GER Meeting #Bk2 - 10

Transcript

Attendees: Robin, Ekant, Vanya, Bobbie, ++

Sandy W: Assist Concrete. So sorry. Uh, I just, I mean, this just strikes me. Does everybody remember Walter Cronkite? He does not. Write his name the same way, but sure sounds like it came from the German. That sure puts a difference. Spin on his name. Do my German friends know who Cronkite was? He was America's primary Uncle Waltie, I think. No, that was Disney. But, uh, he was America's, uh, biggest, uh, newscaster back in the 70s, maybe the 60s and the 70s and the 80s. So Walter Cronkite, Leslie. Big, uh, celebrity… news broadcaster. I think it was for CBS, but I'm not sure. I don't remember it that well anymore. Anybody else remember?

(Robin Bloor's single "Yes." falls in the middle of Sandy's turn above, after "That sure puts a difference.")

Barbara Pennock: Do you remember lastly seeing him on a show maybe called On the Road Again? And he…

Sandy W: Yes.

Barbara Pennock: That was, I think, his last appearance.

Sandy W: Yeah, yeah.

Barbara Pennock: Well, in this paragraph, 261. What interested me was, in the German, he makes this feminine. I believe this is so, um, in English, he just generic term.

Frieda : Ekant: In which sense you mean this

Barbara Pennock: Ohh he says things on. I'm not sure where, just I noted that he was always saying her rather than their.

Frieda : Ekant: Yes, but it's Like the Yeah, it's the third person singular and also the Second person plural. So it's the same word, but it means they, theirs. Right, in the first line, it's ERAS is theirs.

Barbara Pennock: Well, thank you.

Frieda : Ekant: And it's still a group of people is meant.

Barbara Pennock: And is it a female, um, tense? Rather than when when we speak of. Men or something like that. You know, we just call people men. Not so much women, men and women, but just as people, men will do something. So, I just felt that there was… if this singular is, will she do it, or will he do it? Either one. Okay. Thank you.

Frieda : Ekant: Well, I didn't quite understand. In the singular, you have. You have different words for she and he and her and his, but the plural is just the same word as her.

Barbara Pennock: Okay.

Frieda : Ekant: But it has a different meaning, and it means… There or they, or yes, there's, there's, it means exactly the same like in English. Yeah. But you are right. Your observation, it's the same, it's the same word as if you would say, uh, the woman of the neighbor and her. uh, her need. Yeah,

this would be written exactly the same, but we would know from the context that the same word means either a woman or just an arbitrary group of people, so this is.

Barbara Pennock: Yeah, good. Thank you.

Frieda : Ekant: It's a one-to-one translation of the English in this sense.

Barbara Pennock: Right. That's all I got. It took years.

Vanya: And if it would be a group of people, you're right, it would be either

Frieda : Ekant: Oh, yeah.

Vanya: He or her, he or she, it could be both. It's not like… it's more she or more he.

Barbara Pennock: Okay. Good. Thank you.

Frieda : Ekant: I found this whole part. That's quite a very strange text. Very strange. I find a little bit amusing when he speaks about it. little letters which came from the Romans and the Greeks. Yeah, so in a sense they just brought disorder in humankind, but there are even a few little good things, and this little letters. sounds somehow ironical for me when I read this

Robin Bloor: Until I read the tales, this was a problem that I'd never really thought of at all. I've never been told or educated about the use of the letter H, so… I… I knew the TH and the PH, but I didn't know all of these other strange. combinations. SCH, we just thought that was because we're partly German and partly, um, Nordic, so, you know… We have, um… The noise that an owl makes, I think, is shriek in German. And it's Greek. And. Norwegian Viking. But we have. shriek and screech for the noise an owl makes. We just mix the two completely, which shows how useless the English are.

Frieda : Ekant: Oh, careless, not useless

Sandy W: Well, his, uh, going into that reminded me of what you said, I think, last week, Robin, about he couldn't pronounce the word H, so he always inserted a K, I think it was.

Robin Bloor: Yeah.

Sandy W: Which I found curious. Uh, so, uh, the significance of the letter H, then, I wondered if it had to do with that for him in this passage. Or if there is something more universal in terms of language behind it. that any uh person that studies language would recommend uh would recognize.

Robin Bloor: I mean, it's just a fact that, you know, the English speakers cannot do the R properly. We don't roll the R. We might accidentally learn to do that when we're, um… Going up, but mostly we don't. So French from English people has always got the R wrong. And there's probably a whole series of things that we get wrong in German that I don't really know about but you know it's the same. It's the pronunciations are not exactly the same between languages. And therefore, how do you indicate that? And, uh, obviously, at some time, somebody thought, well. Let's use that letter H, but I don't know why they thought that. I don't know who it was. I mean, Gurdjieff doesn't say who did that. Maybe I'll ask. I'll ask.

Sandy W: Isn't there a name for those combinations? I'm thinking diphthongs, but I don't think it's diphthongs. I don't remember what diphthongs are, but I'm thinking there's a name for those,

uh… that that set of letter combinations. That I learned back when I was a kid in seventh grade or something.

Robin Bloor: Diagraph, it's called a diagraph.

Sandy W: Pyrograph, okay.

Robin Bloor: No, diagraph. God. So it began in the second century BC. So the Romans started to do it in the second century BC, so it's way long before the, um… the English language even existed. And it's because the Greek had. The chi and the theta and the phi. Um, that Latin… the Romans didn't have, so they needed to try to… Modify the Latin. to account for that.

Sandy W: If you're interested, I just looked up diphthong, and that is a complex speech sound, or glide, that begins with one vowel and ends. Uh, and gradually changes to another vowel with the same syllables, like oi and boil. Or I in, I don't know where they put either, I in find. Coalition or union of two vowel sounds produced in one symbol, as in OU out, OI noise. So diphthongs are vowels. Oh, a vowel diagraph is a union of two vowels in the same syllable, only one of them being… only one of them being sounded, as in the AI in rain, so you don't hear the AI in rain, and that's a, uh… Or the EO in people. You don't hear the O, and that's called an improper diphthong. It's a vowel digraph. It's amazing what people invent to confuse their language.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah.

Robin Bloor: Well, the H came into English after 1066, when the Normans conquered England. And they brought their scribes with them, and they started to mess with the Old English spellings. by putting in H-based digraphs. And also, they made a few adjustments, as you do when you're making a language change. So SC became SH for no good reason, HW became WH for no good reason, and the letter YOG. which is… I don't know what it is at all, because we don't have it anymore, but it gave way to GH. CH was borrowed from French. TH gradually displaced two letters, the thorn and the eth, which we no longer have. And by the time printing got going, they'd all worked out what they wanted. However, Portuguese is different, and so is Irish and Scottish Gaelic. But they've all got edges, so that's nice.

Sandy W: But you say England did not have an age before 1066. I think that's pretty interesting.

Robin Bloor: I must say it is, as well. It's the French that brought it in. Although it's actually difficult really. Depending, I mean, if you're English and nationalistic, then you have to work out who you support, really. Because when the French came in, they were really Vikings, but they spoke French. Because I think they came over from part of France that they'd conquered, so, you know… But they were really Vikings. I'm… Then for the next, pretty much thousand years, almost the the French and the British fought each other. But it wasn't really the French and the British. It was the Vikings fighting the French.

Sandy W: I actually saw that on, uh, the Ragnar Lothbrok Vikings program. It was his brother that became the Duke that brought all the Vikings in and then took them back over to Concord. So, learned everything I know about history on TV.

Robin Bloor: I'm quite correct. There's no other place that you can learn history anymore. Nobody reads books.

Sandy W: That was actually a pretty good history of the Vikings, and I never knew anything about them at all, and uh… I did learn a lot from that show. So

Robin Bloor: There is, incidentally, but it's a complete digression, the… There was a YouTube video on about the Viking ships. And the interesting thing, oh, a number of interesting things, but the most interesting thing about the Viking ships is they had no cover.

Sandy W: Right.

Robin Bloor: You went with whatever you were wearing, and you might have had to put it on if it got very rainy, but that was it. But they never suffered disease at sea, ever. And it's because… They largely fed from the sea itself and they didn't try and preserve any food.

Sandy W: Interesting.

Robin Bloor: Yeah, and so, you know, when the… the… all that kind of, um… Uh, the galleons going around the world, um, came into existence, uh, about 500 years ago. All of the sailors were getting scurvy and diseased, and often a ship would arrive and half the crew had died, you know. Which is not nice, is it really? They should have all become Vikings. Oh, Vanya, you look really, um… Not well.

Vanya: Like a Viking. No, I'm really not well today.

Robin Bloor: What's your major complaint?

Vanya: Hmm?

Robin Bloor: What are you suffering from?

Vanya: Actually, it's actually a cold. I had a few days no voice. And today my… Eyes are all the time. I have something coming out of my eyes. They are red and burning. And I feel just like… Quite, quite weak somehow.

Robin Bloor: Well… We all hope you're going to get better extraordinarily fast. And we're all going to wish health upon you, so that by the end of this study group, you'll be bouncing around and wanting to go out for a run.

Vanya: Mmhm. Wow. Thank you.

Sandy W: You know, laying on of hands, only we'll do it electronically. You know, laying on of hands.

Robin Bloor: Yeah.

Sandy W: That's

Frieda : Ekant: I found interesting just looking now on the text in 248 Says good elucidating example By is afforded by the sensation of the taste And then he switches over immediately to the capacity to pronounce. So like a by command, and he does not give anything else. But then A peach And in 252, half a page later He says denotion and taste of the consonants. There comes taste again, but in quotes Interesting. I don't know what it means, but it's called my attention

Sandy W: That's a good catch, I think. His use of taste always fascinates me. And I'm not sure I like it. I'm not sure why, it just is not my favorite word from him. Shock, you think?

Robin Bloor: We should tell him to stop. You tell him to stop doing it.

Sandy W: Well, it's not him so much as everybody I know starts using that word. But everybody in the work starts using it for everything that doesn't have anything to do with mouth sensation. And it's like, aye, aye, aye, aye.

Barbara Pennock: I feel that way about the word passion or passionate. You know, it isn't…

Robin Bloor: Damn.

Barbara Pennock: It's very overused.

Sandy W: Good. Good example. I'm looking at individual words on that same page, Eklund, all the way from 248. Right up to 245. Is the word Fahrenheit? And let's see, 1, 2, 3, 4. Five, at least five, six, six times he's used it in that short little short little. section, and it looks to me like, if I look back to the English, he's jumping back in meaning from capacity to ableness. Uh, with that, and uh, you know, it's like, I'm not sure, I think capacity and ableness are the same thing. So, good translation, or not so much?

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, thanks, Dread.

Sandy W: Yeah, fair cut.

Frieda : Ekant: So I feel often

Sandy W: And again, his tendency to repeat a word in a short section is always kind of interesting. It's sort of like he's subconsciously, or just, uh… unconsciously planting it in your brain. For what reason?

Barbara Pennock: For this being ableness, I'm… I see such a similarity, but it's more potent, I think, in Germany… German, because, um, in… 2, 45. I read the ability to be rather than being ableness, and to me there's there's more of a potent factor in the ability to be than being ableness. Maybe it's.

Sandy W: Yeah.

Barbara Pennock: Subjective… I think. And then in, uh, 46, the same way, ability to exist.

Sandy W: Hmmm.

Barbara Pennock: And I could be wrong. that the… We'll tell Google about it.

Vanya: No, it's right.

Frieda : Ekant: I would translate ableness in Feichkeit To be able to do something means to have

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm.

Frieda : Ekant: To have kind of means to do something. And in German means to be able to do something. So in this sense I I cannot yet see your contradiction or your friction which which you express

Barbara Pennock: Not really a contradiction, just the way the words line up. Being ableness is a Gurdjieff term.

Frieda : Ekant: Okay.

Barbara Pennock: But the ability to be… it can be the same, I mean, it is the same, but it just sounds more powerful.

Frieda : Ekant: This is right.

Sandy W: And again, I'll point out this being capacity just sounds kind of weak altogether when he uses the term being capacity a couple of times, or capacity.

Barbara Pennock: Right.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, in German he repeatsgeit. He doesn't use like ableness and capacity. He just uses one word

Sandy W: Right.

Barbara Pennock: And it means…

Frieda : Ekant: Because in German, there is also a translation, a one-to-one capacity, we would translate into capacitate. So there is just a one-to-one, but it is quite artificially sound sounding words which we don't use, I think, I don't know Vanya, I think we do capacitate not too much. It does it is used in technique to speak about Capacitor, I think it's in English It's an electronic Little entity It is more when we somehow want to express someone is able to store, for example, energy or so, then we use capacitate

Sandy W: Yeah.

Frieda : Ekant: Or when you have a bus enterprise and you are asked to bring 2,000 people at once to a certain, then it is we speak about capacity In the sense of a certain size or a certain A certain Volume… volume somehow.

Sandy W: Yeah, I think that's what bothers me about that switch to capacity in English, and I couldn't put my finger on it, but it is like that. It's about volume and what can it hold.

Frieda : Ekant: Okay.

Sandy W: As opposed to ableness, which would be more what can it do?

Robin Bloor: So I've been researching taste.

Sandy W: Huh.

Robin Bloor: Because the original meaning of the word taste got nothing to do with your mouth. It goes back to the Latin "tastare". To touch. Uh, sharply, or to assess. And it's also the source of the English word tax.

Barbara Pennock: Okay.

Robin Bloor: Tax is a kind of touch, possibly even. A sharp tongue. So, I don't know, I don't think… I've been trying to find out what the German term. Whether that's… got the same, but I can't do German etymology, so.

Vanya: I will look.

Robin Bloor: Certainly.

Vanya: They can't really look for…

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, I look if I find something

Robin Bloor: This explains when when I first joined. Rena's group, everybody in that group, and pretty much everybody I ever met in the work. uses taste in that way. And I always thought it was a metaphor, but it's not. It's the other way around. It's taste of food is a metaphor for taste. It wasn't, it didn't mean tasting with a tongue until the 14th century. Before then, no one could ever taste anything with their tongue. Didn't have a word for it so they couldn't do it.

Frieda : Ekant: I found interesting

Vanya: I read in addition to what he can was. Now putting in the chat. That gesmak means geruch. Which means smell. Ah, yeah, you have it there. Okay, yes. Okay, you're fully done.

Frieda : Ekant: a different topic, the TH again. I found it interesting that he describes that Russians can't speak it. but, like, know the difference. I think he says they sense it, or they feel… and that the English… can speak even different versions of it, but they don't realize they do different versions. I found that interesting, because for me. I do hear different versions in the English words, the different THs. And I also think I can at least a little bit pronounce it. So I'm not quite sure how he means it. Is it meant literally or does it mean something else? I, I also have friends, French friends who can speak, pronounce ha. H. Ha! Yeah. Very easily. So I, I'm not sure what it means that they are not able to, because I, I guess in every culture we have people, maybe even the majority who. can not easily or almost not enhance their capacity to pronounce something which they didn't learn already in childhood. Yeah, maybe I'm, I'm, I'm, but I am also sure there is a. big number of people who are very able to, even with a little bit of of. practicing to pronounce something which usually is not used to pronounce. Yeah. Even if it's, if it's, if it's difficult somehow. So I'm not sure what these strict and. definite, definite, uh, messages actually mean, uh. Yeah. So I have difficulties to bring them in connection with the reality I, I, I experience. I mean, I think it really depends on the language. I, I learned actually in my study because, uh. Nowadays, you almost always have children from very different countries in your class, and then at university, we learn. that there are certain. sounds in German that children from other countries just don't know or can't… can't tell apart, and there are other… and in other languages, I think we had, as an example, Arabic, or an Arabian language, that they have, like. three different sounds of "d" that are different to them. And for us, they just sound the same because we are not used to them. Yeah, this is what he means means with theta and delta. It's more. It's not really theta. It's it's it's it's a kind of the. Delta and Delta. I have a Russian friend who who the difference of this. Yeah, this is. Even if Kyiv here says that the Russians are not able to do that. Yeah, so it's…

Sandy W: Well, while we're on that subject, uh, from, uh… 30-249 down a couple of paragraphs. What about good and evil? I mean, not good and evil, but the… Good and demonic. Uh, yeah, good, it does say the notion of evil. Associating those with theta and delta, I mean, I don't see where that follows. That he associates, uh, theta with good and delta with, uh, demonic. Uh, it's not just in the sound, surely, but… Where is that coming from?

Barbara Pennock: Well, he does say Theos, I mean, is God, yeah?

Sandy W: Yep. But you don't see Delta in Demon, Diamond, Dimon?

Barbara Pennock: I think of Delta as change, which.

Frieda : Ekant: It's D

Barbara Pennock: Could be evil.

Sandy W: Yeah, just think of it as a triangle.

Barbara Pennock: Right?

Sandy W: Yeah.

Robin Bloor: It's the shape of the lesson.

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm.

Sandy W: Yeah. But go ahead and enable.

Robin Bloor: The French can't do TH very well, the British TH. And I, I knew a French Canadian, I worked with him, it was a long time ago, and he always taught things when he was thinking. We used to laugh at him.

Sandy W: That's pretty cute.

Robin Bloor: He couldn't do H's very well, either. He used to… for Heath, he used to say ETH. But he was French-Canadian, so… They maybe have a different kind of capability. or lack of capability.

Sandy W: Yeah, I know Canadian French is different from uh. European French. Uh, I mean, I've heard that pretty much all the time I've lived in Maine, and so there are differences. And just hearing, I've heard enough Canadian. French speakers. To think I hear the difference between that and what I learned in high school. Can't go by that, but I've just heard that it's quite different.

Barbara Pennock: Well, I think he personalized this in the paragraph 240, because in the English version, he says the English H. In the German version, he says the German H.

Sandy W: Oh, good catch.

Robin Bloor: Ah, well done.

Barbara Pennock: And I don't know why he does that, why he's not picking on the English exclusively.

Robin Bloor: Yeah, what's he talking about these German people for, really?

Sandy W: They have a perfectly good age!

Frieda : Ekant: It's interesting that there are… From time to time notions which are. bound to a specific, uh, nationality or whatever, a specific group, and there are notions which are.

Robin Bloor: Good.

Frieda : Ekant: bound to the reader. So I think one is something more outside and the other is something more personal, which is meant somehow.

Sandy W: Yeah. Okay.

Barbara Pennock: Thanks.

Sandy W: That's very true. What I just said about Canadians is in Canadian French versus European Frenches. That's personal to me, I think. I don't know that everybody would say that.

Vanya: In German, when you put an H. behind the vocal. Then, the vocal is supposed to be longer. It makes the vocal longer.

Frieda : Ekant: And when you put it…

Barbara Pennock: Can you give us an example?

Vanya: Stool. Mm-hmm.

Frieda : Ekant: Who's…

Vanya: Oh, yeah, okay. But actually, it's not on…

Frieda : Ekant: No, it's not consistent. It's.

Vanya: It's not consistent. That's what it said.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, it's not, it's not.

Vanya: No, okay, it's not coming.

Frieda : Ekant: There is something in the German language, there is this H that is, like, redundant, you don't need it because you would, even without the H, you would.

Barbara Pennock: Okay.

Frieda : Ekant: say the vowels long in those words, but there is the case where the H separates to… Syllabus. Two syllables. And you don't say it, you actually don't hear it, but it's there, so you know… that the vowels are not one vowel, like they're… Oh, what's, uh, Dean, to go. is GEN and you have a G in front and then an E-H-E-N and the H is only there in the middle so you know it's like GEN and not GEN.

Vanya: Mm-hmm.

Frieda : Ekant: Gihan as Git.

Vanya: Hmm, okay, and…

Frieda : Ekant: Gihen. Gihen. I say it's — Gihen? Gihen. Gihen. Yeah, actually, yeah, you can say, but you you don't see it.

Vanya: Hey, Papa.

Frieda : Ekant: Just like grammatically, it serves the purpose of separating the syllables and you don't pronounce it.

Vanya: Yeah, it's true. Like this word, Entstehung, Entstehung, you don't say…

Frieda : Ekant: Like this one. Thank you.

Vanya: See whom you say and stay whom. Yes, it's true.

Frieda : Ekant: And you have it because otherwise the E and U would be like an O because there are also words within that. Yes, I learned it at university.

Vanya: Oil. Yes. Yes Yeah.

Frieda : Ekant: Also, ich bin mir nicht sicher, ob ich den Benflugstimme, dass diese Regeln so abstract sind, dass die immer so sind, auch gehen, es geb. Yeah, as it is.

Vanya: Yeah, maybe there are people who say it like this, but it's still in the grammatical…

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, the grammatical purpose is.

Vanya: Purpose is this

Frieda : Ekant: Ah, it's an A and an H. Ah.

Vanya: But not always like Ange wund, ange wundung It's not for

Frieda : Ekant: Oh, there it's to make the vowel longer, and you could leave it out, and you would still say "wunun".

Vanya: The Ur longer Underwound, yes

Frieda : Ekant: Venung.

Vanya: Of course.

Barbara Pennock: So in, go ahead.

Vanya: With accountants different

Frieda : Ekant: I see it just otherwise than you.

Vanya: Yes, of course.

Barbara Pennock: Yes, otherwise, for sure.

Frieda : Ekant: I'm very sorry. I see it otherwise. I got the otherwise

Barbara Pennock: Well, swaggering, I see he uses different words, such as great acts. And there's another one here. Big deal. I like that one. The big deal one is in 259. And the other one is 265. And look at 265. I mean, this is a different word altogether. Dramatic is anchoring.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, I mean, it's just why's acrying is dramatic

Barbara Pennock: Hey, Karim.

Frieda : Ekant: Tis acrying Yeah, and is he translate wise anchoring into Klugen Yeah

Barbara Pennock: And I see this as plot devising there in German. This dramatic acring, acring.

Frieda : Ekant: Drama is a piece.

Vanya: Twice aka, a drama

Robin Bloor: I think wise anchoring is the kind of thing that… involves the intellect, and I think dramatization is, uh, implied towards the emotional side.

Barbara Pennock: Thank you. That makes good form.

Robin Bloor: It doesn't matter what I say, I'm just going to make you experience my emotions.

Barbara Pennock: Cry.

Vanya: Yeah, also he says one time in the end, the dramas he saying to he could have also said dramas, dramas Because drama is this There's a certain style of theater play Theater play could be also a tragedy or Something else, not

Frieda : Ekant: comedy

Vanya: Drama

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm. Dramatic scheming here.

Vanya: #NAME?

Sandy W: Well, we ought to talk about the criminal midwives here. I mean, they've come up before.

Barbara Pennock: And they always have something to say.

Sandy W: What a mess you've made! Okay, worrying the child for life.

Vanya: So

Robin Bloor: Well, it's a strange thing, isn't it? It's like I've been present at the birth of all my children, so… I've seen various midwives, and it really matters that the midwife is. Emotionally positive. Because if the midwife isn't emotionally positive. It really upsets the mother, and she can't really say, because the midwife's supposed to be there to help you out, you know, and you can't easily, especially when you're going through, um… Uh, giving birth, you can't easily. Tell him to go away, you know. But it certainly is, uh, very important that the midwife is, um… Positive and. Gertrude's grandmother was a midwife. Famously. And that is, she was famous in Armenia for being the best midwife that was known.

Frieda : Ekant: I'm not sure if he is specifically telling something about midwives My first wife was also midwife Brita's mother But what I take out of it is that Sometimes the very first impression is something guiding, yeah, something something with main importance. So in this sense, I understand the role of the midwife as the very first impulse. And nothing is there. Then The initial impulse is counting somehow

Barbara Pennock: That's what I see, too. The first vibration that the baby…

Frieda : Ekant: And not just the baby, I mean, I would say it could be applied to everything where there is just the openness to develop or to create. And then the very first vibration, as you say, yeah, is is somehow negative, then actually nothing very positive can can come out of it. So this is what I also understand from this

Robin Bloor: Yeah, well, that was my birth. My mother was having hysterics. She thought I was going to die. She thought perhaps she was, she was a midwife as well, damn it. And I never found

out about this until someone did some therapy on me, and um… They just said, oh, you nearly died at birth. And it's like, really? And your mother was hysterical. And that doesn't surprise me, she knew how to be hysterical, she was very knowledgeable in that sphere. So, you know, I was ruined, really.

Sandy W: Well, we could have told you that.

Robin Bloor: I was expecting you to chime in and say.

Sandy W: You knew we were going to say something.

Robin Bloor: So we've all been very polite, but we know what a jerk you are.

Sandy W: Yes, yes, I am. Oh, and I gotta say something, I mean, all those years, uh, I don't know, from the 40s to… maybe the 70s or so. There weren't any midwives in America. You went to the doctor… you went to the hospital, and a male doctor delivered you, if he got there on time. And talk about bad vibrations, that's a… Yeah.

Robin Bloor: Really? You never had midwives?

Sandy W: No.

Robin Bloor: Wow. That's just, that's completely uncivilized.

Sandy W: Oh, there it is!

Frieda : Ekant: In German, this is also

Robin Bloor: That's also a room.

Frieda : Ekant: In German is also a development. I mean, we have still midwives, but they are somehow They are somehow pushed out quite completely by modern medicine. So if Yeah, I just know it because my first wife, she is a midwife, and I was in this scene for quite a while, and they had a kind of contract with a hospital where they worked in the hospital, but the tendency grew more and more that Uh, when every, when, when not everything is very clear, then they choose to do a. Caesarean.

Robin Bloor: Seize the hit.

Frieda : Ekant: And I think this is a horrible thing. I mean that medicine is able to do this. It's beautiful to rescue in strange situations. But they are like planning it beforehand. Yeah, they plan it because they say it is less painful. If you get drugged. And it's more profitable for the hospital. They get money for it. Yeah.

Robin Bloor: It's not right.

Frieda : Ekant: You will relapse.

Vanya: Because the daughter of the midwife, you can see that.

Frieda : Ekant: Yes, we are very identified, we both, on this topic.

Robin Bloor: There's a problem with cesarean children. And the problem comes from the fact that the birth canal has within it. a whole series of bacteria that the baby needs to get in its mouth. And

if you give the baby a caesarean, it never gets that bacteria. And from that point on, its digestion is, um… Well, uh, inhibited to some degree, because it's short of bacteria it needs.

Frieda : Ekant: I think they are. Mm-hmm.

Robin Bloor: And that was discovered in the past 10 years, by the way. It wasn't, uh, originally known, so… Freda, if you're going to have any children, you can't have a caesarean. We're not allowing it.

Sandy W: Well, my my special needs grandson. There were 2 of them. They were born at 25 weeks, and my special, the the one that's really special needs only eats pizza. How do you like that? 20 years old? He only eats pizza, so he did not get it in his mouth what he needed so.

Barbara Pennock: So, I was brought into this world cesarean, as were my three brothers. You know, once you have a cesarean, um… It it kind of. plans out that the others will come, will you have them that way also? I don't know about missing bacteria in the birth canal. But I see we did miss something very important, and that is, um… Um, being assertive. being aggressive, I mean, being want to be warned. None of us had that. We were just, here you are.

Sandy W: Come on out, little kid.

Barbara Pennock: And here, look at these bright lights.

Robin Bloor: In the, um, in the UK, and I just know this is procedure, so, you know. They don't do more than three caesareans. And if someone comes in and has a third, they'll tie off the ovaries. While they're there, to stop them having any more, because… The theory was that too much scarring of the uterus will eventually lead to. Unstoppable pleading or what, yeah. So 4 is, they wouldn't have done that in the UK.

Barbara Pennock: Adhesions. Yeah, it…

Robin Bloor: You would have lost a brother.

Barbara Pennock: Well… Could be, but, um… They were good Catholics. They wouldn't have tied anything, I guess. Possibly she could have…

Robin Bloor: Oh, right, yeah.

Barbara Pennock: She could have been influenced by, this is medically reasonable, but then for the next, what, 15 years, they did a practice that permitted her to not have a pregnancy.

Robin Bloor: I thought you weren't supposed to do that if you were Catholic.

Barbara Pennock: Have a practice?

Robin Bloor: You weren't… the contraception was outlawed by one of the popes, was it? I believe so.

Barbara Pennock: Yes. Yes, it wasn't with contraceptives. It was by reading the signs of the moon.

Sandy W: I've heard of that, yeah.

Robin Bloor: Oh yeah, that was a debate. When the Pope was banning contraceptives, that was a debate. What if you actually just take your temperature accurately? As a female, I know a boy. the

moment it starts to rise, which would be, I think it's on the 15th day or something, you've got to stop on the 13th day and take your temperature. I think that's it.

Barbara Pennock: Well, you're right in the area. You stay away from things during that middle of the month.

Vanya: But 13th day is a little tight.

Barbara Pennock: I think that's close.

Vanya: That's too close. You have to calculate the lifetime of a sperm

Robin Bloor: Oh, well, that's actually… I wouldn't bother with that.

Barbara Pennock: Not want.

Vanya: No?

Robin Bloor: No, because they, they have had occasions when someone was practicing what I was called the rhythm method.

Sandy W: That's what it was, yeah.

Robin Bloor: never had sex except one day after the end of the period. So sperm survived for probably 11 or 12 days in the womb.

Barbara Pennock: Couldn't wait.

Robin Bloor: They were just swimming around having fun, you know how to spell them off.

Sandy W: Everybody in the pool!

Vanya: But why a midwife would use exorcism? These are

Robin Bloor: Oh, let's, we should investigate that.

Frieda : Ekant: Because she was drunk. It says because she was drunk. Yeah. And exorcism, he gives…

Vanya: Yes, yes, I know that, but it… why would a midwife be drunk? I mean, this is so weird, this picture

Barbara Pennock: That's why we don't have midwives. What is it, Robin, the exorcism in this?

Robin Bloor: I'm looking it up because I meant to look it up. I haven't done it yet.

Vanya: Also, what kind of exorcism is this? AU, what a mess you've made. That's not an exorcism.

Frieda : Ekant: There it is.

Robin Bloor: So, exorcism means driving out an evil spirit believed to have possessed a personal place by prayer or by solemn command in the name of God. Well, that's interesting.

Barbara Pennock: Hmm. Okay.

Robin Bloor: Comes from Greek through Latin. And the Greek verb exorcisane. Which it comes from means to bind by oath. So the exorcist commands the spirit to leave by invoking a higher power. That's not nice, is it? causing, referring to bad midwife behaviour as a kind of exorcism. Or like a bad exorcism, I guess.

Barbara Pennock: This finding by oath, I can see the purpose or the meaning through that. I mean, again. Your first impression, your first vibration, and it doesn't leave you.

Sandy W: Well, Tanya's really kind of right here. How is this an exorcism? And Leslie, hey, you! Is she talking to the devil there, or the baby? What a mess you've made.

Vanya: It's good to tell you that.

Sandy W: I'm assuming she's talking to the baby, but…

Barbara Pennock: He doesn't use that same term in, um, in German, though. It's like, what have you done, or something, right?

Vanya: Yeah.

Sandy W: Pretty here. Look here.

Robin Bloor: Is that what it says? What's an accurate translation of that?

Vanya: Over to the German right. Does he hear?

Frieda : Ekant: Yes, it's not just, it's not, look what you have done. Angerichtet is like making a mess.

Vanya: Yeah.

Barbara Pennock: Okay.

Vanya: But the exact translation… Just look at what you've gone and done again, yeah? Just look.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, one would say this, like, to a child, that… Yes, made a mess.

Barbara Pennock: Yeah, look what you've done again. That's interesting.

Vanya: Again, yeah, it's also a Vida, yeah. I mean, it's a birth, so it's the first time. So how can it be Vida? How can you get.

Frieda : Ekant: Or does she mean the mother?

Vanya: Or the mother.

Frieda : Ekant: She means the mother. Yes.

Vanya: The devil, or the mother, or… I mean, this doesn't… that doesn't make sense, does it?

Sandy W: Who is she talking to? Well, it kind of gets back to that use, you know, what I was asking about Theta and Delta, and why is that good or evil? I mean, that doesn't make much sense to me. And you might note that is A-E-H-H-H right there in English.

Robin Bloor: He's also pushing an approach. to language that can't really be applied well. To actually… Not to German, not to English, not to Latin even, perhaps a little bit to Greek, and certainly to Hebrew. Where the sounds corresponded to meaning.

Barbara Pennock: Hmm. Okay.

Robin Bloor: And that just doesn't happen. And of course he's giving examples as to where it's all wrong between theta and delta. But it's also the case that earlier on, he goes on about the English sole being the bottom of your foot. It's… it's… from his perspective, it's just the wrong sound.

Barbara Pennock: What can you make out of the left slipper of his own wife?

Sandy W: Or that whole sequence, Bobby.

Frieda : Ekant: Yes, the whole seven, seven.

Robin Bloor: Actually, it's the whole sequence.

Frieda : Ekant: The whole seven particularities are very specific.

Barbara Pennock: But I can appropriate every one of these other things except the slipper.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, because he takes it and gives you some… Some impulse on your back or on the head or whatever. Yes, you don't know?

Vanya: Yes.

Barbara Pennock: You wouldn't.

Vanya: The cat knows very well.

Frieda : Ekant: Me too. Me too. But it's not always the left, I have to say. This I don't understand.

Vanya: I mean, what you say in German is, um… That, um… Another saying of… So this is Untermpantoffelstehen, or Pantoffelhalt. This is, um, used for saying that the man is under the command of the wife.

Barbara Pennock: I like that.

Sandy W: Yeah.

Frieda : Ekant: Just the German saying. from ancient times.

Sandy W: Yeah?

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, it does not have any meaning anymore.

Barbara Pennock: Yeah, it didn't make it this far.

Sandy W: Oh.

Vanya: Mm-hmm.

Robin Bloor: I really can't put all of those things together. Man, uh, mice, hands clenched in her fist, wife of the chief stage manager of the theater. Pimple on his nose.

Sandy W: Yeah.

Robin Bloor: How are you afraid of a pimple on anyone's nose? I mean, seriously.

Barbara Pennock: In German, it's a…

Frieda : Ekant: On the of the own nose. On the own nose very. afraid.

Vanya: But it's only…

Robin Bloor: Oh, on… I'm not on the stage manager's nose, on your own nose. Oh, yeah, I'm…

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, yeah.

Robin Bloor: I'm scared to death of any pimples that ever appear on my nose. I go straight to the doctor and have them cut off.

Frieda : Ekant: There you go.

Robin Bloor: Don't you all?

Frieda : Ekant: People are very afraid of such things because other people start to say, oh, what you have done, what is the matter with you?

Robin Bloor: Three.

Barbara Pennock: Well…

Frieda : Ekant: So you get somehow not a good attention from people. There's such such things.

Barbara Pennock: But I read in the German it is pockmark, not pimple.

Vanya: Yes. Yes.

Barbara Pennock: Okay.

Vanya: But Perkchien is a Verniedlichung. What is that, Frida?

Frieda : Ekant: Uh, the diminutive?

Vanya: Yeah. It's a small… but… so it can be also small pimple.

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm.

Frieda : Ekant: So yeah.

Vanya: But it's true that it comes from the word Pocken, yeah, it's a different root. Mm-hmm.

Frieda : Ekant: I find interesting that the fourth, fifth, and sixth are properties which are, uh, very clear formulated and they have a certain seriousness in, in, in them. Yeah. And all the other around. They sound more quite ironical. But the fourth, fifth, and sixth, they are very clear.

Sandy W: But if you have hemorrhoids, you know that's pretty serious too. Sorry, I could not resist. That was rude and crude.

Frieda : Ekant: It's okay. It's okay, Sandy.

Sandy W: That is rude and crude.

Vanya: But hammer rights he's also using before, you know, in the forward.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, yeah, he loves this.

Vanya: He likes hemorrhoids.

Frieda : Ekant: You like, he loves this, no, this using this word.

Vanya: Yes.

Sandy W: But you're right, Eckhart, he sandwiches those, uh, serious ones in between what's essentially something I'd call tongue-in-cheek. Funny.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sandy W: Uh, uh, do they really have any meaning beyond… Being funny. I mean, that being afraid one might have some meaning. So, but the examples are just… Ridiculous.

Frieda : Ekant: But I mean, if he's talking about someone who works for the theater and who writes plays for the theater, so…

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm.

Frieda : Ekant: What do we expect?

Vanya: Yeah, but he is basically, he's not just talking about people who write plays for the theater, I think, so he is. He's saying more something about… How we create. Dramas inwardly all the time.

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm.

Vanya: About nothing, like.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah. Yeah. And, and, and the real and good properties we lose with this. Yeah. This.

Vanya: #NAME?

Frieda : Ekant: sandwiched properties, which Sandy said.

Vanya: And it's all the fault of the midwife, drinking too much wine.

Frieda : Ekant: No. That was what I thought. A while ago. The midwife, of course, it can be, uh, meant literally, that's what we said, the first vibrations matter, but also what could be the midwife in each individual.

Vanya: #NAME?

Sandy W: Good question. that which is bringing into being, not very skillfully in this case, I'm just thinking out loud here.

Vanya: Yep.

Sandy W: That would just bring him into being, into Earth, into … The normal world. Yeah, that's it's it's well worth thinking about, the midwife. And, uh, it's easy to overlook thinking about the midwife, because he does… make the midwife into kind of a clownish figure, both here and, uh, back in the beginning of the… back in the beginning, when he describes.

Frieda : Ekant: Mm-hmm.

Sandy W: Her function in his birth.

Vanya: Yeah, if we look at it like you have the mother and the child, the mother's taking the active part, and the child is basically the passive, and the midwife could be the third force in it. And if the third was…

Sandy W: That's good.

Frieda : Ekant: I'm not sure. We could also say that you could also say that.

Vanya: The third pause is… Good, in a way. The third force is drunk.

Frieda : Ekant: We could also say that the child is the active force and the mother is the present force, or we can say life is the active force and mother and child are somehow.

Barbara Pennock: Right?

Vanya: Could be also, yes. Yeah, but I wanted to say something about the function of the midwife, like, being something which is not in the process, like, more…

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Vanya: Uh, something that is watching the process or protecting it from outside, like having more… And if this could be something in ourself, which is not… In it, but trying to…

Frieda : Ekant: I mean, maybe it could be, like, the eye, which we don't have. So, uh, because if you have it, then that's the instance that, like. watches and is responsible for the things you carry outside of yourself, like the impulses that reach the real world. And if, like everyone, the midwife is drunk and does only nonsense, then the impulses that arrive in the outside world are tainted and sick and only lead to this. #NAME? Dramatization.

Robin Bloor: Daniel's kind of right about this. The midwife is inevitably the neutralizing force, couldn't be anything else, because the only one that's participating in this activity who is unchanged by it. The baby is changed, the mother is changed, but the midwife is unchanged. She's just there to enable the event to take place.

Barbara Pennock: And that sounds very good.

Sandy W: There it goes.

Robin Bloor: I think you would say that the mother is active force and the baby is passive force, but, you know. Um, how the octave proceeds, I don't know. I do have to say, by the way, that having witnessed five. None of them were difficult. Pretty much. Most of the… couples I ever heard about who had children, and I was kind of around. The women had terrible time. It's just not a good, you know, or it can be not the best day of the year.

Barbara Pennock: Right.

Vanya: Yes, we have exercise time already. Not exorcism.

Robin Bloor: Oh, is it really? Oh, what was the exercise? Remind me quickly.

Vanya: He had it two times already.

Robin Bloor: I know, but I need it three times to actually remember it.

Vanya: Of course.

Barbara Pennock: Well, in English it reads, look back on your experiences during the last week. Where and how could you see this mix up in your psyche? The three personalities which have and can have nothing in common with each other, either in respect of the nature of their arising, or in respect of their manifestations. How does this manifestation in you? And your man… how does this manifest in you and your manifestations? Which attempts do you make to unify or reconcile these different kinds of being impulses? How does it manifest in your life and your relationship? And then the question, in which way do you participate in part dog duty?

Robin Bloor: I can speak to something that belongs to last night, really.

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm.

Robin Bloor: I normally fast for the whole day of Sunday. But today I fasted… oh, sorry, yesterday I fasted also for the Monday. And I discovered, and I must have known this before, but it's really important to actually remember these things. There comes a point where the struggle. But fasting from food imposes. throws you into the present. Now, I think people being what they are, they can probably buffer that if they really want to, so this is more in terms of, if you do this… You will. Put yourself in a situation where you can be present, and you can be present with much less. Difficulty than at any other time. Two days. And it came upon me on… About 10 o'clock in the evening on the same day. And my body, it was, um… It knew it hadn't eaten. And it was just… The sensation is just there. I didn't make an effort to. sent your body, your body was just, the sensation was all over it. Sentenced. Pain, there's nothing particular, I'm not, uh, I don't have a painful life at the moment, but… I'm I sense for example. A pain in the bone of my right leg for… A fraction of a second and then gone. But if I wasn't in that state, I would never have… I'd never have sensed it, because you… your level of sensitivity has increased dramatically when you do this.

Frieda : Ekant: What is interesting in this respect is that we read in Gurdjieff's talks, I guess.

Barbara Pennock: Couple seconds.

Frieda : Ekant: something that he even suggests the opposite. He says, even when you have the tendency to overeat, to eat too much.

Barbara Pennock: Such as deposition studies in.

Frieda : Ekant: Yeah, it is the, in, in the same way also can be used after, yeah, after this, this, somehow this, this loss of awareness, but you can use then the fullness of the body. So also in this case, an increased, uh, sense sensitivity towards the body can be. At least, yeah, used. So this, this like just came in my mind. Yeah. Not that I propose to do it on purpose, no. Just to realize, I found it interesting that Gurdjieff explained it in that way.

Robin Bloor: Was one of the things. That I think is important. Is the realised realisation that the reason that most people can't do being part broad duty is that they can't make the effort. It's the effort is too great for them. I used to, I mean, I've, um… for many years put objects in my path to make life more difficult, deliberately. And I've lived a life of making my life more difficult. I'm often taking decisions that are not good decisions in terms of. the way that normal people think about their life. I'm taking decisions in order that things will be awkward. And the period of time between about 60 and 70, I was, you know, giving up smoking and then starting smoking again and then giving up smoking because smoking is addictive, but it became too easy. And since that time, and obviously also for health reasons. I've been using… Fasting is the main method of providing a. a difficulty for myself that actually works. It works. It'll kick in with different people at different points in time, but if you have the intention to be present. And you fast. by the second day, sometime during the second day, my experience, the third day, you can sometimes be just… Going in and out of presence all day. But by the second day, it will kick in. Uh, and the interesting thing about that is, I've told many, many people this thing. I'm not… I'm just giving you another example, but I've told many, many people this. And I've noticed that absolutely nobody does it. Is this too far?

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm.

Vanya: It's also, I heard Bennett talk about that also quite a bit. I was quite impressed by it. He also had a practice of fasting one day a week. And he always hated it, he said, and he found it very, very… Uh, profitable. Profitable. I mean, he didn't do two days, but one day. And he said the different part is also then to eat the other days normal, not overdo it. Because you will fast.

Robin Bloor: Yeah that's also a difficulty as well and you might be able to work with that. It's doing it one day a week became too easy for me.

Vanya: Okay. I tried that for a while.

Robin Bloor: So it adjusted.

Vanya: Yeah, okay. I had always difficulty to stick with it. I started it many times. like, like, 4 times, 3, 4 times, I already started it, and I managed for a couple of weeks, and then I gave up again.

Robin Bloor: That's okay. No, it's like one of the things that it's really necessary to understand defeat. Fine. If you start something like that, and after a certain period of time. You feel as though you've been defeated, then what defeated you was the resisting force.

Vanya: Hmm.

Robin Bloor: And the attitude that you you haven't got any choice with this. The attitude you absolutely have to have is it didn't defeat you. I'll come back when I'm stronger.

Vanya: Mm-hmm.

Robin Bloor: Right? You know, I just left the field for the moment. I'll come back when I'm stronger. You must never let yourself think that you were defeated in any of this stuff. You know, it's like, I've been trying to remember myself for 30 years, or whatever. Right? And I haven't managed to do it, so I'm giving up. That doesn't actually make any sense, except it makes sense to people in normal life, you know. They have this like, oh, you're banging your head against the wall and you feel good when you stop doing it. That's how they would think of that. But that isn't it. That is by no means it. So, Vanya. Even though you're ill. I will talk to you next week and we'll see how well you did. Well, the Ekins exercise will be pronounce a letter H properly or something like

that, so it'll be a different exercise.

Frieda : Ekant: You will see, you will see. No, I find… I find what I gave as exercise the last two weeks, I find it very valuable, yeah, because these. ongoing contradictions in me. Yeah, I work now since 20 years to find somehow the force to to. to unify, to reconcile, and still they just happen, yeah. It's not that I'm… as unconscious as I was many years before, so I have a certain awareness of, of these, these inner frictions and contradictions, but they always appear, yeah, so I… Usually I don't reject them and I don't reject myself about having them. I just accept that this is the way as like my mechanisms, I would say work in this sense. Take it as a kind of of. challenge to see what I then do out of this. Sometimes I realize I have not the force to unify them. Then I let myself somehow be driven by the strongest of these impulses. This works quite well. I, and I find it, I find this even valuable for me because then at least there is not this. this ongoing, um. rejection of myself and, and judgment, uh, in, in, in a sense. And, uh. this is a little bit in accordance to what Robin says, and then from… and then this letting go of the usual neurotic fight, this gives me somehow a certain momentum, and then I am sometimes able. Uh, yeah. To bring the other two forces or other two impulses, uh, so to say, along with, with, with this one. And then I have a certain unity. Yeah. Even if I cannot always say it is what I want. I decided or I wanted, so I let myself often in life driven by these, the strongest of these impulses. But somehow then I, I, I feel anyhow a certain, uh, unity inside of myself. And this is for me more valuable than to stick to an idea what would be the best or the, the right thing. And then I. all the time to struggle with not reaching a kind of unity and then being lost in the fight between these opposing forces in me. This is one way how I deal with them. And of course, another second way is to wait. This is something which I learned when I realized the struggle of different impulses in me is too strong. I just wait, I come to silence, to stillness, to what we call collected state.

Barbara Pennock: Mm-hmm.

Frieda : Ekant: To use the breathing sensations to collect myself. And then sometimes it happens that it turns out that these impulses either unify or it, I become more clear which of these impulses is the, is the, is the more important in, in a certain moment. Yeah, and then I can easily choose one of them, and the other just have to… to subordinate themselves or to. to realize not so important. These are 2 means which how I work with these. Mish mesh in in myself. Mix up, it's called in English.

GER Chat

2026-10-13 12:01:30 From Frieda : Ekant to Robin Bloor (direct message):

Music Level ist far too high, a lot of distortions…

2026-10-13 12:03:30 From Frieda : Ekant to Robin Bloor (direct message):

Vanya comes soon, too much traffic.

2026-10-13 12:18:37 From Frieda : Ekant to Robin Bloor (direct message):

Vanya is logged in, may try to enter...

2026-10-13 13:12:55 From Frieda : Ekant to Everyone:

Das Wort Geschmack stammt etymologisch von dem althochdeutschen Verb smęcken („Geschmack empfinden“) und dem Substantiv althochdeutsch gismac (um 1000) bzw. mittelhochdeutsch gesmac ab. [1, 2]

Wichtigste etymologische Meilensteine:

Ursprung (Indogermanisch / Germanisch): Das Wort geht über das westgermanische *smakka- (und urgermanisch *smakkuz) auf die indogermanische Wurzel *smeg^{h}- zurück. [1, 2, 3]

Bedeutungswandel „Geruch“: Früher bedeutete gesmac im Mittelhochdeutschen und Althochdeutschen auch „Geruch, Duft“ oder sogar „Gestank“. Diese Verwendung (analog zu „schmecken“ im Sinne von riechen) hat sich in manchen oberdeutschen Mundarten erhalten, erlosch im Standarddeutschen aber im 19. Jahrhundert. [1, 2]

Ästhetischer Sinn („guter Geschmack“): Die übertragene Bedeutung für Stil, Schönheitssinn und Urteilsvermögen kam erst im 17. Jahrhundert über eine Lehnübersetzung aus dem französischen bon goût bzw. italienischen buon gusto in die deutsche Sprache.

2026-10-13 13:24:22 From Robin Bloor to Everyone:

How the two languages use h

Use

German

English

Sounded /h/ at the start

Haus, Hut

house, hat

Silent h marking a long vowel

fahren, Bahn, Kuh, Stuhl, nehmen, Sohn

none (English uses other spellings, e.g. silent final e in hate, or ee/oo)

Silent h between vowels

sehen, gehen, ruhig

none

In digraphs

ch (Bach, ich), sch (= English sh), ph and th in Greek loanwords (Philosophie, Theater)

ch, sh, th, ph, wh, gh

German ch in Bach is a sound English once had and lost. The gh in English night and daughter was that same sound, and German kept it (Nacht, Tochter).

How the lengthening h came about

2026-10-13 13:25:14 From Robin Bloor to Everyone:

How the lengthening h came about

It arose in the Early New High German period, roughly the 14th to 16th centuries, in three steps:

A real h fell silent. In Middle High German, h between vowels was actually pronounced, as in sehen and zehen ("toes"). In the late medieval period that sound weakened and disappeared in speech, though it stayed in the spelling.

Vowels grew longer. In the same period, short vowels in open syllables lengthened. So the vowels in front of these now-silent h's were long.

Writers reinterpreted the h. Scribes and later printers came to read a silent h after a vowel as a sign of length. They then spread it by analogy to words that had never contained an h:

Middle High German jâr became Jahr.

nëmen became nehmen.

stuol became Stuhl.

2026-10-13 13:25:51 From Robin Bloor to Everyone:

Why it happened

Vowel length had become something that distinguishes words, as in Wahl and Wall, or ihn and in. The Latin alphabet had no mark for length. A letter that had become silent was conveniently free to take on the job.

The practice spread through the chancery languages and the printing presses, Luther's Bible among them. Eighteenth-century grammarians, notably Adelung, tidied it up, and the 1901 orthography conference fixed it. That same reform removed a lot of decorative th (Thür became Tür, Thal became Tal), keeping it only in Greek loanwords such as Theater and Thron.

It was never applied consistently

The lengthening h appears mostly before l, m, n, r (Zahl, Lehm, Bahn, Uhr). Even there it is missing from many long vowels: Tal, Plan, schon, Qual have none. Other long vowels are written with a doubled letter instead (Meer, Boot) or with ie (Liebe). That irregularity is why German children still have to learn the h words one by one.