COINCIDENTAL SYNONYM CHAINS

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Coincidental self(ish) synonymy was defined in 04-45 (& 129) as words spelled the same (& nearly the same) that mean approximately the same but, surprisingly, are unrelated etymologically.

04-129 lists three alphabetical order WORD LADDERs of unrelated synonyms.

**flush**  **plush**  **slush**  All three mean both luxuriant and drunk—a double triple, except that flush and plush may be related. Authorities differ.

**gush**  **hush**  **lush**  **rush**  All mean profuse or pour forth rapidly, all unrelated.

**scatter**  **shatter**  **smatter**  **spatter**  **sputter**  **stutter**  These are not all synonyms but a chain of synonyms, mostly unrelated (at least four different roots).

Here’s a new five synonym word ladder—if you’ll count the contraction of (i)s one. They’re partly related, comprising two unrelated groups. Only[,] the last step[,] involves a transposition.

- solo  <sole
- sole  <OF soule <Latin sólus, alone, sólum, only
- ’s one  one <OE ān, an, <G ein [etc] <I-E oinos, root of OL oinos and L. ënus, one
- lone  <ME alone <all one (<all <G al [etc] <I-E alnos. + <one)
- only  <one

Also in 04-129 is a coincidental synonymy SERIAL BEHEADMENT:

**stroll**  **troll**  **roll**  All mean walk leisurely, all unrelated.

This new mixed one is three synonyms for wrinkle or scrunch up, the first two related, the third not:

- scumble  <crumple
- crumple  <OE crump <G krumm, crooked
- rumple  <rimple <OE hrympel, rel. to MD rompel, wrinkle.

As an aside, here’s another serial beheadment, but this time it’s sentential rather than all synonyms.

- Ha, sore
- score
  as core,
- score
- core
- ore
- re
- E.

The triangle has repeated words but makes up for it by being a coherent sentence, a tale about fuel prospecting.  E = energy (Cassell Dict. of Abbrev). The first ‘core’ means drill or dig out as with a fruit. The second core means: 1) buried; 2) “crucial to the economy” (read: company profits).

Next, a pair of coincidental synonymy HOURGLASSES made of seven near synonyms for push, step or hit down on. The two structures differ by a single letter in the fifth line. Trap once meant step on and still suggests clamp down on sharply. Ramp, use force against (Cassell Dict. Slang), is a weaker synonym but also fits.
Note the absence of transpositions in either version. The seven words are unrelated except possibly trap/tramp and perhaps secondarily stamp/tamp by later influence on spelling. The etymologies:

- **Stamp**: 
  - OE stempan, <D<G stempen, stamp, pound, stomp; ?, <I-E stemb to abuse
  - Tampion: <MF tampon <OF tapon, a bung or plug, ?<OE or G tap², faucet
  - Tap¹: <OE tepen; ?<OF tapper, strike, or of imitative origin; unrelated to tap², faucet
  - Rap: <Sw rappa, beat, thrub, or of independent imitative origin
  - Trap: <IE dreb, to tread, step (on)
  - Ramp: <OF ramper, creep or crawl, ?<G rampf, wrinkle, or of unknown origin
  - Tramp: <ME, probably <G trampen to stamp [not stomp] (possibly related to trap)

I can, with trepidation, enlarge it into this very forced but aesthetically justified(?) hourglass by inserting three mere cognates from Cassell Dict. of Abbreviations ('96) right at the heart of things. Let AP#1 mean angina pectoris, #2 atomic power, both cognates of hit. Or, in Jeff Grant’s 2-letter Dictionary, ap means place a cover down on, tuck in, for another cognate. P (or p) means strike down softly on a piano key or musical note.

**STAMP**
STAMP
TAMP
TAP
AP
P
RAPH
TRAP (or RAMP)
TRAMP

Other coincidental (unrelated) selfish synonym hourglasses are implicit in 04-129:

- flush
- hover
- boil
- lush
- over
- broil
- plush
- cover
- roil

First example is from above. In the third the hourglass figure sadly has sagged into obesity.

Another, mixed hourglass arises from sax/ax (op. cit.) by adding zax:

**sax ax zax**

Sax = zax is not related to ax despite both being chipper-choppers.

- Zax: sax < OE seax, knife, akin to OE sāgu, saw < L. secūris, axe < secare, to cut, akin to L. saxum, rock [dating back to stone tool days?]