

in grasping the finer points of typography:

But Lal turned up with a new poser for him: 'Shall we use ordinary ten-point Roman or another series which I use only for special works? It's also ten-point but on an eleven-point body.'

Body? Points? Ten and eleven? What was it all about? Margayya said: 'Ah, that is interesting ... I should like to see your eleven-point body.' He had a grotesque vision of a torso being brought in by four men on a stretcher.

(p. 320)

Prospective readers of this collection should not be put off by the distressing indulgence of some of the essayists in linguistic gobbledegook. The facts and figures of the world's main language as she is spoke by people of non-English culture are predominantly informative and entertaining for anyone with a feel for words.

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DICTIONARIES: ABB THROUGH TRA

J.G. du P. Pretorius and L.C. Eksteen. *Dictionary of Abbreviations*. Johannesburg: Perskor Publishers, 1981. Hardback R12,50

G.S. Nienaber and P.E. Raper. *Hottentot (Khoekhoen) Place Names*. Durban: Butterworth Publishers, 1983. Hardback R14,50

G. Elgie Christ (ed.). *The Academica Dictionary of English Synonyms and Antonyms*. Pretoria: Academica, 1982. Hardback R9,50

Adrian Room. *Dictionary of Trade Name Origins*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982. Hardback R23,00

A good dictionary necessarily embodies personal judgement on the part of its editor (or editors), considers textual probability - and scholarly and editorial precedent. It must also seek to gauge the needs and resources of the educated general reader of the late-twentieth century in an interpretative process that attempts to determine contemporary and relevant 'tone-values' or 'valuations'. It should aim, in short, for a rigorous designation of total

operative context.

The determination of tone-values, of the complete semantic context, the attempt to grasp the full reach of words which are among the oldest in southern Africa has for many years been the task of Nienaber and Raper. The languages and dialects of the Khoekhoen (or Hottentot) are virtually extinct, but the names given to places by these ancient peoples have survived. The study of this nomenclature as a current linguistic item has resulted in *Hottentot Place Names*.

Based on the three volumes of *Toponymica Hottentotica* (see *English Usage in Southern Africa*, Vol 10 Nos 1 and 2) the present volume is a condensed encyclopaedia of great interest to onomastician and general reader alike, although the former will need to refer to the earlier volumes for a properly scientific and detailed linguistic analysis of the names. To take but one example, the 'shortened' reader's guide defines KANGO as follows (p. 144):

KANGO, CANGO for the mountain ridge, 'kop', river, caves, weir, on C3321 and 3322, mean 'Wet/moist mountain' (in the words of Col. R.J. Gordon: 'Natte Berg', in the words of J.W. Cloppenburg: 'Water Ruggens'). The *go* of C/KANGO means a 'peak', here a 'ridge'.

The 1977 edition of *Toponymica Hottentotica*, however, has a fuller and more satisfying description (p. 469):

KANGO(BERG), CANGO(BERG) K 3321 BD

Opmeting 1955 'Kangoberg. Naam van 'n berg 15 myl [24 km] noordoos van Calitzdorp'.

Hierdie Kangoberg lê op die plaas 'Cango Berg' nr B 1206/1910, en op die berg of kop is landmetersbaken 15. Die spelling met C- is klaarblyklik die oudste, die plaasnaam is geregistreer soos aangehaal. Plaas en berg lê in die Swartberge. Die verklaring is sekerlik soos by KANGO(KOP) 3321, nou met -kop en nie, soos by ons hierbo, met die eweneens hibriediese - berg as generiese term nie. 'Pruimbosberg' of (met die wisselnaam wat Smith 1966 CNSAP 378 daarvoor aangee) 'Basboomberg'.

KANGO(KOP) K 3321 CD

Opmeting 1965 'Kangokop, naam van 'n kop 22 myl [35 km] suid van Ladismith, lê op plaas Kanga Lad. 2-12'.

Met die mededeling dat hierdie Kangokop op Kanga lê, dink mens

dadelik (soos die PNK inderdaad gedoen het) dat die naam Kangokop (met die -o-) verkeerdelik of analogies ontstaan het in aansluiting by die bekende grootnaam, en dat dit eerder Kangakop moes gewees het. Ons het by KANGA, die plaasnaam, geprobeer om aanneemlik te maak dat Kanga beteken die plek met 'Baie kan-bome', waar die kanboom 'n soort basboom is, 'n *Osyris compressa*. Dan is hierdie Kangokop heel korrek net 'n kop waar die kan-bome voorkom. Die lid -go (van hierdie Kango) is soos Ou-Kaaps cou = 'montagne' of berg, reeds sedert 1655 in dié vorm en betekenis opgeteken (vgl. HOTT 217). Kangokop is dus letterlik die 'Kan(boom)bergkop', met die begrip 'berg/kop' uitgedruk eers in Khoekhoens met -go, en dan in Hollands met -kop.

The point then is that *Hottentot Place Names* is, as it were, a 'field guide'; *Toponymica Hottentotica* is the desk copy, to be used for fuller elucidation.

Because meaning and interpretation cannot really be separated (both are necessary for onomastic research), the editors have accepted that in the course of time - and at certain moments - the names of places undergo alterations at an extraordinary pace; they are acquisitive of lexical and grammatical innovation; they discard eroded units with what might be termed 'conscious' speed. A civilization becomes outlined in an onomastic contour which no longer matches, or matches only at certain points, the changing landscape of history. Consequently, the book contains introductory chapters dealing with toponymy as a subsection of onomastics, a short history of Hottentot and Khoekhoen, and a description of 'Khoekhoenland' (which effectively dispels the myth - taught in white schools - that Hottentots reached the Cape 'only a little before Diaz'). There are also interesting sections on the consonants and tonalities of the language as well as the various circumstances which contributed to the number of Khoekhoen names retained or directly translated into Dutch.

Interestingly, Dr Nienaber and Dr Raper maintain that it is possible to convey meaning adequately both across the barrier of language differences and across time. The result is a fascinating work, carefully researched, carefully presented and eminently readable. Like Lawrence Green's *A Decent Fellow Doesn't Work* it takes the reader on a tour through time and space.

Just as *Hottentot Place Names* distinguishes between 'words' and 'names' so, too, does Adrian Room in his incisive introduction to the *Dictionary of Trade Name Origins* (p. 1):

Words, the everyday dictionary sort, usually have a well-defined origin or etymology. Names, on the other hand, frequently have

an origin that is a good deal more obscure or complex.

'Trade names', he goes on to say, 'form a special and interesting category of name,' and are, 'next to personal and place names, the most prominent and important in our day-to-day communications and in fact in our daily lives' (p. 2).

Although based on careful and extensive research, Room's dictionary is neither 'solemn' nor pedantic. It is, rather, pleasingly 'popular', readable and informative. Did you know, for instance, how careful one has to be in ensuring that a trade name in one language is as suitable and as apposite in another? What of the French soft drink *Pechitt*, which did not do at all well in England? Or the Finnish lock de-icing compound called *Piss*? Room recounts the story, too, of the classic blunder made by Rolls Royce who, in seeking a 'suitable car name to follow their successful run of ethereal names (Silver Ghost, Silver Wraith, Silver Phantom)', came up with *Silver Mist*. When it was pointed out, however, that 'Mist' is the German for 'manure' they were obliged to do a rapid rethink - and devised the *Silver Shadow* (p. 7).

Room also raises an interesting point: who, in the long run, can say how the words of a language are actually to be used? 'Only', he maintains, 'the users and speakers of the language themselves' (p. 11). Thus some trade names become (officially or unofficially) essentially generic words, such as gramophone and 'hoover'. They are consequently used without a capitalized first letter and are part of everyday and common usage. What a pity it is that our very own Bureau of Standards has not always been aware that it is usage that determines convention in matters of language. We might then have been spared the ludicrous dictum, issued blithely *ex cathedra*, that the word 'comma' must replace the time-honoured 'point'. Where everybody knew that a 'point two-two' was a rifle with a calibre of 22/100ths of an inch, we were suddenly confronted with the bewildering and nonsensical 'comma two-two' rifle!

This is a marvellous dictionary, and everyone should have one in our consumer-orientated society. As Room himself so pertinently asks, 'How can we actually go about our daily affairs and our lives without the use of [and, at least, some knowledge of] commercial products, each of which has its name?' (p. 3). Available from Macmillan Mail (P.O. Box 31487, Braamfontein, 2017) as a service to the busy reading public it has a simple A-Z format and deals with all categories of names: 'name names' (*Woolworth*, *W.H. Smith*); 'word names' (*Fine Fare*, *Sumblest*); and 'arbitrary names' (*Kodak*, *Omo*).

An outstanding feature of *The Academica Dictionary of English*

Synonyms and Antonyms (apart from its easy use as a reference work) is the introduction of the antonyms, where they exist, in conjunction with the word for which synonyms are provided. Making the work even more useful and comprehensive is the inclusion in the synonyms of certain archaic words (occurring predominantly in biblical or legal 'phraseology'). Easier to use and handier than Roget's *Thesaurus*, at least for the present reviewer, the work is a fine example of how exquisite personal judgement on the part of an editor can enhance the value of a dictionary. Hence 'Meekness' (p. 182), with the synonyms 'modesty', 'humbleness' and 'humility'; and the antonym 'Pride'. Of importance here is the fact that 'humility', as a synonym for 'meekness', is 'starred' - which indicates that it has its own separate entry. In the opinion of the editor the word is obviously and sufficiently different from the other synonyms in the category to warrant separate identification and 'elucidation'. The entry for 'humility' (p. 146) then makes it apparent that the qualities of 'humbleness' and 'meekness' are *themselves* suggested by the word 'humility'.

Equally useful, especially for those of us who live, work and write in southern Africa, is the English-Afrikaans *Dictionary of Abbreviations*. Messrs Pretorius and Eksteen have adequately gauged the needs and resources of the modern and educated general reader: they provide both abbreviations and the full forms of the abbreviated words or word; the full Latin or foreign language form of abbreviations derived from those sources is given together with the English/Afrikaans translations; and the different full forms reduced to a similar abbreviation are also listed. Thus those wont to follow the 'doings' of the British Royal Family might wish to look up the following entry (p. 93):

- H.R.H. 1 His Royal Highness; S.K.H. Sy Koninklike Hoogheid
2 Her Royal Highness; H.K.H. Haar Koninklike Hoogheid

So far so good. English and Afrikaans readers are both well served, with the former using the second section of the dictionary, and the latter utilizing the first half. Use of the book is further facilitated by the extensive cross-referencing provided by the editors/compilers.

Not so fortunate is the argument advanced under 'Explanatory Notes' that the present-day preference for the omission of full stops 'depends on personal choice'. There is evidence to suggest that this omission is in fact becoming a matter of convention, rather than one of choice:

Stops [are commonly] omitted, except where they are used to differentiate one abbreviation from another (e.g. SAP: South

African Party; S.A.P.: South African Police).

English Usage in Southern Africa
Vol 9 No 1, p. 29

It is a pity, therefore, that the editors of this admirable dictionary have seemed to 'hedge their bets' by settling for individual 'choice'. They would better have served both themselves and the South African public by taking a stand in this matter.

The above remains, however, a mere aside and is not intended as a serious detraction from the merits of the *Dictionary of Abbreviations*. In a world where the fungoid growth of jargon as well as 'educated illiteracism' threatens all, the work of Pretorius and Eksteen, like that of Room, Nienaber, Raper and G. Elgie Christ will do much to check the spread of these weeds. Ivor Brown, that 'gracious guardian of English', would have approved. He would in particular, I think, have approved these attempts 'to tell a few facts, to explain a few puzzling features, ... perhaps also to chart a course or two'.*

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*Eric Partidge. *What's the Meaning?* London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956, p. 10.