TAUTONYMS AND TENS

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The following is a slightly modified version of an article appearing in the February 1926 issue of The Enigma, the official publication of the National Puzzlers' League. Arthur Holt was widely regarded as the "King of Formists", having been the first constructor of a nine-square in 1897. Verification of some of his references is difficult today, perhaps possible only in the British Library or the Library of Congress.

In 1921 Tunste [pseudonym of Paul Bryan, a National Puzzlers' League member] revealed to Puzzledom the famous formula for constructing a 10-square out of five different reduplicative words—a clever idea, the practicality of which has since been fully demonstrated.

Since the first tens appeared in the December 1921 Enigma, the author thereof has remained interested has remained interested in tautonymy, and has added largely to his collection of tautonyms and tens. From this collection some fifty specimens have been selected and the amicable editor has generously allotted space in this issue for their display. The combinations are abbreviated, for the most part, to the upper [quarter] of each square.

The tautonymic ten is not so easy as it looks, for combinable words are scarce and widely scattered. More than fifty reference books were used in preparing the present exhibit. With two exceptions where notes have been mislaid, the following list of references shows where each tautonym is found.

1. Veth’s Gazetteer
2. Philippine Islands Handbook
3. Philippines Gazetteer
4. Census of the Philippines
5. Encyclopedia of Dutch East Indies
6. Watson, Index to Names of Plants
7. US Copyright Office, Musical Titles Catalog
8. Century Dictionary (cf. fall, hall)
9. Century Dictionary Supplement (cf. blue-eyed grayling, galantias)
10. Century Atlas (eyes grayling, galantias)
11. New Standard Dictionary (cf. grayling, dob)
12. Webster’s New International (cf. allice)
13. Veth, Middle Sumatra
14. Chambers Scots Dialect Dictionary
15. Andrews’ Hawaiian Dictionary
16. Stieler’s Atlas
17. Diffenbach, Travels in New Zealand
18. Jordan, Gener of Fishes
19. Lippincott’s Gazetteer
20. Bartholomew’s Atlas
21. Balfour, Cyclopedia of India
22. Los Angeles City Directory
23. New York Atlas
24. Detroit Atlas
25. Baltimore Atlas
26. Index
27. Catalog

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A few foreign publications are among the references quoted. When the first tens appeared, one captious critic complained of these foreign references. Reduplicate words are so scarce in English that an all-dictionary tautonymic ten is impossible. So the tautonym must be sought where it is more common, and the source of supply seems immaterial inasmuch as these squares are printed merely as curiosities of form-building, and a word in any language is none the less a word.

Especially as to geographical names, which are usually spelled the same in any language where the Roman alphabet is used, it does not matter whether the name is taken from Lippincott or from a foreign atlas. Our own publications omit many less important foreign places, which are found in local reference books naturally printed in the language of the country. For a complete list of French villages we would consult Lassalle’s Dictionnaire des Communes. For Dutch East Indian native names, often tautonymic, what better authority than that 3-volume 3000-page gazetteer compiled by Veth and printed in Holland, entitled Aardrijkskundig en Statisch Woordenboek van Nederlandsch Indie?

To the formist who demands an English title-page we recommend John Forbes Watson’s Index of Native and Scientific Names of Indian and Other Eastern Economic Plants, a list of over 600 pages containing thousands of queer names.

ANTISANTIS is the plural of ANTISANTI, a town. Every proper name has its plural, also its possessive case. [KAPPA KAPPA was the pseudonym of Clara C Wouters, a member of the National Puzzlers’ League.] The square made of two different words, PI-PI-PI-PI-PI and IY-IY-IY-IY-IY, is neither tautonymic nor orthodox, but stands in a class by itself as a curiosity.
Holt continued to try to interest the National Puzzlers’ League in his tautonymic tens. A letter from him was read at the September 1926 convention of the National Puzzlers’ League, submitting 1,000 such squares to be printed by the League if it saw fit to do so. These were turned over to Arty Ess (Rufus T. Strohm), then the editor of The Enigma, but no further action was taken. Holt repeated his offer in communications to the April and September 1927 conventions.

However, Arty Ess did publish 155 tautonymic tens by Tunste (William Bryan) in the July 1926 issue of The Enigma. To save space, he did not supply the references for the words, but said that these were in his possession.