

# THE OED SUPPLEMENT (Se-Z)

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1972 saw the publication of the first volume of the revised Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, covering the letters A-G. The second volume, for the letters H-N, appeared in 1976, and the third volume, spanning O-Scz, appeared in 1983. Reviews of these three volumes were published in *Word Ways* in May 1977 and May 1983.

The fourth and final volume, running from Se to the end of the alphabet, was published in Britain in 1986. This fourth volume of the OED Supplement replaces the corresponding part of the 1933 Supplement, and continues the record of the English language in the last one hundred years. Back in 1983, the editors anticipated that the fourth volume would begin with the word SEA. But they were wrong; the first word in the fourth volume is SE, a 25-string musical instrument similar to the zither!

The following quotation is from the dust cover of the fourth volume of the new Supplement:

This last volume begins with a loanword from Chinese and ends with the name of a Russian tribe. In between are listed all the new words of the present century in the alphabetical range Se to Z, and numberless new senses of older words.

We live in an electronic world and the appearance in this volume of words like SNOBOL, TRANSPUTER, and WYSIWYG draws attention both to the wizardry of the green screen and to the manner in which its practitioners embrace the techniques of present-day word-formation. New vocabulary from all walks of life and from many countries is presented in great abundance, all treated in the OED manner with full historical apparatus - for example, SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY, S/HE (= she and he), SMOKEFALL (T S Eliot), SOFTWARE, SPUTNIK, SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIUS, TEST-TUBE BABY, TRUDEAUMANIA, WEEPING WILLOW (rhyming slang = pillow), WIMMIN (of Greenham Common), WIND OF CHANGE, WORRYGUTS (dialect), YERKISH (sign language for chimpanzees), Y-FRONT, YOGIBOGEYBOX (James Joyce), YOKELESS (D H Lawrence = female yokel), and ZEN BUDDHISM. Demotic elements of the language are also generously treated - the world of words like WATCHA (WOTCHER, etc), WILLYA, and various substitutes for the adverb YES (YEAH, YEP, YUS, etc) - as are the technical, scientific, and other general words of the present century.

Though I have not had a chance to thoroughly explore the depths of this fourth volume for items of especial logological interest, I have unearthed a few items while quickly scanning the pages:

1) There are at least four words which have a Q not followed by a U. Thus: SHQIP (Albanian) and SHQIPETAR (also Albanian), and SUZIE-Q (a modern dance) and SUZI-Q (the same modern dance).

2) Only two palindromes are obviously apparent. There's TATTAR-RATTAT (which appears in James Joyce's Ulysses) and ZIZ (a short sleep). ZIZ does appear in Webster's New International, Second Edition, as a Biblical proper name, but the OED Supplement's meaning is a lot more modern.

3) Tautonymic entries seem fairly plentiful. Here are eleven: SHABU-SHABU (a Japanese dish of beef or pork with vegetables), SHACK-SHACK (an instrument from the West Indies), SHAC-SHAC (the same West Indian instrument), SHISHI (a lion, as a decorative motif on Japanese porcelain), SHUSH-SHUSH (a repeated soft sound), TEUF-TEUF (the sound of exhaust gases from a petrol engine), TSK-TSK (to say disapprovingly), TUMP-TUMP (the sound of water slopping without splashing), WAKEY-WAKEY (veillee), WALLAH-WALLAH (a small boat used as a ferry for casual traffic in Hong Kong), and ZEZE (an African stringed instrument like a zither).

4) There are some words which have more than their fair share of consonants. For example: SPLACK (a sound suggestive of splashing), SPLIFF (a cannabis cigarette), STRYDDAG (an Afrikaner party political rally), SYNTH (a synthesizer), TSK and TSK (to say disapprovingly), and VRDDHI (a process of phonetic change).

5) There are several words which are known to word and number puzzlers. For example: SHRDLU ETAOIN (an unintelligible utterance), SPOONERISMUS (a spoonerism), TETRABOLO (a planar shape composed of four identical right-angled triangles joined by their edges), TETROMINO (a planar shape consisting of four identical squares joined by their edges), TOPONOMASTIC (pertaining to place-names), TROMINO (a planar shape formed by joining three identical squares by their edges), VERBALIZABILITY (that which can be expressed in words), VOXPOP (popular opinion), WORD-LADDER (a puzzle in which a word has to be converted into another of equal length by being taken through a series of word-changes, each word differing by one letter from the last), and WORD-WATCHER (someone who observes linguistic usage). I wondered in my May 1983 article whether TETROMINO and TROMINO would appear in the fourth volume - well, they have.

There are some other words of interest which don't fall into the above groupings. There's SHAHANSHAH (a title given to the Shah of Iran), which is notable for its one N, two Ss, three As, and for Hs. There's the second-order reduplication SOOGEE-MOOGEE (a mixture containing caustic soda used for cleaning the paintwork and woodwork of ships and boats). There's the Joycean SPILLSPILLING (repeatedly spilling), which has the first and second groups of five letters identical. TINKTINKIE (an African bird) and VASO-VASOSTOMY (an operation to reverse a vasectomy) both have the first four letters repeating themselves immediately. There's the amazing WAGGER-PAGGER-BAGGER (a waste-paper basket); there's WILLIAM-NILLIAM (a humorous form of WILLY-NILLY), another sec-

ond-order reduplication; and there's YAROOH (a cry of pain), which is a reversal of HOORAY.

An examination of the bibliography, which covers all four of the Supplement volumes, throws up some interesting facts. *Maledicta*, the International Journal of Verbal Aggression, is listed. This is given as the source of a 1977 illustrative quotation for the word SIGNIFYING; it probably appears elsewhere, too. David Parlett's book, *Penguin Book of Word Games*, is the source for a 1982 illustrative quotation for the word WORD-LADDER; strangely, though, this book has been omitted from the bibliography. Is this an error? Or do sources have to be quoted some minimum number of times before they gain a place in the bibliography? Laurence Urdang's *Verbatim* is listed in the bibliography, and is the source of a 1976 illustrative quotation for the word WORDSTER. *Word Study*, the G & C Merriam journal which appeared between 1925 and 1969, is listed in the bibliography, but I haven't been able to locate any instances of its being used as the source of an illustrative quotation. Unfortunately, the 'bibliograph does not contain entries for either *Word Ways* or Ross Eckler. Other notable names missing are Dmitri Borgmann, Martin Gardner, Ernest Dudeney, Sam Loyd, and Solomon Golomb.

I close this brief review with a list of approximately 200 words in the new Supplement, none of which appear in the Second or Third Editions of Webster's New International.

sapetir (at sepetir), seaquarium, secko, secondee, sedentarization, seismocardiography, sejhval (at sei whale), selectron, self-gravitation, semi-sequitur (at semi-), sensurround, sequelula, Serax, seroepidemiological, sexational, sexophone, sexploit, shabu-shabu, shack-shack, shac-shac, Shahanshah, sackf (at shaku), shazam, shcherbakovite, sheela-na-gig, shenaniganning, Sheridaniana, Sherlockiana, shishi, shitticism, show-bizzy, shox, Shqip, Shqipetar, shrdlu etaoin, shtup, shush-shush, Sicherheitsdienst, sicknik, siddown, sireland, sitzfleisch,  $\frac{6}{8}$  (at six), 16 mm (at sixteen), sixth-sensed, skaz, skeeze, skewgy-mewgy, skhod, skollydom, slaptongue, sleazo, slightlyally, slobgollion, slumscape, smellsip, smilesmirk, 'smorning, snackette, snax, snekkja, snoodle, snurge, soap-operatic, solacet, somepin, soogee-moogee, souvlaki, spacearium, spacelessness, spaz, speciesism, spectrophotofluorometer, spike-bozzle, spillspilling, splack, splib, spliff, Spock-marked, spooqslang, Spoonerismus, sportif, spritzig, sputnikitis, squattez-vous, squop, sterane, sthreal, stiffupperlippishness (at stiff, lla), STOLport, stotty, streepje, strippeuse, Struwelpeterdom, stryddag, subteenager, subvocalization, suggestology, sulphamethoxypyridazine, sumi-e, sunspecs, superfly, surfari, Suzie-Q, Suzi-Q, swazzle, swimathon, syncytiotrophoblastic, synroc, synth

taileron, talocalcaneonavicular, tamboo-bamboolist, tarryhooting, Tarzanesque, tattarrattat, technofreak, tegestology, 10-4 (at ten), tephrochronology, tetrachlorodibenzoparadoxin, tetromino, teuf-

teuf, texturology, thanx, thazz (at thass), thoughtography, 3D (at three), tibn (at tibbin), Timbuctoot, tinkinkie, tizz-wozz, tlaxtli, Todd-Ao, toponomastic, torgsin, torij, tranquillityite, trascine, traxcavator, trickeration, trikini, trizzie, tromino, tsck, tsk, tsk-tsk, tump-tump, turtleburger, 2LO (at two)

Ugandanization, ulyss

Valspeak, vandendriesscheite, varimax, vasovasotomy, vatje, veitchberry, verapamil, verbalizability, verdonid, vestock, video-porn, videophile, viff, villagization, vink, virgie, virguncule, viropexis, viserga, visking, vittelophag, vo-do-deo-do, voxpop, vrddhi

wagger-pagger-bagger, wakey-wakey, Walkman, wallah-wallah, weaponization, weggebobble, white-elephantine, whoompf, whozit, william-nilliam, wobulation, womanthrope, word-ladder, word-watcher, workaholism, wysiwyg

xenolalia, xerocopy, xography

yag, yarooH, yikes, ylid, ylidic, yodization, yogibogeybox, yu-zen-zome, yorgan

zaouia, zat, zeatin, zek, zeze, zhuyin, zipless, zita, ziz, zizzy, zob, zonkey, zooman, zug, zut, zygology

Now that all four OED Supplement sections are available, I hope that we shall see plenty of logological attention devoted to them over the coming years. I want to see a variety of **Word Ways** articles devoted to OED Supplement words, and I want to see the OED Supplement referred to as a standard source for logological specimens, in the same way that Webster's Second and Third Editions are.

#### **DING AN SICH: ANAPOEMS**

*This is the title of a slender volume of 25 pairs of poems by the metaphysical poet E.R. Cole and published for \$12.95 by Wainwright (Philadelphia) in 1985. Each pair is composed of the same basic word-stock, as*

*my oranges could spend whole life watching while I peel you  
I could spend my whole life watching while you peel oranges*

*the tree my hands reach is one of so many  
the one is many so reach my tree of hands*

*Long-time Word Ways readers will recognize these as examples of Vocabularyclept poetry, introduced by Howard Berger-son in 1969. It is gratifying to see this wordplay recognized by professional poets. Willard Espy writes "Every poem is in some sense a puzzle...The puzzles tease, and the poetry that reveals itself makes the teasing well worthwhile."*