



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MA (University of Western Ontario, 2006)

BA (University of Western Ontario, 2005)

**“The Rise and Fall of *Seigneur Dildo*:
The Figure of the Dildo in Restoration Literature and Culture”**

Department of English

Friday, January 13, 2017

10:00 A.M.

David Turpin Building

Room A136

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Robert Miles, Department of English, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Eric Miller, Department of English, UVic (Member)

Dr. Andrea McKenzie, Department of History, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Mark McDayter, Department of English and Writing Studies, Western University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Jennifer Wise, Theatre Department, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

Seigneur Dildoe, as this dissertation will contend, was a fixture in Restoration literature and culture (1660-1700). But what was his provenance, by what means did he travel, and why did he come? This dissertation provides a literary history of the fascinating and highly irreverent dildo satire tradition, tracing the dildo satire's long and winding progress from antiquity to Restoration England, where the tradition reached its early modern zenith. Adding breadth, context, and texture to existing treatments of the trope's political and sexual potency, this dissertation investigates the dildo satire's roots in both Greek comedy (Aristophanes, Herodas) and Latin invective (Martial, Juvenal), its influential association in early modern Italy with Catholicism and monastic life (Aretino), and its introduction in early modern England (Nashe), where it cropped up in the works of a surprising number of literary giants (Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, Marvell). In Restoration England, we find in the satiric dildos of Butler, Rochester, and the contextually rich "Seigneur Dildoe" articulations of a dildo gone viral: the mock-heroic *Seigneur* deployed as a politically central motif symptomatic of its society's acute patriarchal fissures. Throughout I argue that the dildo satire's longevity is due not to a uniformity of purpose or signification (misogynist, anti-Catholic, emasculating, or otherwise), but to its innate versatility and ambiguity as a fugitive sexual and political figure. I also argue that what does in fact unite the satiric dildo's variety of contingent ends, against what has been assumed in the scholarship, is its status as a markedly anti-Phallic figure.