

I, a Language Inventor

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It All Started on a Pacific Island...

My roots as a tonguesmith, or language inventor, started when I was very little when I made up childish nonsense words that only the family circle and nannies could understand, like 'brábintai' for dragonfly, 'numnumbilit' for wanting a drink, and 'míninghai' for a full moon high in the sky. I grew up in the tropics, in the big northern island of Luzon in the Philippines. (I was born on the 12th of January of the year 1966.) My main speaking language then was Tagalog, but as I went through elementary school, a private school called La Salle Greenhills, my language for reading was mainly English, but with some Tagalog in specialized subjects. Such was the diglossia that existed there. Diglossia was the "functional differentiation between languages" such as when one used one language at home or in the neighbourhood, and another one for more formal purposes. My teachers taught in what was known as Taglish, the code-switching between Tagalog and English, so that in the same utterance or even in the same sentence, both languages would be used. The language situation in the Philippines was in flux with over 165 indigenous languages spoken, eight of which were spoken by over a million people at the time of the 1970's, and one of which was the national language—Tagalog, also known as Pilipino, also known as Filipino—with which English was co-official. The indigenous Philippine languages, including Tagalog, were of the Austronesian—"South Islands"—language family, more specifically of the Malayo-Polynesian subfamily, which also included the languages Hawaiian and Indonesian.

Was It Finland or Canada?

When my family and I moved to Anglophone Canada on the 16th of June of the year 1976, leaving behind my beloved toy robot collection and my favourite toy tank, I was 10 years old. The Tagalog-English diglossia tilted in favour of English as I rapidly accustomed myself to speaking only English full-time, but retaining my Tagalog comprehension. The multitude of science fiction and fantasy books spurred my reading ability in English. When I was 11 and 12 years old, Grades 6 and 7, I was enthralled by the works of Tove Jansson, a Swede-Finn who wrote the Moomintroll series of fantasy books. Also then, I read some works of J.R.R. Tolkien of *The Lord of the Rings* fame. Therefrom I discovered invented languages such as Quenya, the Elven Tongue, as well as the elegant alphabets called Tengwar and Runes. I started making up alphabets and scripts on my spare time.

(Filipino culture was highly aural-oral. By the year 2010, I would regain passive fluency (listening and reading), as well as active fluency (speaking and writing) in all things Tagalog. The appearance of TFC, The Filipino Channel, on television in Canada would help...)

During my high school days in the early 1980's, in the public library, I discovered a captivating comic strip in *Heavy Metal* magazine. Therein soldiers in the story used a bizarre language with funny accents. Only later did I ascertain that it was Esperanto, the famous language invented by Dr. L.L. Zamenhof in the year 1887 in Russian-occupied Poland. I found out about Esperanto in the public library from a book called *Teach Yourself*

Esperanto. I browsed the book only sparingly then. I took French in school because I thought that it would look good on my future résumé, or that I could get a government job; and after all, it was the other official language in Canada.

In university in the late 1980's, I found in the stacks of an ancient library some plays and such written long ago in Esperanto. I only considered them a curiosity at the time. My course was cybernetics and I learned artificial languages for computers. I imagined at the time that if there were engineered languages for computers, then why not for people? As art electives, I took courses in French, Japanese, and Spanish, languages in the so-called "real world."

Esperanto Was Really My Hobby Catalyst...

After university and during a break from an era of working full-time, in the year 1991, I started to more seriously study and commit to Esperanto. I joined club meetings and newsgroups. It was then that my adult years in conlanging, the hobby of constructed languages or conlangs, started to crystallize. There was a cryptic word, *glossopoeisis*, which came straight from the Greek for "language invention." In conlanging jargon, so-called "real" languages or "natural" languages like English and Spanish were designated *natlangs*.

(I was in Japan during the years 1992/1994. There, I pondered about the

similarities and paradoxes of the Spanish and Japanese languages. I considered that Esperanto was a Japanesque Latinate language.)

On the 5th of February of the year 1997, my first true inclination towards conlanging began. The language would be called something like "Libera"—freedom! It would be based on Esperanto, but with smoother pronunciation, more like Spanish. I would evaluate Esperanto and find out what was wrong with it if anything really was wrong with it... I would spice up the vocabulary possibly with more English and Chinese words. I would purify it from racism, sexism, Eurocentrism, homophobia, technophobia, and so on... My aim would be perfect symmetry. I would then write a short story along with my grammatical description. But the whole project vanished into the recesses of my mind... Because around this time I would officially create my company called Vix Virtuality Inc., I would designate the project as VX1.

In the year 1998, I created a modified Esperanto clone (L1) called Verdigo ("The Rendering Green") or Verdova ("Green Egg"). It encapsulated my initial reaction to Esperanto's accents, since I was accustomed to accentless English. It was cathartic as all of my subsequent conlangs. I later realized that the use of Esperanto diacritics depended on available technology. After all, Japanese and Chinese could type in their logograms through the use of a simple keyboard, just as the Europeans their accented letters. Unicode, the encoding system that was intended to encompass all living scripts in the world, was still embryonic in the 1990's. The computing world was still fragmented in using many different encoding schemes for the different languages.

Also in the year 1998, I created Pingk (L2), which was the phonemization of English whose unsystematic spellings bothered me since Kindergarten. I thought there were better ways to spell English words. I also thought Spelling Bee contests were silly and a waste of time.

I Was a Teenager Once Again...

In the year 2001, I invented Vong (L3) whose inspiration was tonal natlangs, Vietnamese and Mandarin. The motif was the sunflower. Having discovered the conlanging tool LangMaker on the Web, I was able to create a vocabulary of 1600 accented words in Roman script randomly with specified parameters that moulded the ambiance of an East Asian language. LangMaker was providential for my hobby. In the same year and with the same tool, I created Viko (L4), inspired by Polynesian languages and Japanese. All Viko syllables were of the consonant-plus-vowel variety, so words took the shape like 'vitakivo', 'nisativo', and so forth. After the discovery on the Web of Lojban, a computer-like language meant for human beings, I branched Viko into Pahumu, alias Viku (L5), a kind of crucible for melting Polynesian primitivism with the modernism of a logical language or lojlang. I based the script thereof on Inuktitut, an Arctic natlang.

How an Esperantist Became a Heretic...

Also in the year 2001, I became a heretic once again and created an Esperanto clone with all the silly changes that I wanted. I called it Mondezo (L6). I was dissatisfied by my heresy and went back to being a patriotic Esperantist. I realized that, by then, Esperanto was becoming part of my personality. I knew about Ido, which branched off Esperanto in 1907. It was a schism that caused much heartache in the Esperanto community. I later thought that Dr. L.L. Zamenhof was more than a mere intellectual, but a kind of saint or bodhisattva, for lack of a better term.

My Hobby Started to Explode...

In the year 2002, my trip to glorious Greece inspired me to create a conlang using Greek letters and this I called Atho, alias Latho (L7). Unfortunately, I lost some of the details of this Greek-lettered, but Polynesian-sounding, spiritualistic conlang to the Internet Ocean. Then came Kwaadakw (L8), my first conlang involving Amerindian elements. The main inspiration was the islands of Haida Gwaii, a heavily forested sacred place of the Haida Indians. Then I created Kw (L9), a "Vampiric Language" with elements from Czech and with a clicking consonant as in Xhosa, an African natlang with lots of clicking sounds. Lilipu (L10) came next. I was exposed to Sonja Elen Kisa's fantastic creation of Toki Pona, a conlang which encapsulated "small is beautiful" with its simple pidgin-like grammar and reduced vocabulary.

Lilipu was my answer, a language for creating haiku poetry. Then came Bluish, alias Trangzhik (L11), which had a Tagalog-like "focus grammar" and a phonology reminiscent of Cantonese, Thai, and Czech. Later in the year 2002, I invented Jalossa (L12), based on the Asian Indian natlangs of Pali and Sanskrit. I imagined it as a language for chanting in some esoteric religion.

Sometime in the year 2002, I also made a scant outline of an imagined pidgin for international communication and this I called Wold Pijin (K10), which I intended to be rather something like the English-based pidgin natlang, Tok Pisin, spoken in Papua New Guinea.

In the year 2003, I started on a conlang with an Esperanto-like grammar and with an intended vocabulary based on farflung source natlangs—Japanese, Indonesian, Finnish, and Swahili. I called it Harapanto (L13); 'harap' meant 'hope' in Indonesian, analogous to 'espero' (hope) in Esperanto. This was an attempt at an 'a posteriori' conlang which would mean a slow piece by piece gathering of vocabulary from pre-existing natlangs. All my other conlangs were 'a priori'. With LangMaker, it took only minutes to create hundreds of words. Well, Harapanto was started, but never finished. Then came Bonjang (L14), which I did finish because it was 'a priori'. Bonjang was mainly based on the sounds of Indonesian, but with an Esperanto-like grammar in that the endings told which part of speech a word was, whether it was a noun, adjective, verb, adverb, et cetera. My next creation was Vling (L15), the "rocketship" of all my conlangs thus far. It had a rather comprehensive and very systematic grammar. It had an East

Asian flavour with five tones.

Vling was a model of what would be a good language if one focused on the syntactic structure, not necessarily the phonology whose ambiance was that of an East Asian language, an aesthetic preference.

On one occasion in the year 2003, I made an attempt to streamline Tibetan into an easy-to-learn conlang which I called Tibetoon (M3). My motivation was that I thought Tibetan was too difficult to learn as it was.

Was I Somewhere in Africa?

2004 was the year for Jarminese (L16), which was an Afro-Asian-Amerindian fusion with influences from the natlangs Yoruba, Japanese, Tibetan, Pali, Indonesian, Haida, and Central Pomo. It was a tonal polysyllabic language, much like Yoruba, an African language.

2005 began with L17. It was based on Australian aboriginal languages. I considered it the most exotic of all my creations and involved considerable research. I did not even give it a definite name, just the number designation L17. L18 was a silly experiment on whether I could write Esperanto using the Japanese Katakana syllabary. I just wrote sample text for this. Ludanto (L19) was another silly project; I wanted to see what would happen to Esperanto if it had multitudinous case endings like Finnish, Latin, and

Russian. It was definitely just a thought experiment.

Also in the year 2005 was Ymide (M1), pronounced /'ʌ.mi.de/, which was a modification of Andrew Nowicki's freeware masterpiece Ygyde, pronounced /i.'gi.de/, a philosophical 'a priori' language. I changed Ygyde's alphabet to the Korean Hangeul alphabet. I copied my Ymide and created a better version called Ozode (M2), pronounced /'o.zo.de/.

Also in the year 2005, I started Pilitok (P1), a project I had only in my mind for several years: the 'a posteriori' Philippine cocktail of the three regional *linguae francae*—Tagalog, Cebuano, and Ilokano, plus the two historical colonial languages, Spanish and English. The chance of finishing this project was slim due to the slow building of the vocabulary.

In the year 2006, I ventured into Kanataga (P2), which was Tagalog or Taglish written in the Japanese Katakana syllabary. I did also consider using the Cyrillic script as an alternative. Then I revisited the idea of reforming English orthography, this time using the elegant mystique of the Devanāgarī script, which Hindi and Sanskrit used. This I called Sanskrenḡ (P3).

Was I an Eskimo, Amerindian, or Aborigine?

Also in the year 2006, I made a sketch of Aqqik (P4), inspired by the Arctic natlang, Inuktitut, and Finnish, both of which I thought had fascinating

phonologies, weirdly reminiscent of each other. Then I refurbished L17, the Australian Aboriginal conlang, and upgraded it with the new designation M17. Thereto I added the feature of code-switching between the native Australian and Interlingua, an established conlang.

In the year 2007, I endeavoured to create Ginkgonese (M15), a twin sibling of Vling. Ginkgonese used accent marks over letters, while Vling used numerals, to indicate tone. Ginkgonese was named after the *Ginkgo biloba* tree. By winter, I thought of Purpurweiss (pronounced /'pur.pur.vais/, and meaning "Purple White") with the objective of Lojbanizing the syntax of Standard German to an extent that it (L41) would be easily learnable, leveraging the vocabulary of Standard German as much as possible, and adding new words when necessary for enabling the new syntax. Then about a few days later, I thought of a similar Lojbanic paradigm, but instead of using Standard German, I would leverage Spanish vocabulary and a bit of Basque orthography; I proposed to call it (M41) Txokolate, pronounced /tjo.ko.'la.te/.

Ion per Esperanto...

En la jaro 2008, mi etendis mian kolekton «Oranĝaro», aŭ Franclingve «Orangerie»—Vling (L15), Džeg (M15), Noi-Noi (N15), Phaaŭ (P15), Zling (Q15), Reng (R15), kaj S'rau (S15). Ili havis variajn influojn, inkluzive de la Kamboĝa kaj aliaj Indociĝnaja lingvoj, kaj ankaŭ la Pra-Tibeta kaj la Ĉina lingvoj. Zling kaj S'rau havis evidentajn influojn de ankaŭ Lojban.

Poste, mi daŭrigis mian vojaĝon al la fridaj Arkitaj landoj kaj kreis alian Eskiman lingvon L42, kiu estis rememoriga pri Agqik (P4). Mi decidis, ke ekde nun la lingva numersistemo sekvu mian Teran jaraĝon. Poste, mi decidis reverki pri Xogolat (M41), prononcata /ʃo.ko.'lat/. Mi uzis la vortaron de Interlingua anstataŭ de la Hispana. Xogolat havis la inspiron el la Ĉavakano, ia Hispana kreolaĵo en Filipinoj, kaj el la Kataluna. Sekvante tion, mi revenis al Ameriko kaj kreis novan Indianan lingvon M42 kun inspiro el la Naaŭatla, alinome la Azteka. Poste, mi vojaĝis al Barato kaj kreis alian Barateskan lingvon N42.

En Junio de la jaro 2008, mi faris gravajn ŝanĝetojn pri la ortografio de la Tagaloga. Ekzistis la unua versio (TK42) kaj la dua versio (TL42).

En Marto de la jaro 2009, mi komencis la krelingvon L43, bazatan sur la skribsistemo de la Korea lingvo. Ĝi havis 38 vokalojn kaj 35 konsonantojn. Antaŭ Haloveno de la jaro 2009, mi ekpensis pri simpligita kaj kvazaŭpiŝinigitaj pseudo-Japana kun nur la bazaj 80 logogramoj anstataŭ kun la alta nombro de 2 135 en la norma Japana. Tio estis M43, kiu nomiĝis Uina, aŭ Anglalingve Weena, aŭ Japanlingve ウイーナ, kiu estis protagonisto, unu el la indiĝenaj Eloj de la jaro 802701, el la sciencfantasta romano *La tempo-maŝino* de la verkisto H.G. Wells. La lingvoj Hispana, Mandarena, Tagaloga, kaj Japana estis la ĉefaj lingvoj de influo en M43.

Back to English...

On September 20, two days before the Autumnal Equinox of the year 2009, I made official reality of Vlishy (N43). Like Afrikaans from Dutch, my English offshoot I called Vlishy. It was my friend Christopher Sundita's suggestion to offshoot in this way. I had been getting tired of Standard English. There was an ubication called Vichy, a spa and resort urbette in central France. In the Geneforge gameplay universe, the Vlish was "a levitating, psychic squid-like creation." The famous writer James Blish wrote the book series *Cities in Flight*.

Vlishy was a fancier English with more Graeco-Latinate infusion of words which seemed missing, like holes, in Standard English. Richard Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller (1895/1983), the American Massachusetts-born futurist inventor and author of *Synergetics: Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking* (1975) and *Synergetics 2: Further Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking* (1979), influenced Vlishy somewhat. Fuller's very useful style of English I would rightly opine as a whole different language altogether—Fullerian.

By the beginning of the year 2010, I felt as if I were reborn. This feeling made me decide to uncouple the designations of any of my new conlangs henceforth from my Terran numerical age. (People around me were overly concerned with aging, but maybe rightly so.) By the 3rd of February of that year, I

initiated SV23, or Swedish Creole. The Martian year was about 687 Terran days long, which would make me 23 Martian years old in the year 2010. (I was born on the 12th of January of the year 1966.) Swedish Creole was an idea inspired by Lingua Franca Nova, a Latinate creole invented by Dr. C. George Boeree, a friend whom I met on the Internet about a decade before. On the 13th of February of that year, I created Moma (M23), named after the Museum of Modern Art. Moma would be a futuristic Spanish-influenced, Creole-influenced upgrade of English with regularized spelling. In early anticipation of Halloween, on the 9th of September of the year 2010, a sideline that I did concerned Xing (XG23), pronounced like "shring"—an offshoot of Vling with more Mandarin-like participation—a bit of "plug-and-play" that would become part of my Orangerie collection...

Da Oktogrok Oiu or Laif

Bai 2010-10-12, ai desaid dat Moma en Xoqolat ar mai most importnt konlangz, laik a Braun German en a Braun Frenchman. Dei luk, az wan kud imajin, laik yang Guillermo da Kuban tineijr in Madrid in Espania, or laik Hebert in Divinópolis in Brazil. In eni keis, da next dei, ai go ahead wid a niu projekt Kaja (KG23) pronounst /'ka.ja/. Da neim aludz tu da blond karakter Kia in da Esperanto fantasi muvi Incubus (1965), wich also starz William

Shatner. Kaja iz laik a Blond Mexican. Kaja wud expand on Esperanto en wud hav a komplit list ov verbal aspekts en sou fort. Ich word koresponding tu a part ov spich wud hav a diferent ton kontur wid Swedish ambians. (In Swedish, wordz hav distinkt ton konturz.) Ai hav nat desaided wedr tu spais ap Kaja wid wordz from Amerindian Mexiko. Den leiter, ai remembr dat arauud da yir 2001, ai started konjuring ap da konsept ov Barbarella (C23). Iz about a simplifaid Romans konlang. Its neimseik iz da muvi from da yir 1968. Jane Fonda iz da star in dat saifai film, a speis opera wid sexi ambians. ?Wud Barbarella bi mai repleisment for Kaja? Ai desaid dat eni modifikeishon ov Esperanto iz a sakrilij dat wud put da implementr in sam kainda "jeil", wich did hapen tu mi wen ai krieited Mondezo. Derfor, da beis ov da konlang shud bi sam odr langwij wid lotsa Latin wordz.

On 2010-11-03, ai desaid tu krieit an apgreid ov Johann Martin Schleyer'z orijinal Volapük from da yir 1880 en **nat** ov da revizhon ov hiz work bai Arie de Jong in da yir 1931. Laik Arie de Jong, ai wud atempt at mai own revizhon ov da

original verzhon. Ai wud den yuz a Volapük 2-wei dikshonari bai M. W. Wood from da yir 1889. Mai revizhon wud bi neimð Vanülapük (VA23) da "vanila" langwij. Sz pronounst /va.ny.la.'pyk/. Den, bai 2010-11-07, ai desaid tu abandon dis projekt bikoż ai hav kom tu beliv dat Volapük, laik Esperanto, iz a seikred langwij en shud nat bi medld wid.

Da Moma Siriz or Langwijez iz 8 langwijez: Moma (M23), Vayan (VK19), Bonbon (VK20), Voba (VK21), Jabba (VK22), Gujubi (VK23), Jabrwog (JZ7), en Oktogrok (Q18). Da Siriz wud bi komplitti personl tu mi en wud nat bi ment tu bi propageited tu odr pipl. Dei ar artistik kolazhes...

On 2011-02-04, ai krieit Ondeari (Ω1), wich iz simplifaid Espaniol, riten in Grek leterz. On 2011-02-10, ai krieit a simplifaid Franse kold Langue-des-bois (Γ10)... Den on 2011-03-03, ai krieit a simplifaid German kold Viktorsprach (Δ20)... Den a retinking on da next dei lidz tu Emmanuelsprache (Δ21).

Et cetera... Et cetera...

When I Last Updated This Article

2011-03-04