

istic is inevitably retained.* Secondly, this attempt at linguistic identification must also be qualified a failure because *tsaa*, even if supposed to signify "headgear" as in the case in question, cannot be compared to *tsau*, which is the Egyptian for "crocodile."

From this last remark we may deduce this corollary: in all philological comparisons, both words, while homonymous, should also be synonymous. This is so evident that we need not insist. There is no lack of homonymous terms in all languages, and if the philologist's business was merely to discover consonances, his task would certainly not be a very arduous one. It must be admitted, however, that there are some cases when this synonymy of homonymous words needs be but relative. As illustrative of the appropriateness of this qualification, I may point to the etymology of the English word "loafer," which is said to come from the German *laufer*, a runner, which is itself derived from *laufen*, to run.

Passing from the letters to the words themselves, we cannot help noticing that some of the latter are more ancient, more immutable, and simpler than others; they reappear under a similar—though not necessarily identical—form in divers cognate dialects; in a word, they are the roots of the language. These are the essence of a dialect and, as far as practical, with them only should comparisons be attempted. But in this case care should be taken to choose only equally radical words for the purpose of identification. A living language is subject to inexorable laws of growth and mutations, and any resemblance between a modern accidental term and an old root of a different tongue must be the result of purely fortuitous coincidence.

A rule of analogous import demands that test words be compared, as far as possible, only with synonyms from one of the oldest forms of the language, not from one of its modern derivative idioms. To render this principle clearer by contrast, I shall give an instance of an evident violation of the same. Rev. C. Petitot, in an essay on the Déné languages,† gives the consonance between the Déné word *adi*, "he has said," and the French *a dit*, as in some way confirmatory of the unity of race between the American and the European nations from whose vocabulary the two words are extracted. Now, it seems to me that the

* In another paper, "Déné Roots," published in the Transactions of the Canadian Institute (Vol. II.), I have called attention to the absence of diacritical marks denotive of this explosion in the texts of the "Mountain Chant" by Dr. W. Matthews, hinting at the same time that, as the words which lack it are otherwise quite identical with their northern Déné equivalents, this most important peculiarity had possibly escaped the transcriber, and giving my reasons for this surmise. A copy of the paper sent to Dr. Matthews and accompanied by a note pointing to that passage failed to elicit a declaration that his rendering of the Navajo texts was faultless. Shall we apply in this case the maxim: *Qui tacet consentire videtur?*

† Paris, 1876, x. xvi.