

ELNA NEWSLETTER

NEWS OF THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM AND ESPERANTO AS A SOLUTION

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ELNA CONGRESS RESCHEDULING

has been announced by President E. James Lieberman. *The previously announced congress at Kennedy International Airport on July 26 will NOT take place.* Instead, the ELNA Congress this year will be held in December in Chicago so that members will be able to attend the forthcoming meeting of the Modern Language Association without making a separate trip. More details will be announced soon.

THE INTERNATIONAL ESPERANTO CONGRESSES

will take place this summer as scheduled. These include the Universal Esperanto Association Congress in Beograd, Yugoslavia, from the 28th of July until the 4th of August and the Congress of the Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda in Toronto, Canada, from the 30th of July until the 6th of August. At both of these congresses, thousands of Esperantists from all over the world will demonstrate the fact that Esperanto is a living language as capable of complete communication as any national language in spite of its simplicity. Both congresses will emphasize the idea that everyone ought to learn Esperanto for international communication because of the ease with which fluency can be attained in Esperanto—compared to any national language—and because of its neutrality.

The UEA Congress this year is unique in that its "alta protektanto" and head of the state in which it is being held—Josip Broz Tito—studied Esperanto as a young

student. Members of ELNA can fly round trip between New York and Beograd for only \$268, providing they are willing to make the two flights across the Atlantic on Sundays only. Those interested should write or call the Turkish-American Association, 1472 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, tel. 212-LA 4-3447.

The constant address of UEA congresses is Nieuwe Binnenweg 176, Rotterdam 3002, The Netherlands, tel. (010) 36 15 39. For further information on the Toronto SAT Congress, write to Esperanto, P.O. Box "F," Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

will hold its 88th annual meeting in Chicago from December 27 to December 30 of this year—a meeting that will include a new seminar called the *Seminar on Interlinguistics*. In the words of Professor Mario Pei, "There is no reason why an association devoted to modern languages and their problems should not have a section to cover this most important of linguistic problems." Professor Richard E. Wood of Louisiana State University has been elected the first discussion leader of the new seminar, the 1973 topic of which will be *Sociolinguistic and Cultural Consequences of the Emergence of an International Language*, and he invites the submission of abstracts or proposals for consideration as part of the program. His address is the Department of Foreign Languages, Louisiana State University,

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803.

NOMINEES

for ELNA Treasurer and three positions on the ELNA Board of Directors have been named. They are Michael W. Ham, Peggy Linker and Henry B. Milsted for treasurer; Rex Bennett, Allen Boschen, Lewis Cook, Al Estling, Kent Jones, Charles Power and Richard Sandberg for election to the board. Biographical sketches of the nominees together with a ballot will be sent to each ELNA member in about a month.

BY POPULAR DEMAND,

the paper delivered by Dr. Margaret Hagler at the 87th meeting of the Modern Language Association is reprinted below. Derived in part from her famous doctoral dissertation on Esperanto, its full title is **THE ESPERANTO LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM FOR POETRY:**

The Esperanto language has been used as a medium for both translated and original literature, especially for poetry, ever since 1887, when the first book on Esperanto was published. Naturally, the use of Esperanto for literature immediately raises several complex questions: First, what kind of language is Esperanto and how does it differ from such tongues as English? Second, does Esperanto really have the rich and full-bodied vocabulary, as well as the many other qualities, needed for the creation of poetry? And third, do Esperanto words have the multi-dimensional associations and connotations which are a prerequi-

site for poetry? Let us consider each of these questions, beginning with a description of the Esperanto language.

In contrast to the ethnic and national tongues, such as Eskimo and English respectively, Esperanto is a constructed language. The term "ethnic and national languages" refers to "those tongues which have developed over long periods of time, usually many centuries, during which they have undergone the process of more or less unplanned and uncontrolled changes,"¹ depending chiefly on geographical and historical circumstances.

The term "constructed language" designates "any planned language offered as a universal communication medium, having as its main characteristics grammatical regularity, controlled vocabulary growth, and systematic methods for word-building."² As English may be considered a blended national language consisting mainly of Germanic, Romance, and Greek elements, Esperanto may be classified as a blended constructed language with components from Latin, the Romance languages and other Indo-European tongues, and a very small percentage of invented elements. However, since Esperanto is a planned language, it does not contain the irregularities which make the study of national languages difficult.

Let us now go on to our second question: does Esperanto have the qualities needed for the creation of poetry? We shall first consider its vocabulary and word-structure.

The Esperanto vocabulary, which has grown tremendously in its near-century of existence, is varied, flexible, and subtle. In

part, this is due to the word-building system of the language, founded on the idea of roots to which an ingenious, systematically planned set of affixes can be added, making it possible to build fifty or more words on the basis of a single root. Furthermore, the vocabulary is constantly expanding, so that its richness and capability of expressing nuances is always growing. Because of all these features, the Esperanto poet can choose among as many synonyms as can poets using other tongues.

For instance, Esperanto has the following synonyms for the verb *brili*, "to shine:" *fajri*, "to burn;" *flami*, "to become ignited, to blaze;" *flagri*, "to flare;" *fulmi*, "to flash like lightning;" *glimi*, "to gleam or glitter;" *heligi*, "to become bright, to clear up;" and *lumi*, "to shine, illuminate." Each root can be used to form several more verbs, such as *lumeti*, "to glimmer faintly," and *lumegi*, "to glare."

The word-structure of Esperanto facilitates the reproduction of all rhythmic patterns, whether these are based on stress, accent, quantitative verse, syllabic verse, or the complex rhythmic effects of modern poetry.

Esperanto is especially rich in rhyme—much richer, in fact, than English. Esperanto poets insist that their rhymes are not valid unless the roots, as well as the suffixes, rhyme.

Thus, we have seen that Esperanto possesses the vocabulary and other resources needed for poetry.

And now for the third question: do Esperanto words have associations and connotations? The answer to this question is that since Esperanto is a real, living language, its words have the qualities and characteristics of words in other living languages. In the first place, there is the time-depth factor. The great majority of Esperanto roots, selected from or based on languages

with hundreds of years of existence behind them, came into being charged with the distilled associations of centuries, and, immediately upon being used, began to release their positive or negative charges. For example, the word *koro* not only means "heart" in the literal sense, but also carries the connotation "the seat of the emotions" as in many other tongues. Esperanto writers almost immediately began to employ such expressions as *bonkora*, "good-hearted," *mol-kora*, "soft-hearted," and *senkora*, "heartless," and many more, all of which depend on connotation.

Furthermore, as the unique international cultural and speech-community of Esperantists has grown to around a million persons in more than fifty nations, Esperantists have developed their own associations with and connotations for many words. For example, because green was adopted as the color for the flag and star of the Esperanto movement, the Esperanto word for "green," *verda*, has some of the same connotations as the English expression "true blue."

And now let us look at some actual examples of Esperanto poetry, both translated and original. There are now some thirty national anthologies of translated works in Esperanto, including an *English Anthology* published in 1957 and covering the period 1000A.D. to 1800, with a second volume in preparation. Our time permits a discussion of only parts of one translation from this anthology, an Esperanto version of William Blake's poem, "Tiger, Tiger," translated by William Auld of Scotland, one of today's leading Esperanto poets and critics.

The first lines of Blake's poem and Auld's translation are as follows:

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night

1 Hagler, Margaret. *The Esperanto Language as a Literary Medium*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Comparative Literature Department, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, p. 10.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Tigro, tigro, brile brula
En arbaro nokt-obskura

In these lines, Auld is not only able to preserve the alliteration of Blake's phrase "burning bright," but also to add a subtle effect of near-rhyme because of the similarity of the words *brile* and *brula*. Blake's phrase "forests of the night" is preserved very well in the translation, *En arbaro nokt-obskura*, literally "In the night-dark forest."

The fifth verse of Blake's poem contains the famous line:

"Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" This line is translated by Auld as:

Ĉu vin Ŝafid-farinto faris?

The translation precisely duplicates Blake's cryptic style and symbolic content; in addition, Auld utilized the special features of Esperanto to great advantage. *Ĉu* is a particle which indicates a question. The next word, *vin*, "you," is in the accusative case which lends great flexibility to the word-order of Esperanto. *Ŝafid-farinto*, "the one who made the Lamb," demonstrates the concision of Esperanto. To the German-derived root *ŝaf-*, "sheep," the affix *-id*, meaning "offspring," is added to form *ŝafid'*, capitalized as in the Blake original. *Farinto* is a noun formed on a participial base. Blake's repetition of "made" and "make" is retained in *farinto* and *faris*. Throughout his translation, by skillful and artistic use of the resources of Esperanto, Auld successfully captures the effects of the Blake poem.

An enormous body of original poetry has been written in Esperanto. The definitive collection of Esperanto poetry, the *Esperanto Anthology*, covers the years 1887 to 1957 and contains some 350 works by ninety poets from more than thirty countries or language communities.

A poet whose influence on the development of Esperanto as a literary language has been compared to that of Dante on the development of the Italian language is the Hungarian Kálmán Kalocsay, born in 1891 and still working actively as a poet, translator, critic, and anthologist. His original poetry includes a long work in heroic couplets on the art of Esperanto poetry, highly polished poems in traditional forms such as the *rondel* and *sonnet*, and sophisticated modern poetry. We shall discuss only two of his works, an untitled *sonnet* and an excerpt from a poem in free verse, both of which I have translated into English. The sonnet is from a larger work, *Through the Storm*; appearing next are the original and the translation, which retains the form and meter, but not the rhyme.

el Tra la Ŝtormo

Sur mia forn' muzikas faŭn' per fluto
dutuba, kaj, dum plenabuŝa blovo,
li ŝajnas al mi signi per la brovo,
ke mi lin akompanu per liuto.

Ĉu kantas al la luno por saluto,
jubilas pri sezono de renovo,
aŭ spitan nimfon volas per kormovo
delogi tiu sonoranta muto?

Subite rompas tra l' medito reva
kiel stertora ve' de gorĝo kreva,
konsterne tranĉa sono el la tuboj.

El mitaj tempoj de horo' fantoma
ĝis ĉi epoko plena de inkuboj
hantas la hojlo de l'sufer'prahoma.

from *Through the Storm*

A faun plays music on my mantel-
piece
blowing with puffed-out cheeks
a double flute;
he seems to ask me with his
arching brows
to keep him company upon the
lute.

Does he sing greetings to the
silver moon
rejoicing in the season of
renewal?
Or does the music-making
mute desire
to move the teasing heart
of some young nymph?

Suddenly through this dreamlike
meditation
a hoarse lament bursts through his
broken throat,
a terrifying blast cuts through
the flute.

From mythic and fantastic
times of horror
until this epoch, full of incubi,
this blast of dawn-man haunts us
through the years.

It is noteworthy that the word *faŭno* in Esperanto and "faun" in English both have similar denotations and connotations and that both even evoke the same image of Pan. The sudden hoarse blast on the double flute recalls humanity's demon-haunted past; this brooding sense of history is characteristic of much Esperanto poetry.

Kalocsay's free-verse poem *Diboĉe*, "Hung Over," is in a completely different vein. Here is the first section of this work.

Diboĉe

Hej-farsa ĝojo
ruĝo gutinta en peĉon
saltigu gapantajn okulojn sur
min!

facile ebrieto
pendas el mi
kiel la lango
el buŝo de bubo mokanta
kaj eta stulta kanto
tra l' kapo ŝancelpasas
la spronojn kunfrapante
dancpetole—
rifuĝas la nokto
mateno ĝin frapis
pugalnaze
kaj nun ĝia sango
de nazo
ruĝigas la horizonton

la gaslampofloroj velkas
ekŝprucas la domoj
miksas balaŭĉon
de homa tumulto...

Hung Over

Hey! farcical joy
red dropping into pitch
Let their wide open eyes
jump on me!

I'm a little hung over
it hangs from me
like the tongue
from the mouth of some taunting
street-kid
and a silly little song
keeps running through my head
gamboling around
in a frolicking dance—
The night's buzzed off
morning punched it
on the schnozzle
and now its bloody
beak
reddens the horizon
street-lamp flowers fade
mixed sweepings
of human tumult
gush out of houses...

Kalocsay's image of dawn as the
nosebleed of night is highly origi-
nal, as is the active metaphor
comparing street-lamps to flowers.

This brief analysis of these
poems hardly does justice to
Kalocsay, or to the many other
poets who have chosen to write in

Esperanto. However, it is my hope
that this discussion of the qualities
of the Esperanto language and of a
little translated and original poetry
in Esperanto has shown that poets
of considerable talent and merit
have been attracted to the Esper-
anto language and have success-
fully used it as a literary medium
to create works comparable in
quality and interest to poetry in
national and ethnic languages.

ESPERANTO'S VALUE

to tourists was vividly pointed out
this year in an article by Mrs.
Eleanor Stein of San Diego that won
a \$100 first prize from the *Joyer
Travel Report*. In this article, Mrs.
Stein writes:

....My husband and I have traveled
through several countries this year
and, although we knew no one in
these countries prior to visiting
them, we were wined, dined and
welcomed everywhere we visited!
We were taken on tours of several
cities and visited people in their
homes, talked with them, played
with their children, yes, even saw
their home movies! This happened
to us because we had a special
kind of passport. Our passport was
a little pin..a green star which we
wore all of the time. It means that
we are Esperantists....

In every civilized country of
the world Esperantists can be found.

These Esperantists are people who
welcome the traveler as a friend.
We have an international directory
which lists the Esperantists in
each country, including the United
States. It doesn't matter whether
you speak Esperanto fluently or are
only a beginner. You are warmly
welcomed. My husband toured
Europe in 1969 and lived with 14
different Esperanto families in
Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia
and Hungary. I learned the language
two years ago. My husband has
spoken it for five years. It is not
difficult to learn..It means finding
real comradeship, helpfulness and
friendship wherever you may travel.

ELNA

is a non-profit organization dedi-
cated to promoting easy-to-learn
Esperanto as the international
language. Its president is E. James
Lieberman, M.D., 6451 Barnaby
Street NW, Washington, DC 20015;
its treasurer is Mrs. Peggy Linker,
1414 Monroe Street, Walla Walla,
Washington 99362. Individual dues
are \$8.00 a year. Books about and
in Esperanto can be purchased
from the Esperanto Information
Center, 410 Darrell Road, Hills-
borough, California 94010.

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