REFERENCES


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TRIONIC

A well-known instance of morpheme reanalysis occurred after the Polynesian place name, Bikini, was given to the skimpy two-piece bathing suit in the late 1940s. The word appeared to contain the Latinate bi- ‘double’; one result of that perception was monokini ‘brief bathing-suit bottom worn topless’.

Similarly, Sierra magazine has recently printed ads for Trionic boots and other Trionic footwear. Evidently Trionic derives from bionic ‘having superhuman strength or capacity’ (Random House Dictionary, 1983). Bionic, with the morpheme bio- ‘life’ from Greek, must have been reanalyzed as containing bi- ‘double’; the superhuman denotation was then one-upped by the substitution of tri-.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: There remains something unsettling about the notion of triplexity as applied to a pair of boots. (C.C.D.)