KICKSHAWS

DAVE MORICE
Iowa City, Iowa

Readers are encouraged to send their favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor (e-mail David-Morice@uiowa.edu).

SERIAL PALINDROMES

The following palindrome lines up twelve chemical elements in a row. The story is about a logger who chops down a tree, which falls into a river with his saw, which cuts loose a trout line, which traps a gnu having a drink of water. Don't you agree it has a kind of haiku sound to it?

TIE CARBON, BORON, IRON, TIN, RADON, GOLD, NEON, XENON, NITROGEN, IODINE, PLATINUM, ARGON? NO GRAM UNIT, ALL PEN? I DO--IN (E.G., "OR")TIN. NONE? X NO END, LOG. NO, DARN IT! NOR I? NO, ROB--NO, BRACE IT!

And here's another, listing Columbus's three ships:

AIR, A MAT: NASA T' NIP A NINE-YEAR ERA? EYE NINA, PINTA, SANTA MARIA.

Can you come up with other serial palindromes?

IN SHORT, FROM BLACK TO WHITE

Peter Newby sent a minimal doublet, as requested in a recent Kickshaw, that goes from BLACK to WHITE. His source is the OED:

BLACK
BLACE (Middle English spelling of black)
BLATE (Scottish & dialect adjective meaning "pale, ghastly")
BLITE (wild spinach)
WLITE (to pipe, chirp, warble)
WHITE

And Jay Ames shows how the BLACK to WHITE ladder can be shortened by going to different languages:

BLACK-BLANK-BLANC (French for "white")
BLACK-BLANK (Dutch for "white")
ALPHANAGRAMS

Peter Newby sent two ALPHABET anagrams: PALE BATH and HELP A BAT. Any other anagrams of it or its extended family (ALPHABETIZE, ALPHABETICAL, etc.)?

CHIMERA

Peter was inspired by the classical definition of CHIMERA as "any grotesque monster comprising the parts of different creatures" to look for words that are portmanteaux or blends of two creatures. CHIMERA itself is an example resulting from the crossbreeding of a CHIMPANZEE with the goddess HERA. Other examples from Peter:

CARTOON = CARThorse and 100N
PLUG = Pig and sLUG
HIPSTER = HIPpo and lOBSTER
WISH = Wasp and goldfish

TRICHECHINE WORDPLAY

Peter writes "The OED defines the Middle English word RUSSWALE as 'walrus hide' which is curiously apt as RUSSWALE conceals WALRUS. Adding the unused letters gives us the anagram WALRUSES!"

EPITAPHIC

Jay Ames sent the following two poem epitaphs:

Give a thought to Swearin' Sam
died while blastin' on a dam
though not the one you mighta thought
but a 'damn an' blast' no momma taught.

Below these stones
lies Maggie Jones
let no man tear asunder--
for these are not
the only stones
our Maggie once lay under.

CLUSTERINGS

And Jay found the following names that have clusters of vowels or consonants in them. With pronunciations as he heard them, they appear below. Curiously, when I was in third grade, one boy's name was Richard Przybylsky, which still remember, partly because the pronunciation he used didn't jibe with the spelling—he pronounced it "shi-bil-skee". I learned how to spell it by mentally pronouncing it "prih-zih-bil-skee."
ASSOUIE (ass-oo-ee)  
NOIEEA (no-ayah)  
PRZYBYLSKY (per-zee-bil-ski)  
RYTWYNSKI (rite-win-ski)  
DEMSZCZYSZCZYN (dem-chich-in)  

THE HOUSE MOUSE

William R. Webster has written the following series of riddles featuring a mouse:

What was his position in Congress? Squeaker of the House
Is there any cheese he dislikes? Swiss—he prefers to make his own holes
What device does he want no part of? He's not rapt about a trap, especially concealed beneath a tarp, as it may cause a pratfall
What does a mouse say when its picture is taken? Cheese
What's a bad omen for him? Seeing cat's paws on the pond
What was his closet encounter? He squeaked by in a race with the house cat
What's the most common variety of mouse? Computer mouse
What kind of big game does he hunt? Moose
What kind of vestment does he wear? Amice

NUMBERS IN WORDS

Regarding the numbers found in words (such as THREONINE three, one, nine, ten), Rex Gooch writes "There are many ways to define the most interesting words containing numbers, such as the ratio of the number of letters in the number words to that in the main word, the ratio of the sum of the values of the number words to the length of the main word, the number of different ways in which number words can be formed, the main word having the highest legitimate value (e.g. FIVE HUNDRED ONE) formed from the number words, and the main word containing most number words in any language. Furthermore, we can exclude phrases, names, hyphenated words, obscure words, words which themselves are numbers (though this can be interesting in itself), and so on." He included numerous examples of words and phrases containing the most number words. Here is a selection of English words and phrases with English number words in them:

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (one three seven nine ten thirty forty fifty seventy ninety)
MINNESOTA MULTIPHASIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY (one seven nine ten eleven thirty seventy ninety)
NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR (four eight nine ten nineteen eighty ninety)
COUNT ONE'S CHICKENS BEFORE THEY ARE HATCHED (one three nine ten thirty forty ninety)
HEPATICOCYOLANGIOCOLECYSTENTEROSTOMY (one eight nine ten thirty eighty ninety)
PANHYSTEROSALPINGOOOPHORECTOMY (one eight nine ten eighty ninety)
SEVEN-SIXTEENTHS (six seven ten sixteen seventeen)
SIXTY-SEVEN (six seven ten sixteen sixty)
THIRTY-SEVEN (three seven ten thirteen thirty)
TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE (one two six nine ten)
EIGHTY-SEVEN (seven eight ten eighteen eighty)
SUBCONTINENTALLY (one nine ten ninety)
UNAUTHORIZEDNESS (one three nine ten)
UNENLIGHTENMENT (eight nine ten eighteen)
CONSERVATIVENESS (one seven nine ten)
INTROSPECTIVENESS (one seven nine ten)

The second example has three number names in sequence (nine, ten, eleven); can anyone find a word with four?

Rex also generated a number of examples using German, Dutch, Latin, Spanish and French number names:

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS (eins drei neun elf million)
HEPATOCHOLEANGIOJEJUNOSTOMIZING (eins drei sieben neun elf)
UNBEGUILEFULNESS (null eins neun elf)
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS (een drie negen tien elf dertien dertig negentig)
DERMATITOGENIC (een drie tien dertien dertig)
SELF-ADVERTISEMENT (een drie tien elf dertien)
UNLISTED SECURITIES MARKET (unus tres decem undecim sedecim)
ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (tres septem octo centum)
SUPERCONDUCTORS (unus duo octo)
VENTRICULOCISTERNOSTOMIZE (un trois onze treize seize trente cent)
GASTROJEJUNOSTOMIZES (un trois onze treize seize trente)
DOCUMENTIZE (un onze douze cent)
QUATERCENTENARY (un quatre trente cent)

ARMAGEDDON

Charles S. Purvis sent along the following anagram of Armageddon by Marge D. Doan:

Dear God, man.  
Mad God near  
A modern gad  
nomad raged.  
a God damner  
dragon dame  
raged on mad.  

0! Grand dame  
and mad ogre  
drag a Demon  
Man dare God?  
Go dread, Man.  
Go and dream...  
...and, go armed...

SEASONED PALINDROMES

Jim Puder sends the following palindromes incorporating the names of months. Can any others appear in palindromes?
On Matsu, Guam, raw islets,
Apropos a harem muse,
Rests a vast, sere summer.
Ah, a sopor pastels...
I, warm August, am, no?

Elle, tag a belle "bagatelle"
Zagreb—met pest or
Racy carrot. September gazelle,
Tag a belle "bagatelle".

He comments that the latter might be entitled The Playboy's Philosophy
as Confided to Miss September.

PSEUDO-COMPARATIVES

Jim writes "In last November's Kickshaws, Richard Lederer solicited
new examples of pseudo-comparative triads. In looking for these, I've
noticed that they come in two varieties. The first kind are undoubted
pseudo-comparatives:

att (Siamese coin)/atter (poison)/attest
car/carer/carest (archaic and poetic "caressed")
Cong (Viet)/conger/congest
divi (Zoroastrian demon)/diver/divest
hon (nickname "honey")/honer/honest
Ing (surname)/inger/ingest

"A second group consists of triads which might or might not be
pseudo-comparatives, depending upon which of two or more definitions
for some words are chosen."

crack (fracture)/cracker (biscuit)/crackest (most expert)
cross (mixed breed)/crossover (passer over)/crossest (crankiest)
fin/finner (monetary penalty imposer)/finest
halt (stop)/halter (garment)/haltest (lamest)
low (moo)/lower(scowl)/lowest

FALSE NUMBER NAMES

The dictionary has entries that appear to be numbers, but they differ
slightly from the standard form and they signify something else. Most
false number names still refer to numbers in a specific context, such as
TWENTY-TWENTY (normal eyesight) or TWENTY-SIX (a gambling game).
Webster's Third defines TWENTY-EIGHT, however, as "a West Australian
yellow-collared parakeet". The following examples are limited to cardinal
numbers and are followed by the name of the field in which they can be found:
ETAOIN SHRDLU POETRY

This poem uses only the twelve letters of ETOAI SHRDLU, the twelve commonest letters in running text. Each line is an anagram of those letters:

The loud rains!
His outer land!
Old hue? Trains:
"I rule hot sand."
The rail sound!
Ah, line or dust.
Sail? The round
Lie had no rust.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB: FOURTEEN PATHS NOT TAKEN

In the following Anguish Languish, I tried to (1) make grammatical sense, or at least avoid making a simple word list, (2) stay as close to the original sounds as possible, (3) not use any of the words in the original line, and (4) not use any words in the same position in the parodies. Suppose you took one of these parodies and tried writing parodies of it—would the resulting lines still be parodies of the original Mary line?

Mere, wee ad: I'll eat a lime
Merry Hatter led Earl, Em
Murray added, lit owl lamp
Moray, add eel! I, doll, am
More, Ray? Odd ore, lid, or lam.
May, we ate. Al hid dill, yam
Marie? Hot, dull lady, Lem.
Marry Adelaide, all ham!
Mais oui! Ya! Da! Oui! Da! Wham!
Maundy aided Leda, lame
Ma--whee!--at isle hit! dull aim?
Move ahead? Ah, litter lab
Mirror, we added it, tall limb
Myra, idle id alarm
DOCTORS AND NURSES

Larry Cowan takes a legitimate first name (either male or female) and uses it to identify medical personnel by punning medical terminology; Tim Panic, Paul Zee, Adam Zapple, Sue Chur, Ann Thrax, Tess Tickles. For more advanced examples consider the Atrix brothers (Jerry and Petey), the recently-knighted English brain surgeon Sir E. Brill Cortex, and the noted Russian gynecologist N. Dimitri Osis. He writes "This can become habit-forming. It has resulted in people waking up in the middle of the night, usually to call me with their gems. Keep out of reach of children."

EASTWARD HO! TO TIMES SQUARE AND MIDNIGHT FEEDINGS

Edmund Conti sends along the following progressive acrostic:

H0w doth the little Boise bee
who's busy in the sun?
we H0pe they let him noisy be
o, Idaho, you can't be fun.
so we tHOught you'd like to read this rhyme.
maybe, tHOusands will agree
that if I ch0ose to spend the time
then no patH0s will bother me?
and, folks, aIthough brouhaha
is our special sHOw,
to all readers who ha ha
I can only say, oh, HO

He adds "Nothing could be more perfect than Peter Newby's Square Deal, but what could be more timely than Times Square?"

B C
A D

He adds "Back when I was a hotshot computer programmer, I used to pore over hexadecimal memory dumps, the hex digits being 0-9 A B C D E F. After awhile my eyes would glaze over and I would see things like"

ED TO ABE:
"FEED BABE."
ABE 2 ED:
"BABE FED."

MINI-POEMS

Edmund Conti published in 1994 a small pamphlet of his poetry, entitled Hic Haiku Hoc which includes many examples to please the logologist:
I LOVE TO WRESTLE

amo
amas
a mat!

BAH, GOLDBUG!

Try poe-
try, Poe.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR TIMES

Stephen Hawking
Stephen (haw!) King

FALL

Two leaves.
One leaves.
One leaf

OPEN EVERY DAY EXCEPT SUNDAY

hitshitshitshitshitshitshitshitSHIT

THE PARTY'S OVER

galaxyz

Sight rhymes
Were used at times
By Keats
And Yeats.

How do I love thee?
Let me count the syllables.
sixteen, seventeen.

INTERNET MACINTOSH

Mike Morton fired up his Anagram Generator to discover the following reorderings of "Internet Macintosh"

That intense Mr. Icon
Then: omniscient art
M. Eisner into that NC
Constraint in theme
Heart. Instinct. Omen

TNT, the insane micro
Instant home-cretin
NT? Interim CEO has NT?
Home CRT isn't innate
Machine isn't rotten

If you don't like these, consider the following irrelevancies:

Intention: shame CRT
Other name: instinct
The omniscient rant
Emit innocent trash
Ancient monster hit

Mention this nectar
The innermost antic
Titanic, then sermon
Mother isn't ancient
Instinct or methane?

MAD ADAM

In the following interior monologue, Adam ponders the meaning of his life after the notorious apple incident. Suddenly he realizes that the world is not full of smiling faces:

Evil at salt! Now I'm Adam. I do gag, nit. See?
Bare, tall Eve, rise! Dawn: a mere red, rosey,
Live fog gets apple hot. One pose. Yet I, son,
Am foe, do miss old "I". Paradise? Yes,
I'd a rapid loss. I, mode of Man! O, sit, eyes open.
O, to help past egg of evil. Yes, order ere
Man wades: I revel later, a bee-sting a God.
I'm Adam. I won't last alive.

CHESS WORDS

Chess words are words containing the letters that symbolize chess pieces (KQNRBP) as well as other letters. According to Rex Gooch, QUASI-BANKRUPT(CY), the word I listed as a made-up example containing every chess letter, is actually a word in Webster's Second. Rex noted that there are several pure chess words in which all consonants are chess piece symbols. He cites the following:

KINNIK-KINNIK (Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico)
PURBROOK PARK (a placename)
QUINCUENARIAN (OED)
BENPROPERINE (Stedman)
BUBUBUBUBUBUBU (Dictionary of Jamaican English)

He also lists examples of chess words with other consonants, including:

10 ARTHROPNEUMOROENTGENOGRAPHIC (Stedman)
10 PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION
10 GEORGE FRIEDRICH BERNHARD RIEMANN (mathematician)
  9 PNEUMONOLUMICROSCOPIC SILICOVOLCANOKONIOSIS
  9 WINTERBORNE HERRINGTON