Latin fatua(5). The

---

(1) See Keightley (1900) p.4 for this and other unlikely etymologies.
(2) Keightley (1900) pp. 4-5; Edwards (1974) pp. 15-17
(3) Brand (1853) vol II p. 477; Keightley (1900) p.4
(4) Keightley (1900) p.4; Edwards (1974) p. 26
(5) Coote (1879)

accepted etymology also follows the pattern of derivation from a word taken to mean female supernatural creatures[1]. Ultimately it would seem to be derived from Latin fatum = "thing said". This gave fata = "fate", a neuter plural which, it is supposed, was misinterpreted in the Dark Ages as feminine singular, fata = "female fate, goddess", and these goddesses of fate were supposedly identified with Greek Lachesis, Atropos and Clotho and subsequently, following the Roman conquest of the Celtic peoples, further identified with various Celtic female deities manifested as tripartite. The evidence for such goddesses (known collectively as matronae) is largely archaeological and generally in Roman stonework. Several examples may be seen in museums along Hadrian's Wall, such as a stone relief at Housesteads, Northumberland depicting three identical hooded deities[2]; other examples can be found at Ancaster, Lincs; Kirkham, Lancs; and Cirencester, Glous.[3], which suggest a general adoption of the tripartite goddess(es) by the Roman invaders. It is presumed therefore that fata became attached to the Celtic goddess(es) in vulgar Latin and, as that language became Old French, the /t/ was dropped to give *fa'a, thence *fae. There seems to be no written evidence for these changes.

The first recorded Old French forms occur in Old French and Anglo-Norman romances of the twelfth century and later, and in collections of tales and anecdotes made in Latin, also in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is presumed either that the association of classical and Celtic goddesses is preserved in these romances (i.e. the fays of romance are derived from older Celtic goddesses) or that a further identification was made, this time by the romanciers, between

---

(1) Maury (1896); Keightley (1900) pp.5-11; Edwards (1974) pp. 4-5; Chambers (n.d.) pp. 150-151.
(2) Birley (1976) p.49.
(3) Ross (19749 pp. 269, 270 and plate X.

Celtic goddesses called *fa'a and creatures in romance. In support of such an argument one could point to such features as the frequency with which Celtic females appear in multiples of three, their gifts of prophecy, their association with spinning or their association with the world of the dead. There are many scholarly works which seek to prove that the Arthurian cycle of romances and some related romances are derived from Celtic religion or myth(1).

This identification firstly gives a noun fai, fae, fay referring to an individual female with supernatural powers, probably best translated as "enchantress", so that we must suppose that the substantive faierie is derived from this, meaning "enchantment". Later, this was again misunderstood or perhaps extended to signify "fairyland", and as a plural "enchantresses", whose singular was then mistakenly taken to be not fay but fairie. At this stage of development, perhaps at about the middle of the thirteenth century, this complex of meanings was carried into romances written in Middle English, the first recorded examples occurring in the Auchinleck manuscript (a.1330)(2).

There are clearly many imperfections and difficulties in this, the most generally accepted, etymology. In the first place different commentators give different accounts of the precise development of the word and of the interrelations supplied by the evidence. All agree that fata was interpreted as feminine and eventually gave four

---

(1) Such as Nutt (1897); Cross (1915); Loomis (1936), (1945), (1956), (1959), (1974); Paton (1960); Newstead (1946).
(2) It seems likely that the manuscript was a compilation of stories including romances originating in different places, see Hibbard (1924). Thus it is probably evidence of a relatively widespread use of the word in Middle English before 1330. The occurrences of fairy are : 1330/01 Kyng Alisaunder 1 occurrence; 1330/02 Lai le Freine 1 occurrence; 1330/03 Reinbrun 2 occurrences; 1330/04 Degare 2 occurrences; 1330/05 Sir Orfeo 5 occurrences.

distinct meanings in Old French which passed into English, namely (1) enchantment, illusion; (2) fairyland, land of illusion; (3) human with special powers; (4) supernatural beings; but they differ as to which came first, and which developed from which. Although this etymology seems plausible in essence, it necessarily relies rather heavily upon vague processes of 'identification' and 'misunderstanding'. Most important is the fact that many if not most of the occurrences of Old French fee and Middle English fay, or fairy are not nouns and, if nouns, frequently do not denote or refer to 'enchantress' or 'female spirit'. In a sample survey of one Anglo-Norman and six Old French works which use the word, of fifteen occurrences ten are adjectival, four nouns and one doubtful, being in noun form but used adjectivally (Orva la fee)[1]. Three of the nouns occur in one work[2]. By far the most popular phrase is c'est chose faée, which is used six times of these fifteen. The Dictionnaire de L'Ancienne Langue Francaise[3] is able to quote many examples of faer, 'to enchant', almost all of which are of the past participle fae, i.e. an 'adjectival' form, but offers very few examples of fee, noun, 'enchantress'.

This would suggest that the notion of fairy in its earliest uses is not primarily to Denote creatures, but a quality of phenomena or events which may or may not be associated with creatures. In Middle English before 1400 only two of thirty-five occurrences seem certainly

---

(1) The romances examined were:
Benoit de Sainte-Maure: Le Roman de Troie c. 1155-1160; Thomas: The Romance of Horn (Anglo-Norman) c. 1170; Les Enfances Guillaume a. 1205; Aiol : chanson de gest c.1205-1215; Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de meun : Le Roman de la Rose c.1275-80; Jean Froissart : Meliador c. 1280; Guillaume de Palerne 13th century.
(2) Froissart : Meliador (1895) ls. 7968, 28366, 30343. Notice furthermore that this is one of the latest of these works.
(3) Godefroy (1884).

to refer to creatures and both these are plural (or possibly collective):

> Prosepina and al hire fayerye
> Disporten hem and maken melodye
> 1400/01/006

> This maketh that they ben no fayeryes
> 1400/01/010

Certainly many of the other occurrences in this period could be interpreted as Referring to creatures (a further fourteen) but none are singular nouns referring to individual creatures and, when Reference to any individual creature is made fairy takes the form of an adjective which modifies a noun which Denotes 'creature', e.g.

> A fairy knizt herin is
> 1330/03/001

There is no instance of fay or fairy being used in Middle English to mean 'enchantress' before Morgne la Fay (1400/02/002) and the only other probable examples are Galathe was a fairye and Galathe, ye which was a fairye (1440/01/001 + 002) and by Nygromancye of a Faee (1505/01/001). Even here la Faye, as in Orva la fee above, may perhaps be better translated "the magical", "the strange", "(of) unusual power" or "(of) the strangeness" than "the fairy", the appellation being probably attributive rather than defining, as in Sir Brennor le Noire or Balin le Savage(1).

Thus, though it is certainly true that fay is used on some occasions to mean 'enchantress' it does not seem to have been the most frequent or most central use of the more frequent term fairy. Although

---

(1) These are both taken from Malory (1969). As Malory seems to have collected a large number of such names from disparate sources his collection provides a good illustration of the vagueness of connection between name and epithet, as in: vol I p.12 Sir Uwain le Blanchemains; p.33 Melot de la Roche; p.40 Griflet le Fise de Dieu; p.44 Balin le Savage; p.162 Sir Sagramoure le Desirous; p.283 Sir La Cote Male Taile; p.284 Sir Uwain les Avoutres; p. 319 Hebes le Renoumes; p.369 Sir Nabon le Noire; p.370 Sir Nanowne le Petite; p.370 Isoud la Blanche Mains; p.398 Sir Breunor le Noire; p.454 Sir Uwain le Fise de Roi Uriens.

the meanings seem intuitively to be related, it has never been made clear precisely how a word meaning 'fate' in an abstract or general sense could come to mean 'enchantress', and thence give a further generic word 'enchanted'. It seems more in accord with the evidence and also more likely, that the notion of fate "degenerated" into that of enchantment, and that this notion of 'fatedness' is the central connotation of *fairy*, with *fay* being derived from, or developed parallel to this conceptual development. It seems likely that the generally accepted etymology, in following previous etymologies and attempting to derive Modern English *fairy* from an earlier form meaning 'unusual female creature' is committing an error made by those earlier attempts, that of reading the later meaning into earlier forms. Whereas the more evidence one considers the more likely it seems that the idea of a female supernatural being as specifically *faee* does not antedate the general idea of *fairie*, hence the etymology may not be based upon *fata* giving *fa'a*, but on an original term for the general concept. Such a concept may lie in the vague idea of 'fatedness', a quality in the world which can control and direct the actions of humanity, and hence is more powerful than humanity. For example there is clearly a link between the idea of fate and that of death. Death is perhaps the one mystery for which people feel they can never have an explanation fully adequate to their experience and the supernatural, in its widest sense, has always been connected with death, and is probably universally so(1).

A similar connection can be found in Old English. The word *faege* meaning "fated, doomed to die" was a commonplace of Old English poetry. It often seems to carry with it a semi-supernatural idea of

(1) For further discussion on the association of *fairy* and death see below, section 6.3 .

'the marked man', such as is still evident in the modern notion of 'the bullet with my number on it'. Perhaps such fatalism was a response to frequent warfare. Certainly it is an expression of the central place of battle in the Anglo-Saxon scheme of things. The notion is retained in the Scottish word fey. By extension it was used to mean "destined", "dead", "accursed", "feeble", "cowardly". It is easy to see how the notion of some form of supernatural or divine selection could accompany use of this word, as part of its Associative meaning, especially in relation to the Denotational meanings "fated" and "accursed".

In this connection one might suggest that the notion of female supernatural beings who mark or select the dead may have been an important one in Anglo-Saxon pagan belief and may therefore have added a connotation to faege which encouraged this association. The word waelcyrge (valkyrie) meaning "choosers of the slain", is used to gloss Bellone , Allecto, Venus, erinys and tisifone [1] and is regarded by a least one commentator as a "fierce and vengeful spirit of the underworld"[2]. Judith, shortly before she kills Holofernes, is called ides aelfscinu[3]. Ides is also used of Grendel's mother "apparently as a synonym with aglaecwif, a 'formidable' or 'terrifying woman'"[4]. Aelf means "supernatural" and -scinu has supernatural connotations, belonging to a group of related words concerned with 'appearance', 'shining' and 'skin'. Scinn means both "skin" and "phantom, illusion, magical image"; scinncraeft is "sorcery, magic", scinnes is "radiance", scinan "shine", sciene "beautiful, brilliant, light", scinnhiw "spectre, illusion". The two groups are separable

(1) Serjeantson (1936).
(2) Chadwick (1959).
(3) Beowulf (1954).
(4) Chadwick (1959).

only by virtue of the long and short vowels but, as Storms says, the length of the vowel in scinn is uncertain:

> It is uncertain whether we have a long or a short vowel. The etymology points to a long vowel, the form scinn with double n to a short one.(1)

Insofar as all examples seem connected by the notion of "visual appearance" it seems reasonable to suggest that Anglo-Saxons were aware of a group of supernatural beings having a shining appearance. Whether this group was evil or not before the advent of Christianity cannot be determined. In Salomon and Saturn a fiend (feond) is called scines. Scinnis used to gloss fantasia, portentum, imaginatio, praestigium, monstrum, nebula, necromantia, and is used in the Leechdoms to mean "affected by apparations, haunted" (2). It seems to differ from sickness caused by devils, elves or dwarfs in that there is an implication of hallucination. Storms relates scin to the ignis fatuus, which may be one source of the conception of supernatural radiance or nimbus:

> The magical connotation of scin probably arose from flames appearing in decaying trees or in marshy districts and caused by the phosphorescent effects of the rotting process. The flame and the light produced in this way flares up in continually varying spots, thus creating an impression of dancing spirits.(3)

Judith therefore is given all the connotations of a death-dealing, supernatural female.

In one charm mention is also made of sige-wif, i.e. "victory-women", who have supernatural power(4). Thus the bees in this charm, Judith, waelcyrge (which normally Denotes "witch") and Grendel's mother are all described as females who are connected with

---

(1)Storms (1948) p.114.
(2) scin-seoc. Cockayne (1864-6) I.364.
(3) Storms (1948) p.114.
(4) Storms (1948) p.140.

death and have supernatural power. Though the evidence is slight, one might conclude that this conception was available to speakers of Old English, though by the time of the importation of fairy such an association could hardly have been a central one, for those speakers had long been Christian.

One might wish to argue therefore that even if the notion of the "fatal woman" was the central one in Old French (and this does not seem to be the case) in Middle English sufficient similarity between the connotations, forms and sounds of Old English faege and Anglo-Norman faierie existed to promote the connotation "fatedness" to the central semantic position. That faierie took over some of the connotations of faege may particularly seem to be the case in view of the fact that Laȝamon's Brut(1), one of the last works to use faege extensively is also one of the first to use material from the romance cycles. Furthermore Laȝamon uses aluen (2)to describe creatures associated with the birth, weapon and death of Arthur (hence his 'fate'), creatures whose functions are later fulfilled by Morgan la fee, the Lady of the Lake and other fays in later versions. This suggests that the notion of "fatedness" was associated with the romance material, but had not yet been encapsulated in the word faierie..

Thus at the close of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries occur the following recorded phenomena. Firstly Old French faer has produced Anglo-Norman faee in a romance of c.1170(3) which is almost certainly derived from an Old English story. Twenty years

---

(1) Laȝamon (1847).
(2) Laȝamon (1847) II ls. 384, 385, 463, 489, 500; III ls. 144, 145.
(3) Thomas (1964) The Romance of Horn.

later we have a romance in early Middle English whose immediate source is French (Wace's Brut) but which also appears to have incorporated some local, probably Celtic, tales for which an Old English word alven is used, and which also employs a word similar both in form and meaning to Old French/Anglo-Norman faee, including the forms <faeie>, <feie>, <faei>, <faie> and <feye>(1).

By 1320 the three traditions have sufficiently intermingled so that one word, faierie, may do duty in stories from any source, and faege is diminished in use (though not totally redundant). There can thus be no clear demonstration of the possible influences of OE faege on OF faer, and the point should not be pressed, but there remains a strong possibility that the Associative meaning of the Old English word is in part transferred to that of the import. However this may be, the notion of "fatedness" does seem to be a strong one in the development of fairy in English from its earliest occurrences, and this is particularly evident in the development of later associations such as 'death', 'hurt', 'sickness', 'birth' and 'love'(2).

The hypothesis of faierie preceding fai in Old French would be happier if there were an intermediary Medieval Latin form *fatalia or *fataria, for which there is no evidence and the forms themselves seem unlikely. Keightley says:

> In the Middle Ages there was in use a Latin verb, fatare, derived from fatum or fata, and signifying to enchant (3).

However the only recorded examples of this verb seem to be twelfth century or later, by which time Old French fae existed, and

---

(1) Clearly there is sufficient similarity with Old French/Anglo-Norman forms to suggest a connection in the minds of anyone knowing both languages. For detailed references see Lazamon (1847) glossary.
(2) See below pp. Orfeo 1330/05; Chaucer's Merchant's Tale 1400/01; Launfal 1460/02 and perhaps Reinbrun 1330/03 seem to connect fairy with the dead.
(3) Keightley (1900) p.6.

those Latin examples all appear to be participles. It would therefore not contravene the evidence to suggest that the recorded Latin forms are Latinate borrowings of a previously extant popular word. Grimm quotes a thirteenth century manuscript:

> Aquisgrani licitur Ays, et dicitur eo, quod Karolus tenebat ibi quandam mulierem fatatam, sive quandam fatam, quae alio nomine nimpha vel dea vel adriades.(1)

Latham(2) cites fatalitatis, fatatus and fatata , which are translated as "fairy nature", "haunted" and "fairy" respectively. Although no specific source is cited these seem to come from Map's De Nugis Curialium (c.1190)(3) and Gervase of Tilbury's Otia Imperialia (c.1212)(4), in which case these three texts seem to constitute the entire evidence for the Latin verb fatare. As these texts all seem to be later than the earliest Old French sources, the evidence is not clear cut. The Latin forms may, as Keightley argues, represent an earlier Latin verb which became Old French faierie, or they may represent an attempt to express in medieval Latin a concept already current in vulgar speech. In either case Old French faee may be derived from these or may have developed along parallel lines as Gervase also uses fadus and fadae with what appears to be a nominal function, so that they may represent a noun (= 'a fairy') rather than a participle (= 'enchanted'). The contexts of use are translated by Ritson as:

> some of this kind of larvae, which they named fadae, we have heard to be lovers

---

(1) Grimm (1883-8) p.405. He cites the source a "Isodori etym. 8, 11 92".
(2) Latham (1965) s.v.
(3) Map (1923) Dist. II Chap. XII.
(4) Gervase (1856).

and:

> I know not if it were a true horse, or if it were a fairy (fadus), as men assert.(1)

Here in the earliest uses there exists the same ambiguity that persists throughout the period examined. It is seldom clear if fairy (or fee, or fadus) is being used as a nominal or with a modifying function of some kind, i.e. whether the Entity described is regarded as an Object or an Item.

The evidence of the cognate forms Italian fada (2) and Spanish fada, hada(3) affirm the accepted etymology of fay(4). It seems at least possible therefore that the two forms fay and fairy did not develop one from the other, but each under the influence of the other from Medieval Latin roots which were themselves related, and both were used to characterise a particular quality in experience which can be called 'fatedness' and was probably felt to be a particular feature of Celtic tales. The invention of, or increased use of, fairy in the twelfth century can be explained as the adoption of a generic term used to cover a set of tales and beliefs for which the Welsh themselves seem to have had no term. For it seems that Welsh names for supernatural beings tend either to be specific, unique to a particular place or circumstance, or euphemistic, such as Tylwyth Teg (the fair family)(5). Old French faierie seems to be a more objective term, less culturally restricted than these names. The Celtic peoples possessed a series of beliefs not felt to be totally homogenous by the culture to which they belonged, but appearing so to a culture which found each belief alien. In a similar manner

---

(1) Ritson (1831) p.13
(2) Battaglia (1961-75) s.v.
(3) Boggs et al (1948) s.v.
(4) For additional corroborative examples see Buck (1949) pp.1499-1500
(5) On the Tylwtyh Teg see Briggs (1976) s.v.; Briggs (1977) pp.120-1, 142, 146, 223.

Christianity seems to have grouped together multifarious Entities of teutonic belief under the term devils.

Thus, despite possible origins in oral vocabulary, it is best regarded as primarily a literary word, and therefore not initially an item in the vocabulary of the illiterate in Medieval England. To express their supernatural beliefs medieval peasants in England almost certainly retained Old English words. Some of these passed out of usage; some were emptied of specific meaning and equated with the Christian devil; some occasionally occur in literature but most seem to go underground for a long period, preserved largely in oral tradition, to re-emerge in records of later folk belief.

Of the first kind OE scin, scinlac, drymann, ent, orc, aeglaeca seem to disappear by the fifteenth century(1). Of the second, most aspects of Anglo-Saxon pagan belief seem to have been regarded by Christians as evil and therefore devilish. Many Old English words used of the supernatural come to characterise generic evil, or personified evil, i.e. devils, or the specific source of evil, the Devil. Elf (OE alven) seems occasionally to be used in this sense. Feond and deoful are the words most frequently used. Puca, bugge and schucke are also used with these senses, particularly in Early Middle English. Those Old English supernatural names preserved in literature are generally those in the latter group; used to characterise evil. Their occurrence correlates well with alliterative traditions. In St Juliana and Seinte Marharete schucke may well have been chosen for its alliterative value(2), as may pouke in several occurrences in Piers

---

(1) Serjeantson (1936).
(2) Seinte Marhete (1866). p.9 ; p.17. St Juliana, (1872) p.56.

Plowman[1], and thurse in Morte Arthure and Seinte Marharete[2]. It seems that the change in literary fashion from traditional alliteration to French rhyme not only caused a certain conflict between rival vocabularies for one semantic area, as it were, (resulting in, for example, the tendency for fairy to replace elf, or gobelyn to replace thurse and schuck) but also a reduction in alliterative verse also reduced the need for a rich vocabulary of synonyms. Conversely one can see that the alliterative revival tended to reintroduce such synonyms. In addition one could note that in Old French and Anglo-Norman it is easy to rhyme on /ɛ/ or /i:/[3], and this facility was useful to Middle English writers adopting the French style[4], tending therefore to reinforce the use of fairy (and perhaps supporting the contention that it is primarily a literary word).

Yet, although the records indicate that OE supernatural names declined in Middle English, both in frequency of use and in specificity of meaning, many of the displaced words seem to have been alive in oral traditions. Bugge becomes part of a complex and widespread set of meanings[5]. Schucke seems to preserve its original meaning of "phantom" in East Anglian dialect Shuck and Shock[6].

---

(1) Langland (1867-73) A text X.62; XI.158; B text XVI.51; C text XIX.279; XIX.282

(2) Morte Arthure (1847) 1.1100. Seinte Marherete (1866) p.12.

(3) For a good example employing faee see Thomas (1964) ls. 437-454.

(4) E.g. Chaucer (1970) Wife of Bath ls.859-69 fayerye/compaignye; ls.871-2 dayeryes/fayeryes; Sir Thopas ls. 799 and 802 espye/Fairye; ls. 814-5 Fayerye/symphonye.
Gower (1901) Confessio Amantis I. ls. 2316-17 faie/assaie; II ls. 963-4 certifie/faierie; II ls. 1019-1020 faie/delaie; V ls. 7073-4 faierie/ here yhe.

(5) For discussion of bugge and its cognates see Allen (1935-6) and Henry (1959).

(6) These names have been recorded as dialect for the devil and various forms of apparition. See Chambers (1866) II p.434; Scott (1895) p.145; Briggs (1977) p.362.

Pouke is recalled into literature in the late sixteenth century with a modified sense, but is probably preserved in the dialect names Hodge Poker, Tom Poker, Old Poker and Mum-poker[1]. Thurse is retained as a component in many dialect supernatural names[2].

It seems likely, therefore, that as the literary vocabulary of French superseded that of English in this area, although the words must have been felt to be equivalent in the central meaning, the new vocabulary would tend to be modified by connotations inherited from the old. There was not, as folklorists tend to express it, a 'confusion' of fairies and elves in medieval belief but a tendency of the more generic and more fashionable word to attract and take over the Associative meanings of its rivals. Chaucer, for example, uses fayerye predominantly to characterise a kind of place or experience (i.e. Denoting an Item)[3] but elf for a kind of creature (i.e. Denoting an Object)[4]. Although on four occasions he uses fayerye collectively of creatures, he never uses the word for an individiual.

---

(1) These names can be found in Scott (1895). Although he comments: "This word...seems to be identical with the Swedish pocker, pokker, the devil, the deuce " he does not mention the possibility of a derivation from pouke. Indeed I have not seen such an etymology suggested in any source. Briggs (1977) includes Mum-poker and Pokey-Hokey. Henry (1959) discusses puca.

(2) Thurse seems to survive in many recent dialect supernatural names. See Scott (1895) on Guytrash, Hob Thurse, Hob Thurst, Hob Thruss, Hob Thrust, Hob Thrush, Hob Truss, Hob-trash, Hob-dross, Hob Hurst, Thurse, Thurst, Thrust, Thruss, Thrush and Trash. See also Clarke (1935) and Dickins (1942). Both shock and trash seem to be names for black dogs see Brown (1970) and Briggs (1977) s.v.

(3) Chaucer (1970). Sir Thopas 1.802; Squire's Tale 1.96 seem to Refer to places.
Merchant's Tale 1.1743 and Squire's Tale 1.183 are not clear, probably meaning "illusion".

(4) Chaucer (1970). Man of Lawe's Tale 1.754, Wife of Bath 1.873 Refer to individual creatures, and Miller's Tale 1.3479 has elven as a plural noun. Chaucer also uses elf in the compound elf-quene (Wife of Bath 1.860 and Sir Thopas ls. 788, 790, 795) as other, later, authors use fairy queen.

In addition to those aspects of meaning which fairy may have acquired from displaced Old English lexemes a number of disparate elements seem to have been attracted by the word from its earliest occurrences in English, largely from Classical and Celtic traditions. Insofar as fairy may represent a development of a classical word to accommodate a set of Celtic beliefs then the traditions certainly combine, but to ask whether the traditions were 'identified' or 'confused' would be to ask a meaningless question. In the romances the important feature was the exotic itself, not its source. Details would be assimilated and combined by individual tale-tellers in accord with their own sense of the degree of the exotic to be incorporated, the amount of familiar detail to be reiterated, the degree to which the familiar could be heightened or exaggerated, and the appropriateness of the relationships of these details to the particular idiom, form and tone of the work. These would be modified by the author's knowledge and abilities, the demands and capabilities of his audience, and the accidents of transmission. Probably in very few cases would only one consideration apply in the adoption of a detail. There would be a complicated balance to achieve between recognition of the familiar and the enjoyment of novelty. Hence there can be no single explanation for the complete form of any romance as we have inherited it.

As romance is the genre in which most of the earliest occurrences of fairy are to be found it is worth examining one example in detail to indicate the degree of complexity of the texts in which fairy may be embedded, and thus both the complex semantic net which surrounds it and the fact that we are not dealing with an object-word which begins with a simple meaning which is later expanded and confounded but one which from its earliest uses is problematic. Sir Orfeo is a good example as it has been much discussed as one of the best and most intriguing of the short metrical romances. It was probably based on

an Old French source, the lai d'Orphey(1) which may have been written by Marie de France, being similar to the Lai de Freine and Sir Landeval(1). If so it may well be based on an original Breton lay(1).

This Breton lay may have influenced or conversely been influenced by Walter Map(2). The Middle English author may have introduced modifications extant in Anglo-Saxon tradition as found in King Alfred's translation of Boethius. The original tale may have been derived from Boethius, Virgil or Ovid(3) or all three, and might have been a deliberate attempt at welding the classical myth to a Celtic one, such as the Wooing of Etain,(4) or may simply represent the rewriting of the classical along familiar lines. The Auchinleck romance may therefore contain elements from Classical Latin, Medieval Latin, Old French, Old English, Breton and Irish as well as Middle English traditions, and there are also possible analogies with Welsh and continental tales. A final statement of the 'source' of Sir Orfeo is thus impossible, and any attempt to isolate the constituent elements of the traditions it embodies seems certain to fail(5).

Those features in Sir Orfeo which might be interpreted as belonging to or contributing to the experience of "fairy" constitute about half the poem. It is unclear which, if any, of those features properly belong to that experience whether from the characters', the author's or the audience's point of view. There are no details that can be isolated and treated as the distinguishing features of what constitutes fairy for the Orfeo poet. There are two ways of

---

(1) Davies (1936).
(2) Loomis (1936).
(3) Severs (1961).
(4) Hibbard (1924).
(5) In addition one could note that many elements in this as in other romances are analogous to folk motifs in widely disparate cultures and that, perhaps, one must look to psychological universals for any final account of "sources".

attempting to overcome this problem. One is to regard the poet's treatment of fairy as the reproduction of a typification, then to search out other statements of the supernatural which contain that same typification. From the point of view of literature this is a search for themes and parallels, from the point of view of folklore it is a search for motifs, from the point of view of language it is a search for cognates, etymologies and parallel terms. The second approach is to regard the poet's attitude as in some sense metaphorical, i.e. he is trying to convey an idea of "fairy", his own subjective understanding of the term, not in any detail or series of details but in the subjective reponse those cumulative details arranged in that way may arouse in the reader. This is essentially a romantic interpretation of the poetic method and as such is somewhat suspect when applied to writing in Middle English. In general, however, if any writer is concerned to convey an experience and he cannot rely on Reference to external details (the sensory data) of that experience adequately to recreate it for a reader he must resort to an evocative method. In literature this resides in metaphor and image, in language in the Associative meaning of words, in folklore in the levels of irrational belief certain human situations demand.

These two approaches which regard description or text of this nature as either a typification of experience or a metaphor for experience constitute searches for Applicability of meaning and the Associative in meaning respectively, as described in Chapter 2. From the earliest date fairy seems to partake of both kinds of meaning, as can be seen from the unclear etymology, from the vagueness or ambiguity of early uses and from the number of contributory influences on romances such as Sir Orfeo.

4.4 Conclusion

What bearing then do these observations have on the issues discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 and on the data which provide the substance of the remainder of this study? They have little direct relevance to level (4), but to the other three are quite pertinent. With regard to level (1), one can extrapolate from the above argument the interpretation that the relation between word and putative Referent is a loose one, such that the form of the word may vary whilst the Referent remains constant (in some sense), or the Referent may vary for a word of fixed form, or both may vary; and this is particularly true for level (2), supernatural names, as shown by the bog and puck examples. At level (3) fairy is no exception to this. Its meaning and origin may be nothing like as precise as we might imagine or as dictionaries might lead us to believe.

The observations also serve to underline the restrictions on the value of a rigorous formal analysis of lexical meaning, the testing of which, it will be remembered, was an auxiliary aim. We may achieve aim (B), rigour, in specifying the language studied (English), the period studied (1320 to 1829), the field, mode and genre of each text, the object-word, and the province of the word semantic. Each has been managed herein with a satisfactory degree of success. However each is also exposed as arbitrary by this chapter. The chosen example is neither unique nor distinct from other names such as elf, pixy, puck and goblin. It has no precisely specifiable form, but shades into forms such as <frairies>, <ferrishers> and <fairfolk>. The meanings it possesses are not specific to the chosen language nor period, and are dependent on/related to meanings of other words and similar words in other languages in other periods. We may characterise the style of a

text by internal criteria, but if we wish to know the constraints forming that style, precise specification of genre or field break down, and thus does precision in the specification of the Stylistc meaning of the object-word. Many more objections and variations could be listed. Essentially the conclusion is that fairy exists as a fuzzy point on not one but several intersecting continua, and that a formal operation upon that point pares much of the fuzziness away and thus disguises the continua and distorts the object of study. Thus no matter how precise our formal description of the meaning of fairy it must be no more than a model, and cannot be an objective description of fact.

For example it is clear that fairy begins in English with a complex meaning. It acquires that meaning not merely by virtue of the texts in which it is used, but probably by virtue of those texts in which it is not used. It acquires meaning by virtue of extant words which are similar and may or may not be used in similar texts. It acquires meaning by virtue of its previous history, of the traditions and beliefs its different users are aware of, of rhetorical constraints on usage and fashions in diction, such as the preference for rhyming 'French' verse over alliterative 'English'. And it acquires meaning by virtue of complex cultural interactions concerning the supernatural. Thus one of the key notions which links usage of fairy throughout the period seems to be that of "fatedness" but not only can we trace this notion to no particular culture, tradition, style, register or period, we cannot even specify what that notion entails. "Fatedness" is itself a vague concept. How then are we to define the vague concept "fairy" if we can only appeal in turn to other vague concepts? The answer can only be that assumed in allowing metalanguage equivalence with native speakers' intuitive knowledge of the object language. The object word is defined by a model which is an

abstraction from a data base, and that model is tested intuitively against the testers' knowledge of the rest of the language.

The remaining chapters can now be approached in a suitably cautious way. They represent as objective an exhaustive examination of the semantics of one word as can be made, and they provide an explanation of many aspects of those semantics. They do so adhering to the model of the problem outlined in Chapter 1, the model of possible solutions provided in Chapter 2 and the procedure given in Chapter 3. However they provide only one of many possible abstractions from one of many possible sets of data which deliberately sets aside the kind of difficulty discussed above. This abstraction is therefore only a model itself. Thus it can only partly meet question (i), "How does fairy mean?" because the model appeals to knowledge outside the texts rather than describing that knowledge. With respect to questions (a) to (c) then, characterise is the operative word, for the chapters model semantic relations that probably obtain the accuracy of which can only ultimately be tested by reader's intuition, but a good measure of which is the cohesion of the model and its explanatory adequacy(1). Question (d), "does a supernatural name have one meaning, several, or a continuum of meaning?" can already be answered to a large extent. We can say that from the earliest date fairy possesses several meanings which seem to exist on continua. Whether it subsequently expands, contracts, acquires firm boundaries or remains essentially the same is the subject of the remaining chapters.

---

(1) For discussion of the notion of explanatory adequacy see Chomsky (1957).

CHAPTER 5 : LINGUISTIC RELATIONS IN THE MEANING OF 'FAIRY'

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters of this study have defined its province in progressively narrower terms, moving from general concern with the meaningfulness of lexemes through Level 1, the specification of the problems of a particular Class of lexemes, those with fictional Reference, to Level 2, concern with the subset supernatural names of which Level 3, fairy, was selected as typical and worthy of detailed study. A general theory of the meaningfulness of such lexemes was outlined by use of the notion of the Cluster and meaningful Clusters were identified with the Cotext of a given object-word on the assumption that this Cotext encodes clues to the Reference, Denotation, Sense relations and Associative meaning of that object-word (1). The general answer to question B, "how does fairy mean?" is thus that, if in no other way, supernatural names are interpreted as possessing meaning and putative Reference by virtue of the Cotexts in which they occur and/or the semantic Clusters which prompt their use.

Chapter 3 outlined methods whereby the information encoded in Cotext could be revealed and organised so that generalisations could be extracted from the established corpus as valid for the total langue for English in the prescribed period and it was suggested that some of those generalisations would apply not only at Level 3 but also at Levels 1 and 2. In contrast Chapter 4 detailed as a caveat the difficulties inherent in attempting to gain a completely hermetic formal description, particularly in respect of the boundaries of

---

(1) See Chapter 2.

period, form and the language studied, and began to answer question A, "what does fairy mean?" as well as providing the foundation for a diachronic answer to question B, by showing some of the semantic features fairy could be said to have brought into English or acquired in its earliest uses, in particular the concept "fatedness".

The remaining chapters of this investigation are primarily concerned with Level 3. They take each of the broad semantic areas decribed in Chapter 2 in turn, and examine the data derived from the corpus as evidence of those types of meaning. Whilst it would be possible to discuss every semantic Group and Cluster, this is not the intention of the present work as it would be unnecessarily bulky, repetitious and unstructured. Earlier drafts of this study illustrated the unwieldy nature of such an approach. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 thus constitute a distillation of a much larger discussion. Reproducing the discussion here in full would entail a number of repetitions of evidence, observation and argument. Consequently it was decided to state each argument once in the appropriate chapter, supported by illustrative data from the corpus rather than a complete account of every example. Where these observations could be expanded in discussion of further Groups they have been noted but not detailed. The accounts provided in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 together with the resultant models are thus substantiated by additional evidence, not just the examples quoted. Exceptions to this general rule are always noted in the text.

Thus each of the three chapters proceeds in the following way. An introductory section outlines the arguments to be presented and how they relate to the levels, questions and problems raised in section 1.1 and Chapter 2. Each of those arguments is then given in full, usually with the support of detailed exploration of one or more

important semantic Groups. Where it is felt that other observations need to be made about that Group they are generally included even if peripheral to the main argument but in such a way that they should not distract or detract from it. Finally the semantic area under consideration is summarised, its problems with respect to fairy stated, and a model of the described relations is given. Each model is an abstract of the major relations established in the chapter preceding it, and can be read as a model of the semantic inputs in the total meaning of fairy and the choices possible between those inputs. They may thus be read also as models of the encoding (and, by reversing the model, decoding) processes of users[1], although this can only be done tentatively and there is no claim here that those models are cognitive. The three models are integrated in Chapter 8 where also will be found a detailed evaluation of the whole study and its adequacy to the problem. An additional organisational feature of all four of these chapters is the tracing of diachronic trends, where evident, in an attempt to relate the theoretical description to an actual process. This is done partly because treatment of the entire corpus as a synchronic unity would clearly be a gross oversimplification and partly because the explanation of some of the Groups appears to lie in local historical facts rather than semantic universals or ontological relations.

This chapter is concerned with those aspects of meaning which most properly can be regarded as intra-linguistic, particularly Sense relations. 5.2 examines sentential roles[2], in the systemic sense, as these form the highest nodes in the hierarchy of Table 3.6.b.

---

(1) Using encoding and decoding as descriptions of human language processes according to the model provided by information processing research.
(2) See Berry (1975) pp.77-82 where function is used rather than role. Berry uses circumstance rather than situation.

These roles are thus regarded as representative of fundamental choices and thus the implication of choosing fairy to fill a particular role is discussed at some length, involving examination of topicalisation, of stylistic distribution and of diachronic development. It is argued that selection of the role filled by fairy involves a macro-semantic choice, that is a choice which focusses upon or away from fairy, and may thus relate to Associative meaning, but that no specific Sense relations, Groups or Clusters are entailed by such choices so that choices at a more specific level are not constrained. However filling one role in a sentence by fairy necessarily means that the remaining roles will be taken by tokens of other lexemes, and these are restricted within this corpus.

5.3 is concerned with Sense relations[1]. It is shown that Table 3.6.b does encode some prominent and significant Sense relations, but also obscures others; and that fairy cannot be described purely in terms of such relations, which thus undermines the theory of fictional Reference founded on such a description[2]. GROUP is used as an example of a semantic category which simultaneously illustrates the usefulness and inadequacy of such an approach. Relations of partial synonymity and antonymity are discussed, and three semantic groups are examined as evidence of the varying adequacy of the notion of Sense relations for explaining fairy, and as areas in which Sense relations provide important constraints on Cotext. These groups are POSITION, SMALL and SENSATION. POSITION is shown to be amenable to formal description as a set of Sense relations, but that description to be of little use. SMALL is shown to be distorted by the Sense relations it possesses. SENSATION is shown to be a Group which, despite expectations of its ontological determinacy is highly structured by

---

(1) See 2.4.
(2) See 2.3.2.

Sense. The reasons for the presence of these Groups in the corpus is also examined. Finally all the aspects of Sense which are discussed are summarised in one model, and possible connections with other semantic areas are suggested.

5.2 Sentential roles

As this study is primarily concerned with linguistic problems those aspects of meaning which can be seen as existing as linguistic knowledge are of central importance. Although inferences will be made in subsequent chapters which extrapolate from linguistic knowledge to other areas of human knowledge, it is language that binds these areas together, and it is textual evidence which underlies those extrapolative arguments.

For the analyst one of the most striking features of the processes of analyses described in Chapter 3 was the fact that they seemed to produce generic semantic categories which corresponded closely with semantic primitives derived from other research programmes. The phrase semantic primitive is here used to mean any semantic unit or category which is taken to exist at the most basic levels of a semantic system, i.e. the most general and most essential units of meaning out of which more complex units are built. As can be seen from Table 3.6.b the primitives proposed by the procedure here adopted, encoded in the highest nodes of the relational hierarchy, correspond closely with the categories known in systemic grammar as sentential roles. The categories were arrived at independently of systemic description, although the labels adopted for those categories are those of that grammar in order to demonstrate the connection.

If the descriptions of systemic grammar are generally applicable to English it is unsurprising that analysis of a corpus of sentences should produce systemic type categories. The fact that an independent study can do so must be confirmatory of the validity of systemic approaches to grammatical description. At the same time the fact of

such a descriptive grammar independently existing suggests that the procedure described above and the semantic groups produced by it are valid in language as a whole.

If meaning implies choice[1] then from the point of view of a sentence-based grammar[2] the fundamental meaning of any lexeme, independent of any signifying or symbolic function it may have as itself, will be the role it typically adopts in a sentence. Whether syntactic choice constitutes meaningful choice is merely a quibble about vocabulary. Essentially, as any choice entails information, then the typical sentential role of a lexeme will be indicative of the part it plays in the whole linguistic (and perhaps also conceptual) system. As is common knowledge, and has previously been described in this study[3] fairy almost exclusively occurs in two roles, or two syntactic or conceptual categories. On the one hand it is frequently a noun, a nominal, usually filling the sentential role of actor/goal[4], and this is typically its grammatical slot under the label N used in the preliminary analysis. On the other, the label P in that analysis covered almost exclusively tokens of the lexeme which were adjectival, modifiers, generally filling the situational role. It would be easier simply to say that fairy occurs in the corpus almost exclusively as either noun or adjective. Pretheoretically one

---

(1) This is a functionally abstract notion of meaning, typical of information theory descriptions of meaningfulness, e.g. Shannon and Weaver (1949).
(2) As distinguished from a text-based grammar. Such grammars differ fundamentally with regard to the nature of grammaticality and, implicitly, the notion of how an indvidual creates, conceives and interprets utterances. For discussions of the debates between sentence-based and text-based grammars see Dressler (1978).
(3) See Chapter 4.
(4) In systemic grammar actor and goal are distinct roles, but it will be argued here that it is often impossible to distinguish between them.

would accept this statement and, for all practical purposes, it is sufficient. However as has been demonstrated, the noun/adjective distinction may not always be a clear one[1], and the ambiguity is important as has been shown in the examination of the etymology of fairy in Chapter 4. There it was argued that in early usage the noun was no more than a 'special case' of the adjective, the primary sense of fairy being that it was a quality in events or situations (and thus generally filling the situational role) and the noun form simply being a shorthand form of the adjective, as in Orva la fee. Whilst the distinction between a noun, an adjective 'used as' a noun and a clause containing an adjective together with a 'deleted' noun may be hairsplitting and perhaps only of methodological significance linguistically, semantically it may be crucial if we are concerned to know whether this occurrence Refers to a specific kind of creature or thing, a quality of the world or experience which (necessarily) happens to be manifest in creatures and things (such as the notion of "fatedeness" proposed above[2]) or an ambiguous notion, the precise status of which is unclear even to the user. A pertinent analogy occurs in Sir Gawayn and The Green Knight, interpretations of which could be radically different according to the status awarded to grene in:

> Ȝe kyng and Gawen ȝare
> At ȝat grene ȝay laȝe and grenne,
> (lines 463-4)

Is it the colour "green" they are laughing at? Does ȝat grene mean "they are laughing at that (particular shade of) green"? Clearly the phrase means "that green creature/man". But are we then to suppose that grene is here 'acting' as a noun (for which there is a

---

(1) See pages 143-7.
(2) Chapter 4.

special category, namely "substantive")? Or is it 'actually' an adjective whose noun has been suppressed or deleted? Does it perhaps imply that the author, or Arthur, believed in a class of creatures called the greens (after their colour, perhaps)? If so one could argue that, as fairies lived in fairy, so these creatures lived in green or on green (they lived on village greens, wore green clothes, ate green plants). Or perhaps it suggests that there were many things/creatures called green(s) from which the notion of "green" was eventually abstracted. Perhaps the author was uncertain whether green was actually a quality of certain creatures, or a type of creature and therefore used this ambiguous construction. Perhaps he is simultaneously thinking of both a notion of "greenness" and a specific green creature, as Empson describes for his first type of ambiguity.(1)

The argument could be taken to absurd lengths. It demonstrates, however, that different interpretations are possible. The question: "When is a noun not a noun?" and: "When does a noun not Denote an Object?" can usually be solved in actual texts by breadth of knowledge, detailed examination of Cotext and Context and high-probability guesses, but they are much more difficult to solve in the abstract. Unfortunately as outlined in Chapter 1, when dealing with nouns Denoting the supernatural one necessarily must consider those questions in the abstract. Consequently the terms actor/goal and situation seem more appropriate as they are less categorical than noun and adjective, paying for this usefulness by an equivalent amount

(1) Empson (1961) pp.2-5: "these reasons, and many more....must all combine to give the line its beauty, and there is a sort of ambiguity in not knowing which of them to hold most clearly in mind. Clearly this is involved in all such richness and heightening of effect, and the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry."

of vagueness, and also they capture something of the extra-sentential use of lexemes as well as their intra-sentential functions.

In general nominal groups fill the role of actor or goal, verbal groups fill the role of action and adjectives and other modifiers that of situation, although in principle any role may be filled by any syntactic unit. Any noun in any sentence is as likely to be filling the role of actor as that of goal. In a sense actor and goal are similar roles, for the use of either in a sentence seems to imply that the Referent is an Object, and in an intransitive sentence if one is to assign the role of goal in that sentence (rather than saying that that role is not filled in that sentence) it will be filled by the noun or nominal which also fills the role of actor. It would seem merely conventional (or else implying in some sense that actor is more important than or logically prior to goal) to say that the boy in the sentence The boy thought is actor rather than goal, for the goal of the action of thinking must surely be the thinker. One could thus characterise intransitive verbs as assigning the role of goal to the actor, or as dealing with a hybrid role called the actor/goal.

Within the corpus fairy seldom fills the role of action, and is roughly equally distributed between actor and goal with twice as many occurrences of situation. In some cases it is not clear whether a given token is filling the role of situation or goal, for it may be difficult to decide if the token or phrase is the specific goal of the action or a situational modifier applying to the whole nuclear sentence. For example, the angel flew up to heaven consists of a nuclear sentence composed of ACTOR, the angel, and ACTION, flew, together with an additional element, up to heaven. Three interpretations are possible. Up to heaven can be regarded as part of

the action, i.e. "flying up" is a specific action distinct from merely 'flying'; or up to heaven may be regarded as the goal of the action, up being the directional goal of flew, heaven the locational goal, or up to heaven can be regarded as situational, modifying the whole of the nuclear sentence. Therefore in this study in cases where the distinction between goal and situation is difficult to make, the ambiguous elements have been interpreted as situation if they Denoted time or place, or seem to imply Item rather than Object.

With regard to the roles of actor and goal fairy is roughly equally distributed between the two. In some cases it fills the role of actor for a lexeme taking the role of goal whereas in others the lexeme is actor and fairy is goal. For these lexemes which are within the corpus equally distributed between the two roles this exchange of roles probably represents a shift of focus between the two elements such that in some cases fairy is regarded as prior to the Entity Denoted by the other lexeme, whereas in others the reverse is the case. This difference of focus may represent the difference between credulity and scepticism, as in the difference between the sentences:

(1) Fairies dance their circles on the green.

(2) Circles of grass are fairy rings.

Although these sentences both say very similar things, there seems to be a difference of emphasis between them such that (1) implies existence of an Entity "fairy" more than (2). One could say that the logic of (1) treats grass circles as a consequence of there being fairies, and therefore implies the existence of fairies, whereas (2) regards fairies as an explanation for grass circles, implying that the circles exist and therefore require explanation.

Other reasons for the difference of focus can be suggested however, most of which are Context or Cotext dependent. One may be that the topic of the text is figured primarily in one of the two lexemes, whereas another text reverses those concerns, i.e. whereas one text is 'about fairies' another simply mentions fairies in passing. For example one could compare the typical concerns of a romance and a scientific treatise or, to take particular examples, Melusine (1500/01) and Fulke's Meteors (1563/02). The former has as a central topic the existence of fairies and their behaviour, and much of its matter is concerned with this behaviour, whereas the latter is concerned with scientific explanation of natural phenomena, particularly marks on the surface of the earth. Obviously the difference in topics reflects different attitudes towards phenomena which can be characterised as "credulity" and "scepticism" respectively (in terms of the texts) although the actual beliefs of the author of Melusine and Fulke perhaps do not differ.

One can suggest therefore that a primary semantic choice made in use of fairy within the period is that of focus or topicalisation, such that use of fairy in the role of actor/goal implies, at least within the text, more substantiality for the Denotatum than its use in the situational role. One of the major Groups in the hierarchy is 12 BEING, a Group whose lexemic tokens almost invariably fill the actor/goal role. As will be shown in Chapter 7 on Denotation, the crucial feature of this Group is the substantiality awarded it by users, for BEING is primarily used in an agentive capacity, and that substantiality is keyed to the sentence role such tokens are given. That is to say, role focus is not simply a linguistic choice in vacuo,

but a choice which depends on and encodes attitudinal and conceptual orientations of the user. This is a theme which is one of the clearest general conclusions of this study, and which it will be necessary to reiterate throughout the following chapters: it is not possible to discuss the important linguistic aspects of a supernatural name (and, by implication any noun with fictional Reference) without recourse to extralinguistic information. Linguistic facts in isolation can tell us something about the nature, meaning and use of fairy, but by no means give us a fully adequate account.

Having observed that the choice between actor/goal and situation is one of the most fundamental a user can make, it is possible to look at the diachronic pattern of such use and to use the relative proportions of the choices made as an index of fluctuations in attitude. It must be remembered that what is being described is textual attitude rather than actual attitude, i.e. such an index would not necessarily represent actual attitudes of authors, audience or people of the period in general, as no text necessarily encodes such information. One could however extend the inference to what may be called "conventional attitudes" and conclude that whether or not the fluctuations represent actual changes in the collective attitudes of individuals, they nevertheless represent changes of convention, i.e. changes in the attitudes people wished to exhibit.

There are three pieces of information of use at this level of abstraction which were provided by the above analyses. Firstly one can examine the number of occurrences of fairy in each period, using this as an index of use and interest. To be a thoroughly accurate index one would need to amend the graph of occurrences collected by a statistical estimate of the degree of error for each period but,

within the assumption of the study that the number of occurrences collected reflects the actual usage, such estimate of error is unnecessary (and would probably be impossible to achieve). The second type of information is the actual numerical difference between roles adopted for each period. This can be regarded as an index of the interest in "fairy" as a substantial or a qualitative entity. Thus, for example, if a given period shows four occurrences of fairy in the role of situation and twenty-four in the role of actor/goal, one could infer that fairy was much more frequently regarded as an Object rather than an Item in that period by a factor of 6:1. However the apparently absolute nature of the inferences derived from these two types of information may well be misleading. It is obviously difficult, if not impossible, to quantify degrees of attitudinal difference, and there are too many uncertainties in the analytical procedures adopted for the figures presented to be acceptable in absolute terms. Furthermore the bald statement that "in the decade beginning 1740 there were 24 occurrences of fairy and of these 8 took the actor/goal role and 16 the situational role" is of little interest or use in isolation. Thus the most useful type of information is the third, namely the relative proportions of the roles for each period, that is, the total number of times a particular role was filled in a particular period by the lexeme fairy expressed as a percentage of the total number of occurrences of fairy for that period. This information not only reveals for each period the degree to which "fairy" was regarded as a substantial Entity (an Object) but also enables comparison with other periods and thus the establishment of trends and diachronic patterns. Table 5.2.1 summarises this percentage information as a bar graph, each bar representing a decade, beginning with the year 1320, with the

shaded area representing the proportion of occurrences of fairy in the role of actor/goal and the unshaded area that proportion in the role of situation. It is also useful to know the degree to which one role rather than the other is chosen, i.e. the difference between the two roles expressed as as a percentage of the total occurrences for each decade. This is recorded on the line graph Table 5.2.2, with the dotted line indicating zero percentage difference.

It will be seen that situational (modificational, adjectival) use of fairy greatly predominates throughout the period. This is counter-intuitive as we would expect the preferred use of fairy to be as a noun Denoting a particular supernatural creature. In only two decades, those beginning in 1720 and 1750, is the role of actor/goal preferred to that of situation[1] and in the latter of these this is only a 10% favouring. The question of whether the situational role is actually preferred in the other decades, or whether the two possible functions are regarded/used equally depends on what is regarded as a significant difference. Clearly over the whole period situation is favoured, though in some periods it is favoured rather more than in others. A gross simplification which nevertheless provides an insightful framework within which to work divides the corpus as a whole into five periods, namely:

1320 - 1599 Situational role favoured : Medieval

1600 - 1629 No significant difference : Renaissance

1630 - 1719 Situational role favoured :Post-Renaissance

1720 - 1759 No significant difference :C18 Classical

1760 - 1829 Situational role favoured :Romantic

As the period titles on the right indicate, very rough equations can be made with very broad literary/historical periods.

---

1. It must be remembered that the analysis attempts to equate single tokens with roles, rather than clauses or groups. In many cases fairy is acting as a situational modifier within a group or dependent clause which as a whole takes the nominal role.

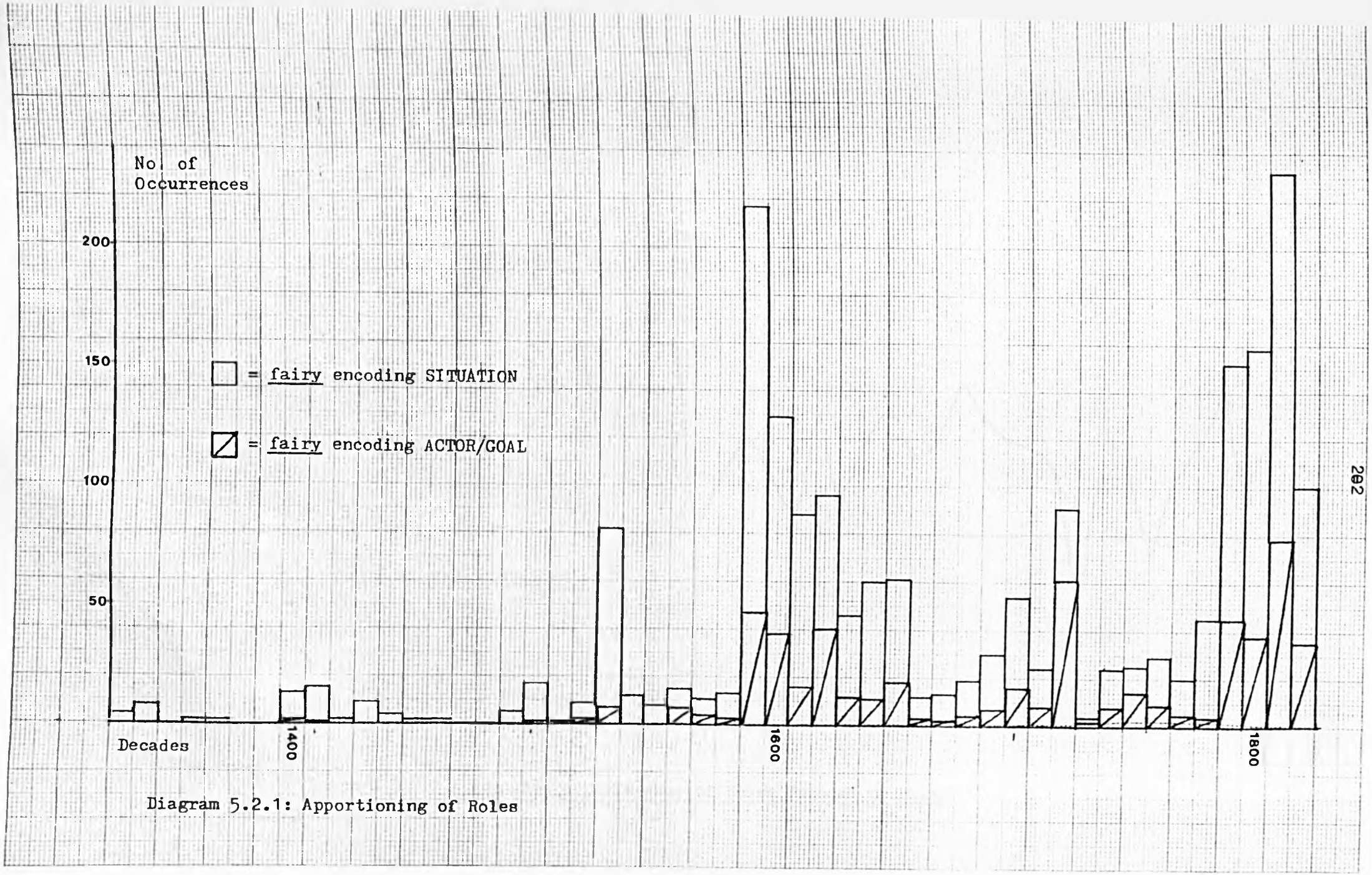


Diagram 5.2.1: Apportioning of Roles

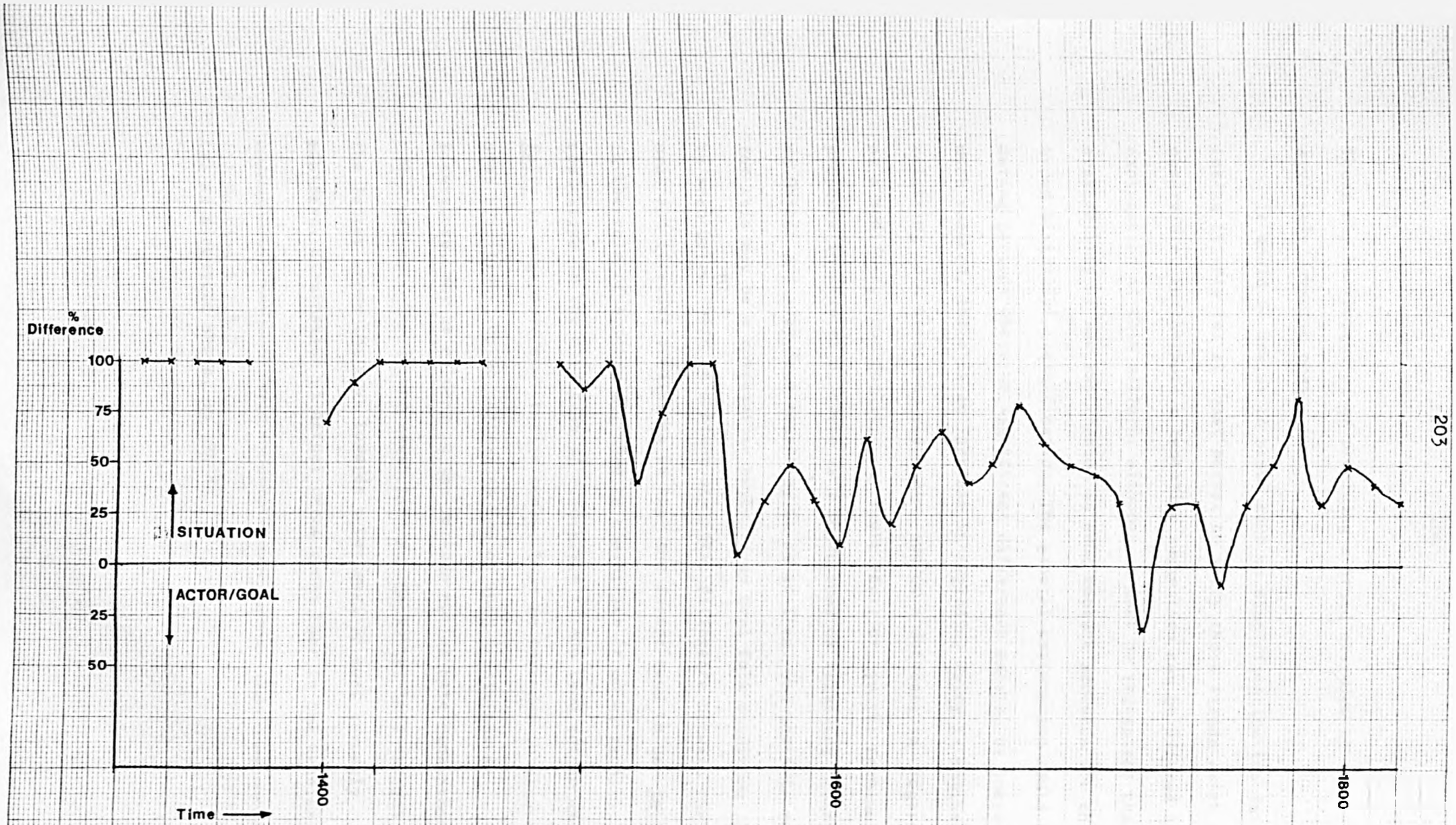


Diagram 5.2.2 : Percentage Difference of Roles Encoded by Fairy

These may be thought of as providing a broad overview of stylistic/semantic change.

It would be unwise to press such an simplification too far, but taking it this far at least serves to reify those trends which are observable. Furthermore a tentative suggestion can be offered in explanation of this pattern, although it must be recognised that the availability of the explanation in some measure accounts for this broad historical classification. The general explanation would be that during periods where no significant difference exists, or where it is much reduced, there is an increase in regarding fairy as nominal, thus referring to a creature, place etc. and/or a decrease in regarding it as a modifier, thus quality, attribute etc.; or, in the terminology proposed in Chapter 2, there is a shift towards regarding "fairy" as an Object and away from regarding it as an Item. One possible reason for this may be a comparative emphasis on oral folk tradition. As will be seen below[1] there is a broad stylistic difference between the oral and literary traditions in that the former tend to use fairy more in the role of actor/goal, tend to nominalise it more, tend to topicalise in the direction of credibilty[2] and tend not to use fairy in a generic qualitative sense. Thus an increase in records of oral traditions, or an increasing use of such traditions in literature, may be evident in the periods called here Renaissance and C18 Classical. The former seems likely, the latter less so, yet it is the latter where the move towards actor/goal is most strongly manifest. Examination of actual texts shows that in the Renaissance

---

(1) Section 6.2.3.2.
(2) As discussed above, pp.196-7.

period the sixty-seven texts recorded in the second analysis fall into the following fifteen categories of mode[1].

		Literary	Oral
Comic Drama	19	x	
Lyric	14	x	(x)
Tragic Drama	7	x	
Tract	7		x
Witch Trial	5		x
Masque	3	x	
Treatise	3		x
Narrative Poem	2	x	
Bestiary	1		x
Satire	1	x	
Eclogue	1	x	
Tale	1		x
Elegy	1	x	
Chapbook	1		x
Conjuration	1		x
	67	48	19(33)

These do not readily fall into the two categories literary/sophisticated and 'oral'/folk,[2] although

---

(1) For a fuller treatment of the stylistic categories used here see Chapter 6.

(2) Oral is in inverted commas as it self evident that none of the texts discussed in the corpus are in fact oral. The word is used to characterise a type of written discourse rather than literally, assuming that these discourses are closer representations of particular oral varieties than those texts more consciously worked and called here literary .

tentative ascriptions have been proposed beside these categories. Examination of Tables 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 will show that fairy encodes situation in slightly less than two thirds of the occurrences in this period. The ascription above identifies roughly two thirds of the texts as literary. One may thus conclude though tentatively that there is some measure of correlation between 'literariness' and treating fairy as situational. The conclusion must be tentative because it has taken no account of the relation between number of texts and occurrences, criteria for stylistic classification of text and for ascription of literary/oral have not been adduced, and the correspondence of figures is only very rough. Without a lengthy exposition it would be difficult to offer more certain conclusions. However sampling of the texts here called oral seems to validate the judgement (i.e. many of the actor/goal encodings are manifest in these texts), and it is a truism of Renaissance scholarship that oral, folk traditions were increasingly evident in written texts for two reasons, firstly a scholarly and literary interest in native traditions in general, sparked off by envy of the classical Greek and Roman traditions, by a desire to emulate them in native culture and by manifestation of a related desire, the curiosity of reason emulating Greek science; secondly as a result of cheap printing, relative affluence, and a larger educated middle class drawn from the working classes, an increasingly greater market for popular lore and anecdote, i.e. a change of medium for traditions previously oral. Popular treatises and tracts, accounts of witchtrials, and the development of chapbooks (cheap literature on any and all subjects) all catered to a growing literacy and all either used material of the folk or developed other material along popular lines. Thus, for example, the

Renaissance produced numerous treatises of popular theology and the supernatural, as today there are innumerable snippets of popular science diluted in the floods of the media.

There is thus no need to belabour the point that the Renaissance represents an upsurge in written versions of oral, folk tradition. However for the period 1720-1759 this is not the case. Indeed it could be argued that this is the period of literary sophistication par excellence and that by no means was elevated literature interested in the superstitions of the uncivilised and boorish masses. The texts for this period break down into the following modes:

		Literary	Oral
Tale	8	x	
Narrative Poem	3	x	
Lyric	2	x	(x)
Eclogue	2	x	
Complaint	2	x	
Ode	2	x	
Travelogue	1	(x)	x
Treatise	1		x
Chapbook	1		x
Epistle	1	x	
Satire	1	x	
	24	13(11)	11(13)

Once again examination of Tables 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 shows that the proportions of actor/goal to situation for the period are roughly 47:53, which is approximately a ratio of 12:13, surprisingly close to

the proportion of texts[1]. Simplifying once more one can say that half the texts are literary and half oral, that half the occurrences of fairy are situational and half actor/goal, and examination of the texts confirms that the correspondence is literary to situation and oral to actor, though the actual textual correspondences are not as perfectly one to one as this might suggest. The reason that oral formulations are present here is plain. Despite the frequency of sophisticated literary forms in this period which use fairy, such as the eclogue, the ode and the complaint there is equally an interest in oral lore, particularly in the form of folktales which, in the second quarter of the Eighteenth century were enjoying a vogue as a fashionable genre - tales collected from oral sources and, generally rewritten, presented as naive and new for an audience somewhat sated with literary artifice.

Thus the identification of five periods in the development of fairy seems plausible. It will be taken up and expanded in Chapter 6. The present purpose is simply to draw the general conclusion that even the most abstract semantic categories of the corpus, sentential roles, cannot simply be regarded as isolated structures existing in the abstract as the necessary frame for the sentence. Certainly they do provide and describe that necessary frame, but they exist by virtue of what is done with them, i.e. by virtue of actual sentences made and uttered, not as a construct of the mind which, in some sense, sentences can be made out of. They serve firstly syntactic function in that they establish relations between tokens in sentences, but they

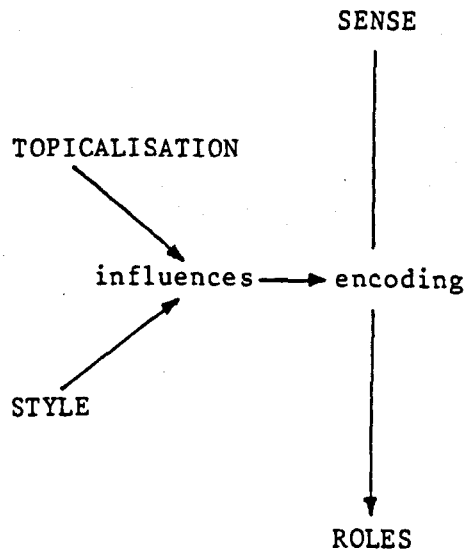
---

(1) It must be confessed that, considering the imprecision of the method, the closeness of the correspondence is remarkable. The proportions of actor/goal to situation were calculated after the attribution of literary/oral to texts in order to prevent bias.

serve other semantic functions also. They facilitate topicalisation, which is a function of Affective meaning (the interest a writer/speaker has in a particular Entity) and Reference (the degree to which an Entity is made important by the situation it is in). Furthermore they seem to encode Stylistic meaning, in that encoding fairy in actor/goal indicates "folk idiom" and encoding it in situation indicates "literary idiom". However there is no intrinsic property of syntactic roles, nor do they appear to correlate with any property which is related to Sense. Sense relations as discussed in Chapter 2 and below encode the basic semantic logic of the language. One can thus regard the primary input of a text using a supernatural name as composed of a selection of Sense relations to be encoded plus assignation of sentential roles to tokens of the lexemes encoding those relations, i.e. selection of cognitive meaning plus syntactic realisation of that meaning. However as has been shown other factors may determine the manner in which such meaning will be syntactically encoded and, as will be shown, such factors may also influence the selection of the Sense relations.

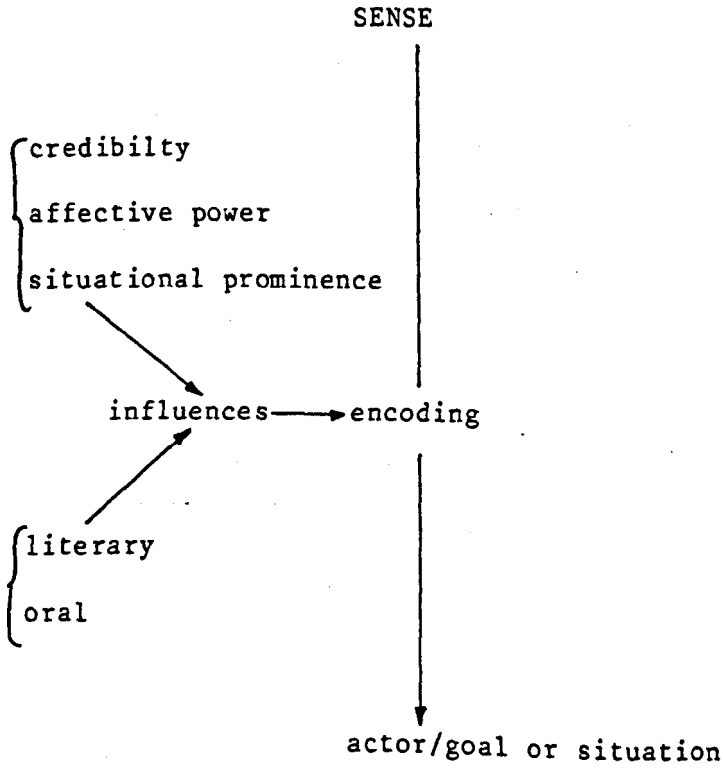
One can summarise the processes so far described at levels (1) and (2) in Table 5.2.3.

Table 5.2.3



And in the case of fairy at level (3), the particular choices can be represented as in Table 5.2.4.

Table 5.2.4



It will be seen that this first small model offers a partial answer to problem (ii) and questions (a) and (b), insofar as the literary/oral distinction is cultural, and the inputs credibility, affective power and situational prominence are real-world relations.

5.3.1 Sense

Despite the insistence in much of the previous discussion that the meaning of fairy depends on Contextual rather than intrinsically linguistic information it is clear that there is such a thing as linguistic meaning, and consequently that Sense relations do exist between lexemes by virtue of their status as lexemes, as linguistic units. Indeed a structural linguist might well argue that semantics is only concerned with such relations, that the system of the langue is the proper object of study, and contextual, referential, psychological, stylistic and ontological information is irrelevant to language as an independent system. Such a viewpoint is very useful if the aim is to understand the principles of lexemic interaction at a general or theoretical level, and it must be at that level that discussion of Sense relations is carried on, but if the aim is to obtain as clear an understanding as possible of the actual semantics of particular lexemes in real texts then the abstraction must necessarily be anchored to the real situations of use. If furthermore meaning is taken to imply at least some aspects of use and function of the object word, as is the case in this study, this is doubly true.

It is the purpose of this section, therefore, to divorce the abstract statements of graph, frequency, distribution and statistic from the actual corpus from which those statements are derived. It will be assumed that those statements are about langue, about the relationships between lexemes which collocate with fairy rather than about actual texts. In this way it will be possible on the one hand to make statements about the object-word with a high degree of abstraction and on the other hand to exhibit the deficiencies of that

degree of abstraction (if any) and consequently the extent of the need for and justification of subsequent chapters.

To begin with, many statements about Sense relations have already been made in the course of the analytical development of Chapter 3. The relations of entailment and synonymity as defined there are Sense relations. Consequently the most abstract statement that can be made about the Sense relations of lexemes in the corpus in terms of entailment and synonymy are those summarised in the hierarchical Table 3.6.b. Two other important types of Sense relation are not contained in this summary however for these relations are more difficult to capture in formal terms. These are the relations of antonymity and likeness (or similarity). Clearly inversion of the test sentence for synonymity does not give a test for antonymity, as the negative of a sentence of the form "To x is to y and to y is to x" would be "To x is not to y and to y is not to x" which only indicates difference of meaning, not oppositeness of meaning. However a reasonable test sentence might be of the form "To x is to not-y and to y is to not-x", e.g. "to hate is to not-love and to love is to not-hate". Leaving aside the obvious ungrammaticality of such a sentence, it does provide a reasonable test. Thus the hierarchical summaries of entailment and synonymity could also be modified by relations of antonymity as tested by such sentences, though this would probably make the diagrams graphically confusing. Some such relations are however apparent where two dichotomous lexemes (two antonyms) or Groups are entailed by one lexeme or Group as 122 INDIVIDUAL BEING entails 1221 MAN and 1222 WOMAN, or 221 APPEARING entails 2211 APPEAR and 2212 DISAPPEAR.

Likeness of meaning is on the other hand impossible to specify succinctly. In effect it is partial synonymity, where two lexemes

share common features or overlap in meaning, but that overlap is often tenuous. The typical expression of likeness of meaning would be "x is something to do with y", or "x is in some ways similar to y". Generally likeness of meaning is understood intuitively by native speakers, differences being often a matter of typical situation of use rather than any Denotative difference(1). Sharing of a single feature is usually insufficient for likeness to be attributed although in formal terms this would appear sufficient, e.g. polar bear and milk share the attribute "white", but are not regarded as related in meaning. Two lexemes which are similar in meaning will share several features and in addition will also exhibit similarities in the patterning of relationships between those features.

Thus the Group 121 GROUP has four realisations in this corpus: 1211 BAND, 1212 TRAIN, 1213 PEOPLE and 1214 NATION. Intuitively these are seen to be both like and unlike in meaning. In the preliminary analysis, where grouping of lexemes was made on a largely intuitive basis, these lexemes would all have been counted together despite their differences of meaning. Indeed one could argue that if there were no differences between their meanings there would be no reason for all four to occur in the corpus or even to exist in the language as useful lexemes.

As the difference between singular and plural is not only a major discrimination in the language but also in accounts of fairy, the notion of GROUP entailing as it does "band", "train", "people" and "nation" is here discussed on detail. The discussion firstly elaborates the notion of the supernatural group, then relates this to the four lexemes above, and finally examines the notion of the

---

(1) See Chapter 6 on Stylistic meaning.

supernatural individual. It will be seen that whilst the recognition of generalised Sense relations is a useful clarification of the framework in which imaginative formulation of a notion such as "fairy" operates, the resultant broad categories obscure the manifold different relationships which contribute to the complementary ideas of likeness and difference in meaning. In other words, the discussion shows that although the formal hierarchy provides a framework within which logical constructions can be made, which might be called the macrostructure (1) of conceptualisation, it obscures the numerous illogical or paralogical constructions which are manifest in actual texts as the microstructure of conceptualisation. Logical structures in the langue, such as "BEING may be encoded either as GROUP or as INDIVIDUAL but not simultaneously as both", permit a range of less logical correspondences to be set up as in The fairy is a goblin, which could mean "A member of the group called fairies is also a member of the group called goblins" or "the individual called fairy is a member of the group called goblins" or "the individual called fairy is also an individual called goblin" or "the member of the group called fairies is also an individual called goblin" or "The group called fairies is also a group called goblins" etc.

---

(1) It is not intended that macrostructure should here have the precise sense attributed to it in text grammar, e.g. Van Dyke (1972), Petofi (1973). However such attribution would not require a major modification of the model here presented.

5.3.2 An Example of Sense Relations: Fairy as GROUP

Whether as a headword or modifier fairy often involves a sense of plurality, i.e. a group or society of fairies or a place where many creatures live or many phenomena of fairy kind can be found. This plurality led W.B. Yeats and, following him, K. Briggs [1] to identify a class of creatures called trooping fairies who are to be distinguished from a second class, the solitary fairies. The classification is useful up to a point, but it is misleading for several reasons. In the first place there are many groups of supernatural creatures who have features similar to groups called fairy, such as the Wild Hunt [2] or dancing creatures [3], yet are not included in the trooping fairy classification (probably because they lack the fairy appellation). Secondly many of the creatures called fairy who are individual or isolated are incorporated by Briggs' classification into the trooping fairy class, probably because they possess many of the attributes of some of that class such as being of normal human size, being fond of hunting and hawking etc. The fairy knight in Reinbrun (1330/03/001) is abnormally isolated, living in an underground palace which is protected by a water sterne and grim, and is very ostentatious, beautiful, large, well protected and empty: Ac wimman ne man fand he non ȝere (83/10). Similarly Partenope [4] comes to a strange, beautiful, well-protected land, with beautiful houses and a well fortified tower, but sees no-one, although attended by invisible beings: He saw no wyghte ȝat him bade. He believes he is in fayre (1490/01/002) and finds an isolated woman who becomes his lover.

---

(1) Yeats (1973); Briggs (1957), (1976), (1977).
(2) E.g. Map(1924) "King Herla" pp.13-17.
(3) See Bray(1879); Palmer (1973) pp.107-8.
(4) 1490/01 Partenope of Blois.

She is later referred to as a ȝynge of ffeyre (1490/01/003) but the contexts of these two references seem to suggest that the lady is definitely not a fairy or fay. Even so Briggs would include her in the trooping fairy class.

In addition there are individual creatures who would be included in the classification who are not supernatural creatures at all. Morgan la fee for example is generally described not as supernatural but as an enchantress, a woman who has learned particular skills. Certainly the appellation la fee could be read as 'Morgan the fairy', but it could also be read as 'Morgan the enchantress' or even 'Morgan the magical', 'Morgan the strange', 'Morgan (of) the special power' or 'Morgan (of) the strangeness'(1).

Finally many of the creatures identified by Yeats and Briggs as solitary fairies are never called fairy. The Grant, for example, is daemonum genus(2). Thus not only is the classification as it is used somewhat arbitrary, but it is difficult to maintain. Rather than use the word fairy, it would probably be better to divide all the supernatural creatures on more logical grounds if the classification by group is to be established in four categories, and this can be done using Sense criteria derived from actual texts, viz:

(a) Creatures which are always described en masse as a group, a host, a crowd, a hunt etc.

(b) Creatures which belong to an identified group but have been individuated from that group.

(c) Creatures which are always described as existing in isolation, acting alone, but spoken of as belonging to a

---

(1) See Chapter 4.
(2) Gervase of Tilbury (1856). For a translation see Keightley (1900).

species, i.e. a 'group' or class of creatures which exist as individuals

(d) Unique creatures which are never classed with any others

In general Briggs' 'trooping fairies' would be classed in (a) or (b) and the solitary fairies in (c) or (d). However it is not always possible in a particular description to decide if a creature belongs to (b) or (c). Usually that decision will depend on the reader/hearer's judgement as to the status of the group. Is it a social group or is it an abstract classification? (a question about type of text and author's intention). Is the classification analytical or analogical? (a question about the nature of Sense relations and their actual psychological employment). Are we to presume that the attribution of some features to an individual in one description qualifies that individual for inclusion within a group with similar features in another description? (a question about textual realistaion of Sense relations, reader interpretation and criteria for classifying phenomena). Or if an individual in (d) is compared with a class of individuals, does that mean the individual is not unique? (a question about the Applicability of the texts in question and the connections between *two compared items*). In other words even an apparently simple discrimination of Sense between "individual" and "group" is dependent on attitudinal, conceptual, textual and Referential problems.

The classification of supernatural creatures by grouping is thus difficult to achieve and in some cases it is difficult if not impossible to decide whether a writer or speaker is classifying an individual with a group of the same kind or mentioning it as an individual member of a social group. This does not necessarily mean that any particular native speaker has no clear conception either of

the plurality of the concept of "fairy" or the word fairy, but for the language as a whole no clear system can be ascertained. "Plurality" or "group/individual" thus must be treated as features in a Cluster as described above to capture the complexity of actual usage.

Having said this one can return to the statement that fairy is used with a sense of plurality in many instances. Also one finds many occurrences of lexemes encoding GROUP in the corpus. In some cases this is clearly a statement by an observer grouping fairy with other names for phenomena haphazardly, as with the lists of Scot, Denham and Gomme.(1) In others fairy itself seems to be used as a generic word covering several different kinds of supernatural creatures, the generic sense which is expanded to allow Briggs to call hags, dragons and giants fairy(2). In a third set of occurrences fairy is used of social beings (class (a) above), as in the use of nation(3). And a fourth set consists of texts using fairy to identify individuals as (b)(4). In terms of narrative one could say that characterisation or description may involve any of the first three of these typical uses without necessarily needing to clarify which is being used, but that narratives involving specific actions, interchange or relations with a human protagonist require individuation; and that classes (b), (c) and (d) above involve increasingly greater degrees of individuation according to the specific purposes of the narrative. That is to say the folklorists' distinction between trooping and solitary is not a distinction between types (races, classes) of beings (phenomena) but

---

(1) Scot (1584/01/004); Gomme (1890); Hardy (1891-95). A similar generic term used with virtually equivalent sense is goblindom.
(2) See above pp. 205-6.
(3) e.g. 1676/01/002.
(4) e.g. 1596/02/017 - captain of our fairy band.

between the attitudes involved in folk descriptions such that the more general, vague and common a particular phenomenon called fairy, the more likely is a text to report it as typical of an individuated group, whereas the more specific, particular, unique and local a phenomenon the more likely it is to be regarded as the act of an individual.

The differences of degree, and their correspondences to the four classes of statement described above, can be illustrated as follows. A statement of type (a) is: The race of fairies is notorious for stealing children, a reported generalisation using a group typification. A statement of type (b) is: The king of the band of fairies who lived under that hill once stole a neighbour's child, an event closer to the speaker in both place and type but still remote. Type (c) can be illustrated by A boggart threshes our corn. This, in the present tense, is immediate and attributed to a creature always found alone. Whereas type (d) could be I've just seen the Cauld Lad. It frightened me, an experience immediate to the speaker reported of a unique phenomenon.

Language is however more flexible than this. There is no necessary or invariable relation between immediacy of phenomena and specificity of grouping. Yet these correspondences typically do exist and the reason is probably not difficult to find. The more immediate an experience, the more intent a speaker is on conveying a precise account, in order that the immediacy can be communicated. A remote event lacks interest and relevance and thus need not be described precisely (though a speaker is usually perfectly able to make a precise description). To convey a vague meaning one need rely only on

a typification of general behaviour - "this is what this sort/race/type/class of creatures does". The more precise the required statement, the more detailed the Referring expression (the definite description) needs to be, and the more individual must its Referent seem. As noted above, with regard to supernatural beings at least, the greatest degree of individuation can be achieved by use of a proper name and it would seem this is the most usual means of stating that a being is of type (d), even though the proper name may be no more than a definite description which is given special status (by the use of intonation or capitalisation).

Thus what seems to be a simple logical distinction between the Sense of group and that of individual is by no means so. Considered in the abstract as a dichotomy encoded in the langue it may be so seen, but as used in actual texts the dichotomy fails to be as precise and indeed may also disappear from criteria of choice when selecting a lexeme encoding GROUP or INDIVIDUAL, the logical distinction may be unimportant, since it may be replaced by the more pressing need to convey the emotional or physical immediacy of the phenomenon Referred to.

Thus one might expect what is in fact the case, that the four lexemes which in the corpus most frequently encode GROUP and are obviously semantically related by virtue of this encoding together with the implication of social organisation, are by no means clearly differentiated. It seems that although the four lexemes band, train, people and nation are not synonymous their meanings overlap in an unsystematic way. There are obvious differences of magnitude between band and nation and of specificity between band and train on the one hand and people and nation on the other. One could thus characterise

their Sense relations as:

Diagram 5.3.2.a

GROUP	Large	Small
Generic	People	Band
Specific	Nation	Train

Once again, however, though this may differentiate these lexemes on logical grounds it is neither adequate for their full meaning nor sensitive to the range of overlap. For example, the expression a people may be virtually synonymous with a nation, yet people may also be used of a much smaller group than that implied by nation as, for example, in the people of this town. There would appear to be an implication in the choice of band rather than train that the group is less coherent, less organised and perhaps less civilised. Train on the other hand seems to imply an organised group of followers and would seem to be Stylistically related to 122111 NOBLE and 3225 ROYAL whereas band would not. Both the lexemes band and company (which are subsumed in the group BAND) seem in the corpus to carry implications of a loose association of individuals, behaving in no organised manner and with no inherent social structure, e.g.:

Leave at once thy realms of air
To mingling bands of fairy elves.

1807/04/001

This would seem to imply a more uncontrolled and uncivilised group somewhat different from the more elegant and sophisticated train which seems closest to the Yeats/Briggs notion of the trooping fairy. To some extent the same difference is carried by NATION and PEOPLE for NATION could be interpreted as implying a more coherent society than PEOPLE. One could thus argue that TRAIN and NATION are similar in that both suggest a social, organised group and that

this is often confirmed by other collocations in the cotext of fairy (such as 3223 ORDER, 31114 REALM, 2324 SERVE, 246 DANCE). As is confirmed in these and other Groups, fairy beings are credited with many of the attributes of social man and the groups TRAIN and NATION frequently seem to imply such attribution, though often without making it explicit. Aside from this implication however there are no clear grounds for separating NATION, PEOPLE, GROUP and BAND except for the lack of firm criteria for regarding them as synonyms.

As the relations of similarity and difference between these four Groups are impossible to specify, so is the full nature of antonymity between GROUP and INDIVIDUAL. As will be shown in the following chapter individuation of fairy phenomena in texts is probably largely a matter of Associative meaning rather than the cognitive structure of the language. It is the case, however, that when use is made of lexemes encoding GROUP seldom is use made of lexemes encoding INDIVIDUAL in the Cotext (although there are exceptions e.g. 1596/02/017). This would imply that a difference is recognised and a choice is being made, either between two types of phenomena (or Rem) or between two modes of expression of fairy. In addition certain collocations tend to occur according to the choice made such that, for example, if GROUP is encoded any member of that group is less powerful than an equivalent individual mentioned in the encoding of INDIVIDUAL. This would also correspond to the grading of individuation discussed above, such that for the purposes of a descriptive text, the actions of a group and of an individual are equivalent (i.e. they both have similar degrees of explanatory adequacy) and thus the individual is credited with power and attributes equal to the group. That is to say a fairy phenomenon may be regarded as a group of weak beings or an

individual strong being. It is significant, for example, that smallness of size is more often a collective attribute of the fairy group than of a specific individual, e.g. the typical phrasal attribution is the little people rather than a/the little person. (Indeed the latter phrase even seems a little odd).

There are grounds therefore for seeing the corpus as containing a functional antonymity between GROUP and INDIVIDUAL but, as investigation of the notion of the fairy group (above) and the fairy individual (below) shows it is neither a clear cut antonymity nor a primary distinction in terms of actual use. It is not possible to say whether this is a feature of this antonymity in the language in general (or even of all antonyms), but it is possible to argue at least that whilst such antonyms may provide the frame of thought for conceptualisation of "fairy", it is part of the imaginative richness of that conception (or alternatively its illogical, primarily Associative nature) that the framework is inevitably broken down.

Discussion of this particular set of Sense relations has thus not only elaborated a specific aspect of conceptualisation of fairy but also illustrated the difficulty of abstract formalisation of relations of antonymity and semantic similarity in the corpus. However it would be artificial to suggest that on the one hand the formal characterisation of entailment and synonymity is complete and a primary structure in the corpus whereas on the other antonymity and similarity are incapable of formalisation and represent no significant structure. Obviously, as has been illustrated, the formal hierarchy simplifies and generalises and equally obviously the four relations themselves interrelate. If one is to talk of a "semantic field" or "network of meaning" of which fairy is part, then all types of Sense

relation must interrelate. Accordingly Tables 5.3.2.b and 5.3.2.c summarise relations of antonymity and similarity between groups which can be seen to exist in the corpus. However these relations cannot be afforded the same status as those expressed in the formal hierarchy because the former have been determined largely on intuitive grounds based, it is hoped, on a sensitive knowledge of the corpus. As aim (B) of this study is to provide as objective an account as possible of the semantics of the object-word the necessary subjectivity of these tables should be borne in mind in what follows. It is to be hoped that there would be a high degree of intersubjective agreement as to the observations presented in those tables but that is, by definition, impossible for this observer to ascertain. It should also be remembered that the operative words in the last sentence but one are as possible. It may well be that the conclusion of such a study as this must be that the semantics of a supernatural name cannot be made with a high degree of objectivity and that richer studies necessarily would depend on such subjective (but hopefully intersubjective) observations.

It will be seen from Table 5.2.3.b that the majority of identified similarities between groups whilst not felt to be equivalent to full synonymy have nevertheless been recognised in the formal hierarchy in that they have been subsumed under one implied group, (as PEOPLE and NATION are subsumed under GROUP) or the similarity is actually manifest in entailment (as VEGETATION is entailed by WOOD).

Table 5.3.2.b

Plausible relations of similarity through shared semantic features, referential similarity or metonymy.

Headword	Similar groups	Total Occurrences
Eat	Drink	27
Evil	Mischief	30
Come	Move	303
Get	Hold	66
Hurt	Sicken, Pinch, Hit	91
Place	Country, Realm, Castle, Room	534
Take	Carry	117
Say	Call (Name?)	303
Beauty	Gay	93
Guide	Lead (Follow?)	51
Sound	Sing, Music	128
People	Nation, Band, Train	103
Royal	Prince, Monarch	360
Earth	Stone	80
Vegetation	Wood	110
Bed	Cradle	27
Dark	Shade	24

[The headword is that used to refer to the group of similar Groups. Bracketed items are doubtful inclusions].

Table 5.3.2.c

Possible antonyms or opposed groups.

				Total
Birth	14	Death	19	33
Appear	40	Disappear	18	58
Evil	19	Good	62	81
Come	115	Go	84	199
Hide	29	Seek	13	42
(Hill)	49	(Field)	25	74
Parent	30	Child	109	139
Take	79	Bring	35	114
Work	20	Play	59	79
Man	111	Woman	154	265
Descend	35	Rise	34	69
Dark	13	Light	37	50
Far	18	Near	22	40
Small	68	Great	54	122
Soft	19	Hard	13	32
Lose	13	Find	49	62
Order	17	Wild	17	34

[Bracketed items are doubtful inclusions]

All the remaining similarities exist between Groups which typically fill different sentential roles and might otherwise be called equivalent (e.g. the lexemes royal and monarch could be regarded as syntactically distinct forms of a single piece of semantic information, as for example sing and song could). A liberal interpretation of this table might therefore be that it captures relations of the same status, nature and value as those summarised in the formal hierarchy but which the formal criteria employed were not sufficiently sensitive to capture. Less liberal conclusions might be that such a table illustrates the inadequacy of a strictly formal approach to Sense relations, or that the notion "synonymy" is not[1] as formal as supposed in the previous chapter, the test sentences being taken as obscuring rather than classifying certain relations[2]

Table 5.2.3.c also contains pairs of Groups entailing other single Groups (e.g. APPEAR and DISAPPEAR both entailing APPEARANCE, MAN and WOMAN both entailing INDIVIDUAL). This exposes one of the weaknesses of the formal hierarchy as a full description of the semantics of fairy. If this were so, and fairy could be defined as such a series of Sense relations, then any text would be regarded as a realisation of a selection of those relations. In which case one would be able to trace the structure of any such text by tracing exclusive branches through the hierarchy (once for each allowed sentential function per sentence), making a choice at each node and,

---

(1) A discussion of the inadequacy of formal analysis of synonymy can be found in Akhmanova (1976) Chapter 2.
(2) E.g. it could be suggested that despite the overt form of the test sentence for synonymy, the actual sentence employed was of the form "An x is a y on some occasions and a y is an x on some occasions", which does not produce perfect congruence of meaning.

on arrival at a node of suitable specificity realizing a token of a lexeme subsumed in one and only one of the groups branching from that node. This would be an attractive, because simple, means of characterising the Cotext of an occurrence of fairy. It has affinities with generative grammar in that sentences are obtained by single selections of successive rewrites of earlier nodes. For example, to fill the role ACTOR in a sentence one has firstly the option of rewriting ACTOR as 11 NAME, 12 BEING or 13 THING. Assuming one chooses 12, then (as this is a lexemic Group) a token of a lexeme in this Group (either being or creature) could be realized to fill this role. However if this lacks specificity, BEING could be 'rewritten' as 121 GROUP, 122 INDIVIDUAL or 123 BODY. Assuming 121 GROUP is chosen, this then could be rewritten as one of four options, each of which is a final node which would have to be realised by a lexeme. This appears to work well, and by tracing the lines of the hierarchy in this way one can produce sentences of a range of specificity which are acceptable to intuition as typical sentences containing fairy, and which conform to a high degree with the texts comprising the corpus.

This is, of course, unsurprising, for the hierarchy is intended to be a summary of the rules operating in typical fairy sentences as indicated by the texts comprising the corpus. However it can only be used in this way if the nodal choices are dichotomous and distinct. It is an obvious feature of the Sense of English that the notional group APPEARANCE can be realised by one and only one of the groups 2211 APPEAR or 2212 DISAPPEAR in one sentence. Otherwise the rules of the language are violated and one obtains the deviant or creative structure known as a paradox, an abnormal (atypical) use of language.

In such a case arrival at the node 221 APPEARANCE results in choice amongst mutually exclusive alternatives. Here the relations of antonymity and entailment function logically in the language. However arrival at a node such as 12211 NOBLE allows no such dichotomous choice. Certainly a choice may be made between 122111 MONARCH, 122112 LORD, 122113 PRINCE and 122114 KNIGHT as if they were exclusive alternatives, but equally one could choose two or more of them to fulfil that role. A possible realisation of ACTOR could thus be: The monarch, lord and prince of all. These lexemes or Groups are not antonymous, nor are they synonymous, yet they are related, and all entail NOBLE. Furthermore the rule of selection is not of the form "select any or all of the Groups if similar OR select one and only one if antonyms" (which is in itself rather too clumsy to be particularly useful) as a form of selectional restriction also seems to operate such that monarch could occur with lord, and knight could occur with lord, but monarch cannot occur with knight . This illustrates simultaneously both the usefulness and the inadequacy of an account of the meaning of fairy based purely on the Sense relations which surround it.

It is useful to formalise such relations to such an extent as it enables identification of broad semantic or conceptual areas which are being brought into play - for example that the most elaborate encoding of ACTOR/GOAL is 12 BEING, which can have any of sixteen realisations, suggesting not only that BEING is an important concept in this context but also that it is a more developed concept than, for example, 13 THING. Furthermore it enables a number of generalisations about the texts and the normal structure of the meaning which form them to the surface without necessitating extensive (and largely superfluous)

verbal elaboration. In addition, as has been shown,[1] it enables the identification of certain possible channels of thought which might underly the structuring of typical texts, e.g. if a fairy *moves*, then it comes or goes; if it carries objects, then it brings or it takes them etc. Whilst obvious such demonstrations are useful because (a) they show (for example) that fairy does not exclusively bring, nor only appear, but that it does only have power, not weakness, (b) they show that part of the conceptualisation of the supernatural at least *is* logical, (c) they provide a partial model for creation of texts encoding "fairy", suggesting perhaps that the rules of choice operating at non-dichotomous nodes whilst not logical or based on Sense may perhaps be Stylistically or Referentially determined, and thereby identifying areas in which examination of these two aspects of meaning may be fruitful.

This suggests therefore that aim (B) is not realistic, and certainly would not be possible within the parameters of formal logic, for Sense relations at least. It was this judgement achieved at an early stage in the preliminary analysis which led to the adoption of the pretheoretical specification of the object-language as the only satisfactory metalanguage. It is possible to make more constructive observations with regard to the requirements outlined in Chapter I however. Some aspects of the meaning of fairy have been outlined in respect of questions (a), (b) and (e), for it has been suggested that fairy means both "group" and "individual", the precise selection of which depends on the attitude of the user in a specific situation-of-use, and that within that broad selection a number of partial systems operate (partial both insofar as they cannot be fully

---

(1) See pp.228-9.

described and they have been transcended in certain texts), one of which is that encoded in the Groups NATION, PEOPLE, BAND and TRAIN whereby "size" and "orderliness" are focussed upon. It seems probable that such focussing depends on the explanatory or descriptive purpose of the text in which fairy is used. This observation will be expanded in Chapter 6.

5.3.3 Sense Relations of Important Groups

Having identified some areas which seem partially at least to be determined by Sense relations, the question of the importance of each particular case in the corpus then arises. Each of the Groups identified is worthy of its own independent study. Indeed, one might argue that such study was necessary before the full ramifications of the meaning of fairy could be understood. This may well be true. It is one of the problems of any investigation of semantics which employs the notion of a field or network of meaning, the problem of determining the limits of that network. In the present case however the concern is only with typification, i.e. with the discussion of those Groups whose Sense relations are particularly prominent in the corpus. Prominence can be defined here in two ways, either by a simple count of the total number of occurrences of that Group or by subjective identification by an observer sensitised to the relevant corpus. In view of what has been said about Sense relations transcending the formal boxes into which they have been placed, the latter is not ignored here. For the former those Groups in the hierarchy can be ascribed prominence in relation to their total number of occurrences in the corpus. This total can be found by adding the relevant subtotals in Appendix 2. Tables 5.3.2.b and 5.3.2.c tabulate total occurrences for the Groups identified across that formal description.

It is obviously the case that the more generic the Group, the higher its node in the hierarchy, the larger the number of occurrences is likely to be. There is no way by which one can decide whether the high frequency of a particular Group is due to its generic and widespread function in the language as a whole or due to a particular importance with respect to fairy, nor can the proportion of these two influences be discriminated within any individual total, without at

least one and preferably several comparable studies of equivalent corpora. If, for example, frequency tables were available for the general occurrence of lexemes in the language the present task would be greatly eased. As it is, intelligent reading can be the only guide. It is to be hoped that the frequencies given here may be of use for comparative purposes in future similar studies.

One can however attempt to clarify certain significant features which distinguish the Sense relations of the corpus from general use on making the assumption that two antonymous Groups or lexemes would be of roughly equal distribution in the language.(1) Assuming this then one can identify antonyms in the corpus of roughly equal distribution, leading to the conclusion that it is the Group that they both entail which is the significant choice. Conversely there are pairs of antonyms one of which occurs more frequently than the other. In these cases one can argue that one of its terms is preferred and therefore conceptually weights fairy in that direction. Examples of the former are DESCEND/RISE, FAR/NEAR, ORDER/WILD and of the latter, PARENT/CHILD, TAKE/BRING, LOSE/FIND, APPEAR/DISAPPEAR.

One could extend the second part of this observation to provide a characterisation of fairy which depended on significant dichotomies, such that fairies will be characterised as typically associated with "child", "taking", "finding" and "appearing". As is well-known some of the most familiar motifs of oral narrative concerning fairies are those of the taking of children, the finding of unusual objects and

---

(1) The assumption is a large one, unsupported by any evidence I have been able to discover. One could argue that the distributions of the terms democracy and tyranny, or war and peace, or teacher and student were not equal and that furthermore distribution depends very much on what is meant by the phrase in the language.

the abrupt or unusual appearance of fairy beings.[1] This notion of characterisation by dichotomy will be taken up at a later stage in this study.[2]

Related to this is the observation that certain Groups which occur frequently in the corpus and have common antonyms in the language are not opposed by those antonyms in the corporal typification. BEAUTY, OLD, JOY, POWER, LOVE, CLEAN and FRIEND are not opposed by occurrences of "UGLINESS", "YOUNG", "SADNESS", "WEAKNESS", "HATE", "DIRTY" or "ENEMY" (as common antonyms) sufficient for them to survive the exclusive process of analysis. The former Groups could thus also be regarded as significant choices in terms of a particular dichotomy such that fairy is much more typically associated with one or all of these groups rather than any of their antonyms.

In all such cases one can regard fairy as being defined by the following process. An area of significance is identified as relevant and fairy is characterised as typically one aspect of that area. For example, in one sentence the role of ACTION may be located in the area "moving items" and the role of SITUATION be located in the area "physical appearance", i.e. two sentential roles are to be filled by lexical counters from these semantic areas.[3] The first area is specified by the Sense relation BRING-TAKE, the second (perhaps) by BEAUTY-UGLINESS. If the sentence is simply drawing on the normal characterisation of fairy TAKE will be selected in 70% of the cases

---

(1) E.g. Brand (1853) p.477; Bray (1879) p.162; Sternberg (1971) p.135; Simpson (1976a) p.91-3, p.101, pp.110-111; MacNeil (1977) p.101, pp. 110-1, pp.113-4.
(2) See Chapter 8.
(3) This one can regard as the typical linguistic account of the relation between syntax and lexical meaning. Whether it represents any actual psychological process remains to be demonstrated.

and BRING in 30%, whereas BEAUTY will be selected in at least 95% of such sentences. One can regard such selection and control as typical of fictional or imaginary sentences, i.e. where the putative Referent is a function of the language construction(1) rather than the other way about, which would be the case in a sentence Referring to an actual phenomenon. For in a Referring sentence one presumes that the speaker is primarily occupied with describing or Referring to the encountered phenomenon, and that this concern will override the typification process of the Sense relations inherent in the structure of the language.

In other words one can interpret frequency of occurrence of a Group as an indication of its likelihood of being used in a typical sentence including fairy, its typifying power perhaps an index of the pressure on the speaker to structure his meaning in that way; but one cannot take that index (insofar as it is an index of important Sense relations) as a determiner of choice or meaning except perhaps in sentences which are to be taken as fiction. In the case of fictional sentences one could say both that such an index encodes the system employed for creation of such a fiction and, because it produces a typifying sentence, it also encodes the signals by which a reader/hearer will recognise such a sentence as a fiction. The greater the degree of conformity between an actual sentence and the probability of its elements appearing according to the Sense structure surrounding fairy in the lexicon, i.e. in information processing terms, the greater the redundancy of the items in that sentence, the more likely is a reader/hearer to regard it as a fiction, as a

---

(1) See Lyons (1977a); and section 2.3.3 above.

creation of the language rather than of the world.

Consequently if Appendix 2 and the formal hierarchy are taken to be a list of nodes of Sense and the relations between them, with no implication of Reference (or indeed of Stylistic constraint), one could accept them as a full description of the semantics of fairy. In doing so however, one is implicitly accepting a theory of supernatural names which is non-Referential and recognises no connection between the construction of sentences containing a supernatural name and any reality outside the logic of the language. Such a theory would fail with fairy for the reasons discussed in Chapter 2 and earlier in this Chapter. In the first place it treats probability of occurrence as self-determining, i.e. it is circular. It says: there is a probability x that group y will be encoded in a sentence encoding fairy because this has been the probability in the past. Probabilities of occurrence of semantic units are not arbitrarily determined however. If they were then the notion of "sense" would itself be meaningless for it would be reduced to an arbitrary code which encodes nothing.

In fact such probabilities are determined by actual sentences in past usage, in concrete situations. Sense relations of a particular synchronic plane of a language record the whole of the past experience and use of the language, its Reference, Denotation, Stylistic choice, connotative, Affective and Emotive meaning as a single type of information. It is true to say that Sense relations encode a large amount of logic (as has been demonstrated above), but they also encapsulate many non-logical relations which have the surface appearance of logic but are in fact cultural encodings of reality, whether physical (as TAKE/BRING), experienced (BIRTH/DEATH) or moral (EVIL/GOOD). In no sense is the relation of birth to death a logical

opposition. It is a structure of experience whose emotional profundity has led to it forming a key place in human thought and language. In other words the probabilities of encodings of Sense are in large part determined not by the language but by what has been done with the language in the past.

Secondly, regarding sentences encoding supernatural names as pure creations of Sense does not take into account the fact of typical collocation. It is a fact of the corpus that DANCE and RING tend to occur in the same sentence. Whilst sentences generated by mere probabilty could encode both Groups, most of them would encode only one, i.e. whilst regarding Sense as a simple indicator of Group occurrence might successfully account for the probability of occurrence of single items, it would not account for probabilities of co-occurrence. The reason for this is plain. A sentence that encoded two or more items closely related by Sense would tend to be either tautologous or paradoxical. Sense relations are inter-sentential not intra-sentential, collocations are primarily intra-sentential.

In other words a theory of construction out of 'pure' Sense relations fails because it needs to take account of Applicability and of collocation. As will be seen, these two problems are essentially problems of Reference and textual 'style'. Sense relations, and the associated notion of predictability and 'typifying power' go a long way towards accounting for purely fictional creations and thus problem (1). They are also indicative of the type of conceptual focussing which occurs in use of supernatural names, whereby even a supposedly objective description of a supernatural phenomenon tends to be specified in terms of the typifying network of Sense. Indeed the power of the language may be so great that it constrains the

interpretation of actual situations. For example, if someone encounters a phenomenon which is both ugly and beautiful but which they believe to be "fairy" (or of which they would generally use the word fairy) it is quite likely that they would discount, ignore or even, perhaps, not see the ugliness as not a feature of the 'meaning' of the word, despite it being a feature of the Referent.

These considerations can perhaps best be illustrated by examination of some of the Groups particularly prominent in the corpus in which Sense relations appear important. The remainder of this chapter thus examines in turn a set of Sense relations which can be clearly and thoroughly described in formal terms, those of 3111 Position, but which contains little explanatory power; a set in which an apparently simple Sense relation actually disguises a more complex relation of Applicability, namely that of 3411/3412 SMALL/GREAT; and a set which appears to be determined by Applicabiltiy but which is actually strongly determined by Sense relations, namely 33 SENSATION. Where possible the significance of these Groups with regard to fairy is also discussed.

5.3.3.1 Example 1: 3111/3112 POSITION/PLACE

The distinction between these two Groups rests largely on that between Object and Item as defined above.[1] The latter Group, PLACE, can be regarded as distinct by virtue of the fact that the lexemes forming it Denote areas which have or may be taken to have objective existence and identity, whereas the former, POSITION, subsumes all lexemes Denoting areas which are relational, i.e. dependent on prior or simultaneous recognition of an existing area (and generally one Denoted by a lexeme entailing PLACE). One may thus use a member of 3112 without having Referred to any other area, but one must so Refer before being able to use a member of 3111.

The positional lexemes are thus predominantly adjectival and prepositional. They include three Groups Denoting vertical position - 31112 DOWN, 31114 HIGH and 31116 OVER - which are thus related to 241 VERTICAL MOTION, and one Denoting lateral position - 31117 SIDE; two imply proximity - 31117 SIDE and 31115 NEAR; one is neutral in all these respects - 31111 WAY. The distinctions between these Groups can be represented by use of three categories, "vertical upward", "vertical downward" and "proximate", thus:

Group	Vertical Up	Vertical Down	Proximate	Occurrences
WAY	0	0	0	21
DOWN	-	+	0	24
FAR	0	0	-	18
HIGH	+	-	-	12
NEAR	0	0	+	22
OVER	+	-	0	27
SIDE	0	0	+	11
				135

(1) See pp.22-3.

A fourth distinction is needed to separate NEAR from SIDE such that the latter is marked with respect to lateral orientation whereas the former is unmarked. WAY, being unmarked by any of these categories is somewhat difficult to specify. Its essential meaning in the corpus is probably something like "unmarked position", for its use in general is in the context of some further positional specification or else would seem to be deliberately vague.

Thus one could say that the Group POSITION occurs with a significant frequency in the corpus, that the lexemes which compose it have distinct Senses and are relationally specifiable, that the probabiltiy of occurrence of WAY, DOWN, NEAR or OVER is about twice that of FAR, SIDE or HIGH and that this Group is related in Sense to the ACTION Group 241 VERTICAL MOTION and to 3112 PLACE. This one can regard as a description of a particular network of Sense within which choices are made which encode part of the semantics of fairy .

For someone such facts in isolation may be interesting, but they are of very little use. In the first place no criteria can be adduced from this isolated description for the apparent preference of WAY, DOWN, NEAR and OVER above FAR, HIGH and SIDE. In the second place, the very fact that these lexemes encode Sense relations (in that they encode relations of place rather than places) means that nothing of importance can be derived from them without knowing precisely the terms (places) they are relating. It is no use knowing that a fairy is generally OVER rather at the SIDE unless one knows over or at the side of what. Similarly the bald statement this Group is related to the ACTION Group 241 VERTICAL MOTION is of little use without specification. As it stands it ably brings to the surface a fundamental of conception, that notions of position and motion are

related in English, but this is a truism, available to any introspection, and serves little purpose unless particular types of relation can be described, which is impossible without returning to the texts themselves. Thirdly one mysterious feature of the table, and perhaps therefore giving it some value, is that two pairs of Groups with identical markings nevertheless differ in that one member of the pair occurs twice as frequently as the other. OVER occurs more than twice as often as HIGH, NEAR occurs twice as often as SIDE. Surely. one concludes, this represents some special features of text or situation (Style or Applicability) rather than an intrinsic difference of Sense. The conclusion from this example must be that lexemes of pure Sense are relatively uninformative. Lexemes such as these could perhaps be accorded a classification midway between full and function words. Their role is not purely syntactical, but they have virtually no Applicability in the abstract.

5.3.3.2 Example 2: 3411/3412 SMALL/GREAT

A counter example might perhaps be found in analysis of two antonymous Groups. The Groups 3411 SMALL and 3412 GREAT are the only Groups encoding "size" found frequently in the corpus, SMALL having fourteen more occurrences than GREAT. Since this is a difference of about 23% it is probably significant. One can say immediately that the lexemes in these Groups are those which are probably used most frequently in the language to encode size, namely little, short, small, tiny and great although one notices the absence of big (4 occurrences) and large (4 occurrences) which by virtue of the method of exclusion explained in Chapter 3 were not counted. Furthermore they are relational. Size is relative to a standard and judgements of smallness or greatness are generally made by an observer, thus frequently relative to himself. However if one disallows the implication of an observer one may conclude that the purely relational information of SMALL and GREAT is of little value, for there is no guarantee that small and great have any constancy of meaning from text to text. Notions of "less than x" or "greater than x" depend on an x. It is impossible to have the notion "greater than" in isolation. This reiterates what was said in 5.3.3.1 concerning the uninformative nature of relational lexemes in isolation.

Given that impossibility one might argue that therefore part of the Sense of SMALL and GREAT is the necessary implication of an observer. Given this one has implicit Applicability, and the information contained in the presence of SMALL and GREAT becomes much more useful. Firstly it supports the argument that characterisation of the supernatural is made relative to a human norm. One could then say that many fairies are smaller or greater than the norm.

However of over 2,000 occurrences in the corpus only 122 mention size. Even allowing for the statement made elsewhere that 40% of the

corpus is concerned with using fairy as a modifier rather than a headword, this means that only one in ten occurrences distinguish fairy size as different from the norm. However given that the most frequently occurring Group which can be regarded as descriptive has only 318 occurrences (MONARCH), then one can say that the notion of size has about one third of the importance of that Group, which is probably a more realistic interpretation of the figures.

The problem with statistics of this nature is that the absolute nature of quantification implies that judgement should be made in terms of the absolute total (2,000 occurrences). This takes no account of focus or topicalisation. Few texts wish to include everything that could be said about fairy. The majority focus on a few features which are most relevant to their purpose. Given that there are 179 important Groups, and thus at least 179 significant things that could be said about fairy, then the average distribution of any topic at one topic per text would be roughly twelve texts. SMALL and GREAT each occur about five times as often as might be expected. One can thus say that, in the abstract either of these two Groups is between two and five times more important than any of the positional Groups discussed in the previous section. How though can one establish the reason for this significance?

In terms of Sense relations there is not a great deal can be said. The only obvious connection is to the Group POWER, as magnitude is often (but not necessarily) linked conceptually to the notion of power. This would mean that small fairy creatures were thought of as lacking in power (or conversely that a phenomenon called fairy which was thought of as weak was called small) and such a creature strong in power would be great. In some texts this is the case. In others it

is not. Oberon king of the fairies in Huon of Bourdeaux (1539/01) is the most powerful creature in the romance, and is only 4' tall. In fact the connection between POWER and SIZE seems to be adequate for GREAT but not for SMALL. Great is seldom used of human stature, but it is frequently used to indicate that many of the features attributed to fairy are done so in large amount, including marvels (1530/01/022/033), joy (1530/01/041/062), stones (1605/04/009), sums of gold (1613/02/004), feasts (1530/01/062; 1613/02/007; 1729/01/003), mishaps (1613/02/005), number (1616/005/001; 1530/01/031), amazement (1628/01/026), art and labour (1653/01/022), fear (1653/01/031) and cleanliness (1826/01/003). One could thus infer that there are few features of "fairy" which cannot be regarded as great in size or extent, and this may be taken to confirm the thesis that excess above a norm indicates unusualness. In some cases great is used to modify fairy to signify "important, superior, powerful" directly as in 1596/01/031,032; 1607/01/034; 1607/03/001; 1627/01/013.

However the reverse is not the case for SMALL. Possible reasons for the frequency of SMALL are discussed elsewhere(1). They are unrelated to POWER, and occurrences of SMALL do not couple it with any attribute save physical size, and the concomitants of size, of fairy beings whereas GREAT is never used in this sense. Indeed there are very few examples of large fairies within or outside the corpus.

In other words the apparent dichotomy between SMALL and GREAT is a false one. Whilst it is certainly a relation of Sense in the language, it generally is not within the corpus, i.e. the Sense relation proposed here whilst it does tell us something about the

---

(1) In Chapter 6.

structure of the language, does not merely fail to be adequate as an account of the meaning of fairy but is positively misleading in such an account, suggesting that texts encode size as a choice between GREAT and SMALL (which is true) but occluding the fact that it depends very much on the Object whose size is being described. That is, one needs to know the Applicability of the sentence (what is being Referred to?) and the attitude to the Referent (Affective or Stylistic meaning) in order to describe how this dichotomy functions in the corpus. The corpus is not the langue and its semantics are not co-extensive with those of the langue .

5.3.3.3 Example 2: 33 Sensation

Having shown that Sense relations are both inadequate and possibly misleading in discussion of the meaning of fairy , it remains to demonstrate that they can be useful. As has been noted, this is best illustrated at the generic level, as in the partial success of the formal hierarchy as a "generative semantics". Surprisingly, in view of what has been said above concerning the need for knowledge of Reference, Sense relations seem to be of particular relevance in an area which one might expect to be totally Referentially determined, namely the Group 33 SENSATION. Whilst it is obviously the case that discussion of this Group must be made with regard to putative Reference, there are clearly relations manifest within this Group, and between this Group and others, which have nothing to do with the actual appearance of real Referents.

In the first place one must note that although it might seem reasonable to suppose that reality consists of a buzz of assorted sensory data compounded in roughly equal proportions of material accessible to each physical sense, the sense of smell receives no mention in the corpus, taste and touch are each manifest in only one lexemic Group, sound has three, but sight has eight. In other words the sense of sight (called here 3313 VISUAL) is strongly favoured in the corpus. Not only this but of the Groups which form 332 GENERIC SENSATION (i.e. lexemes which could not exclusively be associated with one channel of sensation) all would intuitively seem to be primarily visual.[1] Furthermore the Groups forming 3311 TASTE and 3312 TANGIBLE, namely 33111 SWEET and 33121 SOFT, although correctly

(1) These are 3321 BEAUTY, 3322 CLEAN, 3323 STRANGE, 3324 SCENE.

assigned by virtue of their literal meanings are frequently (and in the case of sweet, primarily) used metonymically or generically. In other words there is a strong focus in the corpus on the aural and in particular visual sensation to the neglect of the others. If one was to rely on Referential information as an explanation here, one would be inclined to say that fairy was primarily a visual and secondarily an aural phenomenon and had few manifestations of the other sense. This confirms intuition, and is itself confirmed by the large number of texts in which fairy phenomena are recorded as being seen or heard. The Sense relation between 25151 SEE and 3314 SOUND are thus paramount, and the formal hierarchy obscures their close connection. The action of seeing and the encountering of a situation which is visual are not simply related in Sense but identical. To report seeing x and to report the visual phenomenon x is to report identical information in both cases. This is obvious. What is not so obvious however is that frequently in the corpus a sentence will encode the ACTION of seeing fairy or the SITUATION of a visual fairy , but not both. One is thus inclined to say that there is a semantic element "sight" which may be manifest in two different sentential roles but retains its meaning, so that the true prominence of the encoding of "sight" can only be observed in the corpus by adding the number of occurrences of 25151 SEE to the number of occurrences of 3313 VISUAL, giving a total of 547 occurrences. Clearly the notion of "sight" is of massive importance in the corpus. Using the standard proposed in the previous section it is 45 times as important as the average semantic feature.

If the same exercise is carried out for 215152 HEAR and 3314 SOUND the resultant total is 166 occurrences, roughly a third of that

for "sight". However one can again suggest that aural phenomena and speech have an identical semantic component. Thus 2512 VERBAL could also be added, giving a grand total of 528 occurrences.

The statements deducible from these exercises are necessarily statements about putative Reference because they are concerned with sensation. But the operative word is putative, for if we are talking of fictional reference, as would seem to be the case with supernatural names, then the object under discussion is not an actual phenomenon but a construction of Sense. The sensations encoded in the corpus would not be actual but fictional. In consequence knowledge of the frequency and prominence of certain Sense relations is knowledge of the psychology of speakers. Thus we can say that the visual channel is the most important, and the aural secondmost; that the other three channels are almost totally irrelevant comparatively speaking, and their meanings tend to be appropriated metonymically and/or synaesthetically for the primary two; that the visual channel is roughly three times as important as the aural; if one ignores speech, but only slightly more important if speech is taken into account; and that the visual channnel has a more varied and generally more specific pattern of encoding than the aural.

These statements are all confirmatory of intuitions about the corpus, about the nature of the imaginative construction of the supernatural (e.g. that supernatural happenings are generally 'sightings'), about the nature of "fairy" (it is primarily, or primarily thought of as, a visual phenomenon, which has also a strong aural component, but which is more associated with speech in some form than other forms of sound) and about the nature of the psychological priorities of sensation in general. These facts are observed, and

only observed, across texts and styles (i.e. would appear to be largely independent of Stylistic meaning) and seem to exist independently of Reference. That is, they are psychological facts apparent only as Sense relations in the language. Furthermore the possibility that sensory modes could achieve such prominence in a corpus which might conceivably report no actual sensation (if, for example, it consists entirely of works of fiction), that in 2,000 occurrences there are at least 1,075 mentions of sensation, suggests a partial explanation of the mechanism and success of fictional reference and supernatural names. A name such as fairy is not coined or used in isolation, it tends to be used in conjunction with a report of some sensation or other. So used are we to reports of sensation, and so deeply are the semantic features "visual" and "aural" buried in our language and thought, that such use invariably confirms the validity of the name and places it in a pseudo-physical context. Indeed if one takes into account the prominence of 11 BEING and 3112 PLACE in the corpus, their total occurrences of 1195 and 951 respectively added to "sight" and "aural" give 3,221. One could conclude that every use of a supernatural name is physically contextualised, indeed that the structure of the language is such that it is very difficult to do otherwise. The conclusion must therefore be that Sense relations themselves encode putative physical detail and that in consequence not only must discussion of Sense be made with regard to Reference, but that discussion of Reference must necessarily be made with regard to Sense.

This leads to a further observation with regard to the dictum of Ayer which formed one of the starting points of this study.(1) The

(1) See pp.6-7.

position reached in the above argument illustrates the vagueness of his requirement that "some possible sense-experience should be relevant to the determination of [a proposition's] truth or falsehood". Clearly it could be argued that in all the texts in this corpus such "possible sense-experience" exists yet equally clearly fairy is a word which Ayer would call "metaphysical", "literally senseless". The fact that the word itself lacks all direct physical Applicability does not mean that it cannot be attached to "possible sense-experience" by virtue of the Sense-relations it acquires with regard to other words in the language.

The third observation derived from an examination of the Sense relations of 33 SENSATION has already been touched on to some extent. It is clear from the texts that formal separation of the Groups in 33 according to reasonable literal interpretation of the physical sense concerned is artificial. Those Groups called generic include tokens used specifically, as beauty for example is sometimes used in the corpus to mean physical, visual beauty of appearance shape and form(1)

Those Groups called specific include tokens used generically or metaphorically, the difference being rather difficult to state.(2) Any of the lexemes may be used synaesthetically.(3) Some seem to have such strong connotations in metaphorical use that they might almost be counted as distinct lexemes, as in the moral or ethical symbolism of light and dark . One might wish to argue therefore that a formal schematisation of the literal relations is of little value

---

(1) E.g. 1750/02/001 her stature was tall and her beauty exquisite.
(2) E.g. 1653/01/013 this lovely, sweet and beauteous fairy.
(3) E.g. 1603/03/001 soft music; 1628/01/002 sweet musicke; 1791/01/011 each shining thread of sound; 1798/02/045 sweet odours.

(although, of course, without such a schema at least implicit in our knowledge devices such as synaesthesia, metonymy and other forms of semantic transference could not occur).

However an examination of the relations schematised indicates one important fact about the realisation of SENSATION in the corpus, namely that whilst the fact of sensation is important, as demonstrated in the previous section, precision of sensation is not. Indeed it would appear that one of the reasons for the frequency of transference of meaning across the Groups forming 33 SENSATION is not to achieve greater specificity, but vague effect. Whereas a phrase such as soft grass can be related to a specific form of experience, it is more difficult to do so for soft music, and even more difficult for soft beauty. Use of the devices of transference shifts the burden of meaning from the intention of the speaker/writer to the interpretation of reader/hearer. Using words literally implies an accuracy and faithfulneess of production which would permit the legitimate tests of truth value semantics - the writer has a meaning he wishes to convey, and he seeks to do so by an accurate choice of the 'correct' words. Use of words with transferred meaning prevents truth value tests, allows inaccuracy and vagueness and depends on reader interpretation to provide appropriate (not 'correct') meaning. The consequence is that whilst the entailed notion 33 SENSATION is conveyed by use of the Groups it subsumes, such that the necessity of a physical context is suggested, it is left to the reader to create or supply that context. In a phrase such as 1653/01/013 this lovely, sweet and beauteous fairy, very little is being conveyed to the reader, but a great deal is given him to interpret. It has the vagueness of what has been called "woman's language", characterised in its 'use of "empty"

adjectives', 'expressiveness' and 'lack of precision'[1] The reader is given strong positive connotations to work from, but the descriptive meaning of the three adjectives is equivalent - lovely, sweet and beauteous have the same meaning unless interpreted differently by the reader.

This confirms and links two tendencies previously noted in use of fairy. On the one hand we have seen in the etymology and general development of the word a tendency to use it vaguely even, I have suggested, in a manner deliberately ambiguous to allow the maximum range of connotation and interpretation. This, it has been suggested, allows for a wide degree of subjective meaning, for a fluid development, and for a lack of commitment with respect to the ontology of the described Entity. Conversely it has been shown that the creation and sustenance of a successful fictional Reference depends very much on fitting "fairy" into a credible and consistent physical context, making it real by treating it as if it was real.

Now, a real physical context must be specific - a field, a hill, a wood does not exist in the abstract. However specificity reduces and perhaps even destroys the functional ambiguity of the supernatural name fairy, it reduces it to a unique Phenomenon whose existence can be tested and about which statements made can also be tested as Ayer would require. This would counteract the usefulness, subjective range and credibility of the fiction.[2] Consequently the physical description should aim to create as full a physical context as possible (=_make the "fairy" as real as possible) whilst remaining as

---

(1) Parlee (1979).

(2) Credibilty here need not be taken to mean that actual belief by either speaker/writer or hearer/reader is in question, though it may be. More pertinent is the credibility a hearer is willing to allow and a speaker needs to give for "suspension of disbelief" or "the benefit of the doubt" to be possible.

unspecific as possible (= inducing the reader to produce a context which is credible and permissible to him/her within the stated physical parameters). This also accounts for a lack of specificity in much of the typification of fairy . Agreement occurs at the generic level (they come, go, are attractive, have a moral sense, are like and unlike men, work magic) but does not occur at the specific level - fairy beings are either tall, small or human sized; small may be half an inch to four feet; they are coloured, but it is not clear whether it is their skin or clothes or both which are coloured, and the colours may be green, red, black, white, grey or yellow; they come and go magically, but it may be a form of teleportation, instantaneous appearance and/or disappearance, or flight with or without an instrument, with or without wings, with or without a command word; time is the same or different in fairyland, if different it is either faster or slower; they eat or do not eat the same or different things as men which they produce, buy or steal with or without the use of magic; they have a distinctive appearance which is or is not illusory and may be beautiful or ugly and if either may really be the other; they only appear at Midsummer's Eve, midnight, dusk, Hallowe'en; they inhabit an unusual place - a hill (in, under or on), a graveyard, a dark wood, an island, a burial mound.

What this list of information amounts to is a general formula, which can be expressed as follows:

(1) SUPERNATURAL NAME + PHYSICAL CONTEXT = successful fictional Reference

(2) PHYSICAL CONTEXT is any or all of: GENERIC BEING, GENERIC PLACE, GENERIC SENSATION

(3) GENERIC X is made specific by any logical specific difference from an implicit normal equivalent; or is that equivalent

(4) GENERIC SENSATION is made specific by reader/hearer interpretation

According to this formulation Sense relations enter into the imaginative creation of fairy in at least three ways. Firstly they enable, by virtue of their encoding the structure of a language's reality, putative Reference. Secondly by virtue of the relations existing between a lexeme which has normal Denotation (e.g. dress, place, move) and other lexemes they facilitate distortions from the norm along axes of Sense towards other lexemes to give a deviant Denotation. Thirdly they facilitate by their existence transgressions such as metaphor, metonymy and synaesthesia which minimise content and maximise interpretation.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter on lexemic meaning several different but related aspects of meaning in the corpus have been discussed, centering on the sentential roles of fairy and Sense relations between Groups and lexemes. It has been shown that whilst sentential roles affect topicalisation of the object word and hence may subtly encode or control attitudes, the flexibility of syntax prevents any exclusive equivalence between role and meaning; that fairy predominantly takes a situational role rather than the actor/goal role with which it is more readily intuitively associated, and it was suggested that this is a function of what has been called its functional ambiguity; that Sense relations yielded some fundamental relations concerning fictional Reference, hence the semantics of fairy , but could not provide an account that was by any means fully adequate; and that considerations of Reference and Sense have to be examined in harness. In addition certain prominent Groups were explored, including 3111 POSITION, 341 SIZE and 33 SENSATION. The general conclusions of this chapter are thus that formal analysis (a) enables the specification and examination of formal relations, including Sense relations; (b) that such analysis can obscure or falsify information; (c) that such analysis can isolate significant Groups, but that the Groups and their interrelations still require interpretation, and (d) that interpretation must be carried out in all three areas of Sense relations, Associative meaning and Applicability. Thus Chapters 6 and 7 will in turn examine how these two areas interrelate with naming and with Sense relations, as such explanation would appear to be required of a full account of textual if not lexemic semantics.

Diagram 5.4.1

1. IN THE RELEVANT PHYSICAL SITUATION CHOOSE AN IMPORTANT FEATURE.
2. CALL THAT FEATURE X.
3. SELECT A SEMANTIC GROUP T WHICH ENCODES X.
4. LET THE TOPIC OF THE UTTERANCE ENCODE T.
5. DETERMINE THE APPARENT PHYSICAL RELATIONS OF IMPORTANT ITEMS AND OBJECTS IN THE SITUATION.
6. CALL THOSE RELATIONS r1, r2, r3,....rn.
7. CALL THE SET OF RELATIONS r1, r2, r3 etc. R.
8. SELECT A SET OF GROUPS CALLED S ENCODING R.
9. DETERMINE THE AFFECTIVE POWER OF THE SITUATION AND CALL IT AP.
10. IF THE TEXT IS FICTIONAL DETERMINE THE INTENDED AFFECTIVE POWER OF THE TEXT = AP.
11. SELECT A SUBSET FROM T WHICH HAS THE VALUE AP. CALL THE SUBSET W.
12. SELECT A STYLE OF VALUE AP. CALL THE STYLE Y.
13. SELECT A LEVEL OF CREDIBILITY OF VALUE AP. CALL THE LEVEL Z.
14. ACCORDING TO Y CHOOSE ACCEPTABLE GROUPS FROM S. CALL THIS SET OF GROUPS SY.
15. ACCORDING TO Z ESTABLISH SYNTACTIC AND SENSE RELATIONS BETWEEN LEXEMES IN SY AND A LEXEME FROM T.
    15a. CHOOSE LEVELS OF ENTAILMENT WHICH HAVE THE SPECIFICITY NECESSARY FOR Z.
    15b. ACCORDING TO Y AND R FOREGROUND AT LEAST ONE OF THE AVAILABLE SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMOUS PAIRS, BUT NOT A COMPLETE PAIR.
16. ACCORDING TO Y ASSIGN SENTENTIAL ROLES SUCH THAT THE SELECTED LEXEME FROM T IS THE TOPIC.
    16a. IF THE STYLE IS LITERARY THERE IS A 65% LIKELIHOOD THAT FAIRY WILL TAKE THE ROLE OF SITUATION OTHERWISE THERE IS A 30% LIKELIHOOD.
17. REALISE TOKENS OF THE LEXEMES CHOSEN FROM SY AND T ACCORDING TO THE RELATIONS CHOSEN IN 15 AND THE ROLE RELATIONS CHOSEN IN 16.
18. COMPLETE UTTERANCE.

At this stage however it is possible to expand the diagram of semantic relations proposed at the end of section 5.2[1] to incorporate the major modifications of the input of Sense noted above, as outlined in Diagram 5.4.1.

This diagram is a flowchart summarising the major relations outlined in the chapter which are relevant to the determination of the meaning of fairy both as the way users determine choice of the lexeme and its context, and as the options which require description for an adequate account of that meaning in a period or set of texts. It is thus a model of a partial answer to question (i), "how does fairy mean?" and is integrated with additional models in the final chapter. It may be read by following the choices from any box. The two starting points are here "physical situation" and "affective power", both being major influences on Sense and Style, but it can best be understood by reading back from the terminal boxes "actor/goal", "action" and "situation", as this was the procedure adopted above. The two primary influences on the encoding of the meaning of fairy in sentential roles are those of Sense relations, particularly entailment, synonymity, antonymity and similarity; and Style, particularly in the choice betweeen literary and oral varieties. A third major influence is that of topicalisation which itself is determined by the physical situation both of use and of Applicability and by Affective power, both directly (through emotive force) and indirectly through the need to make credible statements. The need for credibility involves the realisation of a particular set of logical relations inherent in the language as

---

(1) Tables 5.2.3 and 5.2.4.

outlined on page 243 above, and this set of relations is realised in conjunction with the relations manifest in the physical situation. It is this complex of a credible logic and an actual situation which determines which of the relations of Sense will be encoded in which role, though Stylistic choice may also constrain Sense relations directly. These will form part of the discussion of the next chapter.

It should be clear from the above that Sense relations play an important part in structuring the semantics of fairy. Although many of the relations evident in this corpus can be said to be representative simply of structures embedded in the language certain choices concerning which relation to realise and which aspects of that relation to focus on or topicalise are crucial in that structure. However it should equally be clear that aim (B) cannot be attainable if discussion is confined simply to intralinguistic relations for, whilst this chapter goes some way to supporting the hypothesis that a lexeme with fictional Reference acquires meaning by virtue of the Sense relations obtaining around it in actual usage, neither strict formal classification of those relations nor rather fuzzier accounts of those relations provides an adequate model unless more is said on inputs from, in Diagram 5.4.1, "Physical situation", "Style" and "Affective power". These form the topics of the following two chapters.