

## An Answer to Barbara C. Bowen\*

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Barbara C. Bowen's response to my paper on P. G. Wodehouse gives me great pleasure. She seems to share my appreciation of Wodehouse's genius and craftsmanship, and she makes a helpful and generous offer of critical debate. This includes some blunders of mine, on which we can easily agree. Wanting to point out that Maud (in *A Damsel in Distress*) entered George's taxi (on page 58) without knowing him at all, while he had fallen in love at first sight with her perhaps a quarter of an hour before, I should have said just that, not "long before"; and identifying that rhyming journalist in the same novel as "Hilaire Belloc," I have tried to be funny but, apparently, succeeded only in being cryptic.

Bowen's question concerning the bibliographical notes to some possible originals of "the pale parabola of Joy" on page 67 is very welcome, because it gives me an opportunity to clear up that chiaroscuro. What happened, was this: I wanted to avoid footnotes, and *Connotations* wanted to stick to MLA usage. Thus, authors of single poems got mixed up with editors of anthologies, and most of the references were assembled in "Works Cited" under the name of "Roberts" (editor of *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*), for only some uncannily keen-sighted readers to detect. My shoddy proofreading shows that I do not belong to that class. The answer to Bowen's

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\*Reference: Barbara C. Bowen, Response to "'Across the pale parabola of Joy': Wodehouse Parodist," *Connotations* 13.3 (2003/2004): 271-73; Inge Leimberg, "'Across the pale parabola of Joy': Wodehouse Parodist," *Connotations* 13.1-2 (2003/2004): 56-76.

For the original article as well as all contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at <<http://www.connotations.de/debleimberg01312.htm>>.

question, who invented "the deep larder of illusion," is, by the way, Laura Riding did, in "Nor is it written."

As to Bowen's suggestion to go on with the interpretation of Wodehouse parodist and find other vistas besides literary parody, especially the linguistic one of mixed idioms and dialects, I wholeheartedly agree with her. Her examples are as delightful as they are striking, and they must be an irresistible challenge for a scholar specialized in that field, but only for such a scholar. Take, for instance, Aunt Daliah's temperamental French chef Anatole, mixing his mother tongue with a totally un-Addisonian English, picked up, if I remember rightly, in Chicago! I would spring to the task of solving the mystery of this lingo, if only I could. But I can't, since I am not enough of a linguist and, as to my French, I am, like Bertie Wooster, "more or less in the Esker-vous-avez stage" (*Right Ho, Jeeves*). Literary parody is my job, "Paronomasia in Wodehouse," or "Jeeves and the Cat in the Adage," or "Wodehouse and 'The Ancient Mariner.'" But Barbara C. Bowen has given us an appetite for a very different type of essay, titled, e.g., "This type on my window, making a few faces" (*Right Ho, Jeeves*), and I would suggest that, having given us all those intriguing examples, and having added, moreover, quite a number of equally intriguing interpretive aspects, she has already begun to write the piece. I am sure that *Connotations* would be charmed to publish it.

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