

OPRAH'S NOT OVER 'TIL HARPO RETURNS

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Peter Newby's theory of 'Arepoid' word squares being merely classical recreational linguistics is fine as far as it goes, but he marred his discussion by supplying perfect examples of English construction. If, as he suggests, AREPO is a non-word, then each of his squares also should have contained a non-word. I illustrate with the simple example at the left. Here, the non-word is AROSP, which, by extension, will be assumed by the archeologists of the palindromic year 3993 to be a proper name. PSORA, of course, is scabies, and the remaining words need no definition for today's reader. Our concern is what such ephemeral appellations as OPRAH and HARPO might mean to the logologist of the future. I quote from a news report of that time:

O P R A H
P S O R A
R O T O R
A R O S P
H A R P O

with the simple example at the left. Here, the non-word is AROSP, which, by extension, will be assumed by the archeologists of the palindromic year 3993 to be a proper name. PSORA, of course, is scabies, and the remaining words need no definition for today's reader. Our concern

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Yet another OPRAH/HARPO word square was discovered in a cryogenic tomb of early galactic man. Apart from Tucson, Arizona, they have now been found in every one of the major American cities of that period. This has led to renewed speculation as to its meaning. There is evidence to suggest that OPRAH and HARPO were objects of worship, celestial twins who were total opposites in every possible respect. She, the goddess of speech. He, the god of silence. AROSP, as we know from a fragment of one of their sayings ('aros. by any other name would ... sweet'), was a personal name or 'cognoperson' as they quaintly put it when their womenfolk went through a curious period of identity crisis. The celestial twin theory has it that AROSP, afflicted with scabies, made obeisance to the whole spectrum of their gods using his rotor or prayer wheel.

However, ROTOR could also imply letter rotation. AROSP is undeniably a person and PSORA was the scourge of their age. This leaves only the mysterious OPRAH and HARPO, either of which transposes to AROPH, a medicinal preparation of Paracelsus said to be efficacious against the ague. Thus we have the alternative solution that all of these folk named AROSP hoped to preserve themselves for posterity, whence they will be cured of scabies by a liberal dosage of aroph. Sadly, our medical knowledge is still not as advanced as theirs and all attempts at resurrection have failed.

I conclude with five square each containing a proper name:

S W O R D	S T R A W	P A R T S	T I M E D	D E K E N
W E S E R	T R E F A	A C E H T	I M A L E	E M A N E
O S O S O	R E F E R	R E V E R	M A D A M	K A Y A K
R E S E W	A F E R T	T H E C A	E L A M I	E N A M E
D R O W S	W A R T S	S T R A P	D E M I T	N E K E D