

Ye Olde Plum News

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SEMANTIC JOKES

ZEUGMAS

A term for using one word to modify two other words, in different ways.

- At half-past two that afternoon, full of optimism and cold beef... Samuel Marlowe dangled his feet. (The Girl on the Boat, 1922)

- Once, long ago, in his hot childhood, Lancelot, spending his summer holidays at the deanery, had been so far carried away by ginger-beer and original sin as to plug a senior canon in the leg with his air-gun. (The Story of Webster, 1925)

- Ma Price gulped silently... She was all black satin and agony. (If I were You, 1931)

- You will recall my telling you of the time I sneaked down by night to the rev. Aubrey Upjohn's lair in a quest of biscuits and found myself unexpectedly cheek by jowl with the old bird, I in striped non-shrinkable pyjamas, he in tweeds and a dirty look. (The Code of the Woosters, 1938)

- He swallowed his disappointment and a light lunch and returned to his flat. (Something Squishy, 1924)

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### LEXICAL AMBIGUITY

The use of different meanings of the same word or the use of words with the same pronunciation, but different meanings.

- Before Mrs Porter's disgusted gaze he drained the glass and then turned to her, a new man. The noble spirit restored his own. (The Coming of Bill, 1920)

- "This is a pretty state of affairs," said the Mayor, breathing on the barrel of his revolver and polishing it on the sleeve of his coat. "My daughter helping the foe of her family to fly---" "Flee, father," corrected the girl, faintly. "Flea or fly – this is no time for arguing about insects. (The Romance of a Bulb-Squeezer, 1927)

- She rose and faced him, all the woman in her flashing from her eyes. "Well, you Casanova!" she said. "You who?" said Lancelot. "Don't say 'Yoo-hoo!' to me!" cried Gladys. (The Story of Webster, 1932)

- "The author asserts that, if it were not for defective eyesight, there would be no crime in the world. All the crimes that were ever committed are to be traced directly to the absence of spectacles." "And yet," I said musingly, "bread and spectacles were the ruin of Rome." (Crime and the Eyesight, 1903)

- He is as rich as creosote, as I believe the phrase is. (Jeeves Makes an Omelette, 1959)

- "Absolutely," said Ronnie Fish. "What did Gladstone say in 88? You can fuel some of the people all the time, and you can fuel all the people some of the time, but you can't fuel all the people all the time. He was forgetting about Oil. Probably he meant coal." (Ronnie didn't only mixed up 'fool' and 'fuel, he also wrongly accredited Gladstone instead of Lincoln.) (Money for Nothing, 1928)

Constable Potter told Sir Aylmer that he had been assaulted by the duck pond... "How the devil can you be assaulted by a duck pond?" (Uncle Dynamite, 1948)

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TRANSFERRED EPITETHS

Using an adjective about a thing instead of a person.

- I lighted a thoughtful cigarette ... (The Code of the Woosters, 1938)

- He uncovered the fragrant eggs and b., and I pronged a moody forkful. (This example could also fit under next headline as Plum used the noun prong as a verb). (Jeeves and the Impending Doom, 1926)

- As I sat in the bath-tub, soaping a meditative foot and singing ... it would be deceiving my public to say that I was feeling booms-a-daisy. (Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, 1954)

- I balanced a thoughtful lump of sugar on the teaspoon. (Joy in the Morning, 1947)

- Horace chewed a dubious lip. (Uncle Fred in the Springtime, 1939)

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### INVENTED WORDS

Like making verbs from nouns, declension of indeclinable adjectives.

- He spoke with a certain what-is-it in his voice, and I could see that, if not actually disgruntled, he was far from being grunt-led, so I tactfully changed the subject. (The Code of the Woosters, 1938)

- The more I thought of what lay before me at these bally Towers, the more bowed-downer did the heart become. (The Code of the Woosters, 1938)

- One of the first things a chronicler has to learn, if he is to be any real good at chronicling, is when to ease up and take a breather. (Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin, 1972)

- "I'll tell you what you wanted to do, young blasted Wooster. A bit of snake in the grassing." (Joy in the Morning, 1946)

- After that he would go and take a sniff at a rose or two and possibly do a bit of snailing. (The Crime Wave at Blandings, 1936)

- There is a certain stage in the progress of a man's love when he feels like curling up in a ball and making little bleating noises if the object of his affections so much as looks squiggle-eyed at him. (The Story of William, 1927)

- As a dancer I out-Fred the nimblest Astaire. (Joy in the Morning, 1947)

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INCOMPATIBLE METAPHORES

When two or more metaphors (or clichés) are jumbled together.

- Any male turtle dove will tell you that, if conditions are right, the female turtle dove can spit on her hands and throw he weight about like Donald Duck. (The Editor Regrets, 1940)

- He felt like a man who, chasing rainbows, has had one of them turn and bite him in the leg. (Anselm Gets His Chance, 1940)

- A hart panting for cooling streams when heated in the chase, had one happened to come along at the moment, would have shaken his hand and slapped him on the back. (Frozen Assets, 1964)

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