

# HOW NUCLEAR SATELLITES SHOULD BE ANNOTATED

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The matter under scrutiny here is whether the satellite (orsemivocalic part) of a diphthong--i.e. the part following the peak vowel--should be *e* or *i* or *y* in *side* and in *o* or *u* or *w* in *arouse*. (See at the end concerning the diphthongs in *few* and *cute*.) The vowel symbols just given will be used with the understanding that, when they are satellites, they are written above the line level to show that they are semivocalic and functionally semisyllabic; *peak* vowels of diphthongs and triphthongs are of course written on the line level to show that they are syllabic.

To begin with satellites symbolized as [y] and [w], these would be used in place of nuclear symbols only when they are treated as consonants in a given language. This happens when they create a consonant cluster with a preceding or following consonant (indicated by the cluster's blocking or promoting certain phonetological rules; also when "yt" become "ch" in Spanish) or, developmentally, when some variants of the language (including later phases of an ancient language) show consonantal developments--such as the change in Scots and Cockney of //w// to /v/ in *vest* "west" and in *situevation* "situation," where the /w/ is epenthetic, as in English generally. (W-epenthesis no longer operates in Scottish English). Further "consonant" examples are found in the "ev" (or "ef") and "av" (or "af") of later Ancient Greek for earlier "eu" and "au," respectively; cf. also how obstruents (initially a sound resembling English "j"; later, further developments of this) developed out of Latin [y].

Since the criteria just given do not apply to satellites in English--cf. the development of *mayor* and *lay+er* as well as of *steward*, *leeward*, and *Lewis*--nuclear satellites should obviously not be written with "y" and "w": They do not create clusters in *lighten* (which would block the syllabic nasal following, as in *Acton*). (In *softness*, *soften*, *mustn't*, etc., //t// is deleted between consonants; the nasal is obviously an underlying consonant here, in contrast with vowel + nasal in *piston*). It is clear that the satellites in *lighten* and *widen* are semivowels that do not create interconsonantal environments for the deletion of apical stops, as in *windmill* and *wastebasket*.

(For that matter, neither does [ç] create a consonantal environment for deleting an interconsonantal apical stop in *carton* and *certain* [even in *r*-ful lects]. Nor does the barred-*l* satellite-L do so in *Milton*. All of this which demonstrates the diphthongal status of the stressed nuclei in these words! Contrast syllabic-*n* in northerly American lects having [ɲ] in *goLden*, but not in the other varieties, viz. those having true-consonant [l] in *golden*! The non-consonantal status of the satellites in *carton* and *Milton* is also proved by the way other rules operate in *r*-less English. Speakers of many varieties of Northern States English used use the

lateral satellite (1) after nuclei where it does not occur elsewhere (so that *school* and *Jules* rhyme, respectively, with *accrual* and *jewels*); (2) between nuclei (other than before ##; hence, the first syllable of *collar* sounds like *call* in their kind of English, and the first syllables of *spirit* and *daily* sound, respectively, like *spear* and *dell*); and (3) before a y-glide (so that the initial syllables of *failure* and *million* end in the lateral satellite--just like *fail* and *mill*). English rules like SONORANT DEGEMINATION and NUCLEARIZATION depend on the parallelisms depicted in **["Concerning English dark-L" \(CLICK HERE!\)](#)**.

The second consideration is that the satellites do not change to obstruents in English, as they do in Greek--and as in the Scots and Cockney examples above, which involve truly consonantal functions of [y] and [w]--i.e. preceding tautosyllabic nuclei. Internuclear glides are treated variously as the result of lectal variants in the backward GEMINATION of //r l// and the glides; see the volume just referred to. But notice that "phonemic" /fiyl/ (used in obsolete transcriptions by Labov and also in *Sound pattern of English* to transcribe *feel*) could also come close to indicating *filial* in varieties that delete //l// in conversational tempos before /y/ plus an unstressed vowel. Care must be taken, then, not to write "y" or "w" for a nuclear satellite in English, however appropriate that might be for Spanish or Greek. *Montoya* has [y] in those varieties in which one does not hear "toy" in this word and *Toyota* nor "hoy" in *La Jolla*. Of course, many varieties have restored the lost # in *lee+ward* (with "ew" as in *steward*) to create *lee#ward* (with [w] beginning the last syllable, as in *Ottawa*).

The next question is whether the diphthongs in *write* and *loud* should be written with [i#e] and with [i\* & ^], respectively. (There is no problem with transcribing *wait* and *load* in varieties in which these words end respectively with [e] and [^].) As a matter of fact, the "Keltic" varieties have [i] following [V] or [O] in *write* and following [a] in *five*, just as [^] follows similar nuclei in, respectively, *out* and *arouse*. Non-"Keltic" varieties have [i] instead of [e] and [i\*] instead of [e & ^] following [a]. It is theoretically vital and necessary to annotate the difference inasmuch as they lead to *different consequences*! The diphthongs ending in mid-vowel satellites have a tendency in English (and Latin, etc.) to monophthongize, a tendency lacking in the nuclei ending in high-vowel satellites. Further, satellite [i\*] never become obstruents the way [e & ^] often do!

Many varieties make a distinction between the diphthongs in *few* (and after tautosyllabic labials generally) and in *cute*. Following non-grave stops (including fronted underlying velars, laminopalatals, and //y//), Southern States English has got [i%] (which follows apicals in *dew*, *due*, *tune*, *new*) also in *youth*, *use*, *shoot*, *choose*, *juice*, and *exhume*. (Note that [Y] is like [i] but with lips rounded as for [u].) But following labials, as in *puny*, *beaut*, *mute*, *feud*, and *view*, Southern States English has got [Y^]--a diphthong heard everywhere in some varieties, i.e. in place of [i%].

It is quite out of order to write /yu/ or the like in "dune, tune, Tuesday" in varieties *other than* those in which "June" is heard for the first item, "chune" for the next item, and "Chooseday" for the last. (Historically, /y/ occurred in many words, esp. following tautosyllabic palatals--cf. older "shute" for *shoot*)--where it no longer does; we have vestiges of such pronunciations in *sugar* (with "sh" for /sy/ and, depending on the lect, in other words). It is quite in order to write /y/ in triphthongs, such as in *sure* and *mature*, *intuitive*, where the natural pronunciation is "sh" (from /sy/, as in *pressure*) and "ch" (from /ty/, as in *nature*), respectively. (The most natural pronunciation can be avoided by blocking the feeding order of the relevant rules.) *Endure* is often like mis-stressed *injure*, and *dual* may sound like *jewel*. Of course, none of this makes sense to any reader that is not clear that *sure*, *mature*, *endure*, etc. have, in some phase of their phonetological derivations, triphthongs consisting of /i%/ plus satellite [C]; *dual* has got /iu/ plus [-]; and *intuitive* has got /i%/ plus satellite #/ = [#] or [-]. The way that PALATALIZATION operates proves this; and this having been proved, the transcriptions advocated earlier are shown to be correct--at least in the eyes of anyone that can think in terms of system-consequences, i.e. one who goes beyond the list-mentality manifested by many transcribers.

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