

A DECADE OF NEOLOGISMS

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Logologists everywhere welcome the appearance of a new dictionary, particularly if it fills a niche not occupied by ones already on the market. Such a dictionary appeared in the late summer of 1973: A Dictionary of New English, edited by Clarence L. Barnhart, Sol Steinmetz and Robert K. Barnhart. Published simultaneously in Great Britain (Longman) for 3.60 pounds sterling and in the United States (Barnhart / Harper & Row) for \$12.50, this dictionary covers words, initials, phrases, abbreviations, acronyms and meanings that have come into the vocabulary of the English language during the period 1963 to 1972. The new words and phrases were collected from the reading of more than half a billion words of text from American, British and Canadian sources (newspapers, magazines and books). The 5000 or so entries in the dictionary were selected from over a million quotations, a collection exceeded only by those used in the preparation of Webster's Third Edition and the Oxford English Dictionary. The beginning date of 1963 "marks the termination of the record of new English, except for sporadic examples, now available to the general public" -- presumably a reference to Webster's Third which represented an enormous advance on all previous records of the English language when it was completed in 1961 (we can't explain the two-year difference between 1961 and 1963). The dictionary's compilers claim that "by checking the largest and most reliable standard English dictionaries to ascertain that none of the entries in the selection (in A Dictionary of New English) had appeared in them before, we were able to substantiate the judgment that these words and meanings were 'new'". From what we have seen of the dictionary, this implication -- that there is no overlap between the contents of this dictionary and standard English-language dictionaries available in 1963 -- is probably true. Although there are many familiar-looking words in the dictionary, their meanings are unrecorded in pre-1963 dictionaries.

What do the words in this dictionary look like? Prefixes that are particularly productive of new formations are ASTRO-, BIO- and ELECTRO- as illustrated by ASTROBUG, ASTRODOG, ASTROMONK and ASTRONAUTESS; BIODETERIORATION, BIOETHICS, BIOHAZARD and BIOSATELLITE; ELECTRODELIC, ELECTROFILTER, ELECTROGASDYNAMIC and ELECTROMUSIC. Not only scientifically-flavored prefixes generate new words; MINI- has spawned MINICRUISE, MINIMOVIE, MINITANKER and MINITRACTOR. Similarly, SUB- has given rise to SUBCOMPACT, SUBLANGUAGE, SUBPROFESSIONAL and SUBTEXT.

Suffixes, too, give birth to many new items. Two particularly notable ones are -ESQUE and -MANSHIP. The former has spawned a whole passel of new words such as DISNEYESQUE, GERSHWINESQUE, MCLUHANESQUE and ROBOTESGUE. The latter appears in MARX-MANSHIP, QUOTEMANSHIP, STOCKMANSHIP and WINEMANSHIP.

The dictionary includes numerous political and semipolitical words. There's AGNEWISM, CUBANOLOGIST, GUEVARIST, MAOIZE and NIXONOMICS. There's also CHICANO, HARDHATTISM, NADERISM, NEOFEMINIST, WASPDOM and WOMEN'S-LIBBER. The Vietnam war helped give birth to many new words, words such as CAMBODIANIZE, GUNSHIP, HELIBORNE, MEDEVAC, VIETNIK and ZAP. The preoccupation with the environment during the late sixties and early seventies has been accompanied by a growth of related words; the dictionary tells us about ANTIPOLLUTIONIST, ECOCATASTROPHE, ECOCIDE, ECOCRISIS and ENVIRON-POLITICS.

Science gives us several names for recently-created elements. There are HAHNIUM, KURCHATOVIVM and RUTHERFORDIUM, not to mention ELEMENT 104 and ELEMENT 105. Other scientific terms include ANTIQUARK, FIBEROPTIC, INTELSAT, LUNOKHOD, POLY-WATER, SKYLAB and STARQUAKE.

Many of the new words convey ideas that require several words to express; because of this, they are centipede-like conglomerations of familiar word elements. A quick flick through the dictionary reveals the following ten lengthy specimens:

ANTIENTERTAINMENT	MEGAHALLUCINOGEN
BOURGEOISIFICATION	MICROEARTHQUAKE
CONTAINERSHIPPING	NEUROPHARMACOLOGICAL
COUNTERDEMONSTRATOR	PSYCHEDELICATESSEN
INTERGENERATIONAL	UNDERCHARACTERIZATION

An interesting tendency of the new English, as evidenced by the dictionary, is the use of many words as verbs which the reader is more familiar with as nouns. All of the following words are accompanied by impeccable citations for their use as verbs: BOOGALOO, DATA-BANK, DISCOTHEQUE, FRITZ, JET-HOP, MICKEY-MOUSE, MIRV and UNCLE-TOM.

So far we have not felt it necessary to define any of the words that we have selected from the dictionary. All are reasonably familiar or, at worst, are composed of familiar parts, from which the meaning of the whole can usually be gleaned. However, there are many words in the dictionary which have no obvious relationship to already-existing words. Some examples, with meanings given in parentheses, are: BI (sexually involved with both sexes), GOCK (a foul, nasty substance), GROK (to communicate meaningfully), JOR (part of a Hindu musical form), MBIRA (a musical instrument), NGWEE (the monetary unit of Zambia since 1969), QANAT (an underground tunnel),

QIANA (a. synthetic fabric related to nylon), REJASING (reusing junk as something else, a near-acronym), RURP (a type of iron peg), UNK-UNKS (a series of unknowns), and ZVENO (an experimental state farm of Soviet Russia).

Not only does the dictionary list words, but it also lists phrases or terms -- some familiar, others strange. A score of these should give some idea of the dictionary's coverage:

BAG JOB	SILENT MAJORITARIAN
HOT PANTS	WANKEL ENGINE
HOMO AMERICANUS	PEACE SYMBOL
KINKY BOOT	LIMOUSINE LIBERAL
URBAN SPRAWL	JESUS FREAK
MEN'S LIB	RO-RO SHIP
OP-ED PAGE	METER MAID
GRAN TURISMO	BROWN POWER
FUTURE SHOCK	GAME PLAN
LAZY DOG	TRACK RECORD

In its exclusion (rather than inclusion) of many words, the dictionary seems to be remiss. We have already mentioned some names for the elements with atomic numbers 104 and 105, but no mention is made of LAWRENCIUM, the element with atomic number 103. This was not included in Webster's Third, and we would have thought it was a fitting item for including in the dictionary. LASER, another non-entry in Webster's Third, didn't make A Dictionary of New English either, although its derivative forms LASABLE and LASE are both in. UFOLOGY never made Webster's back in 1961 and is similarly overlooked by the editors of this dictionary, although its derivatives UFOLOGICAL and UFOLOGIST are listed. Webster's Third didn't list NANOSECOND as a main entry, and we can see no good reason for A Dictionary of New English doing likewise, especially when it includes NANOMETER, NANOVOLT and NANOWATT.

There don't seem to be many items in the dictionary of obvious logological interest. We note the fourteen-letter tautonym ENGLISH ENGLISH, a synonym for BRITISH BRITISH, English as it is spoken in England. The second-order reduplication MAXI-TAXI appears in the dictionary, as does the four-Z word BIZZAZZ. ROTOVATOR is given as the name of a power-driven tool, the older (and palindromic) name ROTAVATOR being mentioned only in the etymology. ROTOVATOR was mentioned in the May 1973 Word Ways as one of the tiny band of nine-letter palindromes; it would be most disappointing if the lexicographers of this world allowed the spelling ROTOVATOR to predominate over the more etymologically correct ROTAVATOR (the word derives from the term "rotary cultivator"). The adjective PANGRAMMATIC and the source noun PANGRAM are both included in the dictionary. Interestingly, the citation given for the former was taken from Time Magazine's review of Dmitri Borgmann's Language on Vacation.

All in all, this is a very welcome dictionary, containing a multitude of items that no other dictionary has yet seen fit to publish. Our main criticism of the dictionary is that it contains only a little more than 5000 entries in its 512 pages -- a much larger number would have been more welcome. A comparison of the dictionary's contents with our own personal file of neologisms reveals a plethora of terms that could have been included. Still, perhaps the editors felt that they ought to wait a few more years before giving some of these specimens full-hearted acceptance into the formally recorded English language.

We finish up with ten more words from the new English:

SMOGOUT
YOUTHQUAKE
POLYOMINO
PENTOMINO
HOMOSEX

UNISEX
FINLANDIZATION
BANGZONE
MONOKINI
ENDSVILLE

PSEUDONYMS, NICKNAMES, SOBRIQUETS, PEN NAMES

Readers of *Word Ways* interested in onomastics will welcome the appearance of the Handbook of Pseudonyms and Personal Nicknames (Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J.) compiled by Harold S. Sharp and published in two volumes in 1972. Basically, it consists of two (interleaved) alphabetical lists of 25,000 nicknames and 15,000 surnames: each nickname has associated with it the names of all persons, living and dead, who have borne it; each surname has associated with it all the nicknames by which that person is (or was) known. Sometimes both the nickname and the surname are well-known (Richard M. Nixon - Tricky Dick); sometimes the surname is well-known but the nickname is not (Edgar Allan Poe - The Wizard of Word Music); sometimes neither the surname nor the nickname are common knowledge (James Reeside - The Prince of Mail Contractors). A hasty scan of the contents suggests that *The Father Of ...* is the commonest sobriquet; there are approximately 350 different fathers represented, but only 16 mothers (Women's Lib take note).