

SOURCES OF SHARED POLYSEMY IN ENGLISH SPATIAL ADJECTIVES

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0. In the present paper we shall deal with shared polysemy in the history of those E (English) adjectives which have had at least one meaning referring to spatial dimension (volume, space, length, height, width, thickness or depth), but not to shape. By the term *shared polysemy* we shall understand the cases when at least two lexemes share at least two synonymous or antonymous meanings. In that sense, the lexemes *great* and *big* share polysemy since they have both had the meanings 'of g. (great) size /object/' and 'pregnant /woman/'. Also, *long* and *short* share antonymous polysemy since they have two opposite meanings, 'of g./l. (little) length /object/' and 'in far/near future /period/'. In order to restrict our material to the most frequent cases, we have left out instances where less than four spatial adjectives make up a particular semantic non-spatial domain. Thus the two examples above will not be treated, since these have been recorded as the only instances of shared polysemy of spatial adjectives for the meanings 'pregnant /woman/' and 'in far/near future /period/'.

Cases of shared polysemy often include parallel developments (radiation of synonyms). The latter may be of particular scholarly interest as they are likely to manifest recurrent patterns in semantic changes, and investigation into parallel developments may lead to the establishment of regularities in such changes (Stern 1965 : 185).

After presenting a survey of all cases of shared polysemy as defined above, we shall use the survey as a starting point for the investigation of the two following questions: a) What evidence can be adduced to throw light on the ultimate causes of the semantic changes presented; b) Which are the possible conditions underlying these changes (according to a differentiation in Ullmann 1963 : 187)?

Earliest quotations from the OED (Oxford English dictionary), the MED (Middle English dictionary), the SOD (Shorter Oxford dictionary), and the DHS (Dictionary of historical slang) have been drawn with the view to arriving approximately at the periods when particular meanings emerged. When no explicit mention is made of the dictionary source, the OED is to be understood. Adjectives arising in OE, i.e. before 1100, have not been provided with dates, as data on that period are supposed not to be sufficiently reliable.

1. To provide for the data on spatial meanings of the adjectives under investigation, including data on the earliest records, we present a list to which readers may refer when necessary. Borrowings are marked indicating the donor language. If the donor is in brackets, the meaning arose in E independently of the donor.

ample < OF 'of g. extent /area/' "now always eulogistic: abundantly, excellently wide" (OED) 1548 —; 'of g. extent /space/' 1596 —

base < OF 'of l. height /obj./' 1393 — arch; 'at l. height /obj./' c1440—1851

big < ON? 'of g. size /child/' MED a1375 —, /object/ 1552 —, with positive connotation of strength and power

brief < L, OF 'of l. length /object/' 1688 — rare

broad 'of g. width /obj./' OE —; 'of g. extent /area; space/' OE —, often connoting amplitude which connects the limits

close < (OF) 'of l. width /area/; of l. extent /area; space/' 1489 —

colossal < F 'of very g. size /obj./' 1712 —, connoting admiration

considerable < (med. L) 'of very g. size /obj./' 1651 —, connoting importance

deep 'of g. depth /obj./' OE —; 'at l. depth /obj./' OE —

diffuse < L, F 'of g. extent /obj. without distinct shape; event/' a1711 —

enormous < L 'of very g. size /obj./' 1544 —

exiguous < L 'of insufficient size /obj./' 1651 —

grand < OF 'of g. size and magnificent /obj./' 1660 —

great 'of g. size /obj./' OE — (rare in OE); 'of g. diameter /elongate obj./; of g. width /non-animate obj./' OE — ?a1800; 'of g. size and fat /animate/' MED a1325 (c1250) — end of 15c

gross < OF 'of g. size and rough or clumsy /bodily part, structure/' MED 1347—50—1794; 'of (unpleasantly) g. size and fat /animate/' 1577 — dial.

heavy 'of g. size and of g. weight /obj./' MED ?c1421 —; 'of g. size /obj./' ? — (US slang)

high 'of g. height /non-human obj./' OE —, /human /OE — 17c; 'at g. height /obj./' OE —

huge < OF 'of very g. size /obj./' MED c1330 (?a/c1300) —

immense < (O)F 'of g. very size /obj./' 1490 —, /area; space/ 1599 —? obs.

insignificant < *in* + *significant* 'of very l. size /obj./' 1748 —, connoting lack of importance

large < OF 'of g. extent /area/' MED c1230 (?a1200) — 1697; 'of g. width /obj./' MED c1300—1715; 'of g. size /obj./' MED c1385 —

lengthy 'of g. length /obj./' 1760 — rare exc. US and tech. of animals

lite < (OE, ON) 'of l. size /obj./' c1205 — dial. and arch., connotation: materialistic

little 'of l. size /obj./' OE —, "implication of endearment or depreciation" (OED) 1567 —

lofty 'of imposingly g. height /non-animate obj./' 1590 —

long 'of g. length /obj./' OE —

low 'of l. height /obj./' c1150 —; 'at l. height /obj./' 14c —

lowly 'of l. height /growing obj./' 1593 — "usually with allusion to sense 'humble'" (OED)

main 'of g. size /obj./' OE — dial. "sometimes connoting strength, resisting power, or the like" (OED)

mammoth < Russ. 'of very g. size /obj./' 1814 —; E has probably developed this meaning independently of Russian

massive < OF 'of g. size, heavy and solid /obj./' c1410 —

mickle < ON 'of g. size /obj./' OE — dial. and arch., connotation: materialistic?

mighty 'of g. size, heavy and/or powerful /obj./' 1413 —; 'of very g. size /obj./' DHS late 16c — (slang)

minute < L 'of very l. size /obj./' a1626 —

narrow 'of l. width /obj./' OE —; 'of l. extent /area; space/' OE —

petit < OF 'of l. size /obj.; abstr./' 1377 — 1675, often with depreciatory connotation

petty < OF 'of l. size /obj./' 1393—1592 (—1688 SOED), often with depreciatory connotation

ponderous < (L) 'of g. size, heavy and solid /obj./' c1400? —, often with depreciatory connotation

puny < (OF) 'of insufficient size /obj./' 1604 —

scant < (ON) 'of insufficient width /obj./; of insufficient extent /area; space/' a1533 —, connotation: materialistic

scanty < *scant* + *y* 'of insufficient size or width /obj./; of insufficient extent /area; space/' 1701 —, connotation: materialistic

shallow 'of l. depth /obj./' 15c —

short 'of l. length /obj./' OE —

side 'of g. length /area/' OE —; 'of g. extent /area/' OE — c1400; 'reaching far down /obj./' OE —; 'narrow /clothes/' a1825 —

slender origin obscure 'of l. diameter /elongate non-animate obj./' a1513 —; 'of l. size /obj./; of l. extent /area; space/' 1610 —

small 'of l. diameter /elongate obj./' OE — dial; 'of l. width /obj./' OE — rare; 'of l. size /obj./' OE — rare in OE and ME according to Rickenbach (1963)

stiff 'of g. size, heavy and strong /non-animate obj./' c1400—c1440
stout < (OF) 'of g. diameter and strong /plant/' 1573-80—; 'thick-set and /or fat and strong /human/' 1804—, /animal/ 1832—, frequent connotation: 'unyielding'
strait < OF 'of l. extent /space/' c1290 — rare; 'of l. width /garment/' 1387 — dial., /obj.; area/ c1391 — 1527, /ribbon, cloth/ 1439—1503
substantial < (Christ. L), (O)F 'of very g. size /obj./' 1454?—, connoting importance
subtile < F 'of pleasantly l. diameter or thickness /obj./' c1425—; 'of very l. size and delicate /heap of particles/' a1425 —
subtle < L, OF 'of pleasantly l. diameter or thickness or width /obj./' 1382— a1680; 'of very l. size and delicate /particle; heap of particles/' 1394—1753
tall < ME? 'of g. size /obj./' c1430 rare; 'of g. height /animate/' 1530 —, /non-animate/ 1548 —, connotation: materialistic
tenuous < L 'of l. diameter or thickness /obj./' 1656 —
thick 'of g. diameter or thickness /obj./' OE —, 'of g. depth /obj./' OE — 1693, 'thick-set /animate/' a1250—1819
thin 'of l. thickness /obj./' OE —, 'of l. diameter /elongate obj./' a1425 —
titanic < (L) 'of very g. size /obj./' 1709 —, connoting admiration
unride 'of g. size and strong or powerful /body; weapon/' c1220—?a1600
vast < L 'of very g. size /obj./' 1575-85 —, 'of very g. extent /area/' 1590 —
weighty < *weight* + *y* 'of g. size and heavy /animate/' 1581—, formal style
wide 'of g. width /obj./' OE —; 'of g. extent /area/' OE — 1871, /space/ c1386—1871

2. A survey of shared polysemy of E spatial adjectives follows, while the directions of semantic changes within E have been reconstructed taking into account all the available data, i.e. the data on the chronology of meanings and on parallel developments, as well as data on the meanings of source words in cases of borrowings. Sometimes, a semantic derivation occurred in a foreign language before the loan took place. This is indicated here by mentioning only the immediate donor language, not the actual development which took place in the donor or some language other than E.

If a spatial meaning of a native adjective follows a non-spatial meaning in time (marked as "reverse order") it is obvious that the former could not produce the latter in E. However, such a derivation is possible in the donor for loans. Thus, for example, the meaning 'important' of the adjective *heavy* (see § 2.4., 4) cannot have been derived from the meaning 'of g. size' because the latter occurred later. On the other hand, although the meaning 'of high rank' of the adjective *grand* arose prior to the meaning 'of g. size', the possibility that the latter meaning has produced the former in F (French) as the donor is not excluded.

If a semantic innovation of a loanword in E is not paralleled by the same

one in the lending language, this is taken as a proof that the innovation is of native character rather than a borrowing, as is, for example, the case with *large* in § 2.3., 2. the meaning 'haughty' being absent in F. Innovations present in borrowed adjectives which fit into E semantic change patterns but which also belong to the donor, may not be safely ranked as either foreign influence or native development. They may well be a combination of the two. For example, *petty* and *petit* in § 2.2., 5 may have been derived from the meaning 'of l. size' either in OF or in E. Such cases are doubly marked here (as 2 'of l. size /obj./' > and 5 OF > in this example).

2.1. The notion of duration has been expressed by a number of spatial adjectives, being probably derived from the following meanings: 1 'of l/g. length /obj./' >: *short* and *long* /time; event/ OE —; 2 'of l/g. size /obj./' > /time/: *little* OE —; *great* c1330 — obs. with *season, time, years*; *small* 1430-40 —; 3 'of g. amount /matter/' ?>: *tall* /time/ DHS c1840 — (slang); 4 'of l. width /obj./' ?>: *narrow* /time/ 1611 rare; 5 L, OF >: *brief* /obj.; event; abstr./ c1325 — (rev. order).

2.2. The development of spatial adjectives in the meaning 'of low/high rank /human/' has been as follows: 1 'of l/g. height /obj./' >: *high* OE —; *low* c1200 —; *tall* /abstr./ 1655 — 1827; 2 'of l/g. size /obj./' >: *main* OE — rare; *small* c1205 — rare; *little* c1200 — rare; *great* MED c1325 (c1300) —; *big* 1577 —; 3 'of g. power /human/' >: *mighty* (and 'wealthy' and/or 'influential') c1375 — (rev. order) cf. *rich* and *strong* (OE — 1622); 4 'haughty' or on analogy of *humble* 'unassuming': 'of low rank' >: *lofty* /human/ 1548 — (rev. order); 5 OF >: *base* 1490 — arch. (=1); *petty* a1523 — (=2); *petit* a1531—1897 (=2); *grand* c1540—1742 (rev. order); *puny* a1577—1733 (rev. order); 6 ? *slender* 1548—1651 (rev. order).

2.3. Some adjectives added meanings of pomp (haughtiness) or humbleness to those of spatial dimensions: 1 'of l/g. height /obj./' >: *high* /human; mental or verbal event / MED a1225 (?a1200) — /human/ dial.; *low* /human; behaviour/ 1377 — rare; *tall* /verbal event/ DHS 1670 — (coll.); 2 'of l/g. size /human/' >: *great* /human; event/ MED a1225 (?a1200) — 1832; *small* /human; abstr./ c1386 —; *big* /speech; manner/ 1570 —; *large* /speech; manner/ 1605 —; *enormous* 1641 — obs.; *grand* /public event/ 1735 —, /human; abstr./ 1832 —; 3 'reaching far down' >: *side* /human /1508 —; 4 'rigid' >: *stiff* /behaviour/ 1608 —; 5 *low* + *ly* > *lowly* /human; event/ c1374 —, /non-animate obj.; abstr./ 1634 —; *loft* + *y* > *lofty* /human; event/ 1485 — (rev. order); 6 OF >: *stout* /human/ c1315—1851 (rev. order).

2.4. Adjectives denoting spatial dimensions have frequently acquired meanings 'important' and 'unimportant': 1 'of l/g. size /obj./' >: *little* /obj./ a1100 —, /human/ c1220 —; *great* /event/ MED a1225 (?OE) —, *small* /human in profession/ 1338 —, /obj.; event; abstr./ c1340 —; *great* /human; event; abstr./ MED a1375 —; *big* /human; event; abstr./ DHS c1570 — (coll.);

main /event/ 1581–1671; *colossal* 1843 —; *large* /abstr./ ? —¹ (coll.); *enormous* ? —; *vast* /event/? —; **2** 'having sufficient comprehension' >: *deep* /abstr./ 1596–1711 (cf. antonymous *simple*, *silly* and *foolish*, all meaning both 'having insuf. comprehension' and 'unimportant'); **3** 'at g. height' >: *high* /event; abstr./ c1200 —; **4** 'of g. weight /obj./' >: *heavy* /human; event; abstr./ OE — rare or obs. (rev. order); **5** 'younger' >: *puny* 1593 — (rev. order); **6** *weight* + *y* > *weighty* 1489 —; **7** = 2.2. **3**; **8** *in* + *significant* > *insignificant* SOED 1627 —; **9** ON >: *mickle* /human/ OE — rare (=1); **10** OF >: *petit* /abstr./ a1362–1759 (rev. order); *immense* /event/ 1490 — (=1); *petty* 1581 — (=1); *grand* /non-animate obj.; event/ 1597 — (rev. order), /human/ 1832 — (=1); **11** (O)F or Christ. L >: *substantial* /event/ 1432–50 —; **12** L > *ponderous* c1485–1794 (=1+4); *considerable* a1619 — (rev. order); *minute* c1650 — (=1); *tenuous* 1817 —; **13** ? >: *slender* 1530.

2.5. Some adjectives of dimension share the meaning 'rapid/slow /pulse/': **1** 'numerous /succession of events/' > 'rapid /pulse/': *great* 1707 /obs./; *large* 1822–34 —; **2** 'of l/g. duration /interval between successive pulses/' >: *short* 'rapid' 1834 —; *long* 'slow' 1898 —. *Small* has denoted 'weak /pulse/' since 1755.

2.6. Another meaning of spatial adjectives has been the notion of the little or great intensity of an event other than sound. Here is the list: **1** 'of g. size /obj./' >: *main* /event/ OE — 1671; *great* /emotion/ a1175 —, /event incl. sound/ MED a1325 (c1250) —; *big* /agent; event/ MED a1375–1604; *huge* /event/ MED c1380 —; *large* /process/ MED ?c1425–1748 rare; *enormous* 1544 —; *massive* /event/ ? —; *mammoth* ? —; **2** 'of l/g. height /obj./' >: /event other than intel.; abstr./: *low* 1390 —; *high* 14c —; *lofty* /wind/ 1600–1745; *tall* /speed/ DHS c1840 — (slang); **3** 'of f. weight /obj./' >: *heavy* /suffering/ MED c1150 (OE) —, /sun/ c1175 —, /event/ 1375 — (rev. order in all cases); *weighty* 'falling with force' 1583 —; **4** 'at g. depth /obj./' >: *deep* /psychol. event/ 1547 —; **5** 'unyielding' >: 'intense /wind/': *stiff* c1290 — (rev. order); *stout* c1400–1670 (rev. order), /pain/ c1425 obs. (rev. order); **6** 'plentiful/scarce' >: *large* /stroke/ MED 1330 — MED a1400 (?a1350); *scanty* /wind/ 1647–1804 (cf. *scarce* /wind/ c1400–1600); **7** 'rare' >: *thin* /light; colour/ 1649 — (cf. *dense* /phot. negative/); **8** 'unimportant' >: *minor* 1899? —; *insignificant* ? —; **9** *might* + *y* > *mighty* /event/ OE —; **10** *titan* + *ic* > *titanic* 1678? —; **11** F >: *immense* ? — (=1); *colossal* ? — (=1); **12** L >: *tenuous* /event/ 1817 — (=7); *vast* ? — (=1).

2.7. Intensity of voice or sound has been another meaning accompanying a number of spatial adjectives: **1** 'at l/g. height /obj./' >: *high* MED c1200–1776; *low* c1440 —; **2** 'of l/g. size /obj./' >: *small* c1250 —, or **3** (according

¹ The mark ? — indicates that the earliest records have not been traceable in the dictionaries.

to Bosworth and Toller present in OE); *big* 1581 —1859; *little* ? —; **3** 'of l. diameter or thickness /obj./' >: *small* (=2); *subtle* > *subtile* 1398 /obs./; *thin* (and 'of high pitch') 17c —; **4** 'unyielding' >: *stiff* 1377–a1400–50 (rev. order); *stout* c1440–1545 (rev. order); **5** OF >: *base* c1450 — (=1); *gross* 1398 rare (obs., =2).

2.8. Some spatial adjectives refer to sound pitch: **1** 'of l/g. thickness or diameter /obj./' >: *thick* 1389 —; *thin* (and 'weak') 17c —; **2** 'at l/g. height /obj./' >: *high* MED 1393 —; *low* /musical sound/ 1422 —; **3** 'of g. weight /obj./' > 'deep /sound/': *heavy* MED a1398 (rev. order), (and 'loud') 1810 —; **4** 'at g. depth' >: *deep* 1591 —; **5** ? >: *broad* 'deep' 1607 /obs./.

2.9. The notion of numerosity has often accompanied spatial adjectives: **1** 'of l/g. density /group of objects/' >: *thick* mixed with 'dense /group of obj./' OE —, followed by *with* or (obs.) *of* /obj./ c1386 —; *thin* /group of obj./ 1508–1863, /intellectual event; abstr./ ? —; **2** 'of l/g. size /obj./' >: *main* /group of soldiers/ OE; /group of obj./: *little* OE —, *great* MED 1300 —1676, *unride* c1300–c1330, *substantial* 1454 —, *small* 1470 —, *enormous* 1544 —, *vast* 1637 — (or **3**), *considerable* 1651 —, *colossal* 1832 —; *big* ? —; **3** 'of l/g. extent /area/' >: '(not) numerous /intel. event or abs. referring to objects, group of the animate/': *wide* 1534 —, *broad* 1741–2 —, *vast* 1637 — (or **2**); *narrow* ? —; **4** 'of l/g. length /obj./' > 'having l/g. sequence /objects/' > 'of l/g. numerosity /group of obj.; degree of numer. amount/': *short* 1681 —; *long* 1746 —; **5** 'of l/g. height /obj./' >: 'of l/g. numerosity /degree of numerical amount/' >: *low* 1601 —; *high* ? —; *tall* ? — (US); **6** 'unimportant' >: *insignificant* ? —; **7** ON >: *mickle* /people/ c1200–c1440 (=2); *lite* OE — arch. or dial. (rev. order); **8** OF >: *large* MED a1250 (=3); *huge* MED 1275 — (rev. order), see § 4.1.2; *immense* 1498 — (92); **9** L >: *exiguous* 1651? — (=2); **10** ? >: *slender* 1564 (rev. order ?).

2.10. Some spatial adjectives have associated their forms with meanings of density: **1** 'of l/g. diameter /particle/' > 'composed of constituents of l/g. size' > '(not) dense /group of objects; matter/' >: *thick* OE —; *thin* OE —; **2** 'of l/g. size /particle/' > 'composed of particles of l/g. size /matter/' >: *subtile* /matter/ 1390 —, /liquid/ 14c —; *great* /air; liquid/ MED 1398 —; *gross* /liquid/ MED ?1425–1691, /matter/ 1460–70–1691, /vapour/ MED a1475 — arch. or poet., /air; darkness/ a1592 — arch. or poet.; *small* /air/ c1495 —; *massive* /matter/ 1558–68 — rare; **3** 'closing the space between /objects/' >: *close* /objects/ a1500 —; **4** 'plentiful/scarce /matter/' >: *heavy* 1828 —; *low* ? —; *high* ? —; **5** 'rigid' >: *stiff* /semi-liquid matter/ c1430 —; **6** L >: *tenuous* /matter/ 1597 — (=1).

2.11. There are spatial adjectives which have developed the meaning of liberality: **1** 'of g. extent /area/' > 'permitting many topics' >: *wide* /speech; psychological event/ 1574 — coll. or slang; *broad* /speech/ 1588 —, /communica-

tion event/ 1602 —; **2** 'uncultivated, rude' >: *gross* /language; behaviour; psychol. event/ 1588 —; **3** OF >: *large* /speech/ c1374 (MED a1420) — 1599 (=1); *ample* /psychological event/ 1536 — (rev. order).

2.12. Some spatial adjectives share polysemy by meaning 'plentiful/scarce': **1** 'of l/g. extent /space/' > 'embracing few/many things or little/much matter /space/' >: *broad* /matter; abstr./ OE — c1325; *strait* /life; diet/ c1300—1613; *narrow* /possessions/ 1606 —; **2** 'of g. weight /obj.; matter/' >: *heavy* /matter in nature; event/ 1728 — (rev. order), /object/ MED c1395 — (rev. order; examples in the MED are equivocal); **3** 'lean /animate/' >: *thin* /diet; supply/ c1374 — rare; **4** 'of l. length' >: *short* /non-animate/ 1390 —; **5** *scant* + *y* > *scanty* /group of objects; matter; abstr./ 1660 — (rev. order); **6** ON + **4** >: *scant* /obj.; matter; event; abstr./ a1400 — (rev. order), see § 4.1.2.; **7** OF >: *large* /matter/ MED a1250 — (=1); *substantial* /supply of food; 1340 — (rev. order); *ample* /matter; event; abstr./ MED 1437 — (rev. order); **8** L >: *exiguous* 1651? —; **9** ? > *slender* /possessions/ 1564 —.

2.13. The developments leading to 'l/g. verbosity' have been as follows: **1** 'of l/g. duration' > '(not) concise /communication event/' >: *long* (and /human/) c1175 —; *short* (and /speaker/) 1487 —; /human/ 1515 — rare; **2** OF *tout au long et au large* or a similar phrase > ME *in large lengthe, at large* >: *large* 'lengthy /communication event/' MED a1400 (a1325) — rare, 'verbose /human/' 1605—1788; **3** L, OF >: *brief* c1380 — (rev. order), /human/ 1588 — (rev. order); *diffuse* /language; human/ 1742 —.

2.14. The polysemy 'of l/g. extent /space/' — 'stingy/ profligate' has been produced by the following adjectives: **1** 'of l/g. extent /space/' >: *narrow* /human/ a1225 — dial.; *strait* /human; event; abstr./ c1290 — a1628; *close* /human/ 1654 —; **2** 'existing in inadequate quantity' > 'spending inadequate quantity' >: *scant* c1366—1651 (rev. order); *scanty* 1692—1794 (rev. order); **3** OF >: *large* MED c1390—1688 (cf. 1).

2.15. Size adjectives have also expressed the meaning 'having (in) sufficient comprehension /human; intel. event/': **1** 'at a l/g. depth /obj./' >: *deep* c1200 —; *shallow* 1601 —; **2** 'dense /matter/' > 'nontransparent, not easily seen through /matter/' > 'not easily seeing through' >: *thick* 1597 — (cf. *dense, crass*); *gross* (=7); **3** 'of l. thickness' or 'rare /brain/' >: *thin* c1315 —; **4** 'deficient' >: *short* /intel. event/ c1386 —, /human/ ? — (slang), cf. *wanting* 'weak-minded' (dial.); **5** 'of l/g. extent /space/' >: (not) comprehensive /view/' >: *narrow* DHS c1850 — obsolesc.; *scant-brain* 1864 — obs.; *wide* 'shrewd' 1877 —; *broad* 'alert, knowing' DHS late 19c — obsolesc.; **6** 'slow' >: *heavy* c1300 — 1873 (rev. order), cf. *sluggish* (also reversely in *dull, slow*); **7** 'of g. size, rough and clumsy' >: *gross* /human; opinion; utterance/ 1526 — obs., /faculty/ 1526 — arch. (or ?=2); **8** L, OF >: *subtle* 14c —; *subtile* 1474 —.

2.16. Liberal-mindedness and narrow-mindedness have been expressed by

the following spatial adjectives: 'of l/g. width' >: /human; intel. event/; *narrow* 1664 —; *wide* 1824 —; *broad* 1832 —; *small* 1837 —.

2.17. The semantic extension 'of vile/noble character' was realized by the following spatial adjectives: **1** 'of l/g. height /obj./' >: *low* /human; event; abstr./ 1559 —; *high* /intel. event; abstr./ 16c? —; *lofty* /intel. event; human/ 1611? —; *lowly* /human; event/ 1741 — (occas.); **2** 'of l/g. size /obj./' >: *little* 'contemptible; paltry /human; psychol. event/' 1483 —; *great* /human/ 1709 —, /psychol. event/ 1726 —; *small* /event/ 1824 —; *grand* /human/ 1832 —; *big* /animate; event/ 1934 (colloq.) — **3** OF >: *base* /human/ 1593 — (=1); *petty* /psychol. event/ SOED 1713 — (=2).

2.18. Some spatial adjectives have developed a new meaning 'intimate /friendship/' from the meaning **1** 'of l. extent /space; area/' ('of l. width') > 'covering l. space, area' ('covering l. width'): *narrow* 1556—1574; *close* 1577—87 —; **2** OF >: *strait* c1530 — rare (=1); or 'intimate /human/' from 'dense /group of objects/' >: *great* MED a1425 (a1400) — dial.²; *thick* c1756 —.

3.1. It can be noticed that the connotative expansions of the definitions for spatial meanings always have a decisive character when semantic innovations stemming from spatial meanings are involved. Thus *big* with its positive connotation of strength and power has given rise to the meanings 'of high rank', 'pompous', 'important', 'numerous', 'of g. intensity', and 'of noble character' (cf. *strong character*), but not 'of g. duration, density, liberality'. *Broad* and *wide* are synonymous here in all meanings except 'plentiful' as the connotation of amplitude and tangible area is involved only in *broad*.³ The reason why *little* was left without 'humble' might be sought in the fact that *little* was not evaluatively loaded at the time when interest in the meaning 'humble' was alive. When *little* acquired an evaluative tinge, a meaning such as 'contemptible' was free to arise. *Little* also did not produce 'rarefied /matter/', as it has never meant 'composed of l. particles' (see § 2.10). The negative connotation of *petty* and *petit* seems to have prevented these adjectives to share the meaning 'of l. duration' with their F source. *Lofty*, with its primary meaning 'of imposing height' has evolved 'of high rank', 'pompous', 'strong /wind/' and 'of noble character'. The idea of humbleness is involved in derivations from *lowly*: 'humble' and 'of vile character'. *Mighty* has been too burdened with the elements 'heavy' and 'powerful' to yield 'of noble character' and 'of g. duration'. *Main*, connoting (resisting) power, gave only the meanings

² If the OED is right when rejecting the phrase *great friend* as the source, the meaning 'dense (group of objects)' is to be posited for *great*, although only 'composed of large particles' has been recorded.

³ See e.g. Fowler (1965: 66); Stonor (1963: 14); Partridge (1957); Webster's new dictionary of synonyms (1973).

associated with that sense: 'of high rank', 'important /event/', 'intense' and 'numerous /group of soldiers/'. It appears that *tall* connotes materialistic rather than spiritual height (an imposing mountain is *high* or *lofty* rather than *tall*). This might prevent the meaning 'of noble character' from being expressed by *tall*.

Adjectives like *narrow*, *high*, *low*, *small*, *thick*, and *thin* are most prolific with meanings as their respective spatial meanings are less limited in connotations than those of the other adjectives treated here.

3.2. Another observation which can be made here is that all meanings of spatial dimensions that appeared in E native words and often in loanwords later than their non-spatial meanings ("reverse order" cases) contain a sense of dimension loaded with connotations and /or mixed with other meanings; cf. *heavy*, *lofty*, *lowly*, *mighty*, *stiff*, *stout*, *scanty*, *weighty*. The same applies to *big* and *tall*.

3.3. The content of the connective noun is also important for semantic derivations. Thus *lengthy*, which has a restricted range of combination with nouns, does not parallel *long* in abstract meanings 'duration' and 'numerosity'. The strict limitation for *unride* /body; weapon/ has given only the meaning 'numerous'. *Side* is without 'plentiful' because it was not combined with nouns denoting space.

3.4. *Weighty* is instructive in telling us that a pattern may be effective only in some sections of the speech community, while other sections remain unaffected. The polysemy of *weighty* ('important' — 'heavy') was created by analogy with *heavy*, or followed the pattern 'heavy' > 'important'. But these two adjectives did not proceed on completely parallel lines; unlike *heavy*, *weighty* has not denoted 'deep (and loud) /sound/' and 'abundant /event in nature/'. As the latter meaning indicates, *weighty* was not used among farmers. As the Random House Dictionary of the English Language 1967 puts it, *weighty* is seldom used literally, and refers to something heavy with importance, often *concerned with public affairs*. This indicates a formal style and a usage among educated professionals. Cf. also *heavy*, but not *weighty* meaning 'of g. size' in American slang.

3.5. The above-mentioned observations reveal a considerable regularity in semantic derivations for native words; whenever the meaning X of a word A produces a meaning Y, then any other native word within the same speech area or section with the meaning X and coexistent with A also produced the meaning Y. The only case still not explained in this way, even if data in § 5.1. are also taken into consideration, is the lack of the meaning 'stupid /man; intel. event/' for the adjective *scanty*.

3.6. If a pattern might produce a meaning contrary to the existing one, the potential meaning is suppressed. The one case recorded here is *close*, whose

expected meaning is 'of l. extent /space/' > 'embracing few things' > 'sparse', but it has not taken root, as this would collide with the meaning 'dense'. This case could also belong to those mentioned in §§ 4.3. and 4.6.

3.7. It can be noticed that obscure derivational patterns, except *slender*, whose origin is not known, (marked ? >) are restricted to nonce citations in the OED. They may be *hapax legomena*, vagaries of individual authors, which violate general patterns in some respect. This may even be the case with some other examples, such as *gross* and *subtile* (intensity of voice), which are both recorded in John de Trevisa's translation of 'De Proprietatibus Rerum' in 1398.

4.1.1. If loanwords are considered, it may be concluded that a particular semantic derivational pattern in E (like e.g. 'of l/g. size' > '(un)important' or 'of l/g. height' > 'of vile/noble character') obtains for loans a) *always* when the expected meaning is also present in the donor and b) *sometimes* even when it is not present in the donor. Thus, OF *base* meaning 'of low rank' was adopted in E, fitting into the pattern 'of l. height' > 'of low rank', as *base* with the former meaning had already been adopted (§ 2.2.4.). This type is involved in all double markings in section 2. when a native pattern precedes in time.

To illustrate b) we refer to the meaning 'stingy' of the adjectives *strait* and *close*, which has been absent in F, but which conforms to the derivation 'of l. extent /space/' > 'stingy'.

4.1.2. It is also possible that bilinguals sometimes transferred an E derivational pattern to a loanword, which is not a loanword from their point of view. In fact, this seems to be the only plausible explanation for the change ON *skammt* 'short, narrow' (neuter gender) > E *scant* 'scarce', and OF *ahuge*, *ehuge* 'of g. size' > E *huge* 'numerous'. There are no traces of *scant* meaning 'short' or 'narrow' and of *huge* meaning 'of g. size' in E at such time so that they could produce 'scarce' and 'numerous' respectively, nor of *skammt* and *ahuge* meaning 'scarce' in ON and 'numerous' in OF respectively. Thus the only link between the two pairs of meanings seems to be a knowledge of E derivational patterns 2.12.1, 2.12.4. and 2.9.2. in bilinguals who also spoke ON (OF), introducing ON (OF) forms with meanings on the model of E.

4.2. Meanings of loanword forms present in the donor which do not follow derivational patterns in E a) have usually not been adopted (like the meaning 'important' of the adjective *gross*, which appears only in F, as its negative connotation in E was adverse to the positive connotation of 'important'), but b) occasionally they have been adopted.

It is to be noted here that for bilinguals, who often spread loans, the existence of identical derivation in the donor and E, as a borrower, created a situation different from that existing for E monolinguals. For the former,

the adjective *brief* meaning 'of l. duration' in § 2.1. was a case of fitting into a pattern 3.5. or at least 4.1.1. a) since the derivation 'of l. length /obj./ > 'of l. duration' was present both in E and F simultaneously, and for E — F bilinguals both E and F may be considered as native languages. This is likely to be the case with all loans marked here as "reverse order" in the items presenting borrowings in section 2. Although formally they belong to 4.2.b) (*brief* 'of l. duration' can by no means have been derived from 'of l. length /obj./' in E, since *brief* acquired the latter meaning more than three centuries later), virtually they do not differ from other types, which neatly follow derivational patterns. The only pure example of 4.2.b) is *diffuse* 'verbose' (§ 2.13.), because E has never shared its derivational direction. From the point of view of monolingual speakers, the type 4.2.b) always involves semantically opaque words.

4.3. Sometimes the lack of a particular meaning of a loanword in the donor has discouraged E from allowing that meaning to follow the native pattern. For instance, *ample* could have followed the derivation 'of g. extent /space/' > 'comprehensive /view/' (see 2.15.5), but the fact is that its F source *ample* lacks the latter meaning.

4.4. The present investigation shows that no case has been recorded a) of E failing to make use of its own derivational pattern while there was a source available in the foreign contact language or b) of an innovation in E such as would not fit into the native derivational pattern while the equivalent meaning of the model word was absent in the contact language. In other words, identical derivations in the semantic systems of the donor and E as a borrower have always been productive in E as a borrower, and there have been no such cases of borrowing spatial adjectives from L, (O)F and ON that both the donor's and the borrower's semantic system would be violated at the same time (with the partial qualification concerning speakers other than bilinguals in § 4.1.2).

4.5. E has usually ignored the meanings contained in foreign sources which do not comply with E derivational patterns (see 4.2.a)). These meanings are: 'of l. duration' (not derivable from 'of insufficient width /extent/' with materialistic connotation) of the adjective *scant*; 'important' * < 'of g. size and rough or clumsy' *gross*; 'of low rank' * < 'of l. diameter or thickness' *tenuous*; 'intense' * < 'of g. size' with materialistic connotation? *mickle*, * < 'of g. size and magnificent' *grand*, * < 'of g. size and rough' *gross*, 'not intense' * < 'of g. extent' *diffuse*, * < 'of l. diameter or thickness' *subtile*; 'numerous' * < 'of g. size and rough' *gross*, * < 'of g. size, heavy and solid' *massive*; 'plentiful' * < 'of g. size' *massive*, 'of l. comprehension' * < 'of g. size, heavy and solid' *massive*; 'lengthy /text/' * < 'of g. size' *enormous*; 'of vile character' * < 'of g. diameter and strong' *stout*. However, the meanings mentioned above have been present in the respective donor languages.

The only pure instance of borrowing running against E patterns, was mentioned in 4.2.b).

4.6. E has also failed to develop the following investigated meanings which would fit in with its own semantic derivations, but which are absent in F and L correspondents (see § 4.3.): 'not intense' *base*; 'not numerous' *strait*, *base*, *brief*, *close*; 'of l. comprehension' *strait*, *close*; 'of g. comprehension' *ample*, *diffuse*;⁴ and 'humble' *base*. For *close* * 'scarce' see § 3.6.

4.7. on the other hand, E has pursued its own directions contrary to ON, L and (O) F in the following meanings (4.1.1.b): 'haughty, pompous' *large*, *enormous*; 'intense' *large*, *huge*, *titanic*, *massive*, *enormous*; 'numerous' *enormous*, *colossal*, *substantial*, *vast*; 'dense' *gross*, *massive*; 'unimportant' *puny*; 'important' *colossal*, *enormous*, *vast*; 'stingy' *strait*, *scant*; 'not profligate' *close*; 'of l. comprehension' *scant*; 'intimate' *close*; 'scarce' *scant*, *strait* — 1613; F seems to have developed the same meaning in *etroit* after *strait* had lost it. Notice also the considerable divergence in the two forms stemming from *etroit*.

4.8. Subsections 4.6. and 4.7. are in direct opposition, as they differ only in one element; absent vs. present in E, while in both cases an available derivational pattern is present and the corresponding meaning is absent in the source language.

Meanings in § 4.6. and those in § 4.7. mainly do not coincide. Native speakers of E seem not to have been interested in the notions 'not numerous', 'of g. comprehension', 'of l. duration', 'of vile character' and 'humble' to such an extent as to "violate" the lexico-semantic system of the donors. But they had sufficient interest in the subject matter of the group 4.7. to oppose the donors, backed by their own native tongue tendencies. The notions 'not intense' and 'of l. comprehension' appear to be ambivalent in this respect.

4.9. We can use the data in section 1 (etymologies without brackets) and in subsections of section 2 containing foreign sources, to look for semantic derivational patterns where spatial meanings are involved, introduced into E from outside. Polysemy of native words shared with those loanwords which precede native words in time may also have sprung on the basis of external analogy with the loanwords, i.e. as loan translations. All such instances include transfers from 'of l/g. extent /area/' : > 'numerous' (2.9.3.) following *large* (2.9.8.), > 'liberal' 2.11.1. following *large* and *ample* (2.11.3.), and > 'intimate' (2.18.1.) after *strait* (2.18.2.), in addition to 'of g. size /obj./' > 'important' from ON *mickle*. As Ullmann states, such cases are often impossible to distinguish from genuine parallelisms (Ullmann 1966 : 239). There is also no way of finding out whether some of the patterns other than those mentioned above have been imported as loan translations.

⁴ The content of the connecting noun may have also been responsible for the lack of *diffuse* 'of g. comprehension'.

5.1. While some patterns have been active since OE times (like 2.9.2.), others became effective in ME (like 2.8.2.) or in early Mcd E (like 2.9.4. and 2.9.5.). New patterns have sprung in all periods of E, but the climax for the patterns producing meanings under the present investigation was, after a progressive rise in number, in the 15c, yielding ten patterns. Their quantitative drop was also steady, leading to only one new pattern at the end of the 19c. All except one pattern ('existing in inadequate quantity' > 'stingy') seem to be still existent, since their resultant meanings with spatial adjectives, except with *scant(y)*, are current today.

Restriction of semantic derivational patterns in time can account for some cases of non-existent usage. Thus *strait* was left without 'narrow-minded' as the pattern in § 2.16. became effective at the time when *strait* had lost the meaning 'of l. width'. *Side* failed to produce 'liberal' from 'of g. extent /area/' (2.11.1.) because it was not till the 16c. that the pattern was at work, whereas *side* lost the meaning 'of g. extent /area/' at the turn of the 15c. Moreover, all other spatial adjectives denoting liberality arose in the 16c, except *large*, which was imported together with the meaning 'liberal'. A survey of all adjectives for liberality in E reveals that the earliest ones came from L or OF to stay only for a brief period: *disordaine* MED 1340—c1450 and *de(s)lavy* MED c1380—c1422, becoming permanent from the middle of the 15c: *lux* c1450 —. Two native terms followed: *loose* 1470 —, on the model of the preceding one, and *unstinted* 1480 —. E went on drawing on L and F sources: *lavish* 1485—1807, *liberal* 1490—1709, *dissolute* 1513 —, *licentious* 1535 —, *unrestrained* 1586 —, *lascivious* 1589 — obs., *debauched* 1598 —, *libertine* 1605.

This shows that the period of advent of the patterns 2.11.1. and 2.11.2. is included in the period when terms for liberality were most prolific. Although there was some interest in the idea of liberality in those parts of E society which spoke F and L in the middle and second half of the 14c, it was not till the end of the 15c that this interest was heightened. The interest slackened with two variants of the antonym ultimately coming from Greek: *ascetical* 1617 — and *ascetic* 1646 —.

The period of influx of adjectives denoting liberality coincides with the period of social disintegration, moral laxity and love of lavishness in Tudor England, that ended with the Civil War of 1642.

5.2. Sometimes it is even obvious that all terms for a particular meaning arose within a relatively short period. Such is the case with meanings of spatial adjectives denoting pulse, which are all concentrated in the 18 and 19c: *weak* 1700 —, *slow* 1728 —, *full-pulsing* 1878, in addition to those mentioned in § 2.5.

5.3. For the notion of the intensity of an event the greatest number of adjectives was engaged in the 14c. Non-spatial synonyms also appeared most

frequently in the 14c: *fierce*, *breme*, *keen*, *feeble*, *violent*, *frail*, *pithy*, and *sharp*.

5.4. Designation of intensity of sound by spatial adjectives occurred in the interval between the 13c and 17c, with the climax in the 15c. Musical activity has been acknowledged as busiest in the 15c (Myers 1971 : 113) as well as in the 17c (Frevlyan II 1950 : 97).

5.5. Interest in the number of words spoken and the length of speech covers the 12c and a large span from the end of the 14c till the 19c. The hub is the 16c and 17c. The extralinguistic correlative is found in the development of English literature, especially drama.

5.6. The accumulation of synonyms for other meanings is less concentrated, but still with discernible depressions and hubs.

6. As can be noted from the data in this paper, there is a marked decrease in the number of parallel developments for spatial adjectives with increasingly fewer cases from the 18c down to the present day. This tendency may be accounted for by Ullmann's claim that "differentiation between synonyms is a sophisticated process which appears relatively late in the development of a language" (Ullmann 1966 : 231). Namely, if there are fewer synonyms in a language, the conditions for the appearance of parallel developments are proportionately lessened.

7. We may check on our material whether radiation of synonyms is a special form of analogy, as Hockett claims and Ullmann agrees (Ullmann 1966 : 257). For proportional analogy to occur, derivational patterns should be replaced by analogical patterns, like 'dense /group of objects/' : 'intimate' :: 'dense /group of objects/' : 'x', instead of 'dense /group of objects/' > 'intimate', but it is difficult to prove that in reality analogy rather than derivation was operative. If analogy were the only responsible factor, we should expect different and more numerous cases of parallel development than actually recorded. For instance, after *great* came to mean 'intimate' in the 15c, analogy should have enabled also *big* and *large* to mean the same, and even *little* and *small* to mean the opposite. But as the matter stands, it is obvious that the pattern 'of great size' : 'intimate' :: 'of great size' : 'x' or :: 'of little size' : 'x' was completely absent.

To prove that analogy is undoubtedly a cause of any semantic innovation, a derivational pattern has to be violated. According to one type of condition there has to be a meaning *Y* of adjective *B* that arose merely due to the fact that another adjective *A*, which shares meaning *X* with adjective *B* also has meaning *Y*, although meaning *Z*, which has actually generated meaning *Y* is present only in adjective *A*. This situation can be presented by the formula $A X : (Z >) Y :: B X : Y$. Therefore, analogy can be more safely surmised in homonymic calques, semantic loans and development of antonyms (cf. Stern 1965 : 218 ff; Strang 1970 : 368). An example of this type of analogy

is found in Cohen 1969, where it is called *the interaction of synonyms*: right 'morally correct' : ('emphasis' >) 'clarification' :: just 'morally correct' : 'clarification'.

The other possibility is the appearance of a meaning *Y* which is contrary to the derivational pattern, i.e. $A X : (<) Y :: B X : Y$. Such is the case with the meaning 'of insufficient extent' of the adjective *scant*, not present in the lending language, on the following analogy with *strait*: *strait* 'scarce' : (<) 'of insufficient extent': *scant* 'scarce': 'of insufficient extent'. This is the only recorded instance in our corpus of unquestionable analogy.

Chances for analogy to be effective are greater in a reverse order for loanwords, because both native and foreign analogical patterns are available; e.g. *short* or *L brevis* 'of l. duration' : (<) 'of l. length' :: *brief* 'of l. duration' : 'x'. But a possibility of direct and independent loans for both meanings should not be dismissed.

An interesting case has been observed outside the corpus, concerning the emergence of the meaning 'adverse /wind/' of the adjective *scant* (1600 —). It seems that the origin should be sought in *large* 'not adverse /wind/' from OF *large* 'not adverse /wind/' from the meaning 'lax'. When *large* was adopted in the sense 'not adverse /wind/' (1591 —), this meaning must have been associated with 'plentiful', which was another meaning of *large*, through a kind of semantic folk etymology. Very soon after that *scant*, as an opposite, meaning 'scarce', produced the meaning 'adverse /wind/'. In our formula, *Z*, which stands for 'lax', the real source, belongs here to OF, while elements *X* ('plentiful/scarce') and *Y* ('adverse/not adverse /wind/') belong to E. At the same time we should substitute here the sign > (meaning 'folk derivation') for: ('relation of proportional analogy'), which leaves us with a derivational pattern 'plentiful' > 'not adverse /wind/' rather than with analogy.

Thus we subscribe to Stern's opinion that "analogy is not a strong factor in semantic change" (Stern 1965: 227), and to Ullmann's statement that analogy can at best be set up as one of special types of semantic change, playing a modest part in semantics (Ullmann 1963: 172—173). In our study in most cases it was difficult to prove even such a modest part.

8.1. The causes which govern the emergence of new patterns at a particular time might be sought in centres of attraction and perhaps also in centres of expansion (both Sperber's conceptions, referred to by Ullmann (1964: 149, 201)), as explained in § 5.1., but the particular links between the members *X* and *Y* of the patterns demand further investigations for their explanation.

8.2. The existence of a particular semantic derivation is only a precondition for other lexemes which acquired the meaning *X* later to add the meaning *Y* to their polysemy. To actualize the change, a heightened interest in the notion of *Y* must be present. The same interest will be reflected in newly made terms and loanwords for the same notion. Thus a semantic innovation

of a lexeme may be seen as a function of a semantic derivational pattern and a centre of attraction.

In this way Sperber's hypothesis of radiation of synonyms, backed by A. Lehrer, has been confirmed: "If there is a set of words that have semantic relations in a semantic field ... and if one or more items pattern in another semantic field, then the other items in the first field are available for extension to the second semantic field." (Lehrer 1978: 96). In addition, "items of the fields" have been precisely defined in terms of speech population, connotation and the content of the connective noun, pleading regular extension rather than mere "availability for extension".

8.3. Particular configurations of shared polysemy based on a loosely defined synonymy, from which we started the investigation, are a result of disparate factors; while some cases of shared polysemy are a direct consequence of the same semantic derivational patterns (like *great* and *big* 'of g. size' > 'important'), other cases are contingent upon fortuitous circumstances (like *big* 'of g. size' and *weighty* 'of g. weight', also meaning 'of g. size', > 'intense'), or even borrowings may be responsible for polysemy (like *large* < OF and *diffuse* < L, OF 'verbose', both also meaning 'of g. extent'). However, if a stricter synonymy is required for two pairs of meanings to be declared the same, much more regularity emerges, as cases of fortuitous circumstances often turn out to be connected with different meanings (*weighty* actually means 'of g. size and of g. weight' rather than 'of g. size' only, and *diffuse* differs from *large* in the content of the linking noun).

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