

TRIUMPHAL TRANSPOSALS

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Recent developments in logology compel me to come out of retirement, setting the record straight. Articles and/or Colloquy items in the February 1976, May 1976, and February 1981 issues of *Word Ways* have presented numerous transposals of 15 or more letters. Most of these transposals have been of the trivial variety, involving interchanges of individual letters or of blocks of letters. Such transposals have the same standing in the realm of transposals that tautonymic 10x10 word squares have in the domain of geometric forms.

The only mildly interesting trivial transposal is the longest one known: FRIDERICHSEN-WATERHOUSE SYNDROME / WATERHOUSE-FRIDERICHSEN SYNDROME. This 30-letter kingpin, discovered by Darryl H. Francis of London, England, has, so far as I can determine, never appeared in *Word Ways*. Both terms are synonyms for the malignant form of meningococcus meningitis. They appear in recent editions of Dorland's *Illustrated Medical Dictionary*.

The *Word Ways* issues cited include only 7 genuinely interesting long transposals: reasonably well-shuffled, nonsynonymous transposals of 15 or more letters. Since the number of such transposals known in English is not 7 but 14, the first purpose of this article is to bring all 14 together for the first time ever. Each word or name not to be found in Webster Two and/or Webster Three is identified following the list.

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| 15 letters | CINEMATOGRAPHER / MEGACHIROPTERAN
COLOR-SENSATIONS / CONSOLATORINESS
DECHLORINATIONS / ORNITHOSCELIDAN
NONREALISATIONS / SIARESINOTANNOL
PHOTORESISTANCE / STENOCROTAPHIES
PORTE SAINT-DENIS / PREDESTINATIONS
PRESENTATION SET / SEPTENTRIONATES |
| 16 letters | ALCOFRIBAS NASIER / FRANCOIS RABELAIS
HEMATOCRYSTALLIN / THERMONASTICALLY
RECLASSIFICATION / SACRIFICIAL STONE |
| 17 letters | AGOSTINO COLTELINI / OSTILIO CONTALEGNI
BASIPARACHROMATIN / MARSIPOBRANCHIATA
COUNTERISOTHERMAL / INTERCOSTOHUMERAL |
| 18 letters | INARTICULATENESSES / NATURAL NECESSITIES |

Alcofribas Nasier is the pseudonym of Francois Rabelais, the French humorist and satirist, in the New Century Cyclopedia of Names (1954). Color-sensations are defined by The Century Dictionary (1889-1914) as sensations of the kind produced by exciting the retina of the eye. The extralexical term counterisothermal was coined by Howard B. McPherrin of Denver, Colorado, and can be found on page 6 of the National Puzzlers' League publication, The Enigma (June 1925). He similarly coined the term presentation set, the extralexical multivolume analogue of a dictionary term (presentation copy); this can be found in the same issue of The Enigma. Agostino Coltelini was an Italian poet of the seventeenth century who used the pseudonym Ostilio Contalegni; both names are listed in the British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books. Nonrealisations is the British spelling of nonrealizations (compare realisation in The Random House Dictionary, Unabridged Edition (1966)). Porte Saint-Denis is the full form of the abbreviated Porte St.-Denis, the triumphal arch on the Boulevard St.-Denis in Paris, listed in the New Century Cyclopedia of Names (1954). A sacrificial stone is a circular stone cup in which human hearts were burned as sacrifices by the Aztecs, according to the New Century Cyclopedia of Names (1954). Finally, The Century Dictionary Supplement (1909-14) identifies siaresinotannol as the compound $C_{12}H_{14}O_3$ contained in Siamese gum benzoin.

Two long Italian transposals can be found in an old edition of the Italian-language Enciclopedia Italiana, in an article on wordplay.

18 letters INCARTEPECORIMENTI / IPERCONTAMINATRICE
 INTERPOSIZIONCELLA / IPERCONSTELLAZIONI

These have been included in this article because they surpass in quality all known English transposals: all four of the words used are solid, whereas the lone 18-letter English specimen uses one two-word term. It is possible that some or all of these words are coined -- their meanings suggest that possibility (parchment-colored things / supercontaminating; a small, intermediate position / superconstellations). Further, they have not been located in medium-sized Italian dictionaries.

The second purpose of this article is to record the longest known specimens of the special kind of transposal known as the reversal. In general, the longest reversals are 8-letter ones, including all-Webster examples such as DESSERTS / STRESSED, DIORAMAS / SAMAROID, and DETAINAL / LANIATED. There are, however, five known 9-letter reversals, described below.

DELESSERT / TRESSELED

Baron Jules Paul Benjamin Delessert (1773-1847) was a French naturalist and philanthropist, listed in the New Century Cyclopedia of Names (1954). Tresseled is the past tense of the verb tressel, variant of trestle, in Webster Two.

DELIVERER / REREVILED

The verb rerevile, an extralexical term, is formed by express authorization of The Century Dictionary (1889-1914).

In defining the inseparable prefix re-, the dictionary states explicitly that it is "applicable to any English verb whatever, whether of Latin origin or of Anglo-Saxon or other origin."

DE MAILLET / TELLIAMED

Telliamed is the title of a work by De Maillet, an author not more specifically identified. Both names are in The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition (1911), under "Anagram".

NOSTREBOR / ROBERTSON

Nostrebor is a community in Nottoway County, Virginia, indexed and mapped in Rand McNally's Commercial Atlas of America (1911). Robertson is a common English surname.

SEALCREST / TSERCLAES

Sealcrest is the trademark for a brand either of furniture or upholstery, listed on page 662 of The Trademark Register of the United States (1977). Albert M. Hyamson's A Dictionary of Universal Biography, 2nd Edition (1951) lists the Flemish noble Jean Tserclaes de Tilly, and The Times Index-Gazetteer of the World (1965) contains a Belgian town, 't Serclaes.

The third purpose of this article is to assess the legitimacy of the sole 18-letter English transposal, INARTICULATENESSES / NATURAL NECESSITIES, discovered by Charles E. Holding of Silver Spring, Maryland in 1980. (Since he discovered the previous longest-known English transposal BASIPARACHROMATIN / MARSIPOBRANCHIATA in 1971, must the world of logology wait patiently until 1989 for a 19-letter transposal?) The fact that both of the words involved are plurals rather than singulars is justified by the circumstance that the corresponding singulars are not mutual transposals. What may, however, be questioned is the existence of the plurals as words in a nonlogological context.

Under what conditions would one need, or be able, to use the word INARTICULATENESSES? To envision using the word, one must first postulate the existence of different kinds of inarticulateness: one resulting from strong emotion, another from mumbling, a third from incoherence. Next one must create a situation in which these different kinds can be spoken of collectively. As Philip Cohen pointed out in a November 1978 Word Ways article, it is possible to find a context for anything, but that doesn't make it normal English. It is, therefore, necessary to set standards avoiding absurdity: the standards of those with no logological axe to grind, restricting themselves to normal usage. Is this pluralization acceptable by such standards?

Even if it is, the question of NATURAL NECESSITIES remains to be-devil the logologist. The singular happens to be a specific term in philosophy designating the necessity of the causal relation. The wording of that definition is singular: the (one and only) necessity of the causal relation. On what grounds, then, can pluralizing the term be justified?

Is it possible to demonstrate that different philosophical systems define the causal relation in different ways, so that someone surveying some or all of the differing concepts of the necessity of the causal re-

lation could, conceivably, be induced to refer to NATURAL NECESSITIES? Alternatively, should one be so audacious as to imagine the existence of different universes, in which causal relations might well be different, justifying dialogue about various NATURAL NECESSITIES?

Let us consider a totally different approach to the problem. Webster Two, as already noted, defines the term thus:

The necessity of the causal relation

By contrast, the Funk & Wagnalls unabridged contains the following:

Inevitable certainty resulting from the operation of physical laws and natural agencies

The Century Dictionary, yet again, defines the term in this fashion:

Necessity which springs from within, from an internal principle of development, not from outward compulsion

The very different nature of these definitions suggests the following solution to the problem: let the term defined in Dictionary A be one natural necessity, the term defined in Dictionary B be a second, and the term defined in Dictionary C be yet a third. Lo and behold, three natural necessities have been invented, justifying the use of the term!

As a third approach, the phrase NATURAL NECESSITIES could be used in layman's language to refer to almost anything which the speaker or writer regards as very important (for example, "food and shelter are among the natural necessities of life"). However, such a use constitutes picking two consecutive words out of a sentence, words which do not represent any dictionary term. Under these circumstances, the transposal would be no more valid than, say, the transposal of TERPSICHOorean into the phrase CHINESE PARROT.

It is entirely possible that I have overlooked some reasonably obvious interpretation of this term which renders it unimpeachable. Can Word Ways readers come up with some interpretation which will remove the cloud of doubt hanging over it?