ORDER IN A RESISTENTIALIST WORLD

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Earlier in the twentieth century, some French intellectual whose name escapes me now advanced the philosophy of resistentialism. The possibly central tenet of this philosophy was the idea that inanimate objects have an intrinsic tendency to resist us, thwarting our objectives. Resistentialism appears to have made little headway in the world, for 1 do not find the word in my dictionary. Yet, nowhere is the truth of resistentialism more evident than in logological research. As we all know, if we need a word or name to complete some logological structure such as a word square, or a word set exemplifying some aesthetic logological concept, all dictionaries and other reference works, normally at loggerheads with each other, instantly form a sinister brotherhood whose sole purpose is to deny us the term we seek.

I recently became a typical - or, perhaps, not so typical - target of that sinister fraternity. I had run across a high-quality word square of the eighth order, constructed many years ago by some unknown formist. To make that square fully mine, I needed to identify all of the words and names of which it consisted. The first seven terms posed no problem, but the bottom word, DEERNECK or DEER-NECK or DEER NECK, produced an immediate confrontation with the Evil Confraternity. My downfall was, in truth, my own fault, for 1 became the victim of my own preconceptions. You see, it was self-evident to me that DEERNECK, or whatever, was a place name somewhere in the United States. There are hundreds or maybe even thousands of such names in the United States (and elsewhere) beginning with the word DEER, and the word NECK describes both a narrow stretch of land such as an isthmus, promontory, or mountain pass and a narrow body of water such as a strait. The conclusion that I was looking for a place name was, therefore, irresistible and I started my search for it.

Since I am well-supplied with atlases, gazetteers, and other geographic reference works, it did not take me long to locate a wealth of place names beginning with the letter combination DEER. By actual count, I found 146 different such names. The list of those names appears in the appendix. It is not complete - examination of additonal references would certainly lengthen it. Even in its present state, however, it raises an obvious question: is there any other initial letter combination of four (or more) letters that produces a longer list of names? I am thinking of a combination with a substantive function in the complete name, not of an element that serves merely as a prefix - a word such as FORT, LAKE,

MOUNT, POINT, PORT, SAINT, SAN, or SANTA. There are obviously almost limitless numbers of geographic names beginning with terms such as these.

A glance at my list shows that it includes almost every conceivable ending for the combining form DEER, except, of course, the one that I needed: -NECK. The perverseness of the sinister brotherhood in denying me the object of my quest was beyond belief, and an ideal exemplification of resistentialism in action. Frustrated, I suddenly realized that deer are mammals. As such, they do have necks, and DEERNECK could, just possibly, be a word, not a name. This it did, indeed, prove to be, in the hyphenated form DEER-NECK. Even so, my road to success was rocky. I managed to overlook the adjective DEER-NECK in Webster's Second Edition, because it was out of alphabetical order, in a small-print list of what Webster's Second Edition chooses to call "self-explanatory" combinations following the entry DEER. I therefore settled for the noun DEER-NECK in the Funk & Wagnalls Unabridged, defined as the thin, ill-shaped neck of some horses.

With the word square that had prompted my crusade for DEER-NECK now lying conquered at my feet, I returned to the list of place names that it had generated. While there were only 146 different names on the list, they represented a much larger number of different places: there are, for instance, large numbers of cities, towns, and villages named DEERFIELD, or DEERING; many different little streams called DEER CREEK; various bodies of water known as DEER LAKE; and so on. Many of the individual names on the list apply to two or more geographic locations.

My first assignment was to arrange the names in alphabetical order. The work of doing so provided interesting insights into order in the resistentialist world, posing problems that I had never before encountered in many years of alphabetizing lists of words and names.

All the word and name lists I had ever alphabetized could be divided into a theoretical maximum of 26 groups, one beginning with each of the 26 letters of the alphabet. Here, however, all of the entries in the list began with the same four letters, so that the alphabetization process began with the fifth letter. As a result the theoretical maximum number of name groups was 27, not 26; the very first entry, DEER, had no fifth letter, placing it in a separate, 27th group.

Because some names were written solidly (such as DEERTRAIL) while others were written as separate words (DEER TRAIL), I had to adopt a consistent alphabetization principle. Among today's reference works, consistency is notable for its absence: some reference works use one principle, some another. I chose to follow the rules set forth in the 3rd Edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (1983). Those rules mandate alphabetizing letter by letter and disregarding intervening punctuation marks. For my purposes, however, I elected to treat a word

break as in the same category with a punctuation mark, therefore setting aside the APA principle that "nothing precedes something" (page 115). In other words, l elevated the letter-by-letter rule to absolute status instead of allowing it only partial sovereignty. Why anyone would wish to follow, or to tolerate, any other principles for alphabetizing words and names has always puzzled me — that any other principles are incorrect is a self-evident proposition.

True to the spirit of resistentialism, alphabetizing the DEER list involved peculiar psychological difficulties. Two of them centered around the expectation that what follows DEER must always be a word. That expectation was, however, defeated by two types of entries in the list. One type is exemplified by DEERAL and DEERUN, names in which the attachments to DEER look like suffixes, not like independent words: -AL and -UN. In the case of DEERUN, alphabetizing the name correctly is made even more difficult by the fact that RUN is a word, resulting in a desire to split the name into DEE RUN instead of DEER UN. The other type of entry is exemplified by DEE RIVER and DEE ROAD. Here, a psychological effort is needed to shift the location of the word break, visualizing the names as DEER IVER and DEER OAD for the purpose of alphabetizing them correctly.

Most of the names proved to be United States place names, with only a limited number in other countries — Canada, Great Britain, Australia, the Netherlands, and South Africa. The Dutch and South African names are the only ones to look foreign: DEERDSKOP, DEERLIJK, and DEERLYCK. The last two were variants of one place name, as were many other pairs included in the list; DEERCREEK and DEER CREEK, DEERS EAR BUTTE and DEERS EAR BUTTES, and so on. An extended study of the maps themselves would be needed to determine which pairs of similar names were variants and which ones represented different locations with coincidentally similar names.

Included in the list are some turned-around names such as DEERING, MOUNT and DEER, OLD. They are there because that is how they appeared in the indexes l consulted — otherwise, l would not even have been aware of the existence of place names such as NEW DEER and LAKE DEERING.

Remaining unsolved is the mystery of DEERNECK or DEER NECK. There simply <u>has</u> to be a place so designated, somewhere. Does any reader know such a location?

APPENDIX

Deer

Deeral

Deer Bay; Deerborne; Deerbrook; Deer Brook; Deerbrook Shopping
 Center; Deer Burn; Deer Butte

Deer Camp; Deer Canyon; Deer Cay; Deercourt; Deercreek; Deer
 Creek; Deer Creek Dam; Deer Creek Indian Reservation; Deercreek

Pass; Deer Creek Pass; Deer Creek Range; Deer Creek Reservoir; Deer Creek Valley Ranchos; Deercroft

Deerdskop

Deere; Deerema

Deerfield; Deerfield Acres; Deerfield Beach; Deerfield Center; Deerfield Correctional Center; Deerfield Dam; Deerfield Estates; Deerfield Junction; Deerfield Lake; Deerfield Parade; Deerfield River; Deerfield Street; Deerfield Village; Deerfieldville; Deer Flat Reservoir; Deerford; Deer Forks

Deer Grove

Deerharbor; Deer Harbor; Deer Harbour; Deer Haven; Deerhead; Deer Hill; Deer Horn; Deerhorn Mountain; Deerhorn River; Deerhurst

Deerina, Mount; Deerina, Mt.; Deering; Deering City; Deering Heights; Deering Hills; Deering Junction; Deering, Lake; Deering, Mount; Deering, Mt.; Deer Island; Deer Island Passage; Deer Islands; Deer Island Thorofare; Deer Isle; Dee River

Deer Key

Deer Lake; Deer, Lake; Deer Lakes Regional Park; Deer Lake Station; Deerland; Deer Land; Deerlick; Deer Lick Knob; Deer Lick Springs; Deerlijk; Deerlodge; Deer Lodge; Deer Lodge Mountain; Deer Lodge Pass; Deer Lodge Prairie: Deer Lodge Valley; Deerlyck

Deermont; Deer Mountain

Deerness; Deer Ness; Deer, New; Deer Notch

Dee Road; Deer, Old

Deer Paint River; Deerpark; Deer Park; Deer Park Grove; Deer Park Heights; Deer Park Hotel; Deer Park Plaza; Deer Park Pond; Deer Park Village; Deer Passage; Deerpass Bay; Deer Peak; Deer Pen; Deerplain; Deer Plain; Deer Point; Deer Pond

Deer Range; Deerridge; Deer Ridge; Deer River; Deer River Falls; Deer River Flow; Deer River, Little; Deerrock; Deerrun; Deer Run; Deer Run Shores

Deers; Deers Ear Butte; Deers Ear Buttes; Deer's Ears, The; Deers Head; Deerskin Lake; Deers Lake; Deers Mills; Deer Sound; Deersville

Deerton; Deertrail; Deer Trail; Deer Trail Creek; Deer Trail Lake

Deerun

Deer Vale; Deer Valley; Deervanna

Deer Walk; Deerwood; Deerwood Park