Esperanto and the ideology of constructed languages

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Surprisingly little has been done in the way of study of the motivations of the makers of constructed languages, or of the *Weltanschauung* implied by the structure of the languages constructed. There are some exceptions, of course. For example, the Ido-reform embodies an explicit anti-abstractionist principle in its word-construction, tracing back to the philosophical system of one of its founders. This took an essentially Aristotelian view that abstractions exist only as manifested in individual, concrete objects, as opposed to what was taken to be Zamenhof's basically Platonic system. Thus, where Esperanto forms from the adjectival root *bel* the abstract noun *belo* (beauty), in Ido the noun formation *belo* must signify a beautiful thing. The closest to an abstraction that can be made in Ido is *beleso*, which literally means beautiful existence (the root *es* corresponding to the Esperanto verbal root *est* but also replacing the Esperanto abstraction-forming morpheme *ec*). Esperanto is particularly rich in abstractions to the extent that a concretizing morpheme is frequently needed, *aĵ* being

the most popular, where other languages would take a concrete reference for granted without requiring a special indicator. For example *skribaĵo*, a writing, formed from the verbal root *skrib*, whose direct noun form *skribo* does not imply a specimen of writing (except in the idiomatic expression *La Sanktaj Skriboj*, Holy Scriptures, where the Esperanto imitates word usage in other languages).

Not all language construction is motivated by philosophical suppositions. It is a well attested psychiatric phenomenon that the coining of neologisms, and sometimes full scale language reforms is a frequent accompaniment of incipient mental disorders, especially of schizophrenia. The reasons for this are rather obscure. However, it seems to be due at least in part to a break-down in ego control of the association processes. [1] That is, the speaker usually separates unconscious complex-material into its component parts by attaching verbal representations to them. In schizophrenia this separation seems to disappear, so that verbal material referring to one part of a complex is then displaced onto another part of the complex. When the speaker is familiar with one or more foreign languages, this often results in the combination of elements from the various languages. Frequently this includes cryptomnesic elements (i.e. material existing in a subliminal state in the individual's psyche, having been picked up at an earlier age and then forgotten, if it was ever conscious). [2] Another etiology for the "word-salad" tendency in schizophrenia, and its related phenomenon, the construction of neologisms and language systems, which has been proposed by the Freudian school, and for which a considerable amount of evidence has been forthcoming, is the young child's assumption that language means control. To coin a word is to create or control the object which the word is intended to represent, a motif frequent in ancient mythology. [3] Thus the schizophrenic's coining of new language elements represents, on the one hand, his loss of reality-sense, and, on the other hand, his struggle to regain control of a hostile environment. [4]

There is no doubt that some language-inventors are psychiatrically disturbed, and their inventions symptomatic of this disturbance. On the

other hand, it seems unreasonable to extend this to all such inventors. For example, there is no evidence that Zamenhof suffered from any such disturbance. Nor does he appear to have had a philosophical motivation. In his case, sociological factors seem to have played the major role, with religious and philosophical factors taking second place (although they were quite strong). Predisposition to language study was given by Zamenhof's father, whose linguistic training and occupation were a major influence in Zamenhof's childhood. Overt persecution of Jews led him, as being on the receiving end of the persecution, to debate methods of overcoming social strife. Identification with Judaism gave him a strong feeling that an ideology is necessary for a meaningful life. It is interesting that quite similar backgrounds were also the motivating factors in several of Zamenhof's very eminent contemporaries: Martin Buber, Sigmund Freud, and perhaps Karl Marx.

Zamenhof's ideological motivations

Esperanto was conceived by Zamenhof, originally, as one part of a social reform movement, which was to include the establishment of a "neutral" non-theistic religion to complement the "natural" non-national language. Having first, like his close contemporary Martin Buber, been an enthusiastic proponent of Zionism, he soon became disillusioned with the proposition that social strife could be ended by withdrawing from current society in order to form a utopian community. Instead, he became convinced that ideological and linguistic factors are the main roots of social strife. For him, ideological factors meant religious factors, rather than political. He seems to have had very little or no political interests, and his knowledge of or interest in economics was notoriously weak. He identified persecution of the Jews as having two principal bases: (1) The claim to a militant religious ideology, on the part of Christians, which leads them to see non-Christians as a threat to their existence, along with a traditional Jewish separatism and feeling of cultural superiority. (2) The tendency of Jews to cultivate their own "secret" language (Yiddish, or, in the modern day, more commonly Hebrew). Apart from the Jewish factor, we must also remember that

Poland was in Zamenhof's time under Russian military domination. Many of Zamenhof's early reminiscences of persecution are linked not with anti-Semitism but with the inevitable conflict between occupying powers who speak one language and subject peoples who cannot understand the commands they are being required to obey. Thus Zamenhof's two motivations for social reform: the construction of a religious, ideological system which would allow equality to all beliefs; and the construction of a linguistic system which would put all people on an equal footing. This second point is particularly important as the origin of the traditional Esperantist goal of introducing Esperanto not as a universal language but as a universal second language, i.e. not to supplant but to supplement the existing ethnic languages.

Zamenhof's religious project is particularly interesting, in that he was an avowed atheist. In the light of present-day trends in theology, however, we would probably be inclined to consider him a non-theistic religious person, rather than a philosophical atheist, similar to Erich Fromm, with whom he shares many spiritual qualities. [(5)] Zamenhof took the classical Jewish rabbi Hillel as his model, and attempted to establish a religious movement which he called Hilelismo. Hillelist temples were to be set up throughout the world, and in them neutral devotional services would be held, in which persons of varying religious faiths could together express their worship of the "ineffable". It does not appear that the Hillelist project ever moved beyond the stage of pamphlets inviting public support. In his later years, Zamenhof attempted to resign from all public office in the Esperanto movement, in order to devote himself to work for his Hilelismo. However, the outbreak of the First World War and his own death prevented practical steps from being taken.

It appears, from Zamenhof's published works and letters, that Esperanto was first envisioned as a complement to the Hillelist project, rather than as a separate movement. He never had any sympathy with those Esperantists who saw in Esperanto purely a linguistic enterprise, nor could he, unlike many modern Esperantists, see an international

language as making a major contribution to world fellowship without some sort of religious background.

When it became known that Zamenhof was attempting to link Esperanto to a religious movement, public reaction tended to be severe. Much bf the emotional backing for the Ido-schism was derived from the fear that Zamenhof wished to engulf Esperantism with a religious outlook. It is said that many of the early Catholic Esperantists, in particular, were frightened by this prospect -- and it is, indeed, true that the Catholic element in early Idism is striking. However, pressure put upon Zamenhof by Esperantist officials prevented him from expressing his Hillelist scheme as an official Esperantist project. Instead, it was promoted anonymously, and Zamenhof confined himself in public to a much modified form, which eventually turned into the concept of the "interna ideo" which still is largely characteristic of the Esperanto movement.

Adherents of other constructed language systems are typically perturbed by two aspects of the Esperanto movement: its alleged sectarianism and its alleged resistance to linguistic change. Both of these require close examination. Although misunderstood and frequently misrepresented, they represent authentic features of the ideology underlying Esperanto, and trace back to Zamenhof.

The interna ideo principle is strongly rooted in the Esperanto movement, and characterizes most Esperantist groups and gatherings. Graham Greene's famous caricature of Zamenhof and Esperanto clubs has a large grain of truth behind it. [(6)] Nevertheless it is a caricature, exaggerating trends latent in the movement.

Interna ideo as a major force

As expressed by the attitudes of most Esperantists, the interna ideo means that Esperanto is intended to serve not merely as a device for tourists or for technical and literary purposes, though these are

important, but as a major force in the establishment and preservation of international friendship and world peace. It appears to be this interna ideo ideology which has been behind the prohibition of Esperanto groups in certain countries and times, e.g. Hitler Germany, Stalinist Russia, and post-war Portugal. While by no means prohibited in the Communist countries at present, Esperanto still does not enjoy the same degree of freedom as it does in the rest of the world. Not merely international communication but free international communion has been a traditional aspect of Esperanto activity. This has not, of course, prevented the existence of deep-seated disputes among Esperantist groups, yet by and large the assumption is that an Esperantist can, or should, be expected to be particularly altruistic and friendly to strangers. To be an Esperantist is largely felt to mean to be a part of a world-wide community. The religious overtones of this have not been hidden. The Esperanto movement has an identifying song, *La Espero*, written by Zamenhof and regularly called a hymn; it has a flag, prominently displayed at gatherings; and its members are encouraged to wear an identifying symbol, a small green star lapel pin, though this has tended to lose popularity in recent years. The program for the opening meeting at World Congresses tends to have a similarity to a church service, though, following Zamenhof's non-theistic approach, it is markedly nontheological in content.

This sectarian quality inevitably repels many persons who come to a local Esperanto club seeking instruction in the language or use of the language. There is a decided tendency in local clubs for the interna ideo ideology to supplant practical promotion of the language as the principal concern. Thus, talks about Esperanto and the friendship it promotes tend to be rather more frequent than talks in Esperanto, in the local Esperanto clubs. On the other hand, this sectarianism probably is largely responsible for the ability of the Esperanto movement to maintain itself for over 80 years in the face of extraordinary setbacks, a feat unequaled by any other comparable movement for a constructed language.

Devotion to the interna ideo is also probably one of the main causes

for disillusionment among Esperantists and their eventual falling away from the movement. It is a striking fact that although within the past 25 years well over a million persons have formally studied Esperanto in school classes and in clubs, the actual number of Esperantists known to be active seems not to have risen at all. The number of active Esperantists -- taking this to mean actual speakers of the language who are members of Esperanto groups or regularly purchase literature and take part in the movement -- is in the neighborhood of 50,000, a figure which has remained fairly constant for nearly fifty years now. When ex-Esperantists are interviewed, and their reasons for leaving the movement are asked, almost invariably the answer is: I no longer believe that Esperanto is going to become the universal language, I no longer am convinced that this is the way to achieve world peace, I no longer have the enthusiasm I once had.

It is surprising how rarely ex-Esperantists speak to the question: did you or do you find Esperanto useful?

Esperanto in practical use

There is a strong minority in the Esperanto movement which feels that the ideological emphases have been overstressed, and who would prefer to see the practical usefulness of Esperanto given first place. It is obvious that Esperanto is useful to a fluent speaker, particularly to an English speaker, since it then serves as a supplement to his English. By no means all Esperantists are fluent in English, despite the English speaker's assumption that English is already a universally used language. The native English speaker who has a fluent knowledge of Esperanto does in fact extend his range of communication with foreigners considerably, rather more than the statistics would imply, because it is easier to locate a foreign Esperantist than a foreign English speaker -- and the Esperantist is more likely to be interested than an English speaker chosen at random.

Similarly, Esperanto correspondence and Esperanto literature are of

more than sufficient scope for any individual Esperantist's needs, so that Esperanto can be made practical use of to a remarkable extent. It is this aspect of the Esperanto movement, commonly called the *per-esperanta* as opposed to the *por-esperanta* faction, which has always played a strong minority role.

The question of Esperanto's alleged resistance to linguistic change is of a different nature, and again it traces back to Zamenhof. It involves a particular principle which is at the core of the language, and which seems to have become a major ideological mark of distinction between the Esperanto movement and most other movements for constructed languages.

It was Zamenhof's intent to reproduce in Esperanto the situation normally found in ethnic languages: that is, to fabricate a tradition of usage, together with a classical literature, so as to give a distinctive character to the language and, of more importance, to the vocabulary and phraseology of the language. Several means were employed to this end. Markus Zamenhof (Zamenhof's father) had compiled a multilingual collection of proverbs, to which Zamenhof added Esperanto variants and which he supplemented with proverbs of his own coinage. [(7)] The purpose of this seems to have been to provide the new language with a ready-built folklore, from which elements could be drawn for literary use. Zamenhof from the start attempted to create an Esperanto literature, stressing classical European drama and novels. But at an early point he concluded that the role played by the Bible in the ethnic languages as a model of literature should be carried over into Esperanto, so that he began translation of the Old Testament, professedly as a literary rather than a religious enterprise. Unfortunately, this translation was not published complete until 1926, at a time when Esperanto literary style had already matured, so that it has not had the influence on usage which was anticipated.

Esperanto's ready-made tradition

Two works, in particular, were compiled by Zamenhof in his endeavor to create a ready-made literary tradition in Esperanto. These were the *Fundamenta Krestomatio* and the *Fundamento de Esperanto*, works which non-Esperantists sometimes confuse because of their similarity of title. The *Fundamenta Krestomatio* is a collection of early literary pieces, mostly translated from European languages, intended to serve as a literary guide to style. This volume has been much criticized by Esperantists, who have found it poorly edited and internally inconsistent as to usage. Idioms from ethnic languages sometimes find their place in the *F.K.*, another source of criticisms since its original publication. Nevertheless, the *F.K.* has gone through many editions, and in a critical edition brought out after the Second World War continues to be on the market.

Idiomatically minimalized

Actually, it is far from certain that Zamenhof originally intended Esperanto to be free from idioms. Much of his early phraseology carried over ethnic idioms into Esperanto, especially from German. His use of the preposition *el*, as a prefix, is a famous example, since numerous idiomatic compounds were formed with this prefix: elrigardi, eltrovi, elkovri, etc. (*El* means *out of, rigardi* means *to look, trovi to find, kovri to cover*. But *elrigardi, eltrovi*, and *elkovri* meant, respectively, to appear, to invent and to discover.) Almost all of these idiomatic compounds have since been dropped from Esperanto usage. Some idiomatic forms which are still in common use are *malvarmumo* (a cold, formed from *malvarma*, cool, itself a compound from *varma*, warm), *preni por* (to take for, in the same idiomatic sense as in English), and the use of *de* after passive participles to mean *by*. Zamenhof intended Esperanto to acquire a phraseology of its own. Aristotelian logic has never been a guiding principle in choice of vocabulary or of phraseology.

The *Fundamento de Esperanto* combines three very early pamphlets, or parts of pamphlets, the famous Sixteen Rules of Grammar,

the Exercises, and the Universal Dictionary, all of which appeared in the early months of Esperanto. The goal here was to create a traditional standard of usage, comparable to the standard usage encountered by the speaker of any ethnic language at his birth. Although Zamenhof never consciously thought of it in this way, Esperanto had its own pre-modern linguistic history, roughly comparable to the stages gone through in their development by the ethnic languages. [(9)] A number of vocabulary items in modern Esperanto survive from these early "pre-historic" stages, and by their apparent disharmony with the bulk of the vocabulary and the usual derivational principles give a flavor of historical tradition. Such items include most of the a priori elements in Esperanto, such as the preposition *je*, the suffix *-um-*, the verb endings, and a few roots such as *edz* (husband), *fraŭl* (bachelor), as well as many of the famous correlatives. Of these, the verb endings are most fascinating, since they obviously lack, in their modern form, one series:

-a- present:
-i-
preterite:
-o- future:
-u-
conditional:

-as present tense, *-at-* present passive participle, *-ant-* present active participle.
-is past simple, *-it-* past passive participle, *-int-* past active participle.
-os future tense, *-ot-* future passive participle, *-ont-* future active

participle.
-*us* conditional
mood.

The lacking series is, obviously, the series in -*e*-. It is clear that Zamenhof simply took the traditional order of vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and the traditional order of tenses as taught in grammar books (present, past, future, conditional) and combined them to form his verb endings. The missing -*e*- vowel is puzzling, but is cleared up when we discover that as late as early 1887 (the year in which Zamenhof's first pamphlet describing Esperanto was published) there was an -*e*- series representing the past imperfect verb forms: -*es*, and presumably -*et*- and -*ent*-. This series was dropped at the last moment, resulting in the incomplete schema now used. Similarly, with the -*u*- series we would expect participial forms, -*ut*- and -*unt*-, which, in fact, occasionally have been proposed by Esperantists. What happened to these forms in proto-Esperanto has not yet been brought to light by historical research.

Psychological function of idiosyncrasies

Viewed from the standpoint of logic, these a priori and inconsistent features of Esperanto are obviously open to severe criticism, and frequently are among the first to be discarded or changed when reform proposals are made. But their psychological function is equally obvious, and accounts for their retention. They give character to the language, imparting the feeling that Esperanto is not merely 84 years old but in spirit hundreds of years old. Thus, to the average speaker of Esperanto, to suggest changes in the language is felt, emotionally, as equivalent to suggesting changes in the basic structure of English, or French, or German, or whatever his native language might be: it is not taken seriously.

This has led, of course, to the misunderstanding frequent among non-Esperantists that Esperanto is chained to a rigid tradition which cannot be modified. The phrase "netuŝebla Fundamento" ("untouchable

Basis") is frequently quoted, out of context, in support of this claim. In reality, the *Fundamento de Esperanto* allows for considerable, even structural, changes in the language, and this possibility has been followed through with a procedure closely paralleling those taking place in the ethnic languages. The *Fundamento de Esperanto* includes provision for making old forms archaic and (ultimately) obsolete. It also places severe limitations on the powers which may be assumed by any linguistic authority in the Esperanto movement. At the time of composition, this was only a possibility being mooted by those (especially Zamenhof, who wished to step down from his position of authority in the movement) who foresaw the need for an institution charged with supervising the future development of the language. (At present, this is the Akademio de Esperanto, formed after the Second World War out of the remains of the pre-war Lingva Komitato, which in turn traced back to a consultative body formed at Zamenhof's request.) The limitations placed on this authority are that the authority may *pre*scribe new forms but it may not *pro*scribe old forms. It may, however, as occasion arises, qualify old forms as archaic and, if such a situation should arise, obsolete. The situation is roughly comparable to that obtaining in modern English in respect to Shakespeare, the King James Bible, or even Chaucer: these writings cannot reasonably be called "bad English", and most English speakers would be properly horrified at any such suggestion, but they would also be shocked if a modern English speaker were to attempt to use Elizabethan (or earlier) vocabulary and phraseology in normal speech. Most Esperantists are unaware to what extent their language has in fact evolved since 1887, though occasionally republication of early literature brings it to their attention, and critical editions of such works as the *Fundamenta Krestomatio* and *Lingvaj Respondoj* make it obvious. The republication of one of the earliest literary translations into Esperanto, *La neĝa blovado*, in 1947, was interesting, in that to the experienced Esperantist it was almost like reading Shakespeare, so archaic did the text seem.

Evolution through natural processes

In line with his intention of establishing Esperanto as an equivalent of the ethnic languages, Zamenhof after the first five years insisted that evolution in Esperanto must take place through natural processes rather than by fiat. He privately vacillated on this at the time of the Ido crisis (as detailed in his *Leteroj*), but eventually remained firm. Most Esperantists feel that he was right in holding to his principle. It is this principle which most astounds non-Esperantists, and irritates most beginning students of Esperanto as well (sometimes, though rarely, accomplished Esperantists also). The psychological reason behind the principle is important, and plays a significant role in the Esperanto movement: Esperanto is not the possession of or controlled by any individual or group. It is equally the possession of any person who cares to acquire fluency in it and to put the language to use. This point was one of Zamenhof's original principles, and he renounced any legal claims he might have had to a copyright on the language. The democratic principle embodied in this attitude makes it impossible for a body to legislate in respect to the language. The Akademio is limited to registering usage and to acting as an arbiter in the (infrequent) event of a dispute arising over the interpretation of the *Fundamento de Esperanto*. As a rule, it has taken its responsibility in very conservative fashion, waiting for many years before making a pronouncement. Thus, within the past five years it has given authoritative decisions on two points of grammar under dispute since before 1910. (The exact meaning of the passive participles, and the theory of the grammatical categories of Esperanto word roots.)

Democratic dynamics of change

The democratic principle means that changes in Esperanto (either of grammatical structure or of vocabulary) must come about through the popularization of new forms, rather than by outright change. Usually, new grammatical forms fail to become popular enough to survive for long, although one exception may be the increasing tendency to use word roots prepositionally without grammatical endings. (This seems to have begun by reversing a standard Esperanto grammatical principle.

While most morphemes in Esperanto must be combined with grammatical indicators and may not stand alone, there are a few "primary words" which form an exception, largely prepositions. Thus, such ordinary terms as *hundo, skribas, vere* -- dog, writes, truly -- consist of the bound morphemes *hund, skrib, ver* and, respectively, a noun, present tense verb, and adverb indicator. But such terms as *en, de, por, tre, tra*, and many others, are unbound morphemes and may stand alone without grammatical indicators. They may also stand combined with other morphemes, e.g. *eniri* -- to enter, literally to-in-go, *depreni* --- to subtract, literally to-from-take. At an early period this principle was reversed, so that normally bound morphemes such as *ek-* and *far-* began to be used in unbound form. *Far* has attained a certain degree of acceptance as a substitute for *de* in the meaning of "by" after passive participles, while *ek* has long been used as an interjection and in the idiomatic phrase *ek de* meaning "since". [(10)]

On the other hand, vocabulary has been increased at a steady pace, so that at present the total Esperanto vocabulary includes approximately as many primary roots as does the common vocabulary of most ethnic languages, including English. This expansion of the Esperanto vocabulary has, however, followed its own path, and rarely that proposed by reform projects and critics of the language. Critics usually wish to supplement the vocabulary, or to replace existing terms, on the basis of making the language more "naturalistic" (i.e. similar in appearance or sound to existing European languages) or on the basis of discarding idiomatic forms for "logical" forms. Esperanto methods of compounding polymorphemic terms have traditionally come under fire from the critics. Thus, the long series of terms compounded from the prefix *mal-* (a morpheme which reverses the meaning of the main root in the compound) has regularly been criticized by non-Esperantists, and very occasionally by Esperantists, who feel that the language "ought" to have totally distinct terms for "bad, low, cold, empty, dark" etc., rather than *mal-* compounds from "good, high, warm, full, light" (*malbona, malalta, malvarma, malplena, malluma*). In many cases, synonyms for these *mal-* compounds exist, but have gained currency only in poetic literature. It is

interesting that there are instances in which terms introduced by Zamenhof and forming a part of the "official" vocabulary have popularly been ignored in favor of compounds. Such terms include *hejti* (to heat, regularly replaced by *varmigi* in popular usage), *apartamento* (replaced by *ĉambroj*), and the almost never used *hardi* (to harden, replaced by *malmoligi*). Actually, all European languages contain a very long series akin to the Esperanto *mal-* words, the English equivalent being the indefinitely long list of terms compounded with the prefix un- (undo, untie, unopened, etc.). But there is no one-to-one correspondence between which terms in English form their antonyms with un- and which in Esperanto with mal-. Nor does Esperanto limit the grammatical usage to which the series is put. For example, in English we may use the participial form *unopened* but not the verbal form *unopen*, while in Esperanto (which, interestingly, chooses as the primary root the antonym to English "open", namely *fermi*, "to close") one may say not only *malfermita* (participle) but *malfermi* (verb). There is no commonly used synonym in English for "unopened", as there is none in Esperanto for "malfermi", though near-synonyms exist (closed and aperti, respectively).

These illustrations indicate a basic conception underlying Esperanto structure: that the language shall be autonomous in vocabulary, grammar, and style, even though the elements have originally been chosen from ethnic languages. Occasionally this principle of autonomy has been carried to unusual lengths, as in the victory of the root *televid* over the expected form *televizi* to express the notion of television. [(11)] It is also most striking in the poetic literature, as also in some of the better prose writers (Ferenc Szilagyi and Stellan Engholm spring instantly to mind), whose grammatical exploits can only be paraphrased in translation. [(12)]

The apostrophizing of a and o

A particularly interesting fate has overtaken one rule of the *Fundamento de Esperanto*, which gives insight into certain aspects of the basic "feel" of Esperanto. This is the rule which allows the final *-o*

of singular, nominative nouns and the final *-a* of the definite article to be elided. (In writing this is indicated by the use of an apostrophe.) Theoretically there is nothing wrong about such a sentence as

La hund' estas sur la strat' (the dog is on the street)

or

Tra l' profunda silent' sonis granda eksplod' (through the deep silence came the sound of a giant explosion).

It seems almost certain that originally this rule was conceived with a view to increasing the number of monosyllables in Esperanto. Speakers of French and English, in particular, are frequently taken aback by the length of Esperanto words, and one wonders why the simple word *film* could not do in place of the more cumbersome *filmo*. In theory, of course, there is no objection to speaking (and writing) this as *film'*, and it would require no great searchings of heart for the apostrophe to fall into oblivion. But in practice, this rule has never gained popularity, and has been limited almost entirely to poetry (where it is felt, nevertheless, to be a decidedly inferior device for cutting the number of syllables when the length of the line requires it, or for allowing an accented final syllable when the metrical scheme is in need of such).

Every function clearly marked

The reason why the rule allowing elision of the final -o and the -a of the article has failed to become popular seems to be primarily a psychological one: it goes against the feel of the language. In Esperanto the function of every element is clearly marked in some way. Even the "primary words" (those without grammatical endings) fall into distinct series which can be identified at a glance. Further, we have the vexing problem of the grammatical category of roots, which also perturbs critics but is psychologically necessary to the structure of the language, and this militates against the popularization of the elided forms.

In every Western language there are terms which are "instinctively" felt to be verbal, e.g., in English, hear, sit, tell, is. Others are, equally "instinctively", felt to be substantival: rock, cat, rug, sky. It is more difficult to find purely adjectival terms in English, but there are some: small, false, fast, slow, and some others. (Purely adverbial primary words are very rare in English, though fast and slow have gained currency as adverbial forms.) In most Western languages there are also many terms which are relatively uncertain as to their grammatical feel. Thus, in English, we make no common distinction between substantival and verbal primary words which in some languages are carefully distinguished: dog, tree, table, run, chant, etc., may be used indiscriminately as nouns or verbs; in the same way, most adjectives may double as nouns: right, wrong, blue, black, etc.

Substantival, verbal or adjectival?

In Esperanto a similar situation obtains, though, again, Esperanto does not copy the pattern of any ethnic language exactly. *Est* (be) is a verbal root, *kat* (cat) is a substantival root, *grand* (large) is adjectival; *komb* (comb) is a verbal root and *bros* (brush) a substantival root, to the confusion of English speakers.

It would be psychologically impossible to accept, given Esperanto structure, the feeling that a naked morpheme must inevitably be used in a substantival sense, while at the same time accepting the fact that roots are classified as substantival, adjectival, or verbal. If *hund'* is to be felt as a noun, then *grand'* must be felt as an adjective, and *skrib'* as a verb. But in point of view of grammatical fact, they are all nouns (singular, nominative). Thus, the grammatical rule is instinctively discarded by speakers (and most writers) of Esperanto as going against the feel of the language, though almost none of them could, if asked, explain just why.

What emerges from this discussion is one basic point: Zamenhof constructed Esperanto with a particular linguistic ideology at the back of

his mind. It is a very interesting question, to what extent Zamenhof was aware of this ideology. He was a great deal more sophisticated linguistically than most critics realize, as any perusal of his *Lingvaj respondoj* or of his *Leteroj* makes obvious. The nucleus of this ideology is that Esperanto must have its own autonomous character, and exist as a hypothetical entity to the same extent as do the ethnic languages. The goal was to make Esperanto into an authentic language as quickly as possible, removing it from the category of project. It is for this reason that many Esperantists rebel against the terms "artificial" or "constructed" in reference to Esperanto, and prefer to call it "planned language". This euphemism has sound emotional roots; it expresses the feeling that (despite historical fact) Esperanto is similar in background to the ethnic languages of Europe. The metaphor "living" as applied to Esperanto by Esperantists equally expresses this feeling.

A great deal can be said, on the basis of these considerations, both in regard to the future of Esperanto, and in regard to other attempts to construct languages. It is obvious that the ideology behind Esperanto is not the only one possible. It is an interesting question why Esperanto has managed to "catch on" whereas no other constructed language has. There is no intrinsic linguistic superiority in Esperanto over some of the better constructed projects (e.g. by Jespersen, Gode, or Peano), though most of the hundred language projects are simply not viable linguistically. There has never been any substantial financial backing to the Esperanto movement, which survives now, as always, on a shoestring basis. The problem inherent in the popularization of any language applies equally to Esperanto: it takes a fair degree of talent in learning languages and a great deal of time, interest, and energy, to become fluent.

A look to the future

The answer probably lies in the interna ideo philosophy of the Esperanto movement, which provides an emotional impetus for learning the language. Short of Mario Pei's suggestion that an international language be imposed by governmental action (which I cannot see really

taking place at any time in the future), a constructed language must provide its own motivation for being learned. To a certain extent practical usefulness is such a motivation, but while this could be emphasized for Esperanto much more than actually is done, it cannot compete with the arguments for learning some ethnic language such as English, French, German, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, etc. It is the idealism of the Esperanto movement which attracts most of the adherents, at least at first, while at the same time this is the very factor which eventually alienates the majority of them. (This can be overstressed, however. Poorly organized courses, lack of sophisticated teaching apparatus, untrained teachers, organizational disputes, and the discovery that fluency in another language requires work, all lend a hand to cause the enormous turn-over rate in the membership of Esperanto organizations.)

I cannot share the optimism of some writers in the ILR as to the prospects of the universalization of an international language in the near future. What I do foresee is a continuation of the pattern which has been evolving for the past hundred odd years: multilingualism, in which Esperanto (and conceivably one or more other constructed languages) will be firmly entrenched as one language among the many, filling a particular role not filled by the others, with a tradition peculiar to itself.

Footnote

[1] Cf. Carl Jung, **Studies in Word Association** (2nd ed., London, 1969) and also his studies of schizophrenia in Vol. 3 of the **Collected Works of C. G. Jung**.

[2] Prof. Gerd Fraenkel, well known to readers of the **ILR**, has for some years been making a collection and analysis of ad hoc constructed language phrases found in literature, which seems to bear out many of these points. I am not aware of any of his studies having yet appeared in published form.

[3] Three examples will suffice: In the Bible, Yahweh can claim title to control the universe, on the grounds that he created the universe through speech (Genesis chapter 1). In ancient Egyptian religion, the famous Memphite Theology represents Ptah as

creating through speech. And in ancient Babylonian mythology, in the **Enuma Elish** Marduk proves his right to become king of the gods by causing a cloth to appear and disappear merely by speaking.

[(4)] Some fascinating examples of this appear in Jung's **Symbols of Transformation** (C. W. vol. 5), with detailed discussion. Also cf. his study of the "astral language" used by some spiritualists and other cases of split personality, in "On the Psychology and Pathology of So-called Occult Phenomena" (C. W. vol. 1).

[(5)] Cf, particularly Erich Fromm's study of the Old Testament, **You Shall Be as Gods** (New York, 1966).

[(6)] Cf. the character of Dr. Bellows, and his language Entrenationo, in Graham Greene's novel **The Confidential Agent**.

[(7)] An important unpublished study of this point, under the title "Are Esperanto Proverbs Real Folklore" has been prepared by Miss Margaret Hagler, of Chicago, and should soon be in print.

[(8)] Cf. George Rust, "La Esperanta Traduko de la Biblio" in **Biblia Revuo** V:5 (1969).

[(9)] Examples are to be found in Zamenhof's **Originala Verkaro** and the two (soon to be three) volumes of the **Leteroj de L. L. Zamenhof**, as well as in the standard biographies of Zamenhof.

[(10)] **Ek-** began as a prefix indicating sudden, incipient action. **Far-** is the root meaning "to do". Neither **ek** nor **far** as unbound morphemes is listed in **Plena Vortaro**, the text of which was composed in 1934. Whether they are given in the 1970 edition, soon to be published, is not at present known to me.

[(11)] Zamenhof introduced **vizio** as the Esperanto equivalent of the ethnic term **vision**, following two standard principles: the ending -ion regularly became -io in Esperanto, and intervocalic s regularly turned into z at one stage in the development of the language. But European Esperantists associated the term television not with the noun vision but with the verb to see (**vidi**) and formed the Esperanto hybrid **televido**, as if it were a compound of **vidi**, even though in fact no prefix **tele-** exists in Esperanto.

[(12)] A Ph.D. thesis, currently nearing completion, by Miss Margaret Hagler of Chicago undertakes a detailed examination of Esperanto poetic style and points out the modern trends in the grammatical usage of Esperantist poets. It is to be hoped that this thesis may some day be published.