

Lexicography and the Evolution of Consciousness: A study of Owen Barfield's History in English Words.

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Lexicography and the Evolution of Consciousness: A study of Barfield's *History in English Words*

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Source: *Historiographia Linguistica*, Volume 30, Issue 3, 2003, **pages:** 407–427

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[« Previous Article](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Article »](#)

[Abstract](#)[Full Text](#)[References \(0\)](#)[Cited By \(3\)](#)[Supplements \(0\)](#)

SUMMARY Owen Barfield (1898–1997), a cultural critic and historian, has been appreciated by literary scholars and Lewis, T.S. Eliot, and W.H. Auden, but he has been relatively unnoticed by linguists despite the fact that he advanced a reasoned and documented theory of language history throughout his many writings. In his theory of etymological semantics, Barfield asserted that the etymology of words reveals an evolution of human consciousness. Barfield's relationship between language and consciousness is significant to the history of linguistics because he not only described what changed in a language but also explained why it changed. In his seminal *History in English Words* (1926), a book written at the beginning of his career as a scholar and writer, Barfield initially presented his theory with examples from the history of English beginning with Old English and European. This theory became a central and unifying theme in all of his work — a theory which he refined and expanded in his later writings, especially in *Poetic Diction* (1928), *Speaker's Meaning* (1967), and *History, Guilt, and Habit* (1979). RÉSUMÉ Owen Barfield (1898–1997), commentateur sur la culture et historien, fut admiré par divers écrivains et artistes dont C.S. Lewis, T.S. Eliot et W.H. Auden, mais est demeuré peu connu des linguistes, malgré sa présentation soignée et bien documentée, dans ses nombreux ouvrages sur l'histoire du langage. Dans sa théorie de l'étymologie sémantique, Barfield soutient l'idée que l'étymologie des mots révèle l'évolution de l'esprit humain. Ce lien qu'il établit entre langue et pensée a de l'importance pour l'histoire de la linguistique parce qu'il ne concerne pas seulement ce qui, dans une langue, changeait au cours de l'histoire, mais aussi pourquoi ce changement s'effectuait. Dans son ouvrage *History in English Words* (1926), livre écrit au début d'une carrière qui durerait presque sept décennies, Barfield présente sa théorie de l'histoire de la langue.

des exemples tirés de l'histoire de la langue anglaise, partant de ses origines indo-européennes. Cette théorie dev
unificateur dans tous ses travaux, et il la raffina et l'appliqua plus largement dans ses nombreux travaux postérieu
Diction (1928), Speaker's Meaning (1967), et History, Guilt, and Habit (1979).ZUSAMMENFASSUNGDer Kulturkri
Barfield (1898–1997) wurde zu seiner Zeit von literarischen Gelehrten und Schriftstellern wie C.S. Lewis, T.S. Eliot,
geschätzt; sein Werk wurde jedoch von Sprachforschern weitgehend ignoriert, obgleich er in seinen vielen Schrift
Sprache vortrug, die sorgfältig argumentiert und dokumentiert war. In seiner Theorie einer etymologischen Bede
behauptete Barfield, daß die Etymologie der Wörter die Entwicklung des menschlichen Bewußtseins enthülle. Ba
Sprache und Bewußtsein ist wichtig für die Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft, weil er nicht bloß beschrieb, was
veränderte, sondern ebenfalls, weshalb Sprache sich änderte. Schon in seiner History in English Words (1926), ein
seiner 70-jährigen Karriere als Gelehrter und Schriftsteller verfaßte, stellte Barfield seine Theorie mit Beispielen a
englischen Sprache vor, wobei er bis zur ihren indogermanischen Ursprüngen zurück ging. Diese Theorie blieb z
für sein gesamtes Oeuvre — eine Theorie, an der er ständig feilte und die er in seinen späteren Schriften erweiter
Poetic Diction (1928), Speaker's Meaning (1967) und History, Guilt, and Habit (1979).

Document Type: Research Article

DOI: [10.1075/hl.30.3.07sub](https://doi.org/10.1075/hl.30.3.07sub)

Format: PDF

ISSN 0302-5160

E-ISSN 1569-9781

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