

DOGGY DOG WORLD!

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The other day I was reading a novel and I saw the following sentence:

“If you think I’m going out with you anymore, you have another think coming.”

Another think coming? That is not an expression I was familiar with. It had always been my understanding that the phrase was: you have another *thing* coming.

After all, I had heard this hundreds of times, but I was usually so devastated another girl was dumping me that I didn’t give the terminology too much thought.

Was it possible that for more than 50 years I had been hearing and saying this word incorrectly? For all I know, I’ve been saying lots of things wrong. This was starting to drive me star-craving mad. If you’re beginning to re-think how you have used this expression, just think how I feel.

My second grade teacher once chided me for saying, “What in sand hill is this junk we are learning?” She complained my query was not only impolite—but it contained inaccurate phrasing. From my vantage point as a seven-year-old, “sand hill” made a lot more sense than Sam Hill. I mean, who in sand hill was Sam Hill? The “junk” we were learning, by the way, was phonetics. I had a real problem starting phonetics with “ph” instead of an “f”. I couldn’t have been the first kid to think of this.

I emailed my friend Heidi, who is gamefully employed as a proofreader (what fun). She emailed me back and said: “I am certain that the correct way to say this is: You have another thing coming!” Notice that she added an exclamation point at the end. Or is that an explanation point? Either word works, don’t you think?

Heidi knows all this stuff because she passed her final exams in English with flying collars. She thinks these kinds of problems are deep-seated in the American lexicon. I always thought they were deep-seeded; I guess there is more than corn in Indiana.

I still wasn’t convinced about this “think” thing. I don’t usually make mistakes like that and the whole incident became a mind-bottling problem. The very idea that I could misuse a saying like this made me start running around like a bowl in a china shop, which I really do know is incorrect, but it just makes a lot more sense to me. What would a bull be doing in a retail establishment, anyway?

The complexities of the English language have always peaked my interest, so I did some research and discovered that there’s confusion about many common expressions we use, but for all intensive purposes it’s a mute point.

There are several examples of what are called “eggcorns” in the paragraphs above. An eggcorn is the substitution of a word or phrase for words that sound similar. And the alternative wording usually makes just as much sense—Old Timers’ disease instead of Alzheimer’s, for example. So let’s nip this problem in the butt and quit using these half-asked expressions in our daily conversations.

Can you put together a list of the eggcorns in this column? Remember, the proof is in the putting.

ODES FROM THE ODD TOPICS SOCIETY

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*Butler’s Odd Topics Society meets every now and then
to discuss Odd Topics of any nature. Professor Baetzhold
is the Poet Laureate Odd Topics Society.*



Tradition Subverted

**Tonight we had planned our Dodo Roast,
Whereat, 'midst joy and great good cheer,
We'd feast on dodo, then with heartfelt toasts,
Praise those who've delivered our talks this year.**

**But another event was to intervene
And partially alter our venue;
The Faculty Picnic entered the scene,
And Roast Dodo did not, thus, appear on our menu.**

**But though we regret the demise of our feast,
Let's still ring the bells—à la Quasimodo;
For one of us there's a blessing at least;
Mimi did not have to roast the Dodo.**

**The nibbles are great; now let's bring on the toasts;
The beer and the wine still flow tonight!
So let us relax and bask in the glow
Of our usual great good gemütlichkeit.**