

# Beyond Language

*Adventures in Word and Thought*

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*Charles Scribner's Sons* NEW YORK

## 84 REPETITIVE HOMONYMY

Good friends, let us examine a rather obscure sentence:

"Is it true, for all that, that *that* THAT that *that* THAT represents, is not the THAT of which I am thinking?"

To clarify the sentence, we are paraphrasing it:

"Is it true, in spite of all that has happened, that the THAT which that particular THAT represents, is not the THAT of which I am thinking?"

The compelling reason for use of the first version is, of course, the fact that one particular word, "that", occurs 7 times in a row; a very good example of repetitive homonymy. A good example, but one on which we can improve, as use of the word "and" 13 successive times in the next sentence demonstrates:

"AND" and "AND", "AND" and "and", "and" and "AND", and "and" and "and" are phrases identical in meaning.

Even this display, however, can be bettered, if we interest ourselves in the peculiar plight of two typesetters, Boustrophedon Q. Jambalaya and Umquhile X. Hadd. So that you may gain the practice you need in repetitiousness, we are stopping here and asking you (a) to develop the story of these two men, and (b) to culminate that story with a sentence in which one word (or a perfect homonym of that word) occurs 16 consecutive times. As you will see in the "Resolutions" section, it can and has been done!

All of these sentences, regrettably, suffer from a glaring defect: they require the use of words extraneous to the homonymous sequence. Is it possible to write purely homonymic sentences?

Yes, though not easily. One classic example frequently quoted is drawn from the Chinese speech of Annam, a former protectorate of France, in Indochina. The sentence:

BA BA BA BA.

Properly pronounced, with each word accented differently, it is said to mean: "Three ladies gave a box on the ear to the favorite of the prince".

It seems possible, even likely, that some of you are a little rusty in your knowledge of Annamese Chinese. Accordingly, we turn to a language a little closer to home—Latin—for another such sentence:

MALO MALO MALO MALO.

This sentence may be translated as "I would rather be a bad man up an apple tree than a coward", or as "I would rather be in an apple tree than a bad man in misfortune".

There is always an irresistible temptation to match foreign accomplishments with English ones of like caliber. Not to gainsay you the satisfaction of such an achievement, we'll let you devise an English sentence of the same sort. After you have succeeded, you may wish to compare your prose with ours.

The advantage of homonymous communication is undisputed, for simplicity, in addition to being desirable for its own sake, also results in increased speed, permitting a larger volume of communication within a given length of time. It can safely be predicted, therefore, that in composing the homonymic sentence for which we have asked, you are helping to lay the groundwork for the Language of the Future. Yes, *you* can become the Man of Tomorrow, today!

Hints: Page 146.

Resolution: Page 290.

## 85 A CAPITAL QUESTION

What is the capital of DRUK-YUL? What and where is DRUK-YUL?

Naming the capital of some particular country is such a simple question that we are baffled by its inclusion here. How do you account for that fact? How many interpretations can you read into the title selected for our problem?

Hints: Page 143.

Resolution: Page 184.

## 86 IRRELEVANCE

One of our justly famous (or is it notorious? ?) word lists is coming up again, so prepare yourself to feel puzzled:

- |            |            |             |             |
|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. ADDENDA | 5. FLUMMOX | 9. JOGGLED  | 13. STYPTIC |
| 2. CHORDAL | 6. CRAZING | 10. KETCHUP | 14. TWELFTH |
| 3. DISTAFF | 7. HUMBUZZ | 11. LACKEYS | 15. UPRIGHT |
| 4. EMBASSY | 8. IGNOBLE | 12. OVIFORM |             |

**94** *A Feamyng of Ferrets* (page 79)

Errors piled upon errors . . . fantastique! (Now, that's a French word—why?)

Resolution: Page 251.

**76** *Let Your Hair Down!* (page 64)

Leases and disillusionment seem to fall all about us!

Resolution: Page 278.

**109** *Synonyms for Sex* (page 89)

The best sources for the refined terms you are seeking in answer to our question are the medical dictionaries. Some terms, of course, can also be found in the largest “unabridged” general dictionaries.

Resolution: Page 240.

**84** *Repetitive Homonymy* (page 70)

Buffalo had enough. Enough of what? Of itself.

Resolution: Page 290.

**2** *Beyond the Law* (page 5)

Word lists hold the key to resolution of your problem. If the job seems too tough, become a poet!

Resolution: Page 295.

**60** *A Study*

Keats takes Kate  
Resolution: Page 2

**104** *Two W*

A French morph  
Resolution: Page 2

**95** *Augment*

What are the in;  
hornbook, and a llama  
Resolution: Page 2

**90** *The Prep*

Australia . . . L  
Bananaland . . . Digge  
Resolution: Page 2

**22** *Shakespe*

(1) Who was Alo  
know! (5) The number  
Resolution: Page 2

of mistaken association, for almost all dictionaries define a monarch as a king or a queen, and only the largest dictionaries even list the word "monarchess". Hence, we ought to think of "monarch" as neutral, not as masculine.

Our title? We fooled you this time, for *IDA* was a chieftain of the Angles, not of the Oneidas; an Englishman, not an American. The only connection here is a purely mechanical-literal one: split the name *ONEIDA* at midpoint and you have *ONE IDA*, spelt the same but pronounced differently. We call this a "charade", also an exercise in heteronymy. Do you feel edified?

## 84 REPETITIVE HOMONYMY

(Page 70)

First, let's think about Boustrophedon and Umquhile, those distinctively designated typesetters.

Boustrophedon, one fateful morning, set the term "had had" in lower-case type, whereas Umquhile had the good fortune of using upper-case type. Both styles were equally correct, but the supervisor of the two men didn't like Boustrophedon, who had the odd habit of setting some lines of type from right to left (as well as frequently jumbling his type); the supervisor, consequently, ruled that "had had" was wrong. This queer situation may now be summarized with a record-breaking exercise in homonymy:

Jambalaya, where Hadd had had "HAD HAD", had had "had had". Had Hadd had "had had", "had had" would have gained the supervisor's approval.

Can you furnish this little story with a postscript that will extend the homonymy even further?

Second, let's put English on the same exalted plane with Latin and Annamese by deploying the word *BUFFALO* with sufficient skill:

BUFFALO    BUFFALO    BUFFALO    BUFFALO.

For anyone puzzled by this statement, we elaborate: "Wild oxen (roaming the streets) of Buffalo, New York bewilder (visiting) North Carolina coast dwellers."

## 3 SYMBOL

(Page 6)

The symbolico-re most familiar to us as t ancient symbol, found i depicted on tombs at I in India; in Etruscan i carvings in Sweden; on A list of some of the E

- (A) SWASTIKA (also: VASTIKA)
- (B) HAKENKREUZ
- (C) TETRASKELION (
- (D) FYLFOT (also: F
- (E) CROSS CRAMPO
- CROSS OF THOR
- (F) GAMMADION (a
- GAMMA CROSS,

Our purely picto direct you to several "voided Greek cross", e the CROSS CRAMPONNÉE FOT: moving from lowe Phoenician, Hindu, and

As our title tells y to have represented a f signified benediction, h

## 22 SHAKE!

(Page 20)

The dates of deat In 1582, Pope Gr replacing it with the G