

120 SUPERVOCALIC PERMUTATIONS

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Introduction

Long shrift has been given recently to AEIOU words. In the past, AEIOU words or phrases have included names and places as well. Perusing the neighborhood, one might spy a liquor market, customer parking, a public storage facility, or perhaps an ad for Austin Powers. To generalize the concept I introduce the term supervocalic to refer to a word, phrase, or proper noun which contains A,E,I,O,U once each, but no Y. (AEIOUY words are left as a separate exercise.) We break down supervocalics into four categories:

- Untainted words: solidly-written dictionary-sanctioned words (cauliflower, unsportsmanlike)
- Multiword phrases: commonly-used phrases either listed in dictionaries (oriental rug) or not (souvenir stand)
- Popular items: generally-known people, places or other cultural things like songs, movies, or companies (I Get Around, Dangerous Minds, Hair Club For men)
- Fun coinages: made-up words or phrases ranging from the plausible (ex-somnambulist) to the punnish (Marquis De Sod)

The November 1999 Word Ways featured a Dutch story by Hugo Brandt Corstius which included one Dutch word (sometimes a name or phrase) for each of the 120 possible orderings of AEIOU. While the Dutch language does afford the luxury of concatenated words like "punkrockfestival" it is still an impressive feat. In this English exercise, we up the ante with a new constraint. This story consists only of 120 supervocalic units, one for each AEIOU ordering, each standing on its own as a meaningful word or phrase, with no extraneous text. Supervocalic sentences (mice have no thumbs) are eschewed and arbitrary phrases (orange music) are avoided, although some character names are invented to fill certain slots. It tells the story of a wild party and the events therein.

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L.A. Coliseum: Roman Republic omnigatherum. An opium den. Six hundred and two consenting adults, pseudoplastic lounge lizards, let it hang out all through the night.

Milan Escudo--ultradespotic Puerto Rican studio head, born in the USA, Isadore Schultz--superimportant menopausal businesswoman; subchairperson, Levi Strauss & Co. Conceptualist children's author Linus Anderson. Baltimore club outfielder Ken

Sartorius. Armeno-Turkish lithographeur Istanbul Sheboz, ultramodernist painter-sculptor Jim Europa--uncongenial milquetoast, boatbuilder's subordinate. Top Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch (UT)--reputation, moral virtue, Supercatholic John Paul the First--righteous man, Episcopal Church denunciator.

Chuck Mangione pop instrumental in the background...Guitar hero circumrotates proscenium arch...Julia Roberts' facetious dialogue prevails upon Charles Bukowski...Adult video: mouthwatering platinum blondes autosexing...Cane-liquor...Cointreau...intravenous hallucinogens...dentolingual microcapsules: undissolvable blue diamonds (multimegaton containersful). Unconstrained euphoria!

Delusional behaviour: giant sunflowers...UFO spaceships...hippocentaurs somersaulting cirronebula...

"Vice squad cops! Eight thousand!" Gesticulators ask questions, manoeuvring. Anxiousness! Pandemonium! Circumcorneal maleruptions Rheumatoid lingual bones! Overpainful gastrocnemius ulcerations! Subcontinental Ebola virus?

No insurance? Unproblematic. Counteracting unattention, ambidextrous Belorussian brain surgeon authorizes: "Inoculate outpatients' bronchial tubes! Micronuclear beta globulin! Diesophagus ventriculograms!" Communicates precaution, encouraging superorganic macronutrients, low-bacterium peanut oil, burn calories! Au revoir!

Acknowledgement

Further supervocalic explorations will unfold in future articles. Thanks to Andrew Chaikin for substantial input.