

English a blend of different lexicons

A while back, I came across a little gem of a book called *I Never Knew There Was a Word For It* by Adam Jacot de Boinod (Penguin Books), and I fell in love with my mother tongue all over again. Who knew the English lexicon contained words such as 'bowerbird' (used to describe someone who collects useless objects), 'snoach' (to speak through your nose), and 'limbeck' (to brainstorm for new ideas with great cognitive effort) What this book taught me is that the English language is a skilled and prodigious lender of words.

On any given day, you may utter words such as 'yogurt' (Arabic), 'kowtow' (Mandarin), and 'aficionado' (Spanish), not stopping to think you've borrowed them from other languages.

The celebration of English is not just a celebration of English; it is a celebration of our creative human ability to appreciate other languages and to make their vocabulary a part of our own. Virginia Woolf was quite right when she said, "Language is wine upon the lips". English and all its borrowings are delicious. Taste, savour, and digest your mother tongue!

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