PSEUDOREDUNDANCY

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In the November 1982 Kickshaws, Edward Wolpow asked readers to supply pseudoredundant expressions of the form "BORN NATAL, South Africa" and "COLORFUL COLORADO" from the real world. There are many such groups of words, and the list can be further extended if non-dictionary phrases similar to his "When will BEGIN START peace talks?" are allowed.

Clearly, the most meritorious pseudoredundant expressions are dictionary entries: ICE WATER, WATEK VAPOK, RAVEN BLACK, OLEO OIL, NANNY GOAT, BILLY GOAT, BUNNY RABBIT, LEAF BLADE, SWORD BLADE, SEED PLANT, GROUND FLOOR, SUM TOTAL and TOGETHER WITH. Although not actually found as main entries, phrases in common use such as LORD GOD ALMIGHTY OR TWELVE DOZEN can also be construed as pseudoredundant. The excellent example NULL CIPHER does not appear to be a dictionary entry, but it can be found in Helen F. Gaines' Cryptanalysis (Dover, 1956) as a term denoting a concealment or open-letter cipher.

There are a large number of dictionary phrases that are deliberately redundant: KITH and KIN, LARES and PENATES, CEASE and DESIST, FAR and AWAY, CHECKS and BALANCES, OVER and ABOVE, THUS and SO, PICK and CHOOSE, AID and ABET, and WAYS and MEANS (Committee).

The components of a dictionary word can be pseudoredundant: PITTER-PATTER, TEETER-TOTTER, KITTY-CAT, CRYSTAL-CLEAR, HOUND-DOG, PUPPY-DOG, JACK-TAR, PUSSYCAT, LAMPLIGHT, AUTOCAR, MOTORCAR, TAXICAB, ZIGZAG, FOREFRONT, JACKDAW, TITTOP and OLEOMARGARINE. Even LOGOLOGY can be regarded as pseudoredundant: LOGO- is speech, the act of speaking; -LOGY = a speaking, both taken from Webster's Second. Is nothing sacred?

All examples given in the preceding paragraphs are either dictionary-sanctioned phrases or ones in common use. Extending the concept of pseudoredundancy slightly, one can construct artificial phrases of the BEGIN START variety:

The RED CARDINAL schemed to become the new Pope
Does the Holy SEE UNDERSTAND the world situation?
The rectory's PREVIOUS PtIOx had committed suicide
The CHRISTMAS NOEL had been expecting did not materialize
The SONG CAROL sang was a popular one

Don't TORMENT ROSE GOT UP fast
Let ROBERT BOUDEM
Did you PEG MAR?
She WILL BILL
The PIGEON DO
Did the ROOSTER
I saw the TEETOE
't a pack or g

The river's PRE
Can MAY ever for
are both gi

I SHALL WILL a
Reggie Jackson I
A GOOD WELL
Is CHINA POR
CAN TIN replace
Does this BOUG
The artist who PR
Does your SPEE
Is the orange juic
of Morocco?
Was the weather
Have you been BR
German soldiers
On what months
Nomads FORSA
FINISH END tab
I did not expect
To what are the
The old shoemaker
Did you MISS SE
This dress is a

The Soviet Union's
He GUIDES STE
Where can I APL
Did the man star
He TEASED RAC
He also DOGGE
They ELABORA
I know how to Pri
We SLOUGH SW
Did he ENTRUST

Pushing pseudoredundancy one last step, constructed sentences:

THAT WHICH / HOLY / FRIGHTENING, etc.

It's now time to

pseudoredundancy
Pushing pseudo-redundancy to its logical extreme, it is possible to construct sentences consisting solely of pseudoredundant elements: THAT WHICH / HURTS IS PAINFUL, THAT WHICH / SCARES IS FRIGHTENING, etc.

It's now time to step beyond the confines of English in the search for pseudoredundancies. Consider the following specimens:
TAG DAY (TAG = 'day' in German)
LETTER BRIEF (BRIEF = 'letter' in German)
LASPRING (LAS = old English LEAX = 'salmon'; PLæING = dialect German PINKE = 'small salmon')
PILLICOCK (PILL = dialectal Norwegian PILL = 'the penis'; COCK = 'penis')
FISNOGA (FIS = German FUSS = 'foot'; NOGA = Russian NOGA = 'foot')
REINDEER (REIN = old Norse HREINN = 'reindeer'; DEER = old Norse DYR = 'deer')
OUIJA (OUI = 'yes' in French; JA = 'yes' in German)
CHERSONESE (CHER = Greek CHERSOS = dry land; NESE = Greek NESOS = 'island')
LEAL (LE = French 'the'; AL = Arabic 'the')
ELDER (EL = Spanish 'the'; DEX = German 'the')
LEDERLE (LE = French 'the'; DER = German 'the')

What about geographical pseudoredundancies? At least three all-English ones exist: MOUNT HILL (an Australian town, in the Times Index-Gazetteer), DOWN UNDER (Australia), and UP OVER (a sobriquet for the state of Alaska, found in The American Language by H.L. Mencken). Interlingual examples can be added:

VERMONT, the Green Mountain state (VER = 'green' in French)
MURDERKILL RIVER, in east-central Delaware (MURDE = 'kill'; KILL = akin to East Frisian KILLE = 'watercourse', or RIVER)
RIO GRANDE RIVER (RIO = 'river' in Spanish)
TORPENHOW HILL, a ridge near Plymouth, England (TOR = 'hill' in Saxon; PEN = 'hill' in Celtic; HOW = Scandinavian HAUGH = 'hill')

If not placenames, why not personal names? The actor RIP TORN has a pseudoredundant name. In similar vein, one can undoubtedly locate many people with names such as MARGARET PEARL (MARGARET is from the Greek word meaning 'pearl') and ROY KING ('ROY is derived from the Latin for 'king').

Two words well-known to the logologist are deliberately pseudoredundant in more than two ways:

QUASISEMIQUAVARIUS, a 128th note in The American Language by H.L. Mencken (QUASI = 'as if' in Latin, but contextually construable as 'half'; HEMI = 'half' in Greek; DEMI = 'half' in French; SEMI = 'half' in Latin)
PRESUMPTION, adjective referring to the next-next-next-to-last syllable of a word, below the line in Webster's Second (PRE = 'before' in Latin; ANTE = 'before' in Latin; PEN = Latin PAENE = 'almost', contextually construable as 'before').

Answers can be: