Loanwords — Who Needs Them

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In this paper I intend to discuss some aspects of the phenomenon which we usually call 'loanword' It is difficult to be original in such a well-worked field, but I might succeed in bringing to light some unfamiliar facts about the ways in which people of different language communities react when faced with the appearance of loanwords. Finally, I hope to provide a satisfactory answer to the implied question in the title of this paper.

But first a little terminology to clear the ground. Although 'loanword' is not universally accepted[1], throughout my paper — notwithstanding a personal partiality to Quintilian's delightful term 'peregrinator' - I shall use this term on the same authority for "Usage. . is the surest pilot in speaking, and we should treat language as currency minted with the public stamp". (Bk. 1, vi.)

II.

We live in a world of constant change and in order to get a linguistic hold on our lives, we require adequate words for new ideas and material objects New inventions demand new terms, novel concepts and different ways of organising the structure of society necessitate a vocabulary which sufficiently reflects the mutations of life's fabric. We often feel restricted with the connotation of older words, so redolent of yesterday, and desire new expressions and new words more in harmony with today's reality. Words are, after all, an important extension of man, and Feuerbach even said somewhere that 'the measure of man's control over words is a measure of his freedom'.

The changes around us are caused by a wealth of intermingling factors, be it migration, conquests, trade and commerce, fashions, or religious proselytism. It is unimportant whether these cultural contact situations are sought out actively, as in the arts and fashion, or are imposed on us, as in present day 'cocacolanization'. Common to all is the changing vision of reality they bring about and a need to vocalize this change.

The enormous advances in the natural sciences during the last 200 years with the subsequent development of an almost overpowering technology have fundamentally changed the basis of the society of man. The discoveries made demanded a radically different vocabulary and from the Industrial Revolution to the present day, occidental scientists have with preference coined neologisms from the dead languages of Latin and Greek, thus creating internationalisms understood way beyond the confines of any individual European language. For centuries in fact, Latin, and to a lesser extent Greek, had been the traditional vehicle for spreading ideas across the Western frontiers. (Wartburg, 1971:213). So given the tradition, the prestige and aura of learning associated with the classical languages, what could be more natural than to affirm the continuity of occidental culture by storming into the future with

radically new concepts wrapped in the familiar and comforting forms of Latin and Greek. The neologisms were in fact a tribute to the Latin talent for organization and the Greek genius for profound thinking.

But science with its highly technical vocabulary is one thing, for its Graeco-Roman nomenclature is almost without exception the product of a conscious name-giving process, made by men with one foot in the experimental laboratory and the other in the distant worlds of Tacitus and Plato. The linguistic traces left from historical epochs and the ephemeral flowering of a single culture are something else. Here the lexical novelties arrived on a more subliminal level.

It will take us too far to account for the origin of the historic causes which resulted in the present wealth of loanwords in the European languages. In passing, however, one must pay homage to the words of Arabic origin, which not only enriched the technical vocabulary but also replaced the cumbersome Roman numerals. Italian, too, with the lasting marks it has left in the field of music is definitely worthy of tribute. With regret I shall otherwise limit myself to a brief exposition of the influence of one language, namely French, and what will be said in this connexion can by extension be applied to other epochs with minor corrections.

The political and cultural ascendancy of France during the 17th to the beginning of the 19th Century provided such an impetus on the surrounding countries that the people of these nations not only eagerly imitated French customs, but the nobility and upper middle classes came to favour the French language in preference to their own. After the repeated success of French arms, military organisations were modelled after the French pattern of officers and privates were given titles corresponding to their French counterparts. captain, sergeant, corporal, etc.[2] Anyone worth his salt would titillate his palate sampling French *cuisine* in a ***hotel,*** where he would *souper* or *diner* with a *serviette* on his lap. The ***menu,*** of course, would be ***a la carte*** Gardens were made with a fountain ***(fontaine)*** and flowers were presented to the ladies in the form of ***bouquets.*** (Tschirch, 1969:246) At one point this Francomania went so far that even the most uxorious princeling felt obliged to establish an extra-marital relationship with a ***maitresse,*** because every Frenchman of consequence, or so it was believed, was conducting this kind of *affaire.*

The strange development of the Royal Prussian Academy of Science provide a curious example of the Francomania raging at the German courts. It was founded in 1700 as an institution with the aim of "promoting love for and the fostering of German" Yet 40 years later, Frederic The Great with his Francophile predilections appointed a Frenchman, Maupertuis, to its presidency, and it was consequently renamed 'Academie royale des sciences et belles-lettres' and French was established as its official language. (Stam, 1976:98).

One obvious explanation for this extraordinary phenomenon can be found in the social structure of contemporary Europe, where people were stratified according to their social class rather than viewed as members of a national state. With the advent of Napoleon's armies, composed of the people rather than mercenaries, and the general population increase, the trend-setting days of a supra-national aristocracy were numbered and the rising middle-class entered the stage. In retrospect it is somewhat ironic that the very success

of the French in democratizing their nation carried within it the seeds that would develop into a rejection of Francophilia. The politicization of culture and an orientation towards national uniqueness stimulated a dramatic interest in indigenous languages. The time was ripe for language societies to become a force of influence to be reckoned with. It is to their activities I shall turn next.

III.

The lexical side of foreign subject matter, concrete or abstract, has been attended to with fanaticism in some places and indifference in others. A lexical newcomer is "an alien element introduced into a definite system and is defined by its opposition to an assembly of anterior elements" (Deroy, 1980:3). Since the new lexical item has to be grammaticalized and adjusted to pre-existing patterns of morphology and syntax, a certain conflict is bound to arise between the original form of the loan and the forms the borrowing language has at its disposal. That the problem is not new, we can see from Quintilian who in the First Century ridicules those who "insist on absolute conformity to Latin practice, because, since we have an ablative and the Greeks have not, it would be absurd in declining a word to use five Greek cases and one Latin" (Bk.I v 59-60).

These problems were addressed in various ways by the Language Societies, the first of which were founded in a German context around 1617. They made several successful attempts at Germanizing French loanwords: *Augenblick/moment; Entwurf/projet, Fernglas/telescope,* etc. Although these were only piecemeal changes, it is interesting that many words were true neologisms and not simple loan-translations. The Age of Enlightenment in its quest for the true nature of knowledge had little use for these exercises. But the rise of Romanticism with its concomitant emphasis on one's mother tongue awoke the dormant hunt on the loanword, and individuals and societies once more became active in an unprecedented burst of energy. Several books were written, offering the public suggestions on how to replace the "foreign intruders".

The most successful of all loanword hunters appears to be J.H. Campe, who in several volumes, the first of which was published in 1801, managed to introduce so many Germanized words that today more than 2000 of this creations are in common use. This in spite of the fact that he was ridiculed in the extreme by his contemporaries. The title of his work was symptomatic of his motives. *Explanation and Germanization of Foreign Expressions Imposed On Our Language (Worter zur Erklarung und Verdeutschung der unserer Sproche aufgedrungenen fremden*
words — *Freistaat*/republic; *Kreislauf*
derheit/minorite, and many more.

Some fifty years later, the superintendent of the Postal Services replaced the French terms in use within his jurisdiction - the number was 760 - with such an effect that the original loanwords have disappeared completely. A single example must suffice: *Briefumschlag/couvert.*

This feat was repeated with the Prussian-Hesse Railroads, the biggest network in the country, where among many other changes the following appeared: *Abteil/coupe; Ruckfahrtkarte/"Retourbillet"; Wugen/waggon.* These expressions were soon imitated by other German railroads so that a uniform ter-

minology gradually came into being. However, it must be pointed out that these words were not spontaneous creations, but the results of directives from above and they found no response in Austria or German-speaking Switzerland, where the French loanwords are still very much in use. (Tschirch, 1969:258-61).

Let us leave Europe for a while and see what an Asian nation did when confronted with the lexicalizing aspect, i.e. word-giving function, of external influences. In Japan the picture was different from that of the European nations in that the impact of the Industrial Revolution was felt immediately after the forced opening of the country in 1853. Technical terms, alien ideas, eating and dress habits simultaneously crowded the awareness of the Japanese to such an extent that some despaired at having to catch up with so much. Mori, a progressive Minister of Education, even went so far as to consult Whithey, the American linguist, inquiring how the Japanese language could be replaced with English, rather than going through a time-consuming process of lexical adaption. "Our meagre language," he wrote, "is doomed to yield to the domination of the English tongue, especially when the power of steam and electricity shall have pervaded the land. Our intelligent race. . . cannot depend upon a weak and uncertain medium of communication. . . The laws of the State can never be preserved in the language in Japan. All reasons suggest its disuse". (Miller, 1977:42) And in fact, at least as far as the law is concerned, it seems that initial drafts were all written in the English language. (Livingstone, 1976:178).

But the pessimists were proved wrong: as so often before in the past, the developments in China, where the contact with the West was of a longer standing, became a source of inspiration to the Japanese.

A curious outcome of Imperialism was the number of missionaries who ended up as bridgebuilders between the East and the West. Often their influence went far beyond the restricted crowds of religious converts. To preach the missionaries had to come to terms with the vernacular and in so doing they faced the difficulty of rendering Christian theological concepts in non-European tongues. Theology came in the wake of technology, and many missionaries were not above the rhetorical trick of affirming the Industrial Revolution as the inevitable outcome of Christianity. But the outcome was dictionaires of all kinds. In particular demand was an English-Chinese dictionary, compiled by Rev. Lobscheid (1866-69), which went through several printings in Japan. It offered a wealth of English concepts with parallel explanations and translations in Chinese. Given the century-old familiarity with Chinese writing, the Japanese were quick to seize the opportunity and selected what took their fancy. (Muroya, 1955:27). Hepburn's English-Japanese dictionary in 1871 was a milestone in the field of lexicographical endeavours. The eponym of the most widely used version of Romanized Japanese had previously been active as a missionary in China. When he re-issued the dictionary fifteen years later, it was with an increase of more than 10,000 new vocabulary items of which many have become permanent fixtures in the Japanese language. They are distributed over such diverse fields as commerce, technology, law, art and medicine. The favoured method of coining new words was the two Chinese-character combination. But one drawback of these neologisms still haunts the language: since the words were created from a semantic point of view, they were so to speak visually comprehensible; scant attention was paid to the audi-

ble aspect, and the number of homonyms increased drastically during the period. (Ono, 1966:230-1)

The Japanese soon became so adept at this procedure themselves that they later with considerable success passed on their own genuine neologisms to the Chinese, whose present political vocabulary, among other things, is largely of Japanese provenance

Right up to the end of the Pacific War, the Japanese employed the character combination method when constructing new words. After the war, however, the flood of Americanisms that entered the language went through a phonological assimilation only, and few attempts have been made at character renditions. To a fault they are all written phonetically (ibid, p. 238)

What characterized this movement of lexicalization, was the private nature of the initiative. New words were launched into the public arena and on a trial and error basis the public selected what they found to their taste. Usage was the ultimate arbiter of viability or verbal demise

IV.

This process of spontaneous lexicalization has been found wanting by many linguists. When not only a technological but also a verbal gap has to be filled, neological accrescenecannot be left to chance. We need only remind ourselves of the Malaysian example. Here as elsewhere efforts on a national level have been made to bring the process under guided control. (Metzger, 1983:4-6). The practical difficulties connected with the implementation of such policies have been dealt with in detail in another place. (Asmah, 1975:59, 105-6). Suffice it for my present purpose to quote from the above source the means employed when turning foreign technical terms into their Bahasa Malaysia equivalents.

(a) looking for the exact or almost exact correspondences in Bahasa Malaysia.
(b) resorting to loan-translating or loanshifting, when (a) failed.
(c) adapting the foreign term in such a way that the word sounded really Malay, in the event of the failure of methods (a) and (b) (ibid, p. 105)

These guidelines for word-formation I should now like to contrast with an example of totally uninhibited development.

When a new word enters the speech of a large community, its usage presupposes its acceptance by a very large number of individual speakers. If a considerable range of speakers decide to make use of a new expression, this process must be guided by some unifying factors which determine the approving attitude of these speakers. In other words, there must be a collective preparedness *(kollektive Bereitschaft)* to use Gustav Bally's expression.

To illustrate what happens when a word is left to fend for itself on the linguistic market of changing fashions, we can do no better than follow the trial of *Solanum tuberosum*, more commonly known as the ordinary 'potato' Castellanos appears to be the first European to mention the potato, which he saw growing in Colombia, South America (1537). Although he does not mention it by name, he described it as some kind of truffle. Soon after, other

Spanish conquistadores began writing about *Papas*, which they observed in different parts of the continent. Subsequent inquiries have shown the word to be of Quechuan origin, the language spoken by the Incas. The meaning of the word is 'tuber'.

When the *Papa* was brought to Spain, it was known under that name for some time, but except for a few provinces, this designation disappeared, Some say because of its homonymic features, i.e., papa. 'father' and Papa. 'pope' But as the 'papa' appellation still is used in many Spanish-speaking South American parts, one remains doubtful.

I mentioned earlier that Castellano described the *papa* as a kind of truffle, (*turma de tierra*: Literally earth-testicle, to be exact). This association with truffles found an echo in 16th Century Italy where truffles were known as *tartufi* or *tartufoli,* and the potato by an almost identical designation, namely *tartuffo* or *tartuffolo*. This was to be the origin of one of the potato's most popular aliases.

Around 1600 a gallicised version appeared in an agricultural journal owned by a Frenchman, Olivier de Serres, who spoke about *Cartoufle*. This word in turn became *Kartoffel* as it made its way through German-speaking countries. In the cognominal guise of *Kartoffel,* it made the acquaintance of Slav-speakers, and in Poland and Russia today they speak of and eat *kartofel.* In Czech the *Kartoffel* became known as *Brambor,* meaning 'Prussia', the name of its point of entry A similar process of derivation took place in Romania, where we both have *Cartofla* from *Kartoffel,* and also *Bandraburca* from 'Brandenburg', the latter being the name of a Prussian province.

During its Continental peregrinations, we nowhere come across *potato*. To account for this term we shall have to turn to another potato variety, the *sweet potato (Ipomoea batatas)*, another arrival from the New World to Europe. Under the many names it initially was associated with, *batatas* seems to be the most widespread There is disagreement about the origin of this word, we know it to be from an Indian (American) language, but not which one. Be that as it may, already in 1514, Peter the Martyr writes about a turnip-like root,*Botato*, which was widely grown in Hispanola. By a process of transfer, the very same name became associated with the common potato. In Spain the sweet variety was called *Batate* and the other *Patate*

The origin of 'earth-apples' can be explained by an identical transfer of names. Originally *poire de terre* or *pomme de terre* referred to another tuberous vegetable, the *Jerusalem artichoke* (Halianthus tuberuos), yet another appearance from the Americas. Later investigations have shown that most likely the Dutch were the first to call it *erdappel,* a name which previously had been reserved for the indigenous *Cyclamen europaeum,* which, needless to say, is a tuber Somehow the *Jerusalem artichoke* entered France with a loan-translation of *erdappel* tagged on to it, *pomme de terre* To complicate matters, this word was also used to designate the common potato in many parts of France. As time went by, however, the common potato outsted its namesake in popularity and eventually appropriated the name *pomme de terre* for itself *Cartoufle* had not taken hold in its country of bith, but having left the confines of France it found its fortune elsewhere.[3]

To see if some additional knowledge can be gained before leaving the potato for good, we can cast a quick look upon its course through Asia. Two tenden-

cies immediately spring to the eye: 1) either the potato received a name referring to the people who brought it or the place they were thought to have brought it from; or 2) it was lexicalized according to the principle of association.

Under the name of *shu*, the *yam* has been known in China since pre-historic times. The introduction of *Solanum tuberosum* gave rise to the name *yang shu*, which literally means *'foreign yam'* The Japanese initially called the potato *jagaruta (Jakarta) imo* or *oranda (Holland) imo*, the latter part of the word being a generic term for tubers. In the Malay-speaking world the same principle was at work: there was *ubi Wolanda*, *ubi Europah*, and *ubi Benggala*. *Ubi* itself is a common element in the name of tuberous plants, and the present day *ubi kentang* is actually composed of two words which both refer to tubers. (Salaman, 1970:pp126ff).

This rather extended pursuit of a vegetable was done with a purpose It may be too extravagant a claim to insist that the development of the word 'potato' has given us names which most likely would have been the same as those a deliberate language planning would produce. But the development is too identical for it to be a coincidence with guidelines for coining new terms, be they in Bahasa Malaysia or other languages. (Metzger·1983:4-6). These guidelines, of course, are not pulled out of the proverbial hat but must have been designed to conform with the natural processes of word evolution. We may take a hint from this. Language planning will most likely fail if planners try to make these processes conform to individual ideals. As the Malaysian experience clearly shows, the mere presentation of a list with newly coined words does in itself not ensure acceptance, regardless of the imprimatur (Asmah, 1975:59). Acceptance cannot be planned for the simple reason that "Real planning. the determination of a particular course of action to achieve a particular goal. is only feasible where the executor of the plan has real power to manipulate the behaviour of the people whom they include in their planning" (Takdir, 1971 179) And, one may ask oneself, when does the planner have total control over other people's linguistic behaviour?

An empiric methodologist only asks himself the question whether the thing he is doing is serving the purpose he is aiming at, and not whether his product corresponds to the essence of "true" nature of his language. Whereas the former position and its results can be verified, the latter cannot (Popper, 1973:32, vol.1).

Let us by all means have planning within the technical fields where communication is a must. But periodic phenomena like the yoyo and hula hoop are better left alone. Ridicule is inevitable if one attempts to indigenize them verbally, and worse, one might even be suspected of entertaining the error that words or names in some way are capable of revealing the nature of things. Our awareness of reality comes to us through the senses and cannot be apprehended through verbal manipulation What Saussure once said should by now be a linguistic truism. the link is between the word and the *concepts* of the object that exist in the speaker's mind, not between the word and the object (Pei, 1972:23). Yet purists as a rule blithely ignore this, frequently with comic, but occasionally with frightening consequences as well.

V.

No paper on loanwords would be complete without mentioning purism, the playground for good intentions, vitriolic statements, xenophobia, and irrational chauvinism. The resistance to loanwords is commonly couched in terms of indigenous authenticity as opposed to foreign artificiality. Outside the West, a rejection of extraneous lexical or morphological items often goes hand in hand with complaints about an encroaching Euro-American "culture colonialism" (Fishman, 1971:15). With a slight twist, much the same thing goes under the name of "American cultural and financial imperialism" in Europe.

The French have taken an extraordinary step to protect their "linguistic integrity". By applying the law of fraud to penalize the usage of linguistically forbidden terms by the media, "offenders" are literally fined for this supposedly execrable behaviour. It comes as no surprise that the interdicted terms are mostly of English origin. (Bolinger, 1982:45).

The vaunted Gallic quest for clarity has found its classical expression in Rivarol's infamous statement of 1797 "Ce qui n'est pas clair, n'est pas français, ce qui n'est pas clair est encore anglais, italien, grec ou latin" (Stam, 1976:198). Per definition this is clearly untranslatable, but as for the statement's content, not everyone concurred. Jahn in Germany retorts some decades later: "To Frenchify is to falsify; it is an emasculation of the original potency, a poisoning of the language spring, an obstruction of developmental possibilities, and total linguistic nonsense". (ibid:210). Elsewhere this champion of the German language further comments that "he who teaches his children the French language, or permits them to learn it, is delirious, he who allows his daughter to study French is about as good as he who teaches his daughter the virtues of prostitution" (Synder, 1969:26).

The reason for this extremely hostile attitude to everything French is to be found in thwarted nationalistic aspirations, epitomised in one word: Napoleon. In his famous "Speeches to the German Nation", Fichte asserts that the purpose of lexical intruders is to confuse the speakers of truly original languages - of which German naturally is one - and then to pervert their virtues. (Fichte, 1978:71).

A similar ethical sentiment is echoed by a Japanese nationalist, not to be outshone by raving occidentals. Hirata Atsutane argued in the last century that the Japanese fell unto evil ways through contacts with the Chinese. Not only were the Chinese wicked, they had names for their vices, which they taught the innocent and pure Islanders. "The ancient Japanese," he writes, "all constantly and correctly practised what the Chinese called Humanity, Righteousness, the Five Cardinal Virtues and the rest, without having any need to name them or to teach them. This is the essential Japanese quality of Japan, and where one might see a magnificent example of Japan's superiority to all other countries of the world" (De Berry, 1964:42-3, vol. II). It comes as no surprise that people from such an environment saw fit to abolish from their language whatever was more than curious, most of the linguistic replacements were Chinese loan-translations. (Shinmura, 1976:6).

The Italian Fascists engaged in a parallel pursuit when they decided to eliminate from the language words of an undesirable foreign origin. They were no more successful than their Japanese allies. *Hote, menu* and *chauffeure*, all words of Latin origin although they had entered Italian from French, were replaced with "Italian" words. *albergo, lista*, and autista, which are either of Greek or Germanic provenance. (Pei, 1957 159).

Nothing speaks more eloquently of the complex origin of the vocabulary of any language than the misguided efforts of these presumably well-meaning souls. The pristine immaculacy of language that they are dreaming of does simply not exist. In fact, the further back we trace the origin of words, the more we become aware of hitherto unsuspected influences. Superficial authenticity does not guarantee uncontaminated purity In German, for instance, the rejection of the Greek loanword *Stenographie* in favour of the more Germanic sounding *Kurzschrift* has only resulted in a loan-translation with words of Latin origin. curtus/kurz; scribo/Schrift. (ibid.256)

That loans are not detrimental to cultural and/or political development can easily be ascertained.

The proud descent from Latin of the Romance languages cannot change the fact that they as well bristle with loanwords. The Greek influence in turn on Latin is so well known that it only merits a passing reference English and Persian have borrowed more than half of their vocabulary from foreign sources (ibid: 151), and Turkish resembles English in that more than 50% of its vocabulary is of non-Turkish origin. tGallagher, 1971 166).

But it is exactly because of this overwhelming contamination of language, the purist might retort, that we must put an end to the rot This viewpoint is already familiar to us from Plato's "Cratylus" where it is claimed that all words are God-given and any deviation therefrom is sacrilegious. For the names of things are not merely symbols but an inherent and essential part of what they stand for Because of this, any usage of foreign elements is a misnomer, and the only correct usage of words must be through an adherence to a true and authentic native vocabulary But all expressive theories suffer from the paradox so admirably pointed out by Schiller: "Once the Soul speaks, then, alas, it is no longer the Soul that is speaking" [4] In other words, the moment our emotional interior is verbalized it becomes patterns - language - and can no longer claim to be inward feeling - or essence - since language is an external phenomenon. Yet purists ignore not only the weakness of the contention that through our "own" language something peculiar to us is revealed, they also turn a blind eye to the conflict between nature in flux and the deceptive stability of words. Language, mostly their own, of course, is spoken about without any reference to the complex relationship between form and structure, it becomes a fetish, metastasised into an object, worshipped for it magical powers.

But what is language, or to be more specific, what is, say, the French language? Is it the language spoken today, or perhaps yesterday, and how far do we have to go back before contemporary speakers are forced to consult historic dictionaires of the language? Is the language at the point still French as is said about the Strasbourg Oaths (842)? A purist by force of reason reject the French used in that famous document as it bears scant resemblance to the present-day language.[5] But the purist concept is bas-

ed on the methodological error of mixing diachrony with synchrony. Just as it is wrong to determine the structure of society according to the origin and history of individuals, so it is false from a scientific point of view to arrange the vocabulary structure of a living language according to individual words. "Any judgement of word usage in the sense of language criticism is only possible when it is made as speaker criticism and the particular context of internal and extralingual relations has been considered. For words do not exist in a vacuum, but are elements of specific sentences, uttered by specific speakers in specific situations" (Polenz, 1970:161).

Rather than constantly attacking loanwords, we should try to understand the reason for their existence, which is to be found outside language itself. And so it is with purism, I suspect. When one feels slighted in a cultural or political sense, it is always possible to take a vicarious revenge on the opponent's vocabulary, killing it off, as it were, by replacing it with indigenous idioms.

VI.

Throughout this paper I have been using the word 'language' as if it were a one-dimensional, easily tangible entity. It is of course nothing of the kind. In the field of science, no reasonable person would object to efforts promoting standardization and uniformity. Science and technology would be all but dead if the people concerned could not understand each other. (When thinking about the proliferation of nuclear armaments, it is on the other hand not always an unmixed blessing that the vocabulary of science crosses the frontiers with ease).

But outside the laboratory, language is used for much more than mere communication. To a large extent we define ourselves through language. We use it in such a way that those addressed by us will react in a predictable manner; we use it for prestige, intellectual differentiation, and through our linguistic expressions we announce the level of our skills. Even Alice in Wonderland is making more than a statement when she is talking about longitude and latitude without knowing their meaning for "she thought they were nice grand words to say".

In a social context language is foremost a means of establishing what Bronislaw Malinowski called "phatic communion". When I for instance talk to a fellow lover of opera, praising the inimitable voice of Maria Callas, her perfect mastery of 'mezza di voce', which allowed her voice to rise from an almost inaudible 'sotto voce' to a brilliant 'forte' with 'trills and colleratura' which could be heard against the most clamorous Verdian 'stretta', several things take place. I am not only telling my listener that I care enough for this particular art to familiarize myself with the technical vocabulary, but I am also attempting to establish a bond of mutually shared aesthetic preferences. To an outsider it will sound like snobbery hopelessly confusing "good music" with a degenerate artform which thrives on spoilt primadonnas with screeching voices. But regardless of the impression I make upon a listener, no purist can make me say 'first lady' instead of 'primadonna' or otherwise make me discard the Italian terms of music for expressions more to his liking. I would gladly even pay a fine for this stylistic "crime" - for taste in language is very much

a matter of style - for the simple reason that it is ludicrous to speak the way some bureaucratic guardian of language likes and not the way I like.

In the Royal Portal of Chartres Cathedral one can see The Liberal Arts carved in stone, each carrying the tools associated with an arts subject. The figure of Grammar is represented with a book and a rod, with which Medieval students were punished for grammatical faults. The means have changed, as has the name of the 'prescriptive grammarian', but metaphorically the rod of suppression is still wielded by those who find the speech of others disagreeable. When will they wake up and realize that any ethical or rhetorical approach to language is incompatible with a conception of reality as a development of forces? Language changes, and so do people, and "Language is what people speak, not what someone thinks they ought to speak" (Pei, 1972: 117).

Let me finish this paper with an image: one could picture language as a grand piano with a certain number of black and white keys. Their number is limited but the potential combinations of the keys are so many that they have never been exhausted. All the tunes and melodies that have ever been played and all those to come, the yet unrealized ones, we can call *langue*, using Saussure's terminology. We cannot predict how these unheard melodies will sound. We only know what the individual tone will be like although we are ignorant of the total effect.

In musical libraries we can discover how previous generations played their music and how they had a preference for certain tunes. Some harmonies were encouraged and others frowned upon. By studying what the teachers of the piano - the grammarians - have said, we can further learn about their ideals of harmonizing. Yet when looking at the music actually composed, we soon discover that much of what is considered great music is in flagrant violation of the rules laid down. Elements of sound that the teachers have warned against are often heard. Single tones or combinations thereof, considered foreign and disturbing, are repeatedly employed with so great an effect that later players have incorporated them in their own playing. This corpus of fixed music, we can call *langage*, the sum total of all music ever played by man. If we concentrate on a single period, for instance the Baroque, certain features are considered indispensable (e.g. *basso continuo*) yet not pursued with the same rigour everywhere. This is of course the synchronous aspect of music. If we go through other periods, we can discover the diachronic features.

The music of the individual depends on personal talents, likes and dislikes. Some are only capable of playing transmitted music and must have the musical score *(signs)* in front at all times. Others can freely improvise and invent. When alone, it does not matter much how one bangs on the keys, but in the company of others the individual must play in a recognizable manner. Then there is further the informal playing among friends and the more solemn occasions when a large audience is listening. But because of the innumerable sound combinations, we are at times bound to produce music that is disharmonious to some. Ultimately, however, it is the individual's expression, his *parole*, that counts as long as he is playing.

And as it is with the expressive possibilities on the piano, so it is with language. What I say and how I say it, should be left to me. I should like to use that whole world of words that lies there, just waiting to be uttered,

including loanwords, foreign words, neologisms, old words, new words, and whatnot words.

Who needs loanwords - I certainly do.

Footnotes

[1]Although it is rhetorically effective to say that a loan or something borrowed should be returned, it is logically spurious. Even if we for the sake of argument use the same analogy, whom do we return a loanword to? Has there ever been a lender who wanted his words back? A language is not an anthropomorphic entity which gives and takes. To use Aristotle's simple definition, language is "sound with meaning" or "sound with soul" But the crux of the argument, if I understand it correctly, is that 'loan-word' does not mean what it says. (Metzger, 1983:3). Yet it is a semantic truism that usage, not etymological origin, determines the meaning of a word. As for 'xenism', the proposed replacement for 'loanword', it is difficult to see what is gained by an additional '-ism'. 'Loanword' after all is a pure Old English compound, which ought to be the delight of any purist. It is no less attractive by the fact that it is a loan-translation from German (*Lehnwort:* loanword). To reject that in favour of a Graeco-Roman hybrid can hardly be considered progress. One additional reason for rejecting 'xenism' is that in spite of its apparent appropriateness as a linguistic term, 'xenism' (foreign-ness) does not explain whom it is foreign to, which at any rate is a socio-linguistic phenomenon. "The moment a word has found a place within the semantic and morphological system of any language, it is, regardless of origin, for all purposes a part of that language and not a "foreigner" (Polenz, 1970:163)

[2]Military ranks were mostly of Italian origin, having entered French in the 14th and 15th Century. About 60 terms from Italian soldiering are in common use today. (Wartburg, 1971 153)

[3]Wartburg speculates that *pomme de terre* is an imitation of the Alsatian *Erdupfel*. It is more reasonable to assume that the coastal Dutch became aware of the potato before the inland Alsatians. *Erdupfel* is at any rate a Germanized version of *erduppel*. (ibid:200)

[4]'Sprich die Seele, so spricht, ach. schon die seele night mehr' Hegel elaborates on this paradox, quoting Schiller's line. (Hegel, 1952:229)

[5]'The earliest texts make extremely little use of what was to become the article' (Wolff, 1971:242)

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