

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL  
ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE  
ON  
HISTORICAL LEXICOGRAPHY

ACTES  
DE LA SECONDE TABLE RONDE  
INTERNATIONALE  
DE  
LEXICOGRAPHIE HISTORIQUE



**Proceedings of The Second  
International Round Table  
Conference on  
Historical Lexicography**

**Actes de La Seconde Table Ronde  
Internationale de  
Lexicographie Historique**

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## Preface

This volume presents the opening address, 13 lectures, the ensuing discussions and the closing address of the Second International Round Table Conference on Historical Lexicography, held on May 10-12, 1977, at Leyden.

The contributions of Dr. F. Dimitrescu (*Le statut des formations composées dans l'histoire de la langue roumaine*) and Dr. F.J. Snijman (*Thoughts on a dictionary of Afrikaans on historical principles*) have been included, although the authors had to withdraw their participation at the last moment.

The material that appears here may be regarded as a sequel to the proceedings of the first Round Table Conference, held on May 3-5, 1971, at Florence, published as *Tavola rotonda sui grandi Lessici storici* (Firenze, Accademia della Crusca, 1973). As to the number of participants the Leyden conference shows a substantial increase over that of the first conference in which ten representatives of dictionary projects took part. It was a special pleasure to welcome the Celtic representation.

Dr. A.J. Aitken (Edinburgh), Dr. J. Bahr (Göttingen), Dr. R.W. Burchfield (Oxford), Dr. A. Duro (Firenze), Dr. S. Ekbo (Lund), Dr. P. Imbs (Nancy) and Dr. F. de Tollenaere (Leiden) took part in both meetings.

The other participants in the Leyden conference were:  
Dr. d'Arco Silvio Avalle (accompanied by Mrs. F. Anceschi, Firenze),  
Dr. R.W. Bailey (Michigan), Dr. K. Baldinger (Heidelberg),

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Dr. Z. Ben-Hayyim (Jerusalem), Dr. G. Bevan (Aberystwyth),  
Dr. T. de Bhaldraithe (Baile Átha Cliath), Dr. K. MacDonald (Glasgow),  
Mrs. Dr. F. Premk (Ljubljana), Dr. B. Quemada (Paris), Dr. A.  
Zampolli (Pisa), and Mssrs. H. Heestermans, P. van Sterkenburg and  
W. Pijnenburg (all from Leiden). Mr. Aitken was this time accompanied  
by Dr. J.A.C. Stevenson.

As well as presenting a number of lectures concerned with problems  
in historical lexicography in general, the Leiden conference provided  
an excellent opportunity to launch officially the first Dutch period  
dictionary, based on a fully automatized text corpus, the Dictionary  
of Early Middle Dutch.

Dr. B. Quemada and Dr. Ch. Muller (Strasbourg) (for French),  
Dr. A.J. Aitken and Dr. R.W. Burchfield (for English) were kind enough  
to revise the contributions of the non-native speakers. Dr. F. de  
Tollenaere prepared a definitive version of the discussions, after  
which the text of the lectures and the discussions was typed by Miss  
P. van Boheemen. Dr. de Tollenaere and Dr. Pijnenburg shared the  
responsibility of correction and final editing.

The organisation of the Second Conference, which was originally  
intended to be held at Nancy, was taken over by the Leyden Institute  
for Dutch Lexicology. Thanks to the financial support granted by the  
Board of our Institute and to the equally encouraging responses of the  
participants to our first circular, thanks to Dr. van Sterkenburg, who,  
prior to his taking up another function in the Institute, gave the  
first impetus to the organization of the conference, thanks to the  
efforts of Mr. P.A. Veninga and of the ladies' committee (Mrs. M.  
Heestermans - Buck and Mrs. A.G. de Tollenaere - Blonk), and, last  
but not least, thanks to the cheerful friendliness of our guests, the  
organization of the conference and the editing of the proceedings proved  
a pleasure to our hostess, Miss. M. Verdel, and to the authors of this  
preface.

We hope that the third conference in Michigan 1981 will be as  
rewarding to the organizing committee as the second conference was to us.



# Opening of the conference by dr. F. de Tollenaere

F. de Tollenaere  
*Institute of Dutch Lexicology, Leiden*

Monsieur le délégué, monsieur le secrétaire de la direction de l'Institut de Lexicologie néerlandaise, chers Collègues, Mesdames, Messieurs,

C'est pour notre Institut non seulement un honneur mais aussi un plaisir de pouvoir vous accueillir ici à Leyde, à l'occasion de la seconde Table Ronde des grands dictionnaires historiques. À la suite d'une initiative de notre ami et collègue italien, Monsieur Duro, appuyé par le président de l'Accademia della Crusca, le célèbre linguiste Giacomo Devoto, dont nous honorons la mémoire, la première Table Ronde eut lieu à Florence au début du mois de mai 1971. Grâce à cette initiative de notre collègue italien, la possibilité avait été créée pour les chefs des grands dictionnaires historiques de se rencontrer à des intervalles réguliers. Malheureusement des circonstances nous ont empêchés de nous rencontrer en France deux ou trois ans après notre premier contact florentin.

Heureusement nous pouvons constater aujourd'hui que l'initiative de la Crusca n'est pas restée sans lendemain. Nous pouvons espérer dorénavant nous rencontrer à nouveau dans un des grands centres lexicographiques de l'Europe occidentale. Ceci nous permettra d'échanger des idées et de prendre connaissance de techniques anciennes et modernes.

Grâce à l'appui de la direction de notre Institut il nous a été possible de vous convoquer ici. Je crois parler au nom de vous tous, si je prie le délégué, monsieur Geerts, ainsi que le secrétaire Monsieur Wamsteeker, qui nous fait l'honneur d'assister à l'ouverture de notre Table Ronde, de bien vouloir exprimer nos chaleureux

remerciements à la direction de notre Institut pour l'appui moral et financier qu'elle a bien voulu nous donner.

Malheureusement les moyens financiers de notre Institut ne sont pas illimités. Nous avions espéré pouvoir prendre à sa charge les frais de voyage des participants, mais la récession économique l'a emporté sur nos arguments. Par voie de conséquence notre collègue F. Snijman, de l'Université de Stellenbosch, rédacteur en chef du dictionnaire sud-africain, a été empêché de se trouver parmi nous. Nous regrettons aussi l'absence involontaire de notre chère collègue Madame Florica Dimitrescu, de l'Université de Bucarest. Le problème des frais de voyage avait été réglé pour elle grâce à l'appui du prof. Mok, son collègue romaniste de l'Université de Leyde. Mais, comme vous n'ignorez pas, le trafic international Est - Ouest des personnes n'est pas toujours sans entraves.

Monsieur Angus Cameron est empêché de se trouver ici à cause de la réunion, un de ces jours ci à Toronto, de la "Mediaeval Academy of America". Le Dictionnaire de l'ancien anglais, dont il s'occupe à l'Université de Toronto, offre tant d'analogies avec notre projet du dictionnaire de l'ancien moyen néerlandais que nous aurions bien aimé avoir monsieur Cameron parmi nous. Mais sa place sera prise, tout au moins d'une façon symbolique, par une très jeune participante, âgée de moins d'un an, qui a des relations avec le dictionnaire de la langue du Pays de Galles.

Nous sommes heureux d'avoir parmi nous tout au moins un collègue de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique, Richard W. Bailey, de l'Université de Michigan, chef du *Early Modern English Dictionary*.

Malheureusement il nous a été impossible de loger tous les participants ici au centre même de la réunion, la maison Eysinga, ni même en ville. À cause d'un congrès policier international nous avons été obligés de loger un certain nombre parmi vous hors de la ville, à Alphen au bord du Rhin. Si cela vous désole, vous ne seriez point tout à fait privé(e)s de consolation, puisque ces jours-ci vous serez gardé(e)s par plus de mille policiers, et par conséquent à l'abri de tout kidnapping.

Je reviens à nos moyens limités. J'ignore ce que l'avenir nous

apportera. à la réunion des délégués, jeudi après-midi, c'est-à-dire après la clôture de notre Table Ronde, il faudra prendre des décisions quant au rythme de nos réunions.

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Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour as well as a pleasure to welcome you at the opening of this Round Table Conference on Historical Lexicography. We are happy to see you in the city of Leyden, the cradle of the Leyden Dictionary on historical principles. The colleagues who unfortunately were unable to attend asked me to bring you their greetings together with their good wishes.

That this Conference takes place in the year 1977 is in a way by the merest chance. Nevertheless I think it is a happy coincidence, that just 500 years ago the first printed dictionary of the Dutch language came out of the press, "lyke a bride from her chamber". It was the *Vocabularius qui intitulatur Teuthonista, vulgariter dicendo der duytschlender*. It represents the language of the lower-Rhine region, especially that of Cleves, now a border town in western Germany.

During this year 1977 we also commemorate the fact that 500 years ago this country saw the first printed bible in our mother tongue, the so-called Delft Bible. It was not a complete bible yet, just the Old Testament without the Psalms. It may interest the lexicographers who are philatelists - that subspecies exists - that there has been issued a beautiful double format postage stamp on that occasion. Unfortunately the commemoration of the first Dutch printed dictionary has not been an inducement for philately. May we deduce from this fact, that even in this dechristianized world the Bible is still more important than the Dictionary?

Our first meeting at Florence was a Round Table Conference by invitation. This is, in my opinion, a sound principle, since it was never intended as a congress, which might become unwieldy. At this

second meeting we have continued the policy initiated at Florence.

As a consequence the discussions will be limited to the official delegates only. If our guests have points they should like to discuss, they are kindly requested to do that at a strictly private and personal level out of the frame of the agenda.

It has always been our intention to have sent out the papers ahead of time. I must apologize for the fact that some of them were sent rather late, especially by myself and other people of this Institute. We should, of course, have set a good example. Since excuses are supposed to have some purpose, we might perhaps say that we had to do our homework in a foreign language.

Since we have such outstanding presidents for both our morning and afternoon sessions, I hope we will have no difficulty in observing the scheduled limits of time set by the program.

I should like to draw your attention to the taperecorder which will record every word you utter if not for eternity at least for posterity.

I hope the program provides you with the necessary information about both the meetings and the social events. If necessary our Information Bureau, presided by Miss Marlies Verdel, will be glad to help you with additional information.

If anything goes wrong blame it on me, if on the contrary something goes right, please give the credit to the people in the organizing committee.

I should finally like to express the hope that your sojourn in Leyden will be both profitable and enjoyable. With these words I have the honour to declare the Second Round Table Conference on Historical Lexicography opened.

G. Geerts

*Delegate of the Board of the Institute of Dutch Lexicology*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been given the honour of being among you as the delegate of the Board of the Institute of Dutch Lexicology and as such I am very pleased to meet you and to welcome you. On behalf of the Board, which as you know is a circle of Dutch and Belgian scholars and administrators, I have been asked to express our warm acknowledgement of your willingness to accept the invitation to this Second Round Table, to prepare a paper, and to take part in the discussions which are to take place during the next three days.

We hope that the organization of the Conference, the accommodation, the arrangements for informal meetings, and the excursion will combine to give a comfortable and pleasant setting in which your consultations and debates can proceed smoothly and thus be as fruitful as you would wish them to be. We are quite certain that our organizing committee has done all they can to ensure that your stay here will be as pleasant as possible and, furthermore, they are ready to take care of anything more which will contribute to the complete success of the meeting. May I take this opportunity to convey the thanks of the Board to all the members of the institute for their efforts in the preparation of the Conference, and especially to Dr. Tollenaere who is the initiator, mentor, and chairman of this Round Table; to Dr. Van Sterkenburg who, at the beginning, was charged with the organization, and, last but not least, Mr Pijnenburg, who afterwards shouldered the bulk of the work involved in the organization. I hope that the success of the

meeting will counterbalance all their efforts and I am sure that the reward they will most appreciate will be the satisfaction of the participants.

As well as being an honour, Ladies and Gentlemen, my presence here is a great pleasure to me, for I am here not only as a representative of the Board but also because, as a scholar, I am personally interested in your work and in the problems you will be discussing during these days. Some twenty years ago I began my scientific career as a collaborator on the historical dictionary of the Dutch language. Alas, I was not slow to get into bad ways .... such that my merits in the field of historical lexicography are very modest. In spite of this the Conference as a participant and I am very grateful to them. I realize that through this invitation I have been given the opportunity to meet some of the most outstanding scholars in the field and also to renew my acquaintanceship with a science -- or is it an art? As an outsider I hope I am not supposed to know whether that famous question has yet been resolved! -- so, to renew my acquaintance with a tradition of investigation, skills, and artistry which was once my first love, and the results of which have helped me so many times since then in my work on subjects in the field of language history, language change, and standardization. So much so that I have always felt much sympathy and gratitude to those "harmless drudges" as S. Johnson once called the lexicographers, those "men and women, as Uriel Weinreich once said (1968, *Current Trends*, 1, 61), of deep learning in the history of particular languages".

One may perhaps wonder whether university systems which no longer stress the teaching of languages in their full historical and literary perspective, and which shun problems of vocabulary rather than respect them, have made the future of historical lexicography rather uncertain. But, on the other hand, there are so many new elements in the field itself as well as within linguistics in general that we may be convinced that in the near future much interest will be taken in the study of vocabulary. Progress in the field of lexicology that will lead to the solution of lexicological problems, the growing interest of linguists in the problems of semantics and therefore renewed

scrutiny of the many mysteries of words and their meaning(s)., and the research possibilities offered, or at least promised by new technical aids, will no doubt appeal to the young scholars who are confronted with the new insights of language variability and change as a fundamental feature of all human languages.

An important indication of the vivacity of the field of historical lexicography is, in my opinion, Ladies and Gentlemen, the topics contained in the programme of this Second International Round Table Conference. The reason for this importance is not only that the topics are so diversified: theoretical and practical, ranging from "deficiencies" (in connection with dictionaries other than the Scottish, already a well-known subject!) "Principles", dealing with "problèmes tout court", and with "problèmes angoissants", concerning such differing languages as Afrikaans and Rumanian. The programme is highly intriguing, interesting, and full of promise because it is, contrary to the suggestions associated with the adjective "historical", in a large measure future-oriented. You have projects and plans to discuss the realization which will give a new future to languages as old as Early Middle Dutch, Italian of the 13th and 14th centuries, and Early Modern English.

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Si vous permettez, Mesdames et Messieurs, chers collègues, je voudrais répéter brièvement les paroles de bienvenue que j'ai eues l'honneur de prononcer tantôt en anglais au nom de la direction générale de l'Institut de Lexicologie Néerlandaise. J'espère que votre séjour à Leyde, tant du point de vue pratique que du point de vue scientifique, vous donnera entière satisfaction.

Je vous remercie d'avoir accepté notre invitation et de contribuer au succès de cette conférence par votre exposé et votre participation aux discussions.

Le programme de notre réunion étant bien chargé je suis persuadé que les jours qui nous attendent, seront très intéressants, très

fertiles et instructifs.

J'exprime volontiers le souhait que tous les projets que vous allez discuter à l'occasion de cette Seconde Table Ronde Internationale consacrée à la lexicographie historique, pourront être réalisés dans le plus bref délais et dans les meilleurs conditions possibles.

Vous êtes venus à Leyde, mesdames et messieurs, à un moment où le dernier représentant d'une génération importante de rédacteurs du Dictionnaire historique du Néerlandais, notamment le représentant qui a eu l'audace et le courage d'introduire dans l'institut I.N.L. les idées nouvelles de la technologie moderne tout en étant capable de les intégrer dans sa connaissance profonde de la lexicographie historique, juste au moment donc où cet éminent lexicologue, qui forme le trait-d'union entre le passé et l'avenir, est en train de passer le flambeau à ses successeurs. Je suis sûr que votre présence en ce moment non seulement est une garantie pour le niveau scientifique de cette réunion, mais aussi pour Monsieur De Tollenaere un signe d'amitié et d'estime et, en outre, un support moral pour ceux qui, sans son aide, devront mener à bonne fin le dictionnaire du moyen néerlandais du 13ième siècle.

En vous souhaitant, pour finir, une conférence réussie à tous les points de vue, j'exprime aussi le souhait qu'elle ait pour notre Institut de Lexicologie Néerlandaise un effet -- si vous me permettez d'employer le tout dernier mot de mon dictionnaire Néerlandais-Français -- un effet zymotique.



# Some afterthoughts at the parting of the ways

F. de Tollenaere

*Institute of Dutch Lexicology, Leiden*

It has always been our intention to have this second international Round Table Conference on Historical Lexicography concentrated on the theme "Problems and solutions for a new historical period dictionary". There was already a prelude to this six years ago in Florence, when our colleague Florica Dimitrescu, whose involuntary absence among us we regret, spoke about historical dictionaries "subdivisés par tranches chronologiques" (*Tavola*, 1971, p. 75 ff.). Dimitrescu's paper was entirely determined by and focused upon the Rumanian language. She said: "C'est seulement ... en travaillant en profondeur dans un seul siècle, en premier lieu, le xvie ... et les autres ensuite, qu'on pourra entreprendre un examen exhaustif des origines du vocabulaire roumain". If you read xiiiith instead of xvith century, this quotation accords perfectly with the situation of the language of the Low Countries.

A few years ago, whilst pondering over this conference, we had the illusion that we would be able during these days, not only to discuss theoretical aspects of our undertaking, but also to show you something both visual and tangible, viz. some specimen dictionary articles or at least part of a file of computer-generated slips with fully automatic contexts bearing on 13th century Dutch. This lag in production, which is not unusual in lexicographical undertakings, is in our case due to computer software and hardware problems. We should have been glad, however, if today we could have shown you at least four volumes of the Corpus of non-literary 13th century Dutch texts, together with five

volumes of word-indexes. Towards the end of March, when we finally got the Digiset-produced film output of the Corpus, we found that the printing office had unfortunately removed not only the perforation track but the document and line numbers as well. This meant that the computerized photocomposition process had to start all over again! Producing the slips from these texts is an easy task, just children's work compared with the undertaking ahead: the Dictionary of Early Middle Dutch.

Nearly ten years ago, at the third colloquium of professors and lecturers of Dutch abroad, held in The Hague, speaking about the state of Dutch lexicography, I launched the idea of such a dictionary to be combined with the edition of the Corpus and the generating of context-cards by means of the computer (De Tollenaere 1967, p. 145-146). This dictionary project would cover the field of our language from its earliest beginnings until the end of the thirteenth century including, however, the first two decades of the fourteenth century as a transition. Today we have reached two of the four steps of one and the same integrated process of both text-editing and dictionary-making. The third step is not far away, but I will not live to see the fourth. I am fully aware of the fact that I have shifted a heavy, long-term burden on the shoulders of my successors. But they are young and I place full faith in their devotion to this enterprise on a grand scale. It would have been a great help to them if today we had been able to present to this Round Table audience a few dictionary articles composed on the basis of the computer-generated Early Middle Dutch Dictionary file. Since we could not produce those articles and since we cannot discuss either the merits or the defects of something which does not exist, I had to resort to a makeshift for this occasion.

In my opinion, any new lexicographical undertaking of a not too modest size that wishes to keep pace with the changes brought in modern life by automation, should consider the opportunities made available by the computer, but I will not deal with that subject. There would, however, be ample reason to do so, since, during the last ten years of my career at this Institute, I have been so busy with computer-aided lexicography that I have had very little opportunity

to deal with the modest but demanding work of writing dictionary articles. As a matter of fact the last article which I wrote for the Leiden Dutch Dictionary, our counterpart of the more famous OED, appeared in 1968. It is under the entry *verbitteren*, which means 'embitter'. Since I don't wish to end my career, that of an historical lexicographer, as an embittered man, I have the intention to write some other articles as well, e.g. *verblijden* 'rejoice'.

In view of the fact that I intend to put into practice the French proverb "on revient toujours à ses premières amours", it might somehow pave my way to Canossa, if I bring into the debate some postulates which have been advanced in traditional lexicographical theory, but have a bearing on a dictionary of thirteenth century Dutch as well. I will but briefly touch upon those postulates, in order that there may be ample opportunity for discussion, hoping that the debate will constitute a contribution to lexicography in general, and, of course especially to the work on our future Early Middle Dutch Dictionary.

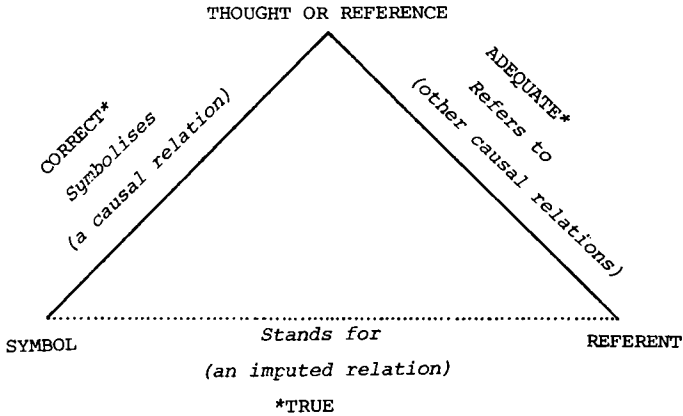
1. The first postulate for which I invite your attention concerns word definition, which Paul Imbs many years ago considered "l'art suprême, en lexicographie" (Imbs 1960, p. 9). In order to simplify matters I will confine myself to lexical or content words and leave aside grammatical or function words. I define meaning in lexical words as the reciprocal relation between a word and a concept. Josette Rey-Debove, who distinguished herself by several excellent treatises on the theory of lexicography, has several times stated that the lexicographer is still at the mercy of the Aristotelian non-linguistic system of definition. She holds the view that this system of defining the objects ("les choses") constitutes a very good, if not the best semantic analysis, because, as Aristotle said, in defining the object one gives the content of the word<sup>1</sup>. This binomial character of the definition maintains the relation between word and object, and avoids speaking in an explicit way about the "signe". In this way the semantic domain of lexicography is radically separated from the other linguistic domains (Rey-Debove

1969, p. 373); the definition fits the "signe" and the object (Rey-Debove 1970, 17; 1971, 34). The encyclopedia on the contrary only gives information on the object (Rey-Debove 1970, 17). Rey-Debove does not agree with the current if not common opinion among semanticists and lexicographers that the lexicographer deals with signs and contexts, as opposed to objects and situations. If this were true, she said, the lexicographer would be a semanticist; he would analyse meanings. If he were capable of doing this, semantics would be achieved in principle, even if its applications were mediocre. According to Rey-Debove the lexicographical definition defines objects (Rey-Debove 1970, 21-22). She is by no means the only person to hold this view. According to Bréal "les substantifs sont des signes attachés aux choses: ils renferment tout juste la part de vérité que peut renfermer un nom, part nécessairement d'autant plus petite que l'objet a plus de réalité" (Bréal 1921, 177-178). In the opinion of Rosetti a word should not be defined by other words: "le seul moyen est de partir des choses, qui fournissent des idées concrètes" (Rosetti 1947, 34). At the Ninth International Congress of Linguists, held in 1962, it was said: "perhaps the most natural way to conceive of "meaning" is as a dyadic relation between a sign and an object" (R.L. Allen 1962, p. 421).

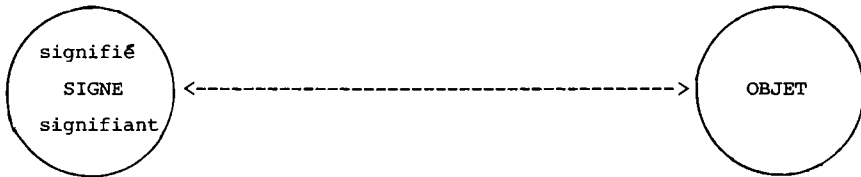
After a long career in lexicography I still cling to the opinion that the lexicographer should deal with signs and contexts and not with objects and situations. In my opinion the lexicographical definition should not define objects, because thinking in language leads to remodelling and transformation of reality. I agree with Baldinger where he says "Oft genug prägt ... die Sprache die Wirklichkeit und nicht die Wirklichkeit die Sprache" (Baldinger 1964, p. 41). The object does not constitute the stability of the word (Reichling 1935, p. 252). Two linguistic groups may perceive the world in a quite different way.

If one accepts the theoretical basis of Rey-Debove's semiotics, one cannot but agree with her statements about the lexicographical definition. If, however, one disagrees, as I do, the situation is quite different.

In none of the publications of Rey-Debove which I read, did I find a diagram illustrating her view of the relation between the Saussurian "signe" (=signifié + signifiant) and the object. If we look at the basic triangle of Ogden and Richards (1949, p. 11),



one gets the impression that it would imperfectly fit the trend of Rey-Debove. One is inclined to postulate a Rey-Debovian diagram on a linear basis which would contain two polar elements: the "signe" and the object.



She opposes object to sign: "*chose à signe* comme les deux sous-ensembles complémentaires de l'univers du discours; dans cette optique, est chose TOUT ce qui n'est pas *signe*, et dont parle le discours" (Rey-Debove 1970, p. 10, n. 13).

However that may be, the basic triangle has been modified by Baldinger (1960, p. 522) in such a way that the meaning is given its place between the Saussurian psychical dualism "signifiant" (=image acoustique) and "signifié (=concept)"<sup>2</sup> (De Saussure 1931, 98-99).



those of De Saussure, and the right side, which "fall within the sphere of competence of psychology -- which does not imply that language has no important part to play in the formation of mental content" (Ullmann 1963, p. 72), are linked by the superior line *signifié* ("unité de la substance du contenu qui correspond au signème", i.e. "linguème significatif") - *sémème* ("unité monosémisée de la substance du contenu qui fait partie du signifié") - *noème* ("unité de la substance du contenu qui ne dépend pas de la structure d'une langue donnée, concept défini par compréhension") (Heger 1969, p. 111). If one cannot deny that Heger's model leaves a sophisticated impression, it is equally true that it is superior to the primitive triangle, in as far as two semantic aspects, viz. both the synchronic unit consisting of a continuous string of meanings (*signifié*) proper to a word as well as the single meaning within that string (*sémème*) are made clear by this diagram.

To define the meaning is not the same as to identify the referent. The view that the lexicographical definition has to deal with meanings and not with objects, may easily be illustrated by some examples. "Nur das Beispiel führt zum Licht, vieles Reden tut es nicht". Whereas the words *thunder* and *lightning* are related to one and the same physical phenomenon, the meanings of both words are totally different. The same applies to the words *morning star* and *evening star*. The modern meaning of the word *moon* seems to be widely different from that which prevailed in Celtic Britain; in this case the referent, i.e. object, has not changed, whereas the "thought or reference", i.e. the concept behind the word, has. Linguistically both Venus and Betelgeuse, the variable red giant near one shoulder of Orion, may be called stars; as objects however there is a tremendous difference between them, since the first is astronomically a planet and only the second is to be considered a star. Whereas the sun is a star for the astronomer, semantically it is not; it's just our sun and not a star.

These examples make it sufficiently clear, how dangerous it would be for a period dictionary of thirteenth century Dutch to define words on the basis of the objects. In such a dictionary one has to define both the whale and the mussel, as well as the crab and the

crayfish, starting not from the object (referent), but from the thirteenth century concept (reference), viz. the concept of fish. I am not saying that the editor of a dictionary of thirteenth century Dutch should not be interested in the object which the word symbolizes in an indirect way, i.e. through the concept. On the contrary. We should not forget that the object is liable to change. In modern Dutch the word *velg* (eng. *felloe, felly*) does no longer mean first and foremost one of the curved pieces of wood which, joined together, form the circular rim of a wheel. You will not be able to define the thirteenth century word *felly* adequately if you are not interested in the thirteenth century object. Our oldest example of MDu. *vierboet(e)* dates from the year 1333. If the word belongs already to the thirteenth century, you will not get an adequate definition of it on the basis of the modern idea and object "lighthouse". If the lexicographer is also a philologist and I think he should be, I can but disagree with Stephen Ullman (1973, p. 72) where he writes that "the philologist is in a position to confine himself to one of three ... dyadic relationships" of Ogden-Richards' basic triangle. The lexicographer, as well as "the psychologist, logician and epistemologist" has to concern himself with all three, be it not in quite the same way. This might be the right moment to quote the Harvard logician W.V. Quine (1973, p. 248): "We see here another nice case of give and take between sign and object. This divorce and remarriage are indeed two good steps forward".

J. Rey-Debove's view that the lexicographical definition should define objects, could be explained by the fact that she deals with synchronic and not with historical lexicography. Or could it be that her terminology *signe* and *chose* has gradually become so esoteric that *chose* does not always mean 'chose'? In the paper which Rey-Debove delivered on the occasion of the Second International Congress of Applied Linguistics, which was held in Cambridge in 1969, there was no doubt whatsoever what she meant by *chose*.

Is it true that Plato in his *Cratylus* insisted upon the existence of some primordial relation between the word and the thing (Ullman 1963, p. 66)? I can, however, but disagree with both Plato's view and Rey-Debove's model of defining. The scholasticism "vox significat mediantibus conceptibus" seems more useful, at least to historical



lexicography.

2. The second question which might be a matter of debate is whether lexicography should be considered a science or an art.

Marouzeau (1951, p. 136) calls lexicography "la science des dictionnaires". According to Bailey and Robinson (1973, p. 38) "lexicography is a notoriously ill-defined science", "operating under the guise of an apparently scientific method". Chapman (1973, p. 308) calls lexicography "chiefly an empirical science bent on gathering specimens of *parole*". It has also been said, that nobody will challenge that lexicography is a science (Van Sterkenburg 1976, 21). Can we take that claim for granted? Is it to be considered self-evident?

Since lexicography deals with words, we cannot ignore the fact that the word is a unit which is contested by some linguists. Heger even called it an indefinable unit (Heger 1965, p. 8). On the other hand linguists consider the lexicon as an unlimited whole as opposed to grammar which can be potentially exhaustive. Everybody knows that dictionaries, even good ones, often disappoint our expectations and hopes. This is inevitable since they cannot be expected to be more exhaustive than the lexicon itself.

I don't believe, however, that the negative factors which I have just enumerated have enough weight to challenge the claim to lexicography as a science. Of much more importance is the fact that lexicography does not deal, as grammar does, with a potentially closed and finite system. It never reflects, as grammar does, any system of linguistic competence.

Rey-Debove once gave a very simple and at the same time very realistic definition of the dictionary. She called it: an ordered string of isolated messages to be consulted and not to be read from the beginning to the end: "Une suite ordonnée de messages isolés destinés à être consultés et non lus de bout en bout" (Rey-Debove 1970, 9).

Can isolated messages constitute a frame for science? If we agree with Max Planck, the German physicist who originated and developed

the quantum theory, the disjointed data of experience can furnish a veritable science by the intelligent interference of a spirit actuated by faith<sup>3</sup>. If we dare suppose that also lexicographers could be both intelligent and actuated by faith, could lexicography in its turn furnish a true science? It certainly could on the condition, however, that its isolated messages could fit in a coherent model, such as e.g. the disjointed data of physics.

I must confess that I have serious doubts about that possibility. I doubt if it is possible to construct either a general or a special lexicographical model which we could call the science of lexicography. I was by no means surprised by Rey-Debove calling lexicography "une pratique, une technique, un "bricolage", voire une cuisine" (Rey-Debove 1971, 194). I think everybody will subscribe to Weinreich's statement that "there is no known discovery procedure for correct semantic descriptions", our descriptions being only "tentative" ones (Weinreich 1962, p. 26 and 41). He prefers to speak of lexicographic "approach" rather than "method", "because lexicography itself uses many methods, none of which have been fully explained". On the other hand, however, it is equally self-evident that lexicography cannot dispense with a very special sort of scholarship, literary, philological, dialectological as well as linguistic as its basic tool.

It has been said that "lexicology is the study of the lexical systems of a language or a group of languages", whereas "lexicography is the art of compiling dictionaries" (Gelb 1958, p. 65). This does not mean that lexicography should be considered applied lexicology as could be presumed from a linguistic point of view (Rey-Debove 1970, p. 32).

It could be interesting to assemble a fair collection of quotations from lexicographers who hold the view that lexicography is to be considered an art. I did already quote one and I will conclude the second point of my paper with a few more. Both Casares (1950, p. 11) and Migliorini (1951, p. 1) speak about lexicography as an "arte". Eric Partridge in his little book *The gentle Art of Lexicography as pursued and experienced by an addict* (1963), calls lexicography an

"arduous, interminable, subtle and Sisyphean art" (p. 10), not "an abstraction, devised and practised for the delight of lexicographers" (p. 39), but "an art vastly more complex and difficult and arduous than the lay consultants of dictionaries can possibly imagine" (p. 42). George Lakoff (1973, p. 144) holds the view that "lexicography is an art - and one where practical considerations outweigh scientific considerations". The editor of *A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* finally, in a paper given to "The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce" on Wednesday 26th February 1975, spoke about "The Art of the Lexicographer".

3. My third and last point is concerned with l e x i c o g r a -  
p h i c a l t h e o r y.

Since original dictionaries are different from telephone directories, they should be written and not compiled (Alford 1973, p. 8). It is my conviction that in writing dictionaries the lexicographical approach should be as coherent as possible.

Let there be no doubt that it cannot be my intention to doubt the necessity of basing our practice on lexicographical theory; we simply need lexicographical conventions for the making of a dictionary. These conventions are sometimes called "Canones Lexicographici", as is the case with the Leiden historical Dictionary of the Dutch language, or "booklet of guidance to editorial workers" (Aitken 1973, p. 12). On the contrary the absence of such codified instructions has sometimes hampered not only the necessary congruency and uniformity of a lexicographical undertaking on a large scale, but also its completion within a reasonable time. Without lexicographical conventions a big undertaking such as for example the OED would methodologically be a mess. We have to strive towards consistency in the methods used. Consequently I am not much in favour of a sort of eclecticism which has sometimes been advocated (Országh 1960, p. 253; Aitken 1973, p. 12). I feel a bit unhappy when I read that in writing dictionary definitions we should not "bar any holds whatever" and "stoop to any kind of device to get the meaning across". (Kuhn in *Lexicography in English*,

1973, p. 252). Still less would I plead in favour of arranging lexicographical material by rule of thumb (Ullmann 1963, p. 119). It was just that eclecticism, the ad hoc procedures, a certain lack of consistency as well as of theoretic principles with which I became confronted as a young lexicographer, that drove me to "theoretical lexicography", if I may use such a big word.

But even the most theoretical lexicographer should not ignore the individual character of the word. "His work cannot be reduced ... to the application of a set of fixed rules and procedures" (Zgusta 1971, p. 20). Every lexicographer knows that "it is ... impossible to establish mechanical rules of sense development" (Knudsen - Sommerfelt 1957, p. 94). The distinction of meanings cannot be reduced to a scientific formula and depends in the last resort on the judgement of the lexicographer (J. Chadwick 1957, p. 109). It is always difficult to apply a general principle to a special case. Each successive article of the dictionary of thirteenth century Dutch will present the editors with a new set of problems, never quite identical with any, they have met before (Aitken 1972-'73, p. 264). As a consequence he cannot but be supple and flexible in his method, without, however, indulging in casual eclecticism. Not long ago I heard an American scholar say: "all theory loses its virginity when it is confronted with facts". This impressed me, as it also applies to lexicographical theory.

We all know how vague the meaning of words can be, how unsatisfactory the order in which we try to arrange them, or as Partridge (1963, p. 104) expressed it: "getting the slippery fish of sense into the semantic net". "The distinction of meanings cannot be reduced to a scientific formula and depends in the last resort on the judgement of the lexicographer" (J. Chadwick 1957, p. 109). In many cases, especially in mastering intricate problems, theory will be of little use or but a poor help; it may simply let you down. Theory does not always pay off in terms of actual dictionary making (Cassidy 1973, p. 340).

I for myself can testify that like so many of my predecessors, I had to learn the trade of lexicography by trial and error. When

difficult problems arose, I could very seldom master them by theoretical considerations. In most cases I had to leave them alone for a certain time, considering the wisdom of the Latin proverb, *solvitur ambulando*. It is not only making a bilingual dictionary that involves frustration and compromise (Martin 1962, p. 153). This is equally true in regard to every dictionary small or big.

It seems impossible, at least to me, to become a lexicographer merely by studying lexicographical theory and treatises about lexicographical undertakings. On the contrary there are many lexicographers who have performed not too badly with very little if any theoretical background. In learning the trade of lexicography, practice, i.e. a training programme of many months, is more important than theory. Theory should not come first. If it is true what Einstein said concerning theoretical physics, that "there is no way from experience to the setting up of a theory"<sup>4</sup>, for lexicography on the contrary one has to go the other way round, from experience to lexicographical approach, method and theory. Josette Rey-Debove did not start her lexicographical career by writing treatises on lexicographical theory. On the contrary, her theoretical contributions were the result of her practising the lexicographical profession.

We can never hope to cope with the fascinating but at the same time complex world of words with the help of theory alone. In order to master the microcosm of every word we will need lexicographical experience, success as well as failures, the support of all the best that has been achieved before us, above all faith and the help of creative vision and productive imagination which, according to Charles Robert Darwin, "is one of the highest prerogatives of man" by which he "creates brilliant and novel results"<sup>5</sup>.

#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>Rey-Debove, *Le domaine du dictionnaire* (1970), p. 23, n. 35: "Cette remarque est dans Aristote: "En définissant la chose, on donne le contenu du mot" (2e Analyt., II, 7, 92b)". I failed, however, to

discover this quotation in Aristotle's Posterior Analytics II, 7, 92b.

<sup>2</sup>The current Dutch translation *betekenis/betekenaar* of De Saussure's *signifi /signifiant*, which goes back to P. Paardekooper (1953) and (1960), seems inaccurate as it leaves aside "concept" (*signifi *). According to the Geneva scholar, the diagram of the *signe* symbolizes meaning (see e.g. De Saussure p. 162). Coseriu (1976, p. 8) too puts on a par *signifi * with meaning: "das materielle Zeichen ("signifiant") gegen ber der Bedeutung ("signifi )".

<sup>3</sup>Max Planck, *The Philosophy of Physics*, trans. W.H. Johnson (New York, 1936), p. 122. This passage is a translation of: "Wie aus dem Chaos einzelner Massen ohne ordnende Kraft kein Kosmos entsteht, so kann auch aus dem Einzelmaterial der Erfahrung ohne zielbewusstes Eingreifen eines von einem befruchtenden Glauben erf llten Geistes niemals eine wirkliche Wissenschaft erwachsen", *Wissenschaft und Glaube* (Weihnachtsartikel vom Jahre 1930), in *Wege zur physikalischen Erkenntnis* 1, 224 (1943).

<sup>4</sup>A. Einstein, *Autobiographical Notes*, in P.A. Schilpp, *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist* (ed. 1949), p. 89: "Eine Theorie kann an der Erfahrung gepr ft werden, aber es gibt keinen Weg von der Erfahrung zur Aufstellung einer Theorie" (p. 88).

<sup>5</sup>Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* 1, 45 (London, 1871).

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## Discussion

*Aitken:* On the question of lexicographical principles and lexicographical theories, I can testify to one very distinguished lexicographer who had no theory at all. This was Sir William Craigie who never wrote a single word about the theory of dictionary-making and who wasn't interested in theory. No doubt he acquired some settled principles just by working at lexicography, as you said, and by sitting at the feet of Murray. But this was certainly nothing like a full and explicit theoretical system such as some of us have aimed at more recently.

*Baldinger:* Monsieur de Tollenaere, je veux me concentrer sur un seul des problèmes que vous avez abordés, un problème essentiel, à mon avis: la relation entre la langue (ou plutôt les mots) et la réalité extérieure (ou les "choses"); le problème est posé clairement par le modèle du triangle de Ullmann et son successeur, le trapèze de Heger. J'ai beaucoup d'admiration pour les travaux de Mme Rey (et, cet après-midi, je me rangerai de son côté en ce qui concerne les problèmes de la définition), mais, avec vous, je ne suis pas du tout d'accord avec ce qu'elle dit à propos de la relation entre les mots et les "choses". C'est tout simplement une erreur de dire que les définitions des mots se rapportent directement aux choses. Nos définitions sont intentionales et non pas extensionales. Si elles étaient extensionales (= si elles se faisaient à partir de la réalité extérieure, il faudrait pouvoir énumérer les objets concernés pour constituer une définition, ce qui, évidemment, est impossible). Chaque langue pose une espèce de

"network" sur une réalité non organisée; les langues - chacune pour sa part - organisent l'Univers (matériel et spirituel) à leur manière, à l'aide d'oppositions à l'intérieur de chaque langue. Et si je dis qu'un mot désigne telle chose, c'est tout simplement une erreur: elle désigne une classe de choses, et les classes de choses se constituent par opposition, à l'intérieur de la langue. Vox significat mediantebus conceptibus. Cette phrase du moyen âge est encore entièrement valable. Le modèle du triangle a été changé en trapèze par Heger (il était mon assistant dès 1957 et, dans les années soixante, est devenu mon collègue et ami)<sup>1</sup> parce que le modèle du triangle n'était pas capable d'inclure la polysémie, essentielle sur le plan de la langue (le triangle reste valable sur le plan de la parole, où la polysémie n'existe que sous la forme du jeu de mots). Sur le plan du contenu le trapèze distingue entre le *signifié* (ensemble de toutes les significations rattachées à un signifiant), le *sémème* (qui correspond à la signification dans la terminologie traditionnelle) et le *sème* (unité distinctive minimale à l'intérieur d'une seule et même langue) ou le *noème* (élément d'un système cohérent qui ne dépend pas d'une langue donnée). Chaque *sémème* peut être analysé soit en sèmes soit en noèmes. La distinction est fondamentale, et j'en reparlerai cet après-midi. Le trapèze - à mon avis le meilleur modèle théorique actuel - se termine du côté droit (en bas) par les *classes de choses* (la "réalité" matérielle et spirituelle) auxquelles les unités de la langue se réfèrent. Le problème qui, pour le moment, m'intéresse le plus, est de savoir si et dans quelle mesure ce modèle est applicable en analysant les textes d'une époque du passé. En rédigeant un dictionnaire d'ancien français - ce que je fais actuellement - il m'importe de savoir ce que je fais en distinguant des significations, en donnant des définitions, etc. La théorie est-elle applicable dans la pratique? Ce sera justement le sujet de ma communication de cet après-midi.

*Quemada*: J'interviendrai rapidement sur les questions abordées par M. de Tollenaere. Le problème de la définition de la lexicographie, en tant que science ou art, ne me paraît pouvoir être examiné que si nous faisons au préalable un effort de mise au point de notre terminologie commune. Et en premier lieu, si vous voulez bien admettre avec moi que

*lexicographie* et *confection de dictionnaires* désignent deux réalités différentes, de sorte que l'on peut être *lexicographe* sans pour autant être *dictionnariste*, comme on disait au 18<sup>e</sup> siècle. Suis-je assez clair?

L'inclusion de la *lexicographie* parmi les sciences du langage est évidente pour tous: le *lexicographe* est un *lexicologue*, et à ce titre un *linguiste* spécialisé. En revanche, lorsqu'il s'agira du *dictionnariste*, la spécificité des questions qu'il lui appartient de résoudre en tant que tel conduit à le ranger parmi les utilisateurs de la linguistique, pédagogues de la langue, traducteurs et autres praticiens de la *linguistique appliquée*.

Je crois nécessaire de dégager le concept de *lexicographie* de celui de *confection de dictionnaires*, même lorsqu'il s'agit d'un répertoire de langue synchronique ou historique. Si la *lexicologie* est, à l'intérieur de la linguistique, la discipline générale qui s'attache à l'étude des mots-lexèmes sous tous leurs aspects (origine, composants morpho-sémantiques, ensembles et structures, emplois etc.), on doit distinguer parmi toutes ses approches celles qui concernent plus rigoureusement l'inventaire, le catalogage, la description et l'explication des unités lexicales, et ceci dans les multiples contextes où elles peuvent apparaître comme dans la perspective d'une norme-modèle plus ou moins abstraite ou arbitraire. Ce sont celles-ci qui constituent proprement le domaine de la *lexicographie*, que nous pouvons alors reconnaître comme aussi scientifiquement fondé que la lexicologie dont elle relève.

En revanche, l'oeuvre du *faiseur de dictionnaire* est toute autre chose. Si d'aucuns parlent de "cuisine" et de "tour de main" du dictionnariste, je me satisfais en parlant d'"art", art du compromis entre postulats théoriques sur le lexique et les vocabulaires (tous les dictionnaires de langue importants parus depuis le 17<sup>e</sup> siècle illustrent les conceptions linguistiques dominantes) d'une part, et d'autre part les écrasantes contraintes matérielles liées au produit technico-commercial que représente un dictionnaire: orientation du contenu, limitation de l'espace, contingences de temps de réalisation, de présentation typographique, etc.

Tout *lexicographe* (au sens déjà défini) a nettement conscience des "sacrifices" qu'il est amené à faire lorsqu'il fait oeuvre de *dictionnariste*. Son répertoire commercialisé portera la marque de telles renonciations et il importe que lecteurs (et auteurs!) en prennent leur parti. Mais aussi qu'ils sachent bien que tout ceci évolue en fonction des réalités techniques et économiques contemporaines. Pour aller vite, disons que, jusqu'à présent, ce sont les lexicographes historiens qui ont eu à faire les plus grands sacrifices lorsqu'ils produisaient des dictionnaires (ils étaient les moins "commercialisables"); les progrès techniques récents font qu'ils peuvent espérer dans l'avenir proche rester beaucoup plus près de leurs objectifs scientifiques dans la mesure où ils peuvent se sentir d'ores et déjà virtuellement dégagés des contraintes de l'édition imprimée.

*De Tollenaere*: Si l'on envisage des lexicographes qui ne sont pas dictionnaristes, c'est une contradiction d'après la terminologie actuelle. Quand j'ai cité Mad. Rey-Debove, c'était pour relativiser les choses, mais je suis d'accord avec vous qu'un dictionnaire qui n'a pas en premier lieu des ambitions commerciales ne peut pas être une cuisine. Quant à une lexicographie qui ne serait plus commerciale, n'oublions pas que de l'autre côté de la Manche il y a un pays avec une tradition lexicographique exemplaire. Cette célèbre lexicographie anglaise a toujours été et est encore toujours une lexicographie commerciale.

*Quemada*: Si ma réponse s'adressait particulièrement à M. de Tollenaere, tout à l'heure, c'est aussi parce qu'il a été le promoteur de nouvelles techniques dans son pays et que j'estime que l'avenir "scientifique" des dictionnaires historiques dépend en très grande partie du progrès technique.

Prenons l'exemple du TLF de Nancy dont vous parlera demain M. Imbs. Pour réaliser de manière *lexicographiquement* satisfaisante l'inventaire projeté, il lui aurait fallu 50 à 60 volumes imprimés. Il n'aura droit qu'à une quinzaine. Dans une autre hypothèse technique aujourd'hui envisageable, on aurait élaboré et conservé le contenu des 60 volumes dans des mémoires d'ordinateur éliminant ainsi l'essentiel des contraintes éditoriales.

*De Tollenaere*: Si vous considérez la lexicographie d'une telle façon,