

AD MEMORIAM DEMETRII

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The Wombat was, I could tell, in a somber mood when he received me in his rural retreat in Fauquier County, Virginia. His dark clothing seemed to reflect his frame of mind; and on the Florentine credenza stood, not the colorful array of comestibles which I was wont to see there, but a large bedewed pitcher of nearly black liquid, a silver plate of black chocolate confections, and a platter, likewise argent, of delicate sandwiches of some black bread.

In an instant forgotten were the little logological items which I had designed to introduce opportunely in our conversation, should it flag: a brand new word ending in -gry (well, not so very brand new, seeing that I had found it in the True Travels and Adventures etc. published in 1629 and written by Virginia's own Captain John Smith, one of those tremendous Elizabethans: "a coat [was put on him, i.e., Smith] made of ULGRY'S hair..."; but unrecorded in the OED, although the word DRUBMAN in the preceding sentence is duly noted by that authority); a little joke about T. O'MALLEY dining on TOMALLEY; an inquiry about the meaning of COFFERESS; and other logological sundries.

"You seem, my dear Dr. Wombat," quoth I, "to be a bit out of tune with this beautiful day. May I ask what appears to be depressing you?"

"Yes, dear boy, you may," replied the venerable little beast. "It is an occurrence associated with December the 7th."

"Isn't it somewhat late in the day to be lugubriating about the attack on Pearl Harbor, forty-five years ago now, unless it is that at this time the Japs are living as high on the hog as though they had won the war?"

"Tsk, tsk," tutted my friend, "we do not call them Japs any more, but Jap-a-knees. Anyway, it is not Pearl Harbor that I am celebrating with this mournful mise-en-scène."

"Right you are about the appellation; still, I suppose I shall keep using it as long as our British allies are called BRITS, a term which jars on my ear much more than JAPS. Hm-m-m, December the 7th, the seventh day before the Ides of December ... I've got it, you are commemorating (and rightly so) the murder of that incomparable master of rhetoric, philosopher, stylist, and all-round logologist (though not at the time so denominated) who was murdered on December 7th, 43 B.C., Marcus Tullius Cicero!"

"Alas, I see that you have not been informed. I am paying poor meed of homage to a man, deceased this December 7th last, whom I know that you also admire and respect and whose logological accomplishments will remain forever green, Dmitri A. Borgmann."

I was astonished at the bitter news. Dmitri Borgmann had been around so long, was so intertwined with activities logological, that he had come to represent for me a sort of benign presence whose vanishing had never even entered my mind. Not only that, he was years away from his grand climacteric and I had looked forward to years of reading his beautifully researched, genial, informative and always original articles and comments in and on logology, the study, art, and science that he had himself defined and named. Another source of sorrow was that I had never let him know my appreciation of his endeavors and accomplishments.

The Wombat with his animal empathy divined my feelings and condoled with me, saying "Let us be grateful for all that the late Master Logologist was given time to attain and to share with us. By present-day standards he was not old, but before Atropos sheared his thread of life Lachesis had woven him fitly into the embroidery of the world and Clotho had spun him into a rare thread."

He paused to bring us the refreshments from the credenza - a fine, deep, rich, dark root beer with the purest sassafras to give it an aromatic nose; thin pumpernickel sandwiches filled with rare dark cheeses and oleaginous olives; and dark chocolates with black fillings of subtle licorice cream. I admired the appropriateness of the mourning meats.

Quaffing deeply and wiping the foam from his rhinarium, the learned beast continued: "Logology deals primarily with the written word and will always be associated with the name and efforts of Dmitri A. Borgmann. I, H.K. Wombat, am the progenitor of a counter-logology which I will now explain and dedicate to the memory of our departed friend, although whether he would approve of it I know not, believing, however that he would have a decided opinion about it one way or another."

"And what is this counter-logology?" I enquired, savoring a nutty sandwich and rolling a draught of "the pure, the blushful Sassafras" on my organ of articulacy.

"G-O-L-O-G-O-L-Y," announced my subfusc friend.

"Hmph," snorted I. "All you have done is interchange the consonants in LOGOLOGY. Makes no sense."

The good doctor was unruffled and looked at me with what I felt was a pitying eye.

"Does GLAGOLITIC mean anything to you? Is it a concept within your experience?"

I reached into the depths of my linguisticophilological consciousness. Against the background of memory hundreds of tiny circles began to dance. "A riot of fancy expressed in small circles." Ent-

wistle and Morison. Russian and the Slavonic Languages. Gradually it came back to me: Methodius and Cyril, the Apostles to the Slavs, had reduced the Slavs' language to writing. Russian still is written in an alphabet called Cyrillic; Glagolitic "may have been the alphabet of the Moravian mission of Methodius and Cyril (863 ff.)."

"Why, yes," I said. "Glagolitic is that fanciful alphabet that Methodius ...; but what has that to do with GOLOGOLY?"

"GLAGOL is the Old Bulgarian or Old Slavonic word for word. GLAGOL is also the Modern Russian word for verb. As for GOLOGOLY, remember Novgorod and Petrograd."

"What is there to remember about them? Except that they have both been diminished by the cancerous growth that is the Soviet state."

"Let us stick to matters of GOLOGOLY. Novgorod means 'New Town (or City).' Petrograd means 'Peter Town (or City).' Ergo, GRAD equals GOROD." The Wombat smiled and crunched a chocolate.

"The light dawns!" I exclaimed. "One of the main distinguishing features of Russian from Old Slavonic and then from other modern Slavic languages is precisely that full vocalism, GOROD vs. GRAD, BORODA (beard) vs. BRAD, MOLOKO (milk) vs. MLAK, and so on. But the Modern Russian word for word is SLOVO, not GOLOGOL. And why give your counter-logology a Slavic name?"

The Wombat smiled. "If the founder of logology could have a Slavic name like Dmitri, why cannot the founder of gologoly give his creation a Slavic name? To the comment of SLOVO's being the Modern Russian word for word: GOLOGOL occurs dialectically; there is a Russian word GOLOGOLIT'] [accent on last O] which means 'to chatter, to joke.' By the way, these Slavic words are cognate with the -gale in NIGHTINGALE, a bird which utters its voice at night. Russian GOLOS, Old Slavonic GLAS, both meaning 'voice,' are also connected, as is English CALL. The Y in GOLOGOLY is like the Y in SEAMSTRESSY 'sewing.' Or, if you like, you may connect it with the Slavic plural sign Y. In any case GOLOGOLY means 'words' or 'wording.' Unlike logology, in direct contrast to logology, it deals with words spoken, not words written."

As the smile of satisfaction played upon the phascolomic lips I remarked, "Then one who practices gologoly is a gologolist."

"No indeed!" was the Wombat's immediate response. "He is a GOLOGOLOG - an elegant nine-letter palindrome!"

"But that should be GOLOGOLOGUE like IDEOLOGUE!"

"One may write THEOLOG for THEOLOGUE, CATALOG for CATALOGUE and, hence, also GOLOGOLOG for GOLOGOLOGUE," stated my friend triumphantly. He then proceeded to explain his creation.

"In logology we have palindromes (hetero and homo), anagrams, and other word play. Any word play with written words in logology you can also have in gologoly with spoken words. In gologoly

the name Aurora, pronounced a-roar-a, is a palindrome (homo). SKIRT is a palindrome (hetero), TURKS. In logology you can't do much with the word RENT anagrammatically; but let us analyze it in gologoly: it is composed of the phonemes R, E, N, T, the rearrangement whereof gives us E, N, T, R or ENTER, T, E, N, R, TENOR or TENNER. Similarly, APPLE breaks down into the phonemes A, P, L, rearrangement of which gives us ALP and LAP.

"It is a bit more difficult to practice gologoly than logology because it is ear-oriented, not eye-oriented. But there are millions who love the thumping of Horowitz and the squeaking of Heifetz, so there may be many who will be charmed by the subtle analysis required by gologoly. I say subtle because we must analyze each word into its phonemic elements, and linguisticians are divided as to just how English should be divided into phonemes. The main thing is to adopt one system and stick to it; not that various systems might not be combined, just as logologists use different dictionaries, archaic and dialectal words, and other resorts to enlarge their word-play scope. The phonemes W, Y, L, M, N, R are particularly to be attended to: they may be either vowels or consonants. I recommend that they be gologolized as either, i.e., as in RENT and APPLE above. If you wish it, I will give you my phoneme list of 24 consonants and 16 vowels and diphthongs with simple rules for their use. A few more anagrams: NATTY - AUNTIE, NAUGHTY-TAWNY, GRID - DIGGER, BIGGER - BURGIE, CURSE - IRKS, ICE - SIGH, EPISTLE - SLEEPY, BROOKS - BOOK, SIR?

"NG which does not occur initially and H which does not occur finally would need special comment, as also the NG which is the automatic pronunciation of N before K and G. Juncture, stress accent, and intonation are ignored as in logology.

"The main thing to remember is that anything possible in the written realm in logology is possible in the spoken realm in gologoly, but that gologoly, to which we are not used, will initially probably seem more difficult than logology. This is but an adumbration of the whole of gologoly, which, you note, I pronounce as a proparoxytone."

I told the Wombat that I would give grave consideration to his invention. At the same time I doubted that it would appeal to the late Master Logologist.

"What does that matter whether it appeal to him or not," replied the Wombat testily, "I have set it forth in his honor, and I, for one, admire a man who, like Diogenes, rejects honors."