AN INVESTIGATION OF ACEINORST

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On pages 292-3 of Language on Vacation (Scribner's, 1965), Dmitri Borgmann lists and defines seventeen transposals for the letters ACEINORST. One of these is a coinage, but the other sixteen can be found in various dictionaries which I have indicated below.

W3 = Webster's Third New International
W2 = Webster's New International, Second Edition
FW = Funk and Wagnalls New Standard
RH = Random House Unabridged Dictionary
OED = Oxford English Dictionary
Cent = Century Dictionary
CS = Supplement to the Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia

ANTICORES variant of 'anticors', inflammatory swellings in horses
(OED, CS)
ATROSCINE a poisonous alkaloid used in medicine (W3, W2, FW)
CANOTIERS canoeists (W3, FW); types of fabric (RH)
CAROTINE's coloring matters in carrots (Cent)
CASTORINE a cotton-velvet fabric (Cent)
CERATIONS acts of reducing to a waxlike state (W2, FW, OED)
CERTOSINA a Renaissance Italian style of elaborate inlay of bone, ivory, wood or metal (W3, W2, RH, FW)
CONARITES varieties of mineral consisting of hydrous nickel silicate (W3, W2, FW, OED)
CRANIOTES vertebrates with a special skull (FW)
CREATIONS products (W3, W2, FW, RH, OED, Cent)
CRESTON, IA. the town of Creston in Iowa (FW)
NARCOTISE variant of 'narcotize', to drug (RH); the '-ize' spelling is in W3, W2, FW and OED, though the OED has the '-ise' spelling in a quotation
NEAR-STOIC almost indifferent to pleasure or pain (not shown in any dictionary)
OSTRACINE pertaining to oysters and allied molluscs (W2, FW, OED)
REATIONS responsive actions (W3, W2, FW, RH, OED, Cent)
TINOCERAS an extinct genus of plant-eating mammals (W2, FW)
TRICOSANE a low-melting paraffin hydrocarbon (W3, W2, FW, OED)

Since NEAR-STOIC is merely a coinage, I have dismissed it as a genuine ACEINORST transposal, leaving only sixteen. (However, I concede that some readers may be unhappy with CRESTON, IA as well.)
Since I first read Borgmann’s book, I have been searching out additional ACEINORST specimens. I feel that I have now collected enough of them to justify their release to an eagerly waiting world. Indeed, had Borgmann been sufficiently diligent in his own research, he would have unearthed most of the extra items which I have discovered; many of the sources which I used were published prior to 1965.

For each of the sixteen genuine ACEINORST transposals in Language on Vacation, I have unearthed a matching partner.

ACTIONERS artisans who make the actions of instruments, such as guns and pianos (the singular form ‘actioner’ is given in W2 and OED)

ACTORINES actresses (the singular form ‘actorine’ is given in The American Thesaurus of Slang, by Berrey and van den Bark, and also in H. L. Mencken’s The American Language, Fourth Edition)

ANCORITES the plural of ‘ ancorite’, a 16th and 17th century spelling of ‘ anchoret’, a recluse or hermit (the spelling ‘ ancorite’ is shown at ‘ anchoret’ in the OED)

ANORETICS drugs causing loss of appetite (W3, RH)

CANISTEO, R. the River Canisteo in New York State (this is the entry exactly as it appears in The Times Index Gazetteer of the World)

CATERINOS the plural of the proper name ‘Caterino’; for readers adverse to pluralized proper names, an alternative is CATERINO’S, the possessive or genitive form of the same forename (this forename appears in the Pronouncing List of Prenames published as part of Webster’s Biographical Dictionary, 1970 edition)


CITROSENA a genus of plants (from the same source as above)

CORTAINES the plural of Cortina’s, parts of certain fungi (both the singular and the plural are found in W3)

ESCONTRIA a genus of plants (from the same source as Citrosena and Centrosia)

NICOTERAS the plural of the proper name ‘Nicotera’, which is a seaport in Italy, and also the surname of Baron Giovanni Nicotera, an Italian politician of the 19th century; as a plural, therefore, Nicoteras are seaports such as Nicotera, in Italy, and people called Nicotera, such as the immediate relations of the Baron; alternatively, NICOTERA’S may be construed as the possessive or genitive form of the name (the seaport is listed in The Times Index Gazetteer of the World, and the man is listed in Webster’s Biographical Dictionary, 1970 edition, and A Dictionary of Universal Biography, by Hyamson,
During the course of my research, I came frustratingly close to identifying further ACENORST transposals, but for various reasons they are not quite up to scratch. I refrain from offering them as full-blooded transposals, but I do feel that they are sufficiently interesting to offer to readers of Word Ways. Perhaps readers will be able to add the necessary items of information to turn these into 100 per cent acceptable transposals.

ACORNIEST this is the superlative form of the supposed adjective 'acorny'; unfortunately, the only adjective which dictionaries offer relating to acorns, is 'acored'; can anyone find a genuine source for 'acorny'?  

CARNOSITE this is a French word; the only English language source which I can offer for it at the moment is the OED where it is used in an etymology of 'carnosity'; can anyone find an example of this word actually occurring in English usage?  

CARSONITE with a familiar name like Carson, there really ought to be a mineral called by this name, but I was unable to find one; alternatively, perhaps an inhabitant of Carson City, Nevada is called by this name  

CORSAINTE a corsaint ' is the body or the soul of a saint, and is given in the OE D; the same dictionary gives 'corsaynt' and 'corsayntye' as obsolete variant spellings; by analogy, there ought to be an obsolete variant CORSAINTE, but it's not shown in the OED; does anyone have access to another dictionary which does show this as a variant?  

CORTISANE the OED gives 'cortisan', 'courtisan' and 'courtisane' as obsolete variants of 'courtisan', a court-mistress or prostitute, but it doesn't show CORTISANE; can anyone locate this anywhere?  

ESCORTEA in Great Britain, the major models in the range of Ford cars are the Fiesta, the Escort, the Cortina, the Granada, and the Capri; builders of hot rods, custom cars and other special or variant automobiles have been known to produce a hybrid of the Escort and the Cortina, and called it the ESCORTINA; this is a term which I recall seeing several years ago in specialist car magazines, but I cannot offer a reference -- can anyone help me out?
SECRATION 'sacration' occurs in many dictionaries as an old word for 'consecration'; I had hoped to locate SECRATION as a hybrid between the two, but so far I haven't had any luck.

SENATORIC this is a supposed adjective derived from the noun 'senator'; dictionaries show 'senatorial' as the modern adjective, and the OED and W2 both list 'senatorial' as an obsolete adjective; I had hoped that just SENATORIC by itself might exist.

TROCENIAS 'Trocenia' or 'trocenia' occurs in a work which I can only identify as Andree's Atlas Index; I have in my possession a reverse alphabetical list of eight-letter words, published in 1927 by members of the National Puzzlers League (Jemand, Cincinnati, Sherlock Holmes, Phil O. Loger, and Miss Fitts), and 'Trocenia' is listed therein, with the source indicated as Andree's Atlas Index; if 'Trocenia' is a placename, then TROCENIAS (places such as Trocenia) and TROCENIASPs (the possessive or genitive form) both become possible; however, Trocenia may be something other than a placename, so I cannot definitely claim this transposal; has any reader of Word Ways got a copy of the source in question?

Finally, beyond transposals and near-misses, there are thousands of phrases, terms and make-believe words (coinages such as Borgmann's NEAR-STOIC) that can be created from the letters ACEINORST. The following group of sixty are those which seem to make some kind of sense, even though none is sanctioned by any dictionary of words, names or phrases.

- acorn site
- core stain
- iron caste
- ran to ices
- Acton rise
- corn stain
- is a cornet
- resin coat
- an erotic S
- corn is ate
- I scare not
- riot canes
- aster coin
- corn is ate
- isn't a core
- scare into
- a tin score
- ear tonics
- it's a crane
- sea-citron
- cane riots
- Eric Aston
- nicer oats
- so certain
- canoe stir
- I, ancestor
- nicer oats
- so I canter
- cart noise
- I can store
- nosier cat
- sonic rate
- cartonise
- I eat corns
- not caries
- sore antic
- caster ion
- in a corset
- oar insect
- stair cone
- coarse tin
- in a sector
- ocean stir
- Tories can
- coat siren
- in coaster
- octane sir
- to scare in
- coin rates
- into races
- races into
- trace ions
- Cora Stein
- ion crates
- rain cotes
- tri-oceans

Who is to say that one, some or all of these don't exist somewhere? I had high hopes of locating COARSE TIN and TRACE IONS in scientific or technical dictionaries. I half-expected dictionaries to include phrases such as RACES INTO, SCARE INTO and TO SCARE IN. I was so certain that I would find SO CERTAIN somewhere. I rummaged through numerous telephone directories looking for CORA STEIN and ERIC ASTON. And SEA-CITRON seemed such a likely candidate. Maybe these items do exist somewhere, and I just didn't search hard enough!