

George Borrow: Wild Wales (1862), Ausschnitt

Bsp. für Konzept des „Besitzes“ der Minderheitensprache durch ihre Sprecher

"Please to bring us some bread, cheese and ale," said I in Welsh to an elderly woman, who was moving about. - "Sar?" said she. - "Bring us some bread, cheese and ale," I repeated in Welsh.

"I do not understand you, sar," said she in English.

"Are you Welsh?" said I in English. - "Yes, I am Welsh!"

"And can you speak Welsh?"

"Oh yes, and the best."

"Then why did you not bring what I asked for?"

"Because I did not understand you."

"Tell her," said I to John Jones, "to bring us some bread, cheese and ale."

"Come, aunt," said John, "bring us bread and cheese and a quart of the best ale."

The woman looked as if she was going to reply in the tongue in which he addressed her, then faltered, and at last said in English that she did not understand.

"Now," said I, "you are fairly caught: this man is a Welshman, and moreover understands no language but Welsh."

"Then how can he understand you?" said she.

"Because I speak Welsh," said I.

"Then you are a Welshman?" said she.

"No I am not," said I, "I am English."

"So I thought," said she, "and on that account I could not understand you."

"You mean that you would not," said I. "Now do you choose to bring what you are bidden?"

"Come, aunt," said John, "don't be silly and cenfigenus, but bring the breakfast."

The woman stood still for a moment or two, and then biting her lips went away.

"What made the woman behave in this manner?" said I to my companion.

"Oh, she was cenfigenus, sir," he replied; "she did not like that an English gentleman should understand Welsh; she was envious; you will find a dozen or two like her in Wales; but let us hope not more."

Presently the woman returned with the bread, cheese and ale, which she placed on the table.

"Oh," said I, "you have brought what was bidden, though it was never mentioned to you in English, which shows that your pretending not to understand was all a sham. What made you behave so?"

"Why I thought," said the woman, "that no Englishman could speak Welsh, that his tongue was too short."

"Your having thought so," said I, "should not have made you tell a falsehood, saying that you did not understand, when you knew that you understood very well. See what a disgraceful figure you cut."

"I cut no disgraced figure," said the woman: "after all, what right have the English to come here speaking Welsh, which belongs to the Welsh alone, who in fact are the only people that understand it."