TRANSDELETION NESTS IN CHAMBERS

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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, Lutrines, astringe, starling, relating
MALINGERS: ALIGNERS, MINGLERS, SMeARING, MANGLERS, GREMIALS
MARLINES: marlings, MEASLING, MALINGER

RETINULAS: ALUNITES, LUNARIST, LUNARIES, NEUTRALS, URALITES, Latrines, urinates, INSULTER, TENURAL

IDOLATERS: DELATORS, SOTERIAL, DILATERS, 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

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triplaee 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 ob-

solete OED variant of strangle; singulate appears in an article

by H.C. Spencer et al in the Annals of Tropical Medicine and Para-

sitology of April 1987 (Volume 81, Supplement 1, p. 24). The trans-

deletion that got away was RESALUTING minus an E; the combina-

tion 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!