SYNONYMIC DELETIONS

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Each sect, cult or specialized denomination has a Scripture from which its adherents draw inspiration. For logophiles, there’s little doubt that it has long been, and continues to be, Dmitri Borgmann’s Language on Vacation (Scribner’s, 1965). Scanning past issues of Word Ways, one quickly becomes aware that many of its articles extend concepts earlier described in this book.

However, certain areas have received a great deal of attention, but others have been allowed to lie fallow. Lest anyone think the latter are incapable of improvement, I turn the spotlight on one of them: Synonymic Deletions.

A synonymic deletion is a word from which one or more letters can be deleted to leave a second word that is a synonym of the first: for example, delete n, 0, n and t from INDOLENT to get IDLE.

This is an interesting and relatively easy diversion. The challenge lies in two restrictions that should be observed. The first states that the two words should be etymologically unrelated; thus, one is enjoined from using FACade, FAiry or GAMble, all of which generate from the same roots. The second states that the letters of the shorter word should be scattered through the longer word, not bunched together. This eliminates such tempting possibilities as dEVIL, dRUGget, peRimeter, intiMATE, corpoREAL, moOLDy, and bROADway.

Keeping these two restrictions in mind, here is a liberal sprinkling of synonymic deletions:

behAvIoR blaCkguArD caRrIaGe
BouncInG ChARgE pArtiClE
CAlcUaTION MAzeD ApproPriaTe
CharActerIStic ApiCIDaTE AsseVERate
ACUmIna TE ASSeVERate CAbRiolet
becAuSe forBiddANce conT AInINa Te
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COlOrLess sCoundRel deSTinATION DecOrate
deSOLatE DeclInE DecoroUsLY
deInIsE dis Co URTeous obSErvE
discordaNce aDeqUatE aBOllA
dRoughtY AdePT CApSulE
toLEraTe BeLIOW
caRrIaGe pArtiClE
ApproPriaTe AsseVERate CAbRiolet conTAmInaTe DEceAseD
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obSErvE aBOllA
cApsulE DeterHoratE
Acquire
Tend
About
Broadening
Concern
Devised
Disintegrate
Departure
premature
breakfast
Earlier
Familiarity
Hurry
Honorable
incomprehensible
butterfly
Masculine
Minute
Enthusiasm
Overbearing
Separate
Employ
Rampage
Regulate
Spoil
Regulate
Knapsack
Scion
Posture
Precipitation
Relation
Christening
Steadfast
Ininfinitely
Assumption
Thereupon
Purpose
Yearning
Exhilarate
Excitation
Feasted
Funereal
Inheritance
Flourishing
Company
Motivate
Boastment
Pilaster
Superior
Rattle
Recapitulate
Routine
Transgression
Rightly
Superfluous
Twit
Each
Alibi
Celebrities
Fatigue
Efficient
Gathering
Wetstone
Immaterial
Irritated
Masculine
Impair
Neighboring
Otherwise
Playfellows
Point
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Remarkable
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