

VERBAL HYPERTENSION

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By expanding the number of English verb tenses, we can express our temporal experiences more precisely. Beyond the old-fashioned Future Perfect ("I will have walked") lie new tenses just waiting for us to go boldly where no grammarian has gone before. Consider, for instance, the Future Past Perfect ("I will have had walked"), the Progressive Conditional ("I would have should have been walking"), and many more complicated forms. Some of these tenses are already being put into practical use. The Past Absolute, for instance, is spoken in some parts of the country in sentences like "I done ate it." Here are some more examples, followed by a story riddled with hypertenses.

He will does walked (Future Present Past)

He will will walk (Double Future)

He could can walk (Unconditional Present)

He is being doing walking (Obsessive Progressive)

He did will was have walked (Refractive Future Perfect)

He might be having been about to be (Superjunctive)

The Hare and the Tortoise

The Hare and the Tortoise were racing against each other in the woods. The Hare, having taken a big lead, decided that the Tortoise couldn't possibly catch up with him. The Tortoise, however, kept running as fast as she could, which was very, very slow.

Yesterday, when the two agreed to have the race, the Hare realized that he would have been having reached the finish line by now and might have been being having come in ahead of the Tortoise an hour ago. She, however, was not wanting to have been going to be being a has-been, so she was being doing walking at her own pace, in the hope that she might have been being the winner next week.

The Hare, however, confident that he was going to be going to be the winner, did has had been curling up under a maple tree and does will have has been falling asleep. Consequently, the Tortoise might win; and the day before the week after Wednesday, she may have been having beaten the Hare, who; shouldn't have been ought to be sleeping in the middle of a race. In any event, he would have could have thought that he couldn't lose.

As the Tortoise was about to be about to be crossing the finish line, the Hare suddenly woke up from his nap. As fast as possible, he raced to catch up with her, but even if it was a month after

Christmas, he couldn't have should be making it on time. He was being will be fast. So was the Tortoise in her own slow way, having been carrying her heavy shell with her.

The Tortoise stepped ever so carefully across the finish line, just a moment before the Hare would have been about to be going to hop across it himself. "I won!" she said. The Hare paused a moment, then replied "Yes, Ms. Tortoise, in the next decade you will have been about to be going to be used to be having been doing being the winner of this race, but tomorrow we'll have to do it again, for it's two out of three, ma'am."

And with that, the Hare tipped his ears and raced away, leaving the victorious Tortoise in his dust.

NAMES

Paul Dickson has done it again! The year of 1982 saw the publication of his delightful book, Words; the sequel, Names (Delacorte Press, 1986) is now available in hardcover for \$15.95. It consists of 282 pages of a dazzling olio of names: names of extraterrestrial beings (in TV and fiction), love names from Valentine's Day classified ads, pet names (of animals), what-town-do-you-come-from names, hurricane names, automobile names, boat names, beauty parlor names, robot names, sports team names, genitalia nicknames, apple names, and street names.

Dickson is a magpie, having collected examples of names for many years. Some of his material will be familiar to inveterate readers and even more to onomasticians, but I'm sure that everyone will discover some name-oddity he didn't know about before. Warning: this book should be read in small pieces, for otherwise one gets literary indigestion from such a rich feast.

I especially prize his collection of weird personal names, which rival those found in John Trains Remarkable Names.. books: Taffy Sidebottom Ball, Shannon Flyrear, Oofy Goofy Bowman, Earless Littlejohn, Madonna Mudd, Eloise Tittlekitty, Opal Lively Zickafoose, Epluribus Kitchen, America Funk, and Flash Dumdum.

One should, perhaps, be cautious when citing items from Dickson's book. In passing, I note that both names of Dmitri Borgmann were spelled incorrectly (Dimitri Borgman), and the little Welsh village with the long name contains the sequence ..wllllantys.. (according to two signs in the village), not ..wlllants..