Nearly a decade has slipped away since the challenge of constructing a three-dimensional word cube of the sixth order first frustrated logophiles at large. I recall my first attempt to conquer this problem, shortly after its publication in Dmitri A. Borgmann's book Beyond Language (Scribner's, 1967). The task (which appeared as Problem 51, Three-Dimensional Thinking) was among the hardest in the book. After taxing sessions of headscratch and eyestrain, I arrived at the following semisolution.

Structurally, the cube is perfect. If you take the letter in the upper left corner of the first square (M), add the corresponding letter in the second square (A), and repeat the process right on down the line — voila! — you have MALONE, the first word on the first level. The same can be done starting with any other letter in the first square. The cube could better be presented with the six sections stacked atop one another, each letter encased in a clear plexiglass building block.

The fault in this cube lies with several of the (non)words it includes. NILESE is an adjective I assumed existed, but all it did was force me to choke on NILOTIC. "E" TENET is one I can make no excuse for, aside from suggesting that it is a designation for Einstein's best-known equation. And as for the unfortunate reversal SURACI, I have resolved that this is what I shall name my first asteroid, when I discover it. All other words can be found in Webster's Second.

Fuming with frustration at my failure to quash one of Borgmann's challenges (in spite of the callus forming on my index finger), I turned to the Resolutions section at the end of Beyond Language. The resolu-
tion given was a 6x6x6 cube composed almost entirely of randomly juxtaposed combinations of short words: ERA LEV, LAD AVE, EGO WET, NO LEDA, and so on. The only solid words in the cube were ENAMEL and OGIVES.

Borgmann pointed out that any two words side-by-side could be included in some sort of rational, grammatical sentence. For example, "The LAD, 'AVE' by name, disappointed his parents." My cube was vindicated! All of its flaws could be resolved by similar logic:

"Is the NILE SE of Portugal?"
"Can you read me SURA CI of the Koran?"

It was hard to feel comfortable with this slightly strained thought-train and its awkward forced matings. An unsatisfied urge for perfection prevailed, and I resolved to whip my cube into shape. This entailed another brainscrambling plunge into the lush depths of logological murk, dredging up long-dead past tenses of verbs best forgotten, invoking ancient synonyms for spiders and such. After many hours of high-level nose-to-book intrigue, the cube below, facelifted almost beyond recognition, presented itself in final form to a pair of anxiously aching orbs.

1 S A S A N I 2 A G O N I C 3 S O L U T E
A G O N I C G A R A G E O R A T O R
S O L U T E O R A T O R L A T E R A
A N U S I M N A T U R A U T E T A N
N I T I D A I G O R O T T O R A S E
I C E M A N C E R A T E E R A N E S

4 A N U S I M 5 N I T I D A 6 I C E M A N
N A T U R A I G O R O T C E R A T E
U T E T A N T O R A S E E R A N E S
S U T T L E I R A L E S M A N E S S
I R A L E S D O S E R S A T E S S A
M A N E S S A T E S S A N E S S A

The cube has several interesting touches. The ascending staircase of esses in the 6th section, MANESS, a rare synonym for "woman". And, best of all, all words are drawn from two standard references, Webster’s Second and the OED (except for NESSAS, nicknames for Vanessa). Still, the cube is by and large composed of unfamiliar, obscure, obsolete terms, and fails to inspire the awe one feels at gazing on some of Palmer C. Peterson’s more lavish form-constructions. This led to yet another attempt, one which provided a larger list of references consulted, and a more sumptuous splattering of sexaliterals.

1 R E C I P E 2 E P I C A L 3 C I N E R A
E P I C A L P A G O D A I G O R O T
C I N E R A I G O R O T N O V A Y A
I C E C A P C O R O N E R E A S E R
P A R A M S A D O N I N R O Y E N A
E L A P S E L A T E N T A T A R A H

Gazetteer. is an old for to readers of "Ballad of I Second.

I do not however, it construction viced that a single reference.

Since these words apelc I am also co stockpile of si dered Eng incorporating may never s
I do not feel fully satisfied with any of the cubes I have presented. However, it seems significant that, of my first three attempts at cube construction, two were ultimately successful. I am absolutely convinced that a cube can be constructed that uses only words from a single reference.

Since these three cubes are symmetric, they use only 21 different words apiece -- 6 words repeated 3 times, 15 words repeated 6 times. I am also convinced, though less absolutely, that somewhere in the stockpile of all available six-letter words (which can remotely be considered English) there exists a nonsymmetric triple word cube, incorporating 108 different words. Alas, this is a hexadic citadel we may never see.

BRITISH ANAGRAMMING

The ancient art of anagramming names (rearranging their letters to form apposite phrases) is not dead, at least in Britain. Some months ago, newspapers noted that the new Conservative party leader, MARGARET THATCHER, anagrammed to GREAT CHARM THREAT. More recently, British naturalist Sir Peter Scott published (with Robert Rines of Boston) an article in Nature presenting photographic and sonar evidence in favor of the legendary Loch Ness monster, proposing the scientific name NESSITERAS RHOMBOPTERYX (Ness monster with diamond-shaped flipper) for the animal. Skeptical British newspapers have noted that the new name is an anagram of MONSTER HOAX BY SIR PETER S.