

# TRANSELECTION NESTS IN CHAMBERS

JOHN HOLGATE  
Sydney, Australia

Successive transdeletions by a single letter from word to word yield a pyramidal structure, as demonstrated by Ross Eckler in "Two New Transdeletion Pyramids" in the May *Word Ways*. What if we progressively delete all letters of a single word and transpose the remainder?

ORDINATES: STRAINED, SEDATION, NOTARIES, TORNADES, ASTEROID,  
DRONIEST, ANEROIDS, INTRADOS, DERATION

All words can be found in Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (*droniest* is the inferred superlative of the entry *drony*, like a drone; *tornades* is a poetic form of *tornadoes*).

According to the editor, this set of transdeletions is called a Baltimore transdeletion, invented by Charles N. Crowder of the Eastern Puzzlers' League in 1904 and defined in the *Glossary of A Key to Puzzledom* (Duane Powell Press, Dowagiac, Michigan, 1906). Such progressive transdeletions are paradigmatic in that each deleted letter is different and each remainder is transposable. I have discovered four more 9-letter Baltimore transdeletions which can be formed using words from Chambers:

TRIANGLES: REALIGNS, STEALING, STRANGLE, TINGLERS, GLARIEST,  
LATRINES, ASTRINGE, STARLING, RELATING  
MALINGERS: ALIGNERS, MINGLERS, SMEARING, MANGLERS, GREMIALS  
MARLINES, MARLINGS, MEASLING, MALINGER  
RETINULAS: ALUNITES, LUNARIST, LUNARIES, NEUTRALS, URALITES,  
LATRINES, URINATES, INSULTER, TENURIAL  
IDOLATERS: DELATORS, SOTERIAL, DILATORS, ASTEROID, STOLIDER,  
SOREDIAL, DILATORS, DIASTOLE, TAILORED

A transdeletion nest is constructed out of a set of Baltimore transdeletions. In a nest, one of the words in the initial transdeletion is itself the object of a second Baltimore transdeletion; a word in turn is taken from the second transdeletion and used to create a third Baltimore transdeletion, and so on, down to a single letter. An example of a transdeletion nest is given on the next page.

It does not seem possible to extend the transdeletion nest to the 10-letter level using only words from Chambers. A near-miss:

PLASTERING: TRIANGLES, TAPERINGS, SPRINGLET, REPLATING,  
RELAPSING, PARTLINGS, PLEATINGS, (SPRANGLET),  
(TRIPLAGES), TRIPLANES

*Partlings* is a Scottish variant of *partly* in the OED, but, alas,

T R I A N G L E S  
 REALIGNS STEALING TANGLERS TINGLERS GLARIEST LATRINES ASTRINGE STARLING RELATING  
 L A T R I N E S  
RETAINS LINTERS NAILERS ELASTIN RENTALS RETAILS RATLINS TRENAIL  
 R E T A I N S  
 TISANE STRAIN ARSINE SINTER ANTRES SATIRE RETINA  
 S T R A I N  
 RIANI RAINS SAINT SNIRT RANTS STAIR  
 S T A I R  
 RAIT AIRS STIR RATS AIT  
 A I T S  
 SIT SAT SAI ITA  
 I T A  
 AT AI IT  
 A I  
 I A  
 A

triplage is an adjective, and sprangle has no diminutive. By far the most tantalising combination is:

RESALUTING: SINGULATE, ....., GRANULITE, RESULTING,  
 GAUNTRIES, TRIANGLES, SINGULARE, STRAUNGLE,  
 LIGATURES, RETINULAS

Singulare is an OED variant of singular, and straungle is an obsolete OED variant of strangle; singulate appears in an article by H.C. Spencer et al in the Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology of April 1987 (Volume 81, Supplement 1, p. 24). The trans-deletion that got away was RESALUTING minus an E; the combination conjures up some interesting phantom words which one day may find their incarnation in the dictionary. I would be grateful to any logologist who could inform me of their nascence in print.

LANGURIST an expert in diseases of the langur  
 LIGURANTS collectors of ligures (precious stones)  
 GUN TRIALS pre-Olympic elimination contests for small-bore  
 pistol shooters  
 TRAIL GUNS Colts, Winchesters, etc., used to blaze trails  
 A-RUSTLING as in the undiscovered Longfellow couplet "The birds  
 were a-bustling / And the leaves were a-rustling"  
 LIGUSTRAN a synthetic form of ligustrin, an extract of the  
 Ligustrum or privet plant (as in dextrin/dextran)  
 RAUSTLING formed from Staffordshire raust (a burst of temper)  
 and the Yorkshire rostle (to wrestle): the irascibility  
 experienced by those grappling with nonexistent words!