

Milam's Dictionary of Nononyms

by

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This document is approximately 952 words long.

My essays are available on *Pharos*.

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caveat lector

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Introduction

Long ago, in my essay *The Ravings of a Mad Man*, I recognized and documented a peculiar category of words in the English language.

I'm not aware of any previous formal discussion of this peculiar characteristic of our language. For now, I'll assume that I'm the first one to have documented it. Therefore, by right of discovery, I'm establishing a new category of words in the English language. Henceforth, words that are simultaneously homonyms and antonyms shall be called nononyms, pronounced "no-no nems."

—from *The Ravings of a Mad Man*, pages 7 - 8

I first completed that essay on Tuesday, March 28, 1989. In the essay, I suggested that readers could send me some examples of nononyms, and I'd start a list. It's been almost 30 years and nobody has ever sent me any examples. Maybe nobody's even read the essay. I don't know. You can lead a horse to water....

I consider the existence and use of nononyms to be a bad thing. The English Language is already sufficiently difficult to use without needlessly making it worse. Furthermore, some nononyms aren't just obstructive of understanding, they're also in very poor taste. *Honey pot* is a good example. I refuse to even use the term in the second sense shown in this dictionary..

It's been a long time since 1989, but I've been busy. So, it wasn't until Wednesday, January 27, 2016, that I finally decided to start my list of nononyms. It started out as a very short list, with only two nononyms in the first version. Those two nononyms are *roam* and *tribute*. It wasn't until Monday, June 4, 2018 that I finally got around to adding two more terms to the list. I expect that the list will get longer if I find the time to add more terms when I encounter them, and if other people send me some examples (hint hint wink wink nudge nudge). Anyway, here's the list, so far.

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demean

1: to conduct or behave (oneself) usually in a proper manner

2: to lower in character, status, or reputation

—*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
Eleventh Edition, 2011

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honey pot

- A container with honey in it.
- A container with shit in it.

—Source Unknown

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oversight

1 a : watchful and responsible care **b** : regulatory supervision
<congressional *oversight*>

2 : an inadvertent omission or error

—*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
Eleventh Edition, 2011

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roam

- 1 to go from place to place without purpose or direction
- 2 to travel purposefully unhindered through a wide area
—*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
Eleventh Edition, 2011

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tribute

1 b (1) : an excessive tax, rental, or tariff imposed by a government, sovereign, lord, or landlord (2) : an exorbitant charge levied by a person or group having the power of coercion

2 a : something given or contributed voluntarily as due or deserved; especially : a gift or service showing respect, gratitude, or affection

—*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
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1. 2011

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