EINSCHWEIN'S MAGIC NUMBERS

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Paying a recent call on my old friend Professor Einschwein, the world-famous Transylvanian logologist, I was privileged to learn about his latest numerological invention. Drawing forth a curious pack of cards, he showed me that each card bore a single letter of the alphabet on one side and a single integer, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, on the other.

"You see that every distinct letter is paired with its own distinct number on the reverse side, and that some cards are duplicated. I verified this, noting a total of 20 cards showing the 16 letters E,F,G,H,I,L,N,O,R,S,T,U,V,W,X,Y,Z but with three cards for E, two for N and two for T.

"Now observe carefully," he said. Spreading out the cards on the table, the Professor carefully selected four, sliding them with his index finger into a single line so as to spell the word ZERO. Next, turning the cards over one by one, he invited me to add up the numbers so revealed. Their sum was zero. "That's cute," I responded, "but don't I recall seeing something along these lines in a recent **Word Ways?**" "Have patience," he purred, "we are not finished. Check me at every step!"

Einschwein continued in the same vein, ZERO followed by ONE, TWO, THREE, etc., until he had reached TWELVE. I watched him like a hawk throughout. There was no question of any new cards being palmed. Each time the cards needed were slid into line as before and then turned over. The sum of the numbers always tallied with the number word spelled. "It's a nice trick, Professor," I said. "But that's it; you can't get beyond TWELVE. THIRTEEN is unlucky, as proved in that article I saw in the February 1990 issue, 'The New Merology'."

Slowly and deliberately he lined up the letters to spell THIR-TEEN. With a sinking feeling I watched him turn the cards over one at a time. Incredibly, their sum was indeed 13!

"But this is against logic!" I cried. "Not only do I remember the earlier impossiblity proof that cancelling common terms in the equation $T+H+I+R+T+E+E+N = T+H+R+E+E + T+E+N$ shows that $I = E$, and thus I and E could never have different values. I also remember that we can go even further. From $N+I+N+E = 9$, we know that $I = 9-2N-E$. But since $I = E$, then $E = 9-2N-E$, from which $2E = 9-2N$. Yet, since $2E$ is even, while $9-2N$ must be odd, we have a contradiction. Thus, if THREE, NINE and TEN are self-descriptive, no **assignment** of letters, distinct **or otherwise** could ever make

THIRTEEN perfect as well!"

"For vy you are shouting at me already?" cried Einschwein plaintively, his Transylvanian accent momentarily in the ascendant. "You vant ve should repeat ze demonstration for you all over again?"

Question: what were the numbers on Einschwein's magic deck of cards? For answers, see Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

THE GREAT ESKIMO VOCABULARY HOAX

*This is the title of a new (1991) University of Chicago Press book containing 23 essays by Santa Cruz linguistics professor and dean Geoffrey K. Pullum. These were originally published (1983-89) in the quarterly journal Natural Language and Linguistic Theory, probably unfamiliar to most **Word Ways** readers. In the Foreword, James McCawley describes the typical Pullum column as an "exquisitely crafted piece of criticism, satire, fantasy, and/or reporting, dealing entertainingly and provocatively with important issues relating to the ways in which ... linguists practice [their] profession or to the ways in which the world beyond ... impinges on linguistics and its practicioners."*

Be warned at the outset: many of these pieces deal with highly-technical linguistics issues, and the humor and satire can only be appreciated by a linguistics student or professor. Nevertheless, some are accessible to the layman, especially the one which inspires the title of the book. Pullum wittily debunks the story that Eskimos have hundreds of words for different kinds of snow, tracing its origin back to Franz Boas in 1911 (4 terms for snow) and Benjamin Lee Whorf in 1940 (7 terms). Other essays of general interest discuss the suppression of a book on syntax which had libelous example sentences like "Sears delivered them the wrong sofa"; the natural home in academe for a department of linguistics (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences all lay claim); the menace of the English-first movement; and ways in which journals can make the researcher's life easier (footnotes on same page, style sheet in every issue, dates of receipt and revision for each article, etc.).

The book sells for $42.95 in cloth and $14.95 in paperback.