MINING THE SEAMS:

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF PUNNING 1590—1750

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CONTENTS

DEDICATION

To Penelope Meyer.

For putting up with my bullshit more than any other person will ever have to.

With much hairy man love, Paul.

SUMMARY

This thesis examines puns in poetry from the Renaissance, through Milton, into the eighteenth century. It examines the puns through the lens of rhetoric, focussing upon the rhetorical techniques that are pun like in their effect: antanaclasis, asteismus, paronomasia, polyptoton, and syllepsis. Through this lens the thesis suggests that the canonical poets of the two eras did differ in their use of rhetorical puns. The eighteenth century saw the rise of the anti-pun debate, which led to the anti-pun attitude becoming a critical commonplace. However, it has long been known that the eighteenth century poets were willing to use puns despite the bad press wordplay was gathering at the time. The Renaissance poets were willing to follow what this thesis describes as the logic of the pun and to use it to structure their lyric poems. Milton appears to arrest this practice in his epic poetry, and, especially through the use of polyptoton, endeavours to bring the play of ambiguity inherent in punning under as rigorous a control as English can provide. The eighteenth century poets did not entirely follow Milton's lead but they do not appear to have returned to the pre-Miltonic use of the puns to deploy the logic of the pun. Rather, the eighteenth century begins to see the ascendancy of the euphemistic pun. While the thesis points to the larger narrative of the pun becoming, as at least one critic would have it, the lowest form of wit, it also suggests the ways in which the poetic punning was altered, challenged, and enriched by poets between 1590 and 1740.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed:

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I would like to begin by thanking my supervisor Robert Phiddian. There are the usual platitudes a disciple generally offers a master, however, it is true that without his guidance and perseverance, this thesis would have fallen off the wagon years ago. To his interminable question 'have you written a thesis yet?' I can now honestly respond '*alea iacta est*'.

This thesis would have died in the arse without being aided and abetted by the following: my secondary supervisor Graham Tulloch and fellow PhD students at Flinders University (Chad, Lisa, Sara, Edo, Ben, Tully, Savvy, Nick, Rebecca).

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ABBREVIATIONS

Absalom and Achitophel	*AA*
The Dunciad in Four Books	*DFB*
Oxford English Dictionary	*OED*
Paradise Lost	*PL*
Paradise Regain'd	*PR*
The Rape of the Lock	*RL*
Virgil's Aeneid	VA

1 A BRIEF HISTORY

'Puns are very good titles, of course, and very bad puns are extremely good.

Make a list of excruciating puns, and the ones you reject will do you very nicely

as chapter headings'.[1]

On Thursday 10th May 1711, Joseph Addison printed in *The Spectator* an essay that now

commonly bears the title 'False Wit: Punning'. It begins with the following paragraph.

> There is no kind of false Wit which has been so recommended by the Practice of
> all Ages, as that which consists in a Jingle of Words, and is comprehended
> under the general Name of *Punning*. It is indeed impossible to kill a Weed,
> which the Soil has a natural Disposition to produce. The Seeds of Punning are in
> the Minds of all Men, and tho' they may be subdued by Reason, Reflection, and
> good Sense, they will be very apt to shoot up in the greatest Genius, that is not
> broken and cultivated by the Rules of Art. Imitation is natural to us, and when it
> does not raise the Mind to Poetry, Painting, Musick, or other more noble Arts, it
> often breaks out in Punns and Quibbles.[2]

Addison goes on to give a brief history of punning in which he nominates the reign of

James I as being the most conducive to producing punsters although he does note that it

is a habit indulged in throughout all recorded history. It was Addison, in the same essay,

who proposed the acid test to determine if a witticism was true wit or not by seeing if it

withstood translation into another language. If yes, then it was true wit. If not, then it

was a pun and therefore false wit.[3] Addison's attitude towards punning is, as we shall

see, emblematic of the larger cultural attack on the pun that occurred in the eighteenth

century.

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[1] John Clarke, *The Fred Dagg Scripts* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1981), p. 183.
[2] Joseph Addison, 'The Spectator: No. 61, Thursday, May 10, 1711', in *The Spectator*, ed. by Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 259.
[3] Addison, 'The Spectator: No. 61, Thursday, May 10, 1711', p. 259.

Not every age has necessarily shared in Addison's negative zeal. In the Renaissance, when writing about the punning rhetorical technique paronomasia, George Puttenham commented that:

> when such resemblance happens betweene words of another nature, and not upon mens names, yet doeth the Poet or maker finde pretty sport to play with them in his verse, specially the Comicall Poet and the Epigrammatist.[4]

While Renaissance hierarchies of poetry may be grounds for considering Puttenham's statement as a small slight against puns (that they are used primarily by comic and epigrammatic poets rather than by the tragic or epic poets), such a view is not as negative as that which Addison propagates.

Simon J. Alderson claims that the anti-pun debate was 'a genuine social phenomenon with a number of conflicting social values attached to it'.[5] Walter Redfern claims the English anti-pun debate was a reaction against what was viewed as a 'plague […] of literature'.[6] Broadly speaking, those Englishmen who condemned punning in the eighteenth century viewed it as a break in decorum; and, the higher the literary art-form, the more obnoxious the existence of a pun. As demonstrated by the examples provided by Addison and Puttenham, it helps to compare critical writings in order to ascertain the difference in attitudes that indicates a cultural and philosophical change between eras of English literature. The pun, in some respects, is trans-historical because it appears in all languages at all times. Attitudes towards the pun and punning, however, are grounded in the social fabric of their time and are the result of what could broadly be called historical trends. One way to gauge the virulence of anti-pun rhetoric is to examine an earlier sample of critical writing and compare it to extracts of critical writing from the

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[4] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*. ed. by Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 202.
[5] Simon J. Alderson, 'The Augustan Attack on the Pun', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 20 (1996), p. 2.
[6] Walter Redfern, *Puns: More Senses Than One* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2000), p. 62.

eighteenth century. The piece we will start with, Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologie for Poetry*, demonstrates a joyful lack of anxiety about using puns to help prosecute its case.

APOLOGIE FOR POETRY

Sir Philip Sidney's seminal work of English poetical theory makes use of puns to highlight, deepen, produce and propagate the central arguments of the text. This is evident from the title of the tract onwards. There are two possible titles for the text: *The Defence of Poesie* or *An Apologie for Poetry*. In *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defences of Poetry* Margaret Ferguson claims that Sidney 'would have relished the ambiguity created by his text's two titles, and would have seen that both are relevant to the problems he explores'.[7] It is important to note, though, that Sidney did not choose a title for his work. Composed sometime in the early 1580s, the text was first published in 1595 by Henry Olney, well after Sidney's death in the spring of 1586, under the title *An Apologie for Poetrie*. Olney, it appears, was being a little underhand in his printing of the text because William Ponsonby had entered the work into the Stationer's register on the 29th of November, 1594. Ponsonby then forced Olney to turn over his unsold copies to Ponsonby who released them with a new cover along with his version called *The Defence of Poesie*.[8] Ferguson goes on to argue that the rhetoric of people writing Renaissance defences or apologies for poetry 'oscillates between apology in the 'Greek' sense of self-justification and apology in the modern sense of a plea for pardon or indulgence'.[9] The ambiguity that Ferguson highlights comes not just from the reader's

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[7] Margaret W. Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* (London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 137.
[8] Scholars, in the main, tend to refer to the text as the *Defence*, legitimizing Ponsonby's title. R. S. Bear, 'Introduction', University of Oregon, (1992) <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rbear/defence.html> [Accessed 20/02/2007 2007].
[9] ibid.

choice between 'defence' or 'apology' as the key word in the title, but from the possible polysemy that Ferguson finds in 'apology' and which, as we will see, also exists in 'defence'.

Three meanings of the word 'apology' were available to Olney when he published Sidney's tract. The first is the rhetorical meaning of a 'pleading off from a charge or imputation; defence of a person, or vindication of an institution';[10] the second is the more common use nowadays of 'apology' as a 'justification, explanation, or excuse, of an incident or course of action'.[11] The third definition offered by the *OED* is interesting because it makes reference to a reader or listener:

> an explanation offered *to a person* affected by one's action that no offence was intended, coupled with the expression of regret for any that may have been given; or, a frank acknowledgement of the offence with expression of regret for it, by way of reparation [emphasis mine].[12]

You apologize to someone whom you have affected negatively and now wish to affect in another more positive manner. It is the affective power of poetry that drives much of the *Apologie* and when one is advocating an affective art form, one must have some idea of who is to be affected and what is to be their role in the art form. Dorothy Connell points out that Sidney's attention in the *Apologie* is 'directed towards the feelings of the reader, not the poet'.[13] While Sidney never openly admits that poetry causes offence or demonstrates any regret for pursuing poetry as a topic, there remains the nagging doubt behind his rhetoric that if poetry is less effective than history or philosophy at moving people towards a more pious life then it is an offence to indulge in poetry when one could be reading history or philosophy and thus learning how to lead a pious life. In this

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[10] *OED* **apology**, *n*. **1**. (1533-1850) 2nd Edition 1989. A fuller explanation of this citation method is provided in the next chapter.
[11] *OED* **apology**, *n*. **2**. (1588-1855) 2nd Edition 1989.
[12] *OED* **apology**, *n*. **3**. (1594-1848) 2nd Edition 1989.
[13] Dorothy Connell, *Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker's Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 45.

way, the potential pun on 'apology' demonstrates to the reader the hidden anxieties of the text that shadow Sidney's treatise.

The word 'defence' has many more shades of meaning than 'apology' though few are relevant to Sidney's text. The two relevant meanings in the OED are 'defending, supporting or maintaining by argument; justification, vindication'[14] and 'a speech or argument in self-vindication'.[15] 'Defence' is a potential pun that allows the subject of the text to be both poetry (first meaning) and the poet (second meaning). 'Apology' on the other hand, is a potential pun that allows the subject to be poetry (first meaning) and the poet (second meaning) and to include the reader (third meaning which specifically mentions 'offered to a person'). Ferguson argues that Sidney 'plays with the classical roles of forensic and epideictic orator in ways that deliberately blur the distinction between the authorial subject and the theoretical subject, poetry'.[16] To this, we might add the third subject, the 'right reader' that is instituted by the potential pun on 'apology' but is developed as a theme throughout the course of the text.[17]

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[14] *OED* **defence**, **defense**, *n*. **II**.**6**.**a**. (1382-1848) 2nd Edition 1989.

[15] *OED* **defence**, **defense**, *n*. **II**.**6**. **b**. (1557-1875) 2nd Edition 1989.

[16] Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry*, p. 139.

[17] Right reading is an extension of the idea of the 'right poet'. Much has been written about Sidney's idea of the 'right poet'. For example, see: Connell, *Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker's Mind*, M. J. Doherty, *The Mistress-Knowledge: Sir Philip Sidney's Defence of Poesie and Literary Architectonics in the English Renaissance* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1991), A. C. Hamilton, 'Sidney's Idea of The "Right Poet"', *Comparative Literature*, 9 (1957), Daniel Jacobson, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Dilemma: On the Ethical Function of Narrative Art.', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 54 (1996), Michael Mack, *Sidney's Poetics: Imitating Creation* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), Niel L. Rudenstine, *Sidney's Poetic Development* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), Robert E. Stillman, 'Deadly Stinging Adders: Sidney's Piety, Philippism, and the *Defence of Poesey*', *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual*, XVI (2002), Robert E. Stillman, 'The Scope of Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*: The New Hermeneutic and Early Modern Poetics', *English Literary Renaissance*, 32 (2002), Robert E. Stillman, 'The Truths of a Slippery World: Poetry and Tyranny in Sidney's "Defence"', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 55 (2002). However, it is interesting that throughout *The Apologie*, Sidney not only retells stories but he also provides the reader with interpretations of the stories and thus demonstrates what could be termed 'right reading'. This process begins with the Pugliano anecdote with which Sidney starts *The Apologie* and continues throughout it. I would argue that the 'right reader' or 'right reading' is an important subtext of *The Apologie* and despite the fact that 'right reading' or the 'right reader' are never overtly discussed in a meaningful way by Sidney, they are worthy of closer critical examination. It was Klein who provided me with the initial impetus for the idea of a 'right reader'

We cannot be sure that Sidney intended either 'defence' or 'apology' to star in the title of his work given that each title was applied by a publisher to the text. This is why thus far I have been referring to 'apology' and 'defence' as potential puns. So, while we can concur with Ferguson about Sidney appreciating the ambiguity inherent in the variant titles of his treatise, if we are to find puns that we can attribute to Sidney we must delve into the text itself.

Sidney uses poetry's ability to 'delight' the reader to demonstrate poetry's pre-eminence when compared with the stereotypical dullness of philosophical writing. When it comes to countering the claims of historians, Sidney relies upon his distinction between the 'brazen world' of history and the 'golden world' of poetry.[18] In an effort to prove that the 'golden world' of poetry taught the reader more so than 'brazen world' of history, Sidney relates two stories, one from a text he considered historical, and one from a work of fiction. In the first story, its veracity testified to by Herodotus and Justin, a servant of King Darius enacts an 'honourable subterfuge' to serve his king. The servant has his ears and nose removed and he runs away to the Babylonians who are the enemies of Darius. The Babylonians welcome him with open arms thinking him to also be an enemy of Darius. The servant though, is able 'to deliver them [Babylonians] over to Darius'.[19]

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and 'right reading'. Lisa M. Klein, *The Exemplary Sidney and the Elizabethan Sonneteer* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998).

[18]Stillman, 'The Truths of a Slippery World: Poetry and Tyranny in Sidney's "Defence"', p. 1296. Sidney's argument is essentially that history is tied to recounting both the positive and negative attributes of the people whose lives it tells and therefore it is an inferior teacher to poetry where a moral and virtuous character can be created that will not be susceptible to the flaws of a 'real' human being. Hence the historical world view is brazen because Caesar, Alexander, et al, have bad character traits as well as positive one but the poetical world view is golden because Aeneas is virtuous, brave, and pious.

[19] Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or the Defence of Poesy*. ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1965), p. 111.

Sidney then states:

> Xenophon excellently **feigneth** such another stratagem performed by Abradatas in Cyrus' behalf. Now would I **fain** know, if occasion be presented unto you to serve your prince by such an honest dissimulation, why you do not as well learn it of Xenophon's fiction as of the other's verity; and truly so much the better, as you shall save your nose by the bargain: for Abradatas did not counterfeit so far.
>
> (Bold mine.)[20]

There is a pun here on 'feigneth' and 'fain'. Then, as now, 'feign' and 'fain' were homophones of one another.[21] Not only that, potentially, they could be homonyms as the *OED* claims that 'fain' is a variant spelling of 'feign', and *vice versa* 'feign' is also variant spelling of 'fain'.[22] The *OED* defines a 'pun' as:

> The use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more meanings or different associations, or of two or more words of the same or nearly the same sound with different meanings, so as to produce a humorous effect; a play on words.[23]

The *OED* allows for puns that are homonymic (a word with two or more meanings) or homophonic (words of the same or nearly the same sound). One of the accusations that Sidney is defending poetry against throughout the *Apologie* is the claim that poetry lies. The reason it is charged with lying is because of the very feigning (to 'fashion fictitiously or deceptively'[24]) that Sidney's example relies upon.

The adverb 'fain' means 'gladly, willingly, with pleasure'.[25] A link is made by Sidney between 'feign' and 'gladly, willingly, with pleasure' — or, to use a word potent in the context of *The Apologie*, 'delight'. As Sidney points out, by feigning, a nose has been saved. Indeed, Sidney takes his argument one step further and claims that while

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[20] Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or the Defence of Poesy*, p. 111.
[21] Helge Kökeritz, *Shakespeare's Pronunciation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 173.
[22] *OED* **feign**, v. Spellings, 2nd Edition, 1989; *OED* **fain**, *a.* and *adv.* Spellings, 2nd Edition, 1989.
[23] *OED* **pun**, *n.*[1] (1644-1992) Draft Revision June 2008.
[24] *OED* **feign**, *v.* **II**. (*a*1300-1862) 2nd Edition, 1989.
[25] *OED* **fain**, *a.* and *adj.* **B**. (*c*1175-1880) 2nd Edition, 1989.

Abradatas may have 'feigned' he 'did not counterfeit so far' as Darius' servant. One reading of this is that Abradatas' fakery did not have to extend to cutting his nose off. A second reading is that there is a difference between 'feigneth' and 'counterfeit' and that is because 'feigneth' is linked to 'fain' because the one is a homophone, a pun, of the other, while 'counterfeit' is linked to cutting one's nose off — a thoroughly unpleasant connotation. The feigning indulged in by the poet and readers of poetry has become an activity that may be engaged in more willingly, gladly, and with more delight than history or the reality that history seeks to recreate or, to use Sidney's terminology, 'counterfeit'.

It may be thought that this is a long bow to stretch based on a simple pun, but Sidney was a master of rhetoric, he was acknowledged as a master orator by his uncles and fellow university students, and this subtle, some might even say sly, pun would not be beyond him.[26] In some senses, this is a classic use of a pun to invert an argument through the seemingly random chance of homophony. But, it is important to recognise that while the homophony might be random in terms of how the two words came to sound alike, the homophony is not random when used by Sidney. It is deployed for a particular effect and that effect is to render the feigning of poetry more pleasurable than the kind of counterfeiting engaged in by Darius' servant.

Other puns occur when Sidney relates Menenius Agrippa's body politic speech, from Livy's *History*, which was designed to stop the Roman mob from continuing the civil unrest in which they were then engaged due to a rift between the populace and the Senate.

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[26] Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 30 and p. 42; Alan Stewart, *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: Pimlico, 2001), p. 56; Malcolm William Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1967), p. 99.

He telleth them a tale, that there was a time when all parts of the body made a mutinous conspiracy against the belly, which they thought devoured the fruits of each other's labour; they concluded they would let so unprofitable a spender starve. In the end, to be short, (for the **tale** is **notorious**, and as **notorious** that it was a **tale**), with punishing the belly they plagued themselves. This applied by him wrought such effect in the people, as I never read that only words brought forth but then so sudden and so good an alteration; for upon reasonable conditions a perfect reconcilement ensued.

(Bold mine.)[27]

Shepherd isolates the pun in the parenthesis and notes that it is 'the sort of brisk, rather empty wordplay which Sidney usually avoids in the *Apology* except in moments of banter and deprecation'.[28] Shepherd might be thinking of a homophonic pun between 'tale', a story, and 'tail', the bottom, with all the scatological connotations such a pun would make available to the reader; an understandable reading given that the pun is made during a story about the body, in particular the stomach which generally leads to the employment of one's bottom. However, I think Sidney is in actual fact, employing a more subtle use of puns here.

Firstly, 'notorious', during Sidney's time, was capable of meaning both 'infamous'[29] as well as 'of a fact: well known; commonly or generally known; forming a matter of common knowledge'.[30] The *OED* clearly distinguished between notorious meaning 'with neutral or favourable connotations'[31] and notorious denoting 'with depreciative or unfavourable connotations'.[32] Sidney performs a homonymic pun with 'notorious' which initially gives the word neutral or favourable connotations and then,

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[27] Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or the Defence of Poesy*, p. 115.
[28] Geoffrey Shepherd, 'Notes', in *An Apology for Poetry or the Defence of Poesy*, ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1965), p. 184.
[29] *OED* **notorious**, *adj.*[1] and *adv*. **A.II.4.a**. (1549-1988) Draft Revision June 2009.
[30] *OED* **notorious**, *adj.*[1] and *adv*. **A.I.1.a**. (*c*1495-1992) Draft Revision June 2009.
[31] *OED* **notorious**, *adj.*[1] and *adv*. **A.I**. Draft Revision June 2009.
[32] *OED* **notorious**, *adj.*[1] and *adv*. **A.II**. Draft Revision June 2009.

when he repeats it, turns the connotations into negatives, which in turn help engender the homophonic pun on 'tale–tail' that Shepherd finds 'empty'.

While I do not doubt that the 'tail–tail' homophonic pun is present as Shepherd claims, I would like to offer a second potential pun, this time involving a homonymic pun on 'tale'. One of the most well known meanings for 'tale' is a 'story or narrative, true or fictitious, drawn up so as to interest or amuse, or to preserve the history of a fact or incident; a literary composition cast in narrative form'.[33] This meaning has been in use since 1200 and continues to this day. However, contrast that meaning with this: 'a mere story, as opposed to a narrative of fact; a fiction, an idle tale; a falsehood'.[34] The 'empty wordplay' contained in parenthesis is in reality an instance of Sidneian irony being shown through an act of punning. Both 'notorious' and 'tale' are suspect terminology and Sidney does not let us forget this by repeating the words to allow the ambiguity to play between a positive reading and a negative reading. Thrown into this is the effect of the homophonic 'tale–tail' pun which lends the effect of asserting that a 'tale' is nothing more than someone literally speaking out of their arse. Sidney seems to be attacking the historical veracity of the story which suits his purpose because he is arguing that poetry and fiction move people to behave properly more so than history or philosophy. It also seems to mock two key phrases with which he concludes the recounting of the body politic speech: 'so good an alteration' and 'a perfect reconcilement'. In the puns on 'good tale'–'bad tale'–'tail' and 'good notorious'–'bad notorious', there is a 'good' iteration of the words but because it is ambiguous as to which particular use of either 'notorious' or 'tale' bears the positive denotation and

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[33] *OED* **tale**, *n*. **4**. (*c*1200-1821) 2nd Edition 1989.
[34] *OED* **tale**, *n*. **5**.**a**. (*c*1250-1867) 2nd Edition 1989.

which the negative denotation, it is impossible to provide a 'perfect reconcilement' while the ambiguity engendered by the wordplay continues to reverberate.

One can read this a number of ways: 1) it is empty wordplay in the context of the *Apologie*; 2) it is highlighting the fact that while Sidney is arguing for an affective poetics, he is doubtful of its existence in the real world; 3) it is a clever means with which to highlight a potential problem for the 'right poet' (a mix of classical orator and biblical prophet according to commentators) that Sidney will solve in the *refutation*. This would not be the first time that Sidney has dramatized a problem before offering a solution to it in the *Apologie*, indeed, the tract begins with the Pugliano anecdote which demonstrates the affective power of language but raises, as an issue, the ends to which people put the affective power of language.[35] Given this, I am inclined to read the puns as partly prefiguring and dramatizing a problem that Sidney will solve later through the idea of the 'right poet'. Still, as Sidney never identifies an English 'right poet' that others can look to for an example, the puns discussed above do encode an ironic nod to the reality of a poet being a 'moving' force in the world.

Sidney, while capable of sneaking in the scatological through a pun, is also capable of entirely serious puns that are used more to complicate and coagulate several ideas than to tickle a reader's funny bone. He ends the first part of his *examination* with a summary that includes one such pun:

> By these, therefore, examples and reasons, I think it may be manifest that the
> poet, with that same hand of delight, doth **draw** the mind more effectually than
> any other art doth. And so a conclusion not unfitly ensue: that, as virtue is the

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[35] Sidney relates a conversation he had with John Pietro Pugliano about horses and horsemanship. Sidney ends the anecdote with the wry comment that if he had been less of a 'logician', then Pugliano may have persuaded Sidney that he should have 'wished myself a horse'. (Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or the Defence of Poesy*, p. 95.) What the passage does is demonstrate an instance whereby rhetorical skill almost overwhelms the logical skill of the listener. Sidney actively engages with Pugliano's speech when he uses logic to avoid the mistake of thinking it is preferable to lead an equine existence over a human existence.

> most excellent resting place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so
> poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it,
> in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman.
>
> (Bold mine.)[36]

Ronald Levao also spotted the pun and concludes that the phrase 'doth draw the mind' means both depicting the mind and leading the mind to action.[37] This pun is important because it encapsulates Sidney's entire argument about how the 'right poet' differs from the divine and philosophical poets:

> Sidney's divine poet teaches delight, and the philosophical poet delightfully
> teaches; but neither end, nor both together, adequately describes the work of the
> right poet. Because Sidney understands the poet's entire purpose is to feign his
> golden world of images, he goes beyond the Horatian account of the end of
> poetry and emphasizes wholly its rhetorical end of 'moving'.[38]

Or, in other words, the right poet 'draws' the mind, at once depicting a virtuous mind and leading the reader's mind towards becoming that virtuous mind.

However, out of eighty-nine separate meanings that the *OED* attributes to the verb 'draw', I want to look at four in particular that were available to Sidney at the time of his writing the *Apologie*. Firstly, 'to attract by moral force, persuasion, inclination',[39] is obviously pertinent to Sidney's argument throughout the *Apologie*. The second relevant meaning is 'to pull out or extract (a sword or other weapon) from the sheath, etc. For fight or attack'.[40] While this may not seem applicable at the moment, in the *refutation* Sidney compares poetry with swords and also describes Alexander the Great conquering the world accompanied by an edition of Homer. A sword is drawn in order to use it. The right poet 'draws' the reader to action in the same way a sword is drawn.

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[36] Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or the Defence of Poesy*, p. 115.
[37] Ronald Levao, 'Sidney's Feigned *Apology*', in *Sir Philip Sidney: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*, ed. by Dennis Kay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 132.
[38] Hamilton, 'Sidney's Idea of The "Right Poet"', p. 57.
[39] *OED* **draw**, *v*. **B.II.26**. *fig*. (*c*1175-1861) 2nd Edition 1989.
[40] *OED* **draw**, *v*. **B.III.33.a**. (*c*1200-1852) 2nd Edition 1989.

The right poet — and consequently 'right poetry' — always carries the ghost of militant protestant action when discussed by Sidney. As Klein argues, a common critical reading of the *Apologie* is that it is 'a disguised apology for Protestant activism'.[41] 'To represent in words, describe'[42] is the third meaning; clearly, this is one of the meanings that Levao construes in his understanding of 'draw'. Finally, the fourth pertinent meaning is 'to frame (a writing or document) in due form; to compose, compile, write out'.[43] If we allow Sidney the axiom that poetry moves a reader, that it moves the reader by 'drawing' the mind like a sword, that poetry 'represents' an exemplary mind at work, is it too much of a stretch to allow that 'right poetry' will 'frame' or 'compile' the mind of the 'right reader'?

We have now examined four puns from Sidney's *Apologie*, 1) 'feigneth–fain', 2) 'notorious', 3) 'tale–tale–tail', 4) 'draw'. These four puns constitute a mere scratching of the surface. Even from this brief exploration, it is clear that Sidney had little anxiety about any critical pressure to avoid punning in his prose tract that is today recognised as being a major work of Renaissance literary criticism and theory.[44] Foremost of the four puns which support the idea that Sidney did not view puns as a breach of critical decorum is the 'tale–tail' pun with its scatological connotations. The fact that Sidney felt that a scatological pun did not breach the decorum of his treatise demonstrates that he did not think the reception of his text would suffer should it include puns.

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[41] Klein, *The Exemplary Sidney and the Elizabethan Sonneteer*, p. 39. While there has been debate about what particular brand of Protestantism Sidney followed there is little doubt that Sidney's faith was a pillar of his poetics (see Mack, *Sidney's Poetics: Imitating Creation*, p. 4).

[42] *OED* **draw**, *v*. **B**.**V**.**60**.**c**. *fig*. (*c*1374-1891) 2nd Edition 1989.

[43] *OED* **draw**, *v*. **B**.**V**.**63**.**a**. (*a*1300-1879) 2nd Edition 1989.

[44] For discussions about the status of Sidney's text, please see: Dennis Kay, 'Introduction: Sidney - a Critical Heritage', in *Sir Philip Sidney: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*, ed. by Dennis Kay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*; Stewart, *Philip Sidney: A Double Life*; Klein, *The Exemplary Sidney and the Elizabethan Sonneteer*.

Of more interest, though, is the way in which Sidney deploys puns to convey complicated ideas and concepts that are central to the concerns he is addressing in his poetic manifesto. They are the 'feign–fain' pun and the pun on 'draw'. These puns both help Sidney adumbrate his poetic theory. While 'feign' and 'fain' link the ideas of pleasure and the poet's 'golden world' of half truths, it is 'draw' that combines the rhetoric of Protestantism with meditations on the relationship between a reader and a text. The puns of the *Apologie* are capable of heavy theoretical lifting and it is a mark of Sidney's confidence in his audience's ability to recognise these puns that he does not see the need to state the multiple meanings inherent in the puns as separate ideas consigned to their own individual sentences.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CRITICISM

In stark contrast to Sir Philip Sidney's use of puns in a critical text are the comments of prominent eighteenth century critics on puns and punning in the writings of others. Our first example of eighteenth century anti-pun commentary is taken from John Dennis' critique of Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*.

> But there are a great many Lines, which have *no Sentiment* at all in them, that is, no *reasonable Meaning*. Such are the *Puns* which are every where spread throughout it. *Puns* bear the same Proportion to *Thought*, that *Bubbles* hold to *Bodies*, and may justly be compared to those gaudy Bladders which Children make with Soap; which, tho' they please their weak Capacities with a momentary Glittering, yet are but just beheld, and vanish into Air.[45]

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[45] John Dennis, 'Remarks on the Rape of the Lock', in *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. by Edward Niles Hooker (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1943), p. 347.

The attitude towards puns is clearly not a positive one. Puns are described as child's play, as having the life expectancy of a soap bubble, and being as far removed from thought as a soap bubble is from a person's body.

This treatment of puns in the writing of even the most respected poets is a feature of eighteenth century criticism as both Addison and Samuel Johnson demonstrate. Of Milton, Addison wrote that a 'second Fault in his [Milton's] Language is, that he often affects a Kind of Jingle in his Words'[46] where the phrase 'Jingle in his Words' echoes Addison's definition of punning with which we began this introduction: 'a Jingle of Words'.[47] Addison then lists four puns from *Paradise Lost* to exemplify which jingling words constituted a fault in Milton's poem:

> *And brought into the* World *a* World *of woe.*
> *. . . Begirt th' Almighty throne*
> Beseeching *or* besieging *. . .*
> *This* tempted *our* Attempt *. . .*
> *At one slight* Bound *high overlept all* Bound.[48]

While a modern audience might debate about whether the first example is a clear pun or not (and this question will be addressed later in this thesis) the last three examples are all recognised puns from *Paradise Lost*.

Johnson, in his 'Preface to Shakespeare', wrote:

> A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal *Cleopatra* for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.[49]

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[46] Joseph Addison, 'The Spectator: No. 297, Saturday, Feb 9, 1712', in *The Spectator*, ed. by Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 63.
[47] Addison, 'The Spectator: No. 61, Thursday, May 10, 1711', p. 259.
[48] Addison, 'The Spectator: No. 297, Saturday, Feb 9, 1712', p. 63.
[49] Samuel Johnson, 'Preface to Shakespeare, 1765', in *Johnson on Shakespeare* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 74.

Addison is clear that punning is a flaw in *Paradise Lost* while Johnson views puns as 'poor and barren' and as something that would cost Shakespeare "the world" and its esteem. Even more extraordinary, a pun must be purchased through the forfeit of one's reason. For Dr. Johnson, puns require insanity and, or, a lack of intelligence on behalf of those who would use them. The eighteenth century bias against puns is a clear hallmark of Dennis, Addison, and Johnson's thought.

POPE

We can see that what was a reasonable rhetorical tactic in Sidney's critical writing was not even a reasonable poetic tactic for the critics of the eighteenth century. This has been demonstrated, briefly to be true, using examples from Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologie* and the critical writings on the poetry of others by Addison, Dennis and Johnson. However, a quick sampling of some eighteenth century poetry will highlight the paradox inherent in the claims of eighteenth century critics: despite the fact that puns became critically derided, the poets continued to use them as, indeed, Dennis' comments on *The Rape of the Lock* demonstrate.

Here, for instance, is Pope punning and also poking fun at the critics who would condemn such an activity. *The Dunciad in Four Books* contains one of Pope's most famous puns and it has as its butt the still divisive Milton editor, Richard Bentley.

> As many quit the streams that murm'ring fall
> To lull the sons of Marg'ret and Clare-hall,
> Where Bentley late tempestuous wont to sport
> In troubled waters, but now sleeps in **Port**.
>
> (*DFB* 4.199-202. Bold mine.)

The commentary that Pope included with the poem offers two definitions for 'sleeps in Port'. Firstly, it defines 'port' as meaning 'now retired into harbour, after the tempests that had long agitated his [Bentley's] society'.[50] It then offers a second reading which turns 'Port' into a pun: 'But the learned *Scipio Maffei* understands it of a certain Wine called *Port*, from *Oporto* a city of Portugal, of which the Professor [Bentley] invited him to drink abundantly'.[51]

The two definitions of 'Port' offered by the commentary on the poem, that it denotes both a harbour and a fortified wine, have been recognised as existing in the poem by critics since the poem first appeared. F. R. Leavis wrote of it:

> The famous pun on Port is a truly poetic pun, depending for its rich effect on the evocative power of the first couplet: the streams are really lulling as if they had been Tennyson's, with the result that, after 'tempestuous', the 'troubled waters' are to the Leviathan resting in sheltered waters after majestic play and the befuddled don dozing.[52]

Leavis conveys successfully the bathos that the 'Port' pun creates around the figure of Bentley. William Empson, on the other hand, finds the port pun to be an example of what he termed eighteenth century punning.

> The pun is sustained into an allegory by the rest of the couplet; *tempestuous* and *sport* are satirical in much the same way as the last word. But here, I grant, we have a simply funny pun; its parts are united by derivation indeed, but too accidentally to give it dignity; it jumps out of its setting, yapping and bites the Master in the ankles […] The eighteenth century pun is always worldly; to join together so smartly a business and a philosophical notion, a nautical and a gastronomical notion, with an air of having them in watertight compartments in your own mind […] the pun is used as the climax of a comparison between the subject of the poem, something worldly, and a stock poetical subject with which

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[50] Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books*. ed. by Valerie Rumbold (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1999), note **202. sleeps in Port.**, p. 301.
[51] Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books*, note **202. sleeps in Port.**, p. 301.
[52] F. R. Leavis, *Revaluation* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1936), pp. 93-94.

the writer is less intimately acquainted, which excites feelings simpler and more universal. Wit is employed because the poet is faced with a subject which it is difficult to conceive poetically.[53]

More recent readings have highlighted the fact that the 'Port' pun is also used in the third book of *The Dunciad*: 'Alma mater lie dissolved in Port!' (*DFB* 3.338). Margaret Anne Doody explores this example of the 'Port' pun.

> The Augustan proclaimed distaste for puns may merely have reflected a feeling that puns of the simple sort were too grossly obvious to be much fun. Complete in themselves, and attention seeking, puns signify a stop to the work of thought, and the two languages are baulked before they can go anywhere […] 'To lie in port' is a phrase used of ships, and indicates the idea of reaching a happy haven, well deserved after the struggle of a journey. Alma mater has no journey and no right to a happy haven. The 'port' to which a ship comes is transformed into another liquid element, both like and unlike that associated with a sea-port; the university seems to be submerging in a liquid element underneath the resting place, disappearing into what ought to support it and ought not to act as a solvent. There is an oxymoronic relationship between lying in port and being dissolved in it.[54]

Both Doody and Empson attempt to define and discuss the eighteenth century attitude towards puns. Importantly, they both seek to base the larger claim on individual examples of puns used by Pope.

All the above criticism does not highlight the excellent parody of critical scholarship that Scriblerus (for this note in the commentary is attributed to him) creates with his comments on the 'Port' pun. The *OED* lists two possible etymologies for 'port': 'Either shortened < the name of *Oporto*, or < *Porto*, the Portuguese form of the name'.[55] 'Oporto' was, as Scriblerus pointed out, a city in Portugal and, perhaps, more to the

[53] William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. 3rd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1961), pp. 108-109.
[54] Margaret Anne Doody, *The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 225.
[55] *OED* **port**, *n.*[7] Etymology. Draft Revision March 2009.

point, it was a coastal city which was 'the chief port of shipment of wines of the country'.[56] Scriblerus' proposed etymology of the word 'port' justifies the reading of a pun in the poem. In fact, it is Scriblerus' knowledge which both introduces the subversive meaning and then cements it. Puns are odd beasts in that when Pope deploys the word 'port' the language around it (particularly 'streams' and 'waters') works to create a context in which 'Port' is to be read as 'harbour', but the context cannot stop the word making available to the reader, especially a reader knowledgeable about Bentley's preference for a tipple, the meaning 'fortified wine'. Scriblerus deploys the scholarship to demonstrate his own learning; behind Scriblerus, Pope uses the very scholarship with which Bentley made his name to hang Bentley's alcoholism up to the scorn of the ages.

It is worth pointing out that Pope was not above the snobbery of his age and was more than capable of making as much fun of puns as he was of people he didn't like.

> Here one poor word an hundred clenches makes,
> And ductile dulness new meanders takes;
> There motley Images her fancy strike,

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[56] *OED* **Oporto**, *n*. Etymology. Draft Revision December 2008.

> Figures ill pair'd, and Similes unlike.
>
> (*DFB* 1.63-66.)

A 'clench' is a synonym of 'pun' and is defined as such by the *OED*.[57] Puns, it would seem, are on a par with poorly thought out similes and figures of speech. Indeed one reading of the passages is that puns are an abuse of language because a 'poor' word is forced to bear the burden of an hundred denotations. One cannot avoid the irony though—a word with an hundred denotations is, perhaps, not poor but rich. A more abrasive view of puns is espoused in Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*.

> Or at Ear of *Eve*, familiar Toad,
>
> Half Froth, half Venom, spits himself abroad,
>
> In Puns, or Politicks, or Tales, or Lyes,
>
> Or Spite, or Smut, or Rymes, or Blasphemies.[58]

Here, in Pope's portrait of Lord Hervey, puns become part of the way in which Lord Hervey communicates. As such, puns are the choice of Satan (who whispers into Eve's ear in *Paradise Lost*) and are on the same satirical scale, if not actually on a par, with 'Lyes', 'Smut', and 'Blasphemies'. We have travelled some way from Sidney's use of puns to help convince the reader that poetry is the best means of moving humanity to right action.

To bring the subject matter of this thesis quickly and bluntly to the fore: it is apparent even from the brief examples used thus far that the eighteenth century critical distaste of punning did not extend fully to the habits of the poets who wrote during the eighteenth century. While Pope may have disparaged puns in his poetry, he also deployed them to great effect throughout his poetical oeuvre. However, though eighteenth century poets continued to indulge in punning, was there a change in punning

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[57] *OED* **clench**, *n*. **II**.**4**. (1638-1824) 2nd Edition 1989.
[58] Alexander Pope, 'An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot', in *The Poems of Alexander Pope: A One Volume Edition of the Twickenham Pope*, ed. by John Butt (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1963), ll. 319-322.

between the practice of Renaissance poets and eighteenth century poets that either mirrors or matches in any way the change in critical temperament between the two ages? Any answer to this question will have to first of all define the term 'pun', and take into account contemporary theoretical thinking on or about puns.

A study of this kind can go down one of two paths. The first is an empirical survey of the quantitative variety in which one identifies and counts individual puns, followed up by comparing data from different periods and making a judgment based on that comparison. The thesis would then become little more than a catalogue of puns and, generally speaking, such catalogues already exist.[59] The second, and more amenable to my own interests, is to take a small sampling and subject them to a more intense scrutiny. This will enable me to ask questions that the first method ignores, questions such as: how is the pun working in this example? why has a pun been used here? is there any similarity or likeness between this pun and that pun? How, though, do we go about reducing the potential primary sources which constitute the raw material for this thesis?

The larger question being posed, and answered, by this thesis is: was there a change in punning congruent with the change in critical attitude towards punning between the Renaissance and the eighteenth century? When deciding which texts to examine, it is worth examining eighteenth century ideas about what constitutes 'good' poetry. That is, what kind of poetry did the writers of the eighteenth century attempt to emulate and what kind of poetry did they seek to write? By answering these questions, and noting that later poets are influenced by earlier poets, we might be able to reverse

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[59] Such catalogues normally focus upon one particular author or one particular theme: Edward Le Comte, *A Dictionary of Puns in Milton's English Poetry* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981); Frankie Rubinstein, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1984). Others tend to be alternative dictionaries that aim to explain 'cant' or 'slang' words that the establishment, the OED in particular, may have overlooked or find insufficient evidence for: Gordon Williams, *A Glossary of Shakespeare's Sexual Language* (London: Athlone Press Ltd., 1997).

engineer a list of writers and texts that may have been important for the final poets examined in this thesis: Dryden and Pope.

Hammond claims that our sense of what constitutes the English canon prior to the eighteenth-century, and the classical canon of the Roman and Greek authors, is indebted to the critical judgement of Dryden himself.

> It was largely Dryden who established the English poetic canon: he promoted Chaucer through his translations in *Fables Ancient and Modern* (which also included an accessible reading text of Chaucer's originals), and through the Preface which placed him in the company of Ovid and Boccaccio as witty storytellers; Shakespeare is recognized as the presiding genius of the English stage, both through critical evaluations in essays and prologues, and through adaptation and imitation in *The Tempest*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *All for Love*; while Milton is increasingly (if unobtrusively) the dominant English voice in Dryden's poetry. It was also largely Dryden who established the canon of Latin and Greek poetry in English, with the help of his publisher Jacob Tonson. Their complete translations of Juvenal, Persius, and Virgil, and their substantial selections from Homer, Horace, Lucretius, Ovid, and others, brought the classics into English with a lucidity and panache missing from most earlier versions. The compact Dryden-Tonson miscellanies, and their handsome folio volumes of Juvenal and Persius, and of Virgil, brought the classics to a non-specialist readership, fashioning in the process a new sense of national culture.[60]

This awareness that Dryden had of his poetic precursors, that his 'companions were not only Oldham, Dorset, and Congreve, but Homer, Virgil, and Shakespeare'[61] (and Milton) aided Dryden's description of his relationship to his poetic forebears in the poem 'To my Dear Friend, Mr. Congreve, On His Comedy, call'd, *The Double Dealer*':

> Strong were our Syres; and as they Fought they Writ,
> Conqu'ring with force of Arms, and dint of Wit;
> Theirs was the Gyant Race, before the Flood;

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[60] Paul Hammond, 'Introduction: Is Dryden a Classic', in *John Dryden: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. by Paul Hammond and David Hopkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 8.
[61] Hammond, 'Introduction: Is Dryden a Classic', p. 14.

And thus, when *Charles* Return'd, our Empire stood.

[…]

Our Age was cultivated thus at length;

But what we gain'd in skill we lost in strength.

Our Builders were, with want of Genius, curst;

The Second Temple was not like the first.[62]

It was this passage that prompted W. Jackson Bate to the thoughts that were eventually published as *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet*.[63]

Bate's work helped prompt Bloom to his theory about the role anxiety plays in the relationship of one poet to a precursor poet and the way in which anxiety and poetic influence appear to be inextricably linked.[64] Earlier thought about canons and canon formation did not stress the anxiety that is noticed by Bate and made central to the workings of influence by Bloom. In some ways, earlier constructions of influence tend to take a more positivist approach to the experience of influence.[65] While canons and canon formation became hot topics in the later stages of the twentieth century, especially under the auspices of post-colonial literary theory, and these critiques provided new and intriguing ways of questioning, broadening and ultimately strengthening established and

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[62] John Dryden, 'To My Dear Friend, Mr. Congreve, on His Comedy Call'd, *the Double Dealer*', in *The Works of John Dryden: Poems 1693-1696*, ed. by A. B. Chambers and William Frost (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), ll. 3-6, 11-14.

[63] W. Jackson Bate, *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1970).

[64] To begin with, Milton is the poet who creates the most anxiety in later poets. By the mid to late 1990s, Bloom has replaced Milton with Shakespeare as the central figure of the western canon. The essential texts are: Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence : A Theory of Poetry*. 2nd edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*. 2nd edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon : The Books and School of the Ages*. 1st edn (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994); Harold Bloom, *Genius: A Mosaic of One Hundred Exemplary and Creative Minds* (New York: Warner Books, 2002), Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (London: Fourth Estate Limited, 1999); Harold Bloom, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2004). A useful, if somewhat dated, analysis of Bloom's theory of influence can be found in Peter de Bolla, *Harold Bloom: Towards Historical Rhetorics* (London: Routledge, 1988).

[65] Two prominent examples are: Leavis, *Revaluation* and T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).

emerging canons, they have little to say about the canon of English literature as it grew in its neophyte stages through the eighteenth century.[66]

In *The English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century*, Trevor Ross challenges the assumption that canon formation began in the eighteenth century. Rather, Ross proposes that a shift occurred over the seventeenth century between a canonical consciousness focused on how a text was produced, to a canonical consciousness that was focused on what texts should be read and how they should be read. The latter form of canonical consciousness is one we are still endowed with today as the academy argues not only over who should be read (which authors in which course) but how we should read them (literary theory). The key difference created by the shift is noted early by Ross: 'Evaluative rankings of authors, for example, only begin to appear in English critical discourse in the mid-eighteenth century'.[67] As Sons of Ben, both Dryden and Pope are significant individuals in Ross' illumination of the way in which ideas of 'the canon' altered.

> Jonson's presentism then became cultural conservatism with Dryden and Pope, whose strategic pursuit of classicist refinement in poetry enabled them at once to disavow economic interest, to assert their moral autonomy, and to present their work as essential in preserving English society from the commercialization and corruption which they felt was threatening to overtake it.[68]

Both Dryden and Pope were actively engaged in the processes of canonization and both helped in the initial creation of what we now know as the English literary canon.

The English literary canon is an elitist formation, and was intentionally created as such by those who began applying hierarchies to writers in the eighteenth century.

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[66] A classic example of such a post-colonial text would be Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995).

[67] Trevor Ross, *The English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), p. 24.

[68] Ross, *The English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century*, pp. 197-98.

But, as we have seen above, the canon was important to both Pope and Dryden for both poetic and cultural reasons. Therefore, if this thesis is seeking to see if the poetic use of puns has changed along with critical attitudes, it is worth examining the poets that were highly regarded by Pope and Dryden, poets they were more likely to imitate and be influenced by. Those poets are the ones that today would be referred to as 'canonical' poets: Shakespeare, Milton, Jonson, Spenser, Chaucer, Ovid, Virgil, Homer, Juvenal, Horace.

If we seek to link a thread from the eighteenth century to the Renaissance, and if we follow the lead of the eighteenth century canon formers, it might look something like the following: Pope → Dryden → Milton → Spenser. This lineage is reliant upon epic poetry constituting the link between the various poets. However, Milton's epic poetic practice was not reliant upon all consuming allegory in the same way as Spenser's.[69] For that matter, Pope and Dryden, who used allegory for mock-epic purposes, also never used allegory as the primary poetic technique as Spenser did. Some in the Renaissance rated lyric poetry as second only to epic poetry[70] and the shorter poems of the Renaissance do constitute part of the forge in which Milton's poetic techniques were tempered. A preferable canonical lineage that we can draw would be Pope → Dryden → Milton → Donne → Shakespeare → Sidney. This lineage has its roots in Renaissance

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[69] The traditional view is that Milton ends traditional allegory (as practiced by Spenser) with the subdued allegorical figures of Sin and Death in *Paradise Lost*. Such a view, for example, is expounded in Michael Murrin, *The Veil of Allegory: Some Notes Towards a Theory of Allegorical Rhetoric in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); and later, Michael Murrin, *The Allegorical Epic: Essays in It's Rise and Decline* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); it can also be found in Catherine Gimelli Martin, *The Ruins of Allegory: Paradise Lost and the Metamorphosis of Epic Convention* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998). There have been alternative arguments written about the uses of allegory, for example: Kenneth Borris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature: Heroic Form in Sidney, Spenser, and Milton.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). But, the predominate view is that traditional allegory for all intents and purposes had its final flowering in *The Faerie Queene*.
[70] See Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry or the Defence of Poesy*, p. 103.

lyric poetry, moves into Milton's epic poetry, before finishing with the mock-epic and translated epic of Dryden and the early and late mock-epics of Pope.