

# IN GOODLY GREE: WITH GOODWILL

GEORGE H. SCHEETZ  
Sioux City, Iowa

I know that I was aware of the -gry puzzle by 1976 because, during the spring of that year, I clipped a newspaper advertisement solely because it contained the name Hungry Bungry. The version I remember was simple: "There are three words in English which end in -gry. What are they?"

Discovering Hungry Bungry ultimately inspired me to compile an onomasticon for *Word Ways* on the subject, which I submitted in 1977. A newcomer to *Word Ways*, I did not know that the puzzle had been introduced in the February 1976 issue. The editor informed me that Hungry Bungry was new to *Word Ways*, and he ran it in *Colloquy* in the August 1977 issue.

I kept accumulating examples and, in 1986, planned to publish a chapbook on the subject. In fact, I had begun work on this project when the article, "Ad Memoriam Demetrii," by Harry B. Partridge, appeared in the August 1986 *Word Ways*. Partridge mentioned a newly discovered -gry word, *ulgry*. The word *ulgry* aroused my curiosity, led me to track down a copy of the original source of the word, and finally to write "Captain Smith's Vlgrie" for the May 1987 *Word Ways*. (Partridge seems to delight in introducing hitherto forgotten -gry words; he used *higry pigry* in "Or'son Visits the Escorial" in the May 1989 issue.)

On February 23, 1987, the editor wrote, "I, too, have been collecting -gry words for some time, with the plan on having a *Word Ways* article about them. Perhaps you could be persuaded to give me an article on this topic?" I accepted the challenge and began to research the words he had supplied that were new to me.

In the process, I discovered even more -gry words, determined that some reported words were spurious, and found the following article taking shape.

## Historical Introduction

In 1975, the Bob Grant Talk Show, on WMCA-AM radio in New York, began (or, more likely, continued) a word game which subsequently spread throughout the United States. The same puzzle was broadcast at the same time in the Philadelphia-Delaware Valley area. It went something like this:

*There are only three words in the English language, all adjectives, which end in "-gry." Two are "angry" and "hungry." The third word describes the "state of the world today." What is it?*

The basic question ("what is the third word ending in -gry") came to the attention of newspaper "action lines" and library reference desks with a vengeance in 1975; the earliest published solution on record is dated May 1975.

### A Brief Survey of the Literature

The question first appeared in an "action line" column in Anita Richterman's "Problem Line" in *Newsday*, early in 1975, and the answer ran on May 9, 1975. It seems most readers heard the puzzle on the Bob Grant Talk Show on WMCA-AM radio. Solutions included puggry, aggry, and gry, but readers also submitted pingry (which Richterman could not verify), "skulldugry" (for skullduggery), "augry" (for augury), "overangry" (for overly angry), and lethargy (sic! sic! sic!). The puzzle is supposed to have appeared in the *Boston Globe's* "Ask the Globe" column sometime late in 1975, but this remains unverified by that newspaper; the question was not found on the reported date (4 December 1975).

The puzzle made the first of four brief appearances in "The Exchange," a notes and queries column in a library journal called *RQ*, in the Fall 1975 issue. A response by Nancy E. Gwinn ran in the Spring 1976 issue and cited various sources of information, including "Ask the Globe" and Richterman's "Problem Line."

The question debuted in *Word Ways* in February 1976. Ralph G. Beaman, in "A Philadelphia Story" in *Kickshaws*, posed a slightly different question:

*"What is the word ending in -gry, not angry or hungry, which is an adjective describing the state of the world today?" We are inclined to believe the poser did not put the restrictions on the word, thinking that there is only one word ending in -gry, unaware there are two common words.*

We may never know the exact wording of the ur-question.

Beaman turned to A.F. Brown's eight-volume *Normal and Reverse English Word List* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1963), but did not find a word that fit the criteria. He ultimately suggested that *meagry*, "having a meagre appearance," was a viable answer.

David Shulman, responding to Beaman's article in the August 1976 *Colloquy*, noted that, in his opinion, the word gry should not be allowed, since it is not part of a word ending in -gry. *Hungry Bungry* appeared in the August 1977 *Colloquy*.

Laurence E. Seits submitted a letter to the editor of *Names*, dated 20 June 1976. In considering the well-known version of the word game, Seits noted that the premises were wrong: there are many more than three words ending in -gry, and not all such words are adjectives. He, too, concluded that the correct answer was *meagry*.

L.M. Boyd, in *Boyd's Book of Odd Facts* (New York: Sterling Publishing Company, 1979, pp. 124-25) reported that *puggry* was the third word.

William Safire, in "On Language: Ending with 'Gry'" (The New York Times Magazine, 27 July 1980, pp. 8-10; reprinted, with commentary, in What's the Good Word?, New York: Times Books, 1982, pp. 63-64), decried the search for such words as "a hoax." Safire reported that David Guralnik, editor of Webster's New World Dictionary, stated -- erroneously, I might add -- that there are no other "native English words" other than angry and hungry, only imports.

Jack Mabley (Chicago Tribune, 17 April 1981, 1:14) devoted seven paragraphs to the -gry question in his newspaper column.

In "The Exchange: '-gry': A Second Time Around (RQ, Fall 1981, p. 19), Gail Porter Bardhan expanded on Gwinn's earlier column and offered comments on the librarian's role in answering such questions. Sandra Mooney, in "Lexicons, Librarians and Luck" (RQ, Winter 1983, pp. 141-42), expounded on the Normal and Reverse English Word List, using the -gry puzzle as a focal point.

Fred L. Worth, in The Colossal Book of Questions & Answers (New York: Arlington House, 1986 (c) 1984, pp. 203-204), gave pugry as the third word.

Rochelle Yates, in A Librarian's Guide to Telephone Reference Service (Hamden, Conn.: Library Professional Publications, 1986, pp. 52-53), quoted Safire's column and took a dim view of such questions.

Finally, the question surfaced once again in "Ann Landers" (26 December 1988), when "Boston Student" asked for four words ending in -gry, two of which were angry and hungry. Laurence E. Seits responded to Ann Landers and concluded his letter with this suggestion:

*Perhaps you would be interested in telephoning the "world's greatest expert" on this puzzle ... He is George Scheetz ... director of the Sioux City [Iowa] Public Library ...*

Ann Landers, a native Sioux Cityan, telephoned the author on December 30, 1988. Upon learning that there were (then) 48 known -gry words, she asked him to send her a letter, that day, to her home address -- using her Federal Express charge account. Her tongue-in-cheek response ran in her syndicated column on January 31, 1989. She decided that only words from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) were acceptable; she found five. (Ann, dear, there are actually at least 25 words ending in -gry in the OED.)

### Who Cares? (Part One)

At least two "authorities" have commented on the "English language" qualifier in the original puzzle. Ann Landers arbitrarily disqualified all words which she did not find in the OED and made it clear that she could not count presumably foreign words, such as "words of French origin whose endings were changed from e to y." David Guralnik, quoted earlier by William Safire, reported that only angry and hungry are "native English words," a claim refuted below.

Many English words are not "native" to the English language and, in the context of this puzzle, a word's etymology should not make any difference to the solution. In fact, the quest for words ending in -gry has long since transcended its puzzling origins.

### An Etymological Lagniappe

The 51 known -gry words may be sorted into four broad categories, according to their etymologies.

(1) "Classic" Old English words, distinguished by the -y suffix, from OE *ig*, signifying "characterized by, having, full of" or the like. Examples include *ahungry*; *angry*; *anhungry*; *begry*; *braggry*; *hungry*; *meagry*; and *unangry*. Dialectal variants include *hangry* and *hongry*. Combined forms include *dog-hungry*; *ever-angry*; *fire-angry*; *half-angry*; *heart-angry*; *heart-hungry*; *land-hungry*; *meat-hungry*; *self-angry*; *tear-angry*; and *wind-hungry*.

(2) Words with suffixes that derive from the form -ary, -ery, -ry, as in *rookery*, *Jewry*. Examples include *bewgry*; *bowgry*; *conygry* and its variant, *conygry*; and *skugry*.

(3) Words of French origin deriving from -gre (French -gré, signifying "pleasure, goodwill, will"). Examples include *maugry* and its variants *magry*, *malgry*, and *mawgry*. The name *Pingry* is probably of French origin as well, but is not necessarily derived from *gré*.

(4) Unique occurrences, including proper names, many of which may be homophonic in origin. Examples include *aggry*; *Ballingry*; *Echanuggry*; *gry* (derived from Latin and Greek) and *gry* (derived from *Romany*); *higry* *pigry*; *Hungry Bungry*; *Lisnagry*; *Pingry*; *pottingry*; *puggry* and *pugry*; *rungry*; *Shchigry* and its variants *Schtschigry*, *Shtchigry*, and *Tchigry*; *Tchangry*; *ulgry*; *vergry*; and *Wigry* and its variant *Vigry*.

Five of the above words might also be considered part of a fifth category, or at least subsets of the other four groupings. These are word forms not actually found, but the logical existence of which are inferred. Examples include *bewgry*, *bowgry*, *malgry*, *ulgry*, and *vergry*. Doubtless, some readers will object to these words. However, there is a sound basis for accepting such inferred word forms.

### Finding New Words

Serendipity is the faculty of making fortunate and unexpected discoveries by accident; the word *serendipity* was coined by Horace Walpole after the characters in the fairy tale The Three Princes of Serendip, who made such discoveries. Many of the known -gry words were discovered serendipitously.

Rather than depend solely on serendipity for additional words, the following search strategy was developed. First, a list of alternate spellings for -gry was developed, from endings found in variant forms of known -gry words: -gary, -ger, -gery, -gory, -grai, -grave, -gre, -greave, -gree, -grei, -grey, -gri, -grie, -gris.

Of course, other spellings are possible.

The next two steps entailed searching each ending in the Normal and Reverse English Word List (NREWL) to compile a list of words which might include an obsolete or variant form which ends in -gry, and finally, looking up each word in the OED. (Words may be verified first in the dictionary cited in the NREWL.)

This process has not been completed, but one or two examples will serve to illustrate its possibilities. By looking up -gery in the NREWL, we find that there are 94 words with that ending. The ending -gre results in 14 words, to which serendipity added **Verdigre** <vu(h)r'duh-gree>, a town in Knox County, Nebraska. (Verdigre is a classic example of local pronunciation ultimately causing a change in spelling. The town, located on Verdigris Creek, was originally named Verdigris Valley.) There are 8 words listed that end in -gary.

An obsolete form of **beggary**, for example, is **begry** or **begrye**. In comparing lists, we find the words **buggery** and **bugre**. Might there have been a form spelled **bugry** or **buggry**? It so happens that the OED cites **bewgrye** [v.r. **bowgre**] from a 16th century use of the word **buggery**. The existence of the forms **bewgry** and **bowgry** may thus be inferred from **bewgrye** and **bowgre**.

Two new electronic versions of the OED present future avenues of research. Oxford now maintains the second edition of the OED in an online version, using software developed by the University of Waterloo's Centre for the New Oxford English Dictionary, in Ontario. A more limited electronic version of the first edition is available in a CD-ROM version published by Oxford University Press and Tri-Star Publishing. (A CD-ROM, for "compact disc read-only memory," is a 5½-inch disk similar to the popular audio compact disc. It is capable of storing the equivalent of 275,000 printed pages, or 1,500 floppy disks. It is reliable, relatively inexpensive to manufacture, and used with a CD-ROM reader and a microcomputer.)

According to a Tri-Star representative, the compact disc version has limited reverse-dictionary functions and cannot search for suffixes, so it is not possible to locate all the word forms ending in -gry in the OED. The Waterloo system can isolate suffixes with ease, but is not commercially available.

For more information on this topic, read Cullen Murphy's "Caught in the Web of Bytes" (The Atlantic Monthly, February 1989, pp. 68-70); Karl Beiser's review, "Microcomputing: The OED on CD" (Wilson Library Bulletin, March 1989, pp. 72-73); or contact Tri-Star Publishing, 475 Virginia Drive, Fort Washington PA 19034.

It is very likely that there are additional place names, and perhaps personal names as well, which end in -gry that will only come to light serendipitously. Much work remains for those interested in ferreting out words ending in -gry.

## Spurious and Doubtful Words

Listed below are a number of proffered -gry words which, upon investigation, do not qualify. In most cases, spelling or grammatical errors were found, but some words could simply not be verified as reported.

1. Orthographical or grammatical errors:
  - a. **augry** for **augury** (submitted to *Newsday*)
  - b. **haegry**, reportedly in the *English Dialect Dictionary*, but found to be spelled **haegrie** or **haigrie**. The etymology of **haigrie** makes it difficult to infer the existence of **haegry**.
  - c. **Jagry**, reportedly in *The Times Atlas*. According to Paul Middleton of Times books, "The Permanent Committee on Geographic Names was unable to find any reference to that name but there is a **Jagny**, in France."
  - d. **Kazingry**, reportedly in the *Dictionary of Biographical Reference* (1966 reprint of third edition of 1889), by Lawrence B. Phillips, but found to be spelled **Kazincry, Francis**; in *Lippincott's Pronouncing Biographical Dictionary* (1901), by Joseph Thomas, as **Kazinczy, Francis**; in *Webster's Biographical Dictionary* (1980) as **Kazinczy, Ferenc**.
  - e. **overangry** for **overly angry** (submitted to *Newsday*)
  - f. **skulldugry** for **skullduggery** (submitted to *Newsday*)
2. Not found as reported:
  - a. **Depelegry**, reportedly in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, but not found in main index, nor in 'supplements' indexes. According to the editorial offices at Catholic University, the text is not computerized, so it is not possible to easily prove or disprove the report.
  - b. **hoagry**, reportedly in *Webster's First*, which might either be the *New International Dictionary of the English Language* (1909) or earlier editions published by Noah Webster. According to Kathleen M. Doherty of Merriam-Webster, Inc., "we have no evidence that any such word ever existed. It has never been entered in any Merriam-Webster dictionary, nor did Noah enter it in his. We have no citations for its use in our files, which at this point contain over thirteen and a half million citations." The word **hoage**, an obsolete form of **hoja, khoja**, a teacher, from Turkish and Persian, appears in the OED.
  - c. **Hugry**, reportedly in *An Atlas of Classical Geography* (1856), by William Hughes, but does not occur in the index.
  - d. **madiungry**, reportedly in the OED, but, according to Eric C. Dann of the Oxford Word and Language Service (OWLS), "madiungry does not occur in the OED or in its Supplements."
3. Wishful thinking:
  - a. **Gregry** for **Gregory**; the author likes to believe that this form of **Gregory** has been used as a personal name, but has yet to find any evidence to support this belief.



## Who Cares? (Part Two)

The -gry puzzle has not been without controversy. I dare say a defense is not necessary, at least not to logologists. However, this particular puzzle has served to focus attention on some writers' ire at such queries; I think of such responses as expressions of unrighteous indignation. Full citations for the sources that follow are found in the section entitled A Brief Survey of the Literature.

William Safire decried the search for such words as "a hoax, designed to provoke hours of useless brain-racking." Librarian Rochelle Yates not only quoted Safire, but judged the conundrum an "irritating exercise," an attitude not condoned by her profession.

Jack Mabley noted that all the -gry words he listed "are in Webster's New International Dictionary, which is The Tribune's final authority." Upon naming other -gry words, Mabley went on to state that they "may be words, but they didn't make Webster's Third."

Ann Landers noted that certain "words were not in any of the four dictionaries I have at home or the three dictionaries in my office. I'm sure they appeared in some musty old English dictionary, but if I can't find them, I don't count 'em."

However, Gail Porter Bradham offered some very pointed remarks on the librarian's role in answering such questions:

*Bill Ferguson of the Lawrence (Mass.) Eagle-Tribune ... comments: "The problem is that these 'words' are not listed in our large American Heritage Dictionary, nor do they appear in the more detailed dictionary in our local library. Those of us who occasionally get hung up on questions of this type, consider it 'dirty pool' when the announced answers don't appear in legitimate dictionaries."*

*This column editor will provide one response to Mr. Ferguson's complaint ... First, the original list was culled from well-established sources: Webster's Third New International Dictionary; Oxford English Dictionary; Webster's New International Dictionary, 2d ed.; Funk & Wagnall's Crossword Puzzle Word Finder; Walker's Rhyming Dictionary of the English Language; and Funk & Wagnall's Standard Dictionary (new ed.). These may not all be available in smaller libraries, but photocopies of the necessary pages can be obtained through the interlibrary loan services of your local library. Second, the purpose of this column is to find answers and/or information not available at the local level. It seems more important that a complete answer be found, whatever the location or nature of the source, than that the questioner receive a negative (i.e., inconclusive) answer.*

To which the author says, "Huzzah!"

### Words Ending in -Gry, with Sources

01. aggry: FW (as "aggry-bead"); OED:1:182 (1819, as "aggry, aggri"); W2 (as "aggry, aggri"); W3 (as "aggry bead")
02. ahungry: FW; OED:1:194 (1601; as "a-hungry"); W2

03. angry: FW; OED:1:329; W2; W3
04. anhungry: OED:1:332 (1607; as "an-hungry"); W2
05. Ballingry: not to be confused with Ballingarry or Ballingearry:  
Bartholomew:40; CLG:151; RD:164, pl.49
06. begry: OED:1:770,767 (14th c.; as "beggeri, begry(e)")
06. bewgry: OED:1:1160 (1552; as "bewgrye [v.r. bowgre]")
07. bowgry: OED:1:1160 (as "bewgrye [v.r. bowgre]")
08. braggry: OED:1:1047 (1633).  
Bungry: SEE Hungry Bungry
09. cony-gry: cf. conyngry: OED:2:956
10. conyngry: OED:2:956 (ca.1521)
11. dog-hungry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
12. Echanuggry: Century
13. ever-angry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
14. fire-angry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
15. <sup>1</sup>gry: from Latin gry: OED:4/2:475 (1594 as v.i. and 1623 as n.); W2
16. <sup>2</sup>gry: from Romany grai: W2
17. half-angry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
18. hangry: OED:1:329 (ca.1386)
19. heart-angry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
20. heart-hungry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
21. higry pigry: OED:5/1:285 (1773)
22. hongry: EDD:3:282; OED:5/1:459 (1526)
23. hungry: FW; OED:5/1:459; W2; W3
24. Hungry Bungry: name of a sandwich served at the Giraffe,  
a now-defunct restaurant in Century Twentyone, a hotel in  
Champaign, Illinois: DI
25. land-hungry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
26. Lisnagry: not to be confused with Lisnacree (county Down)  
or Lisnageer (county Monaghan): Bartholomew:489
27. magry: cf. maugry: OED:6/2:36 (as "magrei, -rey, -rie, -ry:  
see maugre"), 6/2:247-48 (ca.1550)
28. malgry: cf. maugry: OED:6/2:247 (as "malgrye")
29. maugry: FW (as "maugree"); OED:6/2:247-48 (1548)
30. mawgry: cf. maugry: OED:6/2:247 (ca.1350 and 1483; as "mau-  
grey, mawgr(e)y")
31. meagry: OED:6/2:267 (1603)
32. meat-hungry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
33. Pingry: Bio-Base; HPS:293-94, 120-21
34. pottingry: Jamieson:3:532; OED:7/2:1195 (1500-20; as "pottinga-  
rie, -gry")
35. puggry: FW (as "pugree, puggry"); OED:8/1:1573 (19th c.; as  
"pugree, -aree, puggri, -gry, -gery, pagri"); W2 (as "pug-  
gree, puggry"); W3 (as "puggaree, puggree")
36. pugry: cf. puggry: OED:8/1:1574 (as "pugree, -ry, variants  
of puggree")
37. rungry: EDD:5:188
38. Schtschigry: cf. Shchigry: LG/1:2045; OSN:97
39. self-angry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
40. Shchigry: also spelled Schtschigry, Shchigary, Shchigri, Shtch-  
igry, Tchigry: CLG:1747; Johnston:594 (as "Tchigry"); OSN:97,  
206; Times:185, pl.45



41. Shtchigry: cf. Shchigry: LG/1:2045; LG/2:1701
42. skugry: Jamieson:4:266; OED:9/2:156, 9/1:297 (a.1568)
43. Tchangry: Johnston:594; LG/1:435,1117 (as "Changri, Changeri, Kankaree, Kankiri")
44. Tchigry: cf. Shchigry: Johnston:594
45. tear-angry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
46. ulgry: Partridge (as "ulgry"); Scheetz (as "ulgry" and "Vlgrie"); Smith:24-25 (as "Vlgrie" and "Vlgries")
47. unangry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")
48. vergry: OED:12/1:123 (16th c.; as "vergrys")
49. Vigry: CLG:2090
50. Wigry: CLG:2090; Lis; NAP:xxxix; Times:220, pl.62; WA:948
51. wind-hungry: W2 ("Self-explanatory Combination")

Bartholomew, John. *Gazetteer of the British Isles: Statistical and Topographical*. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1887.

Bio-Base. [Microfiche.] Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1980.

CLG = *The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World*. Edited by Leon E. Seltzer. Morningside Heights, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, by arrangement with J. B. Lippincott Company, 1952.

Century = "India, Northern Part." *The Century Atlas of the World*. (Volume X of *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopaedia*.) New York: The Century Co., 1897, 1898, pp. 103-104. (Echanuggry may be found on the inset map, "Calcutta and Vicinity"; Key: 104 M 2.)

DI = *Daily Illini* [University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign]. "Hungry Bungry" appears in an advertisement for The Giraffe run sometime during Spring 1976.

EDD = *The English Dialect Dictionary*. 5 Volumes. Edited by Joseph Wright. London: The Times Book Club, 1898. [Form: EDD:volume:page]

FW = *Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary of the English Language*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1943.

HPS = *The Handbook of Private Schools: An Annual Descriptive Survey of Independent Education*, 66th ed. Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, Inc., 1985.

Jamieson, John. *An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, new rev. ed. 4 volumes plus supplement. Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1879-87. [Form: Jamieson:volume:page]

Johnston, [Alexander] Keith. *Index Geographicus...* Edinburgh, London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1864.

LG/1 = *Lippincott's Gazetteer of the World: A Complete Pronouncing Gazetteer or Geographical Dictionary of the World*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1888, (c) 1882.

LG/2 = *Lippincott's New Gazetteer: A Complete Pronouncing Gazetteer or Geo-graphical Dictionary of the World*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1906.

Lis, Anna. Letter to the Author, 13 July 1987. (1 p.) Lis is the Information Officer, Embassy of the Polish People's Republic, Washington, D.C.

NAP = *Narodowy Atlas Polski*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1973-1978. [Polish language]

- OED = The Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 1933. [Form: OED:volume/part number if applicable: page(date of earliest known usage)]
- OSN = U.S.S.R. Volume 6, S-T. Official Standard Names Approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names. Gazetteer No. 42, 2nd ed. Washington: Geographic Names Division, U.S. Army Topographic Command, June 1970.
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- RD = The Reader's Digest Complete Atlas of the British Isles, 1st ed. London: The Reader's Digest Association, 1965.
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- Times = *The Times Atlas of the World*, 7th ed. 1985.
- W2 = Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, Unabridged, Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, 1934.
- W3 = Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged. Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, 1961.
- WA = *The World Atlas: Index-Gazetteer*. Moscow: Chief Administration of Geodesy and Cartography under the Council of Ministries of the USSR, 1968. [Cover title: *The World Atlas*, 2nd ed. Index of Geographical Names]

### CRAZY ENGLISH

*Few, if any, authors have fallen more in love with the English language than Richard Lederer. His enthusiasm for the oddities of our language shines forth on nearly every page of Crazy English (Pocket Books, 1989; \$16.95). Most of his topics -- from oxymorons to irregular plurals, from palindromes to the ding-dong theory of word formation -- are well-known to *Word Ways* readers; in fact, Lederer has written several articles that appear (in modified form) in this book. However, the book should be a fine introduction to the varieties of wordplay to anyone unfamiliar with the genre -- say, a high-school student who finds English class boring. (I'll bet that the students of St. Paul's School in Concord NH, where Lederer has taught for 28 years, can't make such a complaint; a February 1980 *Word Ways* article recounted his duel with a student to construct the shortest possible sentence using nine different phrase and subordinate clause types.)*

*For other Lederer delights, read Get Thee to a Punnery (reviewed February 1989) or Anguished English (reviewed May 1989); this trilogy offers hours of delightful browsing.*