

A LIVING SUFFIX: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE SUFFIX —ee IN ENGLISH

HENRY LOWICK-RUSSELL T.

Area de Inglés

"... the —ee termination is becoming more and more a living suffix in English."

H. W. FOWLER: *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*.

The study of words leads us to everwidening fields where we find glimpses of history, traditions, custom, distant views of the founders of the race.

In the words of G. M. Trevelyan: "One outcome of the Norman conquest was the making of the English language... Anglo-Saxon was exiled from the hall and bower, and was despised as a peasant's jargon... During the three centuries when our native language was a peasants' dialect, it lost its clumsy inflexions and elaborate genders... at the same time it was enriched by many French words and ideas. The English vocabulary is mainly French in words relating to war, politics, justice, religion, hunting, cooking and art"¹.

The SUFFIX -EE is an interesting little problem.

"-EE is a noun-forming suffix. It is the strong form of the French -é, from Latin -atus, and denotes a person who takes a passive share in an action or agreement, the corresponding active agent being denoted by -or, -er"².

It is the French past participle ending -é (masc.) used to indicate the object of an action, the one to whom an act is done or on whom a right is conferred. Thus, *lessee* is a

person to whom a house is let on lease; *grantee* is a person who receives a grant; *employee* is a person employed by another.

There are relatively few of these words in the language, but the process, though slow, is constantly adding new terms. As we shall see, it is a living suffix.

Most of them have been up to now technical terms of English law, a fact that should not surprise us if we remember that "it was in the 13th century that English law and English legal institutions began to take the form that they were destined to keep for the future"³.

Nearly all the French past participles we have in modern English adapted themselves to the old Anglo-Saxon suffix -ed (A. S. -ed, -ad, -od), but a few of them kept the suffix as -ee, and their number grows little by little. In this the second half of the twentieth century, the suffix -ee is going through a surprising phase of unprecedented expansion, especially in American English.

One peculiarity of this suffix would be enough to merit study, and it is the fact that it is stressed. Suffixes are not stressed in English: -ee is an exception, and it is strongly stressed. Nevertheless, so ingrained is the tendency to move the stress back in English that

¹G. M. Trevelyan: *History of England*.

²Henry Sweet: *A new English grammar, logical and historical*.

³Logan Pearsall Smith: *The English Language*.

here and there we find speakers who stress the *o* in words such as *appointee* and *nominee*. This is more common in the United States of America.

In general, these nouns have a passive meaning, but «some of these derivatives have no special active word corresponding to them, such as *patentee*, *referee*, *trustee*. In these words the passive meaning is prominent, and *patentee*, for instance, may be taken to mean either 'one to whom a patent is granted' or 'one who takes out a patent'; and in some cases -ee is a purely active suffix, as in *absentee*, *devotee*, *refugee*.» (H. Sweet: Id).

The object of this work is to see how the suffix -ee has acted on the English language in the past, and is now acting in our century, helping to build new words used at different levels.

Abandonee. 1848⁴. One to whom anything is formally abandoned; spec. an underwriter.

Absentee. 1557. Noun and adjective: one who absents himself from his estate or his office, post, duty or country. It is used more as an adjective than as a noun.

"They knew of the *absentee* landlord of the parable".

(Hugh J. Sconfield: The Bible was Right.)

Though basically a legal term, I have found it used in poetry. John L. Sweeney, Lecturer in Education and Curator of the Poetry Room at Harvard University, begins his poem 'Separation' thus:

Make the most of it, mood,
Conjurer of Remembrances,
The present's most feeling *absentee*,
Your only food and good
Is present me.

Abusee. (To abuse, 1486; abuser, 1646). One who is abused. Little used outside legal circles.

Addressee. The person to whom a document is addressed. Address (noun) 1539.

"Postage will be paid by addressee."

In the following example, we shall see that it may be used in a slightly different sense, to indicate the person who is at the receiving end of a gesture:

"As every prudent Italian knows, it is perfectly legal and frequently necessary to fold the middle fingers back under the thumb and jab the first and little fingers down at the ground. Such 'horns' ward off evil spirits. But if the fingers point upward, ah, the 'corna' instantly sneers that the *addressee* is a cuckold."

(Time Magazine, April 9, 1965).

Advertisee. (to announce, as in a journal, 1750). A person advertised for, or aimed at by advertising.

Amputee. (to amputate, 1638). One who is about to lose, or has suffered the loss of a limb through amputation.

"Mr. Quieno is a prospective *amputee*", Duane said for the benefit of those who had not seen the case before. (Richard Frede: The Interns.)

Appellee. 1537. Law. 1) One who is appealed against;

2) The defendant in an appeal, now called the 'respondent.'

Appointee. (to appoint, 1601). One who is nominated to an office, or one in whose favour a power of appointment is exercised. "The Senate had turned down Hoover's last *appointee* to the Court."

(Katherine Drinker Bowen: Yankee from Olympus).

Assignee. 1467. Law. A person to whom an assignment is made.

⁴Earliest date of apparition of the word, as established in the Oxford English Dictionary. Obviously, these words must have been spoken long before by many people.

1494. Law. One appointed to perform a duty, enjoy some right.

Bailee. 1528. Law. One to whom a bailment is made, that is, the person to whom goods are bailed. The verb has two meanings:

- 1) to deliver (goods, etc.) in trust for a special purpose;
- 2) to procure the release of, by giving bail. "All this shall be carefully executed on the part of the *bailee*". 1602.

Bargee. 1666. A bargeman (from 'barge', plus -ee. Irreg.)

You spent most of your time at the Embassy standing next to a bar table, swilling drinks as if you were a couple of *bargees* on a run ashore."

(Anthony Trew: Two Hours to Darkness).

Conferee. The verb 'to confer' has two meanings:

a) Transitive: to grant, to bestow graciously, as an honour or favour. Hence, *conferee*, a person upon whom something is conferred.

b) Intransitive: to converse, talk together, to compare views, hold conference, to consult. 1545. "They sit conferring by the Perler fire" (Shak. Tam. Shrew).

"What brought all the brass to Hawaii's Camp Smith was a two-day conference on the deteriorating U.S. position in Southeast Asia. Facing the semicircular table at which the key *conferees* sat, were multicolored lights, positioning every vessel in the U.S. Pacific Fleet." (Time Magazine, June 12, 1964).

"This author and most of his fellow *conferees* ... share this view ..."

(I. de Sola Pool: 'Trends in Context Analysis', University of Illinois Press, 1959). It will be noted that both examples refer to meaning 'b) Intransitive: to hold conference, to consult'. In the first example we find a reference to members of the armed forces who have been

called to a conference for consultation, and who are therefore 'the object of an action'.

In the second example, however, the meaning is far less clear. Actually, *conferee* has here the force of 'one who does or participates in'; therefore, it should logically take the active suffix -er. It is clear, nevertheless, that all speakers reject this rather awkward ending and prefer to keep the -ee ending.

Confessee. (to confess. 1586). One who is confessed. (Rare) One to whom confession is made.

Consignee. (to consign. 1653). A person to whom goods are consigned or shipped. Consignatory.

"My *consignees* received me with the usual business heartiness."

(Joseph Conrad: A Smile of Fortune).

Debauchee. 1661. One given to sexual excesses; esp. a libertine. In this case it is the person himself who causes himself harm; thus being the 'object of an action'.

"The dazed prisoners—four coiners, a sadistic *debauchee* and two madmen—were let out into the glare and sulphurous air of the new freedom."

(Arthur Bryant: The Years of Endurance, 1793-1802).

Poets enrich the language continually, giving added nuances to old words. Emily Dickinson, in this case, adds dignity to a rather bedraggled term. Thus, in 'I taste a liquor never brewed', she says:

Inebriate of air am I,
And *debauchee* of dew,
Reeling through molten summer days,
From inns of molten blue ...

Dedicatee. (to dedicate: address (a book, etc.) to a patron or friend. 1542). One to whom anything is dedicated.

Deportee. One who has been deported, or under sentence of deportation. (to deport. 1641). 1919. In Indian use, to detain a political offender. Hence, *deportee*, spec. in Indian usage.

Designee. (to design: to destine to a fate or purpose, 1593).
One who is designated.

Detainee. (to detain: 1485). A person detained in custody under number 18 of the Defence Regulations of 1939. This word was apparently used for the first time in 1939 in an English document.

Devisee. 1542. Law. One to whom a devise is made.
(To devise: to give by will, now esp. of real estate).

Devotee. 1630. One zealously devoted, esp. to religious ceremonies.

This term has lost much of its religious connotation, esp. in this century.

"Most of the men in B-turret... were still *devotees* of the beard-growing fashion"...
"A *devotee* of discipline of the old school would have been just as shocked."

(C. S. Forester: *The Ship*).

"Poor Yuvaniyom is strictly a chula *devotee*, and he is an old hand at outwitting the wily female."

Note in *Time Magazine*, May 15, 1964: kite-flying is a national sport in Thailand.

The star-shaped male kite is called 'chula'. The diamond-shaped female kite is called 'pakpao'.

"Love's Labour Lost" is... a play obviously topical, designed for a polite audience, abounding in shrewd hits at certain *devotees* of a 'School of Night', presented as 'fantastics'. (Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and Professor Dover Wilson, in the Preface to their 1923 edition).

Seemingly active at first sight, it is, however, passive: 'one who is affected by devotion to.'

Dilutee. 1918. An unskilled worker who is introduced among skilled workers in an industry.

Divorcee. (to divorce. 1494). A person divorced.

The French form had wider currency at the beginning of the 20th century, *divorcée* (sei). Daniel Jones stresses the *o*. At present it is mostly *divorcee* (sí:)

"At 9.23 the new *divorcee* emerged from the courtroom. She made a wrong turn, which took her to the Marriage Bureau... the next step for many Reno *divorcees*."

(*Time Magazine*: March 23, 1962)

Donee. 1523. Law. One to whom anything is given: a) gratuitously; b) one to whom land is conveyed in fee tail (an estate of inheritance limited to a class of heirs); c) one to whom a power is given for execution.

Draftee. 1867. A person who is drafted for military service. See '*selectee*'. 'Draft' has been in the written language since 1494, but *draftee* is a modern coinage which came into general use during World War I. It is widely used at present.

"Virtually all draft boards have interpreted these words to mean that a *draftee's* opposition cannot be a product of a mere personal moral code."

(*Time Magazine*, April 11, 1969).

Drawee. 1776. The person on whom an order or bill of exchange is drawn.

Employee. 1854. One who works for wages or salary. (Employé. 1834).

Employé is very rarely used. "There is an *employé* to every five men in this country". (Norman Douglas: *Together*). Curiously enough, this word is sometimes written down as *employe*, without an accent: "I have been a stenographer all my life, but it looks as if railroad *employes* in general... (Walter Pitkin: *Life Begins at 40*). Pitkin, however,

used *employee* in other parts of his book. The preceding example is another person speaking.

Says Margaret Nicholson, in *A Dictionary of American-English Usage*, based on Fowler's *Modern English Usage*: "*Employee* - *employé*. The case for the English form (-ee) is stronger than with most such pairs. One of them is needed, not for literary but for purely business purposes, and a good plain word with no questions of spelling and pronunciation & accents & italics & genders about it is therefore best."

Enlistee. (to enlist. 1968). A person who has enlisted in the Armed Forces. Apparently active, it is one who suffers the result of an action carried out by himself.

"The reception center... got a new pair of *enlistees* - one used to train monkeys, and the other was a lion tamer. Discovering this, one bright private observed: 'Now those guys are born sergeants if ever there was one'".

(Cavanah and Cromer: *Collection of the Best War Jokes and Cartoons*).

Escapee. 1865. One who has escaped from captivity or confinement.

"Since the hated Wall went up in 1961, *escapees* have gotten past it by tunneling, climbing, jumping or by just knocking it down." (Time Magazine, May 17, 1963).

This term is also used as an adjective: "Last week, as the latest *escapee* dog paddled his way to freedom across the Spandau ship canal... (Time, April 23, 1965).

Evacuee. 1939. This word, according to H. L. Mencken: "raged among the English though violently denounced by their purists, and it never made any progress in the United States. Once the war was over 'displaced persons', usually abbreviated to D. P., came into use on both sides of the water." (*The American Language*).

However, at present (1975), *evacuee* has

displaced D.P. almost entirely. 'Displaced person' has now acquired other nuances. *Evacuee* is a person who unwillingly leaves the place or country where he is, because he has to flee for his life:

"The latest round of fighting has all but ended Beirut's long reign as the commercial queen of the Arab world... Many prominent businessmen have... fled to... other capitals of Europe, especially Athens. The *evacuees* included representatives of some of the world's largest banks."

(Time Magazine, October 20, 1975).

Evaluatee. (to evaluate. 1842; evaluation. 1755; the action of evaluating. 1779). "The California State Department of Education recently issued 'guidelines' for 'evaluating certificated personnel'. To make sure that everyone understood it solemnly included a glossary. "Evaluator", it said, "means one who exaluates". "*Evaluatee*, by contrast, is one who is evaluated". (Time Magazine).

Examinee. (to examine. 1440). One subjected to inquiry, inspection or testing; a person under examination. See *testee*.

"The *examinees* were asked to sit in separate benches."

Expelee. (to expel. 1534). 1949. One who has been expelled from his country. The following headline appeared then in the papers:

SOME FACTS ABOUT *EXPELEES* IN GERMANY

Feoffee. 1542. Law. The person to whom a feoffment is made (English Law: the grant of a feud or fee) (Pronunciation, according to Daniel Jones - *An English Pronouncing Dictionary* - : fe'fi: or fi:'fi:).

We may safely say that this term is practically never used nowadays, except in the sense of 'one of a board of trustees holding land for charitable or other public purposes.'

Flunkee. (to flunk. U.S. 1823) Colloq. U.S. A person who has been flunked, that is, one who is a total failure, esp. at a college examination.

"Hardly any of the summer students are *flunkees* trying to catch up."
(Time Magazine, July 19, 1963).

Grandee. 1598. This is an exception, a word of Spanish origin (*Grande*) which uses the French suffix formation through analogy. In Spain and Portugal, a nobleman of the first rank. The term is usually applied only to Spaniards. However, see the following interesting example:

"The process of buying out the small freeholder to form large compact estates for the *grandees*, began before the Restoration and continued during the next hundred years or more."

(G. M. Trevelyan: Illustrated English Social History, Vol. III, the 18th Century).

Grantee. 1491. One to whom a grant is made.

Grantee is widely used nowadays in the case of people who are granted a scholarship.

"How one panel of judges could have agreed on the 12 *grantees* defeats the unfounded * imagination. (Time Magazine, April 3, 1964).

Note: * Not belonging to the Ford Foundation. Humorous coining.

Guarantee. (v. 1791). That given or held as security. An agreement by which one person guarantees something held, enjoyed, etc., by another; in other words, warrant or surety; a contract to see performed what another has undertaken; the person who makes such a contract.

1853. A person to whom a guarantee (y) is given.

Indorsee. (to endorse — indorse. 1547). The Endorsee. Person to whom a bill is assigned

by indorsement. Commercial and literary use favours 'endorse'; legal use favours 'indorse'.

Inductee. (to induct, initiate into. 1603). One who has been inducted, introduced, brought in, initiated.

"As a veteran he knew the responsibility he had taken; as a new *inductee* he knew the feelings and problems of his men."

(Marion Hargrove: The Girl he Left Behind).

Internee. (an intern. U.S. 1891). 1920. A person placed as an intern(e) in a concentration camp. Widely used during World war II. Now used mainly in medical circles. "From the beginning he —William Joyce, 'Lord Hawhaw', later executed for treason— had been engaged in the unhandsome business of recruiting announcers and speakers in the camps of British civilian *internees*."
(Rebeca West: The New Meaning of Treason).

Interviewee. (verb. 1548; a (press) interview 1869). A person who has been or is being interviewed.

"The list of *interviewees* runs alphabetically from Lawrence Durrell through Boris Pasternak" (Taken from the blurb of 'Writers at Work, the Paris Review Interviews, Second Series, 1963).

Kidnapee. (kidnapper. 1678. ; to kidnap. 1682). Person carried off by force. "Even though the giant was making counterfeit geese, the King... would ship to the giant one out of every thirty eggs laid by the *kidnapee*."

(Ph. J. Farmer: The Celestial Blueprint and Other Stories).

Legatee. 1546. Law. One to whom a legacy is left, or bequeathed. Now also 'legatary'.

"The son, who was residuary *legatee*, forestalled any possible dispute by presenting the chest to the doctor after his mother's death."

(Harold Greville Hanbury, Vinerian Professor of English Law, in his Introduction to 'The Trial of Dr. Adams', by Sybille Bedford).

Lessee. 1495. A person to whom property is leased; a tenant under a lease.

(Note: observe that LEVEE, originally something raised, from French *levé*, has lost the pronunciation of the suffix, both in the sense of embankment (U.S.) & the reception. Pronounce *lévi*).

Licensee/Licencee. Law. The person to whom a license (ce) is given. The document by which authority is conferred (1598).

British, sp. 'licence'.

"Hundreds of suits are now being filed throughout Europe against the West German Grünenthal Chemical Company and its *licensees*, makers of thalidomide."

(Time Magazine, April 30, 1965).

Mortgagee. 1584. Law. A person to whom property is mortgaged.

Richard Nixon, Mortgagee. Headline in Time Magazine, (Sep. 10, 1973).

Murderee. (to murder. 1531). "It takes two people to make a murder: a murderer and a *murderee*. And a *murderee* is a man who is murderable. And a man who is murderable is a man who in a profound if hidden lust desires to be murdered".

(David Herbert Lawrence: Women in Love).

Nominee. 1688. One nominated by another. A person named for any office, duty or position. The meaning of this word is now being stretched to cover 'the person to whom a prize has been awarded': "At last week's big show, well over half of the Oscar *nominees* were not there". (Time Magazine, April 24, 1964).

"They were routed, and returned in 1848 with Taylor to a *nominee* whose personality

was known but whose opinions were not."

(Arthur Hobson Quinn: The Soul of America).

Parollee. (parole. 1616. verb: to liberate (a prisoner) on parole. 1863; U.S.: to liberate a prisoner on his own recognizances. 1888).

A person who has been parolled.

"Out of the Danbury, Conn., federal prison strode *parollee* James J. Morgan, his red hair turned white after ten and a half years, his 220 lb frame scaled down to 190, and his lips still sealed". (Time Magazine, July 6, 1962).

Pawnee. 1683. Person to whom pawn or pledge is deposited. This word does no longer appear in many dictionaries, and it is in process of dying out. We now use 'pawnbroker' (1678).

Payee. 1758. One to whom money is or is to be paid.

"He finally punched \$ 17,790 across one with the checkwriter, then wrote in Benjamin Chartoff's name as *payee*, using standard ink."

Pledgee. 1766. Synonym of 'pawnee'. Rarely used.

Presentee. 1854. a) One to whom something is presented. b) One who is presented at Court. c) One who is promoted to a benefice, esp. a clergyman.

Purgee. (a purge. 1598). One who has been eliminated because he is considered to be objectionable or hostile.

"He all but read the undesirables out of the party. Rarely have such howls been heard. 'You may be dynamic, Mr. Percy', cried one *purgee*, 'but you'd better learn how to aim the dynamite'". (Time Magazine, Sept. 18, 1964).

Rapee. One subjected to carnal knowledge without consent.

"All this is likely to make Brownmiller the

first rape celebrity who is neither a rapist or a *rapee*". (Time Magazine, Oct. 13, 1975).

Referee. 1565. One to whom a thing is referred, esp. a decision or settlement; an arbitrator; an umpire. Esp. in Law, a person selected by the court to try a case in place of the court, or to examine and report on a question in aid of the court.

"One month later, President Kennedy sent his first major civil rights message to the Hill. It was terribly thin, asking for federal court-appointed, voting *referees* to determine applicants' qualifications while their voting suits were pending" . . . (Time Magazine, June 19, 1964).

"The Crown's chief witness . . . used to be a medical *referee* at Brighton Crematorium". (Sybille Bedford: The Trial of Doctor Adams).

Refugee. 1685. One who flees for refuge to another country, esp. from religious persecution or political commotion. One who has been obliged to flee from his country. (Cp. *evacuee*, present usage).

The term *refugee* was originally applied to the French Huguenots (Fr. a 'réfugié') who went to England after the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685.

"Where a tutor was especially employed, he was often a Huguenot *refugee*, for the land was full of educated men of this type, welcomed by careful parents for their French, and doubly welcome in Whig families for their sufferings and their principles." (G. M. Trevelyan: Illustrated English Social History, Vol. III).

"The roads were jammed with unending columns of *refugees*, and death was everywhere". (Manohar Margonkar: The Princes).

Remittee. (to remit, in this sense. 1640). Com. A person to whom something is sent, or remitted.

Retiree. (to retire, in this sense. 1667). Re-

tired. esp. one who has been obliged to retire after reaching retirement age.

"Speakers of the National Council of Tourism . . . are campaigning . . . to build up Mexico's 'industria de los viejitos', which the Council estimates would be worth \$ 400 million dollars a year if Mexico could attract only 1% of the annual *retirees* in the U.S. and Canada" . . . "Some of the *retirees* of the area are Korean War veterans . . . Affluent *retirees* have lived there for more than 10 years." (Time Magazine, May 22, 1964).

Returnee. (to return, in the sense of 'to send back again'. 1459). One who is sent back, or comes back.

"Still, he was the honored homecomer, the successful *returnee*".

(Herbert D. Kastle: The First One).

"Unfortunately for most *returnees* there is little at home to reduce those huge, Americanized bellies." (Time Magazine, April 16, 1965).

Rotatee. (to rotate. 1808; in this sense. 1879) Circa 1940. Second World War. Also used in Korea and Vietnam. Soldiers who are rotated; that is, sent home as they are replaced by new draftees.

"He was going home; *rotatees* did not, were not expected to volunteer for anything. They led a twilight life, suspended between two states of existence".

(Thomas Anderson: Your Own Beloved Sons).

Scratchee. (M. E. *cracchen*, blended with M. E. *scratzen*, to scratch).

Whimsical coinage. One who is being scratched.

"When one human monkey does another the great service of scratching him, delightful as it is, it never quite hits the spot. With infuriating obtuseness, despite the most careful coaching, the scratcher will scratch just above, just below, all around the right spot, but never, never, never quite on it, until, in sheer frustration, the *scratchee* will nearly

dislocate his shoulder going after it for himself." (Robert Heinlein: Beyond this Horizon).

Seekee. Through analogy, ('To seek: Old E. *secan*). A person who is sought by others. In the following example, however, it means "the place that people are looking for". It sounds ugly to me, and I cannot help feeling that this reporter is a bit of an ignoramus. No matter; it is our duty to collate what is being printed. "Already, rampant tourism has created the disturbing dichotomy of the seeker and the *seekee*". (Time Magazine, Aug. 18, 1975).

Selectee. 1940. Amer. According to Henry L. Mencken, in 'The American Language': "It was official fiat which substituted the euphemistic '*selectee*' for the somewhat harsh '*draftee*' of World War I. *Selectee* first appeared in the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (USA), along with '*trainee*'. *Trainee* didn't have much prosperity, but *selectee* was almost in universal use until the end of the war."

See: civilian uses of *trainee*. See *Draftee*, which has replaced *selectee* almost entirely.

Standee. (Old E. *standan*) Coll. a) One who must stand, as in a theatrical performance. b) A person who has been ordered to stand. "The witnesses will stand... 'Raise your right hand and be sworn', said the judge. 'You do, each of you, solemnly swear the testimony you are about to give in the case before this court is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?' The *standees* bobbed their heads". (Al Dewlen: Twilight of Honor).

We see then that there are numerous cases in which the French Past Participle is applied to an English verb of Germanic origin, through analogy.

Testee. (test: means of trial, 1594). A person who is in the process of being tested. Cp. '*examinee*'.

"Certain particular questions were used in the marking, as you know, the others being either window-dressing, or designed to lull the *testee* into a state of unawareness". (Avram Davidson: No Fire Burns).

Tailee. Whimsical. Slang 'to tail': to follow stealthily.

One who is being followed.

"If the *tailee* for instance, walks into a crowded elevator, and the automatic computer decides that the car is filled to the limit, the man who is tailing him will be left facing a closed door... If the *tailee* knows he's being followed he tries to lose his tail." (R. Garrett: A Spaceship named Mc Guire).

Trainee. (to train, in this sense. 1555) 1940. See *selectee*.

One who receives training, instruction, drill. It may be used as a noun or as an adjective (trainee status; trainee gestures; trainee technicians). Originally used in the armed forces, it appears now and then in mufti.

"The Middle Eastern College for Arabic Studies... is attended by about 50 students who include Foreign Office staff and *trainees* sent by commercial and industrial firms." (Rebecca West: The New Meaning of Treason).

Transferee. 1598. Law Transfer: the conveyance of right, title or property from one person who is taken and sent way somewhere (*ree*).

Also, a person who is changed from one position or job to another.

Transplantee. (to transplant. 1440). A person who is taken and sent away somewhere by force.

"Strasse carefully outlined once more his directions for the transplantation of Jews, based on pre-grouping before departure so that each train must have at least one thousand Jews; and it was forbidden for *transplantees* to take anything with them." (Richard Condon: An Infinity of Mirrors).

Trustee. (trust: M. E. trust, trost, trist or trest, fr. or perh. akin to, Old Norse *traust*, confidence, security). 1647. Law. A person, real or juristic, holding property in trust. One to whom anything is intrusted; one to whom the management of a property is committed in trust for the benefit of others. "He quit in disgust two years ago when the *trustees* would not let him establish a permanent repertory company." (Time Magazine, Jan. 26, 1962).

(Closely related is the slang term 'trusty', n. which is on its way up to standard speech: a convict who enjoys the confidence of the prison authorities, gaining thereby some advantages, such as a certain degree of freedom within the goal).

Vaccinee. (vaccine. 1799). A person who has been vaccinated. "Some polio vaccines may make the *vaccinee* infectious to others." (Time Magazine, April 30, 1965).

Vendee. 1547. Law. The person to whom a thing is vended (sold); buyer.

Warrantee. Law. The person to whom a warrant (warranty) is made.

(Warrant: a document giving authority to do something).

In this last term we have a clear case of the jumble of languages which lies at the basis of Modern English:

Old North French *warrant*. Old French *garant*, *garant*.

Old French *warrantir*: to warrant.

Old High German *werento*, guarantor, properly present participle of *weren*, to guarantee, and partly from Old North French *warir*, to preserve, defend.

Middle English *warrant*.

CONCLUSIONS

The suffix *-ee* is of French origin. It is derived from the Fr. past. part. *-é*, and it denotes the passive receiver of an action.

It was used after the 12th century mainly in technical terms of Law. In English written law most of the terms appear for the first time between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Suffixes are not stressed in English: but *-ee* is strongly stressed.

Although most of these words are derived from French past participles we find a few cases of this suffix added to words of Anglo-Saxon origin, through analogy.

-ee survived sluggishly for centuries mainly in legal or commercial terms. However, in the twentieth century we see a noteworthy revival which has given origin to many new words, some of them slang. The reason is perhaps simply that this useful suffix lends itself to brevity. It is therefore not surprising to find that many examples, perhaps the most colourful, appear in newspapers and magazines.

It would seem that American English is more venturesome than British English in the coinage of new words using this suffix.

-ee forms vivid words which are quite clear in the mind of the reader or listener, though he may find or hear them for the first time.

The active exceptions are so few that the reader has no doubt as to the general passive meaning of a term which denotes "the object of an action, the one to whom an act is done, or on whom a right is conferred".

A stress on the last syllable goes against the grain, as it were, of every native speaker of the English language, and yet we find new examples where we least expect to find them.

We cannot know how many of these will survive, but the examples given are enough to show that this foreign-sounding suffix will continue to be used in English.

Our curiosity was aroused by H. W. Fowler's dictum:

"The *-ee* termination is becoming more and more a living suffix in English."

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Other sources are presented after the corresponding examples. They include 22 numbers of *Time Magazine*, spanning 14 years (June, 1961 to October, 1975) and 35 books: *Novels, Biography, History, Sociology, Anthropology and Poetry.*

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José P. Alessandri 636
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