

# **The Linguistics of Euphemism: A Diachronic Study of Euphemism Formation**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines how very personal linguistic choices are actually products of societal mores and pressures. How people use euphemism to talk about sex is a direct reflection of these social concerns. In order to examine this sentiment in a diachronic methodology, examples of sexual euphemism are extracted from three British novels that span 180 years: *Emma*, by Jane Austen, *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, by D. H. Lawrence, and *Well Groomed*, by Fiona Walker.

Due to the nature of both pragmatics and euphemism, it is first necessary to put these euphemisms into their historical contexts before any real conclusions may be drawn. This requires consideration of the culture and expectations surrounding each novel and encompasses research from the fields of sociology, history and philosophy. Only once the cultural conditions have been established is it possible to begin extracting and examining the euphemisms. This data (over 250 sexual euphemisms from the three works) provides the basis for the discussion.

In studying euphemism formation, an existing model (Warren, 1992) is examined and the rules and categories suggested by this model are tested against euphemisms from the novels. It will be seen that improvements are required of the model in order for it to account for all examples. A modified version of this model is proposed to encompass all of these euphemisms, as well as other examples from notable sources.

## **Introduction**

*In the beginning was the Word. There followed, at an undetermined but one assumes decent interval, private, harsh, and dirty words. Invention here being the mother of necessity, the need for euphemism arose. Nowhere could this need have been greater, or more evident, than in the realm of sex (Epstein 1985:56).*

It is a common misconception that word meanings are consistent and static. Researchers from many different fields, however, are beginning to appreciate the complexity behind word choice, and the changeable nature of meaning: "Word meanings, it is suggested, are dynamic and negotiable," (Warren, 1992:128). Nowhere is this more obvious than in the area of figurative language that, by definition, allocates referents not found in a word's dictionary description. This type of language comes in a variety of forms, and is used for a variety of

reasons. Examples include the metaphor of poetry or prose, which aims to surprise and entertain (cf. Lee, 1966), the language of 'political correctness' (cf. Burrige, 1996) that strives to avoid offence, and circumlocutions, which may be employed to uphold civility and avoid impertinence. The area considered in this paper encompasses elements of all of these devices, and many others besides.

Euphemisms are powerful linguistic tools that "are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them," (Rawson, 1981:1). The need for euphemism is both social and emotional, as it allows discussion of 'touchy' or taboo subjects (such as sex, personal appearances or religion) without enraging, outraging, or upsetting other people, and acts as a pressure valve whilst maintaining the appearance of civility.

This paper is taken from an original study into both the use and formation of euphemism (Ham, 2001<sup>1</sup>). As this is a broad topic, only the historical formation of euphemism is covered below, with reference to examples of euphemism extracted from three literary texts spanning 180 years. Types of euphemism formation are discussed with reference to a particular model suggested by Beatrice Warren (1992), but it will be shown that deficiencies in the model exist as some examples of euphemism given fail to fit into any of the suggested categories. Modification of the model will allow for these examples to be included, and an improved version is proposed at the end of the discussion.

## Euphemism

The function of euphemism is to protect the speaker/writer, hearer/reader, or all of the above from possible effrontery and offence. This offence may occur in the broaching of a taboo topic, e.g. religion or death, or by mentioning subject matter to which one party involved may be sensitive, such as politics or social issues. In order for communication to progress smoothly and without conflict, accommodations are continually, and often subconsciously, made. Interpretation varies according to context, i.e. whether the speaker means the term to be euphemistic, and the hearer interprets it in that light (Warren, 1992). With euphemism

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished MA thesis, Ham, K. (2001) "The Linguistics of Euphemism: A diachronic study of euphemism use and formation," University of Surrey, 2001.

being so entwined with context, however, classification of a term as 'euphemistic' becomes difficult. For this reason, Allen and Burridge (1991:21) suggest the hypothetical context of being "polite to a casual acquaintance of the opposite sex in a formal situation in a middle class environment" as one in which a euphemism is likely to be used in place of a 'dispreferred' alternative. To maintain a constant standard in defining terms as euphemistic during the current study, this pragmatic context will be used. It should be remembered, however, that even within this 'context' objective euphemism classification is a grey area, and judgements may differ from person to person.

### Sexual Euphemism

The subject of sex, being a major concern in human life and one that is likely to elicit embarrassment, is a potent source of euphemism for Western people of most ages and walks of life. It will be shown that this is also valid for the historical period discussed.

Despite the claim of 'narrowing the focus', the boundaries of sexual euphemism are deceptively wide, encompassing the sexual act itself, associated body parts, and even clothing that is in direct contact with these body parts, i.e. underwear (Nash, 1995)<sup>2</sup>. In fact, if the size of the euphemism collection indicates the size of the taboo, as suggested by Rawson (1981), the area of sexual taboo is greater than any other. Allen and Burridge (1991:96) state "the degree of synonymy in the vocabulary for the genitalia and copulation has no parallel elsewhere in the English lexicon - except in the terms for 'whore'." They state that there are approximately 1,200 terms for 'vagina', 1,000 for 'penis', 800 for 'copulation', and around 2,000 for 'whore'. These figures are reinforced by analysis of Shakespeare's vocabulary. In his plays, Shakespeare used 45 synonyms for 'penis', 68 for 'vagina' and an impressive 275 for 'copulation' (Partridge, 1968). This rash of synonyms indicates what Halliday (1978:165) terms "over-lexicalisation", a phenomenon that marks a problem area in the language. The high turnover rate for sexual euphemisms, resulting in these vast numbers of expressions, could be a direct product of the semantic domain of which they are a part. It seems sex has become a great 'secret' (Giddens, 1992), necessitating its constant discussion and the subsequent creation of new euphemisms.

## Warren's Model of Euphemism

Warren (1992) deals with how euphemisms are formed. This model, along with the pragmatic 'context' introduced above, will figure prominently in the classification of euphemism in this paper.

Warren's model is based on the idea that "novel contextual meanings", i.e. new meanings for words in a particular context, are constantly created in language. This creation is rule-governed and the acceptability of new meanings depends on, for example, the strength of ties between the novel term and its referent, whether the novel term is considered to be of lasting value, i.e. the referent has no other name, or if the novel term is a "desirable alternative" (Warren, 1992:130). It is this latter situation that results in the creation of euphemistic terms. In her theory, Warren gives four devices for euphemism formation. To organise the wide variety of euphemisms that exist, these categories are divided into sub-categories of formation devices as represented in Figure 1.<sup>3</sup>

To help clarify this diagram, examples of each type of euphemism and the method of formation are described below<sup>4</sup>.

- i) Word formation devices. As seen in figure 1, Warren gives five ways to form euphemisms using this mechanism. An example of each of these is:
- 1) Compounding: 'hand job' [masturbation], the combining of two individually innocuous words forms a euphemism for an otherwise unacceptable term.
  - 2) Derivation: 'fellatio' [oral sex], the modification of a Latin term ('fellare', to suck) to form a printable modern English word (Rawson, 1981).

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<sup>2</sup> It will be seen below that this definition must be modified to encompass the diachronic aspect of the study. Due to the pragmatic aspect of 'context', definitions of sexual euphemism have changed with the conventions of the day.

<sup>3</sup> See page 259 below for *Figure 1: Classification of the main devices for constructing euphemisms* (Warren, 1992:133).

<sup>4</sup> In keeping with the idea that euphemisms, where necessary, avoid the use of Allen and Burridge's "good old native Anglo-Saxon terms," (1991:vii-viii), in this paper 'prick' and 'cunt' (Anglo-Saxon terms) are used to define expressions such as 'penis' and 'vagina', i.e. as representations of non-euphemistic terms. Following the practice of Allen and Burridge, who in turn follow colloquial use, 'cunt' is used to refer to all "those parts of the female genitalia used in sexual intercourse" (ibid.:245).

- 3) Blends: Warren gives no examples of what she means by this term, or of how a blend is formed.
- 4) Acronyms: SNAFU ['Situation Normal All Fucked Up'], a military euphemism for a possibly catastrophic event.
- 5) Onomatopoeia: 'bonk' [sexual intercourse], here the sound of 'things' hitting together during the sexual act is employed to refer to the act itself.

ii) Phonemic modification. "The form of an offensive word is modified or altered," (Warren, 1992:133), for example:

- 1) Back slang: 'enob' [bone/erect penis], Rawson (1981:88) and 'epar' [rape] (Warren, 1992:133). The words are reversed to avoid explicit mention.
- 2) Rhyming slang: 'Bristols' [breasts], a shortened, and further euphemised, version of 'Bristol cities' [titties] which becomes a "semi-concealing device," (Burchfield, 1985:19).
- 3) Phonemic replacement: 'shoot' [shit], which Rawson terms "a euphemistic mispronunciation," (1981:254), i.e. one sound of the offensive term is replaced.
- 4) Abbreviation: 'eff' (as in "eff off!") [fuck (off)].

iii) Loan words. "...it has always struck me as curious that most, if not all, the banned words seem to be of Saxon provenance, while the euphemisms constructed to convey the same meaning are of Latin-French," (Durrell, 1968:ix). Some examples of this include:

- 1) French: '*mot*' [cunt] (Allen and Burridge, 1991:95), '*affair(e)*' [extramarital engagement] and '*lingerie*' [underwear], (Stern, 1931).
- 2) Latin: '*faeces*' [excrement] and '*anus*' [ass-hole]. Aside from typical motivations for euphemism, Latin is often favoured as the uneducated and the young cannot interpret the meanings (Allen and Burridge, *ibid.*:19). However, "often such substitutions are just as vulgar if one understood the meaning of the latinate," (Liszka, 1990:421).
- 3) Other languages: '*cojones*' [testicles], is Spanish (Nash, 1995), and '*schmuck*' [penis] in Yiddish literally means 'pendant' (M. Adams, 1999).

iv) Semantic innovation. In this case, a "novel sense for some established word or word combination is created," (Warren, 1992:133). Examples of Warren's seven categories of semantic innovation are:

- 1) Particularisation: a general term is used, which is required to be 'particularised' within the context to make sense, e.g. 'satisfaction' [orgasm] and 'innocent' [virginal], both of which require contextually based inference by the reader/listener to be comprehensible.
- 2) Implication: In this case, several steps are required to reach the intended meaning, e.g. 'loose', which implies 'unattached', which leads to the interpretation [sexually easy/available]. Warren warns against possible misinterpretation of this type of euphemism, though it seems this could occur with many examples of 'semantic innovation'.
- 3) Metaphor: A multitude of colourful metaphorical euphemisms surround menstruation, centring around 'red', e.g. 'the cavalry has come'- a reference to the red coats of the British cavalry, 'it's a red letter day' and 'flying the red flag,' (Allen and Burrige, 1991:82). Other metaphorical euphemisms include 'globes', 'brown eyes' and 'melons' [breasts] (Rawson, 1981:38), and 'riding' [sex], which is common to many languages, including English, Greek and Middle Dutch (cf. Allen and Burrige, *ibid.*).
- 4) Metonym: Otherwise called 'general-for-specific', this category includes the maximally general 'it' [sex] and the contextually dependent 'thing' [male/female sexual organs, etc.].
- 5) Reversal: or 'irony'. Including 'blessed' [damned] (Stern, 1931) and 'enviable disease' [syphilis], both of which enable reference to something 'bad' by using opposites.
- 6) Understatement: or 'litotes'. Examples like 'sleep' [die], 'deed' [act of murder/rape] and 'not very bright' [thick/stupid] fall into this category.
- 7) Overstatement: or 'hyperbole'. Instances include 'fight to glory' [death] and those falling under Rawson's (1981:11) "basic rule of bureaucracies: the longer the title, the lower the rank." For example, 'visual engineer' [window cleaner] and 'Personal Assistant to the Secretary (Special Activities)' [cook] (Rawson, *ibid.*).

These categories are claimed to account for most euphemism formation. However, Warren does say that other, minor methods may be employed. For the purposes of this paper, however, only the four main categories of euphemism formation above will be considered as covered by Warren's model. If devices outside of these are utilised, it will be seen as a deficiency that must be addressed. These systems of classification were closely followed in organising the euphemisms found in the following analysis.

## Methodology

The texts to be studied are Jane Austen's (1816) *Emma*, D. H. Lawrence's (1928) *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, and Fiona Walker's (1996) *Well Groomed*. In an attempt to minimise variables outside of those to be studied, the authors chosen are all British and the stories are of a similar genre, i.e. love/romance/sex. The two historical novels were selected on the basis of their popularity and accessibility to the average reader. The modern novel was chosen because of similarities in plot style to the works of Jane Austen, i.e. the series of misunderstandings between the main characters before the realisation that they were 'meant to be'. All three novels aim to represent the society of their day, which is crucial for the purpose of the current, pragmatic analysis.

In order to find candidates for the analysis, the three novels were searched in their entirety for sexual euphemisms. This complete reading maximised numbers of examples found, and reduced the possibility of inconsistency and misrepresentation sometimes found in the use of extracts and sampling. Despite careful reading, this list of euphemisms should make no claim to being exhaustive due to the possibility of human error. Some entries may also be disputed because individual readers interpret euphemism differently. This is unavoidable. It should be remembered that this is just one example of an analysis, of which a variety of examples may be suggested. However, it is not the purpose here to list every euphemism but to investigate formation, so this issue need not be addressed further.

### Jane Austen's *Emma*

*It is a truth universally acknowledged that Jane Austen's novels are about courtship and marriage. But it is a truth almost as universally ignored that they are also very much about sex (Chandler 1975:88).<sup>5</sup>*

As Chandler suggests, modern readers of historical texts may form different impressions of a work than those of the author and their contemporaries. The first thing to consider when

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<sup>5</sup> This view of Austen's novels is also shared by Halperin (1988), Cohn (1988) and Marie (1985) to name a few. The opposite view is expressed in such comments as: "...the passions are perfectly unknown to her," Charlotte Brontë; "There are worlds of passionate existence into which she has never set foot," George Henry Lewes, and other influential writers and critics quoted in McMaster (1987:37ff). Most agree, however, that Austen "controls her use [of sex] to fit her settings, to avoid offence and keep attention where she feels it belongs," (Smith, cited in Korba, 1997:139).

analysing historical texts is that the author was not writing for readers of the future and, therefore, such texts can not be judged by modern standards - especially in pragmatic studies. In the two hundred years since the publication of *Emma*, society has changed considerably, with one obvious difference being that "we do not live in an age of decorum. Austen did," (Stout, 1982:320). Consequently, an effort must be made to apply standards of the day, and to define authentic boundaries for the pragmatic context. In an attempt to establish what was acceptable between a man and a woman in middle-class society in the face of little evidence (cf. Fergus, 1981), researchers rely on the 'conduct books' of the time and the 'novels of manners' (cf. Preus, 1991), such as those of Jane Austen and her contemporaries:

*Imaginative writers are the most obviously powerful fist-hand authorities on the sensibilities of their own times, for the obvious reason that they were the sensibilities of their times* (Gard 1992:116).

It seems to be a consensus (cf. Chandler, 1975 and Preus, 1991) that the small, country societies of Jane Austen's novels were representative of the larger picture of British society at the turn of the nineteenth century: "Austen represents her elite group of country gentlefolk as one that adheres to domestic norms," (Armstrong, 1987:140). Such society presented strict social conventions, especially regarding interaction between the sexes and courtship. A man and woman were not ordinarily expected to be alone together; indeed this behaviour was sometimes seen as evidence of a secret engagement (Grey, 1986), which itself was morally suspect (Parkinson, 1988). Interaction was conducted in large groups and at parties or dances, the latter also being the only time that women and men usually made physical contact. Dances were, therefore, important in literature and the courtship procedure, i.e. the securing of both a dance and a life partner (T. Adams, 1982). That "Austen's characters succeed in expressing themselves not in spite of custom and convention, but *through* them," (McMaster, 1987:40) is of vital importance to this current study.

It is evident from these conventions that to use the concept of sexual euphemism that exists today to Jane Austen's society would be both irrelevant and futile, "for sexual relations [were] declared by the slightest gesture, the briefest glance in such a communication situation," (Armstrong, 1987:144). So what definition can be applied? Anything outside the guidelines mentioned above would be improper, as would personal comments, especially negative ones

(Armstrong, *ibid.*), as well as talk of feelings and terms of endearment (Epstein, 1985). This does not mean that these actions did not occur, however, and even in the polite works of Ms. Austen examples abound:

[Emma] *imagines without compunction that Harriet's father's [sexual] conduct is venial because he is noble; that Jane is having an affair with her best friend's husband, Mr Dixon, and even that Mr Churchill may have several natural children who would inherit his estate ahead of Frank* (Sabiston 1987:29).

It is the guidelines in this section that are used to identify candidate sexual euphemisms contained within *Emma*.

### Jane Austen's Euphemisms<sup>6</sup>

*What did she say? - Just what she ought, of course. A lady always does.*  
Austen (1816:326)

Jane Austen intended her characters to be representative of polite society in her time, i.e. the turn of the nineteenth century. It should be expected, therefore, that the spread of euphemisms in *Emma* (Table 1<sup>7</sup>) would not be unusual in such context, and would - barring issues of personal style - represent the euphemisms in use, and the motivations behind them, approximately two hundred years ago. In this way, Austen "offers us far more than the *surface* of the lives of genteel English people," (McMaster, 1987:44).

In turning to these euphemisms, the first noticeable quality is that the category of 'phonemic modification' is empty. Although there are potential candidates, 'darn' [damn] dates from the 1770's and 'gosh' [god] from 1757 (Rawson, 1981), in her hour of need Emma adheres to the good, common oath "Good God!" (p. 301). There are also no examples of onomatopoeia or acronyms, which may be due to their relative obscurity, but that there are no Latin euphemisms is perhaps a little more surprising. However, when considering the terms Latin usually replaces, the mystery becomes clear. For example, 'genitalia' [sex-organs], 'vagina' [cunt], 'labia' [vaginal lips]: i.e. "use of Latin synonyms provides Standard English with euphemisms for bodily effluvia, sex and the associated acts and bodily organs," (Allen and

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 1 for the list of euphemisms found in *Emma*. All page references in this section refer to Austen (1816), unless otherwise stated.

Burridge, 1991:19). In short, it is unlikely that these referents would appear in any form in the works of Ms. Austen or, it may be supposed, within the dialogue of polite society in her time. In general, and breaking from practices of the previous century (cf. Morgan, 1987, and Morrison, 1994), it seems for Austen "the best pornographer is the mind of the reader, which in this matter required only the slightest assistance..." (Epstein, 1985:64).

The majority of Austen's euphemisms appear as particularisations, and implications. While this corresponds with numbers presented in her own study, Warren (1992:145) warns that these types of euphemism "are vague since the interpreter can only conclude from circumstantial evidence whether they are intended or not". This warning is especially valid when circumstances surrounding the euphemism are two hundred years old, and relatively inaccessible (Chandler, 1975). Understatement is a more obvious characteristic frequently utilised in Austen's novels (cf. Stout, 1982, and McMaster, 1987), and this is reflected in the relatively large number of examples found. There is only one euphemism that does not fit into any of Warren's categories, and this will be discussed below.

Aside from these euphemisms, it is interesting to note that Austen uses the words 'leg' (p. 129) and 'breast' (p. 328) that were euphemised soon after her time (Marsh, 1998), and that the words 'intercourse' and 'intimate' carry different connotations than today as 'fallen euphemisms'. The word 'gay' (p. 137) also maintains its innocent meaning as 'happy/lively'. Whether these practices continue through the next two hundred years will be seen in the following sections.

#### D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*

*I want men and women to be able to think sex, fully, completely, honestly and cleanly [...] If I use the taboo words, there is a reason. We shall never free the phallic reality from the "uplift" taint until we give it its own phallic language, and use the obscene words (Lawrence, cited in McArthur 1996:52).*

*Lady Chatterly's Lover* is D. H. Lawrence's most famous, and infamous, work. As seen in the above quotation, Lawrence's intention was to encourage freedom and honesty in interaction (see also Karl and Magalaner, 1959, and Burack, 1997). "His war was against evasive,

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<sup>7</sup> The tables provide an overview of results, with the figures referring to the amount of *different* terms, not the total amount. Repeated euphemisms are not represented, but are detailed in the appendices. See page 262 for

reticent language, which makes for evasive, reticent living and thinking," (Nin, 1964:109), and his tactics were in agreement with Read's (1934) view that taboo is a "disease" in language. Both men advocated the abolishment of such restrictions.

First published in 1928 in Europe, *Lady Chatterly's Lover* could only be printed in abridged form in Britain until the groundbreaking case of Regina vs. Penguin Books in 1960. A result of this case was the revision of the Obscene Publications Act of 1857, which aimed to prevent publication of works that "deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences," (Marsh, 1998:207). The charges against Lawrence's novel addressed both the language and the subject matter, and comments on the novel included: "the most evil outpouring that has ever besmirched the literature of our country," (from a review of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, in Ellis and De Zordo, 1992:215).

Although the period in which Lawrence was writing is much closer historically than that of Jane Austen, the values were not identical to those held today. Lawrence was 16 years old when Queen Victoria died in 1901, and the sexual repression that existed during that monarch's reign was apparent to him and an influence on his work (cf. Craig, 1992, and Resina, 1992). His aim in *Lady Chatterly's Lover* was to bring sex back into the foreground and to "break with taboos on sexuality from the past," (Spilka, 1990:183) that had placed the topic firmly within the underground worlds of seedy, secret sex shops, illicit pornography and the denial of sexual impulses. Worthen (1991:105) says of Lawrence: "...all his life he had been skirting around something that he would much rather have been honest about."

#### D. H. Lawrence's Euphemisms<sup>8</sup>

Despite the frequency of the 'taboo' Anglo-Saxon words 'fuck' and 'cunt', *Lady Chatterly's Lover* abounds with euphemism and delicacies of language, as shown in Table 2<sup>9</sup>. Whereas the gamekeeper favours undeviating terms, other characters in the novel prefer less direct terms, including a wide variety of foreign words, either through derivation or as loan words. While the referents for such Latinate terms were inappropriate for Austen, they are fitting for

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Table 1.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 2 for the list of euphemisms found in *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. All page references in this section refer to Lawrence (1928), unless otherwise stated.

<sup>9</sup> See page 262 below.

the subject matter in this novel, and are accordingly abundant, as are Greek and French words of the same semantic group.

In keeping with the classical, learned atmosphere created by such foreign words (Allen and Burridge, 1991), Lawrence also uses a large number of metaphors and metonyms. Whereas metaphorical writing is characteristic of Lawrence in general (cf. Humma, 1990), the metonyms seem to oppose his claim for directness, especially evasive strategies such as 'him' [his prick], and 'her' [her cunt] which would be more in character for Jane Austen.

Unlike Austen, however, Lawrence does not use reversals, understatements or overstatements in his euphemisms, but he does use 'intimate' both non-sexually (1928:283) and sexually (p. 290), showing both the progress in semantic change of this word since Austen's time, and that using this word as a sexual euphemism was in practice at the beginning of the twentieth century. The category of 'phonemic replacement' remains empty.

An interesting side-note, when contemplating the three euphemisms not covered by Warren's model, is that creation of the euphemism "John Thomas" is often attributed to Lawrence. This is not the case, however, as the term has actually been in existence since the mid-nineteenth century (Nash, 1995). The failure of Warren's model to include this, and the other 'rogue' euphemisms, is addressed below.

Fiona Walker's *Well Groomed*

*For the greater part of the vast history of humankind talk of sex, of bodily love, was distinctly out of bounds. Certainly it was not permitted in polite society; that one could not speak of it there was one of the things that made polite society, well, polite (Epstein 1985:57).*

The tone of Epstein's statement suggests that society is gradually becoming less "polite" and that talk of "bodily love" is acceptable, though frowned upon. If this is the case, the breeding ground for euphemisms should be highly active as people strive to converse about sex, but retain the awareness that "polite society" still expects certain standards of decorum - even if they are lower than in previous times. Epstein goes on to say that, while sex has always been on people's minds, now it is also on their tongues. This certainly seems to be true when

considering the genre in which the novels of Fiona Walker are included - the modern "female novel"<sup>10</sup>.

In considering the euphemisms within *Well Groomed* it is easier to apply the pragmatic context than with the historical novels, as boundaries are directly observable in today's society.

### Fiona Walker's Euphemisms<sup>11</sup>

Whilst dealing directly with sex, Walker uses a wide array of euphemisms, and generally avoids the bluntness displayed by Lawrence, most noticeably in the absence of the word 'cunt'. Although this word is no longer restricted in novels, it has not gained the popularity of 'fuck' which is common in both film and print. It appears that the censors have moved from novels to cinema and television, as 'cunt' remains uncommon in these fields. The reason for the absence of 'cunt' in this novel is, therefore, stylistic, showing that it is still frowned upon - or at least dispreferred - in modern society, and Walker prefers to euphemise the referent - usually as a metonym.

Although the number of metonyms is smaller, the euphemisms and referents in Walker's work are surprisingly consistent with those in *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, which could be expected given the subject matter. It does, however, show that metonymical strategies are similar over this time period. As with Lawrence, metaphors are abundant, and Walker also declines to use reversals, understatements or overstatements, and the derivation and loan words are limited to French and Latin. These 'foreign' words are deeply embedded in the English language now and many, for example 'affair' (from the French '*affaire*', are accepted without reference or acknowledgement to their roots. They are not intended to show educational achievements as in the works of Austen and Lawrence.

At last, the category of 'phonemic modification' is activated, though examples are still scarce. The euphemisms in this category, as well as the onomatopoeic ones, show the writer's

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<sup>10</sup> Morrison uses this term to describe Jane Austen's works, with the definition that, in this type of novel, "we expect (with some justification) that the love interest will be paramount," (1994:341). This also being the situation in Fiona Walker's novels, the term may be applied here.

playfulness. This is not intended to be a serious novel, which is also evident in the implications that often require several wild leaps to arrive at the sexual connotation. The author has chosen her words purposely, and cleverly, so that readers are required to draw these conclusions and keep their minds in the semantic mindset of the novel, i.e. "sizzling [...] love, sex, passion," (*The Sun* (tabloid newspaper), a review on the cover of Walker, 1996). The activation of this category perhaps indicates that this style of euphemism formation is a quite recent language development, and it is probably employed more often in modern times.

Aside from these euphemisms, the word 'fuck', and its synonym 'shag', show the progress of semantic shift in their non-sexual uses. For example, "I fucking know" (p. 4) [an expletive] and both senses of 'shag' [tired/have sexual intercourse], which are shown in one sentence: "I've been too shagged out [...] to shag," (p. 99). In a move that emphasises the decline of the non-sexual connotation, Walker also uses both the non-sexual and sexual meanings of 'intimate': "There was nothing [...] as intimate as a large party. And Tash was bursting with the need to get extremely intimate indeed," (p. 598), although she does retain the traditional meaning of 'gay' [happy/lively], (p. 468). The three euphemisms not covered by Warren's model are addressed below.

It appears that sex is no longer such a 'great secret'. Modern society - of both sexes (cf. Terry, 1983) - spends a lot of time talking on the subject, directly and in euphemistic terms. The heroine of the story is now expected to enjoy, rather than endure, her sexual encounters (Thurston, 1987) and Walker's novel displays the playful attitude toward sex that has pervaded since the 'swinging sixties' (cf. Harvey and Shalom, 1997). The euphemisms found show this directly, for example, in the phonemic modifications and the humorous metaphors.

## **Warren's Model and Diachronic Euphemism Formation**

*Surely no other type of society has ever accumulated - and in such a relatively short span of time - a similar quantity of discourses concerned with sex (Foucault 1978:33).*

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 3 for the list of euphemisms found in *Well Groomed*. All page references in this section refer to Walker (1996), unless otherwise stated. See also Table 3, page 263.

On first glance it appears that Warren's (1992) model of euphemism formation copes with the examples of euphemism extracted from the three novels quite well, especially considering the wide variety of cultural issues mentioned and the situation described by Foucault. The majority of euphemisms found in the texts are covered by the model's categories, and the classification process is not too complex. There are, however, problems with those (seven) euphemisms not included and with the categories themselves.

Two new categories may be incorporated into the original model that would allow for these examples to be included: 'Naming' and 'Deletion'. Within the category of 'Naming', which will be introduced under Warren's heading of 'Semantic innovation', there are two further sub-categories: 'Proper nouns' and 'Geographic adjectives'. The first of these includes examples such as Austen's 'Kitty' [prostitute], Lawrence's 'John Thomas' [prick] and 'Lady Jane' [cunt], and Walker's 'roger' [to have sexual intercourse], as well as other examples, e.g. 'Fanny Adams' [fuck all, i.e. nothing] and 'Jiminy Cricket' [Jesus Christ] (Rawson, 1981). The second new sub-category of 'Geographic adjectives' would include 'the Italian way', and further examples, such as 'French letter' [condom], 'English guidance' [sadism] (Rawson, *ibid.*), 'Essex girl' [sexually available woman] and 'Dutch cap' [contraceptive diaphragm] (Allen and Burridge, 1991:88).

The category of 'Deletion', which will be placed under 'Phonemic modification' would include the examples from Walker 'Did you - ' [Did you have sexual intercourse?], and 'Have you - ' [Have you had sexual intercourse?]. These examples are both phonemic deletions, although the category could also include graphological deletions, e.g. '\*\*\*\*', or 'F---' [fuck], and the aural deletions on television or radio shows when 'bleeps' cover words deemed inappropriate for broadcast.

These new categories may be incorporated into Warren's model, as shown in figure 2<sup>12</sup>. The newly introduced categories are indicated.

In order facilitate discussion of problems with Warren's category system, Table 4<sup>13</sup> gives the combined total of each type of euphemism found in the three novels:

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<sup>12</sup> See page 260.

<sup>13</sup> See page 263.

If the aim of the model is to cover all possible euphemism formation, and this must be the aim of any model, categories with at least one example must be declared valid. By this token, categories that are not represented within the novels must be validated by the provision of satisfactory examples. Of the four 'null' categories represented in the table above, examples of rhyming slang, back slang and acronyms were provided above and, to confirm their validity, further examples include:

- 1) Rhyming slang: 'berk', an abbreviated form of 'Berkeley Hunt' [cunt], which is "widely used by speakers who have no notion of the implications of the unabbreviated version," Allen and Burrige (1991:219).
- 2) Back slang: 'mosob', "bosom spelled backwards," Rawson, 1981:38 [breasts].
- 3) Acronyms: AIDS [Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome], though before the true nature of the disease was known it also went by the acronym GRID [Gay Related Immuno-Deficiency] (Allen and Burrige, Op. Cit.).

While the two other categories are readily acceptable, the category of 'back slang' seems obscure. Both Warren (1992) and Rawson (Op. Cit.) give examples of this, however, so its inclusion is guaranteed. A different case exists with the category of 'blends', of which Warren herself gives no examples nor does she relate how such euphemisms may be formed.

In psycholinguistics, the term 'blend' is used when "two words are amalgamated into one," Aitchison (1994:91), for example, 'not in the sleast' where 'sleat' is a blend of 'slightest' and 'least' (Aitchison, 1989:250). In this field, such phenomena are examples of selection errors, i.e. when a speaker fails to choose between two candidate words and blends them into one, but blends may occur intentionally, such as 'brunch' (breakfast/lunch), and for literary effect, as shown by the writer Lewis Carroll, e.g. 'fruminous' (furious/fuming) in *The Jabberwocky* (1989). However, these examples are not euphemistic in nature.

It is evident how 'blends' may arise, but examples of euphemistic blends still remain to be found. A candidate blend may be "Gadzooks" (Rawson, 1981), where 'gad' is a euphemistic version of 'God' and 'zooks' comes from 'hooks', i.e. the nails "used in the crucifixion of Christ," (ibid.:116). If this were Warren's intended meaning, however, the category should be listed under the heading of 'phonemic modification', not in its present position under 'word formation devices'. As such examples could also be filed under 'phonemic replacement', the category of 'blends' remains a mystery. This being the case, and with the support that even in

psycholinguistic investigation examples of blends are "fairly rare," Aitchison (1989:250), this category can probably be removed from the model until evidence of its validity is produced. This results in the final model represented in figure 3<sup>14</sup>:

Regarding the diachronic aspect of this study, as mentioned in the preceding section values and ideas regarding sex have changed greatly over the period studied. Following these ideals, some differences in euphemism formation over time may be observed.

One example concerns the category of 'phonemic modification', which was not activated until the most modern text. Although examples of this type of euphemism formation did exist in the time of Jane Austen (according to Rawson, 1981, 'darn' [damn], comes from the 1770's, and 'goddam' [God damn] from the fifteenth century), neither she nor Lawrence employ them in the texts studied. Another issue arises in the opposite direction with 'reversals', 'understatements' and 'overstatements', which were all used by Austen, but not in the successive texts. These phenomena may simply be a matter of choice, of literary style, or perhaps they occur only in certain dialect communities.

While it is impossible to come to a definite conclusion, one suggestion may be that the popularity of certain types of euphemism formation changes over time, and that these changes are probably due more to evolving discourse styles than alterations in motivation for euphemism use. Overall, people are still talking (or not) about much the same things that were being discussed two centuries ago. There are some differences, but these concern boundaries within the lexical field, not the motivation behind euphemism use.

*What has change from generation to generation was the prominence given either to explicit language or to language that was more reserved. Both kinds co-existed but advanced or retreated according to the mode of writing or the mood of the age (Burchfield 1985:27-8).*

Thus, the style of reference alters, but formation varieties remain within the final model presented in figure 3.

## Conclusion

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<sup>14</sup> See page 261.

Artistic concerns aside, it should be mentioned that there is a dark side to euphemism. This centres mainly on political and military 'double-talk', which is designed to intentionally deceive, "to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind," (Rawson, 1981:4). Such strategies are especially dangerous in that they deceive both the hearer *and* the speaker themselves. Extreme examples of this include the 'ethnic cleansing' and 'endgültige Lösung' (final solution) of Hitler's Germany which glossed over the mass murder of millions of people, with lesser (but equally deceiving) examples being rife in the time of the Watergate scandal in America. To illustrate how euphemism may be exploited to deceive both the public and one's self, John W. Dean III, a participant in the Watergate affair, made this statement to the press:

*If Bob Haldeman or John Ehrlichman or even Richard Nixon had said to me, "John, I want you to do a little crime for me. I want you to obstruct justice," I would have told him he was crazy and disappeared from sight. No one thought about the Watergate cover-up in those terms - at first, anyway. Rather it was "containing" Watergate or keeping the defendants "on the reservation" or coming up with the right public relations "scenario" and the like (New York Times April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1975).*

Awareness of typical strategies, and the circumstances in which they may be needed, however, may decrease the effectiveness of such deceptive techniques, especially if the mass media could become part of the awareness process, instead being part of the instigation.

To conclude, it appears that there are a variety of ways in which the results of studies on euphemism could benefit not just those trying to understand language, but also those wrestling with the nature of humanity. To trace human characteristics through history, broader studies of the kind presented here could analyse court documents, medical, church and city records, as well as further literary examples. The formation of euphemism could be traced further back in time using these texts to gain a deeper understanding of the historical roots of English, or of other languages for which sufficient evidence exists. Finally, considering the motivation for euphemism permits the outsider a view of the highly individual thoughts and linguistic choices of another human being, of "notions which are not open to observation," (Warren, 1992:159). This insight shows how people are affected, or even controlled, by the mores and pressures of society and, as demonstrated by Lawrence, how they react when they are broken. As George Orwell (1978:65) wrote: "...if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought." Euphemism shows how people

encode their ideals and beliefs within societal boundaries, but the question of from whom we are concealing our true thoughts, and why, remains.

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## Appendix 1 - The Euphemisms of Jane Austen<sup>15</sup>

### 1) Euphemisms covered by Warren's (1992) model:

#### i) Word formation devices:

##### Compounding -

'match of affection' [happy marriage], p.7.

'good-looking' [physically attractive], p. 114, p. 143.

'engage the affections of' [to flirt], p. 124.

'seduce [someone's] affections' [to flirt], p. 126.

'warm admiration' [heated affection], p. 198.

'conscious preference' [fondness], p. 198.

'upstart' (a compound of 'upward' (moving/inclined) and 'starter') ["Of persons, families, etc.: Lately or suddenly risen to prominence or dignity," OED], p. 210.

'double dealing' [sexual deception], p. 259.

##### Derivation -

'celibacy' (Latin 'ce<sup>l</sup>liba<sup>tus</sup>', OED) [life without love/sex], p. 67.

'affair' (French, 'affaire') [extra-marital activity] (cf. Rawson, 1981), p. 137.

'sanguine' (Latin 'sanguineus' and French 'sanguin(e)' OED) [optimistic about love], p. 258.

##### Blends -

##### Acronyms -

##### Onomatopoeia -

#### ii) Phonemic modification:

##### Back slang -

##### Rhyming slang -

##### Phonemic replacement -

##### Abbreviation -

#### iii) Loan words:

##### French -

'outré' [excessive/revolting], p. 167.

'beau' [lover], p. 228.

##### Latin -

##### Other languages -

'cara sposo' (Italian) [dear husband], p. 210 (x2).

#### iv) Semantic innovation:

##### Particularizations -

'handsome' (for a woman) [physically attractive], p.5.

'pretty' (for a man) [physically attractive], p.12.

'sink [one's self]' [marry beneath one's self], p.22.

'handsome' (for a man) [physically attractive], p.28.

'making violent love' [passionately "wooing", Rawson, 1981], p. 100.

'figure' [body], p.31 (x2), p. 125.

'a firm, upright figure' [slender, young body], p. 31, p. 245.

'lover' ["the man who declares his honourable intentions and whose formal courtship is a prelude to marriage," Parkinson, 1988:27], p. 33, p. 245, p. 325.

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<sup>15</sup> All page references refer to Austen (1816), unless otherwise stated.

'an attachment' [the possession of romantic feelings for someone], p. 54, p. 58, p. 100, p. 293, p. 298, p. 318.

'ungallant' [insulting to the opposite sex], p. 55.

'size' [body shape/build], p. 125.

'in [someone's] fancy' [to be attractive to someone], p. 139.

'pretty' (for a woman) [physically attractive], p. 145, p. 203.

'fancy [someone]' [to be physically attracted to someone], p. 240.

'bulky forms' [fat bodies], p. 245.

'improper' [morally unacceptable], p. 250, p. 318.

'his object' [sexual target], p. 259.

'a union' [a marriage/relationship], p. 312.

'attached' [in love], p. 323.

#### Implications -

'influence [one's] schemes' [fall in love with], p.13.

'source/expression of congratulation' [domestic happiness], p. 15.

'domestic comfort' [marital relations], p. 15.

'go away in the evening in the company of her pleasant husband' [to go to bed together/ to go to have sex], p. 15.

'the natural daughter of somebody' [illegitimate child], p. 18.

'done [one's] business' [cause [one] to fall in love with someone], p. 46.

'recommendation of person' [physically attractive], p. 136.

'ready to have [someone]' [ready to marry/have sex with someone], p. 137.

'a certain age' [an older person], p. 145.

'pale [...] want of complexion' [unhealthy looking, possibly due to illicit sexual activity, cf. Johnson, 1989, and Preus, 1991], p. 150.

'colour' [to blush due to embarrassment], p. 168.

'flirtation' [behaviour to attract a lover], p. 245, p. 278.

'carrying [something] to his lips' [kissing something], p. 291.

'with affection and faith engaged' [emotionally involved], p. 300.

'with manners so very disengaged' [appearing sexually available], p. 300.

'the best blessings of existence' [sexual and emotional gratification], p. 320.

'affections [...] entangled' [to be in love with someone], p. 322.

'flutter of pleasure' [sexual excitement], p. 322.

'the advantage of being constantly with her' [domestic/sexual happiness], p. 339.

'N takes M' [N marries/sexually conquers M], p. 350.

#### Metaphors -

'fell in love' [gained affection for], p. 12.

'frozen' [sexually cold/frigid], p. 62.

'flame' [venereal disease], p. 62.

'hood-wink'd boy' [prick/chimney sweep (this latter also being an eighteenth century euphemism for sexual intercourse, Chandler, 1975)], p. 62.

'what is warmer and blinder' (cf. Sabiston, 1987) [love/sex], p. 68.

'the wound' [unrequited love], p. 110.

'the cure' [someone who will 'requite' the love], p. 110.

'sucking in the sad poison' [the feeling of unrequited love], p. 126.

'Hymen's saffron robe' [marriage], p. 233. A reference to the Greek goddess of weddings - Hymen - who wore a yellow robe, and the poem "L'Allegro":

*There let Hymen oft appear,*

*In Saffron robe, with Taper clear,*

*And pomp, and feast, and revelry,  
With mask, and antique Pageantry,  
Such sights as youthful Poets dream,  
On Summers eyes by haunted stream.*

by John Milton, 1608-1674.

Metonyms -

'her situation' [recently married/pregnant], p. 15, p. 265.

'her person' [her body], p. 203.

Reversals -

'usual advantages of personal beauty and merit' [singularly unremarkable], p. 137.

Understatements -

'tolerably well' [very well indeed], pg.9.

'no remarkable degree of personal beauty' [ugly], p. 121.

'tolerably well-looking' [physically attractive], p. 145.

'not un-pretty' [attractive], p. 203.

'a little movement of more than common friendliness' [a highly forward action], p. 291.

'very much disposed to be attached to [someone]' [head over heels in love with someone], p. 299-300.

'a very indifferent lover' [not one single sign of preference or affection], p. 325.

Overstatements -

'too gallant to be in love' [an offensive, over-zealous admirer], p. 38.

2) Euphemisms not covered by Warren's (1992) model:

'Kitty' [prostitute, see Corsa, 1969, for an explanation of the "Kitty" riddle], p. 62.

## Appendix 2 - The Euphemisms of D. H. Lawrence<sup>16</sup>

### 1) Euphemisms covered by Warren's (1992) model:

#### i) Word formation devices:

##### Compounding -

'sex business' [sexual intercourse], p. 7.

'sex game' [sexual intercourse], p. 60.

'came off' [achieve orgasm], p. 140, p. 210 (x2).

##### Derivation -

'affair' (French, 'affaire') [extra-marital activity] (cf. Rawson, 1981), p. 34, p. 134, p. 175.

'penis' (Latin, cf. Rawson, 1981) [prick], p. 40, p. 41, p. 42 (x2), p. 125, p. 179.

'loins' (Latin 'lumbus', or the Old French 'loigne', OED) [the generative organs, or "the seat of physical strength and of generative power. Hence occasionally used for 'sire'," OED], p. 127.

'phallos' (Greek 'fallo~' - phallus) [prick], p. 141 (x2), p. 218.

'whore' (Old Norse 'hóra' (together) and 'hór' (adultery), which begot Old English 'hoere', originally synonymous with the Latin 'cara' [dear] [prostitute], p. 210.

'Lesbian' (Greek 'lesbio~' - Lesbios, or the Latin 'Lesbius', OED) ["After the alleged practice of Sappho, the poetess of Lesbos] Of a woman, homosexual, characterised by a sexual interest in other women," OED], p. 212.

'mound of Venus' (Latin 'mons Veneris', OED) ["...the more or less prominent fatty eminence covering the pubic symphysis of the human [...] woman," OED], p. 220.

'posteriors' ("an elegant Latinized euphemism", Rawson, 1981:216, from the Latin 'posterior', "coming after, following," OED) [ass], p. 231.

'escapade' (French 'escapade', which itself came from the Spanish 'escapada', OED) ["A breaking loose from restraint or rules; a flighty piece of conduct," OED], p. 255.

'prostitute' (verb) (from the Latin 'pro' [forward] and 'statuere' [to set up/place], i.e. "to expose publicly," "or to offer for sale," Rawson, 1981:223) [to have sexual intercourse for money], p. 271.

'chastity' (Latin 'castitas', which was adapted to Old French 'chastete' before reaching the current form 'chastity', OED) ["pure from unlawful sexual intercourse," OED], p. 313.

##### Blends -

##### Acronyms -

##### Onomatopoeia -

'vibrate' [have sexual intercourse], p. 42.

'piss' [urinate], p. 232.

#### ii) Phonemic modification:

##### Back slang -

##### Rhyming slang -

##### Phonemic replacement -

##### Abbreviation -

#### iii) Loan words:

##### French -

'L'amour' [sexual intercourse], p. 8, p. 271 (x2).

'demi-vierge' (literally 'half-virgin') [celibate woman], p. 19.

'beau' [lover], p. 22.

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<sup>16</sup> All page references refer to Lawrence (1928), unless otherwise stated.

'paramour' ('par' [through] plus 'amour' [love], cf. Rawson, 1981) [illicit sexual partner], p. 281.

Latin -

'phallus' [prick; "an image of the male generative organ [...] its symbolised significance," OED], p. 78, p. 182.

'copulate' (cf. Allen and Burridge, 1991) [sexual intercourse], p. 258.

'in puris naturalibus' [naked], p. 271.

Other languages -

iv) Semantic innovation:

Particularizations -

'sturdy body' [fat body], p. 6.

'sexual love' [sexual intercourse], p. 7.

'sex experience' [sexual intercourse], p. 9.

'give [one's self]' [participate in sexual intercourse], p. 28.

'love-making' (the most common euphemism, cf. Rawson, 1981) [sexual intercourse], p. 30.

'lover' [sexual partner], p. 31, p. 281.

'make love' [have sexual intercourse], p. 35.

'buttocks' [ass], p. 42, p. 73.

'a fulfilment' [orgasm], p. 139.

'drawers' ("the word actually describes how the garment is drawn on, not the garment itself," Rawson, 1981:203) [underwear], p. 238.

'love' [sexual intercourse], p. 271.

'unusual sexual postures' [anal sex], p. 278.

'mistress' [married sexual partner], p. 281.

Implications -

'the love connexion' [sexual intercourse], p. 7.

'the gift of herself' [voluntary sexual intercourse], p. 7.

'sordid connexions and subjections' [sexual intercourse], p. 7.

'the connexion' [sexual intercourse], p. 8.

'sex(ual) thrill' [orgasm], p. 9, p. 32.

'disconnexion' [celibacy], p. 22.

'satisfaction' [orgasm], p. 31, p. 214.

'[go to] bed' [sexual intercourse], p. 34, p. 36.

'sleeping with [someone]' [having sexual intercourse with someone], p. 35, p. 36, p. 47.

'touch [someone] with [one's] body' [have sexual intercourse with someone], p. 38.

'open her thighs' [have sexual intercourse], p. 134.

'bit of married love' [sexual intercourse between spouses], p. 169.

'[to] have' [to have sexual intercourse with], p. 208, p. 210.

'carrying on with' [having sexual intercourse with], p. 209.

'pleasure' [orgasm], p. 214.

'passion' [sexual intercourse], p. 257.

'keeping' [having sexual intercourse], p. 279.

'[to] entertain' [to have sexual intercourse], p. 280.

'touch' [sexual intercourse], p. 289 (x2).

'intimate' [having sexual relations], p. 290.

Metaphors -

'her tool' [his prick], p. 8.

'take [someone]' [sexual intercourse], p. 8, p. 122, p. 124, p. 218.

'crisis' ("The use of the word *crisis* for *orgasm* is a sign of something seriously wrong with Connie's sexual life," Charney, 1981:104) [orgasm], p. 8 (x2), p. 31 (x3), 179.

'dynamo' [sexual intercourse], p. 34.

'the straight road' ['simple' sexual intercourse (missionary position?)], p. 37.

'the narrow gate' [cunt], p. 37.

'go off' [achieve orgasm], p. 57.

'the springing of his seed' [his orgasm], p. 122, p. 131, p. 290.

'bird' [prick], p. 125.

'a flapping overlapping of soft flames, soft as feathers, running to points of brilliance, exquisite, exquisite and melting her all molten inside' [orgasm], p. 139.

'the soft bud' [flaccid prick], p. 139.

'his life' [semen], p. 139.

'butting of his haunches' [thrusting motion during sexual intercourse], p. 178.

'balls' [testicles], p. 182.

'[to] bring [someone] off' [to cause someone to achieve orgasm], p. 210.

'cock' [prick], p. 216, p. 226, p. 295.

'cloud of [...] hair' [pubic hair], p. 218.

'cock-sure' [confident/erect penis], p. 218.

'heads' [(cunt) labia/lips], p. 218.

'gates' [(cunt) labia/lips], p. 218.

'the king of glory' [prick], p. 218.

'maiden hair' [pubic hair], p. 220, p. 229, p. 233.

'love hair' [pubic hair], p. 229.

'man hair' [pubic hair], p. 229.

'the secret warmth' [cunt], p. 232.

'the secret entrances' [cunt and asshole], p. 232.

'secret places' ("It is surprising to find Lawrence using sexual euphemisms worthy of *Fanny Hill* at this climactically frank moment. 'Secret places' sounds very Victorian...", Charney, 1981:108) [cunt], p. 232, p. 276.

'Knight of the Burning Pestle' [prick], p. 236.

'Lady of the Red Hot Mortar' [cunt], p. 236.

'benediction' ['sexual blessing'/sexual intercourse], p. 276.

'release' [orgasm], p. 290.

#### Metonyms -

'the sex thing' [sexual intercourse], p. 7.

'expend himself' [ejaculate], p. 8.

'him' [his prick], p. 31, p. 32, p. 131, p. 139, p. 218.

'her' [her cunt], p. 31, p. 121, p. 131 (x2), p. 139 (x4), p. 210, p. 216, p. 218 (x2), p. 290.

'his hard, erect passivity' [his erect, inactive prick], p. 31.

'male passivity' [inactive prick], p. 32.

'[to] need women' [to require sexual intercourse], p. 36.

'her *functions*' [child-bearing], p. 77.

'her body' [her cunt], p. 122, p. 131.

'his deep-sunk intentness' [his prick], p. 131.

'he' [his prick], p. 139 (x3), p. 218, p. 290.

'underthings' [underwear], p. 178.

'it' [prick], p. 181.

'down there' [cunt], p. 185, p. 210.

'thee' ('you') [cunt], p. 185.

'the other' [sexual intercourse], p. 209.

'it' [sexual intercourse], p. 209.

'come' [orgasm], p. 210.

'I' [my prick], p. 210.

'tail' (the expression B. Lawrence (1978:237) calls "the most severely tabooed of all the female descriptives...") [ass], p. 232 (x2), p. 276.

'the lower tip of her body' [cunt], p. 233.

'bowels' [testicles], p. 290.

Reversals -

Understatements -

Overstatements -

2) Euphemisms not covered by Warren's (1992) model:

'John Thomas' [prick], p. 218 (x3), p. 219.

'Lady Jane' [cunt], p. 218 (x3).

'the Italian way' ("Italian fashion - anal intercourse. This highly derogatory euphemism, based on the supposed habit of Italians, dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A variant is 'Italian way'...", Richter, 1993:191) [anal sex], p. 278.

### Appendix 3 - The Euphemisms of Fiona Walker<sup>17</sup>

#### 1) Euphemisms covered by Warren's (1992) model:

##### i) Word formation devices:

###### Compounding -

'sex-life' [sexual activity], p. 502 (x2).

'foreplay' [pre-sexual activity], p. 563.

###### Derivation -

'affair' (from the French 'affaire') [extra-marital (sexual) relations], p. 56, p. 254, p. 346, p. 435, p. 487, p. 490, p. 527, p. 588.

'post-coital' (from the Latin 'post' [after] and 'coire' "where *co* equals "together" and *ire* is "to go", " Rawson, 1981:52) [after sexual intercourse], p. 66, p. 265.

'fornicating' ("...distinguished for having an unusually piquant etymology: It comes from *fornix*, the Latin word for "arch" or "vault." The Romans brothels, it seems, were built underground, with arched ceilings. Because of this, *fornix* acquired the additional meaning of "brothel"; "to frequent brothels" became *fornicari*....," Rawson, 1981:106) [having sexual intercourse], p. 120.

###### Blends -

###### Acronyms -

###### Onomatopoeia -

'bonk' [have sexual intercourse], p. 56, p. 219, p. 632.

'frissions' [sexual intercourse], p. 429.

'bum' (a very old euphemism, with "the first example in the *Oxford English Dictionary* coming from 1387. Probably not a contraction of *bottom*, as some have speculated, but of onomatopoeic origin, this "bum" may be related to similar-sounding words with the general meaning of "protuberance" [...] and bump," Rawson, 1981:287) [ass], p. 677.

##### ii) Phonemic modification:

###### Back slang -

###### Rhyming slang -

###### Phonemic replacement -

'tit' ("as a mispronunciation of "teat", " Rawson, 1981:283) [breast], p. 98, p. 677, p. 678 (x2).

'boob' ("Current *boobs* seems to have replaced older *bubbies* - perhaps transferred from their being used to suckle bubbies or babies," Allen and Burridge, 1991:100) [breast], p. 678.

###### Abbreviation -

'effing/eff' [fucking/fuck], p. 70, p. 461, p. 592.

'knickers' ("an abbreviation of "knickerbockers" which are men's knee-length pants," Rawson, 1981:203) [women's underwear], p.435, p. 677.

##### iii) Loan words:

###### French -

'risqué' [bawdy], p. 303, p. 427.

###### Latin -

###### Other languages -

##### iv) Semantic innovation:

###### Particularizations -

'make love' [have sexual intercourse], p. 264.

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<sup>17</sup> All page references refer to Walker (1996), unless otherwise stated.

'buttock' [ass], p. 385.  
'ravish' [have sexual intercourse], p. 494, p. 695.  
'get it up' [achieve an erection], p. 524.  
'fling' [extra/pre-marital sexual relations], p. 528.  
'her pair' [her breasts], p. 609.

Implications -

'unfortunate places' [genital area], p. 27.  
'take/go [someone] to bed' [have sexual intercourse], p. 55, p. 138, p. 166, p. 331 (x2), p. 350, p. 484, p. 510 (x2).  
'sleeping with [someone]' [having sexual intercourse with someone], p. 122, p. 390, p. 463, p. 598.  
'near-ecstasy' [close to achieving orgasm], p. 264.  
'one-night/fortnight-stand' [sexual relations lasting just one night/two weeks], p. 298, p. 435.  
'to lay' (a relatively recent euphemism dating from 1930 (cf. Rawson, 1981) and showing semantic shift in its applicability to both male and female objects) [to have sexual intercourse], p. 302.  
'lights-out act' [sexual intercourse], p. 303.  
'the goods' [prick], p. 323.  
'getting into [someone's] knickers/Y-fronts' [having sexual intercourse], p. 435, p. 671.  
'writhing' [having sexual intercourse], p. 458.  
'intimate' [having sexual relations], p. 598.  
'adultery' [illicit sexual intercourse], p. 632.  
'[to] have an early night' [have sexual intercourse], p. 632.  
'beddable' [sexually attractive], p. 673.  
'upwards' [to his prick], p. 697.

Metaphors -

'shag' (from the image of "rolling about," Allen and Burrige, 1991:93) [sexual intercourse], p. 2, p. 99, p. 187, p. 224, p. 244, p. 308, p. 446, p. 523.  
'central heating' [an erect (presumably 'hot') prick], p. 2.  
'coupling' [sexual intercourse], p. 2, p. 60.  
'cleavage' [the 'valley-like' area between the breasts], p. 39, p. 72.  
'hold a [...] torch for [someone]' [feel sexually attracted to someone], p. 56.  
'globes' [breasts], p. 72.  
'a session at stud' [sexual intercourse], p. 82.  
'flaccid sex-life' [unfulfilling sexual partnership], p. 88.  
'deflower' [have sexual intercourse with a virgin], p. 248.  
'fireworks' [sexual intercourse], p. 259.  
'natural childbirth' [painful sexual intercourse], p. 264.  
'plunge' [the action of the penis during sexual intercourse], p. 264.  
'screw' (a term that Allen and Burrige (1991:92) list under the category of "terms of attack") [sexual intercourse], p. 302.  
'shaft' [prick], p. 348, p. 592.  
'ride' ("a metaphor that appears in a number of languages (e.g., English and early Greek)," Allen and Burrige, 1991:59) [to have sexual intercourse], p. 351, p. 497.  
'blue word' [swear word], p. 386.  
'talking dirty' [talking about sex], p. 427.  
'steamy scenes' [sexual encounters], p. 465.  
'get [one's] claws into [someone's] back' [have a sexual hold over someone], p. 485.  
'kinky' [sexually unusual/deviant], p. 497.

'rolling (in haystacks)' (or "in the hay," Allen and Burrige, 1991: 93) [having sexual intercourse], p. 502, p. 626.

'the big event' [sexual intercourse], p. 563.

Metonyms -

'himself' [his prick], p. 60.

'come' [orgasm], p. 264, p. 265.

'groin' [prick], p. 307, p. 575.

'her' [her cunt], p. 349.

'between her legs' [her cunt], p. 349.

'rear' [ass], p.386.

'it' [prick], p. 524.

'bottom' ("...the general directional reference has a specific euphemistic meaning," Rawson, 1981:38) [ass], p. 642, p. 647.

'beneath her skirts' [her cunt], p. 693.

'him' [his prick], p. 694.

'his thigh' [his prick], p. 694.

Reversals -

Understatements -

Overstatements -

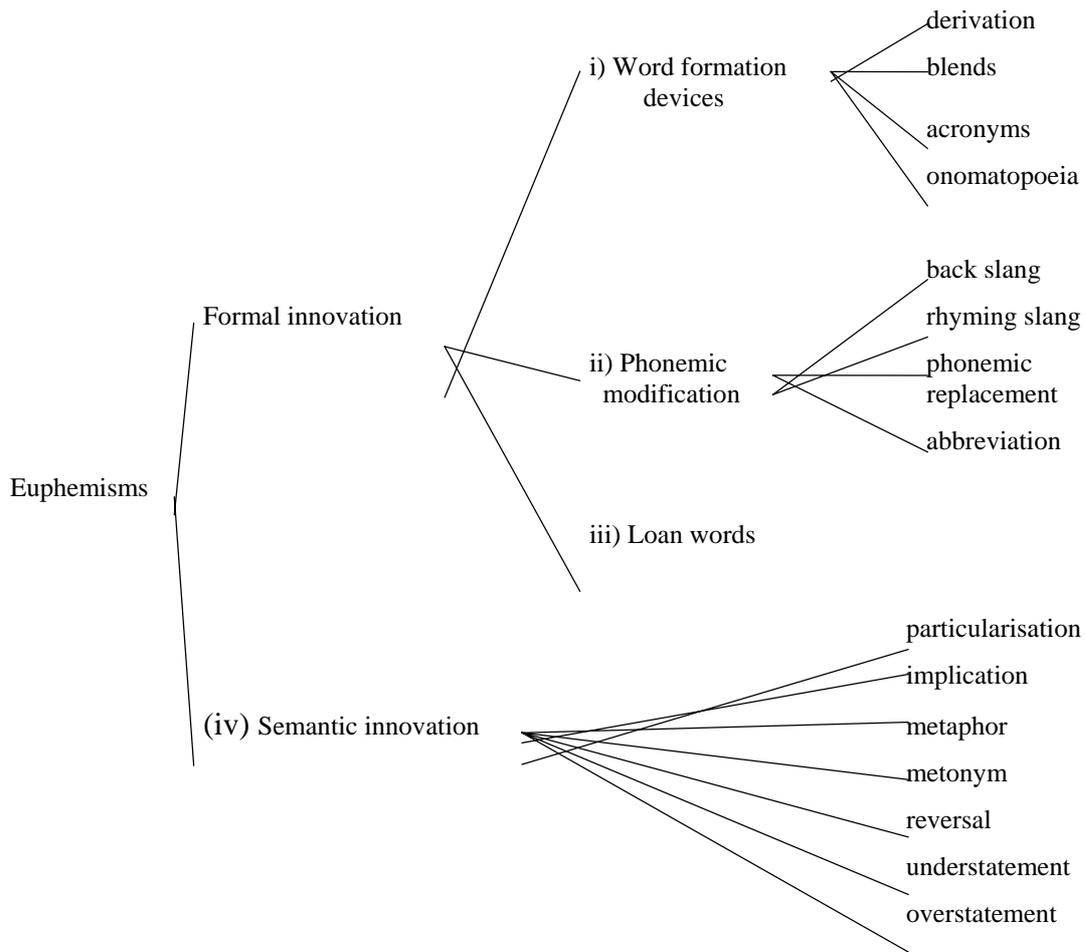
2) Euphemisms not covered by Warren's (1992) model:

'roger' ("...another of the many personal names that have been bestowed on this part of the male anatomy [...] "Roger" may have come from the habit of farmers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of giving this name to their bulls. [...] it also became a byword for the sexual act," Rawson, 1981:238) [to have sexual intercourse], p. 427.

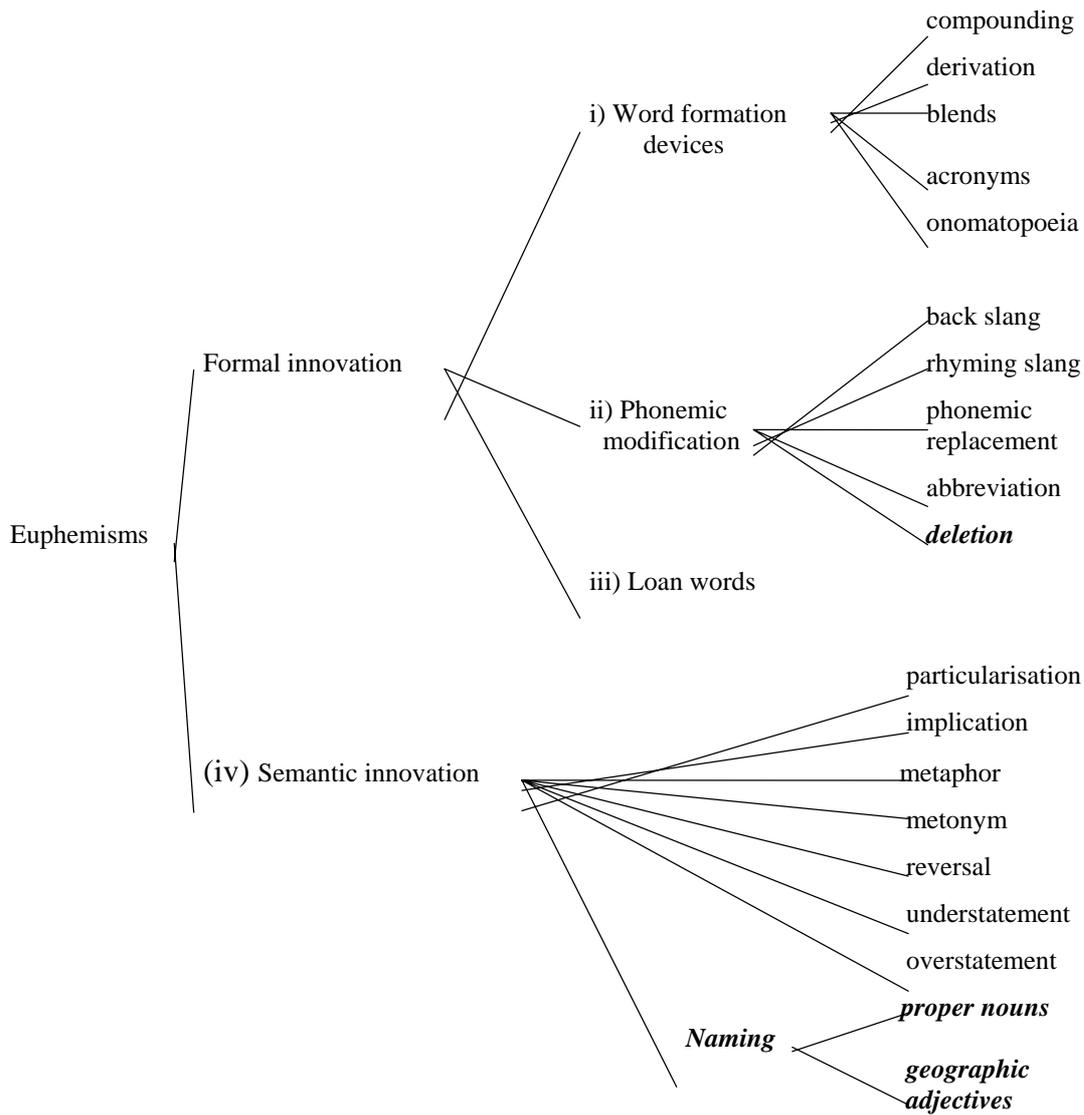
'are you -' (omission - use of a graphological symbol '-' to show the omission) [are you having sexual intercourse], p. 490.

'have you -' (omission, as above) [have you had sexual intercourse], p. 490.

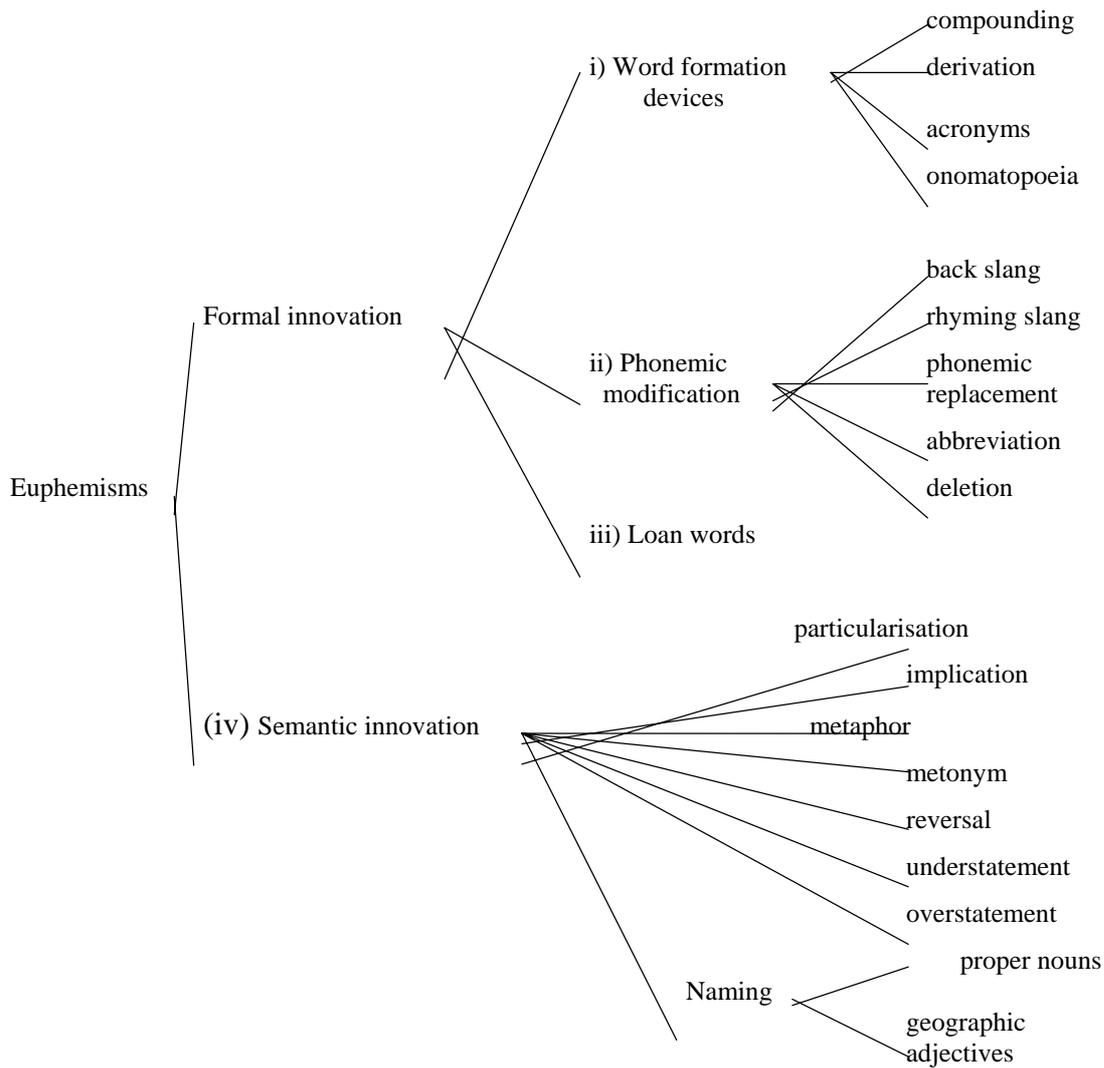
compounding



**Figure 1:** Classification of the main devices for constructing euphemisms (Warren, 1992:133)



**Figure 2:** Modified version of Warren's (1992:133) classification of the main devices for constructing euphemisms



**Figure 3:** Final modified version of Warren's (1992:133) classification of the main devices for constructing euphemisms

i) Word	Compounding	8	iii) Loan words	French	2
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formation devices					
	Derivation	3		Latin	0
	Blends	0		Other (Italian)	1
	Acronyms	0	iv) Semantic innovation	Particularisation	19
	Onomatopoeia	0		Implication	20
ii) Phonemic modification	Back slang	0		Metaphor	9
	Rhyming slang	0		Metonym	2
	Phonemic replacement	0		Reversal	1
	Abbreviation	0		Understatement	7
				Overstatement	1
Euphemisms not covered by Warren's model	1				

**Table 1:** The euphemisms of *Emma*

i) Word formation devices	Compounding	3	iii) Loan words	French	4
	Derivation	11		Latin	3
	Blends	0		Other	0
	Acronyms	0	iv) Semantic innovation	Particularisation	13
	Onomatopoeia	2		Implication	20
ii) Phonemic modification	Back slang	0		Metaphor	31
	Rhyming slang	0		Metonym	22
	Phonemic replacement	0		Reversal	0
	Abbreviation	0		Understatement	0
				Overstatement	0
Euphemisms not covered by Warren's model	3				

**Table 2:** The euphemisms of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*

i) Word formation devices	Compounding	2	iii) Loan words	French	1
	Derivation	3		Latin	0
	Blends	0		Other	0
	Acronyms	0	iv) Semantic innovation	Particularisation	6
	Onomatopoeia	3		Implication	15
ii) Phonemic modification	Back slang	0		Metaphor	22
	Rhyming slang	0		Metonym	11
	Phonemic replacement	2		Reversal	0
	Abbreviation	2		Understatement	0
				Overstatement	0
Euphemisms not covered by Warren's model	3				

**Table 3:** The euphemisms of *Well Groomed*

i) Word formation devices	Compounding	13	iii) Loan words	French	7
	Derivation	17		Latin	3
	Blends	0		Other (Italian)	1
	Acronyms	0	iv) Semantic innovation	Particularisation	38
	Onomatopoeia	5		Implication	55
ii) Phonemic modification	Back slang	0		Metaphor	62
	Rhyming slang	0		Metonym	35
	Phonemic replacement	2		Reversal	1
	Abbreviation	2		Understatement	7
				Overstatement	1
Euphemisms not covered by Warren's model	7				

**Table 4:** The total number of different euphemisms from the three novels