As I survey the logological scene from my ivory tower, I am dismayed by what I observe. It appears that the devotees of the word have divided themselves into two groups, hereinafter designated as the Dilettantes and the Intelligentsia.

The Dilettantes are the dabblers in the Art of the Word. Forsaking real logology, they devise all sorts of trivial word problems, and then set out to solve them. Illustrative of this pseudo-logology is the recently created problem of square words -- words spelled only with the letters A, D, I, P and Y, an excellent dictionary specimen being IPPIAPPA. Presumably, a canvass of western songs would uncover some refrain such as YIPPI-I-A Y! YIPPI-I-A Y! That would give the Dilettantes a 16-letter example to flash before the world.

Then there are the serious logologists, the Intelligentsia. For obscure reasons known only to themselves, they have not merely forsaken the Word, they have embraced its archenemy, the Number. Incredible as it may seem, they have chosen to investigate a variety of mathematical structures. By keying these structures to the numerical qualities of the alphabet, they are able to disguise their insidious activities as logological studies. Actually, of course, they have joined the camp of the enemy, and we have a Trojan horse in our midst!

I submit that the time has come for a return to the pristine purity of genuine logology. The present disarray might be warranted -- note the conditionality of my statement -- if all problems in the realm of logology proper had been solved. Inasmuch as no condition of the sort obtains, let us cease the self-destructive activities now in progress and focus our attention on legitimate problems. To help put such problems in perspective, I propose to examine three of the basic areas of logology -- transposals, word squares, and palindromes -- pinpointing the needs of our time in these areas.

Transposals

The ultimate goal of transposers has always been to find 100 transposals of 15 or more letters, all of them well-shuffled ones, all of them solidly written ones, all of them genuine dictionary words, and all of them either reasonably common words or at least words instantly recognizable as possessing an English structure. Only one such transposal has been uncovered up to now: CINEMATOGRAPHER, converting into MEGACHIROPTERAN. A second one, which comes close, is DECHLORINATIONS, converting into ORNITHOSCELIDAN.
All other transposals of 15 or more letters fall so far short of meet­ing the specified standards that they need not be mentioned here.

While this is the ultimate goal, it appears not to be a realizable one. Yet, there are other transpositional goals, highly realizable ones, no attempt to approach which has been made. I shall now de­fine one for you.

Without reasonable doubt, it is possible to take English words of respectable length, say 10 to 13 letters in length, and transpose them into foreign words. Why has no one ever attempted such a feat? Lack of imagination?

Consider the English word EMENDATOR. Transpose it and you suddenly have the French word MODERANTE. While this is an authen­tic transposal, it suffers from numerous defects, not all of which are immediately obvious. For one thing, this is only a 9-letter transposal, a bit too short to satisfy. Second, it is only a two-language transposal. Why not try for three different languages? I can visualize transposing the same nine letters into a German word. DAMENORTE (places for women) is a good coinage, as is TODARMEEN (death armless). Naturally, we want a German dictionary word, not a coinage, but the point is that the letters involved are wholly amenable to the structure of German words.

A third defect of the EMENDATOR - MODERANTE transposal is esthetic. It is not a "pure" example of transposing one English word into one foreign word. The same letters also spell ADOREMENT, another English word and an obsolete one, to boot. Furthermore, the letters can be transposed yet once more to produce NOTRE DAME. This is a name, not a word; it is a two-word name instead of being written solidly; and it can be regarded either as English or as French, depending on which particular place named NOTRE DAME you are considering -- one in France or one in the United States. These side issues detract very considerably from the interest attaching to the EMENDATOR - MODERANTE transposal.

The transposal just analyzed was plucked out of thin air, rather than being the result of a diligent search for interlanguage transposals. Let’s commence an actual search for such transposals, and see what turns up. The results should be absolutely fascinating. You don’t have to be fluent in foreign languages to find such transposals: a good dictionary of the other language should suffice to unearth a substantial number of transposals meeting the conditions set for them.

Word Squares

The obvious goal here has always been twofold: (1) to create a 9 x 9 word square consisting entirely of words and their derivatives all or almost all of which are either in the 2nd or in the 3rd Edition of Webster’s Unabridged; and (2) to create a 10 x 10 word square using words from any reference source whatever.

These goals are not now realizable, and may never be realized, because the and which a piling them using them, electronic c. Until the Fe the needed ! !

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Words of reverse-alphabetical word lists that do not exist and which are probably never going to be compiled. The job of compiling them is too arduous for the handful of logologists interested in using them. Only a large-scale team effort, involving the service of electronic data processing equipment, would be equal to the task. Until the Federal government chooses to finance the compilation of the needed lists, the issue is a dead one.

Yet, there is a goal practical of attainment. About half a century ago, two members of the National Puzzlers' League, A. F. Holt and Tunste, constructed a few hundred tautonymic 10 x 10 word squares, the next best thing to authentic word squares of that magnitude. Because these puzzlers were interested in quantity rather than in quality, they culled words and names from the most painfully obscure reference works, including telephone books, music catalogs, and books published in foreign languages which may or may not ever have been translated into English. The result was a large number of tautonymic tens. If the sources used were out of this world half a century ago, you can imagine what they look like today.

Since a tautonymic 10 x 10 word square consists of four identical 5 x 5 word squares, and since 5 x 5 word squares are delightfully easy to construct -- anyone at all can do it -- the only requirement is a fund of 10-letter tautonyms such as PANGO PANGO, BUDDY BUDDY, FIFTY-FIFTY, and YLANG-YLANG. Why not compile a list of such tautonyms from the major reference books published since 1950? I am willing to wager that a list of 1,000 or more such tautonyms could be assembled without great difficulty. A list of that length should make it possible to construct at least one "modern" tautonymic word square. In the absence of any real prospect for constructing a "genuine" 10 x 10 word square, this alternate goal becomes highly desirable and is eminently possible.

How about it, logologists? Instead of frittering your time and energies away looking for square words, invest the same effort in looking for tautonyms. Pool your findings, and in no time at all, you'll have a list making the desired construction possible.

Palindromes

As with transposals and with word squares, the overriding desideratum is magnitude: in this case, length. There was a time when 25- or 30-letter palindromic sentences and verses were most favorably regarded, and sensible specimens of between 40 and 50 letters seemed little short of miraculous. Then came the revolution, and certain palindromists on both sides of the Atlantic decided to prove that it was possible to construct palindromes of any length. Examples running to hundreds of letters began to appear in print. What sort of creations were these "monster" palindromes?

There are two types. One type resorts to abbreviations, contractions, slang, weird uses of words, and a disregard for normal grammar to achieve otherwise impossible length. Looking at palindromes of this kind, one is left with the impression of broken, muti-
lated, highly artificial English -- of a wrenched language, so to speak. Palindromes ought to be an exercise in beauty: these palindromes are ugliness incarnate.

The second type of palindrome meets the highest standards of beauty. Reading the palindromes, one is overcome by a feeling of exhilaration, by a sort of nebulous euphoria. Unfortunately, however, there is a severe semantic problem. Does some rational meaning lurk behind the words one is reading? As one strains to catch the drift of the words being read, trying to perceive a thread of meaning running through them, one tends to become drowsy from the effort, and the realization soon overcomes one that these palindromes are a fine sedative, if nothing else.

Neither one of the two types of palindromes currently in vogue satisfies normal standards. What is sorely needed is the palindrome that conveys a clear meaning in correct English. The ideal to be aimed for is a palindrome of the type, WAS IT A BAR OR A BAT I SAW? This is a short specimen, only 19 letters long, but its English and its meaning are impeccable. It is a certainty that such palindromes cannot be constructed in lengths exceeding 75 letters, but what good are the longer palindromes if the language is mutilated and the thought nebulous beyond belief?

A proficient palindromist is able to construct palindromes between 40 and 50 letters long, occasionally even longer, that approach the ideal even if they do not quite attain it. There is a paucity of such palindromes. This is a call for all dedicated logologists to buckle down and devise new palindromes in this category and letter length. The objective is a realizable one, and a most meritorious one. Let us embark on the much-needed and long-overdue expansion of good palindromes of commendable length.

Transposals, word squares, and palindromes are not the only three basic areas of logology. There are others, such as anagrams, pan-grammatics, and letter shifts (word shifts). These, too, stand in need of expansion along old-fashioned lines. Come home, America's logologists, to those fields which should constitute your primary area of concern. Demonstrate your respect for the Word!

The user is enlightened by the words:

All of these examples are written by noted logologist, IRIS M. TII, Santa Clar...

Further examples of the discovery of NILLY will be discussed in COLLEGE ENGLISH, 196...

This type of definition "ultrafashionable" of their kind...

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