

***'Rich and Strange': Encountering Early Modern Poetry in the
Subject of English - A Study of the Reading and Reception of
Renaissance Poetry by Teachers and Students in England***

Amanda Naylor

**Doctor of Philosophy
University of York
Education
September 2014**

Abstract

This thesis presents a study of the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English, in England. The opening chapters provide a context for the current reading and reception of early modern poetry by examining three key historical periods in the development of attitudes towards early modern poetry within the subject of English. The historical periods examined are: the English Renaissance, the end of the nineteenth century and current educational contexts. The attitudes of key theorists such as Sidney (1595/2004) and Brooks (1947/1968) are explored, along with writings on the pedagogy of poetry and early modern poetry. The research strategy for this study is presented in the following two chapters. Sixteen in-depth interviews were collected from four groups of participants: students, teachers, lecturers and examiners. The group of sixteen participants was chosen as a group of experts, in that they were familiar with the poetry in an educational context and felt confident in discussing their perceptions of early modern poetry.

Analysis of the data follows from discussions of the methodology and leads to findings about the various strands of the participants' perceptions of early modern poetry. The elements of perception that are explored are: the ways in which participants interpreted early modern poetry, what participants perceived as significant in the poetry, and what was identified by them as the particular qualities or characteristics they viewed as specific to early modern poetry. Discussion of the participants' perceptions makes links with theoretical debates regarding perceptions of early modern poetry within the subject of English. In conclusion, recommendations for professional practice are made and an argument presented for raising the status of early modern poetry, particularly in the secondary sector and within teacher training, in the subject of English.

Contents	Page
Abstract	2
Contents	3
List of Tables	8
Acknowledgements	9
The Declaration	10
Chapter 1: Introduction	11
1.1 Origins of the Study	11
1.2 Aims of this research	11
1.3 Research Questions	12
1.4 Research Strategy	13
1.5 Structure of the Thesis	13
1.6 Conclusion	16
Chapter 2; Literature Review (A) Early modern poetry in the early modern period	17
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Early modern poetry in the early modern period	18
2.2 (a) Definition and dates	18
2.2 (b) Discussion of the term Renaissance	19
2.3 The debate over the terms <i>early modern</i> and <i>Renaissance</i>	23
2.4 Key Terms; imitation, <i>mimesis</i> and Ascham's <i>The Scholemaster</i>	29
2.5 Early modern theories of poetry: Sir Philip Sidney and George Puttenham	35
2.6 Sir Philip Sidney's <i>The Defence of Poesy</i> : <i>mimesis</i> , the power of poetry and the role of the poet	36
2.7 George Puttenham's <i>The Art of English Poesy</i> : Significance of proportion, rhetoric and materiality in poetry	42

Chapter 3: Literature Review (B) The place of early modern poetry in the Establishment of the English curriculum in the nineteenth century	49
3.1 Introduction	49
3.2 The significance of Palgrave's <i>The Golden Treasury</i>	50
3.3 Matthew Arnold, early modern poetry and elementary schooling	54
3.4 <i>The Teaching of English in England</i> and early modern poetry	61
3.5 The establishment of English as a university subject	64
3.6 Changing attitudes to early modern poetry in the twentieth century: T.S. Eliot, Cleanth Brooks and F.R. Leavis.	68
3.7 The significance of twentieth-century anthologies	74
Chapter 4: Literature Review (c) Current discourses around the teaching of poetry and early modern poetry in the subject of English	77
4.1 Introduction	77
4.2 Reader response theory and the pedagogy of poetry	78
4.3 The significance of sound	83
4.4 Sound in the classroom	86
4.5 The role of the teacher and teacher reading practices	88
4.6 Poetry in an Arts Context and Steiner's (1978) definition of Difficulty	90
4.7 Search Strategy	93
4.8 Historicised reading of early modern texts	94
4.9 Conclusion to Literature Review	97
Chapter 5: Methodology; Feasibility Study and pilot Study (1)	100
5.1 Introduction	100
5.2 What was the most appropriate research method?	102
5.3 Feasibility Study	105
5.4 Pilot Study (1)	108
5.5 Analysis of Pilot Study (1)	113
5.6 Conclusions	116
Chapter 6; Methodology; Pilot Study (2) and The Main Study	117

6.1 Introduction	117
6.2 Developing the research questions	120
6.3 The Role of the Researcher	121
6.4 Participants	121
6.5 Interviews	122
6.6 Data Analysis	128
6.7 Data Analysis; Pilot Study (2)	131
6.8 Data Analysis; Main Study	134
6.9 Reliability, Validity and Ethics	136
6.10 Conclusion	139
Chapter 7: Results and Analysis (1)	141
7.1 Overview	141
7.2 Subsidiary Research Question (1) <i>In what ways do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry within the subject of English?</i>	142
7.2(a) Students	
i) Response to terms	143
ii) Relevance	144
7.2 (b) Teachers	
i) Response to terms	146
ii) Relevance	147
7.2 (c) Lecturers	
i) Response to terms	152
ii) Relevance	154
7.2 (d) Examiners	
i) Response to terms	156
ii) Relevance	159
7.3 Comparison	
i) Response to terms	161
ii) Relevance	167
7.4 Discussion	
i) Response to terms	165
ii) Relevance	167

7.5 Conclusion	173
Chapter 8: Subsidiary Research Question (2) What do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners perceive as significant in the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?	175
8.1 Introduction: Theme of Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge	175
8.2 (a) Students	179
8.2 (b) Teachers	184
8.2 (c) Lecturers	189
8.2 (d) Examiners	196
8.3 Comparison	199
8.4 Discussion	206
8.5 Conclusion	
Chapter 9: Subsidiary Research Question 3: <i>How do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners characterise the poetic elements that they view as being specific to reading and responding early modern poetry?</i>	208
9.1 Introduction	208
9.2 (a) Students	209
(i) Form	214
(ii) Metaphor	215
(iii) Humour	215
(iv) Summary	215
9.2 (b) Teachers	216
(i) Form; rhythm and rhyme	216
(ii) Form and structure	220
(iii) Metaphor	221
(iv) Humour or wit	224
(v) Summary	232
9.2 (c) Lecturers	224
(i) Form	224
(ii) Rhetoric	227
(iii) Metaphor	228

(iv) Voice	231
(v) Humour or wit	232
(vi) Summary	232
9.2(d) Examiners	233
(i) Form	233
(ii) Metaphor	236
(iii) Voice and humour	238
(iv) Summary	240
9.2(e) Comparison	241
9.2(f) Discussion	243
9.2(g) Conclusion	251
Chapter 10; Conclusion	
10.1 Rationale for this research	253
10.2 Subsidiary Research Question 1	254
10.3 Subsidiary Research Question 2:	256
10.4 Subsidiary Research Question 3:	257
10.5 Conclusion; Main Research Question	258
10.6 Limitations of this research	260
10. 7 Recommendations for further research	261
10. 8 Recommendations for professional practice	261
Appendix A; Interview Schedule – Examiners	265
Appendix B; Interview Schedule- Students	268
Appendix C; Example of Transcript (Extract)	270
Appendix D; Consent Form	272
Appendix E; NVivo nodes; Version One	273
Appendix F; NVivo nodes; Version Two	278
Appendix G; NVivo nodes; Final Version	279
Appendix H; NVivo Queries	280
References	281

List of Tables

Table 1; Feasibility Study - questions for semi-structured interview with pupils	107
Table 2; Feasibility Study - questions for semi-structured interview with teacher	108
Table 3; Pilot Study - questions for teacher interview	113
Table 4; Descriptive codes from pupil transcripts	114
Table 5; Descriptive codes for teacher transcripts	114
Table 6; Analytic codes for Pilot Study (1)	115
Table 7; Interview questions for teachers and lecturers	125
Table 8; Extracts from literature review used for discussion at the end of the interview	127
Table 9; Braun and Clarke (2006) The phases of thematic analysis (p. 87)	129
Table 10: Initial Themes for Coders 1 and 2	133
Table 11; Main themes or “parent nodes” (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75).	136
Table 12; Main themes or “parent nodes” (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75)	142
Table 13; Main themes or “parent nodes” (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75)	249

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the immense support that the kindness and wisdom of my supervisor Dr Nick McGuinn has given me over the course of this project, as well as the clarity and insightfulness of feedback of Professor Ian Davies. Many thanks go to Jennifer Shaw-Wright who so generously gave her time in reading this project and to Audrey Wood, who has been a great friend throughout the process. I would like to also thank Dr Wendy Joliffe who intervened to support me when the going got really tough. My thanks, finally, go to my parents who have always encouraged and inspired me to study and my husband, Ross Wiltcher, without whose patient support I would not have been able to complete this project.

The Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis presents a study of the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English, in England. This introduction is intended to outline how the study came about as well as its aims, methods and content. The overall structure of this thesis takes the form of ten chapters, including this introductory chapter.

1.1 Origins of the Study

This study began in the researcher's personal interest as an English teacher in the poetry from the early modern period, having had a long held fascination for the period and poetry that began at school and developed at undergraduate level. This interest developed over the course of a varied career in secondary schools, where the researcher always enjoyed teaching pupils a whole variety of texts from the early modern period, developing an interest in their responses to pre-twentieth century poetry. Having later studied the early modern period at Masters level, this seemed to be a natural spring board to develop a study to explore the teaching and reception of poems from the early modern period in the subject of English. From the outset it was clear that this study derived from a topic with which the researcher is clearly intellectually and emotionally involved and that as a researcher this perspective will always need to be acknowledged. Denscombe (2007) argues:

Qualitative research...tends to place great emphasis on the role of the researcher in the construction of data...it is recognised that the researcher is the crucial 'measurement device', and that the researcher's self (their social background, values, identity and beliefs) will have a significant bearing on the nature of the data collected and the interpretation of that data. (p. 250)

1.2 Aims of this research

The research presented in this thesis into the encounters of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners with early modern poetry in the subject of English, aims to explore participants' perceptions of early modern poetry. As the research focuses on the attitudes and interpretations of the participants of the poetry of the early

modern period, it is exploratory and interpretative in nature. The further aim of the study is to contribute towards debate in the field of the pedagogy of early modern poetry, in which the research is sparse. In this way the research can make some contribution to the wider field of the debates over the pedagogy of poetry in schools and university.

The possible audience for this research includes teachers in schools and lecturers in universities who seek to reflect on their pedagogical practices. Teacher trainers may also wish to explore areas of this research. Examination boards may find the results of this study of interest in their decisions regarding text selection for exams, so too policy makers in their discussion of and considerations over curriculum guidance and legislation. It is also hoped that other researchers in the field will be able to use this research to support their own work and contribute to the wider field of knowledge regarding the pedagogy of poetry and more widely the subject of English in schools and universities.

1.3 Research Questions

The principal research question for this study is:

What are the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry in the subject of English?

For the purposes of this study, the subject of English explored is that of English as a secondary school subject, at college level, and English within the Higher Education sector. The subsidiary research questions for this study revolve around clarifying different strands of “perception” in line with what Andrews (2003) notes as the importance of keeping “tight the aperture...of your study” (p. 10). Thus the following subsidiary questions were developed:

1) In what ways do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry within the subject of English?

2) What do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners perceive as significant in their teaching and learning of early modern poetry?

3) *How do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners characterise the elements that they view as being specific to reading and responding to early modern poetry?*

1.4 Research Strategy

This study employed qualitative research methods and was “interpretivist” (Thomas, 2013, p. 108) in nature. Sixteen in-depth interviews were collected from four groups of participants: students, teachers, lecturers and examiners. There were four interviewees within each group of participants. The interviews lasted on average an hour each, providing very rich data. This group of sixteen participants was chosen as a group of experts, in that they were happy to be interviewed for a study in the area of early modern poetry and they felt confident in discussing their perceptions of this poetry. The lecturers were specialists in the field of early modern literature.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The literature review provides a context for the current teaching and reception of early modern poetry by examining three key periods in the development of the poetry within the subject of English that provide insight into the poetry itself and the way that it has entered into the curriculum of English.

The first period addressed in the literature review in Chapter Two is that of the English Renaissance, for without understanding what the significance of early modern poetry was at the time in which it was written, it is not possible to fully explore the significance and meaning of it today, in an educational context, which is the focus of this study. Chapter Two examines debates about the terms *Renaissance* or *early modern* and the impact of those terms on this study. Attitudes held today by teachers and students towards poetry of the period are in many ways echoes of those held by writers in the early modern period, yet there are also striking contrasts between contemporary readings of early modern poetry and those of the period in which it was written (Alexander, 2004; Hebron, 2008).

Chapter Two contains an exploration of the key concepts that enable an insight into the tensions between the reception of early modern poetry today by readers, and the understanding and reception of early modern poetry at the time in which it was written is then provided, looking at the key terms *imitation* and

mimesis. The work of Thomas Ascham will be addressed for its significance in illustrating these key concepts and their impact on the teaching of theories of writing and poetry in the early modern period. Chapter Two ends with particular reference to Sir Philip Sidney and George Puttenham, as they are both key theorists who provide insight into the contexts of production and readership of early modern poetry (Alexander, 2004; Heninger, 1989). In this way, Chapter Two provides the theoretical background to the writing of early modern poetry and key concepts and tensions that reverberate today in the subject of English.

The second section of the literature review, Chapter Three, addresses changes in attitudes towards early modern poetry at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Early modern poetry fell out of favour with readers and critics towards the end of the seventeenth century, to see its fortunes gather momentum again in the nineteenth century with readers and anthologists (Ferry, 2001). Therefore Chapter Three explores how and why early modern poetry came to be on the curriculum in English schools at the end of the Victorian period. The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century saw the establishment of English as a subject in school and in university, and the presence in the curriculum of early modern poetry.

Chapter Three also examines the attitudes of two key figures, Matthew Arnold and Francis Palgrave, who were influential in this reception of the poetry into the school and university curriculum. These two figures have had a very strong influence on the way that the English curriculum for poetry has evolved and their ideas still resonate today in debates amongst English teachers over how poetry should be framed and encountered in the subject (Eaglestone, 2000; Davison, 2009). Also addressed in Chapter Three are the struggles over the development of English as a university subject and debates around the place of early modern poetry specifically in the Higher Education curriculum in at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Chapter Four, the final section of the literature review examines ideas and concepts from research into poetry pedagogy in current educational contexts which are important for this study on the teaching and learning of early modern poetry. Research focused specifically on the teaching of early modern poetry in

school and university environments is sparse; however, there is a rich seam of research on the teaching and learning of poetry more generally in the English curriculum. Chapter Four presents four concepts within current research into poetry that can inform the areas of investigation for this study: reading and the application of reader response theory, drawing on Benton (1989) and Pike (2000 (a)/2003); the importance of aural qualities of poetry, particularly Alexander (2008/2013) and Gordon (2009); the role of memory (Whitley, 2013) and the role of the teacher in the reading the reception of poetry in the subject of English (Cremin, 2013 and Collins and Kelly, 2013). These four concepts have emerged as important historically and in contemporary contexts in discussions over the pedagogy of poetry.

The final focus of Chapter Four is work that relates specifically to the reading and reception of poetry of the early modern period. The discussions of the academics and editors Alexander (2004), Hebron (2008), Wynn-Davies (2003) and Waller (1993) will be addressed, looking at how critically and historically informed reading of the poetry is important when considering the reading and reception of poetry of the early modern period today. The authors all consider the differences between the way that the poetry would have been received in the early modern period, and the way that it is read and received now.

A rationale for the research methodology is presented in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five presents the feasibility study and the first pilot study that was undertaken for this research. It discusses the development of the initial research questions, the selection and trialling of the research methods and the coding and analysis of the first tranche of data. Chapter Six presents the further development of the research questions and the refinement of the data collection. The relative merits of the interview as a data collection technique is discussed and the significance of the role of researcher. The selection of participants is addressed as are ethics, validity and reliability. A discussion of the coding of the data is presented, with reference to Braun and Clarke's (2006) presentation of thematic analysis, which was used in combination with the *NVivo* data analysis program.

The results are presented in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine, which are organised under the three subsidiary research questions. For each of the subsidiary

research questions, the data is presented under separate headings for each group of participants: students, teachers, lecturers and examiners. The fifth section in each of these three chapters provides a comparison between the responses of the participants within the particular themes explored. The final section of the chapters relating to the subsidiary research questions relates the themes and data to the theoretical and contextual dimensions of this study. Chapter Ten provides a conclusion to the thesis, drawing together the main themes from the three subsidiary research questions to answer the main research question: *What are the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry in the subject of English?* The limitations of the study are also addressed in the concluding chapter and suggestions for further research.

1.6 Conclusion

This research was designed to explore the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry in the subject of English. The research originated in the researcher's academic interest and personal enthusiasm for early modern poetry and it is exploratory and interpretative in nature. The data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) system of thematic analysis and using the *NVivo* computer software. It is intended that this research extends the knowledge of the pedagogy of early modern poetry as this is an area in which current research is sparse.

Chapter 2; Literature Review (A) Early modern poetry in the early modern period

2.1 Introduction

In order to undertake a study of the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the curriculum and subject of English, it is necessary to place the poetry in its historical context and understand how and why it has come to be present in the curriculum of English today. The three chapters of the literature review provide a context for the current teaching and reception of early modern poetry by examining three key periods in the development of the poetry within the subject of English that provide insight into the poetry itself and the way that it has entered into the curriculum of English. This chapter opens with debates about the terms *Renaissance* or *early modern* and the impact of those terms on this study. An exploration of the key concepts that provide an insight into the tensions between the reception of early modern poetry today by readers, and the understanding and reception of early modern poetry at the time in which it was written is then provided. The chapter will end with particular reference to Sir Philip Sidney and George Puttenham, as they are both key theorists who provide insight into the contexts of production and readership of early modern poetry (Alexander, 2004; Heninger, 1989).

Much work has been done in both sectors on the teaching of Shakespeare as drama and it is a problematic construct to delineate Shakespeare's work as being only drama or poetry; however, the corpus of work on Shakespeare as a dramatist is outside the scope of this study. The work of Shakespeare that is considered for the purposes of this study are Shakespeare's sonnets, which are considered alongside other sonnets produced in the early modern period. The field of research undertaken specifically into the teaching and reception of early modern poetry in both the school and university sectors is very sparse (Conroy and Clarke, 2011), so this research will make some contribution towards this area.

By placing early modern poetry in its historical context and seeking to understand how and why it has come to be present in the curriculum of English today, the three chapters of the literature review provide the background to this

research into the teaching and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English. By addressing specific ideas and concepts from three significant periods in the development of the poetry and its place in the curriculum, key terms and themes that inform the debates in the area will be uncovered. The aim of the three chapters is to provide the background to the origins of the ideas held by those encountering the poetry of the period in the subject of English today. The aim of the three chapters of the literature review is also to present a context for interpreting the responses of teachers and students involved in this study of early modern poetry. Reference to the ideas and debates from the three periods addressed in this chapter can throw light on the contemporary encounters of teachers and students with the poetry of the early modern period, which is the focus of this study.

2.2 Early modern poetry in the early modern period

2.2(a) Definition and dates

The first section of this chapter will examine the way that poetry was defined and valued in the early modern period in England. This is significant for this study as it provides a starting point for exploring the way that students, teachers and examiners in the field of English define and value poetry of that period now. The first element of the analysis will be a discussion of the term *Renaissance* and the alternative term used for the period, *early modern*, and their relative usage in literary studies. In exploring the definitions of these terms, it can be seen that there tends to be an alignment of attitudes towards the period associated with the different definitions (Hebron, 2008; Marcus, 1992; Waller, 1993). This alignment of academic arguments and attitudes can be related to the way that teachers and students frame the period in question and align themselves and their attitudes towards the period. The specific time period to which these terms refer is also discussed and parameters put on the period for the purposes of this study. The section then addresses the significance of the humanist curriculum in the education of youngsters in the Renaissance or early modern period, and the way that this shaped ideas about poetry and imaginative literature. These points are of

significance to this study, in that it is the position of early modern poetry within the English curriculum, and therefore its perceived value by students and teachers today, which can be drawn in parallel to ideas about poetry and imaginative literature at the time in which these texts were being produced. Finally, the arguments of two key writers from the early modern period will be explored, Sidney's (1595/2004) arguments about the significance and power of poetry and Puttenham's (1589/2004), theories of language and style. Both of these writers entered into the debates in the early modern period about the nature and importance of the developing body of poetry, in English.

2.2 (b) Discussion of the term *Renaissance*

The *Renaissance* is a term that is used across academic disciplines: in history, literature, cultural studies and many others. As a term it gained wide usage in England after it was used by Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy*, published in 1869, to refer to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English culture. Arnold's specific use of the term will be discussed later in this chapter. The first entry of the term in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is dated to 1845 and the meaning is defined as "the revival of art and letters, under the influence of classical models, which began in Italy in the 14th century" (Onions, 1973, p. 1974). Burckhardt (1878/1928) argued that the political conditions in Italy gave rise to what could be termed a *modern consciousness*. He argued that in the medieval period man's consciousness lay beneath a veil of "faith, illusion and childish prepossession" (Burckhardt, 1878/1928, p. 129) and that political conditions in Italy gave rise to a lifting of this veil, to enable an objective treatment and consideration of the state, in parallel with a development of the subjective side of man, "man became a spiritual individual, recognized himself as such" (Burckhardt, 1878/1928, p. 129). He argued that various elements such as artists' signatures, portraits by merchants and courtiers, personal writing, the use of studiolo in private chambers all signified a growth in this consciousness and sense of self, where the individual saw themselves as self determined rather than "conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation" (Burckhardt, 1878/1928, p. 129). Burckhardt's ideas

have been the subject of much debate (Hebron, 2008; Waller, 1993) but indicate a locus of discussion about the period that was emergent in the nineteenth century.

The term *Renaissance* as it applies to literary study is described by Chuilleanain (1996) as being:

Variously defined, as a rediscovery of ancient Greek and Latin texts and of the linguistic competence needed to understand them, and as a rebirth of the human spirit to a joy in the things of this world as opposed to a penitential preparation for the joys of Heaven. (p. 143)

This definition encompasses a number of elements that are significant within the term: the huge significance of classical texts in the period and the importance of education in ensuring the “linguistic competence” needed to work with them. Chuilleanain echoes Burckhardt’s claims of the spiritual dimension of the period, here putting a joyful modification into the term, of the interaction with “the joy in the things of this world”. This is in contrast with Chuilleanain’s characterisation of a, presumably Medieval, joyless view of the world in preparation for the “joy” of Heaven. There are those that would not interpret Medieval religious attitudes as joyless (Hebron, 2008, p. 104), however, Chuilleanain does stress continuity with the Medieval period in the deeply religious character of much of the writing from the Renaissance, “that is it a mistake to ignore the deeply religious character of much of Renaissance writing” (p. 143) and also argues that:

What distinguishes the writers of the Renaissance is the high claims that they make for their art, the seriousness with which they regard language and the study of literature, whether sacred or secular, as a means of bettering the human condition whether this is seen in political or religious terms. (p. 143)

The “high claims” and “seriousness” that Chuilleanain argues distinguishes writers of the Renaissance can be seen in the writings of the early modern authors Sidney, Puttenham and Ascham, discussed later in the chapter. This element of the high seriousness with which writing was viewed in the period is also endorsed by other specialists in early modern poetics, such as Kinney (2000) and Hulse (2000).

For the purposes of this study, the term is being used in application to the British, and more specifically English, period of the Renaissance, as it applies to

imaginative literature. The definition of imaginative literature in this period will be discussed later in this chapter. Various editors producing collections from this period have outlined the dates within which they have defined the period. Hollander and Kermode (1973), use the dates 1509 up until 1660. They identify the period as starting in 1509, which is when the work of Erasmus first arrived in Oxford and ends with the restoration of Charles II to the throne and the end of the Commonwealth in England. The arrival of the work of Erasmus in England is key to the introduction of humanist ideas in England, and the end of the Commonwealth is one point out of many possible others at which to conclude the repercussions of that, in what the authors identify as the political outcomes of the Reformation. Norbrook and Woudhuysen (1992) identify the dates of 1509–1659 to delineate the period, sharing the same starting date as Hollander and Kermode but citing the reason for 1509 as being significant with the accession of Henry VIII, and drawing the close at 1659, with the crisis in the English republic. Norbrook and Woudhuysen acknowledge that although their stated time span is very long, to select such a broad period “helps to show the ways in which the political struggles of the 1640s connected with the earlier phases of Renaissance culture” (1992, p.xxix).

Similar to the arguments of the above editors, Vickers (1999) uses the broad and less specific sweep of the 1530s to the 1650s, avoiding pinning the period to specific dates, stating the broad relationship between the European and English Renaissance:

The Renaissance was a European phenomenon, but while the national cultures shared many assumptions and methods the forms and goals of criticism differed, reflecting different intellectual and social contexts. In England, for instance, we find a later phase of major linguistic and cultural transition that had already taken place in Italy and France. (p.2)

Vickers’ concern in his volume is specifically with Renaissance literary criticism, in England, and he follows his definition by referring specifically to his particular interest in the “remarkable flourishing of poetry, drama, and prose fiction between 1570 and 1630” (p. 3) that is an aspect of the English Renaissance. Like Vickers, Alexander’s (2004) definition is broad, “the term Renaissance is applied to the

phase of English cultural development coinciding with the Reformation and extending into the seventeenth century” (p.xix) and is tied in to the religious changes in England and their repercussions well into the seventeenth century. Like Vickers, Alexander’s particular focus is also English Renaissance literary criticism, and he uses the dates of 1575 to 1640 to define the parameters of the selection of texts for his edition. His first selected text is Gascoigne’s *Certain Notes of Instruction*, dated at 1575.

Hebron (2008) explores the definition of the term *Renaissance* using a poem by John Donne to explicate the significance of the term to a modern reader of the poetry of the period. Through Donne’s poem *To His Mistress Going to Bed*, Hebron draws together elements that constitute what the term means via exploring the poem. He undertakes an examination of the poem and draws out the wider referents from it, summarising:

We have seen how some lines by Donne have led us to some key themes of Renaissance history of society: colonialism, war, attitudes to women, forms of government. They have also illustrated some aspects of literature and culture, rhetoric, artifice, the imitation and adaptation of classical models, the fictive persona, manuscript and print, the educated reader, coterie culture. (p. xiv)

Hebron’s purpose in *Key Concepts In Renaissance Literature* (2008) is to provide a support for those studying the period, so his definition is specific and focuses on the contextual elements of production and reception of the poetry: the political and historical themes, along with literary dimensions and influences. Chuilleanain’s (1996) essay is also aimed at literary students of the period. Like Hebron, Chuilleanain focuses on the classical and literary dimensions of the Renaissance, but she foregrounds more forcefully the religious elements of the period, using terms such as “joy” and “rebirth” to characterise the period.

Hebron (2008) is also concerned with the ways in which a modern reader interacts and reads texts from the period. He provides a definition of the specific time period which is designed to be comprehensive for the students at whom the book is aimed, and has a wide scope:

Books on the English Renaissance usually cover nearly two centuries of writing (1500-1660). A flourishing of Renaissance ideas occurred especially in the Elizabethan (1558-1603) and Jacobean periods (1603-1625). For some, it is the last phase covering the Caroline Age (1625-1649) and the Commonwealth (1649-1660), which sees the fulfilment of the Renaissance movement, particularly in the writings of John Milton. (p. ix)

Hebron (2008) acknowledges the level of debate over the period, but utilises a broad scope for the period, which is reflected in a variety of reference and text books written to support the study of English in schools and universities (Bradford, 1996; Thorne, 1997). Given that the focus of this study is the teaching and reception of poetry from this period, in schools and universities, Hebron's (2008) definition and dates for the *early modern*, or *Renaissance* period, will be used. This definition incorporates all the dates used by the editors of collections discussed in this section, such that the start of the period is in line with Erasmus' arrival in Oxford in 1509 and the accession of Henry VIII, and the end of the period determined by the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and including the writings of Milton, whose poetry Hollander and Kermode (1973) argue is a "total presentation of the humanist programme in the broadest sense" (p. 5). These dates are also in line with school and university reference and text books published to support study in the history of literature and language.

2.3 The debate over the terms *early modern* and *Renaissance*

This section will address the debates around the use of the terms *early modern* and *Renaissance*. The debates over this term are significant to this study in a number of ways. The use of the different terms indicates the way that scholars and editors frame the period. The way that the period is defined and framed shapes editorial practice in anthologies and collections, which in turn affects what readers read and how they read it (Ferry, 2001; Korte, 2000). The framing of the period and the selections made in texts, especially texts popular with the public or exam boards, have a strong influence on the opinions and the imaginations of those who study and work with this period (Ferry, 2001; Dymoke, 2002), so these debates are pertinent to this study.

The use of the term *early modern* rather than that of *Renaissance* to describe the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in literary history, grew up in the 1980s in England and the United States. Waller (1993) discusses the growth of the term and the significance of its usage. He writes that using the term *early modern* emphasises continuity with our own period so that, “we seem to face either similar issues, dilemmas and obsessions or be able to trace the history of our dilemmas and obsessions to that period” (p.1). A change in attitudes to literature of this period has come about due to the growth of new critical schools: New Historicism, Cultural Materialism and Feminism, which challenge the previous viewpoints of critics and editors. Waller states, “all three have shown that a consideration of literary and related texts is inseparable from the locations and forms by which power and desire flow through society’s dominant institutions, including the family, religion and politics.”(p.7)

Waller (1993) traces this change in attitudes through examining various editions of poetry of the period and what texts are chosen, and what are not. He starts with looking at the selection of texts for Francis Palgrave’s (1861) *Golden Treasury*, who he argues “provided a set of criteria for evaluating the poetry that was largely accepted for more than a century” (p.4). Palgrave chose poems that were short, required less historical understanding than long, narrative poems and gave insight into what Palgrave determined as the “magical world” (p.4) of the Elizabethan age. Waller observes that the poems selected by Palgrave “became the basis for the modern canon of Elizabethan poetry.” Waller also observes that that collection “assumed the best poetry had an immediacy that made it easily accessible to the educated reader” (p.4) and that it dealt with “supposedly universal human experience” (p.4). Waller is clearly sceptical about Palgrave’s framing and selecting of the poems, and notes Palgrave’s observations that the poems were “treasures which might lead us in higher and healthier ways than those of the world” (Palgrave, 1968, p. xxi in Waller, 1993, p.4). Waller observes how this reading of poetry from the period “underlies the most comprehensive anthology of the period’s poetry, E.K. Chambers *Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse* (1932)” (p.4) in Chambers’ single, editorial viewpoint. In Waller’s account, Palgrave’s notion

of the “magical world” (p.4) of early modern poetry remained unchallenged until the 1980s (p. 5).

Waller then looks at two more recent collections, *The New Oxford Book of Sixteenth-Century Verse* (1991) and *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse* (1992) which have been influenced by the decisive change in critical practice between the 1930s and the 1980s. These editions seek to reflect the impact of changing critical practices. Therefore these editions include alternative, previously marginalised voices such as those of women or writers from outside London and the South East of England. These editions attempt to place the texts selected within their social, political and theological contexts and represent a multiplicity of viewpoints and outlooks. Waller sums up this approach as presenting the poems as “social acts rather than isolated objects” (Waller, 1993, p.7). Editorial practice and the selection of poems have a real impact on the way that readers perceive and interact with poems and literary periods (Ferry, 2001; Dymoke, 2002). In exploring the teaching and reception of poetry of the early modern period, the poems which teachers and students will encounter and the way that they encounter them may well be strongly influenced by the texts that they have had access to in the course of their studies and the ways that those texts have been framed by editors. This framing of the poetry for readers may be a rich source for the exploration of students’ and teachers’ experience and conception of the poetry of the period.

The change in literary critical practices in the 1980s referred to by Waller is tied up with the development of the term *early modern*. The term came into usage with regard to literary history after Stephen Greenblatt’s (1980) *Renaissance Self Fashioning* (Wynne-Davies, 2003). Greenblatt termed the phrase *New Historicism*, which characterises the approach taken by critics of this school (Padley, 2006). This school of critical approach is one of the elements of the term *early modern*. The New Historicist approach, generally associated with North American schools of criticism, is to view literature as being “inevitably and inescapably bound up with political and historical considerations” (Padley, 2006, p. 172) and holds that all texts are equally valid, representing and constructing the reality of any particular time. For example, in *Renaissance Self Fashioning* (1980), Greenblatt presents the work of a canonical literary writer, Marlowe, in comparison with an extract from a

contemporary source, to draw conclusions about early modern attitudes to time and space (Hebron, 2008). The New Historicist critical approach differed from its earlier literary predecessors in its valuation of historical context. Padley (2006) characterises the differences as being:

Where literary scholarship of the 1930s and 1940s adhered to a narrow sense of historical context in which characteristic values and attitudes of a period could be extrapolated from the available evidence, New Historicists drew on a wider and more fluid range of historical sources and discourses, taking in economics, social history, social science, anthropology and the recovered histories of the marginalised and excluded. (p. 172)

Closely related to New Historicism, and integral to the connotations bound up with the term *early modern*, is the critical school of *Cultural Materialism*. Cultural Materialism is generally associated with British critical approaches. Like New Historicism, Cultural Materialism draws on the historical context very strongly in the interpretation of text, but adds to the mix a political commitment to marginalised voices and pays particular attention to class, gender and race. The foreword to *Political Shakespeare* (1994) by Dollimore and Sinfield defines the term “cultural materialism” as being a synthesis of “historical context, theoretical method, political commitment and textual analysis” (p. vii). Cultural materialism insists that texts be read along with the detailed analysis of the contexts of production and reception of the text of its time. Culture, in this definition, is very broad, rejecting the idea of high culture to encompass all forms of expression, artefacts and practices of any one period. Materialism is expressed by Dollimore and Sinfield as being “opposed to ‘idealism’: it insists that culture does not (cannot) transcend the material forces and relations of production” (p. vii). Texts are culturally situated, and as culture is continuously changing, so does the signification of those texts. Furthermore, Cultural Materialism “does not pretend to political neutrality” (p. vii) but it “registers its commitment to the transformation of a social order which exploits people on grounds of race, gender and class” (p. vii). Cultural Materialism is determined to challenge the validity of the literary canon and established literary categories, along with a focus on bringing about voice and power to those who have previously been excluded. The development of the term *early modern* as a literary

term is associated with an increased emphasis on the historical and social elements of the period, and its “continuity” (Waller, 1993, p. 1) with our own.

Marcus (1992) discusses the interplay between the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern* and notes the significance of the move away from the term *Renaissance* and the connotations of that term. The term connotes an era that is conceived of as, “re-naissance, cultural rebirth, the reawakening of an era conceived of as classic” (p. 41). The use of this term suggests an interest in the activities of the elite and that is optimistic and upbeat. She argues:

One of the reasons many historians have become suspicious of the term is that it buys optimism at too great a price – the neglect of other cultural currents and forms of cultural production, of a vast sea of human activity and misery that Renaissance either failed to include or included only marginally. The term Renaissance implicitly calls for a perception of historical rupture (in order to be reborn, a culture must previously have died) and, along with that, a subtle hierarchical valuation of disparate cultures. (p.43)

Marcus is noting the associations wrapped up in the word originating in commentators such as Burckhardt and Arnold, who perceive the period to be one of optimism and spiritual richness. Marcus observes that this is to foreground the experience of some over that of others. She notes that, in contrast to these overtones, the term *early modern* signals a “disaffiliation” (p.41) by historians towards what they see as the “elitism and cultural myopia” (p.41) associated with an older view of Renaissance history. The associations of using this term in literary study are summarised thus:

To look at the Renaissance through a lens called early modern is to see the concerns of modernism and postmodernism in embryo – alienation, a disjunction of origins, profound scepticism about the possibility for objectivity (in literary studies or anywhere else), an emphasis on textual indeterminacy as opposed to textual closure and stability, and an interest in intertextuality instead of filiation. (Marcus, 1992, p.43)

Like Waller (1993), Marcus notes the elements of continuity with our own “postmodern” period wrapped up in the term *early modern*. The associations of the term and the signification of what these terms connote are particularly pertinent to this study. In exploring the teaching and reception of the poetry from the early modern or Renaissance period, students’ and teachers’ encounters with the poetry will be influenced by their knowledge and assumptions about the period, and by their conscious or unconscious use of various terms to describe their thinking and imagination of period in question.

Marcus further notes that both terms are often used together in the same text. In analysing the introduction to *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe* (1986), Marcus observes that the editors often refer to historical change as *early modern* and the literature of the same period *Renaissance*, indicating the desire to acknowledge the importance of cultural inclusiveness and egalitarianism of the new term, whilst being reluctant to give up the “charismatic idea of rebirth, the aura of elitism that is carried by the idea of the Renaissance” (Marcus, 1992, p.44). This debate still pertains today. In a Russell Group university in the North of England, when a new centre for research into this period within the English department was opened in 2006, there was much debate over what the centre should be called. Eventually the department decided on *CREMS*, the *Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies*, which incorporates both aspects of the terms. The name of the research school thus enabled all aspects of the terms to be unified, to provide consensus amongst the debaters.

This section has explored the debates over the use of the different terms *early modern* and *Renaissance*. The development of the use of early modern to signal a “disaffiliation” (Marcus, 1992, p.41) from older notions of cultural elitism has been influential in thinking about the period and suggests ways in which scholars and editors frame the period. Despite the debate about the topic, there is no hard and fast convention that is applied to the use of these terms. Recent volumes by academics such as Alexander (2004) and Hebron (2008) dealing with literary aspects of this period use *Renaissance* in their titles and in the text of their works. The use of the two terms, and what teachers and students see as the connotations and usefulness of these terms, can provide interesting material within

this study for discussion about the period and insight into how the framing of the period influences the opinions and the imaginations of those who study and work with this period. For the purposes of this study, the term *early modern* will be used to describe both the historical period being referred to and as an adjective to describe the texts from this period. For this research the term that is deemed most neutral to describe the time period and the texts that originate from that period is appropriate, and also in part to signal a “disaffiliation” (Marcus, 1992, p.41) by the author from older notions of cultural elitism that have been influential in thinking about the period.

2.4 Key Terms; *imitatio*, *mimesis* and Ascham’s *The Scholemaster*

In order to explore the tensions between the teaching and reception of early modern poetry today and the writing and reception of early modern poetry at the time in which it was written, this section will look at the key terms *imitatio* and *mimesis*. There were different understandings of these key terms in the early modern period (Hulse, 2000), deriving from different Classical sources, and it is significant to understand that these meanings were always in dialogue with each other and therefore “the exact relationship between them is a primary subject of debate in the period” (p. 29). These terms inform the way that early modern writers thought about the meaning and composition of their work (Alexander, 2004; Vickers, 1999). They were terms that were highly significant in the humanist education system, so would have been encountered by any that had been educated in this way, so also inform the way that early modern texts would have been read and received (Hulse, 2000; Vickers, 1993). The work of Thomas Ascham will then be addressed, as Ascham’s *The Scholemaster* (1570) provides the fullest account of early modern humanist teaching (Hulse, 2000) and it can illustrate the impact of these concepts on the teaching of students in the early modern period.

Lying behind all early modern thinking on imaginative literature and poetic theory is the idea of imitation or representation. The Greek term is *mimesis* and the Latin *imitatio*. Renaissance theorists had three various concepts covered by this term that they inherited from Classical writings. To differentiate between the meanings, Alexander (2004) ascribes the term *mimesis* or representation of the

human world to the first two concepts ascribed to the term, and imitation (*imitatio*), or the copying of models, to the third (p. xxxi). The first concept is one that originates from Plato's *Republic*, and is that of platonic forms, whereby forms in our world are a copy of those in a perfect realm. Artists' and poets' work is thereby an inferior version of an imitation of forms, which are in their turn an imitation of the perfect realm. The second is Aristotle's redefining of *mimesis* in the *Poetics* as the representation of universal patterns of human behaviour and of the actions that embody the universal behaviours. The third concept, the rhetorical practice of imitation, was central to Renaissance educational practice.

The first concept or definition of *mimesis* in use in the early modern period to be discussed is that which derived from Plato's *Republic*. In Book 10 of *The Republic*, Plato attacks poetry and also visual arts, because in his argument the poet or artist is incapable of doing more than replicate the external appearance of things. Truth, Plato argues, the realm of ideas, is not available to him. In the dialogue in Book 10 between Socrates and Glaucon, the two personae discuss the meaning of the term *mimesis* by way of using the image of a bed made by an artist. An artist in a painting of a bed is imitating a bed made by a joiner. The joiner himself is making a bed that is an imitation of the perfect form of a bed, made by God in the perfect realm, so that this artist's representation is at three remove from reality. In the words of Socrates, 'you're using the term 'representer' for someone who deals with things which are, in fact, two generations away from reality.' (Plato, 2001, p.66) Reality is in the world of platonic forms, so every painter offers imitations of imitations. This process of representation is inherent in all art, visual or literary. Truth exists in the realm of perfect forms, so the artist cannot represent truth. The philosopher, Plato argues, has more hope of representing the idea of beauty or truth than the artist, who works at two removes. This first, Platonic, concept of *mimesis* is one of the areas of debate for early modern literary theorists, and to which Sir Philip Sidney replies in his *Defence of Poesy*.

The second conception of *mimesis* that forms the basis of discussions about poetry in the early modern period is Aristotle's version of the term, where he rebuts Plato's theory of imitation (Rivers, 1994). A newly recovered version of Aristotle's *Poetics* was published in Greek in 1509 and in Latin in 1536, and became extremely

influential over literary critical thinking for the next two hundred years (Alexander, 2004; Hulse, 2000). Aristotle redefined the meaning of the term *mimesis* and argued that the artist offered a representation of what could be, of possibilities. The test of the artist is verisimilitude, that what the artist presents is credible; 'the poet's task is to speak not of events which have occurred, but of the kind of events which *could* occur, and are possible by the standards of probability or necessity' (Aristotle, 1996, p. 40). He argues that 'poetry is both more philosophical and more serious than history, since poetry speaks of universals, history of particulars' (p. 41). 'Universals' can be interpreted here as 'the permanent, characteristic modes of human thought, feeling and action' (Preminger, Warnke, & Hardison, 1974, p.379). In this way poetic *mimesis* is of actions, thoughts and feelings, rather than specifically of men or characters. Aristotle, in the *Poetics*, was discussing the Greek genres of epic and tragedy. That *mimesis* is a representation of action, feeling and thought means that the poet builds plots around actions, that he produces, 'a valid representation of the actions of men according to the laws of probability' (p. 379). It is this second, Aristotelian concept of notion of *mimesis* that underpins Sidney's discussion in *The Defence of Poesy*, in which what *could be* is represented by poetry, when he states, 'Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *mimesis*' (Sidney, 1595/2004, p. 10), which will be discussed more fully in the next section.

Sidney, in *The Defence of Poesy* (1595/2004), refers to both *mimesis* and *imitatio*. He refers to the third concept of *imitatio*, or imitation, when he refers to the skills that a writer needs to perfect his medium, which are 'art, imitation and exercise' (p. 43). This brief statement outlines the principles of education that developed in early modern period. The founding of St Paul's school in 1512 and the design of the curriculum for this new school is regarded as a crucial moment in the development of humanist learning. Erasmus helped develop the school curriculum for the new St Paul's with its founder John Colet, and this curriculum emphasised a training in rhetoric (Hulse, 2000; Vickers, 1999), leading to a huge rise in the number of grammar schools in the period. Sons of aristocratic families were educated at home by a tutor in a range of classical texts, in Latin and Greek. Less wealthy students attended newly established grammar schools, of which there

were some 360 by 1575 (Vickers, 1999, p.3). John Milton was educated at St Paul's, Edmund Spenser at the Merchant Taylor's School just east of St Paul's, and Shakespeare famously attended Stratford Grammar School (Hulse, 2000). The poets of the early modern period will have had a humanist education and their work will be shaped in dialogue with this education (Hulse, 2000, p. 29), which in turn informs the dialogue between the early modern and our own, in the poetry, which is the focus of this study.

Thomas Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570/1999) provides a very important account of early modern humanist teaching (Alexander, 2004; Vickers, 1999). The second book is concerned with the doctrine of imitation, in line with the third concept ascribed to its Renaissance definition. This third concept of imitation, *imitatio*, derives from the Latin texts of Cicero and Quintilian, who advocated the need for orators to learn and imitate good models of language and thought in order to develop their own style. Vickers (1999) summarises this process:

Inventio did not mean 'creation out of nothing' (or whatever meaning we might attach to that word), but the finding of appropriate arguments, words and expressions, which would often be gathered from the notebook where the orator had recorded them. (p.24)

Vickers observes in his parenthesis that a contemporary reader or student will have a very different notion of what creativity is "creation out of nothing", essentially a post-romantic view of creation, to that of what we know of an early modern reader. This is one of the tensions that are of much importance to this study.

Ascham, in *The Scholemaster*, uses the term *imitatio* to mean by imitation through copying of other language. Ascham advised students on how to use *imitatio* to learn style – comparing speeches by Cicero with its model by Demosthenes in Greek and noting in what ways the speech has been altered, what included and what left out. Sidney (1595/2004) describes this process:

The diligent imitators of Tully and Demosthenes, most worthy to be imitated, did not so much as keep Nizolian [favourite collections of] paper-books of their figures and phrases as, by attentive translation, as it were, devour them whole, and make them wholly theirs.(p. 49)

Sidney characterises, in a characteristically telescopic manner, the way that imitation worked. Students kept notes, examined style and worked repeatedly on

translation and re-translation (Hollander and Kermode, 1974). In turn students then produced their own writings that are influenced and shaped by all that they have previously read and studied. This is the education in *imitatio* described by Ascham in *The Scholemaster*. Hulse (2000) provides an excellent summary of Ascham's conception of the way that pupils should be taught about language, suggesting that Ascham's definition is close to Mikhail Bahktin's conception of dialogic language:

Writing is filled with predeccessory texts, learned and vernacular, wise and foolish, and the process of rhetorical education is largely a process of training the mind to control the interplay of those predeccessory texts through linguistic imitation. Indeed, the trained mind is constructed in and through this interplay of texts.(p. 39)

Ascham discusses the principles of educating boys. The medium for this education was Latin, which boys would use for translation, writing and talking even in their leisure time. The whole curriculum was directed towards preparing boys for virtuous action (Hollander and Kermode, 1973), reading appropriate texts and not reading 'vicious texts' such as Arthurian romances or dubious works in Italian. Embedded within this classical training was an expression of the outcome of rhetorics: the triad of actions that derived from Cicero, *movere, docere, delectare*, translated as *to move, to teach* and *to delight*. Of these three desired outcomes from rhetoric, early modern writers regarded *movere*, to move or persuade, as the most important outcome (Vickers 2005, Alexander 2004). *Movere* required that the orator had complete control over the manipulation of the audience's emotions. The classical text that guided early modern writers on ways in which to move their audiences was Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, written in the first century AD. In this text, Quintilian outlined to tools of *elucutio*, methods by which the writer creates figures of speech to persuade his audience and to move them. These figures of speech were categorised into *tropes*, in which the meaning of words were changed through verbal devices, such as metaphor and irony, and *schemes*, which were changes in the form and arrangement of words, such as through repetition of words or changing their place, but without any change in their meaning. These are features, and this is the language, that is used today to discuss and characterise the style and features of poetry, particularly within an educational setting.

As the role of imaginative literature and poetry grew in this period, these principles of organisation of material in which all pupils were steeped were taken into poetry, as a consequence of the humanist curriculum and the way that pupils were educated. Vickers (2005) states:

When rhetoric was taken over into literature the same aims and methods were validated. A poet, like an orator, was supposed to delight, to teach and to persuade, three interlinked goals. He or she must arouse the listener or reader's emotions, take up a definite attitude to the subject being treated, holding the audience's attention all the while by the pleasure of reading. (pp. 102-3).

Sidney and Puttenham, examined in the next section, grapple with the ways in which poetry was different to rhetoric. Poetry, in the hands of early modern poets, whilst sharing the goals and structures of Classical rhetoric, was developing a vernacular, English form and tradition of its own. Ascham's description of the rhetorical principles of imitation and virtuous actions, examined in this section, provided a general theory for a whole series of early modern treatises on rhetoric (Hulse, 2000). The association of virtuous action and poetry is one that has retained its influence in thinking about poetry, and can be seen as a recurring theme in later writers such as Arnold, Palgrave and Newbolt. The concern of writers in this period with the development of a specifically English, vernacular, poetry is also one that has recurred in subsequent writers on English poetry, such as Leavis (1933) and Lewis (1954).

This section has addressed the tensions between the key terms *imitatio* and *mimesis*. The different understandings of these key terms in the early modern period all feed into the poetic and literary theory of the time, and the meanings were always in dialogue with each other (Hulse, 2000), as will be seen in the next section addressing the writing of Sidney (1595/2004) and Puttenham (1589/2004). These terms were highly significant in the humanist education system, so would have been influential on the production and reception of early modern texts and in the development of thinking about poetry. It is important to understand the significance of these different terms and their impact on early modern thought, in order to explore the tensions and ambiguities in the way that these texts are read and received by teachers and students today, which is the aim of this study.

2.5 Early modern theories of poetry: Sir Philip Sidney and George Puttenham

This section will address two key theorists of poetry in the early modern period, Sir Philip Sidney and George Puttenham. In order to provide the background for the ideas of contemporary students and teachers about the poetry of this period, some discussion of the most significant ideas for the study from the period in question needs to be provided. In the early modern period there was a “remarkable flourishing of poetry, drama, and prose fiction” (Vickers, 1999, p. 4) within a wider expansion of ideas that is encompassed in the term *Renaissance*. Writers addressed themselves to this flourishing of literature, discussing what the role of imaginative literature might be in the development of a corpus of texts written specifically in English, rather than in Latin or Greek (Alexander, 2004, p. xviii).

In particular, this section will address Sir Philip Sidney’s *The Defence of Poesy* (1595/2004) arguments about the significance and power of poetry and George Puttenham’s *The Art of English Poesy* (1589/2004), who puts forward theories of language and style. Both of these theorists are regarded as being central to understanding the way that early modern readers and writers thought about poetry and imaginative literature (Alexander, 2004; Hulse, 2000; Vickers, 1999; Waller, 1993). These two works will be examined for the qualities that they argue make poetry distinctive from other forms of art, and for what they tell the modern reader about the way that early modern writers and readers thought. Attitudes held today by teachers and students towards poetry of the period are in many ways echoes of those held by these two writers, but there are also striking contrasts between modern readings of early modern poetry and those of a contemporary readership (Alexander, 2004; Hebron, 2008). An exploration of the key concepts and debates that inform this study will be addressed in this section, that can provide insight into the tensions between the way the poetry from the early modern period is read and received today, by students and teachers, and the way the poetry was produced, read and received in the early modern period, in England.

2.6 Sir Philip Sidney’s *The Defence of Poesy*: *mimesis*, the power of poetry and the role of the poet

This section will focus on Sidney's definition on *mimesis*, Sidney's conception of the moral power of poetry and his depiction of the role of the poet. *The Defence of Poesy* is one of the 'central theoretical documents' (Waller, 1993, p. 35) of English literary writing. Heninger (1989) writes that:

The Defence of Poesie is a major event, if not the major event, in the development of literary theory in England. There is nothing that comes close to its scope and authority, nothing that even makes the attempt to identify poetry as a mature discipline separable from rhetoric and grammar taught in schools. (p. 226)

Sidney wrote to defend the qualities of poetry, imaginative literature, against its critics, most notably Gosson (1579), who was amongst a school of Puritan critics who attacked imaginative literature and poetry. Plato distrusted the poetic imagination, and so did the Puritan critics of this period. Alexander (2004) summarises the Puritans' objections to poetry as being in line with Plato's views, so that that poetry can:

Peddle fictions, either poor copies of reality or dangerous phantasms; it tells stories which glorify vice, wantonness and depravity; engaging the mind with fiction is a bad habit to get into for those who would be morally good. (p. xviii)

To counter these kinds of Puritan objections to imaginative fiction and poetry, Sidney sets out his arguments for poetry's superiority to history and philosophy as a means of exploring ideas and promoting virtue, for he states "the ending end of all earthly learning being virtuous action" (Sidney, 1595/2004, p. 13), which poetry is a powerful ally in attaining.

Sidney (1595/2004) sets out an argument about the qualities and importance of poetry. Heninger (1989) notes the 'scope' (p. 226) of Sidney's work and Waller (1993) observes that Sidney engages with a 'host' (p. 35) of classical, medieval and contemporary writers. Waller notes how sixteenth-century learning is 'an unstable mixture of rational knowledge, notions derived from magical practices, and the classical cultural heritage' (p. 35) and that Sidney 'brings together a host of

contradictory views of poetry' (p. 35) to create his argument and refute the points of his detractors. Heninger identifies Sidney's attempt to define poetry as a discipline, separate from the related disciplines in the humanist curriculum of rhetoric and grammar. For Sidney, the essential element that marks out work as poetry, imaginative literature, is that poetry expresses, 'what may be and should be,' (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.11). Sidney defines poetry as a creative act, along the lines of the Aristotelian definition of *mimesis*.

The Defence of Poesy follows the form of a classical oration. Sidney is providing an argument for the defence as it were in a court of law, following the conventions of a rhetorical piece to construct an argument in a convincing manner to his audience. An argument developed in this way builds up through the introduction and narration to the proposition, which is the essential idea of the oration, and around which all the arguments build. The proposition, in the early modern definition, must be, 'a pithy sentence, comprehending in a small room the sum of the whole matter,' (Vickers, 1999, p. 81). At the centre of Sidney's argument, his proposition, is his definition of poetry, his "small room", presented at the core of his oration. In this proposition he directly cites Aristotle and provides the audience with his central conception of poetry, or 'poesy', which underpins the argument of *The Defence*:

Poesy is therefore an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *mimesis*— that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture – with this end, to teach and delight. (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.10)

Here Sidney clearly states his allegiance to the Aristotelian concept of *mimesis*. The imitation that Sidney refers to is one that is creative; it goes further than *imitatio*, the third early modern concept of the word. To elaborate his point, Sidney provides the reader with further clarification using three active verbs, defining his reading of *mimesis* for the reader. Each wording has subtly differentiated meaning, elaborating what is to be understood by the term, and therefore what Sidney is arguing. 'Representing', that is re-presenting, is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as being used in 1582 with the meaning of 'to place (a fact) clearly before another' (Onions, 1973, p. 1800), so that this definition has overtones of realism, of

presenting something concrete. The second synonym, 'counterfeiting', suggests a movement away from presenting a realistic image. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a usage cited from 1622 shows the term to be used as 'to pretend to be (a person, etc)' (Onions, 1973, p. 438), a meaning which pertains today and that has overtones of presenting something that is unreal. Alexander (2004), in his note on the early modern use of this term, provides the phrase 'making after a pattern' (p. 10) and Heninger suggests 'produce by artifice' (Heninger, 1989, p. 256). The early modern use of the term, Heninger states, would often carry positive overtones of making, as the Latin verb '*fingere*', to make, is part of the derivation of the word. The first meaning Sidney presents suggests something concrete and real, whilst the second suggests a more artificial, constructed quality.

The third synonym which Sidney utilises is the phrase, 'figuring forth'. This denotes actually creating something, of making a 'figure', understood in contemporary Elizabethan usage as a shape, devised form or diagram. The preposition teamed with 'figuring' is 'forth', which suggests a movement, as if the figure is in some way coming out of, or emerging from, the maker, which conjures up images of a god-like creation, an idea that Sidney suggests at other points in the text. Sidney has therefore created a tripartite, dynamic definition of *mimesis*, outlining his allegiance and interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of *mimesis*, where what the artist produces is not of inferior quality to reality, as Plato would have it. Poetry, Sidney argues, is something real, which is re-presented in a new form, following a pattern or the process of *imitatio*, that emerges from the maker in a 'figure' or shape. Aristotle's definition of *mimesis* as the representation of what could be, of possibilities, clearly stands behind Sidney's definition of the way that something new is made by the poet by 'figuring forth' works of art. Sidney directly challenges Platonic ideas of art and poetry, being inferior copies of the ideal world.

This dynamic definition of poetry is the rhetorical proposition of Sidney's argument, central to the oration. Sidney applies his triadic interpretation of the term *mimesis* to the metaphor of 'speaking picture' to characterise the process of poetic creation. Again this idea had classical forebears. Alexander (2004) notes that this idea relates back via Plutarch and Horace to Simonides' 'painting is silent poetry

and poetry talking painting' (p. lviii). The qualities that painting and poetry possess are seen as being in some way equivalent. The use of the metaphor of the speaking picture, however, is Sidney's original touch. Sidney's use of metaphor conflates the two artistic mediums, so that they become one. It enables a 'link between the author's representation and the teaching and delighting the reader' (Alexander, 2004, p. lix), so that the required end product of poetry, its success criteria of teaching and delighting, are achieved by the 'speaking picture', which for the reader can potentially be both beautiful and communicative.

Sidney's central proposition defining the term poetry ends with the purpose of 'teach and delight.' This purpose is derived from Cicero's classification of the purposes rhetoric and the effect of the speaker on the audience, the triple goal, defined as, "*docere*, to teach or instruct; *delectare*, to please or interest; and *movere*, to move the emotions" (Vickers, 1999, p. 15). Cicero was on the humanist curriculum for all Elizabethan schoolboys (Vickers, 1999; Hulse, 2000), and with which all contemporary readers would be expected to be familiar. Sidney builds on these familiar purposes of rhetoric and argues that the power of poetry, the 'speaking picture', is actually stronger than that of rhetoric, because (using the Ovidian terms) the poet can create a 'golden world' (p. 9) which is better than the 'brazen' (p. 9) world in which the reader lives:

Only the poet...lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite new forms such as never were in nature...So as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed with the narrow warrant of her gifts but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit. (pp. 8-9)

Sidney portrays the poet as being 'lifted up' with his own creative energy, and creating 'new forms' that are not in nature, but he ranges within the 'zodiac' of his own wit, so that he is imitating the creative process of nature. The image is astrological, implying a universe of potential and suffused with energy, as the poet moves freely in vast poetic spaces. Sidney continues his theme of the powers of the poet:

Nature never set forth the earth in so rich a tapestry as divers poets have done, neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too-much-loved earth more lovely: her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden. (p.9)

Through teaching and delighting poetry will, ultimately, promote virtue. Poetry will do this by “winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue” (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.22). Poetry can do this by moving the reader with its images and teaching them to behave in a more enlightened fashion.

Later in *The Defence of Poesy*, in Sidney’s confirmation or summary of arguments in support of poetry, he describes the poet’s power over his listeners, both child and adult, as he characterises the pedagogical power of poetry:

He cometh to you with words set in a delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner, and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue. Even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste. (p.23)

Woodcock characterises Sidney’s statement of the purposes of poetry as ‘assessment criteria’ (Woodcock, 2010, p. 43) against which the success of poetry can be measured. Sidney states that poets, ‘imitate both to delight and teach; and delight, to move men to take goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved’ (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.7). Poetry is successful because it can ‘ pierce... men’s souls’ (Sidney, 1595/2004, p. 16). Sidney argues that poetry can ‘lead and draw us to as high as perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of’ (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.12). Sidney suggests that poetry, leading to virtue, enables us to leave behind the corporeal body, tainted and diseased with sin, and move towards the more heavenly, virtuous realms, associated with the spirit. Listening to and reading poetry is a pleasant experience, which draws in the reader like the child with flavoured medicine, and like medicine has properties that improve and help us overcome the weakness and illness of the body.

In the narration section of Sidney’s argument, the central part of the oration, he describes the process by which poetry can ‘lead and draw’ (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.12) the reader away from their infected state:

The skill of each artificer standeth in the idea or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself. And that the poetry hath that idea is manifest by delivering them forth in such excellency as he has imagined them; which delivering forth also is not wholly imaginative, as we are wont by them that build castles in the air, but so far substantially it worketh, not only to make a Cyrus, which had been but a particular excellency as nature might have done, but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses, if they will learn aright why and how that maker made him.' (p.9)

Sidney expresses here what he sees as the specific skill of the poet. He uses the Platonic concept of "idea", signifying for Plato the unchanging form of a thing that resides in the realm beyond the world of appearances, but then characteristically provides his own synonym for this term, "fore-conceit", by which he means the poet's own original conception in his mind which he wishes to express (Duncan-Jones, 1989, p. 374). Sidney takes the term associated with Platonic concepts and shifts the meaning to align with his own arguments about poetic creation. Sidney then characterises the poet as delivering forth the "fore-conceit", that which is conceived in the poet's mind and not in the perfect realm, in a creative process, on the page. However, more than just creating something to read about, a hero, the poet "bestows...many Cyruses" on the world, because the reader will learn from these examples and behave in heroic fashion and become themselves a Cyrus. We might read about Achilles and imitate his behaviour, so poetry is thus an inspiration for manly action, a "companion of camps" (p. 37). By this process, Sidney argues, will poetry influence readers to behave in a morally correct fashion.

Sidney draws a contrast between the strengths of the poet who is more successful in obtaining his outcomes than the philosopher and historian. Sidney imagines the figures of a historian and philosopher walking towards him with their arguments. The philosopher comes towards him badly dressed, looking gloomy "with a sullen gravity" (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.13) making arguments which nobody can understand. The historian approaches him "loaden with old mouse-eaten records", equipped with facts but boring to his listeners. By contrast, the poet creates a "perfect picture" (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.16) for his arguments and draws the listener in with his tales, in striking contrast to the unintelligible philosopher and dull historian. Sidney's argument, directed at the "poet-haters" (Sidney, 1595/2004, p.31), lays out his argument in defence of poetry.

Drawing on an extended array of predeceasing texts, Sidney brings together a number of the key arguments that were being fought over in the early modern period, and specifically those of Plato and Aristotle. He summarises the qualities that mark out poetry as different to other disciplines, notably philosophy, history and rhetoric. His central metaphor, that which differentiates poetry from other disciplines, is the “speaking picture” (p. 10) of poetry. This speaking picture of poetry, he argues, engages its audience, delighting, persuading and teaching. For Sidney, the power of poetry to “strike, pierce ... possess the sight of the soul,” (Sidney, 2004, p.31) is what gives it its remarkable power. One aspect that this study seeks to explore is that the way in which students and teachers in a contemporary context view the significance and relevance of the poetry of the early modern period to readers today. Looking at the ways in which Sidney expressed early modern ideas about the power of poetry to draw in its audience and influence their actions can provide a number of key markers around which to explore ideas and attitudes of students and teachers today about their reading and reception of early modern poetry.

2.7 George Puttenham’s *The Art of English Poesy*: Significance of proportion, rhetoric and materiality in poetry

George Puttenham’s *The Art of English Poesy* (1589/2004) will now be explored, as he provides insight into another dimension of early modern ideas about poetry which is of relevance to this study. Puttenham’s treatise concentrates on elements that are more specifically linguistic and material than Sidney’s, who has a more philosophical approach to poetry. *The Art of English Poesy* was written in the 1570s and substantially updated in the 1580s, still being added to as it went to print in 1589, three years after the death of Sir Philip Sidney (Alexander, 2004). Puttenham came from a very different social background to Sidney, as although he was a courtier his social standing was ambiguous (May, 1999) and his treatise presents poetry as an art that can be learned. Vickers (1999) observes that Puttenham was “convinced of the need for poetic expression to be unified”(p. 21) at a time of such literary proliferation of forms and texts. *The Art of English Poesy* is an uneven work, characterised as being “a babble of aesthetic discourses” (Hulse, 2000, p.59) but it

provides a highly significant “repository of normative [Elizabethan] views about poetry” (Alexander, 2004, p. lxxv). This text explores a different, but equally important, set of themes from the poetic theory of the early modern period which provide conceptual paradigms to explore with students and teachers of early modern poetry today in the subject of English. For Puttenham (1589/2004), the very essence of poetry is that it appeals to the ear:

Speech by metre is a kind of utterance more cleanly couched and more delicate to the ear than prose is, because it is more current and slipper upon the tongue, and withal more tuneable and melodious, as a kind of music, and therefore may be termed a musical speech or utterance, which cannot but please the hearer very well. (p. 62)

Puttenham emphasises the musical and physical qualities of poetry, as it is “cleanly couched” or artfully arranged and “delicate”, implying delightful and joyous to hear (Alexander, 2004, p. 62). Metre is the element that marks out the poetry, so “musical speech”, which is “tuneable and melodious” cannot fail to please the corporeal “ear” of the hearer. Poetry, according to Puttenham, is also more easily uttered by the speaker, as it is “slipper” upon the tongue, by which he is perhaps referring to the effect of rhyming and rhythm in the patterning of the words rolling off the tongue. Therefore, he states, both the speaking of poetry by the tongue and the listening to poetry by the ear is a more pleasing physical experience than that of speech without metre. The comparison of music with poetry in Sidney is also a recurrent image, and he also stresses the pleasure of it, using grand metaphors to convey the significance of it, such as the ‘planet-like music of poetry’ (p. 54), whilst Puttenham characteristically delineates the minutiae of the experience.

There was a direct equation assumed by Renaissance theorists between a type of poetic music and the emotions it could evoke and Puttenham explores this in his discussion of the relationship between emotion and rhyme:

Which manner of situation, even without respect of the rhyme, doth alter the nature of poesy and make it either lighter or graver, or more merry or mournful, and many ways passionate to the ear and the heart of the hearer, seeming for this point that our maker by his measures and concords of sundry proportions doth counterfeit the harmonical tunes of the vocal and instrumental musics... your proportions differ, and breedeth a variable and strange harmony not only in the ear but also in the conceit of them that hear it. (pp. 125-126)

Puttenham suggests that poetry “doth counterfeit” music, using the verb in a similar way to Sidney’s use of it in his definition of *mimesis*, where counterfeiting is associated with patterning or producing by artifice (Alexander, 2004; Heninger, 1989). Puttenham is very conscious of the material, physical quality of poetry and describes anecdotally a court culture where poetry is used physically and materially. He notes that poetry can be carried and that it can be remembered, that it is ‘briefer and more compendious, and easier to bear away and be retained in the memory’ (p. 62). These elements of memorability and portability are significant in an early modern culture where poetry is less stable and fixed in print than the texts that have come to us today (Hebron, 2008; May, 1999). Poetry is distributed and circulates amongst groups of people, sometimes in manuscript and sometimes in print. Puttenham’s observations particularly on the significance of memory for poetry also has a significant resonance in the way in which poetry, and early modern poetry, has been encountered in the subject of English, both in the ensuing debates about English and its constitution as a subject and in editorial practice with regard to poetry of the period (Ferry, 2001).

An area of early modern poetic debate into which Puttenham provides very original insights is the organisation of material within poems into stanzas and verses. Alexander (2004) notes that “no one had previously treated the subject of English versification in any great detail” (p. 371) so that ‘Book Two...opens a new avenue to our understanding of English Renaissance poetry’ (p. 371). Puttenham discusses in great detail elements of proportion in verse which he delineates as residing in the five areas: staff (stanza), measure (metre, rhythm), concord (rhyme), situation (appropriateness of poetry to material) and figure (shape). For Puttenham, poetry must work through proportion which must be right for subject, material and situation. Sidney mentions proportion fleetingly as an element of poetry, but Puttenham provides very detailed observations on the way that Poetry must demonstrate decorum, be appropriate and fitted to the circumstances.

One very interesting element of Puttenham’s discussion to a modern reader is his discussion of “staff” or stanza form. Puttenham presents an analysis of stanza forms for their appropriateness to the content that the poet is expressing. He discusses the way that different length stanzas suit different material. He defines

the term “staff” as being like a stick that bears along the body of the poem, supporting it and giving it strength. He gives various examples such as that of a seven-line stanza as being suitable for a grave or historical poem and provides Chaucer as an example of these. Puttenham’s reading of Chaucer here demonstrates the potential differences in the way that he is interpreting the work of Chaucer to that of a contemporary reader, now.

Puttenham’s analysis of “measure” brought him into the debate that was ongoing in the early modern period, over the ways in which stanzas should be organised, whether they should be guided only by Classical principles or by new rules that apply to vernacular verse, written in English (Ascham, 1570/2004; Daniel, 1603/2004). Classical verse was organised solely by variety of line lengths (Alexander, 2004) guided by the number of syllables in the lines. Sidney makes brief reference to this debate, but does not come down to agree or disagree with those who argued for classical versification. Puttenham, however, does assert very clearly that the poet, writing in English, can use the new modes of versification that were developing. He argues that poets can connect lines of a stanza by either rhyme or line length. The structuring of a poem by using rhyming rather than line length indicates a definite shift towards a poetry that is particularly English and was “of great importance in subsequent poetic practice” (Alexander, 2004, p. 377). Puttenham argues the suitability of English for rhyming, ‘For this purpose serve the monosyllables of our English Saxons excellently well’ (p. 120), because the qualities of monosyllabic words or the less complex syllabic words by comparison with romance languages work well within a rhyme scheme. Rhyme in English poetry is an ongoing area of debate in the discussion of poetic form and Puttenham is commenting here at a crucial moment in the development of the literary genre.

The most original aspect of *The Art of English Poesy* (1589/2004), which provides very revealing insights into early modern thinking about poetry, is Puttenham’s discussion of patterns of rhyming and connection with the visual aspects of poetry. Puttenham analyses the way that visual patterning in poetry is interlinked with the aural effects of the text. He writes, “ocular proportion doth declare the nature of the audible, for if it pleaseth the ear well, the same represented by delineation to the view pleaseth the eye well, e converso” (p.126).

The two qualities feed into each other and combine to create the perfect outcome. Puttenham provides diagrams to illustrate the way that line length and rhyme relate to each other. In this mode of awareness of words as physical objects having a particular signification, Puttenham reflects “an increased awareness during the Renaissance of the material basis of language in its visibility as written marks and its audibility as spoken sounds” (Elsky, 1983, p.246). Puttenham is interested in the visible symbolism of emblems or devices and their significance as things. Many orthographical treatises were written in the sixteenth century, such as Thomas Smith’s *De recta et emendata linguae Anglicaescriptione, dialogus* (1568) and Richard Mulcaster’s *The First Part of the Elementarie* (1582), in which “their common premise [is] that written language imitates speech, and that letters are manmade signs that represent the sounds of the spoken word” (Elsky, 1983, p.246). An emphasis in schooling on the process of writing and the proper formation of letters allowed letters to acquire a “status of things in the Renaissance” (p.246) as well as being understood to possess “symbolic significance”(p.248).

Integral to Puttenham, and early modern thinking, about poetry is that it uses rhetorical figures. Puttenham’s *The Third Book Of Ornament* examines the relationship between rhetoric and poetry and gives English names to classical rhetorical figures, such that his “serious purpose is to show that Greek and Latin names are not mysterious and sacred hieroglyphs but words directly expressive of the action of a figure” (Alexander, 2004, p.lxiv). Some examples of this are “Asteismus, or the merry scoff...Hyperbole, or the overreacher; otherwise called the loud liar” (Puttenham, 1598/2004, p. 162). Puttenham characterises the figures in lively, humorous and very physical way, but one that is highly expressive, interpreting the Classical learning for an English audience, reading poetry in the vernacular. There is a recurring image used by Puttenham of rhetorical figures as clothing. The poet must clothe his writing in the way that a courtier clothes his or her body. He writes at the beginning of Book Three:

And as we see in these great madams of honour, be they for personage or otherwise never so comely and beautiful, yet if they want their courtly habiliments or at leastwise such other apparel as custom and civility have ordained to cover their naked bodies, would be half ashamed to greatly out of

countenance to be seen in that sort, and perchance do then think themselves more amiable in every man's eye when they be in their richest attire – suppose of silks or tissues and costly embroideries – than when they go in cloth or in any other plain and simple apparel, even so cannot our vulgar poesy show itself either gallant or gorgeous if any limb be left naked and bare and not clad in his kindly clothes and colours.’ (p. 133)

“Colours” are rhetorical figures, which Puttenham insists must be present to make vulgar, or vernacular, poetry “gorgeous” and ready to present itself. Puttenham examines various rhetorical figures and the ways in which the poet may use them. He categorises them as those which work in a pleasing way, purely on the ear, “auricular”, those that affect the mind and reason, “sensable” and those that please both the ear and the mind, “sententious” (p.149). Puttenham categorises classical figures under his specific categories, giving his own definitions of the figures and examples of how they have been used in poetry, either that of his own or of contemporaries, such as Sir Philip Sidney or Queen Elizabeth I.

Puttenham provides an original insight into early modern poetic practice, which illuminates early modern thinking about the development of poetry at such an explosive moment for literary practice (Alexander, 2004; Hulse, 2000). He argues for English poetry in its own right, with forms and practices different from Classical poetry. He emphasises the rhythmic qualities of poetry, the importance of English rhyming and the significance of the visual in poetic construction. Puttenham also describes a world where poetic action is highly significant and related closely to rhetoric (Waller, 1993; Hulse, 2000). The insight provided by Puttenham gives the contemporary reader a glimpse into ideas about poetry that resonate clearly today in debates over the forms and style of poetry, and provide material specifically for discussion with students and teachers that is the purpose of this study.

Both Sir Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy* (1595) and George Puttenham's *The Art of English Poesy* (1589) put forward arguments about the significance and power of poetry. Both of these theorists are regarded as being central to understanding the way that early modern readers and writers thought about imaginative literature (Alexander, 2004; Hulse, 2000; Vickers, 1999; Waller, 1993). Where the two writers are similar is in their desire to produce distinctively

English treatises on poetry that is written in the English vernacular. They both discuss poetic forms that suit the English language, debating forms of versification that derive from Latin and Greek texts. Both draw ideas from Classical texts and engage in debates that many were entering in the early modern period (Vickers, 1999; Kinney, 2000). Both seek to blend Classical sources in their analysis of poetry of the period, and seek to differentiate the qualities of poetry from other disciplines. Music features in both as significant analogues for poetry and both seek to engage with Aristotelean and Platonic concepts of mimesis and imitation. Sidney's *Defence* is a masterpiece of oratory, "the most brilliant piece of aesthetic writing of the Tudor age" (Hulse, 2000, p. 59) whilst Puttenham's *Art* exhibits "tongue-in-cheek pedantry" (Alexander, 2004, p. lxiii) . Where the texts differ is in what Sidney argues is the significance and moral power of poetry and Puttenham's highly detailed theories of English language and style.

All the elements of early modern poetry discussed by Sidney and Puttenham can provide fertile material to explore in this study of the teaching and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English. Attitudes and perceptions held today by teachers and students towards poetry of the early modern period are in many ways echoes of those held by these two writers, so their ideas are a rich repository of themes to probe in this research. The attitudes and perceptions of teachers and students can also be explored through the arguments that align over the debates on the relative use of the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern*. There are also striking contrasts between current readings of early modern poetry and those of a contemporary readership (Alexander, 2004; Hebron, 2008), where the intervening time period and change in cultural and linguistic practice can make such poetry seem alien and strange. The key concepts and debates this section can provide insight into the tensions between the way that poetry from the early modern period is perceived and read today, by students and teachers, and the way the poetry was produced, read and perceived in the early modern period, in England.

Chapter 3: Literature Review (B) The place of early modern poetry in the establishment of the English curriculum in the nineteenth century

3.1 Introduction

Early modern poetry experienced a resurgence of interest in the nineteenth century, as interest in the whole period of the Renaissance grew (Norbrook and Woudhuysen, 1992), having fallen out of favour with readers and critics towards the end of the seventeenth century (Ferry, 2001). Therefore, the second section of this literature review will address how and why early modern poetry came to be on the curriculum in English schools at the end of the Victorian period. The attitudes of two key figures, Matthew Arnold and Francis Palgrave, who were influential in this reception of the poetry into the school and university curriculum will be addressed in this section.. It will begin by examining the most influential poetry collection of the nineteenth century, Francis Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* (1861/1940), which has not been out of print since the first date of publishing (Eaglestone, 2000). The establishment of English as a subject in the primary curriculum and the ideas of Matthew Arnold will then be examined, as he is a key figure in the establishment of the subject of English, of literature and specifically of poetry. Matthew Arnold very much admired the ideas and poetry of what he termed the *Renascence* and advocated the study of specific poets by school pupils. These two figures have had a very strong influence on the way that the English curriculum for poetry has evolved and their ideas still resonate today in debates over how poetry should be framed and encountered in the subject amongst English teachers (Eaglestone, 2000; Davison, 2009). This section will address the change in the way that early modern poetry was viewed at the point at which the subject of English was entering into the state education system for all children.

Also addressed in this section will be the struggles over the development of English as a university subject and debates around the place of early modern poetry specifically in the Higher Education curriculum in the key moment of the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

The ideas of the report *The Teaching Of English in England* (1921), otherwise known as the *Newbolt Report* will be addressed, as one the most important

documents in stating the philosophy and ideals of the subject of English in the wake of the First World War (Davison, 2009; Eaglestone, 2000). Like Arnold, the authors of *The Newbolt Report* viewed the early modern period in English literature as one which all pupils should aim to understand and study. The startling increase in estimation of early modern poetry at university level will then be reviewed, as the development of English in the Higher Education system is examined. Running parallel with these developments are important anthologies of poetry from the early modern period, which will be addressed in the final section.

3.2 The significance of Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury*

Francis Turner Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*, published in 1861, was a landmark text in the popularisation and reading of early modern poetry in the nineteenth century. Anthologies of poetry had been popular in the early modern period, with the first extant printed anthology being Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes* (1557), which encouraged many imitators over the course of the following eighty years. However, poetry of the early modern period had fallen out of favour in collections of poetry after the Restoration, where at first political circumstances and then fashion led to the poetry being 'virtually ignored' (Ferry, 2001, p. 102). Ferry observes that the anthologies in the eighteenth century, 'encouraged the vague impression that there were no shorter poems before the Restoration worth preserving' (p. 103) and they only started to appear again in collections at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Palgrave picked up on this growing interest in early modern poetry and included two out of four sections in *The Golden Treasury* representing poetry of the early modern period.

Palgrave was an art critic and an employee of the government education department (Clausen, 1980), whose project was to select and disseminate poems that he regarded as possessing the highest qualities and having the most significance in the English tradition. The title of *The Golden Treasury* implies a collection that is valuable, like gold, and that, as a treasury stores valuables for its owner, so the book stores poems that are valuable and worth preserving for the nation. Palgrave states in the preface to the collection that his selection for the *The*

Golden Treasury is different from other contemporary collections by including, 'all the best original Lyrical pieces and songs in our language, by writers not living – and none beside the best' (Palgrave, 1861/1940, p. ix). His intention is to create a canon, by stating 'all' to describe the number, and 'best' to describe the quality of the contents of his particular anthology. In the dedication of the book to Tennyson, Palgrave refers to the volume as 'a true national Anthology'.

Palgrave's name for the collection, *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*, makes clear that he is only selecting a limited range of poems. He provides a definition of lyrical poetry in the preface as being where poems turn on 'some single thought, feeling or situation' (p. ix). As Palgrave only selected lyrical poems he therefore excluded other genres of poetry, such as narrative, comic or religious. Palgrave also used the type of rhyme as a criteria, excluding blank verse and ten-syllable couplets, along with 'all pieces markedly dramatic' (p. ix) or those containing humour. Palgrave's definition of poems as suitable for selection include also those that exhibit the qualities of unity and brevity: 'we should require finish in proportion to brevity, -...above all, that Excellence should be looked for in the whole than in the Parts' (p. x)

Another of Palgrave's aims is pedagogical. He writes in the dedication that:

If this collection proves a storehouse of delight to Labour and to Poverty, - if it teaches those indifferent to the Poets to love them, and those who love them to love them more, the aim and the desire entertained in framing it will be fully accomplished. (Palgrave, 1861/1940, p. vii)

Palgrave's use of the verb 'framing' is very significant here. A picture frame surrounds and influences the eye of the viewer to some degree. Palgrave is using the term in more dynamic way, as it sums up his project to select and actively guide the reader in their reading and interpretation of his selected texts. In the dedication he explains that he made the selection to provide an overview of the thought and cultivation of the 'English mind' (p. xi) and he observes that the poems are 'treasures which might lead us in higher and healthier ways than those of the world' (p. xi). To support the pedagogical purposes of the volume, Palgrave provided notes on the poems and introductions to the four books in the back of the volume. The arrangement of the volume had a twofold appeal. For those who had a classical

education, or those who admired a classical education, Palgrave included quotes from Virgil as headings for sections and an untranslated fragment of Euripedes as an epigraph in the 1861 edition (Ferry, 2001). The price of the 1861 edition was very modest by comparison to other volumes on the market (Ferry, 2001) and the size, in one volume and in a handy pocket size, also added to its appeal.

Palgrave put together what he perceived to be gems in the treasure of the English language, that could ultimately travel wherever English was the dominant language spoken, throughout the empire. Palgrave organised the four books of the volume in such a way as to present the development of English poetry as passing through phases in a natural and evolutionary manner. He characterised each book with a key author; Shakespeare, Milton, Gray and Wordsworth, representing their time periods, and clustered other poems with them not in a temporal fashion but orchestrated to represent 'gradations of feeling or subject' (Palgrave, 1861/1940, p. xi) so that the collection is itself a unity, which he compares to the symphonies of Mozart or Beethoven, and thus is pleasing to the reader as well as instructive.

Within *The Golden Treasury* early modern poetry was featured significantly. However, the selection was one that reflected a very particular view of the period, the Golden Age of pastoral. The arrangement of the sections was deliberately orchestrated to support this viewpoint. Looking at the first section of the collection, Palgrave's orchestration can be analysed. Palgrave characterises the first section of the collection as being the book of Shakespeare and the section opens with *Spring*, a lyric that describes a vision of the pastoral, complete with lovers and shepherds. The second lyric, *Summons to Love*, evokes a pastoral scene again, with zephyrs and classical goddesses. In the notes at the back to guide the reader's interpretation of the first book, Palgrave writes of it:

There is here a wide range of style...a general uniformity of tone prevails. Few readers can fail to observe the natural sweetness of the verse, the single-hearted straightforwardness of the thoughts:- nor less, the limitation of subject to the many phases of one passion, which then characterised our lyrical poetry.
(Palgrave, 1861/1940, p. 536)

Palgrave is clearly framing 'the reader's interpretation of the selected poems. He chooses not to include a variety of genres, and very few women writers are

represented in the selection. From a modern viewpoint his selection is very unrepresentative of the plethora of forms and writers available to him; however, the collection was to mark a resurgence in popularity of poetry from the early modern period. *The Golden Treasury* was immediately popular on its publication and is regarded as 'the most important anthology in English literary history' (Clausen, 1980, p. 275). The anthology was reprinted three times in the year of its publication, in a children's version in 1875 and in a second edition in 1891 and was reprinted twenty four times before the end of the century (Clausen, 1980; Ferry, 2001).

The effect of framing a period in the way that Palgrave does, is to attempt to limit the interpretation of the reader, to reduce 'the poems' meaning to a single, limited context' (Norbrook and Woudhuysen, 1992, p. xxi) so that they are received by the reader as static objects with fixed meanings. Attitudes towards this framing of early modern texts changed over the course of the twentieth century. Waller (1993) traces these changes in attitudes towards early modern poetry through examining various editions of poetry of the period and what texts are chosen, and what are not. He starts with the selection of texts of *The Golden Treasury* and states that Palgrave's selection of poems, "became the basis for the modern canon of Elizabethan poetry...It assumed the best poetry had an immediacy that made it easily accessible to the educated reader" (Waller, 1993, p.4). Waller also comments that the poetry dealt with "supposedly universal human experience" (Waller, 1993, p.4). Inherent in Palgrave's stated aims are attitudes detected by Waller and other critics as elitist, that it is the "educated" reader who will appreciate the treasures that will lead them to "higher and healthier" ways of the world. However, the views of Palgrave can be seen to be similar to the attitudes of Matthew Arnold and Sir Henry Newbolt, as well as those of F.R. Leavis and others of the early twentieth century, which will be dealt with later in this chapter. Like Matthew Arnold before him and Sir Henry Newbolt afterwards, Francis Turner Palgrave was appointed Oxford Professor of Poetry in 1885, due in large part to the success of *The Golden Treasury* and Clausen comments on the legacy of this particular volume as being:

The Golden Treasury continued to be read as something approaching holy writ by poets and scholars long after his death. His effect on common readers of poetry,

though less easily documented, has almost certainly been greater. Indeed, Palgrave probably did more than anyone else to create late-Victorian poetic taste and assumptions about poetry – a set of assumptions which, as far as non-academic readers go, have probably not changed very much in the eight decades since he left the scene. (Clausen, 1980, pp. 288-289)

Palgrave created an extraordinarily influential anthology that brought a particular version of English poetry, and particularly early modern poetry, to a very wide audience in a handy and popular form. When English was introduced as a subject in secondary schools at the beginning of the twentieth century, *The Golden Treasury* appeared as recommended reading for all pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 (Shayer, 1972), indicating how close the anthology had come to defining what English poetry was and how important a collection it had become. This study is addressing the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English in a contemporary context. The influence of the selection of poems by Palgrave and any enduring attitudes held by students and teachers towards the poetry of the period can be investigated through exploring the way their ideas may echo those of Palgrave.

3.3 Matthew Arnold, early modern poetry and elementary schooling

Matthew Arnold very much admired the ideas and poetry of what he termed the *Renascence* and advocated the study of specific poets by school pupils. Arnold's idea had a very strong influence on the way that the English curriculum for poetry evolved and his ideas still resonate today in debates amongst English teachers over how poetry should be framed and encountered in the subject (Eaglestone, 2000; Davison, 2009). This section will look at the way that poetry entered into the curriculum for elementary schools in the nineteenth century. It will examine the ideas of Matthew Arnold as the most influential advocate for the subject of English and the teaching of poetry in the Victorian period. Marshall argues about the development of English as a subject that, "no discussion of its origins is complete without a look at the philosophy of Matthew Arnold" (Marshall, 2000, p.18). The section will also address the way that Arnold viewed the early modern period and its significance for the school curriculum. It will then present the way that poetry was part of the first statutes for the subject of English in 1871. The Newbolt Report

will then be examined, which was the major departure point for a review and revitalisation of English at the beginning of the twentieth century. Particular focus will be on what the report expressed specifically about the role of poetry and the period of the early modern within that. There are remarkable similarities between the ideas of Arnold and those expressed in the Newbolt Report, which will be examined at the end of this section.

The nineteenth century was a period of great expansion in schooling and saw the introduction of universal elementary education. The study of poetry was enshrined in the statutes of 1871 when English entered the curriculum for elementary students as a specific subject (Mathieson, 1975). Highly significant in the design of the English curriculum was Matthew Arnold (Davison; 2009; Eagleton, 1983; Jeffcoate, 1992; Mathieson, 1975). Mathieson (1975) avers, “For the growth of English, his passionate insistence upon the value of literary culture has been of outstanding significance” (p.37). Arnold held the position of school inspector from 1851 to 1887. Arnold was also a writer of poetry and Oxford Professor of Poetry for ten years. Arnold repeatedly recommended that poetry, including early modern poetry, be included in the curriculum in elementary schools. In Arnold’s eyes poetry was intrinsic to culture. Arnold makes his argument for culture in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869/1993). Arnold explored his ideas about the importance of culture, earlier expressed in his essay *Democracy* (1861/1993), because Arnold linked culture and democratic values together. For Arnold, culture was embodied in literature and philosophy, expressed as “the best knowledge, the best ideas” (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 79). Arnold conceptualised culture as an active force in its own right, not just as something that we can acquire and possess, using active verbs often to characterise the way in which culture operates, such as moving, conceiving or achieving. Arnold used culture in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869/1993) as a way to discuss “an ideal of human life, a standard of excellence and fullness for the development of our capacities – aesthetic, intellectual, moral” (Collini, 1994, p. xxi).

Also significant in Arnold’s conception of culture is that it is not innate. A full understanding of culture is acquired only by effort and by exposure to the results of previous generations. In his view, this was within the reach of everybody, given the right opportunities, and not something confined to a small class. Culture, he argued,

is begotten of curiosity; it should not be divisive and “an engine of social and class distinction” (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 58). In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869/1993) Arnold drew on to outline the qualities of culture: “The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being more intelligent” (p. 59). This desire to perfect oneself has within it a social aspect, “the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it” (p. 59). Culture is not just curiosity but “a study of perfection” (p. 59) a “moral and social passion for doing good” (p. 59). In drawing a comparison with religion, about which Arnold was ambivalent, he stated that religion and culture strive towards the same end. Both place perfection as internal, as a move away from animality, so that in the endless growth of culture “the spirit of the human race finds it ideal” (p. 62).

Arnold holds the Renaissance up in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869/1993) as the most admirable historical moment since the Hellenic period, a time when man’s intellectual impulses in Europe, including England, were in the ascendant. The term *Renaissance* was first used in English in 1845, with the sense of an artistic and cultural movement originating in Italy (Onions, 1973, p.1794). Arnold substituted this term with one of his own, *Renascence*, which he provides as an English form of the French noun. He observes on the use of this spelling, “I have ventured to give to the foreign word *Renaissance*, - destined to become of more common use amongst us as the movement which it denotes comes, as it will come, increasingly to interest us, - an English form” (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 226). Arnold is confident about the utmost significance of the Renaissance as a model towards which society should strive. He is also clear that the intellectual spirit of the European movement has specific importance to England and Englishness and thus ‘englishes’ the French term. He describes the period as “the great re-awakening of Hellenism, that irresistible return to humanity in nature and to seeing things as they are, which in art, literature, and in physics, produced such splendid fruits” (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 135).

Arnold characterised the Elizabethan period in England as a time of “splendid spiritual effort” (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 64) in which society was

concerned with the pursuit of higher ideals and of cultural renewal. In *Culture and Anarchy* Arnold defined two historical forces that he saw influencing society and the way that individuals think and behave: *Hebraism* and *Hellenism*. Arnold felt that these two forces, equally important, should be in balance. Hebraism, associated with Christianity, fixes on the ideas of duty, moral rules, obedience and the subjugation of the self and its chief concern is to act rightly. In contrast to this is the idea of Hellenism, originating with the Greeks, which he defined as concerned with knowledge and beauty, with the play of ideas and the charm of form. The Elizabethan period was one in which the force of Hellenism was uppermost, whilst Arnold felt that the balance in contemporary Victorian society was too much towards the ethic of Hebraism. Further than that, he felt that the ethic of individualism in Victorian politics and public life was too far reaching, embodied in the phrase "Doing as one likes" (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 81), which was itself a term that was current in Victorian politics (Collini, 1994). He wrote that society will drift towards anarchy if everyone pursued their own ends. He argued that there was not a proper notion of state in England. He believed that there was a need for a more collective viewpoint of nationhood, so that the state represents "the nation in its collective and corporate character, entrusted with stringent powers for the general advantage, and controlling individual wills in the name of an interest wider than that of individuals" (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 83). If the state is collective and represents the best for all individuals, then it can be informed by the principles of culture. Arnold argues that culture is collective, and with it all classes will judge with "right reason – which provides principles of authority as opposed to anarchy" (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 89). The *Renascence* is where Arnold argues that collectively society was engaged in an "uprising and reinstatement of man's intellectual impulses and of Hellenism" (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 226) and therefore a period bound together by culture in a common calling.

Arnold believed wholeheartedly that culture should be transmitted; "We must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible" (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 79). He allied culture, sweetness and light, very strongly with poetry, "culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry" (Arnold,

1869/1993, p. 67) and he believed in the power of poetry to be part of the education of pupils in culture. He writes:

A power of reading, well trained and well guided, is perhaps the best among the gifts which it is the business of our elementary schools to bestow;...good and sterling poetry learned for recitation...should be made to contribute to the opening of the soul and imagination, for which the central purchase should be found in *poetry*. (Arnold, 1910, pp. 191-192)

Arnold also allies poetry in his report of 1880 with the formation of the “soul and character” and with “high and noble principles” (Arnold, 1910, pp. 200-201). Arnold believed in a “humanized democracy” (Novak, 2002, p. 595) and that schooling played a pivotal part of this. This “humanizing” was best brought about by the use of English literature, and in its highest form, poetry. Arnold writes of poetry that:

No man... can fully draw out the reasons why the human spirit feels itself to attain to a more adequate and satisfying expression in poetry than in any other of its modes of activity. For to draw them out fully we should have to go behind our own nature itself, and that we can none of us do. (Arnold, 1880/2000 p. 549)

Arnold believed that the reading of poetry has the power to guide us in interpreting our own lives; “we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us” (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 241). The more poetry we read, the more we have to base our judgements in life upon. Further than that, we need to be clear about what we read and its quality. Readers need to be aware of what good quality poetry is and be able to judge it, as poetry is so important. He writes, “The best poetry is what we want; the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can” (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 243). Arnold believed that the foremost poetic writers were Dante, Homer, Shakespeare and Milton, who he argued should be viewed as markers of quality, as “touchstones” (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 247). Arnold believed that all readers should study and be aware of their qualities of content and style and he advocates that readers should memorise and be completely familiar with these markers of quality:

There can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have

always in one's mind lines and expressions of the old masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry...when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently. (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 247)

Arnold provides key quotes as exemplars of touchstones from the four poets, two of whom are early modern writers, who possess in his view "the highest poetical quality" (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 249), consisting of the qualities of substance, manner and style. Arnold asserts that the work of these writers possesses "a mark, an accent, of high beauty, worth, and power" (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 249). Arnold argues that rather than define the stylistic qualities of such touchstones of poetry, it is better to provide specimens, so that the characteristics can be demonstrated. Like Sidney, Arnold refers to Aristotle to support his arguments about the substance of the poetry and its possession of "a higher truth and a higher seriousness" (Arnold, 1869/1978, p. 250) and like Sidney he refers to Aristotle's belief in the superiority of poetry over history to illustrate ideas and move readers with language.

Arnold's vision of poetry being in the curriculum in this way, as the study and memorisation of poetic touchstones, first entered the curriculum in English as a specific, optional, subject in 1871. Arnold's vision of poetry being the study and memorisation of poetic touchstones can be seen in the syllabus of the Revised Code in 1876. The syllabus from 1876 placed a great deal of significance on poetry and its role in forming the ideas of young people. Arnold argued the importance of memorisation in his report of 1861, as something that provides discipline and that "out of the mass of treasure thus gained" could grow "a more precious fruit", nourishing the taste of "all but the rudest natures" (Arnold, 1861 in Mathieson, 1975). English as a subject became compulsory for all elementary students in the Code of 1882, where "intelligent reading" was compulsory for all elementary pupils (Ellis, 1985, p. 98). Within these standards, the only named authors for reading are from the early modern period, Shakespeare and Milton. An interesting comparison can be made to today's National Curriculum, where the only one named author is

one from the early modern period, William Shakespeare. The Newbolt Report picked up Arnold's ideas again regarding the key significance of poetry again in 1921.

Arnold's views have caused much debate, not least over the question of who is to determine what aspects of culture exemplify "sweetness and light" (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 79) and who should determine what should be studied. Mathieson (1975) notes Arnold's "considerable ambivalence" (p. 42) between his ideas of egalitarianism and his "occasionally contemptuous" (p. 42) attitude towards the masses in his writings. Eagleton (1996) argues that Arnold's ideas are deliberately formulated such that culture will have the anaesthetising effect of "controlling and incorporating the working class" (Eagleton, 1996, p.21) into the social hierarchy and that will ensure stability, not revolution. If education does not provide culture, the working class may rebel; "if the masses are not thrown a few novels, they may react by throwing up a few barricades" (Eagleton, 1996, p.21). Eagleton addresses the way that Arnold, and others after him such as Henry James and F.R. Leavis, believed that Literature could take on the mantle of religion:

Since such [moral] values are nowhere more vividly dramatized than in literature, brought home to felt experience with all the unquestionable reality of a blow to the head, literature becomes more than just a handmaiden of moral ideology: it *is* moral ideology for the modern age. (Eagleton, 1996, p.24)

Eagleton (2000) notes that to modern readers Arnold's notions of sweetness and light might seem "a little simplistic" (p. 12), but balances that with the fact that in the nineteenth century "many great hopes were pinned on English literature" (p. 12). Arnold was convinced of the power of poetry, and Willinsky (1990) argues that he played the "pied piper" in arguing for its centrality in the curriculum for English:

Arnold played the pied piper of poetry for the cause of national education; he convinced education's overseers to create a legal mandate for English literature's place in the lives of the young. Where the Bible served as the reading matter of the poor in Charity Schools, and the classics served the privileged in Grammar Schools, English poetry had little place at all until it finally gained status as a "specific subject" in 1871. (p 345)

Arnold's ideas resonate is much that is written about the position of poetry in English (Eaglestone, 2000) and his ideas, particularly about the selection of texts and the role of memory, can be used as a springboard to explore the ideas and attitudes of teachers and students in the contemporary moment, and their reading and reception of early modern poetry.

3.4 *The Teaching of English in England (1921)* and early modern poetry

Arnold's ideas were very important in influencing the position of poetry in *The Teaching of English in England (1921)* or *The Newbolt Report*. This is one of the key documents regarding the development of English in the twentieth century (Davison and Dowson, 2009; Jeffcoate, 1992). The authors of the report invoke the 'spirit' of the Renaissance to help revive the flagging spirit of the English, as Arnold had done in *Culture and Anarchy (1869/1993)*.

The development of English as a subject, and the position of poetry within it, was affected by the influence of the First World War, as was the nation's view of itself. Eagleton (1996) observes, "the deep trauma of the war, its almost intolerable questioning of every previously held cultural assumption, gave rise to a "spiritual hungering"...for which poetry seemed to provide an answer," (p.26). The committee for the report into English was chaired by Sir Henry Newbolt, who as Arnold had been before him, was Oxford Professor of Poetry from 1911 to 1921. Other members of the committee included established literary critics and professors, such as Cambridge academics Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson. The authors asserted the belief that the subject of English, and more specifically the study of literature and poetry, has the power to improve character and to transform society. Jeffcoate (1992) argues that the report laid "the basis for its (the subject of English) theory and practice until at least the 1960s" (p. 34).

The Newbolt Report stated that the education of the infantry soldier in the First World War had been poor. Expressed in the *The Newbolt Report* was a view that education, as it stood, was not good enough and was a divisive force in England. The report expressed its philosophy that education can and should be a unifying force:

A liberal education...is the greatest benefit which could be conferred upon any citizen of a great state, and that the common right to it, the common discipline and enjoyment of it, the common possession of the tastes and associations connected with it, would form a new element of national unity, linking together the mental life of all classes by experiences which have hitherto been the privilege of a limited section. (Newbolt, 1921, p. 15)

These sentiments echo those of Arnold, that classes can be unified through a joint pursuit of a 'liberal' learning. The authors expressed very strongly that the right of all to a liberal education was not being provided by the curriculum as it stood. This liberal education could be provided for all by the subject of English. Literature was, they argued, a powerful force:

If we use English Literature as a means of contact with great minds, a channel by which to draw upon their experience with profit and delight, and a bond of sympathy between the members of a human society, we shall succeed. (Newbolt and Board Of, 1921, p. 15)

The authors put their views into a historical perspective, referring to the Renaissance and the humanist curriculum. They refer to the founding of St Paul's School in 1509 and also to Ascham's writing regarding the proper education and approach to schooling pupils in imitation and the classics. The authors write:

What the Renaissance educators did clearly perceive...was that the essence of a liberal education is the study of a great literature. They found in the classics the source of all culture and enlightenment; the best that had been thought in the world expressed in the best possible way.....And the spirit in which they approached that literature which to them was all in all was the spirit which we desire to recapture on behalf of the English to-day. (Newbolt, 1921, p. 30)

Arnold's conception of the significance of *Renascence* is echoed here, with the reference to the 'best that had been thought' expressed in the 'best possible way'. The authors of the report invoke the 'spirit' of the Renaissance to help revive the flagging spirit of the English, as Arnold had done in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869/1993). Arnold had predicted that the spirit of the movement would come to be more important for the English nation. The authors of the Newbolt Report construct the Humanism of the Renaissance as the values which underpin their version of what English should be in schools. Their bracing assessment of the liberal values of the Humanist curriculum was one that 'was concerned with all the pursuits and activities proper to man; hence the term "Humanities"'. It aimed at

producing the good citizen, possessed of sound judgement in practical affairs, and at the same time it strongly emphasised the aesthetic' (p. 29). Their vision of the values of the period was one that chimed with what was needed for their own, through the teaching of 'great literature' (p. 30)

However, what the report observed to be the current pedagogical practices had deviated a long way from their optimistic, humanist origins. The current state of the subject of English had become ossified, applying the principles of grammatical analysis as the only way to teach the living language; 'the old classical system is still responsible for a warping of method in the teaching of English, for a futile application of time-honoured forms' (p. 52) and made the subject of English 'seem despicable and unworthy' (p. 53).

The solution, states the report, is to renew the conception of English to encompass an emphasis on speech, writing, reading aloud and specifically the reading of English literature. The report suggested eleven positive methods for supporting standards in English, which included discussion, reading and interpreting works of literature and analysing passages from books. With specific regard to poetry, the report refers to Arnold and his "repeated appeals for the study of poetry by children" (p.86) and quotes comments by Arnold regarding the relationship between poetry and the soul and 'its extreme importance to us all' (p. 49) and that 'in particular poetry, is the finest of the fine arts' (p. 204). In exploring the significance of literature, and poetry, the authors defined it as possessing two elements, the contemporary and the eternal:

On the one hand, Shakespeare and Pope tell us what Englishmen were like at the beginning of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th centuries. On the other hand they tell us what all men are like in all countries and at all times...There is a sense in which...Homer and Dante and Milton, Aeschylus and Shakespeare, are all of the same age or none. (Newbolt, 1921 p. 205)

They argue that to study literature and treat it as history is to ignore its nobler and 'more eternal' (p. 205) qualities. Citing *Paradise Lost* as an example, they illustrate the two strands of the text; the contemporary being the significance of Puritanism to the text, but also arguing that the text stands 'utterly above any history' (p. 205) and possess qualities that stand outside the historical period and are significant to

any reader in any time period. In this way, the authors argue for the eternal qualities of texts, and like Sir Philip Sidney, they draw unfavourable comparisons with history and philosophy, adding science also to the analogy:

Works of science or speculation (philosophy), as of history, are often superseded and cease to have more than a historical interest. A great work of art, whether it be the Parthenon or Paradise Lost, can never be superseded. (p. 206)

The Teaching of English in England argues very strongly the case that teaching English as a subject across the board, from school to university and in the training of teachers, is a force for social good. Snow (2008) views the report's authors as providing a view of teaching English as "a central humanising discipline" (p. 19), echoing the report's references to the Humanist roots of the subject of English, and the desire of the authors to foster national identity and unity. Eagleton (1993), by contrast, observes that the Report's sentiments about Renaissance and the role of Shakespeare and Milton were "nostalgic" (p. 25) and vaguely militaristic, whereby "new recruits" (p. 24) would be "armed" (p. 25) with a "conveniently packaged version of their own cultural treasures" (p. 25) so that they could "sally forth overseas secure in a sense of their national identity, and able to display that cultural superiority to their envying colonial peoples' (p. 25). These critics have responded to the moral alignment in the report between literature and ideology and the author's views that being able to use English, learning from texts written by great English writers, will enable a common spirit to be fostered. Literature in the report is fore-grounded as the wellspring of these benefits, and more specifically within literature is poetry, which is the finest version of English Literature. As with Arnold's writing, Shakespeare and Milton are two writers from the early modern period that are cited specifically as possessing these qualities.

3.5 The establishment of English as a university subject

This section will address development of English as a university subject. The previous sections have reviewed the way in which English as a subject came to be on the syllabus as an option in elementary schools by 1871 and as a compulsory subject in 1880. Within that, the role of poetry and more specifically early modern

poetry has been addressed. The influence of Matthew Arnold has been examined along with the development of ideas about English and poetry in schools expressed in the Newbolt Report. This section addresses the development of English as a university subject specifically at Oxford and Cambridge and the debates around the way that the subject of English should be composed. These debates provide a background for ideas around the curriculum in English, and more particularly the position of early modern poetry within that curriculum, which is the concern of this research.

By 1904 English had moved into the curriculum for secondary schools. The 1906 Regulations for Secondary Schools recommended particular texts for students to read. As in the 1880 recommendations for elementary pupils, Milton and Shakespeare are present on the list. For pupils of 14 to 15 “simpler poems” from five poets, including Milton, were recommended, along with poems from selections “such as *The Golden Treasury*” (Shayer, 1972, p. 29), which moved on at ages 15 to 16 with “more advanced poems” from the same poets and *The Golden Treasury*. However, English as a subject was seen as inferior to classics, so Grammar and Public schools were hostile to the subject and it was not present on their curriculum at this date (Mathieson, 1975). In parallel with the establishment of English as a school subject, the position of English in universities at the end of the nineteenth century was being debated. Shayer (1972) characterises the position of English as lying “very uneasily between history on the one side and grammar and rhetoric on the other, with classics hovering balefully in the background” (p. 3). He is summarising the problematic notions around the identity of English as an academic subject, whereby the study of literature was developing in its own right as an academic pursuit, rather than being perceived as part of another discipline such as classics or history.

Eaglestone (2000) argues that at the end of the nineteenth century, English literature did not exist at universities in any formal sense, but was the subject of strong debate (p. 12). Eaglestone uses two essays to summarise the arguments from the two opposing sides. On the one side, supporters argued that education provided beneficial and civilised moral values for those that received it, in the spirit

of Matthew Arnold. Collins' book, *The Study of English Literature* (1891) argued literature in education, and particularly a university education, had new duties and responsibilities "to instruct people of all classes, not just the well off. Literature and the interpretation of literature...could be taught to students of any background" (Collins, 1891 in Eaglestone, 2000, p. 13). Eaglestone summarises that for Collins, studying literature was a moral and aesthetic education that was a healthy influence on character and opinion. Representing the other side of the debate, Eaglestone cites Henry Nettleship, an Oxford Professor of Classics, who thought the study of English literature had very little worth and was only studied by those with lesser minds. Nettleship believed that only the historical study of English Language had enough rigour to count as a subject, which he argued in his pamphlet of 1887 *The Study of Modern European Language and Literatures in the University of Oxford*. The ideas of Nettleship were dominant at the end of the nineteenth century. The first English degree in Oxford 1893 involved the study of subjects such as German, Old English and the history of the language, with poetry serving only as sources of examples and novels not worthy of study at all. Most of the students for this degree were women, reflecting the status of the subject expressed by a witness for the Royal Commission in 1877, which observed of the subject that it was a suitable subject for "women...and the second and third rate men who...become school masters" (Eagleton, 1996, p. 24).

Having been made compulsory as a secondary school subject in 1904, in 1906 The English Association was founded, as a first step towards professionalising those who taught English. Dymoke (2000) argues the significance of this, as the association aimed to promote English "as a definable curriculum subject in its own right" (p. 9) and to counter the conservative influences of the classical tradition such as those espoused by Nettleship and the Oxford group. Mathieson (1975) argues, however, that the situation was different in Cambridge (p. 125). She discusses the writing of E.M. W. Tillyard, who reflected on the haphazard situation of English in Cambridge at the period. Mathieson notes that, in contrast to Oxford, "before the war much thought was being given by some scholars at Cambridge to the establishment of an English Tripos concentrating mainly on the critical study of literature as defined by Matthew Arnold" (p. 126). In 1913 Benson proposed a

School of English for Cambridge “deeply influenced by Arnold” (p. 126) which linked literature with the cultural health of the country, a theme picked up on in the Newbolt Report after the First World War and later again by F.R. Leavis. Matthieson summarises the position of English in universities in 1918 as being present in London, Cambridge and Oxford. The focus of the Oxford degree was linguistic, and there were language and literature elements in the London and Cambridge degrees, but the literature element was one that focused on the facts of the literature or the relative merits of good taste in the subject (Mathieson, 1975, p. 131).

The development of English at Cambridge after the war was influenced by two key figures, F.R. Leavis and I.A. Richards. Richards joined Cambridge University in 1919, when the first Tripos that included English as a subject was examined (Storer, 2004). Eagleton states that, “the fact remains that English students in English today are “Leavisites” whether they know it or not” (Eagleton, 1996 p. 27). Writing in the magazine *Scrutiny* for a period of four decades, starting in the 1920s, Leavis and others made their case, that the impact of industrialisation, the loss of agricultural communities and the development of the mass media was a danger to modern society and that literature was a force for moral good, humanising readers. These ideas are reminiscent of those of Matthew Arnold. Leavis argued that English tradition could be passed on in universities to an elite capable of understanding and dealing with ideas, who would in turn pass these ideas on themselves to others, maintaining some defence against the encroachment of the mass media and popular culture. For Leavis, some writers were seen to possess the moral qualities that enabled them to be deemed ‘English’ enough, and some were not. Eagleton neatly summarises what has come to be termed “the canon” suggested by Leavis:

With breathtaking boldness, *Scrutiny* redrew the map of English Literature in ways from which criticism has never quite recovered. The main thoroughfares of this map ran through Chaucer, Shakespeare, Jonson, the Jacobean and Metaphysicals, Bunyan, Pope, Samuel Johnson, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Austen, George Eliot, Hopkins, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot and D.H. Lawrence. This was ‘English Literature’: Spenser, Dryden, Restoration Drama, Defoe, Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, Browning, most of the Victorian Novelists, Joyce, Woolf and most writers after D.H. Lawrence constituted a network of ‘B’ reads interspersed with a good few cul-de-sacs. Dickens was first out then in; ‘English’ included two and a half women, counting

Emily Bronte as marginal case: almost all of its authors conservative. (Eagleton, 1996, p.28)

The tone of Eagleton's summary suggests that he is very sceptical about Leavis' definition of "The canon" (Eagleton, 1996, p.28). Leavis proposed the study of what he deemed suitable authors, in a clear, precise fashion. He and his fellow Cambridge academic I.A. Richards championed the study of English Literature as a university discipline. They advocated a close attention to text, but paid little attention to the historical and cultural contexts within which the texts were produced. Leavis writes, '[The critic] is concerned with the work in front of him as something that should contain within itself the reason why it is so and not otherwise' (Leavis, 1952, p. 224) so that the text is perceived as self contained. Leavis (1952) proposes that the reader with 'true judgment' (p.224) will feel and react spontaneously to the quality and life force of a literary work. In this way, by the 1920s, English literature started to be an accepted subject to study at university. On Leavis' list, cited above, are many of the authors that would be accepted today as early modern poets; Shakespeare, Jonson, The Jacobean and the Metaphysicals, and who can be found represented on exam syllabuses and university curricula today. This study seeks to explore the ideas and attitudes of students and teachers in a contemporary, educational context, who are inextricably involved with a conception of the subject of English strongly influenced by the ideas of Leavis and the Cambridge School (Davison, 2009; Eagleton, 1996).

3.6 Changing attitudes to early modern poetry in the twentieth century: T.S. Eliot, Cleanth Brooks and F.R. Leavis.

Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* established 'what became the basis for the modern canon of Elizabethan poetry' (Waller, 1993, p. 4), which remained relatively unchanged until the 1980s. These changes to the canon of early modern literature will be discussed in the next section. What also changed over the course of the twentieth century was ways of reading and evaluating early modern texts. This change in the way of evaluating early modern texts has had a profound impact on which early modern poems teachers and students will encounter within their study of English, and is therefore of significance to this study. In the *Golden Treasury*, the

texts selected were viewed by Palgrave and his associates as 'treasures' (Palgrave, 1940, p. xii), glimpses of an ideal world, that embodied universal experiences. In particular, Palgrave stressed that the poems should represent the individual genius of the poet. This view of Elizabethan poetry underpinned the most comprehensive anthology of Renaissance verse of the early twentieth century, the *Oxford Book of Sixteenth-Century Verse*, edited by E.K Chambers in 1932.

One of the writers who most influenced the reputation of early modern poetry and helped bring it into the central sphere of study was T.S. Eliot. In particular, two of his essays are regarded as 'central' (Leitch et al, 2010, p. 953) in the development of attitudes towards early modern poetry: *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919/1975) and *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921/1975). In *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, Eliot argues against the belief that poems represent the isolated genius of one writer, or individual excellence; rather he argues that poets must write as part of a tradition and he (it is always a 'he' in the essay) must be part of that tradition. T.S. Eliot's definition of tradition is seen as European and, belonging within that, English. He argues that poets must understand the tradition they come from and write in relation to that:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. (Eliot, 1919/1975, p. 38)

By this definition, poetry contains influences from many predecessor texts. When a new poet comes along, he is judged against the tradition and the tradition is itself re-evaluated because of the new poet's works. In this way tradition is seen as organic, rather like Arnold's conception of culture, as an abstract life force. Eliot suggests thinking of the canon of poetry as 'a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written' (Eliot, 1919/1975, p. 40). Eaglestone (2000) observes, 'For Eliot, a tradition isn't just past but a living thing, organised, structured and present in the mind – or even in the bones – of a great writer' (p.54). As each writer must write with the past in the bones, Eliot states:

The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves...which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them...so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. (Eliot, 1919/1975, pp. 38-39)

An ideal order is, in other words, a canon of great works. Writers need to have these things in their bones to write a great work, so as Eaglestone (2000) observes, 'we must have internalised and accepted not only the lists of works that people like Palgrave decided were great but, more importantly, the criteria that guided their judgment'(p.54).

In *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919/1975) Eliot also defines what a poet needs to exhibit in order to have talent, to join the ideal order, or the criteria for fitting into the tradition. Eliot argues that poetry is not an expression of personality, rather it is a loss of personality. Poets should, he argues, surrender themselves to a process of 'depersonalization' (p. 40) and become a medium in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. He characterises the poet as an empty vessel that can receive and recombine impressions; "The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together." (Eliot, 1919/1975, p. 41)

Eliot uses the language of science to characterise the process of poetry. He argues against what he elaborates in *The Metaphysical Poets*, (1921/1975) the way that poetry of the nineteenth century became too embroiled in emotion. A great poet, he states, is like a catalyst, which enables reactions but is in itself untouched. The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material' (p. 41). The materials of poetry, the passions, are recreated and reformed for the reader through the language choices selected by the intellect, 'the mind' of the poet. The experience of the reader is one of two elements, emotion and feelings:

The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one

emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. (p. 41)

It was in his essay *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921/1975) that Eliot argues that the poetry of Donne exhibits the elements that means that it belongs to the canon of English poetry. 'Metaphysical' poetry is the term coined by Samuel Johnson for the lyrical poetry of the first half of the seventeenth century, comprising a number of poets such as John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell and Henry Vaughan. By the time Eliot was writing, these poets had fallen very much out of favour with publishers and readers. This trend had been happening since the seventeenth century, as expressed for example in Dryden's complaint about the poetry of John Donne in 1693 and Samuel Johnson's in 1793 in his *Lives of the English Poets*.

In *The Metaphysical Poets* Eliot takes up Johnson's complaints about seventeenth-century poetry and argues against his points. Johnson used the term 'metaphysical' to characterise qualities of seventeenth-century poetry in a derogatory fashion. Eliot quotes Johnson's attack that 'the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together' (Eliot, 1921/1975, p. 61) and provides counter-arguments putting forward his assertion that the poetry expresses unity and a fusion of images and associations. He states that the imagery used by the metaphysicals was not yoked by violence, but that the images are strongly intellectual and 'compelled into unity by the operation of the poet's mind' (p. 61), so that a new unity is created by telescoping images and multiple associations, which makes the poetry vigorous. Eliot uses Donne as a model exemplar of how the poet's mind works:

A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other...in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes. (Eliot, 1921/1975, p. 64)

This process which for Eliot Donne exemplifies, is the process which Eliot has described in the *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1921/1975) in which the poet's mind is a receptacle that enables experiences to be stored and recombined into a new compound. Donne's poetry deserves, in Eliot's view, to belong to the living organism of the poetic canon, as do the other members of the Metaphysical school.

Eliot argues that since the seventeenth century English poetry had moved away from being intellectual to being reflective, and draws unfavourable comparisons with later poets, such as Tennyson and Browning, who Eliot regards as sentimental and unbalanced. Eliot argues that as modern life is complex, so must poetry be to interpret it: 'poets in our civilisation...must be *difficult*' (Eliot, 1921/1975, p. 65). Eliot argues that as metaphysical poetry is intellectual, complex, it must be concluded that 'Donne, Crashaw, Vaughan, Herbert and Lord Herbert, Marvell, King, Cowley at his best, are in the direct current of English poetry' (Eliot, 1921/1975, p. 66). Eliot had argued the place of metaphysical poetry in the ideal order or canon and 'as soon as it appeared, the difficult seventeenth century metaphysical poets...became models of good poetry' (Leitch et al, 2010, p. 953).

Drawing on the work of Eliot and Richards, another significant figure in the progress of the critical theory of poetry was Cleanth Brooks. He also contributed to the re-evaluation of the significance of seventeenth century poetry that was occurring in this period. He was very influenced by the work of I.A. Richards and read it 'perhaps a dozen times' (Leitch et al, 2001, p. 1214). Brooks wrote in reaction to what he saw as the over emphasis in contemporary graduate studies on historical and biographical readings and protested the lack of attention to the 'interior life of the poem' (Leitch et al, 2001, p. 1214). Brooks' highly influential work *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947/1968) analyses eight poems; four were written by early modern writers: Donne, Shakespeare, Milton and Herrick. Brooks states that these writers are 'close to the central stream of tradition' (Brooks, 1947/1968, p. 157). Brooks explicates his concern with the interior life of poems, looking at the way in which they achieve harmony through metrical pattern and metaphor. The 'well wrought urn' of the title expresses Brooks' conception of a poem being a text which is united and complete within itself, with the structure of the poem providing

this unity: 'the essential structure of a poem...resembles that of architecture or painting: it is a pattern of resolved stresses'(Brooks, 1947/1968 , p.166). Pattern is the key element which provides this structure, in which a poem achieves harmony through metrical balancing and metaphor. A poem, according to Brooks, is expressing the ideas of the poet through a harmony, which consists of, 'meanings, evaluations, and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of the balancing and harmonizing connotations, attitudes and meanings.' (Brooks, 1947/1968, p.159)

Brooks' conception of poems, as argued in *The Well Wrought Urn*, demands that the reader pay close attention to poetry, which he suggests is 'a closer reading than most of us give to poetry' (Brooks, 1947/1968, p. 8). Like I.A. Richards, he argues that this close reading of poetry must be foremost in the reader's interpretation of a work, which had not previously been the pedagogical emphasis in the developing subject of English. He observes:

The Romantics, for example, usually preferred to discuss the poet rather than the poem, and so, for that matter, have most of the teachers of literature during the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries. To many university teachers still, the normal way of approaching a poem is through a study of its sources and background and its genesis and development in its author's mind. (Brooks, 1947/1968, p. 8)

The first essay in the *The Well Wrought Urn* is on John Donne's *The Canonization*, in which Brooks demonstrates his approach to the close reading of text, establishing the idea of harmony and unity. At the opening of this essay Brooks refers both to T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards and their close observation of language in poetry, particularly their observations on metaphor, to support his own. His argument is that the unity of *The Canonization* is built around paradox, that this is the linguistic structure which binds together the ideas of the poem. The paradox at the heart of the poem is the metaphor of worldly lovers being canonised as saints for their profane love. This paradox might be viewed as Johnson did, as heterogeneous ideas yoked together by violence, but Brooks argues that this paradox unites all the images in the poem. The paradox unites the way that the poem works through a series of images in which the lovers are portrayed as both moths and the candles

which burn them, as one in a phoenix which is burned and rises again and interred in a well-wrought urn in a tomb at which pilgrims wonder and worship. The disparate images in which the lovers' canonisation is portrayed is memorialised, ultimately, in the poem itself, which is immortal. Brooks summarises, 'The urn to which we are summoned, the urn which holds the ashes of the phoenix, is like the well-wrought urn of Donne's *Canonization* which holds the phoenix like lovers: it is the poem itself' (Brooks, 1947/1968, p. 15). Brook's conception of a poem that is united and harmonious, encapsulated in the title of his book, is exemplified by the work of John Donne and other early modern poets, who belong to the living tradition identified by T.S. Eliot.

3.7 The significance of twentieth-century anthologies

The influence of Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* (1861/1940) echoed throughout the twentieth century, with his anthologist's influence of selection, editing and framing for the poems. In 1900 *The Oxford Book of English Verse* was edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, with a revised edition of 1939, in which Quiller-Couch has clearly modelled his collection on *The Golden Treasury* (1861/1940). He writes in the preface:

Few of my contemporaries can erase – would wish to erase – the dye of their minds from the late Mr Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*: and he who has returned to it again and again with an affection born of companionship on many journeys must remember not only what *The Golden Treasury* includes, but the moment when this or that poem appealed to him, and even how it lies on the page. (Quiller-Couch, 1939, p. x)

Quiller-Couch arranged his collection purely on chronological principles, thereby not seeking to orchestrate the readers' responses in the way that Palgrave did, yet he still sought only to select what he viewed as 'the best' (Quiller-Couch, 1939, p. vii) and modernised spelling. Quiller-Couch also, like Palgrave, undertook intrusive editorial practices, such as removing stanzas from poems that he deemed to be weak or superfluous, and presenting single stanzas from much longer poems so that they appear as short lyrics, in the way that Palgrave did. In the 1972 version of the collection, *The New Oxford Book of English Verse*, Helen Gardner sought to include a

wider spread of verse than those in the previous editions and included satiric, political, epistolary, and didactic verse. Corelis comments on the collection that:

We may see Gardner's edition as standing at a crossroads, or perhaps a better metaphor would be a hilltop, a critical vantage point from which a broader and more judicious survey may be made than previously, but which is also farther removed from the ordinary social world. (Corelis, 2013)

This movement away from anthologising in the way that Palgrave had done, selecting and framing poems to present one editor's vision of a period of poetry, is demonstrated in three much more contemporary collections of poetry. In 1999 Christopher Ricks updated *The New Oxford Book of English Verse* and resumed the original title of *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. He broke with tradition by leaving the poems unmodernised (Ferry, 2001). Norbrook and Woudhuysen (1992) comment on the impact that the changing editorial practice had. It challenges the framing of poems by a single editor such that a poem's meaning is limited and single (p. xxi), and works to support the reading of poems "on many different levels" (p. xxi), so that:

To read poems in their social and ideological contexts, as parts of a social process rather than static objects, is often to gain dimensions of meaning that are lost in a homogenizing, timeless approach. (p. xxi)

The effect of not modernising the poems and trying to make the presence of the editor less obtrusive in a collection is something that Waller (1993) comments on in *English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century*. He looks at two collections of early modern poetry, Norbrook and Woudhuysen's (1992) *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse* and *The New Oxford Book of Sixteenth-Century Verse* (Jones, 1991). These editions seek to reflect the impact of changing critical practices. Therefore these editions include alternative, previously marginalised voices such as those of women or writers from outside London and the South East. They attempt to place the texts selected within their social, political and theological contexts and represent a multiplicity of viewpoints and outlooks. Waller sums this approach up as presenting the poems as 'social acts rather than isolated objects' (Waller, 1993, p.7).

This section has examined the journey of poetry onto the curriculum in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, along with the changes in perception of early modern poetry by readers. The resurgence in popularity in reading early modern poetry has been examined through the impact of Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* (1861/1940). Matthew Arnold's belief in poetry and the impact it has on the minds of young people and on the nation has also been explored. The discussions of poetry, and specifically the perception of early modern poetry, present in The Newbolt Report and the critics of the Cambridge School and the New Criticism have been addressed. These various strands summarise the ways in which arguments around the value and significance of various poets from the early modern period have been perceived within the subject of English. The complex relationship between editors, editorial practice and selection has been explored, as collections and editions of poetry have controlled the way the students and readers of poetry read and receive all poetry, including that of the early modern period.

Chapter 4: Literature Review (c) Current discourses around the teaching of poetry and early modern poetry in the subject of English

4.1 Introduction

The final section of this literature review examines ideas and concepts from research into poetry pedagogy in a contemporary context which are important for this study on the teaching and learning of early modern poetry. Research focused specifically on the teaching of early modern poetry in school and university environments is sparse, however there is a rich seam of research on the teaching and learning of poetry more generally in the English curriculum. The research presented in this section has been selected to help focus on elements of the pedagogy of poetry more generally that informs this particular study.

The first concept that this section addresses is reading and the application of reader response theory. This theory has been highly influential in the research on the pedagogy of poetry, particularly evident in the work of Benton (1999) and Pike (2000/2003), and is one that provides a background to possible readings of early modern poetry within contemporary educational contexts. The second concept is the importance of aural qualities of poetry, as stressed by Puttenham (1589/2004) and explored in a contemporary educational context by Alexander (2013) and Gordon (2009). Research into the role of memory, also so significant to Puttenham (1589/2004) and Arnold (1869/1978), is covered in the writing of Whitley (2013), which he argues is “overlooked” (p. 44) in the current field of research into poetry. The final concept, the role of the teacher in the reading and reception of poetry in the subject of English, is explored through the research of Cremin (2013) and Collins and Kelly (2013). These four concepts have emerged as important historically and in contemporary contexts in discussions over the pedagogy of poetry.

The final focus of this chapter is work that relates specifically to the early modern period. The discussions of the academics and editors Alexander (2004), Hebron (2008), Wynn-Davies (2003) and Waller (1993) will be addressed, looking at how critically and historically informed reading of the poetry is important when considering the reading and reception of poetry of the early modern period today.

The authors all consider the differences between the way that the poetry would have been received in the early modern period, and the way that it is read and received now. They argue that it is the very difference in the poetry to that of our own time period, the *gap* between the experience and context of the poetry and that of our own, combined with very strong elements of similarity to our own experience that gives the poetry of the early modern period significance to a contemporary readership. The last section, therefore, will address specifically what has been written about ways to read early modern poetry, today, and subject-specific writing about the teaching of early modern poetry at the contemporary moment, such as the work of Conroy and Clarke (2011).

4.2 Reader response theory and the pedagogy of poetry

The first concept that this section addresses is reading and the different varieties of reading that have been researched to illustrate readers' interactions with poetry. Specifically, the reader response theory of the relationship between reader and text has been widely applied to the pedagogy of poetry, particularly in the work of Benton (1999) and Pike (2000(a)(b)/2003). Both of these researchers have drawn on the reader response theory of Rosenblatt (1994).

Rosenblatt (1994) argues that a poem is an "event in time" (p. 12) or process that happens in a time frame, within which reader and text come together and "compenetrate" (p. 12). As with a musical performance, a poem only exists when it is being read:

All art aspires to the condition of music, not in the sense of banishing all ideas or referents, but in the sense that the primary concern is with the musical event itself, that the performer's attention is absorbed in what he is producing *as he plays*. Once he stops playing, we are left only with the black and white score. (p. 29)

As in a performance of music, Rosenblatt (1994) argues that a "live circuit" (p. 44) is set up between a performer/reader and a text. The formation of a "live circuit" (p. 44) between reader and text is a process in which "the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those

symbols channel his thoughts and feelings” (p. 25). The reader brings their interpretation to the words or “verbal symbols”, and at the same time, by focusing the attention of the reader to the associations of those words, the words “channel” the reader’s reactions. She states that “a novel or poem or play remains merely ink spots on the paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols” (p. 23). All readers will have a notion of what, to them, the “inkspots” or words on the page signify, but this will be different to the meaning and associations that others will have of the same word or groups of words. Rosenblatt argues that the same text will have a very different meaning and value to us at different times or under different circumstances.

Rosenblatt (1970) discusses specifically this process with regard to the reading of poetic text. She describes this activity of transformation or transaction between reader and text as *evoking* a poem. The poem acts as both a *stimulus* (p. 30) for the reader, stimulating the reader’s access to their memories and personal associations, and as a *blueprint* (p. 30) to reorder those associations in relationship to what is happening in the text, or to respond to the text. Reading a text is a creative activity, to which the reader brings “personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition” (p. 30). The text brings “into the reader’s consciousness certain concepts, certain sensuous experiences, certain images of things, people, actions, scenes” (p. 30). The poem is thus a dynamic interchange between text and reader.

According to Rosenblatt’s (1970) analogy, a musical performance uses the score to guide the musician’s actions, but the music does not exist until it is played. Once the performance stops, the music stops. So too with a poem, where once the reading by the reader has stopped, the event that is the poem ceases. A poem is an event that happens in a time frame, within which reader and text come together and “compenetrate” (p. 12), or to use the words of I.A. Richards that Rosenblatt cites, “interanimates” (p. 53).

Rosenblatt (1994) outlines two types of reading as being central to her philosophy of textual interaction: that of *efferent* and *aesthetic* reading. The term

effere derives from the Latin verb *efferre*, “to carry away” and characterises reading that is undertaken in order to derive information that can be “carried away” from the text. It is this type of reading that we might undertake in reading a newspaper or a text book. Using this modality of reading, the work could actually be done by someone else for the reader. By contrast, *aesthetic* reading is an end in itself. In the aesthetic mode of reading, what is carried away is not the focus, but the process itself. Using the aesthetic standpoint, reading is for the pleasure that a text brings. Rosenblatt refers to Coleridge’s famous statement about poetry, that; “The reader should be carried forward...not by a desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasurable activity of the mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself” (p. 28). The aesthetic experience is “the journey itself” (p. 28) on which the reader must turn their attention fully to be part of. As in performing a musical piece, the reader is participating in the production of the poem. Both reading standpoints can be taken on one text but, Rosenblatt argues, the primary purpose of reading a poem, is the aesthetic experience. Therefore, in the theory of reading outlined by Rosenblatt, the process of reading poetry is dynamic, with the reader as much involved in the meaning making as the text itself.

Wolfgang Iser also argues that the role of the reader is an interactive one. Iser (1978) proposes that a text contains potential meaning and this meaning is only actualised when a reader brings their own interpretation to it. Iser (1978) argues that a literary work falls between two poles: the text created by the author as one pole, the artistic, and the other pole being the aesthetic, which is the “realization accomplished by the reader” (p. 21). The literary work itself must lie in the middle, between the two end points, as the text only lives when it is realised by the reader. This realisation cannot take place without the text itself, so the literary work must be dynamic and it exists virtually. As in Rosenblatt’s conception of the poem, the literary work is the product of the interaction between reader and the text. Within a text, Iser states that there are set of shared meanings that are culturally acquired, which he terms the “repertoire”. This he defines as “all the familiar territory within the text” (Iser, 1978, p. 69). This “repertoire”, the representation of cultural norms or patterns, is shared, to a greater or lesser extent, by all of us. These patterns, or

schemata, provide a “hollow form” (Iser, 1978, p. 143) into which the reader can pour their own interpretations. This ensures that to some degree the meaning of a text, the reader’s interpretation, is fixed through the patterns or schemata that derive from a reader’s shared cultural repertoire and provide a shape for interpretation. The “text mobilises the subjective knowledge present in all kinds of readers and directs it to one particular end” (Iser, 1978, p. 143). This is very similar to Rosenblatt’s conception of the *stimulus* (Rosenblatt, 1970, p. 30) for the reader, stimulating the reader’s access to their memories and personal associations, and as a *blueprint* (Rosenblatt, 1970, p. 30) for reordering those associations.

The second aspect of Iser’s conception of reading is the reader’s own subjective standpoint. The reader, he argues, “assembles” (Iser, 1978, p.38) meaning out of what the text has provided. The schemata in the text provide the framework, the text “sets off a sequence of mental images which lead to the text translating itself into the reader’s consciousness. The actual content of these mental images will be coloured by the reader’s existing stock of experience” (Iser, 1978, p. 38). Therefore, the text becomes a literary work when the “dynamic happening” (Iser, 1978, p. 22) occurs between reader and text. Like Rosenblatt, this definition is linked to an interanimation between text and reader, within a specific time period.

Mark Pike has explored the role of the concepts of reader-response theory in the pedagogy of poetry of pre-twentieth century poetry, which includes that of the early modern. In his doctoral work, discussed in *Keen Readers; adolescents and pre-twentieth century poetry* (2000a), Pike examines ways to engage pupils in poetry from this period. His starting point is “the widespread antipathy and pupil resistance to poetry” (Pike, 2000a, p. 13) which he hopes to counter by exploring “responsive teaching” (Pike, 2000a, p. 13). Drawing on Rosenblatt (1978) and Iser (1978), he devised ways of teaching poetry that drew directly on reader response methods. He argues that using pedagogies that incorporate reader response, can motivate and engage adolescent readers with pre-twentieth century works. Pike used a longitudinal, three-year case study of six readers preparing for their GCSE English Literature, reading in total fifty seven poems. Of the fifty seven poems used in the study, 15 were pre-twentieth century poems. At the end of the study six of

the students drew the conclusion that they preferred pre-twentieth century poetry. Pike (2000a) concludes:

Given that the readers were selected for their lack of enthusiasm for poetry, their positive responses to and perception of pre-twentieth century poetry is encouraging. The cause of their keenness is attributed, at least in part, to the teaching and learning methodology they experienced which has been described. It has been argued here that a fundamental element of this methodology was the initial emphasis placed upon text as 'stimulus' (Rosenblatt, 1978). The maturation of readers' responses over time has been documented but it has been suggested that 'responsive teaching', which uses readers' responses as a starting point, should be followed by teaching about cultural context and form in order for a full appreciation to be gained by readers. (p. 27)

Pike (2000 a) is tentative in his claims for responsive teaching, but he emphasises that the six readers selected for the study were very negative in their attitudes to poetry at the outset of the study. Although the study is clearly very small, Pike suggests that the findings indicate valid conclusions about using "responsive teaching" (Pike, 2000a, p. 13), based on reader-response theory

Pike expands his arguments about the significance of reader response theory, taking the arguments of Iser (1978) and Jauss (1982) in their analysis of literary texts as offering up perspectives which change and challenge everyday horizons, saying that they present "indeterminacy" (Pike, 2004, p. 143) which "readers can use their imagination to fill" (Pike, 2004, p. 143). In arguments reminiscent of those of Waller (1993) and Conroy and Clarke (2011), Pike (2004) states, "It is the very *difference* (be it social, cultural, ethnic, religious, moral or linguistic) between the world of the text and that of the reader which can provide a justification for pre-twentieth century works being part of the curriculum for ethnically and socially heterogeneous schools in the twenty-first century" (p. 143). Pike argues that is the very challenges presented by poems from a historical context, that are motivating and actually more engaging than poems that are easily

accessible, as long as “responsive teaching” (Pike, 2000a, p. 13) is used artfully by the teacher.

Pike (2000b) explores a related argument to “responsive teaching” (Pike, 2000b, p. 13) but extends it by suggesting that pupils should be taught about literary criticism itself and reader-response theory, so that they will be better able to understand what a poem is, “an event”, and therefore have more confidence when discussing it. He argues that “what poetry is must be examined with those who study it” (Pike, 2000b, p.49). He argues that his PhD studies demonstrated that GCSE pupils are “capable of engaging with sophisticated concepts about the genre and of responding perceptively to challenging ideas from reader-response theory” (Pike, 2000b, p.52) and that “many teachers do not spend enough time exploring the nature of poetry with pupils” (Pike, 2000b, p.42).

4.3 The significance of sound

The second concept explored in this chapter is the significance of listening as an element of reading and responding to poetry. Puttenham (1589/2004) stated the importance of the aural qualities of poetry in the early modern period, describing it as “musical speech...which cannot but please the hearer very well”(p. 62). This element of the importance of the aural qualities of poetry and pleasure is explored in a contemporary educational context by Alexander (2008, 2013) and Gordon (2009), with relevance to the reception of poetry in schools, which is the second concept addressed in this section.

Alexander (2008) argues that listening is a skill that has become undervalued in the contemporary pedagogical landscape in the subject of English in schools:

The increasing dominance of the literacy agenda in the past decade has accelerated the tendency to regard speaking, reading and writing as constituting English as a subject. Listening is seen as a generic skill and any rationale for its inclusion as a profile component of English has been all but lost. (p. 225)

She argues that “reading and writing with the ear are under-valued” (p. 220). In researching the place of listening in the English curriculum, Alexander sent a questionnaire sent to thirty-one heads of English in Northern Ireland. Alexander (2008) summarises her findings:

When asked why they thought listening belonged in the English curriculum, mention of listening to the text or to literature was striking by its absence. There seems to be little received wisdom on why listening is important for the subject or how it is developed within the English curriculum (pp.224-225)

Alexander (2008) concluded that “clarification of the role of listening in the English classroom emerged from the survey as something for which there is a perceived need” (p. 225). Alexander also surveyed students in schools as part of her research; 136 A-level pupils, 44 GCSE pupils and 100 pupils in their first year at secondary school , again through a questionnaire about their own listening and about listening as a part of English. In the results there was “near unanimity” (p. 226) that listening was an important aspect of their English lessons, and Alexander paraphrases that “the stock attitude was that: Listening is a very important part of English. It is a skill that needs to be improved” (p. 226). It is unclear what this paraphrase of the students’ responses particularly adds to the debate about the role of listening, but Alexander’s sample of both teachers and students is a reasonable size, and provides some insight into the way that attentive listening, reading with the ear, is in Alexander’s words the “Cinderella” component of English. She concludes by stating that:

Attentive listening has the capacity to enrich talking, reading and writing in the English classroom. Such attention is threatened by neglect, by conflicting claims, by external pressures and by lack of will. The Cinderella profile component of English still awaits due recognition. (p. 232)

Alexander (2013) builds on her research of 2008, and explores the significance of “attentive listening” (p. 232) to poetry, in her contribution to the 2013 ESRC series of seminars *Poetry Matters*. In her contribution to this, Alexander (2013) argues the absolute need for pupils to be readers of poetry, with a focus on “readers who can

hear the voice of poetry, who read poems aloud and for whom reading a poem is in part an aural experience” (p. 118). She uses two types of definitions of readers first suggested by Donohue (1981). The “graphi-reader”, in Donohue’s definition, “deals with writing as such and does not think of it as transcribing an event properly construed as vocal and audible” (Alexander, 2013, p. 118). The second type of reader, “epi-readers” (Alexander, 2013, p. 118) are inclined, by contrast, to read with the ear and think of writing as if it originates as a transcription of an event that is firstly spoken and heard. The nature of epi-readers is that they participate in the dialogic nature of texts and that “the words on the page are experienced as voice” (p. 118). Alexander argues that poems as texts particularly demand “to be vocalized and heard”(p. 118) and that a poet’s style is “a strategy to restore the poet’s voice”(p.119). In this way, Alexander argues, in order to engage both the visual and auditory imagination, poems in the classroom must be heard.

Alexander (2013) argues that understanding that reading can be conceived of in this binary way enables students and teachers to take into account this crucial understanding of the way that different readers engage with poetry, and that the inclination of graphi-readers will be to not understand the orality that is embedded in the style of a poem. Alexander then identifies a tension in the contemporary situation in secondary schools where the “commodification of poetry teaching” (p. 120) within the current high-stakes assessment system has led to poetry becoming a “naming of parts” (p. 121) and the neglect of reading poems aloud or hearing them read. This “commodification” of poetry has been noted by a number of recent researchers on poetry such as Dymoke (2011) and Hennessy and McNamara (2011).

Blake (2013) responds to Alexander’s (2013) research and reflects on poetry as a multimodal text which invites “interaction with the voice of the poem, and through that interaction to other interactions beyond it” (Blake, 2013, p. 138), observing, “this is poetry as a matter of spokenness, part of a deep cultural heritage of literary meaning making, in which orality is encoded in the form even as it moves into the mono-modality of standard print production” (Blake, 2013, p. 138). She characterises poetry as a “voiced, social experience” (Blake, 2013, p. 138). She observes how Alexander wants young teachers to support pupils in encountering poetry as a “lived, embodied experience, co-constructed in the here-and-now by

the poet and reader” (Blake, 2013, p. 139) and that this is “deeply ethical in its educational context: it is about learning to listen to another’s voice, a listening that is deeply attentive, empathetic and present” (Blake, 2013, p. 139). Poetry as voice allows young people to try out different voices; “this is a wholly different encounter with the “stuff” of poetry to the lists of terminology more commonly encountered in the curriculum materials supporting secondary school English“ (Blake, 2013, p. 139). Blake notes the revival of interest in US, Canada, Ireland and England in memorising and performing poetry and suggests that Alexander’s arguments point to an alternative framing of a pedagogical multiplicity of encounters with poetry as voice “through inhabiting and appropriating the voices of others, across historical time and cultural location, gives young people a far greater richness of resources through which to find their own” (Blake, 2013, p. 140)

The significance of memory, so important to Puttenham and Arnold, is an area which Whitley (2013) argues “may well have been overlooked in contemporary research” (p. 44). Whitley refers to his own work, interviewing poetry teachers from primary to university level, stating:

A disproportionate number of teachers who feel themselves to be strongly committed to poetry also hold a large amount of verse in their own memories. We understand very little about how such memories function, but it is clear that poetry is particularly amenable to being embedded in long-term memory in this way and that those who carry verse in this form inside themselves nearly always experience it as an immensely valuable resource. (Whitley, 2013, p. 44)

4.4 Sound in the classroom

Related to listening is the third concept addressed in this chapter, the significance of sound in the classroom. Gordon (2009) argues that since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1990, poetry in the National Curriculum “has predominantly been presented as a print-based medium” (p.162), in that there are references to hearing poetry in Key Stages One and Two but not Key Stages Three and Four. Gordon (2009) argues that this implies that reading poetry is somehow a more sophisticated approach to poetry than listening to it, “the diminishing role of poetry across the phase implies a model of progression where listening to poetry is considered either a means to an end (a step towards reading poetry from the page)

or a practice inferior in a hierarchy of maturity and sophistication to reading the page” (p.162). The revised curriculum of 2007 was not very different and he summarises, “it appears, then, that curriculum details continue to present poetry as a medium associated with the page rather than the voice” (p.162).

Gordon (2009) suggests a conception of poetry which he puts under the umbrella term of “lifeworld” (p.165), in which a poem is “an articulation of the voice, history and culture – the *life* – of an individual (the poet or an adopted persona)” (p.166) and that “any poetic encounter is a meeting of two *lifeworlds* the first that of the listener or reader, the second that newly unconcealed world projected as poem” (p.166). It follows, he argues, that we can “conceive of classroom encounters with poems, too, allowing for the multiple lifeworlds represented by thirty or so pupils, encountering a poem in the *lifeworld* of a classroom, an elaboration of Rosenblatt’s (1970) notion of a poem as “an event in time” (p. 12). The event is the interaction in the classroom of individuals and poem.

Gordon (2009) builds on his conception of “lifeworld” (p.165), with referring to Eliot’s notion of the “auditory imagination” (Hayward 1965, 89: originally 1933), where Eliot argues that in the imagination the understanding of rhythm and word sound qualities operated at a deeper level than thoughts or feelings. He also refers to Eliot’s ideas about the music of poetry in which he suggests that words are inextricably connected with the rhythms of speech, such that Eliot believes that most modern poetry is meant to be spoken, rather than read silently. Within this context, Gordon presents his data, based on conversation analysis, in which pupils respond to listening to poetry.

Gordon’s (2009) findings demonstrate the centrality of sound to the way that the pupils responded and made meaning out of the poetry. Gordon (2009) demonstrates how the pupils recollected and repeated words that they had heard, replicating also tone, pace, volume and emphasis, which suggested the working of Eliot’s “auditory imagination” (p. 170). The sound of the voice was “central to the orientation to the text”, where “the sound of the voices seemed to *embody* for the pupils a world or culture” (p.172). Gordon (2009) suggests, therefore, that

response is “relative” (p. 172), reminding us of the “broader implications of the ‘lifeworlds’ concept” (p. 172) and that “a heard poem comes to have meaning only relative to its listeners and their response to it” (p. 172). Gordon (2009) concludes that, “the curriculum thus endorses a contradictory and illogical situation where, on the one hand, it seems to recognise features of the materiality of sound as significant to meaning in poetry, while on the other it emphasises encounters with a response to poetry in the silent world of the page” (p. 173). Gordon’s (2009) study is detailed and important to the discussion of readers’ responses to poetry, and potentially to readers’ responses to early modern poetry. Although only small-scale, with ten pupils and one teacher providing the data, the application of conversation analysis to the study of the pedagogy of poetry is timely and significant.

4.5 The role of the teacher and teacher reading practices

The fourth concept, the role of the teacher in the reading and reception of poetry in the subject of English, is explored through the research of Cremin (2013) and Collins and Kelly (2013). The early modern concept of *imitation*, the copying of forms, is echoed in the ways that some contemporary research refers to the need for teachers be immersed in poetic texts. Hulse (2000) observed that early modern writing was filled with “predecessory” (p. 39) texts and that their work was always in dialogue with that of their predecessors and other early modern writers. Both Cremin (2013) and Collins and Kelly (2013) argue the need for contemporary poetry teachers to be conversant with a wide array of poetic texts, in fact to be immersed in poetry, so that there is a broad range of texts with which they are familiar and they can enthuse students with their understanding of the “interplay of texts” (Hulse, 2000, p. 39).

Cremin (2013) writes about her United Kingdom Literacy Association research project *Teachers as Readers; Phase 1*, where she and her team surveyed 1200 primary practitioners, researching the reading habits of primary teachers. The research found that less than 2% of respondents had read any poetry over the three months prior to the survey and only 1.5% noted poetry as their favourite childhood

reading. Cremin (2013) explains one of the stimuli for this research as being the observations by Ofsted (2007), that teachers tend to draw on their own experiences of reading poetry at school or publisher's resources, so consequently there is a very limited 'canon' of children's poetry. Cremin (2013) also refers to an impact of 'high stakes testing' (p. 11) in affecting teachers' reading identities and classroom practice. *Teachers as Readers; Phase II*, was devised in response to concerns about teachers' habits and practices as readers of poetry. Forty-three primary teachers were involved, such that it was a year long project that was "almost exclusively devoted to teachers' own reading and sharing of texts; individually and collaboratively, they engaged in explorations of poetry through art, drama, dance, discussion and writing" (p. 12).

Cremin's (2013) project encouraged individual work into self-selected poets and sharing of texts and teachers documented their learning journeys. Cremin (2013) provides a case study of one teacher, Brenda, who has been teaching for 31 years. During the course of the project, Brenda reconsidered her practice and what opportunities she was giving the pupils to "ponder and wonder, ask questions, engage physically with poems and represent the musical tenor of words" (p. 16). Cremin (2013) observes that 'the data suggest there was a complex interplay between Brenda's enhanced repertoire, her pedagogic practice and her positioning as an adult reader' (p. 18). Cremin (2013) also observes that Brenda's stance strongly influenced her pupils' knowledge about, and pleasure in, poetry. Cremin (2013) concludes that:

If we are to alter the challenging poetry landscape in the primary years, then teachers and student teachers need to consider their identities and attitudes as poetry readers and teachers of poetry, and more research needs to explore the dynamic between teachers' and childrens' reading practices and identities. (p. 19)

Collins and Kelly (2013), in their research with a cohort of forty-nine undergraduate student teachers, using a mixed methods approach of questionnaire and interview, explored the nature of the students' experiences with poetry, as they moved from being a student into the role of a teacher within their placement schools. They conclude that trainee teachers 'encounter tensions in their identities

between being a learner and a teacher' so they, like Cremin (2013), identify the importance of teachers' reading identities and their confidence with teaching poetry. What emerges as a significant element in shaping the undergraduates' experiences in their poetry journeys from primary school is their memories of their teachers and the way that they framed their experiences with poetry (p. 27). Whitley (2013) reflects on the "cyclical process" (p. 44) evident in the data from Collins and Kelly (2013), in the way that they characterise experiences with poetry as being recycled (p. 27).

4.6 Poetry in an Arts Context and Steiner's (1978) definition of Difficulty

In this section, research more specifically into pre-twentieth century poetry is addressed, firstly through the lens of poetry in an arts context (Stevens, 2007), and secondly, using the viewpoint of *difficulty*, specifically that of Steiner's (1978) definition, as this helps illustrate issues to do with pupils' reading of the poetry. This is explored in relation to the ideas of Fleming (1996) and the research of Naylor (2013).

Early modern poetry offers particular dimensions of challenge to readers, given the contextual and linguistic differences to our own age. Steiner, in *On Difficulty* (1978), argues that there are four different types of difficulty to be encountered when one reads poetry: contingent, modal, tactical and ontological. Steiner exemplifies these areas of difficulty by referring to various early modern poems. "Contingent' (Steiner, 1978, p. 27) difficulties are located in the reader. A poem may deal with something that the reader has no knowledge about. These may be elements of the language or cultural context that need to be "looked up" (Steiner, 1978, p. 29). Steiner exemplifies this dimension of "Contingent" *difficulty* by referring to elements of reading Shakespeare and looking up the meaning of the term "Nature" (Steiner, 1978, p. 25), which would lead to "the probing of these words...[in] the dictionary and Shakespeare concordance" and result in "the study of the very dense, central topics in Elizabethan thought" (Steiner, 1978, p. 25).

Modal difficulty is related to the first difficulty. Once the reader has 'looked up' the various elements significant to the poem, there still remains something in the poem the reader finds "inaccessible or alien" (Steiner, 1978, p. 28), something which causes a barrier between the reader and the poem. Using another early modern poem as an example, Steiner teases out how Lovelace's *La Bella Roba* central conceit of describing a whore as a thin skeleton and the prey of the huntsman, is repellent, particularly to contemporary reader, and that this level of *difficulty* cannot be removed through research and homework. This *difficulty* is located in the reader.

The third difficulty, "tactical difficulty" (Steiner, 1978, p. 33) lies with the poet rather than the reader, a deliberate choice by the poet to be obscure. Steiner refers to metaphysical poetry as an example of this, where the poet is choosing to surprise the reader with a conceit, to oblige them to revisit and rethink the deliberate conjunction of two very dissimilar elements in an image. John Donne's conceit of lovers as the two twin feet of a compass in *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* exemplifies this, using a mathematical and scientific image to represent separation and loss. This difficulty is tactical in that it deliberately slows the pace at which the reader gains comprehension. Using the musical term *rallentando*, Steiner argues that this is a tactic to make readers apprehend new, different dimensions to the poetry, as "we are not meant to understand easily and quickly" (Steiner, 1978, p. 35). "Ontological" (Steiner, 1978, p. 41) difficulty is seen in poetry that is purposefully not open to comprehension by the reader. Steiner's definitions of difficulty, which he exemplifies using early modern poems, provide a way of examining which challenges pupils might face when encountering early modern poetry.

Fleming (1996) explores Steiner's ideas about difficulty (Steiner 1978); he states that, 'expectations of what poetry should mean and how it should function have changed over time...Reading poetry from the modern movement is a different matter from reading a Shakespeare sonnet' (Fleming 1996, p.40). Fleming suggests that, 'one of the decisions which the teacher has to make pertains to the appropriate lexical, syntactical, contextual or historical details which need to be supplied in order to provide enough clarity for the reader to be able to make an

authentic response' (Fleming, 1996, p.38). What the teacher has to decide is what information, contextually or otherwise, from the repertoire of the poem, needs to be given regarding the poem, and most crucially, at what time.

Stevens (2007) considers ways of working with classic poetry via an arts context. In training students to become English teachers, he observes that few at the start of his Postgraduate teacher training feel confident to teach "older poetry" (p. 55). In contrast to teaching contemporary poetry, his teacher trainees perceive a lack of "immediacy" in pre-twentieth century poems, so that teaching it to their pupils presents for them more of a challenge and has less "appeal" (p. 55), such that they manifest a certain "prejudicial antipathy towards anything old-fashioned and thus irrelevant to modern life" (p. 55). Stevens (2007) confronts these attitudes and presents his arguments for how to "enliven the teaching of pre-twentieth century poetry" (p.56). Stevens (2007) argues for the need to "locate the teaching of such poetry firmly within an arts context" (p.56) and see the poetry within a broader "arts tradition" (p.56).

Stevens (2007) elaborates on his argument for enlivening the teaching of pre-twentieth century poetry through two different strands. He refers firstly to the work of Eisner who discusses what the arts enable the reader to do, "to slow down perception, to look hard, to savor the qualities that we try, under normal conditions, to treat so efficiently that we hardly notice they are there" (Eisner, 2002, p. 5 in Stevens, 2007, p. 56). Secondly, Stevens (2007) points out the ways that "historical, biographical and artistic contexts could be used as a means of both enhancing a sense of critical distance and wonder...and showing how the lives and times which gave rise to poetry in the first place were not after all so very different from the present in terms of anxieties and liberating possibilities" (p.56). As an example, Stevens (2007) cites teaching *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, using Coleridge's life and "obsessive concerns" (p. 59), along with the relationship of the text to ballad forms and different engravings, as an example of combining working within an arts context with historical and biographical details.

Stevens (2007) notes that there may be “tension” (p. 56) in both making “the past relevant and celebrating it as different” (p. 56), however the practice of “celebratory immersion” (p. 56) combined with a critical distance in the teaching of pre-twentieth century poetry can attempt to work with this tension. Stevens (2007) comments that “in many ways the core of effective English teaching may be seen as the centrally Romantic idea of wonder as the essence of art (and maybe of poetry particularly)” (p.56). The “critical distance and wonder” derive from the elements that are strange to the reader of the repertoire of the poem, and also the exploration of what is familiar to the reader. Like Steiner (1978), Stevens (2007) draws attention to the need for a different kind of attentiveness to poetry and particularly pre-twentieth century poetry, to read ‘rallentando’ (Steiner, 1978, p. 35): slowly, deliberately and carefully.

4.7 Search Strategy

The search strategy for this literature review was undertaken through a variety of sources. A general search through *Google Scholar* was undertaken of the terms “*early modern poetry*” schools; “*early modern poetry*” teaching; “*Renaissance poetry*” schools and teaching “*Renaissance poetry*” schools. Searches using the terms “*early modern poetry*” and *perceptions, attitudes and interpretations* was also undertaken. Education databases were checked through Proquest; *British Education Index* and *Education Resources Information Center*. These databases were searched through different terms and synonyms; *Early modern, literature Higher Education, poetry, teaching poetry, perceptions*. English subject databases were also searched. The *MLA Periodicals* were searched using the terms “*early modern poetry*” and teaching, which resulted in one journal. The *MLA Bibliography* was searched with the terms “*early modern*” and teaching, which produced 193 results. The terms “*early modern*” and pupils resulted in 2 results and “*Renaissance poetry*” and teaching or pupils selected 597. Some of the references from this search, on examination, were relevant. The terms “*renaissance poetry*” and perceptions produced 3 results and “*early modern*” and perceptions and students, 1 result.

COPAC was searched, using “*early modern poetry*” in a general search. For the terms “*teaching early modern poetry*” there were no results and for “*teaching*

renaissance poetry” there was one result, an unpublished thesis, Yang (2006), which is explored in Chapter Five. Searching the subject category “teaching of literature” and “early modern poetry” there were no results and in the subject category of “teaching of literature” and “Renaissance poetry” there were no results.

4.8 Historicised reading of early modern texts

Waller (1993) looks specifically at the response of his students to one early modern poem, Sir Henry Wyatt’s *They Flee From me*. He asked his students to produce a ‘response statement’, in which they described in as much detail as possible the initial effect the poem had upon them (p.2). He then asked his students to account for this response. Waller asked them to describe what they understood to be the *repertoire* of the text, using the same parameters as Iser (1978), ‘subject matter, language, conventions, themes, the gaps or indeterminacies which the reader had to fill in’ (Waller, 1993, p. 3). Waller also asked them to consider the *repertoire* that they as readers had brought to the text. Waller describes the outcomes as dividing clearly between the genders in their identification with the masculine voice of the poem. Waller then followed this by then using Roland Barthes’s *A Lovers Discourse*, which ‘gave these students a powerful vocabulary with which to start to discover that their responses were...constructed within a repertoire of common late-twentieth century assumptions about love, desire, gender and sexuality’ (Waller, 1993, p. 3). Waller states that the aim of his study was to introduce the poetry of the sixteenth century so that such confrontations, or dialogues, ‘what I like to call ‘polylogues’ since many, often contradictory, voices are involved – can occur between today’s readers and the texts that come to us from the sixteenth century’ (Waller, 1994, p. 4). He concludes that both texts and readers have vital parts to play in producing ‘lively, informative, effective (and affective) readings’ (Waller, 1994, p. 4).

Conroy and Clarke (2011) suggest that the challenge of teaching texts from this period is to create a dialogue with the past that can accommodate the “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (p.1) and also that teachers need to “facilitate engagement with the specificities of a particular historical moment” (p.1).

The authors note that, “the dynamic between familiarity and difference that encounters with the past engender is a constant that appears in much of the literature on teaching the early modern” (p. 14) to describe the period in English literature of between 1509 and 1640. They observe two key points that are relevant to this study. Firstly, that emphasising only that which is familiar to students is not in the best interests of the students. Secondly, the pedagogical value of keeping a “sense of strangeness” (p. 14), of teachers resisting the temptation to stress that which is familiar and to play down the unfamiliar.

Wynne-Davies (2003) examines two poems to illustrate the way that early modern poetry has been read over time. She takes sonnet 30 of Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* sonnet sequence, which up until the 1980s was read purely as a sequence of love poems. Waller (1993) produced a radical re-reading of Sidney as courtier poet who engaged with cultural, poetic and religious discourses in his poetry, and claimed that the sonnet sequence was not simply a courtly love sequence but an appeal to Elizabeth I and demonstration of his ambition (Wynne-Davies, 2003). By 1992, Alan Sinfield reinterpreted Sidney’s sequence again, asserting that “Sidney’s preoccupation with issues of political control and ideological strategy appears throughout both his career as a courtier and his literary work” (Sinfield, 1992, p. 85 in Wynne-Davies, 2003, p. 17) so that Sidney was seen as belonging to a “Protestant faction that was committed to cultural interventionism” (Sinfield, 1992, p. 85 in Wynne-Davies, 2003, p. 17). Here we can detect a movement from New Criticism, reading the sonnet sequence as intensely focused on what seems to be the subject, love, through to Waller’s reading of the poetry in terms of its context that can be labelled New Historicist. The last stage identified by Wynne-Davies is that of Sinfield pinning his colours to the mast as Cultural Materialist, producing politicised readings and demonstrating political commitment (Dollimore and Sinfield, 1994). Wynne-Davies (2003) summarises her overview of the changes in critical practice as:

The autobiographical love poet was transformed into a radical politician who used cultural products to effect social and religious change. The critical shift that occurred about Sidney’s writing was of course replicated across a range of Early Modern authors and their works. (p.17)

Of significance here is the discussion earlier in this chapter about the interplay between the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern*. Marcus (1992) argues that the term *Renaissance* suggests an interest in the activities of the elite and that the term is optimistic and upbeat. She argues that “it buys optimism at too great a price” (p. 43) and neglects to encompass “other cultural currents and forms of cultural production, of a vast sea of human activity and misery that the Renaissance either failed to include or included only marginally” (p. 43). In contrast to this, Marcus observes the “disaffiliation” (p.41) with the older notions of the Renaissance signalled by literary historians using the term *early modern* to dissociate themselves from the “elitism and cultural myopia” (p.41) associated with an older view of Renaissance history. The term *early modern* emphasises continuity with our own period so that, Waller (1993) observes, “we seem to face either similar issues, dilemmas and obsessions or be able to trace the history of our dilemmas and obsessions to that period” (p.1). There is a tension in the teaching of poetry from this period between regarding the period as one in continuity with our own, and therefore emphasising the familiarity and what is recognisable for pupils and students in the repertoire of the texts, or with examining the repertoire of the texts by looking at the differences that exist between that period and our own. A phrase that encapsulates this tension succinctly is the “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (Conroy and Clarke, 2011, p.1) that those reading and studying poetry of this period have to enter into and negotiate.

This section of the chapter has examined ideas and concepts that underpin research into poetry in a contemporary context which are important for this study into the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the curriculum of English. Concepts that are significant in the broader field of research into poetry, that can inform the areas of investigation into perceptions for this study, have been addressed in this section. Reading and the different varieties of reading, specifically, reader-response theory of the relationship between reader and text has been widely applied to the pedagogy of poetry, have been examined in the work of Pike (2000/2003). What might be termed *historical reading*, has been considered in the discussions of Alexander (2004), Hebron (2011) and Wynn-Davies (2003), to explore the tensions in reading today poetry written four hundred years ago.

The importance of the aural qualities of poetry has been explored in a contemporary educational context by Alexander (2013) along with the role of the teacher in the reading the reception of poetry in the subject of English, in the research of Cremin (2013) and Collins and Kelly (2013). Both Cremin (2013) and Collins and Kelly (2013) argue for the need for contemporary poetry teachers to be conversant with a wide array of poetic texts, in fact to be immersed in poetry, so that they have a broad range of texts with which they are familiar and can enthuse students with their understanding of the “interplay of texts”(Hulse, 2000, p. 39). Research into the role of memory, Whitley (2013) argues is “overlooked” (p. 44) in the current field of research into poetry. The variety of frames within which poetry can be viewed pedagogically has been addressed in Stevens (2007). *Difficulty* and how this term is defined, specifically by Steiner (1978), helped illustrate issues to do with the reading and reception of the poetry, and has been explored in relation to the ideas of Fleming (1996) and Naylor (2013). All the various strands explored in this chapter feed in to the wider area of the perceptions of early modern poetry in the subject of English.

4.9 Conclusion to Literature Review

This thesis presents a study of the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English, in England. Chapter Two, the first section of the literature review, has examined the significance of early modern poetry at the time in which it was written through an examination of Sidney (1595/2004) and Puttenham (1589/2004). Attitudes and perceptions held today by teachers and students towards poetry of the early modern period are in many ways echoes of those held by these two writers, so their ideas are a rich repository of themes to probe with participants in this research. Chapter Two has also examined debates over the terms *Renaissance* or *early modern* in order to explore tensions and ambiguities in the way that texts from this period are read and received and the contrasts between current readings of early modern poetry and those of the period in which it was written.

Chapter Three, the second section of the literature review, has addressed changes in attitudes towards early modern poetry at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The chapter has explored how and why early modern poetry came to be on the curriculum in English schools and in university, and the presence in the curriculum of the subject of English of early modern poetry. Chapter Three also examined the attitudes of key figures such as Matthew Arnold, Francis Palgrave and T.S. Eliot, among others, who were influential in this reception of early modern poetry into the school and university curriculum. These various figures have had a very strong influence on the way that the English curriculum for poetry has evolved and their ideas still resonate today in the attitudes of English teachers over how poetry should be framed and encountered in the subject (Eaglestone, 2000; Davison, 2009). The ideas presented in this section can provide a springboard to explore the perceptions of respondents of early modern poetry explored in this study.

Chapter Four, the final section of the literature review, examines ideas and concepts from research into poetry pedagogy in current educational contexts, which are important for this study. Research focused specifically on the teaching of early modern poetry in school and university environments is sparse, so the research on the teaching and learning of poetry more generally in the English curriculum can inform this study. Chapter Four presents an exploration of the significant areas of: reading and the application of reader response theory; the importance of aural qualities of poetry; the role of memory and the role of the teacher in the reading the reception of poetry in the subject of English. Two of the frames within which poetry, and more particularly early modern poetry, can be viewed pedagogically have been addressed through exploring Stevens (2007) and Steiner (1978). The last section of Chapter Four addresses the issue of historicised reading, applied specifically to early modern texts. This section has considered the discussions of Waller (1993), Conroy and Clarke (2011), Wynn-Davies (2003) and Marcus (1992). The exploration of the ideas with regard to historicised reading relates specifically to the tensions in readers' perceptions and interpretations of early modern poetry, in the current educational context.

In addressing three key periods in the development of the subject of English and exploring the debates and tensions relating to the teaching and learning of early modern poetry, this literature review has provided a context for exploring the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English, in England.

Chapter 5: Methodology; Feasibility Study and pilot Study (1)

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the feasibility study and the first pilot study that was undertaken for this research. It will discuss the development of the initial research questions, the selection and trialling of the research methods and the coding and analysis of the first tranche of data.

This study began in the researcher's personal interest as an English teacher in the poetry from the early modern period. From the outset it was clear that this study derived from a topic with which the researcher is intellectually and emotionally involved and that as a researcher this perspective will always need to be acknowledged. In this way, embarking on the research indicated that it would potentially belong to the paradigm of qualitative research. Denscombe (2007) observes the way in which the researcher is involved in the process of qualitative enquiry:

Qualitative research...tends to place great emphasis on the role of the researcher in the construction of data...it is recognised that the researcher is the crucial 'measurement device', and that the researcher's self (their social background, values, identity and beliefs) will have a significant bearing on the nature of the data collected and the interpretation of that data. (p. 250)

The nature of qualitative work, where the researcher is reflexive, would mean that the potential nature of this research aligns with an interpretivist paradigm. Thomas (2013) categorises the various elements of interpretivist research, one of which is that interpretivist research seeks to, "understand the particular, contributing to building a framework of 'multiple realities'" (p. 111); in this case a desire to explore the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English.

At the point of embarking on the project, still teaching English in the classroom in secondary schools, the researcher fulfilled another of Thomas' (2013) descriptors of the nature of interpretivist research, as being an "insider, interacting with participants" (p. 111). The research aim, to explore the reading and reception of early modern poetry, would therefore seek to discover, through examining particular instances, the qualitative, interpretivist elements that Thomas (2013)

describes as “perceptions, feelings, ideas, thoughts, actions as heard or observed” (p. 111). The study developed significantly over time, through the process of a feasibility study, a pilot study and then a further pilot study as the research questions and the data collections methods were refined.

The literature review has addressed key ideas and concepts around the reading and reception of early modern literature in the subject of English. Chapter Two has explored the way in which the poetry of the early modern period was valued at the time in which it was written. Highly significant to the poets of the period was the moral dimension of poetry, that in it resided examples of high mindedness and virtue (Sidney, 2004). Poets of the period were conscious of creating a new tradition for English poetry, that was suited to the medium of English, rather than based on the traditions inherited from Classical, Italian and French poetic practice. Particularly exemplified by Puttenham (1589/2004) was the linguistic significance of poetry, of the use of language and what he analysed as the essential qualities of poetry, expressing thoughts in an artistic and socially decorous fashion. One of the areas that this research hoped to explore was how early modern poetry is viewed in a current context and whether attitudes of readers today resonate with any of the attitudes of early modern writers, such as Sidney (2004) and Puttenham (1589/2004).

Chapter Three reviews how in the nineteenth century the assertion of value in poetry, and specifically early modern poetry, for both moral qualities and linguistic significance, was reiterated by Arnold and other reformers of the English curriculum (Mathieson, 1975) and in Chapter Four, current thinking and research into poetry pedagogy and specifically the pedagogy of early modern literature was also been addressed. One of the recurring themes of the contemporary writers on poetry of this period, such as those of Pike (2000) and Waller (1993) are that it is the very difference in the poetry to that of our own, the *gap* between the experience and context of the poetry, along with very strong elements of similarity to our own experience (Conroy and Clarke, 2011) that offers significance to a modern readership. How this period of poetry writing is taught and received in schools and universities in England is the focus of this study and what the value of

studying it is perceived to be by those who are involved in it. The challenge for the researcher was to determine how to explore attitudes towards poetry of a specific time period within educational contexts.

5.2 What was the most appropriate research method?

In considering what approach to take towards this research, it was necessary to analyse how other researchers working in a similar field had approached their studies. The literature regarding the teaching of early modern poetry, specifically in educational contexts in England, is sparse. However, there are studies from related areas that can throw light on an appropriate methodology for this study. There are three doctoral studies that are closely associated with my general research area which illustrate other approaches. Yang (2006) looked at the study of Renaissance poetry in a second language context, suggesting a language-based approach to the poetry using intralocution as a means to read texts. Dymoke (2000) and Pike (2000c) both looked at teaching poetry in a secondary context, in England, Dymoke focusing on writing poetry and Pike on reading it.

Yang's (2006) study focused on teaching Renaissance poetry in a second language context in Taiwan. This was a conceptual study in the teaching and learning of English in the Taiwanese context, as Yang did not undertake empirical research, but devised a method of teaching certain "manageable" (p. ii) early modern texts for use in a second language context. Yang argued that the application of linguistic approaches to literature teaching could be very beneficial in the Taiwanese system where literature, rather than language, was privileged in the teaching of English.

Yang (2006) argues that, "the conspicuous communicational features of Renaissance poetry offer teachable texts to the classroom" (p. 27) and he proposes a method of reading and teaching Renaissance poetry, through linguistic strategies, that will facilitate students reading the poetry and guide their reading strategies. Yang used the term "intralocution" (p. 29) as meaning "the style of addressing within the text" (p. 29) and the study is a detailed analysis of "intralocution" (p. 29) in specific early modern poetic texts, looking at the poet's use of voice and the

relationship of speaker and addressee, as a guide to students using this approach for their own reading and interpretation of texts. As a conceptual study in the teaching and learning of English in the Taiwanese context, Yang's approach suggested an innovative, linguistic analysis approach to texts from the period and how they might be used in an educational context. This study was assessed as being able to inform the data analysis stage of this research with regard to the idea of "intralocution" (p. 29) but as the study was not empirically based, it did not inform the research design of this study.

Dymoke (2000) and Pike (2000c) both looked at teaching poetry in a secondary context, in England: Dymoke focusing on writing poetry and Pike on reading. Pike (2000) looked at using pre-twentieth century poetry in the GCSE classroom with the research question "How can keen adolescent readers of pre-twentieth century poetry be fostered in English lessons?" (Pike, 2000c, p.23). He used a three-year, longitudinal action research study (Pike, 2002c, p. 27) addressing the progress of six adolescent readers in relation to their response to pre-twentieth poems using "responsive teaching" (Pike, 2000c, p. 20) methods, based upon Rosenblatt's (1970) reader-response theory (Pike, 2000c, pp. 17-18). The challenge that Pike explored was how teachers negotiate for their pupils "the dual need for individual response and acquisition of knowledge" (Pike, 2000c, p. 15) in their teaching of pre-twentieth century poetry.

As a teacher-researcher, Pike undertook action research, making the case for action research as beneficial for the improvement of practice in the classroom (Pike, 2000c, p. 35), an argument which he has subsequently developed, exploring the importance of action research in the subject of English, for example in *Action research for English teaching: ideology, pedagogy and personal growth* (2006). Pike's action research was based in his own pedagogy whilst teaching at his school (Pike, 2000c, p. 13) and developmental in nature. Pike's (2000c) work explores a similar subject area to this research, in that he is drawing on pre-twentieth century poetry as the basis for his study, so there are definite overlaps with regard to theoretical writing on poetry and its position in the curriculum. This was an approach that was considered at the outset of this research, whilst the researcher

was teaching in schools; however, the focus for this study was not on specifically developing practice through action research with pupils. Rather, this research sought wider perspectives than just pupils, which to begin with was focused on teachers and pupils, and subsequently became wider to include university lecturers and examiners. This research also had the aim of exploring, specifically, attitudes and perceptions of early modern poetry, and did not seek to explore developing pedagogy in a classroom context.

Dymoke (2000) used a case study approach, researching the poetry teaching of six practitioners at different stages in their careers, to investigate their practice in teaching poetry to pupils across the age range from 11 to 18. Dymoke's intention was to move away from what she perceived to be negative standpoints that characterised research and writing into poetry in the 1980s and 1990s (Dymoke, 2000, p. 67) and to use a small-scale, in-depth study looking at how competent teachers work in the classroom with poetry from a range of periods, with pupils from the full secondary range of 11 to 18. The advantages of using a case study approach which Dymoke suggests are that it provides a "holistic view of the case" (p. 70), that its nature is democratic, the researcher has an interpretive role and that a variety of research methods can be used (Dymoke, 2000, p. 70). The benefits that Dymoke identifies of this method of research, that it produces a "holistic" (p. 70) view of a case and that "the researcher has an interpretive role" (p. 70) was seen to be relevant to the design of this study.

The decision was made to trial a small scale study, drawing from case study design, for the feasibility study, which combined data from one teacher and four pupils in the same setting. In this way the case study approach that had been successful for Dymoke could be explored, but rather than focusing on teachers, the study would include data collected from pupils as well. The use of teachers and pupils enabled triangulation to be included in the data collection, as Thomas (2013) notes, "viewing from several points is better than viewing from one" (p. 146). In this way the research had a starting point for exploring the reading and reception of early modern poetry in educational settings.

5.3 Feasibility Study

The feasibility study started with the initial research questions:

How do we teach Renaissance poetry in the twenty-first century, where our world view is so different from that of the poetry's original context?

How do pupils make meaning out of the poetry and how do teachers support them?

For the feasibility study the method chosen was qualitative, connected in some ways to a case study approach. Denscombe (2007) argues that the main benefit of using a case study approach is:

That the focus on one or a few instances allows the researcher to *deal with the subtleties and intricacies* of complex social situations. In particular, it enables the researcher to grapple with relationships and social processes in a way that is ...holistic rather than based on isolated factors. (p.45)

Denscombe (2007) also notes the disadvantages of the case study approach, a key one of which is that it is very difficult to generalise from the findings of a case study.

For the case study, the researcher worked with one school, with a teacher and four GCSE pupils from that teacher's class. Pike (2000c) had worked with a GCSE class, and in combination with the researcher's interest, this seemed the most appropriate age group to select. There was a mixture of written and oral data; including observation of four lessons, taking field notes and audio recording each lesson. Before the lesson the teacher was interviewed and after the lesson four pupils were interviewed. The written data was a journal entry for the teacher, lesson evaluations for two lessons written by the teacher after observation and the transcripts deriving from the lesson. The sample was a convenience sample, as at this point the author was a teacher-researcher, and had recently been a member of staff at that school and the Head of Department was happy for research to be undertaken in the department. The researcher also had to take in to account time restrictions and the practicalities of teaching and researching concomitantly.

The school was a large comprehensive and the member of staff observed and interviewed was an experienced and established teacher, who was very happy to participate in the project. The teacher's GCSE group that were used was set by

ability and the group used was a middle ability set, expected to gain C or D at English GCSE. The teacher discussed the project with the group so that as a class they were aware of the purposes of the research, and the four GCSE pupils who were interviewed did so voluntarily. The pupils were 16 and the permission of the school and the teacher ensured that ethical guidelines were followed. As a teacher–researcher the author was known to the school and had had all the relevant criminal record checking.

The lessons observed were those to do with the delivery of *On My First Sonne* by Ben Jonson, an early modern poem dated from 1603 and on the AQA syllabus, in the *AQA Anthology: English and English Literature: Spec A 2005 Onwards* (AQA, 2005). This was one of only two early modern poems being studied at GCSE in the AQA Anthology, so the opportunities for working with a class studying one of these poems was very limited, due to the constriction of school timetables and when poems were being studied by the pupils.

One purpose of the feasibility study would be that it would provide emergent patterns (Thomas, 2013, p. 111) that would test whether the data collection methods were able to answer the research questions. The feasibility study produced a variety of data, although it was not related as closely to the research questions as hoped. The diary entry and the interview provided rich data as a means for exploring the teacher’s points of view. The diary entry prompted an exploration of the teacher’s philosophical approach to poetry and the principles underlying the way that she hoped to “make meaning” for the pupils. It also brought up the practicalities of the poetry teaching, the end point of assessment and the implications for timing. The interview with the teacher was very interesting as it brought up many aspects of what practitioners feel and perceive. The themes across the two data sets for the teacher were: the strength of feeling regarding time constrictions and the constrictions of the syllabus.

The lesson observation gave rise to different themes: historical context, pupils’ understanding of language and form, how the pupils read the poem and how they tried to engage with it. In the interviews with the pupils it proved difficult to elicit what the pupils actually thought about the poetry and what they want to get out of the teaching. The answers tended to be repetitive and mostly they focused

on difficulties with the language, their responses to the ideas in the poem and to their memories of poetry. Practicalities that had not been anticipated arose with the observation. Using one observer and audio-recording was effective until the teacher began to circulate, then all the subsequent data was unrecorded, as the recorder was placed at the front of the class. Field notes on the lesson were detailed but could not hope to fully record what was going on.

The feasibility study revealed flaws in the design of the research. It became clear that specifically focused types of observation were needed as the focus of the research questions had been on both teacher and pupil. This would necessitate two observers and observing specific pupils and recording them as well. The questions for the pupils were judged to be relatively successful, in that the pupils were able to answer the questions and the interviewer to probe their viewpoints. (See Table 1).

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>When you first saw the poem, what did you think?</i>2) <i>What do you think about the poem now?</i>3) <i>What did you like about the poem?</i>4) <i>Is there anything you didn't like about the poem?</i>5) <i>What so you think you've learnt from the poem?</i>6) <i>What did you do in the lesson that helped you understand the poem?</i>7) <i>Do you feel happy that you can write about the poem now?</i>8) <i>Can you say anything generally about studying poetry?</i> |
|---|

Table 1; Feasibility Study - questions for semi-structured interview with pupils

The instruments that were judged to be successful were the semi-structured interview with the teacher and the diary entry for the teachers, which did provide a number of emergent themes. The interview questions for the teacher were based on the answers to the diary entry, which are given in see Table 2 (below).

- 1) *You stated that ‘weaker pupils’ find the Renaissance poems in the anthology a ‘particular challenge’, both in terms of language and context. Would you consider this group to fall into the category of ‘weaker’? What are the indicators? What are your impressions of the pupils?*
- 2) *What would you take as an indicator of success in your teaching of this particular poem?*
- 3) *What do you think were the most effective strategies you employed over the sequence of lessons? Why?*
- 4) *At present all students study a few Renaissance poems. Would it matter if poems from this period were not included in the GCSE Literature syllabus? Should all students undertake to study these poems, or only those who are going to study A’Level?*
- 5) *What do you think are the key issues in teaching poetry at GCSE? What are the implications for; Teacher trainees, Classroom teachers, Heads of department, Curriculum designers?*

Table 2; Feasibility Study - questions for semi-structured interview with teacher

The data was coded using two levels of coding (Punch, 2009, p. 179). The themes that were coded were issues to do with pre-1914 poetry, and specifically the pupils’ reaction to language and context. One key theme was the exam syllabus, the choice of poetry for the anthology provided by the exam board and the amount of poetry needing to be studied for the exams. There were classroom management points, the relationship between the kind of activity provided and the behaviour of the pupils. Having undertaken the feasibility study, it was concluded that the methodology used had started to address the research questions but the questions were too broad, and they would need to be refined and made more specific. So the researcher embarked on another pilot study, in order to refine the questions and test again the case study approach.

5.4 Pilot Study (1)

For pilot study (1), having reviewed the outcomes of the feasibility study, the research questions were refined and made more specific, so that two areas were being addressed specifically. In the feasibility study, the first research question, *How do we teach Renaissance poetry in the twenty-first century, where our world view is so different from that of the poetry’s original context?* was too broad. Andrews (2003) notes the need to consider the “aperture” (p. 10) of the study, and this

question was too large. There were also assumptions within the question, such as “we” –from the position as teacher-researcher – as well as problems of definition, such as “worldview”. The decision was made to remove this research question, in order to narrow the aperture and attempt to focus specifically on the teaching and reception of early modern poetry. Therefore the second research question was refined and separated into two questions, to become the main focus of the study:

How do pupils make meaning out of Renaissance Poetry?

How do teachers support their pupils meaning making when teaching Renaissance poetry?

In this way the “aperture” (Andrews, 2003, p. 10) of the study was reduced to focus specifically on making meaning out the poetry – as pupils, and the way that teachers support that. Narrowing down the questions to focus on the way that pupils and teachers work in the classroom to make meaning out of the poetry was a priority. In this way the research questions were moving to reflect the process that Andrews describes of reflecting the personal and intellectual interests of the researcher. Using Thomas’ taxonomy of an interpretivist paradigm (Thomas, 2013, p. 111), the pilot study used unstructured and structured observation and the interviews were semi-structured, which places what the researcher does in this category. The research questions were concerned with “perceptions, thoughts, ideas, feelings, actions as heard or observed” (Thomas, 2013, p. 111) and, at the stage of the pilot study, the researcher was more of an “insider” (Thomas, 2013, p, 111) than an “outsider” (Thomas, 2013, p. 111). Finally, the primary concern, as with the feasibility study, was to find out whether “emergent patterns” (Thomas, 2013, p. 111) were being generated by the data collection tools.

As with the feasibility study, the sample was a convenience sample, for the same reasons as given for the feasibility study, and as far as possible the circumstances replicated those of the feasibility study. Again, the author was in the position of teacher-researcher, as this research took place in another school where where the researcher was subsequently employed job sharing as the head of department for English. The school was a small, semi-rural comprehensive. Groups for English were set by ability and the group chosen was a middle ability set,

expected to gain C or D at English GCSE. The member of staff interviewed was an experienced and established teacher. As in the feasibility study, the students were from a GCSE English group, studying *On My First Sonne* by Ben Jonson, in preparation for the AQA English Literature exam, for the same exam as those in the feasibility study. The teacher discussed the project with the group so that as a class they were aware of the purposes of the research, and the four GCSE pupils who were interviewed did so voluntarily. The pupils were 16 and the permission of the school and the teacher ensured that ethical guidelines were followed. The teacher – researcher was employed by the school and had had all the relevant criminal record checking.

The research instruments were to focus differently on the teacher and the pupils. For the teacher, there was a teacher Interview before the lesson and a lesson observation of one lesson with two observers in the lesson. Observer One observed the teacher and kept a running commentary and notes of the lesson. A lesson transcript was made taken from an audio recording of the teacher. For the pupils, recordings were made of four individual pupils in the lesson whilst Observer Two kept an observation schedule of body language of pupils. The individual pupils were recorded as part of a group, with sound recorders present on the desks to capture the discussion work. Benton (1988) researched the variety of ways in which poems might be used with school students and tracked the students' responses, with as little teacher intervention as possible. He gave groups of students tape recorders to record the levels of their discussion without a teacher present. It was this method that the researcher was adapting in hoping to capture the discussions that took place within the classroom. After the lesson, there were four pupil interviews, two male and two female pupils.

In the feasibility study, the classes were observed by the researcher. As the research questions applied to both teachers and pupils for the Pilot study another observer observed the class in parallel with the observer. A schedule was devised to be used to observe four pupils in the class, who were the four pupils designated to be interviewed subsequent to the lesson. Devising a schedule is recommended as an approach to observation (Bell, 1999; Croll, 1986; Denscombe, 2007) as a method

that enables a more focused approach on what is being observed. This builds on work done by Bales (1950) and later Flanders (1970), using categories to analyse and describe the behaviour by individuals in a group situation. The pupils were to be systematically noted, once every three minutes, under a variety of different headings, "Off task", "Listening", "Writing", "Reading Text", " Puts hand up" and "Field notes"

In consideration of "inter-observer" reliability (Denscombe, 2007, p. 209), the researcher met with the second observer to discuss the observation schedule for the pupils, and the second observer was tasked to observe the actions of the teacher, using the method of a running commentary noting timings and actions of the teacher. This is a method that, on a continuum between structured and unstructured observation, would be towards the unstructured end of the continuum. As an observer who is not related to the actions of the classroom in any way, the role of the observer here would be as a non-participant. Thomas (2013) notes:

While unstructured observation may seem to be an easier way of observing than using a structured observation, in fact it requires a great deal of preparatory work and devotion to become part of the situation you are observing and it needs sensitivity, commitment and thought to analyse the findings meaningfully. (p. 222)

The combination of a structured with a non-structured method was devised to provide "thick description" (Thomas, 2013, p.223) of the pupils' behaviour in context, of the teacher's activities and the observation schedule for the pupils would provide data with regard to the actions of the pupils and the separate elements of their meaning making.

The consideration of naturalism is a key challenge in the accumulation of data from any classroom. Recording the teacher talk throughout the lesson was an important aspect of the data in collecting evidence of ways that the teacher was supporting the pupils in their meaning making. The researcher discussed with the teacher the possibility of using video, but this was not felt to be an option due to the intrusive nature of the recording method and the effect that the teacher felt it

would have on her and her pupils. We agreed on the use of digital voice recorders, one for the teacher and one for each of the four pupils to be observed specifically. These pieces of equipment are very small and not dissimilar to a mobile phone, so that we felt these would seem less intrusive for the pupils. The positioning of the tape recorder for the recording of the teacher and all her dialogue was crucial. The teacher was asked to take the tape recorder around with her as she moved about the room, in order to capture all her interactions such that:

The behaviour is observed as the stream of actions and events as they naturally unfold. The logic here is that categories and concepts for describing and analysing the observational data will emerge later in the research, during the analysis, rather than be brought to the research, imposed on the data, from the start. (Punch, 2009, p. 154)

The combination of observation that records “events as they naturally unfold” and the use of observation schedules was an attempt to combine structured and unstructured approaches. Recordings were also made of the four pupils who were to be subsequently interviewed. The voice recorders were placed on the desk and it was made clear that the recording was related to one named pupil. It was hoped that this instrument would pick up naturalistic events and activities to do with the pupils’ meaning making.

With the pilot study it was important to remain conscious of the issue of asking too much of the teacher who was the participant. Punch (2009) comments, “a successful in-depth interview has many of the characteristics of a prolonged and intimate conversation” (p. 148). With the aim in mind of “probing meanings, interpretations and symbolic significance” (Punch, 2009, p. 148), the questions were modified from those of the feasibility study so that they were more open-ended (Table 3). The questions were given to the teacher prior to the interview, so that she could think through her ideas.

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What do you think are the most effective strategies you have employed in teaching poetry? Why? 2) Has your approach to teaching poetry changed over time? How? 3) Do you feel that there are specific challenges in teaching Renaissance poetry? 4) What would you take as an indicator of success in your teaching of this particular poem (<i>On My First Sonne</i> by Ben Jonson)? |
|---|

Table 3; Pilot Study - questions for teacher interview

The interview for the pupils was the same as for the feasibility study, as these were judged to have been relatively successful (see Table 1 above). The question design had taken into account the age and ability of the pupils. The questions were written with the intention of eliciting the pupils' viewpoints and were designed to be "neutral, singular and clear" (Patton, 1990, p. 295), so the sentences used were unelaborated and the vocabulary choices relatively simple. Consideration was also made of supporting the pupils by not making the questions overly general. The interview design was therefore much more structured than that of the teacher's, where the open nature of the questions acted rather as prompts and were followed up by questions. In order to take account of issues of validity with the pupils' interviews, the design of the data-gathering enabled cross-reference with recordings made in the classroom. The four pupils who were designated for interview were also the four pupils who were recorded in their group work in class.

5.5 Analysis of Pilot Study (1)

Coding for the pilot study went through a process of first level and second level coding. Miles and Huberman use the terms "Descriptive" and "Pattern" (Punch, 2009, p.179) codes to define and label types of codes. The first level coding for the pilot study started with transcribing the pupils' lesson activities and interviews. Transcription is itself a process that involves interpretation (Swann, 2001; Bird, 2005), which will be discussed later in this chapter and standard transcription

conventions were used for the writing up of oral data. The first level, descriptive codes for the pilot study are presented in Table 4:

first encounters with the poetry	pupils' dislikes
pupils' views after the observed lesson	Reading
pupils' discussion of reading	Developing a personal response
Pupils' reading of technical aspects of the poetry	Aspects of Renaissance poetry
pupils' personal engagement	Pedagogy and strategies used
Classroom activities	Interviews

Table 4; Descriptive codes from pupil transcripts

Interviews	Classroom activities
Reading	Use of pronouns
Strategies and pedagogy	Demands of the exam
Content knowledge needed by pupils	Strategies
Opinion regarding aspects of poetry	Use of ICT
	Pupil contribution
	Questioning

Table 5; Descriptive codes for teacher transcripts

Richards (2005) suggests a three level approach to coding. Richard's (2005) three levels are; descriptive, topic and analytic coding (pp. 87-88). Descriptive codes classify and record the data, whilst topic codes label data. From the first level codes (above), second level codes were derived labelling the data in six main areas;

reading, strategies and pedagogy, the use of pronouns, ICT, use of oral work and scaffolding. The second level codes fall into this category of topic coding and the topics selected needed further refinement.

The third stage of Richard’s (2005) levels is analytic coding, which is essentially the same as Miles and Huberman’s (1994) definition of *pattern codes*, the purpose of which is to interpret and conceptualise data. In order to synthesise and theorise the data from the pupils and the teachers, the coding was refined further and theorised and these overarching codes were classified into these groups:

Supporting students in their response to reading
The aesthetic response
‘Lifeworlds’ and the repertoire of text
Levels of Difficulty

Table 6; Analytic codes for Pilot Study (1)

The analysing and theorising of the outcomes of Pilot Study (1) was explored in detail in Naylor (2013), using the four analytic codes in Table 6 to report and present the findings of the pilot study. The paper reported on aspects that emerged from the data using Steiner’s (1978) notion of difficulty and Fleming’s (1996) discussions of how to approach poetry from a different time period. Pike’s (2000a; 2003) work on teaching poetry from the canon and ways of motivating pupils was referenced as well as Marcus (1992) and Conroy and Clarke (2011) on the particularities of teaching literature from the early modern period. The work also drew on the work of Rosenblatt (1994), Iser (1978) and Gordon (2009), to explore the ways in which the classroom provided a space for the “Lifeworlds” of the pupils, the teacher and the poet come together.

5.6 Conclusions

What became clear in the refining and analysis process of the pilot data is that some of the instruments provided much more rich data than others with regard to the research questions. The use of classroom observation did not provide much workable data. The observation categories were not helpful and did not give much in the way of insight. They were useful only when used as a check against the pupil recordings, and that was as a confirmation of what, generally, a pupil was doing, for example listening or discussing. It revealed nothing of what was being listened to, or how the discussion was being undertaken. Having a second observer was very useful to check against transcript, as one is always mindful of the need for inter-rater reliability. The richest sources of data were the interviews. Both sets of data from the interviews provided insight into the experience and issues of teaching poetry, and to some degree to teaching early modern poetry. However, it was judged that there was not a lot of rich data with regard to, specifically, the poetry of the early modern period. The data provided by both teacher and pupils was much more generic and informative about poetry pedagogy, rather than specifically issues to do with early modern poetry. It was decided to think again with regard to the data collection and the research questions, which is discussed in the next section.

Chapter 6; Methodology; Pilot Study (2) and The Main Study

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the further development of the research questions and the refinement of the data collection. The relative merits of the interview as a data collection technique is discussed along with the significance of the role of researcher. The selection of participants is addressed as are ethics, validity and reliability. A discussion of the coding of the data is presented, with reference to Braun and Clarke's (2006) presentation of thematic analysis, which was used in combination with the *NVivo* data analysis programme.

Having reviewed the outcomes of the feasibility study and pilot study (1), the nature of the research questions needed to be reviewed and the focus of the research sharpened. It was clear from both sets of data that it was the interviews that had provided insight into the experience and issues of teaching poetry. There was not, however, enough rich data with regard specifically to the poetry of the early modern period. The data provided by both teacher and pupils was generic and informative about poetry pedagogy. This next chapter discusses the reformulation of the research questions and the further refinement of the data collection instruments.

6.2 Developing the research questions

Andrews (2003) discusses the relationship between the aim of a project and the research questions. He discusses the importance of devising questions that are both workable and manageable. Andrews' definition of 'workable' is related to the potential scale of a project, and "manageable", in that the questions "suggest a research methodology and it is likely that they can be answered in the course of the research project" (p. 24). The aim of this research was to explore the teaching and reception of early modern poetry in English in schools, which started with a focus on GCSE English in England, as this suggested a possibly rich research area. The researcher was interested in both the teaching, by teachers, and the reception, by pupils, of the poetry. The two research questions that were used at the outset of the research which were:

How do we teach Renaissance poetry in the twenty-first century, where our worldview is so different from that of the poetry's original context?

How do pupils make meaning out of the poetry and how do teachers support them?

It was felt that these questions would enable data to be collected illustrating the connection between the period under investigation and the context of the secondary English classroom. The focus was on the teaching of early modern literature at GCSE, as this was the departure point of interest as an “insider” (Thomas, 2013, p. 111). The research questions were subsequently refined and refined again, as the initial two presented problems, not least of which is the presence of the pronouns “we” and adjective “our”, indicating how much of an insider the researcher felt at the time of devising them. The refinement of the research questions occurred iteratively, in the way characterised by Andrews (2003), as the result of the dialogue between the data collection instruments and the ongoing development of the insight of the researcher.

Andrews (2003) further notes that one decision that needs to be made by the researcher is “how tight the aperture will be of your study” (p. 10). It was clear that the aim of the research was to explore the significance of the poetry that was a product of a specific historical period. It was clear on the journey through the trialling process that the research questions that were being used were not producing the insights that would fulfil the overall aim of the project. Through a constant, recursive process, the final question was derived, as far as possible, to enable the “aperture” (p. 10) of the research to provide fruitful data to answer the question that was tied tightly to the original aims of the project.

Having trialled the research approaches in both the feasibility and pilot study, it was clear that the research questions needed continual refinement if there was to be a maintenance of focus on the original aim, that is, specifically on early modern poetry in the subject of English. Andrews’ (2003) discussion regarding research questions being “workable” and “manageable” (p. 24) has already been noted, and this became a crucial factor to work on as the project developed. In both the feasibility and the pilot study, the research instruments that were used were

variable in their success at uncovering issues pertinent to the poetry of the specific period, the early modern, in line with the original research aims. One of the limiting factors in both the feasibility and pilot studies was the amount of early modern poetry that the GCSE pupils had actually encountered. Both studies, using GCSE, were limited by the amount of early modern poetry on the syllabus, which at the point of the studies were two poems in the AQA anthology (AQA, 2005). This then meant that the age group of pupils or students that had been selected to work with would need to change, to encompass those with a broader range of experience of the texts.

Andrews (2003) characterises the progress of research as a dialogic or dialectic process, responding to an existing state of affairs, and in this way the refinement of the research questions occurred iteratively, as the result of the dialogue between the data collection instruments and the ongoing development of researcher insight. In the desire to maintain focus on the position of early modern poetry in the subject of English, rather than covering ground more generally about the pedagogy of poetry of any period, it was judged that the research needed to move away from classroom practice and observation, and more into exploring the ideas of those more closely involved with early modern poetry in particular.

In order to unearth more about the original research aim, the questions and data collection needed to be refined once again. This process developed along with a refinement of the literature review, to move more specifically to look at the significance of early modern poetry when it was written and its position today. As Andrews (2003) observes on the way a researcher can refine questions, “if the researcher wanted to delimit the scope of the study even more, he or she could concentrate on teaching, and therefore teachers’ responses, rather than try to look at both teaching and learning” (p. 42). This process described by Andrews, whereby questions can be improved by being delimited and sharpened in their focus, characterises the process by which the question was derived for the question for the final study:

What are the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry?

The subsidiary research questions for this study revolve around clarifying different strands of “perception” in line with what Andrews (2003) notes as the importance of keeping “tight the aperture...of your study” (p. 10). Thus the following subsidiary questions were developed:

- 1) In what ways do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry within the subject of English?*
- 2) What do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners perceive as significant in their teaching and learning of early modern poetry?*
- 3) How do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners characterise the elements that they view as being specific to the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?*

6.3 The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher needs always to be acknowledged. Punch (2009) highlights the focus that feminist research has placed on the role of the researcher (p. 148) and Creef (2002), working in the area of feminist research, explores this in a very personal way that has elements of comparison with the author’s role as a researcher. Over the course of research for an oral history project on Second World War Japanese war brides, Creef charts her journey in which the objective boundaries between the insider and outsider relationships of the interviewer and her subjects became problematised. She commenced the project regarding herself as a sympathetic insider, but able to “practice objective scholarship” (p. 5). Creef herself was the daughter of a Japanese war bride, and she observes of herself at the outset of the project, that she was “already familiar with this particular community and that I was, in short, perfectly qualified to undertake the challenge of giving voice to their unique histories” (p. 75). Over the course of the project, conducting group interviews, it became clear to Creef that:

I failed to see...the lack of stability in these terms—insider-outsider/partial-impartial...I also miscalculated not only how unstable but how deceptive the notion of neutral territory would, in the end, turn out to be. (Creef, 2002, p. 79)

She reflects on what she has learnt in hindsight, that her research has “always been inseparable from the politics of my own self-location” (Creef, 2002, p. 80), warning the researcher against believing that their standpoint can be neutral.

There is much to be drawn from this research journey of Creef’s (2002) with the researcher’s own. It has been very important for the researcher to be conscious throughout the research that the interest in the poetry from the early modern period does stem, like Creef’s (2002), from the researcher’s “self-location” (p. 80). The impact of this on those from whom data is collected will also be influenced by their perspective of the researcher, whether they are viewed as an “insider/outsider” (p. 79), and in the way that the author relates to the elements of the data collection. Punch (2009) agrees with Creef’s (2002) conclusion, stating that all researchers come to their project with a position and there is no “position-free project” (Punch, 2009, p. 45). This perspective is of great importance to this research and this aspect needed always to be acknowledged and born in mind as the journey of the author is charted through the research.

6.4 Participants

Having refined and produced the final research question, consideration was needed of the sample that would be used to explore it. Having commenced with a case-study approach, this model was adapted to encompass a sample that was more familiar with early modern poetry and embedded in working with the period. Rather than observe and interview, from the richness of the data provided from the teacher interviews in the feasibility and pilot study, it was decided that interviews were the richest source of data. For the interviews, a group of specialists in early modern literature were needed – those who have significant experience and who were familiar with the issues of the period. This group of participants would be members of an elite as specialists in the poetry of the period. In order for the participants to be able to articulate in detail their perceptions of the period and their experiences of the reception and teaching of the poetry of the period, they needed to be strongly involved in studying and teaching the poetry of the period. In the discussion of piloting the final instruments for the main study, issues that arose

with trialling specific questions with willing, but perhaps unsure, participants were discussed. It is important to note that this study does not and cannot aim to offer definitive insights. The findings are a synthesis of a snapshot of one set of specialists working within the subject of English in various institutions. To provide this snapshot of data from specialists, the interviewees for data collection were invited from four different groups of people involved closely in the discipline of early modern literature; second and third year English undergraduates; 'A' Level teachers; Lecturers in early modern literature and Examiners ('A' Level and GCSE).

To provide some coherence to the group, most of the participants were based at North City University (pseudonym), apart from those who are not involved in Higher Education. The undergraduate students who were interviewed have specialised in the Early Modern period and are writing dissertations or voluntarily presenting papers within the English department. The lecturers are at North City University and research and publish in the area. The teachers are those who opt to teach early modern poetry, as far as they can, within the Associated Qualifications Alliance AQA 'A' Level Syllabus, and whose students will be destined to study at elite universities, such as North City University. Given that the university is in the North of England, the largest exam board in the area is the AQA and the examiners interviewed all work for the AQA and this is by far the most popular exam board for English syllabi in the north of England. Whilst the study is not specifically of an exam board, in the spirit of coherence those interviewees not at North City University will be associated by their use of the AQA syllabus in selecting poetry for examination for GCSE or 'A' Level. Both schools in the pilot and feasibility study used the AQA syllabus, as do the undergraduate student, teacher and examiner interviewed for the pilot for the main study.

6.5 Interviews

In order to collect the data for this study, sixteen individual interviews were undertaken. Sixteen in-depth interviews were collected from four groups of participants; students, teachers, lecturers and examiners. There were four interviewees within each group of participants. The cohort of participants was

chosen as a group of experts, in that they were happy to be interviewed for a study in the area of early modern poetry and they felt confident in discussing their perceptions of this poetry. For Pilot Study (2) three interviews were collected, prior to the main data collection, to trial the interview questions. The interviews were undertaken with one student, one teacher and one examiner, who also fulfilled the same criteria as the participants for the main study.

Punch (2009) argues that the strength of the interview as a data collection tool is that it is “a very good way of accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality” (p.144). Jones (1985) also notes how effective interviews are in probing in depth other people’s ideas and “constructions of reality” (p. 45). Darlington and Scott (2002), discussing in-depth interviewing, state, “the in-depth interview takes seriously the notion that people are experts in their own experience and so best able to report how they experienced a particular event or phenomenon” (p. 48). They examine the strengths that the interview process offers researchers, with an emphasis on the relational and active quality enabled by discussion that can flow in different directions as various areas are explored. They suggest that the central value of the interview is that it is a shared experience between interviewer and interviewee, such that meaning making is active. They cite “respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge – treasuries of information awaiting excavation, so to speak – as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers” (Holstein and Gubrium, p. 114 in Darlington and Scott, 2002, p. 50). Furthermore, they argue that:

They are an excellent means of finding out how people think or feel in relation to a given topic. They also enable us to talk with people about events that happened in the past and those that are yet to happen. These retrospective and anticipatory elements open up a world of experience that is not accessible via methods such as observation.” (Darlington and Scott, 2002, p. 50)

In devising the questions for the final study, the world of experience, both in the past and the present, came to the fore as a means for exploring the perceptions of different groups of people, although Darlington and Scott also warn against letting

the ability of talking about past experiences lead the researcher to have a sense that they have access to the past, which of course they do not. They also warn against the power of the researcher that is inherent in the interviewer's role, which becomes objectified in a transcript when the researcher departs with the interviewee's words (Darlington and Scott, 2002, p. 51). Another disadvantage noted of the interview is that it only gives access to what people say, not to what they do. In the case of the new research question, focusing specifically on the perceptions of a particular group of people, this issue is less significant than it might be in other research contexts.

A new set of interview questions was drawn up in preparation for the final data collection to seek to explore the perceptions of the various participants of early modern poetry in the subject of English (see Table 7 below). The questions were drawn up to enable a much more specific focus on early modern poetry, and reflected much more closely elements of the literature review. Question (1) explored respondents' attitudes towards the period, exploring their conceptualisation of the two terms *Renaissance* and *early modern*. Questions (2) and (4) explored respondents' knowledge of the period, as a departure point for probing respondents' perceptions. Questions (6), (8) and (9) addressed respondents' pedagogical experience in their respective settings. Question (3) asked respondents' to reflect on what is framing their perceptions of the period, in asking them to characterise their own poetic journey with regard to early modern poetry. Questions (5) and (10) sought to explore ways in which participants characterised early modern poetry and to explore their interpretations of it. All the questions were the same for all four groups of participants, except Questions (7) and (9), which were amended to match the participants' experiences as either a student or an examiner (see Appendices A and B)

- 1) Here are two terms, Renaissance or early modern. Which terms would you use and why?
Can you explain why you believe your particular chosen definition is appropriate to use to describe the period? What might academics argue about when they use these terms?
- 2) If you had to put a start to the period, when would you say that it started in England? Why go for those dates/ parameters? If you had to suggest when it finished, when would that be? Why?
- 3) Can you explain how you have come to think about the poetry of the period, for example who or what is framing your idea of the poetry and the period for you? Was it a teacher/exam book/ anthology?
- 4) What poets would you name that belong to this period?
- 5) Of the poets that you mentioned with which you are familiar, can you suggest any common characteristics, in that they are all classed as early modern/Renaissance poets?
- 6) Why do/ might you choose to teach early modern/Renaissance poetry? What is the value of studying poetry from this period?
- 7) Has early modern/ Renaissance poetry featured in your teaching in the last ten years? In what ways?
- 8) How might/do you go about introducing poetry of this period to your students?
- 9) How would you describe successful teaching of the poetry of this period? Are there any elements unique to the teaching of early modern poetry?
- 10) If you had to name five key terms that you would use in the classroom with your students whilst teaching the poetry or the period, what would they be?
- 11) If I asked you to give me a metaphor to describe your feelings/ideas about early modern/Renaissance poetry, what would it be? If you want to draw the metaphor, please feel free!

Table 7; Interview questions for teachers and lecturers

Question (11) asked participants to provide a metaphor that described their feelings about early modern poetry. Armstrong, Davis and Paulson (2011) argue that metaphor “allows researchers...some insight into their [speakers] thought patterns and understandings of a given topic” (p. 152) and Wilson (2013) used metaphor as a means to uncover teachers’ perception of poetry writing, arguing that metaphor can be used a tool for uncovering participant conceptualisations. His findings revealed a number of themes about the perceptions of teachers of poetry writing, and this seemed to be a potentially powerful tool to include in the new question schedule, so a question was included where participants were asked to express their views about early modern poetry as a metaphor.

Some extracts from the literature review were also included in the interview schedule. They were placed at the end of the interviews (see Table 8)

Please look at the extracts below, two of which are written by early modern/Renaissance poetry theorists. I would like to explore your views on these extracts in the interview. How might these extracts prompt us to discuss ways of reading and encountering early modern poetry?

1) Sir Philip Sidney describes the poet’s power over his listeners, in both child and adult, as he characterises the pedagogical power of poetry:

‘He cometh to you with words set in a delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner, and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue. Even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste.’

Sidney states, ‘Poesy is therefore an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *mimesis*– that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture – with this end, to teach and delight’

Sidney states that poets, ‘imitate both to delight and teach; and delight, to move men to take goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved.’

Sir Philip Sidney (1580) *The Defence of Poesy*

2) Puttenham defines the difference between prose and poetry as ‘speech by metre is a kind of utterance more cleanly couched and more delicate to the ear than prose is, because it is more current and slipper upon the tongue, and withal more tuneable and melodious, as a kind of music, and therefore may be termed a musical speech or utterance, which cannot but please the hearer very well.’

Puttenham notes the suitability of English for rhyming, ‘For this purpose serve the monosyllables of our English Saxons excellently well’ (p. 120), because of the qualities of monosyllabic words or the less complex syllabic words by comparison with romance languages work well within a rhyme scheme.

Puttenham analyses the way that visual patterning in poetry is interlinked with the aural effects of the text. He writes, ‘ocular proportion doth declare the nature of the audible, for if it pleaseth the ear well, the same represented by delineation to the view pleaseth the eye well, e converso.’

George Puttenham (1589) *The Art of English Poesy*

Matthew Arnold and T.S. Eliot, wrote about the relationship of poetry to tradition, in the following ways:

‘There can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one’s mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry...when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently.’

Matthew Arnold (1880) *The Study of Poetry*

‘No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead.’

T.S. Eliot (1919/1975) *Tradition and the Individual Talent*

Table 8; Extracts from literature review used for discussion at the end of the interview

These extracts were used to prompt open discussion around the topic of reading and responding to early modern poetry, such that the nature of the interview, which was semi-structured, could include some space for completely

open response to stimulus by the interviewees. The interview schedule was prepared for three different categories of respondent. These were students, teachers and lecturers, and examiners. The questions were all the same except Questions 7 and 9, for which the wording varied upon the context of the interviewee, referring either to the classroom as a student, as a teacher, as an examiner and as a lecturer.

6.6 Data Analysis

To arrive at the emergent themes, the systematic approach of thematic analysis outlined in Braun and Clarke (2006) *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology*, provided an extremely clear and detailed guideline to data analysis. Braun and Clarke argue that thematic analysis is a theoretically flexible and accessible approach in qualitative analysis. The authors argue that thematic analysis is an activity which can provide “a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide [a]rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (p. 78). Boyatzis (1998) and Ryan and Bernard (2000) characterise thematic analysis as a tool, but Braun and Clarke argue that it should be considered as a method in its own right. One of the benefits, the authors argue, of this method is that it is flexible, as thematic analysis belongs to a group of methods that “are essentially independent of theory and epistemology, and can be applied *across* a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches.” (p. 78)

The authors describe thematic analysis as a method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within data. They argue that, although used widely as a tool in qualitative data analysis, insufficient detail is given to reporting the ways that themes are identified as emerging from data. Braun and Clarke (2006) develop their argument by stating that to describe themes as “emerging” or being “discovered” is to provide a passive account of the process. They state that the researcher has an active role in identifying patterns and themes, and that “If themes “reside” anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them” (p. 80). Thematic analysis, the authors argue, is not “wedded” (p. 82) to any pre-existing framework, but can be

essentialist, in that it reports experiences, or it can be *constructionist*, “which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (p. 81). This rationale for approaching data is in line with Punch’s (2009) point that there is no “position-free project” (p. 45) and Creef’s (2002) observations on the impact of the researcher’s “self-location” (p. 80) with regard to data collection and analysis.

Braun and Clarke’s (2006) method of thematic analysis seemed to the researcher to be an appropriate approach to apply to the analysis of the pilot data for the final data collection, as the steps to be undertaken are clear and reproducible by any other coder, along with advocating a very detailed and iterative coding process. In the pilot study, a three-level approach to coding had been taken (Richards, 2005), whereby descriptive codes were produced, topic coding was undertaken and to produce the final codes, analytic coding was undertaken. In order to clarify this process further, to report the procedure undertaken in producing and refining the codes, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) very specific and useful “step-by-step-guide” (p. 86) was applied to this last set of pilot data, which is summarised in Table 9.

1	Familiarisation with data,	Transcribing data if necessary, reading, re-reading and noting initial ideas
2	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3	Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4	Reviewing themes	Checking if all the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis
5	Defining and Naming Themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6	Producing the Report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 9; Braun and Clarke (2006) The phases of thematic analysis (p. 87)

One of the key elements to Braun and Clarke's argument is that there are a number of choices that are made in the analysis of data that need to be made explicit, that there needs to be "to be an ongoing reflexive dialogue on the part of the researcher or researchers with regards to these issues" (p. 82). In the first phase, the researcher must become familiar with the data, in the case of interviews either through transcribing the work themselves or through reading and re-reading produced transcripts. Some researchers argue that transcription is a key phase of the data analysis (e.g. Bird, 2005), and transcription involves a level of interpretation of the data (Swann, 2005). With the data for this study, the researcher started by transcribing the data, which was very interesting but highly time consuming, so the decision was made to have the data transcribed by an experienced transcriber. The researcher worked very closely with the transcriber of the data, ensuring that key terms that recurred were understood and that the orthographical interpretation was of good quality.

The level of detail with regard to the notation in transcripts is dependent on the approach needed to interpret the data, such as discourse analysis, where a great deal of detail is needed. Every effort was made by the researcher to ensure that the data was a "rigorous and thorough 'orthographic' transcript – a 'verbatim' account of all verbal... utterances" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 88) in which the transcription conventions were practically suited to the purpose of the analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that transcriptions that are not produced by the researcher should be carefully checked against the original audio recording. This check of the transcription against the original audio recording was done very carefully by the researcher (see Appendix C for example of transcript). During the interviews the researcher took detailed field notes, and these were used as a check in combination with the original recording, particularly at points where interpretation of particular words was difficult. The interviews took between fifty and eighty minutes each.

Phase two of the process described by Braun and Clarke (2006), generating initial codes, is one where a feature of the data is identified, which can be either "semantic content or latent" (p. 88), which are of interest to the researcher. Braun

and Clarke (2006) give an example of a data extract which has been coded for two different phenomena. Their guide states that data must be worked through systematically, “giving full and equal attention to each data item, and identify interesting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of repeated patterns” (p. 89), stating that the researcher should code for as many potential themes or patterns as possible.

Phase three of the process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), “searching for themes” (p. 89), is where the initial codes are refocused at the level of broader themes. They suggest using visual representations, such as tables or thematic maps, to represent the “relationship between codes, between themes and between different levels of themes” (p. 90). This coding was refined through iterative interpretive work to refine the codes into themes. This approach was utilised for the analysis of Pilot Study (2) and the main study.

6.7 Data Analysis; Pilot Study (2)

The three interviews from Pilot Study (2) were analysed, using the three phases of data analysis outlined in the previous section. Once this has been done, there was a need for a “reflexive dialogue” (p. 82) and what Denscombe (2007) terms “investigator triangulation” (p. 136). The help of a second researcher was enlisted to code the data for initial themes, so that what had been found in the data could be cross-checked with what the second researcher identified in the data. After meeting and discussing the transcripts in detail, the initial themes located by both coders are presented in Table 5.

Coder One	Coder Two
Terms – definitions, difficulties and significance of that	Difficulty in defining terms
Poets defined as belonging to the period Poems referred to specifically by respondents	Major poets; Donne, Sidney, Marlowe, Marvell. Women poets – lack of. Pastoral as a theme
Reference to key poems/use of touchstones	Texts – specifically referred to – To His Coy Mistress, The Flea, The Passionate Shepherd to his love
Significance of Shakespeare	Place of Shakespeare – seems to stand apart from everything else
Qualities of the poetry	Length of poems/ Relationship of poetry to drama/ Rhythm and meter
Significance of anthologies and the anthology	Significance of the Anthology (exam/AQA and /or other anthologies)
Personal experience	Significance of certain poets and poems to respondents
Significance of memories	Significance of what respondents have studied/ Significance of certain poets and poems to respondents
Studying	Appeal of studying poetry – no ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers – liberating
Difficulty	Accessibility
Exams /assessment outcomes/descriptors	Exams and assessment
Metaphor – use of, significance of, own metaphors	Metaphor (especially scientific)

Frames	Early reading (?influence of what read when respondents young?)
View/framing of history	Overlap between different subjects specifically history
Value/ Knowledge/Reasons for choosing to teach poetry from the period	If don't study early modern poetry – something is missing Importance of metaphysical poets – why?
Teaching Understanding minds/connecting through poetry Comparison with modern poetry Englishness Musicality Judgement	Significance of context Stigma attached to liking poetry With no other way to respond – students can fall back on metre, form and rhythm (use of technical terms) Importance of personal response

Table 10: Initial Themes for Coders 1 and 2

There was a great deal of common ground in the codes identified by the two coders; however there were also areas of the data which had been identified but had not been seen by the individual coders but not by both. These codes are marked in bold at the bottom of the table, but on discussion it was agreed that these codes were certainly present in the data, but had not been identified by both. The codes emerged from the data, in that both analysts found the phenomena, but also the fact that some codes were present in the data but missed by one or other of the coders, demonstrates that data analysis is an active, rather than a passive process (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The richness of the data from this second pilot study verified that in-depth interviews were revealing data regarding the new research question: *What are the perceptions of examiners, teachers and students of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry?*

6.8 Data Analysis; Main Study

In order to collect the data for this study, sixteen individual interviews were undertaken. Sixteen in-depth interviews were collected from four groups of participants; students, teachers, lecturers and examiners. There were four interviewees within each group of participants. The cohort of participants was chosen as a group of experts, in that they were happy to be interviewed for a study in the area of early modern poetry and they felt confident in discussing their perceptions of this poetry. The lecturers were specialists in the field of early modern literature. The interviews took between fifty and eighty minutes each. In total twenty hours and twenty minutes of recorded data were collected, which once transcribed resulted in 143,465 words of data. The data was rich, thick data from in-depth interviews.

In the main study, exactly the same thematic analysis approach was used as for pilot study (2), a three level approach to coding had been taken (Richards, 2005), whereby descriptive codes were produced, topic coding was undertaken and to produce the final codes, analytic coding was undertaken. Braun and Clarke's (2006) very specific and useful "step-by-step-guide" (p. 86) was applied to the data. The first stage of the coding was familiarising and noting initial ideas (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 88).

The second stage of coding the data, generating the initial codes, was done by the researcher using *NVivo*. The creation of codes in *NVivo* was done in the same way that Braun and Clarke (2006) advocate, by working through the data systematically, "giving full and equal attention to each data item, and identify interesting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of repeated patterns" (p. 89), stating that the researcher should code for as many potential themes or patterns as possible. This systematic approach to the coding resulted in 29 "parent" nodes, with 175 lower-level nodes (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75). *NVivo* is structured such that the coder determines a hierarchy for codes, so that a "parent" (p. 75) node is a higher-level code, which contains a number of lower-level, nicknamed "child" (p. 101) nodes or codes. The process of determining higher or

lower level nodes in the software programme is a part of the researcher's data analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the researcher has an active role in identifying patterns and themes, so using *NVivo* is a recursive, analytical process on the part of the researcher. Bazeley and Jackson (2013) advise the researcher to "regard your coding structure as a work in progress" (p. 99), so that nodes can be merged, reorganised and refined during the process of analysis. Using the *NVivo* software supported this ongoing refining and organising of data by the researcher, by the nature of the work space and interface with the data provided by the programme.

Phase three of the process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), "searching for themes" (p. 89), is where the initial codes are refocused at the level of broader themes. They suggest using visual representations, such as tables or thematic maps, to represent the "relationship between codes, between themes and between different levels of themes" (p. 90). This third phase of thematic analysis was part of the data analysis process in *NVivo*, in the constant refining and organising of higher-level and lower-level nodes. Appendix E and F contains two examples of parent and child nodes in *NVivo* from this project.

The coding was refined through iterative interpretive work in *NVivo* to refine the codes into themes. It was at this point in the data analysis, in the same way as with Pilot study (2) there was a need for a "reflexive dialogue" (p. 82). Considering what Denscombe (2007) terms "investigator triangulation" (p. 136), the researcher enlisted the help of a second researcher to code the data for initial themes, so that what the researcher had found in the data could be cross-checked with what the second researcher identified in the data. Inter-rater work was undertaken with the second researcher, an experienced teacher of English, who read all the transcripts and noted her interpretation of the themes. These themes were discussed and checked against those of the researcher's from the work in *NVivo* (see Appendix F). The themes were then further refined by the researcher. The final main themes or "parent nodes" (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75) in the *NVivo* programme are presented in Table 11:

Difficulty or Complexity or Challenge
Response to terms
Early modern poetry, characteristics
Frames for the period
Relationship to Assessment
Relevance
Teacher Identity
Teaching
Ways of reading

Table 11; Main themes or “parent nodes” (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75)

6.9 Reliability, Validity and Ethics

In discussing the reliability of this study, it is important to be reminded of Punch’s (2009) point that there is no “position-free project” (p. 45) and Creef’s (2002) observations on the impact of the researcher’s “self-location” (p. 80) with regard to research. The “position” of the researcher has been transparent, as far as possible, in this study in the data collection and analysis.

Bassey (1999) has an account of the concept of “trustworthiness” (p. 75) in case studies that is drawn from Lincoln and Guba’s (1986) original concept, which can throw some light in the issue of reliability in this study. He proposes a set of questions to be asked of the different stages of the research. One question posed is “have the raw data been adequately checked with their sources” (Bassey, 1999, p. 76). For this study, the interview transcripts were all sent to the respondents to check for accuracy and to double check whether the participants were still happy to be in the research. The researcher also worked very closely with the transcriber of the data, ensuring that key terms that recurred were understood and that the orthographical interpretation was of good quality.

Another question asked by Bassey (1999) is “has a critical friend thoroughly tried to challenge the findings” (p. 76). As noted in the methodology, a second researcher was used at three points in this research, once for classroom observation and twice for data analysis, for Pilot Study (2) and the main study. This inter-rater work was undertaken with the second researcher who was an experienced teacher

of English. For the main study, there was also further use of a “critical friend” (p. 76), another experienced teacher of English, who read and criticised the final analysis of the data for the research. The critical friend scrutinised the analysis and gave the researcher “that precious commodity, time” (p. 76) in a very detailed discussion and debrief, which Bassey (1999) further notes “requires humility and openness to ensure a friendship survives” (p. 76).

In discussing the validity of the in-depth interview as a research tool, Mears (2012) observes that “the validity of the interview research is related to its appropriateness for studying what it claims to inform and its veracity in reporting” (p. 174). The use of in-depth interviews of a group of experts in the field of early modern poetry was chosen after process of working through the feasibility study and Pilot Study (1), in that the aim of research was to explore perceptions of early modern poetry in the subject of English. Gillham (2000) notes that “interviewing gives you access to a person’s subjective world” (p. 93), which work on perceptions and interpretations by its nature will be. In the sense that Mears (2012) is judging the validity of interviews, this method of in-depth interviewing is appropriate and valid for this research which exploratory and open-ended, seeking to explore perceptions.

Denscombe (2007) observes with regard to the validity of interview data “when the interview concerns matters such as the emotions, feelings and experiences of the interviewee, it is...difficult to...make checks” (p. 200). He suggests a number of methods for the researcher to have “greater confidence in interview data” (p. 201). He suggests that interview data can be checked “against other interviews to see if there is some level of consistency” (p. 201), which has been undertaken in detail in the data analysis stage of this research. Secondly, Denscombe (2007) suggests “checking the transcript with the informant” (p. 201), which was also undertaken by the researcher, in returning the transcripts to the interviewees for any comments that they wished to make. Thirdly, Denscombe (2007) proposes that the researcher needs to “gauge how far an informant might be expected to be in possession of the facts and to know about the topic being discussed” (p. 202). The group of sixteen participants was chosen as a group of

experts, in that they were happy to be interviewed for a study in the area of early modern poetry and they felt confident in discussing their perceptions of this poetry. The lecturers were specialists in the field of early modern literature, so as far as possible this criterion has been addressed. Finally, Denscombe (2007) notes that “where themes emerge across a number of interviews...the researcher can refer to it with...rather more confidence” (p 202). Denscombe (2007) is tentative in his wording, as interviews are expressions of peoples’ perceptions and are necessarily subjective, however recurrent themes across the cohort in this study would indicate that issues raised have currency amongst the participants in the study.

The second strand of Mears (2012) assessment of validity in using in-depth interviewing is the “veracity” (p. 174) of reporting. The systematic use of Braun and Clarke (2006)’s method of thematic analysis was an approach which was applied to this research to ensure “veracity” (Mears, 2012, p. 174), as the steps undertaken were clear and reproducible by any other coder. *NVivo* software was used as a tool to support the detailed analysis of the data. The software has within it functions to check data analysis, so that queries can be made of to check and refine the coding done by the researcher. Appendix G has an overview of the text queries that were made in *NVivo* as a check on the researcher’s coding.

With regard to ethical considerations, for the second pilot study and the main study, all the participants were adults and took place in the study voluntarily. All the participants signed a consent form (see Appendix D) and were aware that they could withdraw at any point from the study. The interview questions were sent to participants a week prior to the interview, so that they had plenty of time to consider the questions and withdraw before the interview was arranged to take place, should they have wanted to. The data has been stored securely in password protected files. All the individuals in the research have been given pseudonyms and the geographical area of the research has been disguised. Punch (2009) notes that “research integrity and quality” (p. 51) is an element of ethical consideration, and as noted with reference to reliability and validity, every effort was made by the researcher to be open with the participants about the nature of the research and researcher’s “self-location” (Creaf, 2002, p. 80) with regard to the research.

6.10 Conclusion

To conclude, after consideration of the richness of the data provided from the teacher interviews in the feasibility study and Pilot Study (1), it was decided that semi-structured interviews were the richest source of data for this particular study. This study sought to explore “perceptions, feelings, ideas, thoughts” (Thomas, 2013, p. 111” of participants with regard to reading and responding to poetry of the early modern period. Drawing from case study design, it was decided that a group of specialists in early modern literature would be a rich source of data for this study. To provide some coherence to the group of specialists, the examiners interviewed all work for the AQA and the teachers taught GCSE and A’ Level from AQA syllabuses. The lecturers and students were all from the university based in the North of England and all the students had studied A’ Level English using the AQA syllabus.

The decision to move to using older, undergraduate students arose having trialled some research instruments with GCSE pupils. The data that resulted from the work with that age group of pupils was interesting, but it did not provide data that was really specific with regard to perceptions of early modern poetry in particular, which is the focus of this study. The decision was made to involve four different groups of participants, in order to explore a range of perspectives, to widen the range of perceptions considered. In order to probe and explore participants’ perceptions, interview questions were drawn up that drew on a variety of sources of participants’ ideas, that included memories, experiences and values. Asking participants to provide a metaphor to characterise their perceptions was used in the construction of the interview schedule, as a further way to explore the participants’ perceptions, for as Barrett (2001) observed of metaphor as a research tool, the “use of figurative language and metaphor is a means of connecting cognition and emotion” (p. 612).

The data from the interviews analysed using the systematic approach of Braun and Clarke (2006), who argue that the researcher has an active role in identifying patterns and themes. *NVivo* software was used to support the recursive,

analytical process on the part of the researcher, and the coding resulted in 29 “parent” nodes, with 175 lower-level nodes (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75). After iterative analysis these codes were finally refined into nine main themes or “parent” nodes (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75). The results from this analysis are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Results and Analysis (1)

7.1 Overview

The main research question for this study is:

What are the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry in the subject of English?

In order to collect the data for this study, sixteen individual interviews were collected. There were four groups with four participants in each group of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners. This group was chosen as a group of experts, in that they were happy to be interviewed for a study in the area of early modern poetry and they felt confident in discussing their perceptions of this poetry. The lecturers were specialists in the field of early modern literature. The interviews took between fifty and eighty minutes each. In total twenty hours and twenty minutes of recorded data was collected, which once transcribed resulted in 143,465 words of data. The data was rich, thick data from in-depth interviews.

The data was analysed using the model of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The first stage of the coding was familiarising and noting initial ideas (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 88). The second stage of coding the data, generating the initial codes, was done using *NVivo*, which resulted in 29 parent nodes, with 175 child nodes (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75). This coding was refined through iterative interpretive work to refine the codes into themes. Inter-rater work was undertaken with an experienced teacher of English who read all the transcripts and noted her interpretation of the themes. These themes were discussed and checked against those of the researchers. The themes were then further refined by the researcher. The final main themes or “parent nodes” in the *NVivo* programme were:

Difficulty or Complexity or Challenge
Response to terms
Early modern poetry, characteristics
Frames for the period
Relationship to Assessment
Relevance
Teacher Identity
Teaching
Ways of reading

Table 12; Main themes or “parent nodes” (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75)

What is presented in this chapter are the overarching themes that have been selected that answer the main research question. Other themes that are not reported here will be discussed briefly in the concluding chapter of this thesis. This chapter is organised around three subsidiary research questions which refine the main research question further:

- 1) In what ways do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry within the subject of English?*
- 2) What do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners perceive as significant in their teaching and learning of early modern poetry?*
- 3) How do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners characterise the elements that they view as being specific to the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?*

For each of the subsidiary research questions, the data will be presented under separate headings for each group of participants: students, teachers, lecturers and examiners. The subsequent section compares the responses of the participants within the themes. The last section on the subsidiary research question relates the themes and data to the theoretical and contextual dimensions of this study

7.2 Subsidiary Research Question (1) *In what ways do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry within the subject of English?*

This section focuses on the ways in which students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry. The points that are considered in relation to this subsidiary research question are divided between the four different groups of participants. In the discussion of the data from each group of participants that relate to this question, two themes are covered which were coded as *Response to Terms* and *Relevance*. The first of these themes, *Response to Terms*, concerns the attitudes of the participants towards the early modern period and the way that they discuss and conceptualise the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern*. The data for this theme came from the respondents' answers to Question 1 and 6 of the interview schedule (see Appendix A). The second theme that relates to the participants' interpretation of early modern poetry is discussed in this section is the theme of *Relevance*, which was determined for coding as the relevance to a contemporary reader in an educational or personal context. The data for this theme came in responses to Question 8, but not exclusively, as the theme recurred at various points in answer to other questions. These two themes provide insight into ways that the participants interpret early modern poetry in the subject of English.

7.2(a) Students

i) Response to terms

All four students had come across the term *Renaissance* whilst at school. Two students related how the term had been introduced at the time of studying Shakespeare for English GCSE and one had learnt the term in History. Elaine said that the term was "loaded" and "backwards looking" but also useful as a "blueprint or framework for how you think about texts or poems". Three of the students used the term "re-birth" of classical ideas whilst characterising the period. Sue linked the term *Renaissance* with the idea of "vibrancy", and Steve described the period as a "revitalisation" and of being a "re-birth...an action... a process, an event".

The use of the term *early modern* was seen as very different to that of *Renaissance* by the students. Sue described the term as “neutral” and “passive”, defining the term as “chronological rather than thematic”. Mary suggested that it was “data-oriented” and gave an example that it could be applied as an adjective to a piece of furniture. Steve called it a “time period”. The students did not see the two terms *Renaissance* and *early modern* as at all synonymous. Only one student commented on the connotations of *early modern* as suggesting a movement towards the modern, so that “there’s sort of a lot more focussing on parallels with connections with the present rather than with the classical past.”

Elaine drew a parallel between the two terms whilst discussing the dates for the periods:

There’s sort of this almost fuzzy line between where the Renaissance ends and the early modern period begins because I wouldn’t, in my mind, I wouldn’t class Milton as a Renaissance poet, but I would class Petrarch as a Renaissance poet and not an early modern poet and then someone like John Donne falls ... you know, in the middle. I personally would call [him] an early modern poet but would say there’s a lot of Renaissance elements in his poetry, so, you know, I think there are different facets which inform ... and, you know, similarly you could say for Milton there’s a lot of classical allusion and sort of Renaissance elements in his poetry.

ii) Relevance

The relevance of early modern poetry to a contemporary reader in an educational context was discussed by three of the students in the context of their experiences at school. They characterised relevance as making personal connections with the poetry, which Mary described as “getting connections”. For Elaine, connection with the poetry when she was at school came through comparing early modern texts with contemporary ones and understanding the biography of the writer, so that she could “get more of a personal connection”. Steve described how his teacher had enabled him, at school, to find “contemporary resonances” in the early modern texts that he studied, although he was not specific about what the resonances

were. He also discussed how reading these texts privately now was important to him, as he was “alone with the text written by someone and it’s a personal connection”. He continued to describe this process of “connecting with the writer” so that the reader understands that “these thoughts are... had everywhere even now.”

In response to the interview question in which Mary was asked to describe her feelings or ideas about early modern poetry as a metaphor, she answered:

In terms of how you first engage with poetry...If you put a caveman in an aeroplane and it would really scare him (laughter) and he wouldn’t know what he was doing, where he was, why he was 300 feet up just be very disorientating. However, if you explained to the caveman how the plane works, where he’s going, how it’s an amazing feat of engineering and hopefully if he understands he would come to appreciate that actually it’s very interesting and still fits into his lifestyle and would be useful.

In the metaphor Mary characterises the caveman as changing perspective from being initially scared at encountering a sophisticated piece of machinery, which she is equating with early modern poetry, to learning to embrace it and being able to see the relevance in what is new to him. The cavemen grows to understand that it is interesting and useful, fitting in to his “lifestyle”, making a connection with it. Later in the interview she returns to her metaphor to reiterate her point:

It was what I was saying earlier that poetry can have a lot of power over people as long as the caveman knows he’s in an aeroplane and knows what it is so to speak as in getting that connection first and I think getting the connection with early modern poetry is the key to it; having a power over it and having that connection ... genuine connections with humanity and just seeing similarities with the person/author, but you’ve got to get over that hurdle first in order for it to have the power.

Mary refers to the power of poetry as being allied with “genuine connections with humanity” in a similar way that Steve did. Steve also characterised his interpretation of connections as thoughts that had been had “everywhere” which carries a similar resonance to Mary’s characterisation of seeing “similarities” with

an author. Mary states that getting the connections with early modern poetry are “key”. Three of the students used the noun “connection” to characterise ways in which they interpreted the poetry as having *relevance* to the contemporary reader.

7.2 (b) Teachers

i) Response to terms

All four of the teachers were familiar with the term *Renaissance*, all of them using the term “re-birth” in association with it. Three teachers said that they would use the term in their teaching and that it would be useful for pupils. Two teachers characterised the term as having connotations of looking backwards, in contrast to *early modern*, which they suggested was looking forwards. Graham described the period as being “self-conscious”, characterising the activities that were being undertaken in the period as:

Those writers, those poets, those artists, knew they were being humanist in the old-fashioned sense, they knew they were imitating and making a variation on the greats of the Greek and Latin past, they knew that. They didn’t understand how much that they were doing ... inventing the future. We’re going to do that in retrospect, but they were then in the future.

In contrast to the two teachers that characterised the *Renaissance* as looking backwards, Martin defined the term *Renaissance* as looking forwards with “new ideas, new thoughts and new discoveries” and “revolution in terms of explosions of drama and new ideas and scientific discovery”.

Tanya characterised the period as a “massive leap forward”, emphasising particularly the shift in the English language:

The whole English language just took leaps and bounds forward because it was becoming more standardised, it was just communication got better, I suppose for them ... really thinking about it the printing press was more ... had more effect than like the internet today, you know, like in terms of communication. If you think about it, Britain being able to write it down and read it, common people being able to read and write, common people – ordinary people – not just the educated classes. Massive, isn’t it, in terms of intellectual advancements, a massive leap forward.

Tanya's interpretation of the period is full of positive actions associated with the Intellectual progress that she interprets in the period, which she reiterates later in the interview with "you can see thinking-man like man-kind man coming out of the medieval soup"

Three of the teachers were familiar with the term *early modern* and one had not heard of it or used the term at all. One teacher described the term as "technical" and one associated it specifically with teaching English Language rather than literature. Graham stated that the two terms suggested "different ways to look at the same period" and he elaborated that "I tend to use early modern because of how similar those people are thinking to us as opposed to the medieval period which is fundamentally different". Like Tanya, he draws a contrast between this period and the preceding one. Martin suggested that there were problems using the adjective "modern" within the term:

We are now into the 21st Century; we have so many periods that are modern or post-modern or something with the word modern in that we're actually thinking 'Okay, what do we mean by modern' because, yeah, Early Modern for – you know – when I was in school in the 70's is going to be different from the pupils at school now in terms of what's modern and therefore what's Early Modern. So I'm more wary of that term.

Within the teachers' group the term *Renaissance* was familiar and was one that was perceived as useful in teaching, at school, and one that generally pupils would be able to work with and understand. The types of adjectives that were associated with it connoted positive interpretations, such as "re-birth" and "new" or positive actions, such as a "massive leap forward". The term *early modern* was not recognised by all four, and the connotations of the term *modern* were interpreted as being open, in that it could both offer potential for links with pupils in a contemporary context but also problematic, in that what exactly it means as a term is unclear.

ii) Relevance

The teachers utilised the term *relevance* in characterising what elements of the poetry that could make connections with their students and how they might seek to teach the poetry to students. All four teachers used different epithets to characterise how they interpreted the different versions of *relevance* that they perceived in the poetry. Martin characterised *relevance* in terms of themes that were “timeless”, as did Tanya. Jenny stated that “fundamentally we have the same emotions” and Graham that “the human being is having the same essential experiences that I have.” Tanya also called the themes “universal” and said they expressed elements of the “human condition”. Tanya described her teaching of Ben Jonson’s *On My First Sonne*:

It’s like the crystallised essence of an idea of a piece of experience of something, defamiliarisation, looking at something in a different way, or it’s a recounting of something that happens universal and so ... I don’t know ... it comes as a comfort to you later in life when you ... it’s like touching hands with someone from centuries ago. I mean, isn’t it crazy, that guy ... writing about losing his first son, people having an experience like that today it’s still the same, isn’t it? It reaches out across the centuries; it’s like that commonality of experience.

Tanya’s characterisation of connection is of “touching hands” across time, a physical connection, that represents the same “commonality” of emotions that span the centuries. Tanya describes the connections in the poetry from the perspective of an adult, that the poetry can come in later life as “a comfort”, and idea which Jenny also stated, that poetry had the power to make her feel that “I’m not alone”.

Three of the teachers gave examples of how they used what they interpreted as this quality of *relevance* in the classroom with pupils. Specifically, their examples focused on two thematic areas present in early modern poetry that they described as being relevant to their pupils: love and sexual relations. With regard to the first theme of love, three teachers discussed how they had taught sonnets from the early modern period. Two teachers discussed teaching sonnets as part of a longer sonnet sequence, either by Shakespeare or Sidney, and the way that they perceived these working with their pupils. Both teachers had experience that they drew on of

teaching sonnet sequences expressing the trials of love. They both expressed that the sonnet sequences had the potential to have a strong significance for their pupils, particularly for those in late adolescence. Martin characterised the qualities that he perceived as relevant of the sonnet sequence:

Still has ability to communicate things that are relevant to today's seventeen-year-old all the kind of ... all the love problems that Shakespeare talks about – you know – and Sidney – you know – once you explain the set-up – you know – Sidney's in love with this girl who's married and he hasn't got a hope (*laughter*). That happens in Harry Potter – you know – (*laughter*) and so it sort of, there's something universal about it, something timeless about it.

Martin characterises the relevance that he interprets in the sonnet sequences as the trials of love of the speaker, which he believes can communicate with his students with the same force and currency as a contemporary text popular with an adolescent age group. His comparison with Harry Potter and use of the term “universal” reinforce this perception that the same themes are present in both texts. At a later point in the interview, Martin referred to a very similar aspect that he interpreted in the work of Donne, “which is why I think again pupils find things like Donne quite refreshing because it doesn't matter whether he's courtly or not, he's talking about wanting to stay in bed with his girl (*laughter*)”.

Jenny discussed teaching sonnets individually rather than as part of a sequence. In describing her teaching of Shakespeare's *Sonnet 18* to a GCSE group, she related that she interpreted her students' reactions as shock at the possibility of infidelity in the relationship being portrayed by the speaker of the sonnet and characterised their reactions as, “What, Shakespeare had a bit on the side? They are shocked about that.” She also described the way she related it to popular culture to contextualise it for the students. She recalls:

Paul O'Grady who dressed up with the big blonde wig, he presented this most brilliant poetry programme ...what was good about it was that you got somebody who wasn't linked with poetry and you did not associate with academic study presenting this programme about poetry and one of the poems was “Shall I compare thee to a summers day”it was done as a kind of Cilla Black “Blind

Date" type of thing (*laughter*) and it was so wonderful, so there would be ... so Lily Savage would interview William Shakespeare, this actor would come on (*laughter*) and she would say 'now who's this dark lady then, Will, what's going on' kind of thing and it was brilliant

The *relevance* of the sonnet discussed in this extract is being presented via the medium of popular contemporary culture. It is important to the teacher that the sonnet is not presented in the context of "academic" study, which suggests some resistance to that context of academic study. The emotion of infidelity is presented as the point of connection, via the humour of the sketch being described. Jenny later also discussed how she would refer in her teaching of early modern poems in relation to themes that occur in *Coronation Street*, as she stated that the poems are about people, who were "no different then to the way we are now."

Three of the teachers, whilst stating that the strands that make the poetry relevant are those which are familiar, also stated that the elements of difference needs to be acknowledged. Tanya characterised Marlowe's *Passionate Shepherd to his Love* as "timeless" in which "boy meets girl, you know, that whole area you could transpose that to any culture at any time and any place". However, she also states that difference is also significant, stating that the period as "was a different time, a different space". She felt that it was the meeting between the two elements that was so very important to her and her teaching:

Well because the old poetry is beautiful, the cadence of it, how it takes you to that place; it takes you to that world, it shows you how those people thought and it's ... the people who write poetry are obviously thoughtful, intelligent, they've got some message, they've got something to say, they're trying to impart something, so it's not ever... it's always something that's useful to learn and it's beautiful, but it is like really ancient, old stained glass. These students, by learning it, they're shining their light through this window, they're shining their modern light there; 'Look they're alive, all these people are dead' but they're shining their light there, they're understanding their thoughts through this glass and *I don't know* bringing it alive again, or *I don't know* taking those thoughts and those feelings that their forefathers had. I think how fantastic is that? If I said to you I could show you something that your great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather wrote, you know, and 'look this is a poem that he wrote', how fantastic ... and that's what it is really, the brightest and the best.

Tanya characterises the process of her students relating to the poetry as making connections with their “modern light”. The poetry is a stained glass window that is brought alive by her students, so that they make connections with “those thoughts and those feelings that their forefathers had”. The thoughts are in a different space “that place...that world” but through the glass of the poem “they’re understanding their thoughts through this glass”. Both similarity and difference are being characterised as co-existing by Tanya in her metaphor.

Expressing a similar idea, Graham commented that “you are constantly struck by how exactly alike these people were but also how spectacularly unlike us they were”. For Justin, success in teaching this period and making it relevant for pupils was not to stress what was familiar through the recognisably familiar elements, but for them to have knowledge about the period. He repeated that they need to understand context and tradition in order to have a “shared language” between pupils and texts, so that pupils can have a dialogue with the texts, in his words a “conversation”. He stated that pupils need knowledge, so that they can understand and relate in a different way to the poetry. A fuller review of the data with regards to the impact of new historicism and the significance of historical context will be undertaken in section three of this chapter.

The teachers expressed their notions of relevance as being ways to make connections between their pupils and the early modern texts. In their characterisation of teaching sonnets from the period, the expression of different versions of love by the speaker was described as particularly resonating with young people. The teachers characterised the relevance of the poems as being the elements of the poetry that they could make connections with their students in the classroom. Two of the teachers also stressed that making connections was not about stressing only connections but also coming to grips with the differences embodied in the poetry.

7.2 (c) Lecturers

ii) Response to terms

With regard to the term *Renaissance*, three of the lecturers stated that they use both terms in the context of their teaching and writing, whilst one stated that he would use only *early modern* as far as possible in his work. Carla stated that she preferred *Renaissance* as a term as it was closer to “how thinkers felt at the time” than *early modern*. Gavin stated that both terms were “acceptable” but that *Renaissance* did connote looking “backwards” and that the “magnetic” centre of the term was Italy in the 13th and 14th centuries. Diana preferred to use the term *Renaissance* as she suggested that:

There are these kind of big narratives about this is how we became modern, which are really interesting but they maybe don't give a sense of the period as something which is rich and strange and interesting as a kind of entity in its own right or other place, which in a way *Renaissance* captures something of what I think is a genuine energy or a genuine excitement in this period.

Diana suggests that the period is an “other place”, which she reiterates later in the interview with “I suppose *Renaissance* seems to me to present more of the sense that this is a moment in its own right than the precursors of lots of other things to follow.” In her view the period has its own character and vitality that marks it out from other periods, which she stresses in the extract through repeating “genuine”.

One of lecturers commented that the term *Renaissance* was “exclusive” and another that it was “un-inclusive”. Diana noted that the connotations of the term *Renaissance* were limiting in that it “excludes so much of the populace” and Stefan stated that the implications of the term were that it has a tendency to “shut off particular types of writers from our study”. Stefan discussed how he made every effort to counter-balance this idea of the Renaissance by providing a rich spread of writers:

So trying to give my students some texts by women writers ... by Protestant, by Catholic, the elite, by the non-elite, forms of literature that are more traditional ... say someone like Spenser or Shakespeare and stuff like anonymous ballads,

you know, trying to present some of that to give them a real honest picture of the period.

Diana further noted that the *Renaissance* was an “exclusive idea” because “it doesn’t think properly about the Middle Ages as a period”. Stefan described how his students come to university with preconceptions about the period of the *Renaissance* which he regarded as creating a barrier, that were “baggage” and “relatively old-fashioned beliefs” about the period, that the period was in some way cut off from the medieval period and that the growth in literary production was somehow “spontaneous”.

Carla felt that *early modern* was a term that was less satisfactory as a starting point with students:

So I feel like at least if we use *Renaissance* we can then kind of confront that and actually look at the Middle Ages and how active it was, whereas *early modern* is seen as kind of a safe term so we don’t examine the implications of that so much. And it also just confuses people – a number of people who think I do Victorian stuff.

Carla suggested that the term *early modern* connotes “a jolly romp towards the modern age” and that the term is making claims for the period as being the starting point for this movement to the modern. This connotation of the term was viewed as problematic by all four of the lecturers. Stefan described the adjective *modern* in the terms as a “killer” and commented that:

Well the term *modern* does tend to reinforce the belief somehow that we are the direct result of this period, that we are modern and they are early modern, and I think that is unhelpful first of all because this period is utterly bizarre (*laughter*) and I think the sheer level of alienation we have from it is difficult to emphasise.

He continues, stating that:

The danger is looking back at everything and seeing it in an analytical and logical perspective in a sense of trying to see where the modern world begins and that’s problematic because there’s hundreds/thousands of wrong terms in the sense

that they don't lead to what we have now. Plenty of beliefs are getting discarded, thrown away and changed beyond all recognition and having somehow the mind-set that you can go back and connect up in a very clear and very unambiguous way to very different periods, like I say, is very problematic.

Stefan sees it as simplistic to make unambiguous links with the period, which the term *early modern* connotes. He views the period as provoking "alienation" in a contemporary reader, alien to our own, an idea also used by the lecturer Gavin to characterise the period in his interview. Stefan expresses that it is ill-conceived to try and connect with texts from this period in this way with an interpretive framework implied by the term *modern*. He views imposing this reading on texts from a period so different to our own as misguided and limiting.

ii) Relevance

Relevance as a theme was characterised in a variety of ways by the lecturers. Diana and Stefan felt that by reading texts from the period as being clearly linked with the present the reader loses the actual essence of the really specific qualities of the period, which Stefan calls "bizarre" and Diana "rich and strange". Diana elaborates on this:

One of the reasons I love this period is because it is ... you kind of stumble at once across things which are ... which you can really recognise or which seems strikingly relevant, but you also ... what I like about the period is how weird elements of it are and they don't want to ... that can be done very reductively in a sense of kind of ... oh it was, you know, it was all crazy and it was all dirty and it didn't have medical facilities, or whatever else, but actually there's ... I think it's really exciting for me is that it pushes you to think about how you understand the world because you're coming up against world views which sometimes seem as though they're like yours and then just kind of turn and give you something that you weren't expecting or have a very different way of imagining or thinking about the world or about the kind of literary moment.

Diana characterises the elements about the period that to her are by turns "rich" in their suggestiveness and "strange" in their oddness. The strangeness she suggests is composed of the unfamiliar elements to a contemporary reader, "weird" or "dirty" and "crazy". These elements are reminiscent of the way in which Stefan

characterised beliefs and terms from the *early modern* period which have now been discarded or changed beyond recognition. Diana describes the unfamiliar qualities co-existing with “things that you can recognise or which seems strikingly relevant”. The richness, Diana suggests, is the co-existence of these elements, of world views that are recognisable which “turn” and surprise you. The richness which Diana characterises “pushes” the reader to confront how they think and imagine the world.

Gavin interprets the relevance of the period for study as being that which is different to the experiences and beliefs of a contemporary reader. He argues:

The period has an awful lot to say as versions of what the self what to be human is which later centuries don't do. The difference of the past, the sheer alien nature of what infuriates and animates and enthuses people is quite different from later centuries.

Gavin identified interpreting the poetry through making connections being a post-Romantic reading of the poetry. He said:

You get facets of that coming through in the satirical public nature of early modern verse, which is quite different in nature to poetry after the Romantic period –where there comes to be a presumption that the proper realm of poetry is the persona – the investigation of the self, it's the crystallization of an emotion that relates in some way to the self. Most early modern poetry doesn't have that presumption, most early modern poetry is public and political in a way that is not true of later centuries and in that sense we might suppose that those beautiful little poems of Donne and Marvell are atypical insofar as they do work for us as they are crystallizations of the self.

Seeking relevance in poetry by making connections, which Gavin characterises as “crystallizations of the self”, he suggests is an ahistorical reading of the poetry. He observes that the poems of Donne and Marvell are unusual in that they can be read in a post-Romantic way, allowing personal connections with a contemporary reader. The personal connections allow a relationship with what can be interpreted as familiar to readers, by contrast to the “alien” nature of a great deal of the “versions of the self” offered by the poetry of the early modern period.

In contrast to the other lecturers, Carla discussed incidents in her teaching the period where she interpreted experiences as being relevant for her students:

Sometimes I give them Ben Johnson's poem on the death of his son, which people find very moving... I think people are surprised because there is again this sort of historical truism that people say Oh well early modern people have a lot of like miscarriages and little children dying, so they don't really care about children, and actually you can say no, here is real feeling, just the same as you would read now in a book or in a poem and I think they respond to that can be ... they can see an individual behind the poem.

Carla perceives that when her students can see the individual behind the poem, this allows a connection to be made, for them to see the "crystallization of emotion", in what Gavin would view as a post-Romantic reading of the poem.

All four lecturers characterised elements of the period at different points in the data with specific adjectives, four of these being "bizarre", "strange", "weird" or "alien". Diana stated that this difference captured in the adjectives co-existed with familiar, recognisable "things" which the reader could find relevant, in the way that Carla characterised the familiar in the bereavement portrayed in Jonson's sonnet. Stefan stated that it was very "problematic" to look for connections with the poetry in this way and Gavin suggested that to look for relevance and connection in this way is related to post-Romantic expectations of poetry.

7.2 (d) Examiners

i) Response to terms

The examiners held a variety of interpretations of the term *Renaissance*. One examiner characterised the term as being "literary" as opposed to *early modern* which she saw as being associated with language development, in the way that the term would be utilised in 'A' Level English rather than English literature. Another examiner, Natalie, stated that *Renaissance* was a "scholarly" term that "made assumptions" in terms of "cultural rebirth" and was "problematic". Natalie said that it was not a term that she would assume pupils would know without being specifically discussed with them. She also said it was not a term used by the exam

board. For her, the *Renaissance* when related to an English literature context could be equated with “the Golden Age of Elizabeth” whilst James also stated that for him he “tended to think of the Tudor poets” when he used the term *Renaissance*. Paul defined the term as a “cultural rebirth...in art, music and other forms, not necessarily just literature” and used the analogy of a “cultural nexus of painting and music and literature.” He also stated later in the interview that “I’ve never read a Renaissance female poet”.

The answers regarding the term *early modern* were also varied. Two characterised the term as being a description that was specifically chronological. One of these two linked the term specifically to ‘A’ Level English language, where *early modern* depicts a time period in the continuum of the development of the English language. James suggested that the term was “problematic” as the term means “different things to different people”. He suggested that it was a “broad literary grouping” in that it was looser than *Renaissance*, so that poets like Wyatt and Pope would be classed as *early modern* but not as *Renaissance*. He said that it was not a term that he would not use the term with his students. Like Natalie, he also stated that the exams boards use years as categories for texts, avoiding the use of terms as categories at all.

Paul stated that he would not use the term *early modern* except with a very specialist audience and perceived a problem with the adjective modern in the term *early modern* “modern for most people would start in 1900 or 1914 or even for the younger generation teachers 1945 or later.” Paul related the term *early modern* specifically to the work of Shakespeare, where he perceived the “moment where the feudal world is ended” and that there was an emergence of “a world we would recognise”. He said that he would apply both *Renaissance* and *early modern* to Shakespeare, but to different aspects of his work:

As a poet I would say he’s a Renaissance writer, so things like the long poems are for me Renaissance things. I think I’d see the Sonnets as Renaissance literature. In fact I’ve just realised Shakespeare’s literature when he’s writing poetry but he’s not literature when he’s writing plays. When he’s writing plays he’s writing

for a different audience. His poems were written I think for a relatively narrow coterie of educated, probably high social status people. So that's niche writing, whereas he just did a radical transformation as a dramatist he's playing to Londoners who are going to pay good money in his pocket for three hours, so that means he gets to choose a lot of the stuff and sometimes sends up a lot of the stuff that he would have felt was suitable for the other market...If that makes him an Early Modern it's in fact he ... he's the origin of John Sullivan because he like Falstaff are contemptible, laughable, not heroic, not moral standards that we can live by, they're people like us who've got dreams. Their dreams are inappropriate to their talents but they've still got dreams. And Del Trotter and Falstaff both dream of being successful; they both dream of being attractive to women, they both dream about ... they try to be dolphin-like above the surface of their environment and they come a cropper, but you sympathise with them, you laugh at their dreams, you sympathise with their dreams. So that for me is a continuity that goes from Fools and Horses to Shakespeare and I can see there's an unbroken line... I can see a continuity from Shakespeare that would mean I would say he's Early Modern

Paul equates elements in Shakespearean drama as being in the continuum that is connoted by the term *early modern*. At a later point in the interview, in Paul's response regarding what he saw as the common characteristics of early modern poetry (Question 6), Paul referred again to his conception of what in the writing a modern reader would "recognise":

Even Herbert who is the most secure in his faith feels it's all right to be wobbly in faith and I think that's something ... it's the same thing that Shakespeare did ... the medieval and morality plays didn't, they lived in a world of moral certainties, whereas I think a writing tradition that is equally active on moral doubts is the beginning of the world that we would recognise.

The points of connection denoted by the term are the elements of *relevance* explored in the next section of this analysis. There was little agreement between the examiners on their interpretations of the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern*.

ii) Relevance

Relevance was characterised by the examiners in different ways. Two examiners specifically discussed poems of seduction as being something that chimed with their students. Georgina referred to ideas in Shakespeare's sonnets which for her are "still relevant today". She cited one sonnet where the speaker is depicted as settling for "what you can get", which she said are ideas that "are still there" for a contemporary reader. She also described that she felt that in her experience John Donne's *The Flea* works "really well" with students. She outlined what she perceived to be one of the elements that spoke to them, "they can really kind of understand his desire for the woman and wishing he was a flea that could roam and roam (*laughter*) about her body ... completely without having to kind of worry." So they could "relate to it more because it was more contemporary than they thought it would be."

Two examiners cited Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* as a poem that students find relevance in. Natalie described the relevance of the poem as:

And, of course, what students often find interesting is that, you know, something like, you know, encouraging your girlfriend to have sex with you is not something that's gone out of date (*Laughter*) effectively. Probably 'world enough, and time', I think there are still guys out there is that not, you know, Marvin Gaye's *Let's Get It On* and it's getting, you know, 300 years earlier.

The examiner refers to the rhetorical position assumed by Marvell's speaker in *To His Coy Mistress* and to the persuasive force of the speaker urging his mistress to have sex with him. The increasing urgency with which Marvell depicts the speaker of the poem haranguing his mistress to succumb to his blandishments is echoed in the teacher's quoting of "world enough, and time." The central image in the poem of the lack of time, "times winged chariot" at the speaker's back, and lack of space for the mistress' luxury of refusal is equated by the examiner to the same expression of male desire and urgency in a more contemporary context by the reference to Marvin Gaye suggesting to "Get it on". These sentiments, the teacher

feels, of male approach and female delay are certainly recognisable to adolescents today.

Paul commented also upon the relevance as he saw it of Marvell's poem to pupils of every ability:

You can still do Marvell's Coy Lover and you can probably take that down to the lowest of the F's and the G's will get something out of that and what they don't know is what they're appreciating is that this is just a bit of rampant lust ramped up in the conventions of a literary tradition which was never designed for and was shocking at the time.

Paul characterises pupils by their capacity to get grades at GCSE of F or G who can make connections with the "rampant lust" of the poem, similar to the readings of pupils' reactions to this poem by Marvell and *The Flea* described by both Natalie and Georgina.

Relevance was defined by Paul when discussing what he looked for in a good answer on early modern poetry in a GCSE exam. He states that he would look for an answer in which candidates had interrogated the poem and explored the answers around his definition of relevant:

I'd be asking who might want to read this, who might enjoy reading it? What might anybody gain from reading it? So is there anything in the ideas that is relevant? Is there anything you recognise in the attitudes.

The key term in this extract is "recognise" as he pairs this with "relevant" in his rhetorical questions to characterise the way that he wants to read a candidate's answer on an early modern poem. He later discusses how in a good exam answer he would want evidence of dialogue with an early modern poem:

I want them to meet poems that they feel confident they can dialogue with, so I don't mind if a kid says '*Whoo, that's crap that is, I read some crap poems – I had to, but that's the crappiest poem ever*'. So sometimes I might provoke them into that and I would like teachers to use poetry to provoke kids to response and then when they've got response to refine the response into something which has a bit more structure and a bit more informed quality, and a bit more development, and a bit more thinking about where does it come from, where in you does it

come from or where in your culture does it come from and have you ever thought it might be the culture's that's talking not you? Do you want to say that you're just your culture? You've got a choice.

Relevance here is equated with the candidate's reading of a poem, what they can articulate as a response that shows the examiner where "in you" or where in their "culture" does that response come from. The examiner uses the term "dialogue" to characterise the connections he wants to see the candidate making between themselves, their culture and the poem. He later states:

So I don't want to draw historical accuracy from them either in terms of history or in terms of literary development; I just want them to know ... this is a long time before you were born, man's long dead, woman's long dead, you're alive. What's different that worth comment, because that tells us how we've changed, all of us, and what's the same, because that tells us that there's an enduring ... and they fall back on an old bourgeois formula of it's the essential of the universe and the unchanging things that you find irrespective of the genre and the time and the rest of it and they need to be plugged into the continuity of human experience as well as the interesting diversions from it. So I'm not interested in the category of Renaissance literature...

The examiner utilises the terms "different" and "the same" as two qualities that he wants to see candidates discuss. Natalie and Georgina brought to the forefront the elements of similarity that they perceived in the poetry as enabling students to make connections with early modern poetry and therefore interpret it as relevant to them in a contemporary context.

7.3 Comparison

i) Response to terms

The discussion over the respondents' definition of the period as either *Renaissance* or *early modern* enabled the various participants' interpretation of the period to be explored. All the participants were familiar with the term *Renaissance* and most understood it as an artistic movement. The associations of the term were generally seen as positive for the students, teachers and examiners, who used terms such as "vibrancy", "massive leap forwards" and "golden age". Eleven participants from

these three groups used the term “re-birth” in the context of defining their ideas of the period. Members of these three groups mostly suggested that it was a term that was useful to use in a school context with pupils. Two of the teachers suggested that the term connoted that the period was a distinct break from the medieval period, as did one of the examiners.

The lecturers had a slightly different viewpoint from these three groups. Two of the lecturers suggested that they had to confront the preconceptions that students have of the Renaissance when they come to their undergraduate courses. Two of the lecturers noted the exclusivity of the term *Renaissance* and later in their interviews all four of the lecturers discussed women early modern poets, whilst one of the examiners stated that he had “never read a Renaissance female poet”. Three of the lecturers preferred to use the term *Renaissance* in their own work as they felt that it captured something specific which they perceived in the period.

Most of the participants had heard of or used the term *early modern* except one teacher. There was little consensus between the interpretation of the term. The majority of the students, teachers and examiners expressed a view that the term was neutral. Four from the group of students, teachers and examiners thought differently to this and noted the connotations of the term “modern” as emphasising connections or similarities with the present. From the teachers, Martin questioned what the term would mean for young people in his classroom but Justin interpreted the term as very useful to stress how similarly, in his view, people were thinking at that period to our own. The examiner Paul distinguished the use of the two terms as both being applicable to the works of Shakespeare but characterising different facets of his work.

The lecturers all acknowledged the connotations in the term of as being the origin of modern thinking, which they characterised as being problematic in a number of ways. Stefan outlined why he saw the term as problematic, as he saw it as implying that unambiguous connections can be made with a period which is “utterly bizarre” and far removed from contemporary readers in many ways. Carla suggested that, unlike *Renaissance*, the term is often unexamined with students and therefore they

lack awareness of the problems and connotations of the term. This would seem to be the pattern in the data, in which only four of the twelve participants who were not lecturers commented on the connotations of the term. Two of the examiners stated that exam boards avoid using any terms and simply use years to delineate areas of study, thus avoiding any of the issues tied up in either of the terms. The connotations particularly of the term *early modern* also relate to the theme *relevance*, discussed in the next section.

ii) Relevance

All the students characterised their interpretation of relevance as being personal connections with early modern poetry. The students had experienced this as the way that the poetry had been negotiated at school with them by their teachers. Of the teachers, three directly cited how they tried to highlight for the pupil personal, emotive connections with the poetry as a way of enabling students to relate to the poetry – with the three themes of love, sexual relations and bereavement as the themes that were cited as being relevant in the classroom. Of the examiners, who drew both on their classroom experience and their examining expertise, three referred also to themes of love and sexual relations in the poetry. Some of both the teachers and examiners noted their perception of early modern poetry as being particularly appealing to slightly older adolescents, as the themes of love and sexual relations may well be significant to them at that time of their life. One examiner, Paul, specifically referred to relevance in terms of personal connection and reflection on the individual's relationship to culture.

Only one lecturer referred specifically to using personal connections with the poetry in her teaching, in citing her teaching of Jonson's sonnet on the death of his son. Like Martin, she also drew comparisons between what can be found in an early modern poem with what can be found in a contemporary text, similar to the way in which Martin referred to Harry Potter as an analogy for the poetry. In interpreting relevance as personal connections, the participants are looking for similarities

between elements that a contemporary reader recognises in the poetry and elements that they perceive as being present in the early modern poetry.

In contrast to interpreting similarity as relevance, difference was also seen as a quality of relevance in early modern poetry. Two of the teachers referred specifically to how they understood the poetry coming from a “different space”, in Tanya’s words. Justin expressed clearly at various points in his interview that his pupils needed historical knowledge of the period to make any connection with the poetry. Georgina, an examiner, in discussing the poetry of John Donne, referred to the ways that she perceives her difference as an important element of her teaching;

G; so they just tend to block the past into one big ... and that’s why I quite like looking at the difference ... the ideology behind the texts and our view of the past we tend to like just box things up and make it quite simplistic and I think I quite like it when they discover things

Int; So you’re talking about the texts as being a site to confront their ideas?

G; Yeah; definitely and to kind of break down those misconceptions that they have about the past and see that it’s more multi-faceted

Of the lecturers, Diana characterised the relevance for her of the co-existence of both similarity and difference, that pushed her to examine how she thought about the world in her contemporary context. She characterised that there was the presence of both a “commonality of experience” and elements that are “weird” and “strange”. Gavin commented on the “versions of self” offered in the poetry, and three participants used the term “crystallised” or “crystallisation” to characterise the way that poetry expressed an essence of feeling or emotion to them.

Dialogue as an element of relevance featured in three participants’ interviews, two teachers and one examiner. The teacher Tanya described how she felt teaching early modern poetry was “like touching hands with someone from centuries ago.” She used the image of young people shining their light through the poetry that, as a stained glass window, enabled light to shine on “those thoughts and those feelings that their forefathers had”. The teacher Justin referred to students having “conversations” with the poetry and the examiner Paul stated that

he wanted to see a “dialogue” with the poems that enabled students to reflect on themselves and who they were. Justin and Paul were diametrically opposed in how they saw this dialogue being set up, as Justin stated that without historical knowledge his pupils cannot formulate a response, whilst Paul stated that he wasn’t interested in historical accuracy, just an understanding the poet was “long dead”.

7.4 Discussion

The aim of the first section of this chapter has been to address the subsidiary research question; *In what ways do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry within the subject of English?* The data has been presented in terms of two main themes coded from the data under *Response to Terms* and *Relevance*. The first of these themes, *Response to Terms* has presented the attitudes of the participants towards the early modern period and the way that they discuss and conceptualise the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern*. The way that the participants view the period in question has enabled one aspect of the participants’ interpretations of the poetry of the early modern period to be explored, which was the ways in which the participants conceptualised the period. The second theme that relates to the participants’ interpretation of early modern poetry that has been discussed in this section is the theme of *Relevance*, which enabled how the participants interpreted early modern poetry as relevant to readers in an educational or personal context to be examined. The two themes are closely linked and both provide insight into how the participants interpret the period and its relevance. This final section of the chapter will relate the themes and data to the theoretical and contextual dimensions of this study.

i) Response to terms

The interpretations of the period stated by the interviewees, bound up in their discussions of the term *Renaissance*, relate clearly to the review of definitions raised in the literature for this study. The period was characterised in the data by students, teachers and examiners in a way that was reminiscent of Arnold’s

characterisation of, to use his spelling, the *Renascence*, which he defined as a “re-awakening” (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 135) of classical ideas. His use of an anglicised spelling of the term was to signal the significance of these ideas coming to life again in England and being relevant to the context in Victorian England in which he was writing. Marcus (1992) pointed out the connotations of the term as being a “charismatic idea of rebirth...carried by the idea of the Renaissance” (p.44). The optimistic terms such as “revitalisation”, “new” and “golden” align themselves with these interpretations of the term, which Marcus (1992) glossed as “optimistic, upbeat – rebirth and renewal are marvellous ideas” (p. 43). This “optimistic” view was prevalent in the data, particularly of the students, teachers and examiners.

Some of the interviewees’ conceptualisation of the period were similar also to Arnold’s conception of culture as a dynamic force which has agency and energy (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 78). In the way that Arnold associated culture with Hellenism and a vital resurgence of intellectual impulses, so too the Renaissance was described in the data as energetic, and as being “an action, a process and an event”, ““explosions” and “revolution”. The connotation of “leaping”, of the period leaving behind the middle ages and being categorically different from that period, was stated by two teachers and one examiner. The positive connotations in the data of leaping forward, echoes Arnold’s optimistic belief that the spirit of the *Renascence* encapsulated the spirit of Hellenism, “the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it” (Arnold, 1869/1993, p. 59). The lecturers perceived that the Victorian connotations of the term, such as those of Arnold’s, were still prevalent in the thinking of students when they arrived on their courses.

Two lecturers stated that characterising a break with the medieval period, connoted in the term *Renaissance*, was not “thinking properly” in Diana’s words, about the period. The literature for this study examined how the term *early modern* was developed as a rejection of the connotations of the term *Renaissance*. Two of the lecturers used the term “exclusive” and “un-inclusive” regarding the

connotations of the term and Stefan specifically pointed out the wide selection of writers that he seeks to include in his teaching. Stefan's aims in providing for his pupils a "real honest picture of the period" echoes Waller's observations on editorial practice over the last forty years, which sought to provide a far greater, more representative spread of writers from the period. Also echoed in this comment of Stefan's are the concerns of the New Historicist school of critics, who sought to see all texts as equally valid and worthy of study (Greenblatt, 1980). The exclusion of different writers connoted by the term *Renaissance* is signalled by Marcus (1992) where she states that the term focuses on a "small ruling elite" (p. 43). The lecturer Carla referred to the fact that her students arrive on her undergraduate course not expecting to read any women writers indicating that this is alive issue, along with Paul's comment "I've never read a Renaissance female poet".

ii) Relevance

Conroy and Clarke (2011), in discussing the teaching of the early modern period in university settings, state that one of the issues is that the Renaissance, unlike other periods of history, is very present in media and film representations. This argument could, of course, be made of other periods of history but they support their argument by citing series such as *The Tudors*, first broadcast in 2007, and other films about the lives of Elizabeth or Anne Boleyn. The authors argue that students arrive with sense of familiarity, a set of preconceptions about the period, and the period is "always familiar" (p. 1). The challenge of teaching the period, they maintain, is to set up a "dialectic of familiarity and difference" (p. 1) that can enable both difference and familiarity to co-exist in readings and interpretations made by their students of texts from the early modern period.

This tension between what is familiar and what is different was apparent in the data. In characterising elements that were different in early modern poetry, the lecturers noted "beliefs and values" and elements that are "crazy" and "weird". Conroy and Clarke (2011) itemise the elements of what they see as comprising the

elements of difference, which outlines the differences that Diana and Stefan might be suggesting that readers encounter with the period:

A series of other profound differences make the discontinuity between the early modern and the contemporary moment in ways that are not true for the study of later historical periods; the evolving complexities of the relationship between print and manuscript, the profound belief and subjectivity that mark the Reformation, the relationship of the body to the other modes of being prior to Descartes, the fluid and relatively unfixed nature of the vernaculars, the relative marginality of all but the masculine subjectivity to key discourses, the tendency to homogenise an enormously diverse and complex process of historical change” (p. 2-3)

The authors present what they determine as the key elements of the period that affect the discourses of early modern poetry. The project of the authors in their book *Teaching the Early Modern Period*, which they state at the outset, is to acknowledge the discourse of similarity and difference with the period. They want to set up a “dialogic engagement” (p. 4) with the past, through the historicist nature of the essays in their volume, which locates different elements of teaching literature of the period into their historical contexts. This argument, the acknowledgement of difference in the period, chimes strongly with what some of the respondents articulated in their problematisation of the term “modern” in *early modern*. Some of the interviewees argued that emphasising parallels and connections with the present was misguided and ill conceived.

In his analysis of discussing interpretations of history within a secondary school context, Chapman (2011) identifies three different approaches to the past that underlie pupil and teachers’ conception of history. He recognises that his model is “simplifying somewhat” but outlines three alternative standpoints:

- that aim to *identify* the present with the past (or to assert *continuity* between them) or that aim to *differentiate* the present from the past (or to assert *discontinuity*); and
- that aim to *affirm* the value of aspects of the past or that seek to *negate* them. (p. 100)

Chapman (2011) points out that these approaches are “fundamentally distinct ways” (p.100) to view the past. The first of Chapman’s (2011) conceptions is to “assert continuity” with the past, such that the present is identified with the past “or” the second approach is one which asserts “discontinuity” with the past, so that the present is differentiated from the past. These two approaches are opposed to each other and seek to conceptualise history in different ways. The position of Conroy and Clarke’s (2011) “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (p. 1) is to conflate both of these approaches and suggest that they should “co-exist” in readings of texts of the early modern period. Five of the respondents expressed ideas that engage with both continuity and discontinuity with the past co-existing in a text, whilst the remainder of the participants other than the lecturers characterised “continuity” (Chapman, 2011, p. 100) with the past as the way that they conceptualised the *relevance* of the poetry.

Ten of the respondents referred to personal connections as significant in characterising *relevance*. Naylor (2013) presented the findings of the pilot study for her doctoral studies, of teenage readers responding to early modern texts. A major theme in the findings was the way in which the adolescent readers characterised the *relevance* they saw in Jonson’s *On My First Sonne*, which was being studied for their GCSE English. The data from four pupils was presented in total. For the two male pupils, key to their engagement with the world of the poem was learning about the background of the poet and the biography of Jonson. One male pupil stated that the fact that the poem was about a true incident enabled him to relate to it more effectively. His religious beliefs were also a point of contact with the poem, as he related his reading of the bible with the language and spirit of the early modern era. One of the female pupils responded to sonnet within the context of the relationship of the poem to her own writing. She related her experience of the death of a loved one and writing a poem for him, reading it publicly at his funeral,

to that of Jonson's writing of the sonnet. The three pupils were responsive to the themes of death, loss and the impact that had on the speaker of the poem. Their interpretation of the relevance of the sonnet was that they reported a relationship between the expression of those themes in the poem and their own lives.

In the data for this study, similar patterns of finding *relevance* were reported by the four students in the data. They characterised their personal connections with early modern poetry and also their experience of this "continuity" (Chapman, 2011, p. 158) with the past being emphasised. Three of the teachers and three of the examiners directly referred to ways in which they encouraged pupils' personal and emotive connections with the poetry. Cited as particularly relevant by these six participants were the themes of love, sexual relations and bereavement. Chapman (2011) points out that historical interpretation is shaped by a range of factors, four of which are:

- our orientation towards the past and understanding of what history is;
- our purposes in engaging with the past;
- our awareness and identification of traces of the past;
- decisions we make about which traces have relevance to the issues we are interested in (p. 155)

The teachers and examiners, in articulating the themes that they perceive to be relevant to their students, derive in part from the "purposes" (p. 99) that they have in engaging students with texts within exam classrooms. They need the poems to appeal to their pupils and to interest and motivate them. Chapman (2011) argues that one of the reasons for interpretations in history being different from each other is the "practical contexts" (p. 99) from which they arise, which seems also one possible factor in shaping the interpretation of relevance with regard to poems from the early modern period.

The lecturer Gavin commented on the "versions of self" offered in early modern poetry, and three participants used the term "crystallised" or "crystallisation" to characterise the way that poetry expressed an essence of feeling

or emotion to them. Gavin stated that this was a post-Romantic reading of the poetry. He stated that in “the Romantic period” there came “to be a presumption that the proper realm of poetry is the persona...it’s the crystallization of an emotion that relates in some way to the self”. By contrast he argued that “most early modern poetry doesn’t have that presumption”. This comment has particular resonance in discussing how contemporary readers respond to early modern poetry, particularly within an educational context, and how students and teachers characterise their encounters with the poetry. Hebron (2008) argues a similar point about contemporary readings of early modern poetry:

We are still influenced today by the Romantic movement, which conceived of poetry as the intense expression of a powerfully felt experience. At some level we still expect a poem to have some clearly traceable link with the psyche and biography of the poet. Yet Renaissance poems often work very differently. They are not usually a direct record of inner experiences of the poet; rather, they are more like miniature theatres, in which different personae play out psychological dramas.’ (p. iii)

Hebron (2008) presents a detailed analysis of the Donne poem *To His Mistress Going to Bed* as a method of illustrating the complexities and problems around finding *relevance* in an early modern poem for a modern reader. His purpose in presenting his analysis is to explore the different positions adopted by a modern reader, who is looking for *relevance* in a text, and in the position of the writer, John Donne.

Hebron (2008) explores the poetic construction of *To His Mistress Going to Bed*, rhythmically and linguistically. He illustrates the tropes of the poetry, the imagery, the voice and the rhetorical virtuosity of the text. He then continues with exploring the ‘the flow of history and ideas’ (p. xi) in the text and the mind depicted in the poem. His point in this exploration is to demonstrate the elements of the Elegy that to a modern reader may seem as relevant, what he calls “live issues” (p. xii), such as relationships between the genders and colonialism. The attitudes in the poem do seem to be unacceptably gendered to modern eyes, that the woman is silenced and that she is depicted as a land to be conquered. Yet, Hebron argues, this is the challenge of the poem, to “see through the eyes of people remote from us in

their outlook and beliefs” (p. xii). He argues that the reader from the early modern period would have “seen this text first and foremost an ingenious literary exercise” (p. xii), that it would have been read intertextually and against the classical sources from which it has originated, in this case Ovid’s *Amores*. He summarises his argument by warning against reading the poetry in a post-Romantic fashion and completes his analysis by advising readers against assuming that the poetry will be “an attempt by the writer to present a truthful record of a real experience”(p. xiii). In the data, many of the participants did interpret the poetry as “a truthful record” of experience and explore its *relevance* through looking at what they could recognise in it.

Another element of *relevance* of the poetry defined by participants was themes that are “universal” and “timeless”. These rather vague terms, described by the examiner Paul as “an old bourgeois formula”, can be considered in the light of the conception of “lifeworld” (p.165) proposed by Gordon (2009), which may help to explore the perceptions of the respondents. In researching the way that poetry is encountered in the classroom, Gordon (2009) proposes a conception of poetry which he argues is encapsulated in the term of “lifeworld” (p.165). This term, he argues, summarises the way in which a poem is “an articulation of the voice, history and culture – the *life* – of an individual (the poet or an adopted persona)” (p.166). He brings together a variety of theoretical strands that feed into his definition and use of “lifeworld”:

That poets are the voices of their societies, subtle and self-possessed; that the controlled voice they project is unique in its meaning-potential; that poetry is a hyper-human means of expression, an invocation of spirit for individuals and for communities; and that poetic utterance brings into being what has not previously been presented to the world. (p. 165)

The *relevance* that the participants suggested was present in the poetry of the early modern period relates very strongly to the conception of “lifeworld” (p.165) utilised by Gordon (2009). The respondents discussed the way that the themes which they characterised as “universal” or “timeless” could speak to their students and allow them to relate to the circumstances being evoked in the poetry. The

themes of love and seduction, present particularly in the sonnet sequences of Shakespeare and Sidney, were identified as areas of experience within the “lifeworld” (p.165) of the persona of the poem that chimed strongly with adolescent readers of the poetry.

Another element of the “lifeworld” (Gordon, 2009, p. 165) can be identified in three participants’ reference to the theme of loss and bereavement, voiced in the sonnet *On My First Sonne* by Jonson. This sonnet was referred to by the teacher Tanya and also the examiner Paul. Paul wanted the candidates in his exam to respond to the poet Jonson as a representative of, as Gordon (2009) put it “voices of their societies” (p. 165), as he wanted them to comment on the “continuity of human experience”. This element of relevance was also evoked by the lecturer Carla as working within her seminar and allowing her students insight into the “individual behind the poem”.

7.5 Conclusion

The aim of the first section of this chapter has been to address the subsidiary research question: *In what ways do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry within the subject of English?* The data has been presented in terms of two main themes *Response to Terms* and *Relevance*. The interpretations of the participants towards the period were explored through the lens of the various approaches taken to the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern*. All the participants were familiar with the term *Renaissance* and the usage of *early modern* was perceived as more specialised and problematic by the presence of “modern” in the epithet. The attitudes held by the participants towards the period were varied, some reflecting the Victorian attitudes characterised by Arnold, and other reflected more recent ideas influenced by the revision of attitudes to the period from the 1980s up to the present day.

Relevance was discussed as a key theme in the data which throws light on participants’ interpretations of the poetry of the early modern period. Ten participants mentioned the themes of love, seduction and bereavement as relevant

to their pupils in a twenty-first century context, placing emphasis on what was familiar in the poetry. Although Conroy and Clarke (2011) warn against shutting down the “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (p. 1) by focussing only on what is familiar, this appears to be the experience of some teachers and students. Chapman’s (2011) argument for interpretations in history differing from each other due to “practical contexts” (p. 155) and “purposes” (p. 155) may provide some insight into why this is a feature of the interpretations of the poetry in this context. There is a tension in providing two competing historical approaches that are “fundamentally distinct ways” (p. 158) to view the past. Five participants expressed the opinion that it was important to enable both approaches to be present in their interpretations of the poetry. Diana characterised the co-existence of both similarity and difference in her interpretation as “rich and strange”, which would enable a “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (Conroy and Clarke, 2011, p. 1) to be interpreted in the poetry of the period. These two themes provide insight into the way that that students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry in the subject of English.

Chapter 8: Subsidiary Research Question (2) *What do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners perceive as significant in the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?*

8.1 Introduction: Theme of Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge

This section focuses on what the participants expressed as significant, as they perceived it, in their teaching and learning of early modern poetry. The discussion of the data coded from each group of participants relating to this question will be presented under the theme; *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge*. The questions that the data is derived from are 6, 8, 10 and 11, although this is not exclusive as the theme recurred throughout the data. For the theme being presented here, *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge*, three terms have been used to characterise similar but not identical aspects of the way that the poetry was perceived as being intellectually challenging for the respondents within the context of their teaching and learning. The terms are used as far as possible to reflect the way in which the different respondents sought to characterise what they perceived to be significant dimensions of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* within the contexts in which the respondents were operating.

8.2 (a) Students

The students characterised their perceptions of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge*, in three main areas; in terms of the lexis, in the reading of the poetry and as being challenging over a period in time. They expressed their notions of *difficulty* through a number of different terms. Two students, Steve and Sue, described the poetry as “dense” and Sue suggested that it was “tricky”.

Sue referred to the lexical dimensions of *difficulty* when answering question (9) *What are the conceptual issues that you or other students might have? Are they unique to early modern poetry?* She referred to “the language itself” whilst also in response to this question Mary commented “the difference in spelling and the way it looks and the odd syntax”. Elsewhere in the interview, Mary described that in her

opinion, on first encountering the poetry there was a “hurdle”, a “stigma” or a “barrier” for the reader. She characterised this barrier as “the shock of the old”. She had recently written an essay on Sam Wannamaker’s new indoor performance space at *The Globe* theatre. The phrase was Wannamaker’s and was his characterisation of audience reactions to being in a space that replicated early modern theatrical practice. In the way that this theatrical experience was unfamiliar and surprising to the audience, so Mary had taken this term and applied it to characterising the initial difficulties that she perceived readers’ experience when encountering poetry of the period for the first time. She described it in this way:

The shock of the old was when the New Globe ... everyone was just standing there saying ‘what do I do’ but as soon as you get over it it actually comes alive and you understand it and it’s incredible that and you’re surprised about how close that person is to you in the way they think, the way they are.

Mary highlights confusion and disorientation on the part of the audience, who do not know what to do with such a novel experience. She then points out the way that the audience come to terms with what is going on. As the audience comes “alive” and “understand” the experience, they are surprised at the proximity of the drama that is so “close” to them and “the way they think, the way they are”. This “shock of the old” is reminiscent of Mary’s metaphor that she used to characterise *relevance* in early poetry of a caveman in an aeroplane. In this metaphor she equated a new reader of early modern poetry as being like a caveman newly introduced to an aeroplane. The caveman changes his initial reaction from fear of the contraption to understanding and liking what it can do and understands its relevance to him (see section on *relevance* in previous chapter). For Mary, the “shock of the old” is temporary state as in her analogy she states that “you get over it” and it then “comes alive”.

The second dimension *difficulty* identified by the students was that of reading. Elaine used comparison between reading an early modern text and a contemporary text aimed at teenagers to make her point. In her response to question (4) regarding what was framing the period for her and a discussion about

the role of libraries, she described unfamiliarity as an area of *difficulty* in early modern poetry and linked this with reading. She repeatedly used the adjective “challenging” to characterise this dimension of reading the poetry in a discussion over what texts were provided in libraries for adolescent readers:

I really think that as well as promoting sort of modern text you should really in libraries promote ... Renaissance anthologies...because it expands your imagination; it expands your reading range...I think that it's very easy that if you become familiar with a kind of genre that it's not challenging you enough; it's not encouraging you to think necessarily. I think that idea of becoming engaged with challenging ideas, challenging texts, can make you more reflective on other aspects and I think they feed into history, your understanding of history, of philosophy...I know there are some very good modern novels for teenagers around, but I have read some that are quite badly written as well (*laughter*) that were in the recommended section of libraries ... you know where it's just not challenging; it's not promoting sort of critical thinking about what's going on that I could sit there and read passively and come away and not think about the book again and I think that challenging texts yes, they may be difficult to get to grips with sometimes, but they keep you thinking long after you've put them down.

In drawing a contrast with modern novels for teenagers, Elaine suggests that once the reader has become “engaged” with early modern poetry there will be many positive outcomes for them, more so than with modern novels for teenagers. She argues that the adolescent reader's imagination and “reading range” will expand; that the reader's critical thinking will be promoted and that the reader will be “more reflective” and make links with other dimensions of knowledge such as history or philosophy. She is very focused on the impact of the poetry on the thinking of the reader. By contrast, Elaine described the reading of novels that she has seen recommended for teenage readers as being read “passively” whilst sitting in the library and not promoting the sort of “critical thinking” that she characterises early modern poetry as doing. She acknowledges that early modern texts may be “difficult to get to grips with” but that the thinking required for more “challenging” early modern texts continues long after the reader has put the book down. These aspects of *difficulty* are portrayed positively by Elaine.

Two other students, Steve and Sue, noted like Elaine the enduring quality of *challenge* that they perceived in early modern poetry. Steve observed that, even though he had studied early modern poetry at school and at university “I don’t now have a comfort zone”. Sue, who had also studied the poetry both at school and university, stated “I’m still grappling” with the texts. She also described how, “I think we were all intimidated by John Donne – and I think I still am intimidated!” She narrates how the poetry of Donne made her feel “daunted” as an ‘A’ Level pupil:

I definitely remember feeling daunted by long Donne poems just because I want to feel like I understand an essence of the poem, but if it’s long and you’re trying to work through complicated language ... conceits and stuff and then you’re trying to get an overall framework as well, you just need to really digest and think for a long time about something that perhaps might end up being insignificant but you just need that time.

Sue observes that the language and the kind of reading and attention that she perceived she needed at school was daunting to her. She repeats that the length of the poems was significant and describes the lexis as “complicated”. She characterised the need for time to sift the importance of the different factors that comprise the poem using the metaphor of digestion, so that the thinking process takes a “long time”. Sue later elaborated on the elements of *difficulty* that she now perceived as an undergraduate, having taken courses on early modern poetry for her degree:

And I think it’s also intimidating because there’s a huge social difference of what poetry was ... the function of poetry at that time and that’s why the editing and un-editing module is so brilliant because we really looked at poetry as coterie verse within its time period rather than an authorial thing, because poets didn’t want their work to be published under their name they wanted it to be circulated and amended and changed and stuff, so I think in that sense it’s quite intimidating because it seems quite alien to our perceptions of poetry today.

Sue’s characterisation of the *difficulty* had shifted from the way that she expressed her former concerns at school, to more contextual features now that she is at university. The terms Sue used here are “intimidating” and “alien” so she is

still suggesting some kind of distance for a modern reader, but from her undergraduate perspective she is not characterising the language as challenging, rather the contextual circumstances of the production and reception of poetry at the time. She points out that the function of poetry at the period was different to that of today, so that it may seem “alien” to the modern reader.

The students characterised their perceptions of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* in three main areas. They discussed difficulty in terms of the lexis and syntax, in Mary’s words the “shock of the old”. Elaine characterised the reading of the poetry as requiring a much more complicated process of reading than contemporary texts, and Steve and Sue both described early modern poetry as continuing to be a challenge for them, even though they had studied it both at school and university. Sue presented a shift in her perspective from being a school student to being an undergraduate on *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge*, but she did not characterise the *difficulty* as lessening as she studied it in more depth and variety.

8.2 (b) Teachers

The teachers characterised their perceptions of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* in two areas that were the same as the students’, lexis and reading the poetry; however, the teachers were discussing this theme in relation to their pupils in their secondary school and college English contexts. Other dimensions that the teachers identified of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* for their pupils were classical and religious references. The teachers also raised the significance as they perceived it of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* in their own professional lives.

Three teachers described one dimension of *difficulty, complexity or challenge* for pupils as being lexical. This was characterised particularly as an initial difficulty. Glossaries were mentioned by two teachers in that both students and teachers simply have to “look it up”; in the words of Jenny, or as Tanya expressed of the language “it needs almost translating” and like two of the students Justin

characterised the language as “dense”. Martin described the language of a sonnet earlier than that of Shakespeare but still early modern as nearly unrecognisable:

So it was Tudor, earlier Tudor than Sidney and so it was just sort of across the line into being something that was almost like it was in another language – you know – not in a modern English that you could recognise.

Martin’s perception of the language of early modern poetry, like Tanya’s view that it nearly needs “translating” for her pupils, is that it is on the cusp of needing to be interpreted as “another language” in a classroom context. The effect that Jenny perceived of this lexical *difficulty* for students was that in her teaching she needed to “get that out of the way first”, because she stated that “anything that obstructs meaning you want to get rid of” so that pupils were not “scared of it”.

Another element of *difficulty* referred to by two teachers was the syntax of the poetry. The unfamiliar ordering of the language was characterised by Tanya as “frightening” and by Jenny as “scary” for pupils. Tanya represented the voices of her pupils as she perceived their responses to the difficult syntax of the poetry, “that’s what makes it then difficult to get your brain round, ‘get your head round’ as they would say or ‘get into it’ because they’re all the right words but not necessarily in the right order (*laughter*)”. In a play on Coleridge’s aphorism about poetry, Tanya suggests that the unfamiliar sentence structure is something that her pupils respond to as presenting a challenge to them to get their heads “round”.

Tanya elaborated on the dimension of syntactical *difficulty* at another stage in the interview in answering question (4) regarding the way she has come to think about early modern poetry and what is framing it for her:

It’s good to learn it at school because it’s difficult, so it provides stretch and challenge for those that need something to ... you know ... and there’s like a skin, you’ve got to push yourself through that skin before you can fully appreciate it. So there’s like a ceiling or a ... *I don’t know what the word is* – a gateway to push through before you can fully appreciate it, so the way that it’s written, the diction, the syntax is difficult, but when you read it and read it and speak it out

loud and read it, it sort of it clicks in your brain and you get to be able to understand it, you get to be able to think and then you never forget it through your life. So it's that level of complexity I think, that difficulty, but it's necessary and then you feel a feeling of achievement having done it, you know.

Tanya directly links learning early modern poetry at school with “stretch and challenge”, linking the poetry with thinking. Tanya's words recall an element of the way that the student Mary characterised *difficulty*. Mary used the terms “hurdle” and “barrier” and Tanya uses the similes of “skin” “ceiling” and “gateway” to convey her perception of an initial block that pupils encounter with the poetry in the unfamiliarity of the syntax. Tanya describes the process needed to read the poetry and come to terms with the syntactical *complexity* as repetitive, iterative and slow; “read...read...speak out loud...read...clicks in your brain”. Tanya characterised this process as satisfying, an “achievement”. Tanya also identifies why she perceives it particularly valuable to encounter this poetry in a school context, as she states that “you never forget it through your life”. Both Tanya and Jenny discussed the element of memory in relationship to poetry of this period and its significance to them and their pupils, linking the process of memory with the complexity of the poetry. Jenny observed of memorising a Shakespearean sonnet “it's always there” and that it can “offer you a different insight, a different way of seeing things.” The code of *memory* cannot be fully explored in this section but is one that merits exploration in further study.

The *difficulty* perceived by Tanya as syntactical, “all the right words but not necessarily in the right order”, she relates to the third dimension of *difficulty*, *complexity or challenge*, that of reading. Tanya saw the kind of reading that pupils needed to undertake to engage with early modern poetry as an iterative reading. Justin also stated that in his perception, *difficulty* for his pupils lay in the actual concentration needed to read the poetry, “the level of ... the attention ... but it's new to them and it's difficult and it really is ... it's the single hardest thing to do.” Both teachers perceive that the unfamiliarity of the lexis and syntax require a specific, slow, iterative process on the part of the reader, which Justin interprets as a level of “attention”. This is reminiscent of the way that the student Sue

characterised the slowness and intensity of reading required for early modern poetry as being related to thinking “you just need to really digest and think for a long time” and Elaine that the texts keep you thinking “long after you’ve put them down”.

Justin discussed his perceptions of a significant area of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* in for his pupils as being classical and particularly religious references. He discussed this within the context of his teaching of the Pastoral genre at ‘A’ Level. He stated that “nine times out of ten” the story of creation in the book of Genesis was new to his pupils, explaining that:

One way and another most kids get through their GCSEs thinking the past is the war, the Victorians and the olden days, and that’s the three things in the past and they come with the notion that the bible was written by some bloke in a single sitting and it all kind of hangs together perfectly...it’s just how much the past is constructed.

Justin links his perceptions of his ‘A’ Level pupils who, having done their GCSEs, do not know the story of Genesis or the nature of the bible with a fragmented and naive view of history. Justin stated that in teaching the Pastoral genre with these ‘A’ Level pupils he starts by looking at *Paradise Lost*, in which he observes that “all the essential ideas of Pastoral” are present and that “the foundation is what Milton was talking about...all does come from Christian mythology.” He described how he has to engage the pupils with the classical and biblical background, which he characterises as being nearly always new to his pupils. For the ‘A’ Level he has to teach a variety of texts in the Pastoral genre, and elaborates on why he starts by teaching Milton;

In the same way as you can’t make sense of early modern stuff without knowing the humanist stuff without knowing the Greeks and the Latins and without knowing the bible you can’t make sense of anything that’s after that without knowing what they’re reacting against or imitating or subverting or copying.

The unfamiliar elements of the classical and religious elements, Justin observes, need to be clarified and discussed with students:

They [the texts] all do something with Greek and Latin models and they all do something with Christian ideas. Their attitudes towards those are often very different, but they all do something with it. That's what they're talking about primarily, so it's what you end up talking about with your sixth-formers and your GCSE class when you've got a chance to do it.

Justin perceives that this knowledge is very important for his 'A' Level students, as this is "primarily" what the early modern texts they study are doing, so his students need to understand that to "make sense" of them. He adds that he does that with his GCSE pupils "when" he has a chance. The placement of this statement after the time adverbial suggest that it is an opportunistic activity at GCSE, which he later confirms in the interview when discussing the limitations that he perceives are placed on his poetry teaching at GCSE by the sheer volume of material that needs to be studied.

The element of *challenge* was not interpreted by the teachers as simply being for the students but was also presented as an element of the teachers' professional lives. Tanya discussed how teaching the sonnet sequence of Shakespeare was "a challenge for everybody" and "something to really get your teeth into". She related that she had had to learn and to look up the vocabulary and references along with her students. Justin also related the teaching of John Donne to his role as part of a teacher's training organisation specialising in improving teacher's subject knowledge:

The only time I actually formally discussed my subject without thinking about students with someone who really knows what they're talking about and she clearly does;...Her [professor's] view of the way Shakespeare works, her view of the way that Donne works, her view of the way those poets work is handy and extremely factual, because I don't get that and that's exactly what the [teacher training organisation] tries to do, we don't get those encounters anymore ... they'll probably last you forty years.

At various points in the interview Justin returned to his involvement in this teacher training organisation and how much satisfaction and professional challenge it gave him to be involved with it. Both teachers associated the element of complexity with regard to their own subject knowledge and as positive. Tanya stated that when teaching Shakespeare's sonnet sequence that "she loved it" and Justin spoke very positively of his association with training teachers and working with academics on this.

The teachers' interpretation of difficulty in the data has included difficulty at a lexical level, at a syntactical level, at a level of understanding references to classical and religious sources, and also as a challenge for teachers and their subject knowledge. The teachers' characterisation of their perceptions of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* were very similar to that of the students in the area of lexis and reading the poetry, in relation to the challenges they perceive the poetry poses to their students. However, the teachers identified other areas of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* for their pupils in the classical and religious references. The teachers also raised the significance *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* in relation to their own professional identity and its impact on their subject knowledge and motivation.

8.2 (c) Lecturers

The lecturers characterised their perceptions of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* in two areas that were similar to those of the students and the teachers, as they also commented on syntax and reading the poetry. The lecturers referred specifically to particular poets in relation to *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge*.

Three of the lecturers described how first year undergraduates have difficulties with syntactical elements of early modern texts. Stefan described how students can get "bogged down" in longer texts, as:

Renaissance stuff...tends to have so many digressions; digression upon digression and darting off in different sections. It can sometimes be difficult for

undergraduates I think to see what the pattern is and what the whole thing looks like together.

He also referred to the fact that his students struggled with “colossal sentences that were going nowhere”. Carla described her students as finding Renaissance language “alienating” and she wondered if the language was too “flowery” and contained too much “unfamiliarity” for them:

It was this active sort of hostility...it was almost like seeing the kind of Renaissance language brought something out in them; it was a very odd reaction, so some of them do find it quite alienating I think and really need to be coaxed ... you're not going to find it as difficult as you think you are..

She observed how the more historical a piece seemed to be, the more alienated her students felt from it. She also observed that the students gave up easily with reading the texts, describing their attitude as, “it’s almost like they just need a very small excuse and they can say ‘oh right we’re alienated’”. She related how they had reacted to a sonnet by Sir Philip Sidney, which they “didn’t read into it in the way that they would have done with a more modern poem.” She describes this further in characterising the students working with digital resources from Early English Books Online:

They completely misunderstand it even though these are students who read all sorts of difficult texts for their seminars and understand those. It’s almost like they get a sort of mental block if it feels too Renaissance-y it’s really difficult.

Carla suggests that her students are reacting to the early modern poetry in a different way to more modern texts, that they had some sort of “mental block” with it. In a similar way, Diana characterised her students as having *difficulty* with Spenser:

The Faerie Queen, which I wish our students weren’t so resistant to...because it’s amazing and that ... I mean that Spenser is a brilliant example of the weirdness I was talking about; he’s just so ... there’s so much going on and there’s so much that’s peculiar and there’s so much you can pick up and play with.

Carla suggested that some of her students had an “active...hostility” at first when

encountering early modern poetry with her, whilst Diana wished that her students were not so “resistant” to the unfamiliarity, the “weirdness” of Spenser.

Carla suggested that students came to the course with preconceptions about poetry that may influence their attitudes towards encounters with the poetry:

I think people have a certain image of Renaissance poetry as being very stiff ... very conventional, very monocultural, but actually if you present them with things like ballads or sort of unexpectedly bawdy sonnets, sonnets that are political ... rather than love poems, they actually ... or both of those ... they actually kind of say ‘Oh I didn’t realise that was there’. That was a thing, especially because with the Romantics, tend to take over as sort of historic poetry so people think ‘Oh poetry is wandering through some daffodils’ (*laughter*) ‘and sire up some sheep.....’ that’s all well and good, but early modern poetry just has so many different kind of possible layers to its subjects and it can be fun and playful, there’s so much thought goes into it, but it’s not as obscure as people think, it’s possible for us to unpick it and to have fun with it.

Reminiscent of Gavin’s comments on post-Romantic conceptions of poetry discussed in the *relevance* section of this chapter, Carla refers to the way that the Romantics “tend to take over as...historic poetry”. Carla characterised the elements of *complexity* in the poetry and suggested that “if you get the right kind of weird” students will be engaged and “geek out”. Carla used the term “weird” as did Diana, to describe the unfamiliar but engaging elements of the poetry.

In order to illustrate the way that the “weird” or challenging elements of the poetry could be enhanced, she argued that if you surprise the students and enable them to see the *complexity* in terms of the layers that are in the poetry, the “diverse and unexpected” qualities, they can overcome their initial barriers. She gave a poem by Elizabeth I to exemplify what she meant:

There’s a poem by Queen Elizabeth, it’s about having a rusty sword and sort of it sounds very kind of sad and like I’m a weak queen, but actually when you put ... you kind of give students the context is that actually she’s speaking to a lot of pro-war parties that she’s saying that the rusty sword is a symbol of peace and it’s actually a powerful thing and it’s a very important thing for a female ruler ... for her to be able to reject the sword which is such a huge symbol of kind of male power and male kingship especially. They sort of ...they start ... having all these

ideas about gender and they can spark off a lot of interesting thoughts.

The *complexity* that Carla discusses here is the multi-layered nature of reading the poetry that is informed by the context of production and reception at the time of its authorship. This *complexity* Carla perceives as sparking off debate and dialogue amongst her students.

Gavin, the fourth lecturer, discussed *difficulty* in terms of what he thought it would be helpful that students should encounter of early modern poetry before they came to university, in answer to the question probe of whether he thought the poetry should be taught at school:

I think it should be taught, but it needs to be really selective. In a sense those sets of different demands can't be met in what school children can do with poetry. While it may be important to understand our intellectual legacy in relation to the Renaissance I don't think that's a very good ground for teaching 15 year olds about poetry. There is a lot of poetry from the era that is quite comprehensible – John Donne or Marvell can be taught but I would say about my own coming to familiarity with poetry there was a sense of randomness in encountering poetry which was something that really worked. I don't see anything wrong with that, I think 'small dabbles' in a sense creates an attachment, will allow people to return to...so I think there are good reasons to be very selective in what is taught...wonderful poetry full of religious allusion just shouldn't be taught really – I think it is too forbidding.

Gavin's view is that a great deal of early modern poetry has a "set of different demands" in the reading of it, a *complexity*, that is not suited to a school context. He argues that it is "full of religious allusion" and therefore "too forbidding" to be taught within a school context. He does suggest, however, that it is important to introduce school pupils to "our intellectual legacy in relation to the Renaissance" but that in itself is not a good enough argument to grapple with such difficult poetry in a school context. This echoes the *difficulty* that Georgina and Justin identify in dealing with religious and classical allusion in the poetry, but they both express the importance of conveying a sense of "our intellectual legacy" from this period using the poetry. The exception, Gavin argues, is the poetry of Donne and Marvell which

is

“quite comprehensible” for school pupils. Gavin’s comment at this point in the interview is reminiscent of another of his points that was coded under *relevance*, where he identifies the poetry of Donne and Marvell as early modern poetry which is “atypical insofar as they do work for us as they are crystallisations of the self”.

Gavin further argues in this extract that the poetry of Donne and Marvell might be first encountered and read in “small dibbles”, as he himself did when he first encountered the poetry as young man. Gavin suggests that encountering early modern poetry with a sense of “randomness” enables a familiarity to be established with the poetry, which in his words results in “an attachment” which “will allow people to return to”. In a similar way in which the teachers Jenny and particularly Tanya perceived that memory and attachment were significant outcomes of encountering early modern poetry at school, Gavin the lecturer presents his interpretation of the importance of encountering the poetry at school.

The lecturers characterised their perceptions of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* in ways that were similar to those of the students and the teachers, in that they perceived some resistance and initial barriers to students’ encounters with the poetry. What other participants did not note was that this “alienation” might be related to the post-Romantic preconceptions about poetry that students may come to their undergraduate courses with, which the lecturers did state. The lecturers also referred specifically to particular poets in relation to *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* and their perceptions of how students and school children encounter these texts.

8.2 (d) Examiners

In a similar way to the other participants, the examiners discussed *difficulty, complexity or challenge* as being comprised of lexical and syntactical elements. The lecturers noted as well the challenging nature of the references in the poetry, as did the other respondents. The examiners also discussed the impact of *difficulty, complexity or challenge* within the contexts of setting and marking exams. James

stated that it was “useful to have a stretching text for students” in the exam; Natalie stated that “we feel that by setting some of the early modern poetry, it poses a genuine intellectual challenge for the students in terms of close reading.” Georgina commented, “Gove wants to make A-levels more challenging ... then looking at Renaissance poetry might be certainly more challenging for students.”

Two of the examiners directly referred to *difficulty* or *challenge* on a lexical level in early modern poetry. Georgina, in her response to the question in the interview “why might you choose to teach or select early modern or Renaissance poetry to put it on a syllabus do you think?” she replied “largely because of the language” and then elaborated that, “because the kids enjoy it and once they actually can get through the language they realise that it’s actually quite bawdy and ... they get it, they understand it, and its challenging.” Georgina identifies that she perceives the students need to “get through” the language, reminiscent of the metaphor that the teacher Tanya gave that students need to push through “a gateway”. Georgina states that one of the reasons she would chose to teach or set the poetry in an exam is that this element of the language provides a challenge, which she then follows with the perception that once this barrier is overcome, the pupils will “enjoy” the poetry and “understand” and “get it”. Natalie observed that, once students had overcome the initial challenge, or got “a handle” on the poetry, they feel a sense of success with the poetry:

I think that once they get a handle on that type of poetry, they do feel a genuine sense of accomplishment in having tackled something that appears difficult, that is within the canon of great literature. And maybe the earliest type of texts that they’ve come across, you know?

In the way that Georgina stated her students enjoyed the poetry once they had got to grips with it, Natalie linked the “genuine sense of accomplishment” specifically with the historical and canonical nature of the texts.

In response to the same question as Georgina, as to why early modern Poetry might be selected for an exam, James, an ‘A’ Level examiner, discussed language as a specific *difficulty* of an early modern sonnet that he had set for one of

his papers:

It's more difficult in a sense that it's, it's very removed from what they know and it's a kind of language that they're less used to reading. I mean, I've, I've...we have set *Sonnet 19* once and I mean it was for an early January exam and not, not many students were in for that exam. But it was clear that it did cause them trouble, you know. It was a 'nature and all her fading sweets' became misunderstood as being a box of bonbons...It's just not very helpful for you as an examiner to have many students feeling uncomfortable with a particular text and not being able to, to do much with that text.

James characterises the mistaken decontextualised reading by the candidates of "nature's...fading sweets" as an example of the way that the language of the sonnet caused them "trouble", where Shakespeare's metaphorical allusion to time's ravages on nature were translated as a box of boiled sweets. He suggests that the language was "very removed" from what the candidates knew and were familiar with. As a result of the candidates feeling "removed" from the language, James perceived the candidates to be "uncomfortable" with the text and as such using Shakespeare's *Sonnet 19* in the exam was not "helpful" to the examiner. From his perspective as a principal examiner, if candidates simply could not respond to the text because it is too difficult, or as he put it they were "not able" to "do much with the text", then the text he selected had not worked in the way that he needed it to. James, later in the interview, explained what a good exam answer needs to contain, "it has to have a bedrock of understanding and engagement with the text", which in the exam that featured Shakespeare's *Sonnet 19* he perceives that the text did not enable students to do.

In summarising his response to question (7) *Has early modern poetry actually featured in your exam in the last ten or so years? In what ways?* James replied that his viewpoint has changed on this after his experience with setting Shakespeare's *Sonnet 19* for his January 'A' Level Literature paper:

So it's quite useful to have a stretching text for ... But I mean, now I would have more concern for accessibility. So, I would, I would be conscious that the work needs to be such that a wide range of students can access a fair amount of it.

He identified the text as being “stretching” but states that his views have developed and shifted, and that now he would be “more conscious” of accessibility in text, as much as stretch and challenge.

James raised, in the above extract regarding *Sonnet 19*, that the sonnet was something that candidates were “less used to reading”. Reading as a dimension of difficulty and challenge was referred to in the data by students and teachers, and James raised it as one of the elements of *challenge* that he perceived in the poetry. In response to Question 11, where respondents were asked to provide a metaphor to describe their feelings about early modern poetry, James suggested the metaphor of an “open book” which required a specific type of reading. He stated that, like this “open book”, early modern poems require a “thoughtful, slow engagement” which “would repay repeated reading”. He continued:

And I think students need to really go about their work thoughtfully and slowly and expect the poem to release its meaning gradually. There’s not one sort of simple answer...I think it goes against a lot of, the kind of instincts of students but ...They can’t just grasp and know something instantly. It’s, it’s going to be a slow and thoughtful process for them to build up the meaning and they’re going to recognise that actually, they may not grasp the poem after the second or third reading but they’ve got to, you know, pore over it and ... following the units of meaning and allowing the poem to release meaning to them.

As Justin the teacher noted that he believed that the concentration that his pupils needed was the “single hardest thing to do”, here James suggests that this type of reading goes against “the instincts” of the students, or as with *Sonnet 19* that candidates are “less used” to reading this type of text. James’s characterisation of the iterative, intense reading that early modern poetry requires is reminiscent of Sue’s metaphor of digestion and Tanya’s description of repeated readings. James portrays the poem as releasing its meaning over time to the pupils, while through a “slow and thoughtful process” the pupils “build” up their own understanding of it. The process has to be active on the part of the students, they have to “pore” over the text but it is not a process that can be completed quickly, so that the students cannot “just grasp and know...instantly” their interpretation of the poem.

In discussing her examining work at GCSE, Georgina drew a comparison with

what she saw as challenging qualities in early modern poetry at GCSE with other work she had marked:

I did moderate the coursework which is control assessment which is all about social networking and children's literature and stuff, it's really like quite ... yeah, very, very ...well it's about ... it's like – well I don't think it's challenging because it's things the students are using them, yeah, it's relevant, but is it really stretching them and teaching them anything about literature...things like 'Anita and me' – some of the more modern contemporary stories; 'Heroes'... it's quite simplistic, very simplistic really for GCSE.

Georgina characterises the constituents that she interprets of contemporary texts at GCSE as not “challenging” or as “very simplistic” and questions whether these texts are stretching the students. For her, the fact that the work derives from a realm with which the students are familiar, “the students are using them”, makes her wonder if the students are being challenged or taught anything about literature. Georgina is using the term *relevant* as a term here as something which presents a problem, whereas at other points in the interview she uses the term positively, as noted in the section on the code of *relevance*. Georgina contrasts these GCSE texts and their “simplistic” approach to the *challenge* that she interprets in early modern poetic texts. Having noted that the language is challenging, she elaborates:

I mean it's the metaphors, isn't it, the obscure nature...also the rhythm and rhyme can be quite challenging if you want to unpick ... and obviously some of the ... There's so many references to Greek mythology and religious texts etc. that it's ... so ... there's so much intertextuality ...it's quite shocking how little they know about just religion and it's so important, isn't it, in English classical literature and they don't even have a basis of what's Easter – you know –why do we have Easter, what's Good Friday... and I give them passages from like Genesis and stuff and they're just like 'what's all this'. Their understanding of religion is very ...but when you study literature you've got to understand that's part of our heritage and a lot of texts refer to that. So that's also why it can be quite challenging –

Georgina uses the adjective “obscure” in relation to the imagery of the poetry, and utilises the active verb “unpick” to characterise the activity required with the students to work with the poetry, as if it is a fabric. Another examiner, Natalie, also

used the same verb to characterise working with the poetry with students. Like the teacher Justin, Georgina notes students' lack of awareness of religious references, which to Georgina is "shocking". Both Justin and Georgina refer to the need to discuss the book of Genesis with their students. Expressing very similar views, Natalie discussed the *difficulty* as she perceived it, of the classical and religious imagery with her students:

You know, that there'll be a reference, a classical allusion that is simply a closed book to [inaudible 00:19:32] kids. They really don't have any of that background. And often, nowadays, biblical or, you know, explicitly Christian religious imagery is also pretty dead. You would have to unpick that and explain it to them.

As Georgina and Natalie both use "unpick" to characterise the way that they work with their students and as Georgina noted her reaction to the students' lack of awareness as being shocked, in a similarly stark characterisation Natalie states that for her students the religious imagery is "pretty dead".

A further dimension of *challenge* noted by two of the examiners is when early modern poetry presents *difficulty, complexity or challenge* to teachers as individuals. Similarly to the way in which the teachers Tanya and Graham had stated that they enjoyed the challenge within their professional lives as English teachers, so the examiner Georgina discussed how she enjoyed teaching the poetry as a challenge for herself. She gave the example of when she chose to teach John Donne as an element of AS rather than Blake, "I could have done Blake but I find it a bit simplistic and when I teach I quite like to be stretched and challenge myself."

Paul, a chief examiner for GCSE English, discussed *difficulty, complexity or challenge* within the context of presenting challenge for all those involved his GCSE; pupils, teacher and examiners. Paul discussed having approximately 400 examiners mark GCSE papers, of whom 30% of those may "be a problem". He then said that each examiner marks 500 scripts, so potentially there may be 65,000 scripts that "may be badly marked". This situation results in Paul having to select poems for study that are accessible to teachers, pupils and examiners. He explained this:

I need to choose poems that work for the kids that the teachers can handle, that result in things written in an exam that a duff marker can't miss. I need a duff marker. Or a good marker who is on the thirtieth script and it's late at night and they're worrying about getting to school in the morning because they've got bloody Yr9 first thing. Will this text produce from a sixteen year-old something that fits into my mark scheme...I need the kids to be writing in a way that allows the examiner to recognise 'Ah they're doing A04 bullet 2'. ...If on the other hand the poem hasn't worked and the kids are writing something they don't quite understand in a way that's clumsy and awkward, so their writing is bad, because the thoughts aren't clear, then that examiner is going to have a job to place what the kid has done accurately and that's where the problems come in. So this is an awful thing to say, if I'm choosing my poems they have to be of service to the system.

Paul describes his perception of the relationship between selecting difficult texts for examination at GCSE and student problems. He states that selecting a text which is too difficult poses problems for both pupils and examiners, so he selects poems that are "of service to the system". He then recounted when he had set an early modern poem from the latter half of the seventeenth century, which was not well received:

When I did *The Despairing Lover* that was one of the problems I had. The kids didn't know what to write about it, they weren't clear and the examiners weren't sure how to assess it. ...And that's a tough thing in training examiners... So this is making something splendid and austere to your heart as Early Modern poetry. Fodder for the system.

Paul's experience with *The Despairing Lover* exemplified for him the complexity present in poetry from the early modern period, albeit that the poem is very much from the latter end of the period. He felt that it posed problems for all those involved in the examination system.

Natalie, in discussing the *difficulty, complexity or challenge* with regard to early modern poetry and exam syllabuses stated:

We...have to try and ensure quality of marking... Quality of marking issues often disproportionately hit subjects where they might be seen to be some grey area about the quality of the script. In Maths, there...You know, there aren't quality of marking issues so much because there's a right answer and a wrong answer and they can show steps of working, so at times, we can be wary of setting papers that are difficult for students to access, difficult for young teachers to teach because they don't have the subject experience and difficult for mainstream examiners to mark because they lack subject awareness. So we're in a nexus of problems around the subject, I think.

Natalie, like Paul, draws attention to where exam boards as a "nexus" bring together issues of subject knowledge and quality of teaching within the subject of English. The relationship between what is selected for inclusion in a syllabus and whether teacher and examiners have adequate "subject awareness" to teach and mark the texts is one point raised by Natalie. She points out that exam boards are "wary" of setting papers that are too difficult and in her perception early modern texts may contain too much *difficulty*, in that the subject knowledge of young teachers and examiners to teach and mark syllabuses may not be good enough. There is a tension which Natalie identifies, as later in the interview, in her response to the question in the interview *Why might you choose to set early modern or Renaissance poetry for your exam?* she answered, "we feel that by setting some of the early modern poetry, it poses a genuine intellectual challenge for the students." The *difficulty, complexity or challenge* is represented by her for the exam boards as being one that is necessary but also problematic.

The examiners discussed *difficulty, complexity or challenge* as being comprised of lexical and syntactical elements as some of all the other groups of participants. Like the teachers, the examiners raised the issue of the *complexity* of the religious imagery in early modern texts. The impact of *difficulty, complexity or challenge* on exams and examining was also raised, as the exam boards are, in Natalie's words, "in a nexus of problems around the subject" in which early modern poetry is one strand.

8.3 Comparison

All four groups of participants highlighted that they perceived the theme of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* as an element that is significant in their teaching and learning of early modern poetry. Terms such as “dense”, “alien”, a “hurdle” and “removed” used in the data suggest that within all the groups of participants respondents perceived qualities that were, in various ways, complex. The various dimensions of the theme *difficulty, complexity or challenge* coded in the data were; lexical and syntactical, in reading, of classical and religious references and within professional and examining contexts.

The teachers, students and examiners’ characterisation of their perceptions of lexical *difficulty, complexity or challenge* were similar. The language of early modern poetry was interpreted by the examiner James as having a quality that made it “removed” from his candidates, whilst the teachers referred to using glossaries and almost needing to translate the language with their pupils. The student Sue pointed out that difficulty lay in the “the language itself” whilst the student Mary perceived an initial barrier that she characterised as “the shock of the old”.

The lecturers characterised their perceptions of *difficulty, complexity or challenge* in ways that were similar to the other three groups of participants, in that they perceived some resistance and initial barriers to students’ encounters with the poetry. What other participants did not note was that this “alienation” might be related to the post-Romantic preconceptions about poetry that students may come to their undergraduate courses with, which may or may not have been a product of the way that these students had been taught at school.

The students, teacher and examiners all commented on the issue of reading. The student Elaine characterised the reading of the poetry as requiring a much more complicated process of reading than contemporary texts, as did both teachers Tanya and Justin. All three of these participants characterised reading as an iterative

process which Justin stated was, in his opinion for his pupils “the single hardest thing to do.” The examiner James stated that, using his metaphor of early modern poetry as being like an “open book”, early modern poems require a “thoughtful, slow engagement” which “would repay repeated reading”. He stated that students cannot “just grasp and know...instantly” their interpretation of an early modern poem. The student Sue characterised the slowness and intensity of reading required for early modern poetry as being related to thinking “you just need to really digest and think for a long time” and Elaine that the texts keep you thinking “long after you’ve put them down”.

Three of the lecturers also noted that their students encountered *difficulty* in their reading of the poetry. Stefan observed that his students struggled, particularly with longer texts, with “digressions” and with “colossal sentences”, Diana noted that her students were “resistant” to the long “peculiar” text the *Faerie Queen* and Carla discussed in detail the “active...hostility” she had experienced with her students. She also counter balanced this characterisation of reading the poetry with an example where she had harnessed the “weird”, “diverse and unexpected” qualities, of the poetry to stimulate her students’ interests.

In discussing *difficulty* in association with religious and classical imagery in the poetry, the lecturer Gavin argued that the poetry is “full of religious allusion” and therefore “too forbidding” to be taught within a school context. Although both the teachers and examiners noted this dimension of *difficulty* they did not perceive this as a reason not to tackle poetry in a school context. Two from these groups discussed how they tackled religious allusion in their own teaching by looking particularly at the bible and the book of Genesis, whilst two of the examiners stated that selection of particular poems from the early modern period that they perceived were not so challenging was the outcome for them of this element of *difficulty*. The lecturer, Gavin, also noted the key importance of selection of texts for those studying them in a school context. This area of difficulty was not prominent in the students’ discussion of what they perceived to be difficult or complex in the poetry.

The quality of *difficulty, complexity or challenge* in the poems was portrayed by three examiners as being problematic, given that the exam boards are in a “nexus of problems around the subject”. The ‘A’ Level examiners James and Natalie Stated that they sought to include the poetry because of its “intellectual challenge” and “stretch and challenge”. James discussed how he had to be very selective in what poems from the period were selected for exams as the risked being too far “removed” from what the candidates could deal with effectively in the exam. Paul also characterised this problem as arising at GCSE, where he stated that poems had to be “fodder for the system”, so that all those involved his GCSE: pupils, teacher and examiners, could understand the texts and make sense of them in the exam. Two of the teachers, Tanya and Justin, identified the significance *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* in relation to their own professional identity and its impact on their subject knowledge and motivation, along with one of the examiners, Georgina. These three linked teaching the poetry with an ongoing challenge professionally. The students also identified early modern poetry with an enduring quality of challenge, as Steve stated that he still did not comfortable with the poetry as an undergraduate and Sue stated “I’m still grappling” and “ I think I still am intimidated!”

The inter-relationship between *difficulty, complexity or challenge* and memory and attachment featured in three respondents’ data. The teacher Tanya identified why she perceives it particularly valuable to encounter this poetry in a school context, as she stated that “you never forget it through your life”. Both Tanya and the teacher Jenny discussed the element of memory in relationship to poetry of this period and its significance to them and their pupils, linking the process of memory with the complexity of the poetry. Gavin, a lecturer, noted that encountering early modern poetry in “small dibbles” creates “an attachment” that “people return to”.

All four groups of participants highlighted that they perceived the theme of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* as an element that is significant in their teaching and learning of early modern poetry. The various dimensions of the theme varied

on the context of the teaching and learning of the participants, and the nature of their interactions with it.

8.4 Discussion

The aim of this chapter has been to address the subsidiary research question: *What do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners perceive as significant in the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?* The data has been presented in terms of the main theme of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge*. The theme of *Complexity, Challenge or Difficulty* in relation to the study of early modern poetry recurred throughout the data, with all participants. The ways in which this element was characterised through the use of different terms varied on the context of the participants and the ways in which this element of the poetry impacted on their situation. Terms such as “dense”, “alien”, a “hurdle” and “removed” were used by different participants to characterise the way that pupils and students perceive the poetry. Jenny referred to her interpretation of students’ responses as “scary”.

Recurrent in the interviews was a sense amongst the interviewees that this “barrier” was an initial one that can be negotiated by teachers and students. Mary’s image, “the shock of the old”, encapsulates this sense amongst the interviewees. Kiernan (1999) explains the origin of the term that Mary used to evoke this initial shock of the unfamiliar:

When Sam Wanamaker first had the idea of rebuilding the Globe, he argued that live theatre needs the unfamiliar, the frightening. He believed you could only give back the classics their frightening novelty by renewing their original stage and staging. The shock of the old first came at the new Globe during the 1995 workshop sessions when actors and audiences began to discover how the physical characteristics of an early modern public amphitheatre could influence the respective roles of the actors and the playgoers in the performance space. (p. 3)

Kiernan (1999) uses the terms “unfamiliar” and “frightening” to characterise the “frightening novelty” that Wanamaker wanted to achieve, so that his recreated

early modern space could “shock” and become energised by the interaction between audience and actors in the new, and also old, space. It is this energising quality that Mary has transferred onto the experience of reading early modern poetry, where she stated that the poetry “comes alive”.

Mary has also taken Wanamaker’s idea of the proximity of the audience to the early modern stage, as she was referring specifically to the new indoor, intimate space recreated at the *The Playhouse*, at *The Globe* site on Bankside. In this new, enclosed and intimate space audience and actors are very close at hand, in a surprising and unexpected way for a modern audience. Mary takes this element of closeness and proximity and transferred that to the poetry, so that the surprise is “how close that person is to you in the way they think, the way they are.” The initial shock that Mary perceives in early modern poetry, for readers, is equated with audience’s encountering for the first time recreations of early modern theatrical practices. But in the way that the audiences get over this first “shock”, she suggests that the reader can get over the “shock of the old”. The teachers discussed how using glossaries, treating the language as if it needed “translating” was a way to support students. The lecturer Carla stated that her students needed “coaxing”. That students find this *difficult* to do unaided is suggested by the examiners, where two referred to setting early modern poems for their exams which they discussed as not working for them and not being understood by candidates.

This initial “shock of the old”, referring specifically to linguistic and syntactical differences, relates very clearly to Steiner’s (1978) analysis of poetic *difficulty*. In Steiner’s discussion of *difficulty* in poetry he made particular reference to early modern poetry to exemplify his arguments. The initial difficulties characterised by the participants, such as shock or unfamiliarity, resonate with what Steiner’s (1978) definition of “Contingent” (p. 27) difficulty. Steiner argues that a poem may deal with something which is new to the reader, unfamiliar, and of which the reader has no knowledge. In this case, he argues, the difficulties simply need to

be “looked up” (p.29), using the same phrase that occurs in the data, used by the teachers, to tackle such *difficulty* head on.

Steiner’s argument continues, such that the lexical difficulty in early modern poetry could be that the new words may be archaic, dialectal or have shifted semantically, with their contemporary usage different to its original context. Other reasons for *difficulty* on a lexical level is that the cultural context has shifted, so that terms do not necessarily make sense if interpreted in a contemporary fashion. In the way that Stefan noted regarding the term *early modern* that “plenty of beliefs are getting discarded, thrown away and changed beyond all recognition”, so Steiner’s analysis of change on a cultural level is one argument to explain this dimension of *difficulty*.

Steiner exemplifies this dimension of lexical *difficulty* by referring to elements of reading Shakespeare and looking up the meaning of the term “Nature”(p. 266), which would lead to “the probing of these words...[in] the dictionary and Shakespeare concordance” and result in “the study of the very dense, central topics in Elizabethan thought” (Steiner, 1978, p. 25). The term “dense” of Steiner’s echoes the usage of the term by the students in the data. It is also exactly this kind of *difficulty* that the examiner James recounted in the mistaken interpretations of “nature’s sweets” by his candidates for the ‘A’ Level exam. The candidates had read the terms literally, as “bon-bons”, missing out on the poetic dimension of analogy and also the Elizabethan connotations of the term “Nature”. In order to tackle these difficulties, Steiner argues that readers have homework to do, which can potentially be “in a real sense, interminable” (Steiner, 1978, p. 26) which would suggest why such a poem in an exam could present difficulties. A further dimension to this would be what experience with this type of poetry candidates had at school. The teacher Jenny observed that there was a “cultural cache” around being very familiar with Shakespeare’s sonnets, so what previous encounters candidates had had with this type of poetry and these types of terms would affect James’s main concern in the exam of “accessibility”.

“Modal difficulty”, Steiner’s second category of *difficulty* is related to this first, and also relates to what was found in the data. Steiner argues that once the reader has “looked up” the various elements significant to the poem, there still remains something in the poem the reader finds “inaccessible or alien” (Steiner, 1978, p. 28). Using another early modern poem as an example, Steiner teases out how Lovelace’s *La Bella Roba* has a central conceit of describing a whore as a thin skeleton and the prey of the huntsman, which is repellent, particularly to contemporary readers, and that this level of *difficulty* cannot be removed through research and homework. This *difficulty* is located in the reader. The lecturer Carla recounted a similar situation where she was working with her undergraduates on a sonnet by Sir Philip Sidney to which she perceived that her students were “universally...hostile.” They objected to the strength of the feeling portrayed in the poem from the persona, such that “they said it was ... it was ... a poem ... thing about desire and all these desires that I’m feeling and they said ‘well he just seems very selfish; it’s all about what he’s feeling’ ..” The undergraduates, as a group, were perceived by Carla to be rejecting what they saw to be a selfish, self-obsessed persona, which while it might not be “repellent” in the way that Lovelace’s central conceit was, it certainly did not appeal to her undergraduates and to the responses that are located in “the reader” (p. 28).

Steiner’s (1978) third type of *difficulty*, “tactical difficulty” (p. 33) he argues is located in the poet and is a deliberate choice by the poet to be obscure, so that the reader is forced to perceive the language used in the poem in new and revised ways. Steiner refers to metaphysical poetry as an example of this, where the poet is choosing to surprise the reader with a conceit, to oblige them to revisit and rethink the deliberate conjunction of two very dissimilar elements in an image. John Donne’s conceit of lovers as the two twin feet of a compass in *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* exemplifies this: using a mathematical and scientific image to represent separation and loss. This difficulty is tactical in that it deliberately slows the pace at which the reader gains comprehension. Using the musical term *rallentando*, Steiner argues that this is a tactic to make readers apprehend new,

different dimensions to the poetry, as “we are not meant to understand easily and quickly” (Steiner, 1978, p. 35).

Steiner’s appropriation of the musical term *rallentando* relates closely to the way that time featured in the participants’ conceptualisation of *complexity, or difficulty*. The student Elaine reflected that she needed time to “really digest and think for a long time” so as to come to an understanding of the poetry. Both teachers comments on the type of reading what was required of their pupils as being repetitive, iterative and slow. Tanya described her perceptions of it as “read...read...speak out loud...read...clicks in your brain” and Justin as “the single hardest thing to do” for his pupils in maintaining the concentration needed.

Another feature of the time element of the poetry was the way that participants characterised the poetry as resonating and the experience of thinking about the poetry enduring after the reading of the poem. Elaine said that the poems “keep you thinking long after you’ve put them down” and both the teachers Tanya and Jenny discussed the element of memory in relationship to poetry of this period and its significance to them and their pupils, linking the process of memory with the complexity of the poetry.

Steiner’s definitions of *difficulty* provide a way of examining what challenges pupils might face when encountering early modern poetry. Michael Fleming (1996) built on Steiner’s ideas. Fleming states that expectations of what poetry should mean and how it should function have changed over time. This point is raised in relation to the theme of *difficulty* by the lecturers Carla and Gavin. Fleming points out that readers read modernist poetry in a very different matter from reading a Shakespeare sonnet. Applying this to a school teaching context, Fleming argues that the art of teaching poetry from different periods is in the selection of material and approaches that enable pupils to make their own responses, but also to support those responses with enough insight into the contexts of production that the pupils can make informed decisions about it. Fleming suggests that, “one of the decisions which the teacher has to make pertains to the appropriate lexical, syntactical,

contextual or historical details which need to be supplied in order to provide enough clarity for the reader to be able to make an authentic response” (Fleming, 1996, p.38). What the teacher has to decide is what information, contextually or otherwise, from the cultural context of the poem, needs to be given regarding the poem, and most crucially, at what time.

This dimension of *difficulty* recurred in the data in association with religious and classical imagery in the poetry; the lecturer Gavin argued that the poetry is “full of religious allusion” and therefore “too forbidding” to be taught within a school context. Fleming (1996) argues that part of the art of teaching poetry of this period is the decision of when and how to introduce the contextual or historical elements to inform pupils’ responses. Both Justin and Georgina directly discussed this dimension of *difficulty*, saying they did not perceive this as a reason not to tackle poetry in a school context but were in accordance with Fleming’s analysis that the art is when to tackle these issues, as they referred to the way that they tackled religious allusion in their own teaching by looking particularly at the bible and the book of Genesis.

Snapper (2013) offers a different perspective on why students may perceive *difficulty* in their study of poetry at undergraduate level. His study of “resistance” to poetry at undergraduate level, the same word that the lecturer Diana used to characterise her undergraduates’ reactions to Spenser, linked this quality of undergraduate response to their experiences of poetry at school, at both GCSE and ‘A’ Level. He argues that “few students start ‘A’ Level with much *knowledge* about poetry, despite the intensity of their work on it at GCSE. They will have studied *poems* at GCSE, but are likely to know little about *poetry*.” As a consequence of the way that poetry is examined and assessed at GCSE, the pedagogy pupils’ encounter is determined by the “pressure of exams” (p. 36). He then points out that pupils’ ‘A’ Level experience is also dominated by the pressure of exams, limiting their access to a deeper understanding of the nature of poetry and poetic form:

Few are given the opportunity to stand back and reflect on what poetry actually is, what it is for, what they feel about it and its role in their literary education,

where it comes from, who reads it and who writes it and why. Few are given the opportunity to make connections between 'school poetry' and 'their own' poetry. Few are asked to select and explore poetry themselves. If they do any of these things, it is likely to be a fleeting experience, since the pressure to 'get things done for the exam' is always present.

In his study, Snapper (2013) observes that 'most students in my undergraduate focus group had studied two set poetry texts during the two years of their 'A' Level course – and had read no other poetry.' Furthermore, he found that, few had written or really reflected on poetry. The consequence of this was that the first-year undergraduates had a "missing 'layer' of both cognitive knowledge and meta-cognitive awareness about poetry, the lack of which stood in the way of their full engagement with the course" (p. 39) Snapper (2013) further found that the lecturers that these student had "clearly expected students to have a narrow frame of reference, to have read little and to display ambivalence to a range of difficult aspects of the course – poetry, Shakespeare". Snapper (2013) also identifies that, whilst having these fairly low expectations of their student, the lecturers "often appeared to assume a foundational knowledge of and about literature which it was clear that most students did not have." The end result of this, Snapper (2013) argues, was that the undergraduates in the study "struggled to deal independently with...(difficult) texts" (p. 40) as they "find themselves trapped between a personal response and critical semi-ignorance" (p 39). Snapper (2013) concludes that the "reductive, de-aestheticized approaches" which are the "dominant modes of thinking about literature in schools and universities, might be at least partly responsible for such a situation."

The way in which the lecturer Carla characterised her undergraduates reacting to the sonnet of Sir Philip Sidney, to which she perceived that her students were "universally...hostile" demonstrates a strength of the feeling that would have been refined by a more judged critical response. Carla further discussed when she was teaching Spenser that she set the student to do some very basic work, preparing presentations about the narrative of the *Faerie Queen*, about which she joked that "I don't even know what's going on." She observed that:

Once they kind of knew what was happening they seemed much more confident, it's almost like they were scared of getting like a character wrong or an event wrong and once they had that foundation they could be a bit more kind of playful.

Carla's perception of *complexity, challenge or difficulty* in relation to her experience with her first year undergraduates may well be explored in relation to what Snapper (2013) termed "resistance" in "advanced English studies."

8.5 Conclusion

This section has addressed the subsidiary research question: *What do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners perceive as significant in the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?* Data presented from the theme of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* have been explored. The theme of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* was significant in various ways for all the participants. The initial "shock of the old" was noted in all the different contexts that the respondents discussed in their interviews. The process of reading the poetry was noted as a particular area of complexity particularly by those involved in school and examining contexts. Steiner's typology of difficulty and Snapper's analysis of "resistance" to poetry within advanced English settings had been examined to explore facets of this *difficulty, complexity and challenge* seen as significant to the participants in this study.

Chapter 9: Subsidiary Research Question 3: *How do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners characterise the poetic elements that they view as being specific to reading and responding early modern poetry?*

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will address the subsidiary research question: *how do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners characterise the poetic elements that they view as being specific to the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?* Early modern poetry is part of the larger genre of poetry itself so inevitably all the generic features that it possesses will conform to those that belong to all poetry. However, within the overall framework of the generic features of poetry, this research has sought to tease out what the participants interpret to be the particular emphases and qualities that are significant of the poetry of the early modern period. In this way, the impact of these particular emphases and qualities on the perceptions of the respondents of reading and responding to early modern poetry can be explored.

The data coded under the theme of the *Characteristics of Early Modern Poetry*, has been selected for analysis under subsidiary research question (3). The particular codes that address this research question from the data within this broad theme are: *form, voice, rhetoric, metaphor, reading aloud* and *wit and humour*. The data for these codes came mostly from Questions (9) and (10) of the three interview schedules and the discussion of extracts relating to early modern poetry. These schedules can be seen in Appendix A. Question (9) specifically focussed on whether any of the participants perceived any elements as being “unique” to reading, teaching or answering an exam question on early modern poetry. Question (10) asked respondents to discuss any key terms used in the classroom or seminar room whilst encountering early modern poetry and the extracts asked respondents to “explore their views” on early modern poetry, using the extracts as prompts. In this way the analysis of the data has sought to tease out what the respondents viewed as being specific to the teaching and learning of early modern poetry.

9. 2 (a) Students

All four of the students identified *form* as an element of particular significance in early modern poetry and three directly related these elements to the classical origins of the poetry. Two students discussed *metaphor*, specifically the *conceit*, as significant. Of the other codes, individually students commented on *humour*, *reading aloud* and the significance of *rhetoric*.

(i) Form

In responding to question (10) regarding five key terms that apply to early modern poetry, four students observed that they perceived the prominence of *form*, including *rhyme* and *meter* as being very significant. Steve stated that “they all rhyme” and Elaine stated that “literary forms and the conventions” were particularly important conceptual issues when dealing with the poetry. Sue commented that “form and structure and rhythm and things like that and I think that’s pretty integral to...early modern stuff in particular”. Steve elaborated, relating this element of *form* to the classical origins of the poetry:

They’re using classical ideas and form and they play with them but they’re steeped in the rules, which I suppose is inherent of the Renaissance ... they’re using classical thoughts and they’re talking to each other using those rules. And they have a form...They’re consciously not writing in a vacuum; that they are aware that other people are writing and that this is a golden age scare quotes there of poetry, of thinking, of life ... you know, this is a time to be alive and to be putting your feelings on paper...

Steve used the term “inherent” and Sue the term “integral” to describe the specific relationship that early modern poetry has, in their perceptions, with its classical origins. Steve characterises the poets as working consciously in an age that is responding to classical models and to each other “talking to each other using those rules”. Steve also gives a positive perspective on the period, calling it a “golden age”, albeit using the phrase with “scare quotes” to signify that he acknowledges that as a problematic term. He implies that the era was significant for writers, that “this is a time to be alive”. Steve links the idea that this was a “golden age” with the

use of *form* derived from classical models in the poetry, so that this is a collective, unifying feature and that “they’re talking to each other using those rules”.

Like Steve, Sue also related the *form* of early modern poetry to its classical origins:

They often look to classical illusions ...like the Renaissance idea again I think they were all trying to break boundaries...I think often their use of meter and rhyme could be seen as similar ... like their use of iambic pentameter and their use of similar forms like the sonnet and things like that.... the Renaissance poets ways of incorporating the classical things into their own work. Yeah...the use of classical meter in new ... in Renaissance stuff that was new at the time allows a sort of reflection and imitation of the stuff of classical works without being the same or without being unchallenging.

Sue links “rhyme” with “meter”, specifically “iambic pentameter”, as significant within the period and as part of the way that classical ideas were being taken into the poets’ work to form “new” works. She also notes, like Steve, that this is consequence of the particular facets of the historical period. She observes that their relationship with their classical origins was not of simply imitating or reflecting, but in making works that were “new”, not “the same” and that were also “not unchallenging”.

Mary also stated that *rhyme* was a significant feature of early modern poetry, in her opinion. Her points came in her response to the extract by Puttenham (1589/2004), exploring the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon words in English and rhyme in early modern poetry. She related this extract to her own encounters with early modern poetry as GCSE:

When I studied it I think I noticed it more at school level than I have done now, as in because I think it was ... I did struggle to engage with the text and would always see when a word rhymed, so you could just go ‘Okay that’s a rhyme and great that’s an annotation in my anthology’ (*laughter*)

As it was difficult for Mary to “engage” the poetry when she was younger and she expresses that rhyme was a significant element that she noticed and that supported her encounters with the poetry. She characterises rhyme as something which enabled her to start to form an interpretation “great that’s an annotation in my anthology”. She expressed the belief that rhyme was a significant element and that she had believed it was significant enough to make a note in her exam anthology, in the hope that it might gain her some marks in the exam.

In her response to the next extract on the interview schedule from Puttenham (1589/2004), stating his opinion on the visual representation of aural dimensions of the poetry, Mary made a connection between her observation of the significance of rhyme to her at GCSE and an essay that she was writing at the time of the data collection. The essay was for her undergraduate module *Editing and Un-editing the Renaissance* and she had been analysing the way that school editions of early modern texts had been edited:

The work I’ve been doing for this essay, that in the school edition there are commas in places at end of lines where they haven’t been in other editions, so it’s like they’re trying to create something which has a distinct voice that is easier to read because the kids are going ‘Oh, there’s a *dah-dah-dah*’ ... the iambic pentameter ... emphasised by the punctuation, so... I think that’s very interesting that oralities ... are something that is very ... I’m just very conscious of, which actually I think does help a school child in the classroom...it kind of chivvies them along; it keeps them rolling along with momentum. Gives you momentum, definitely the phrase.

In the way that Mary perceived the rhyme in early modern poems in her GCSE exam anthology to be a support to her beginning to make an interpretation of the poetry, Mary perceives that editors of early modern texts aimed at school pupils also believe that rhyme can be used to support younger learners. Mary compares what she has learnt about the way in which contemporary editors of early modern texts edit their texts to draw attention to the “oralities” in the verse, the “dah-dah-dah” or the rhythm of the verse. At GCSE, Mary had looked for both visible, or rhyme and shape on the page, and aural qualities, such as rhythm and the sound of rhyme, in

an early modern poem to help her start to form her interpretation. She encapsulates what she understands of the work of the editors of school editions of early modern texts that she had been analysing, as giving “momentum”, supporting pupils so that it “chivvies” them along, through emphasising rhythm and rhyme with their editing of the punctuation.

Elaine and Sue also foregrounded the importance of the oral dimensions of early modern poetry and linked that with the classical origins of the texts. Elaine identified that reading aloud early modern poetry would have helped her a great deal as a school student in relating to the, to use Mary’s word, “oralities” of the poetry and its relationship with its classical origins:

I think it would have been a lot so much better if we had even got up and said the poem aloud rather than just reading one page, because certainly two years with ‘Coy Mistress’ I think that because so much of early modern poetry is drawing on classical rhetoric, it’s so much easier to understand if you get up and read it or perform it, you know, and so much more engaging instead of reading it on the page and just making out....we read it on the page or we read it sitting ... you know the teacher read it while we were sitting down looking at the page. Whereas if we had got up and performed it and acted it out, you know, I think it would have a) have been more interesting but also b) a lot more easier to understand

Elaine characterises her experience at school as being passive, reading it “sitting” or being “read to”. She argues that because of the relationship with classical rhetoric and the oral origins of the poetry, the experience of studying early modern poetry for her would have been “so much easier to understand...so much more engaging”. Elaine’s view in this extract is that emphasising the oral dimensions of *To His Coy Mistress* was a significant opportunity for her learning that was missed.

Sue also connected the meter in early modern verse to the oral, classical, origins of the work, “I think meter is quite a good way of thinking about...because the classical stuff is so oral... meter can recreate that sort of spontaneity of oral declamation.” Sue linked the oral qualities of early modern poetry with her

experience of studying Shakespeare at 'A' Level. She related the impact that one particular teacher had, who coming new to the school, completely revolutionised the way that her "whole" 'A' Level class had been "really struggling" with the qualities of early modern verse and had "sort of stumbled over and not really thought about it". She recounted how, after the arrival of the new teacher, "Suddenly everyone loved it; everyone was just thriving (*laughter*) – off the verse". In her recounting of the impact of this teacher, for Sue the classes' problems with the verse, the rhythm and the meter, were integral to their success and comprehension of the text. At another point in the interview, while discussing the poetry of Donne, Sue suggested that the significance of *form* was that it is the foundation of the poem, "the whole craft of it is rhythm and meter and rhyme and sometimes sound as well as meaning, normally just capturing one essence of something or one meaning."

Elaine highlighted specifically that she perceived the relationship of early modern poetry to *rhetoric* as significant. Elaine pinpointed this as a key characteristic of early modern poetry and that as an undergraduate student an understanding of this had been extremely useful:

I studied classical rhetoric quite a lot in my second year and again you know you don't have to do masses and masses, but just even doing a little bit of classical rhetoric that's sort of understanding what classical rhetoric is and the kinds of devices and techniques and everything would set you up in a lot better position. ..understanding early modern poetry, I would certainly promote rhetoric as a way of thinking about that.

Elaine argues that a knowledge of *rhetoric*, if only of a "little bit" helps students "thinking" about the poetry and provides them with an insight into the "devices and techniques" that are being used by the poets. This resonates with what the lecturer Stefan said the importance of *rhetoric* in early modern thinking about poetry. He recounted how he had used extracts from Erasmus' *De Copia* with his students to enable them to have more insight into rhetorical techniques and although they had only looked at small extracts from Erasmus' work, it had given his students insight into what Elaine calls "a way of thinking" about the poetry. Both Elaine and Sue

expressed the belief that significant elements of early modern poetry, read aloud and rhetoric, could have supported them in their encounters with early modern poetry.

(ii) Metaphor

Both Elaine and Sue referred to the specific term *conceit* applied to *metaphor* as a very significant element of poetry of the period. As noted in the literature review, *conceit* is a term specifically associated with metaphor in Metaphysical poetry and they both used the term *metaphysical* in a descriptive sense of grouping certain poets together. In responding to the question regarding five key terms in application to early modern poetry, Elaine replied with five terms that clustered around the idea of imagery, with *conceit* as the first one that she listed, “I ... think as important and we’ve used as well - is sort of conceit, so metaphorical conceit, allegory, illusion, blazon, *one more* – maybe metaphor”. Elaine referred to Donne’s conceit of a flea as one that she particularly recalled from her ‘A’ Level studies. She described the way that that the *conceit* had featured in this:

I read *The Flea* in relation to the theme of persuasion and the particular context of *Love through the Ages*. They were very much thematic ... a thematic approach to the poem and looking for connections with other poems that might be from completely different periods but on the same theme and, again, very much the approach of looking for identifiable features and technique, so saying, you know...the theme persuasion is evident in Donne’s poem *The Flea* through the conceit of the flea, whereas in poem ‘X’ the theme of persuasion...

Elaine characterises her use of identifying the technique of the *conceit* as working in a not dissimilar way that Mary characterised the rhyming working for her at GCSE. Elaine’s view of the *conceit* is as a way of structuring her response about Donne, as an “identifiable” technique and as a way of making connections with other texts.

Sue also identified the use of *conceit* as a significant element in her characterisation of the teaching and learning of early modern poetry. In response to the question about her interpretation of the term *Renaissance*, Sue drew attention to “daring conceits and ideas” and then came to back to the *conceit* again in response to naming five key terms. She recounted her experiences at ‘A’ Level, “I remember conceit coming up in my A-level stuff quite a lot and that was just a really useful term to think about and to break down Donne’s work into ideas and themes and stuff with that term. Both Sue and Elaine considered the use of *conceits* as being of particular significance, “useful” and “identifiable”, in their experiences of the poetry, particularly at ‘A’ Level.

(iii) Humour

Steve was the only student who named a key term to be used in the classroom when encountering early modern poetry as “humour”. Rather than elaborating on the term in relation to the poetry he related it to the context of the classroom:

When you go in and it’s all very serious and we’re going to talk about this, this and this, and there is no laughter and there is no joking and the tutor walking round is killing the humour and is leading you to points which they want you to be at, which in a way is teaching, but it isn’t ... you aren’t learning, you’re not thinking for yourself

Steve perceived humour as a significant element of early modern poetry and then identified more generally that humour, in his view, is related to “thinking for yourself”. Humour was identified as a significant characteristic by other participants in the study but only by one student.

(iv) Summary

The students identified *form* as an element of particular significance in early modern poetry. Three of the students directly related this element to the classical origins of the poetry. Elaine and Sue noted the relationship between the poetry

and rhetoric and they both also identified the *conceit* as significant. Mary particularly noticed the relationship of meter to “oralities” in the poetry and the significance of that to younger pupils. Elaine identified reading the poetry aloud as significant. Steve responded to humour in the poetry and in the classroom context.

9.2 (b) Teachers

The teachers identified *form* as being significant, in their perceptions, within the context of their teaching and learning of early modern poetry. Musical elements of the form of the poetry were commented on by two teachers and the *conceit* was discussed by three. Humour was discussed by two as significant elements in their conception of the poetry.

(i) Form; rhythm and rhyme

Three teachers noted formality and strict rhyming patterns as elements that were particularly significant in early modern poetry. Jenny commented, “they’re quite formally written out, they follow certain patterns and schemes”, Martin that “there’s a similar discipline about poetry at that time and the sort of ubiquity of the iambic pentameter – you know – form” and Tanya stated that early modern poetry was “stylized”, “formalised” and that “you didn’t get these sort of crazy free-writing poems that you get today”.

Form, rhyme and rhythm, were depicted by Jenny as being elements of early modern poetry that she believed were particularly significant to younger pupils. In her answer to question 8, *How might/do you go about introducing poetry of this period to your students?* Jenny discussed how, with working with Key Stage Three pupils:

We’d get a poem, look at its structure and then I would say ...supposing it had so many repeated lines, I would get them to write a poem that had so many repeated lines. I used to have some rhyming dictionaries; kids love rhyming

dictionaries... you are putting them in the position of being the writer...they... have to look at the presentational features, the meter, the rhyme

In Jenny's perception, it was very important for her pupils to be put "in the position of the writer". She points out that the visual "presentational" features of the poetry were significant, along with the "meter" and the "rhyme". Jenny placed emphasis on the way that rhyming dictionaries were important in this extract, that the rhyming was a very significant aspect of the poetry and also that her pupils enjoyed the creative element of using the rhyming dictionaries in their own writing. By replicating the original poem being studied, writing poems with the same number of "repeated lines", Jenny expresses her opinion that in doing this activity her pupils got to grips with the rhyming and structure of the poetry. Jenny perceives these qualities of visual appearance, meter and rhyme as significant in early modern the poetry and also as a way of engaging her pupils with it.

In a similar way to Jenny, Martin characterised *form*, particularly rhyme and rhythm, as highly significant in the way that his pupils read and responded to early modern poetry. In an extended discussion of teaching Shakespeare's sonnets at all key stages, he elaborated in detail on why he perceived this form of the poetry working so well with his pupils. He stated his belief that "verse [is] very natural, the most natural means of writing." In his experience, pupils respond in a lively fashion to different types of rhythm. He said that his pupils loved structure and like to play with rhyme and rhythm, "they're very much in their comfort zone really with it." Terms that he cited that he used with his pupils whilst working with the sonnets were; rhyme, iambic rhythm, volta and feminine endings. He said that, in his opinion, playing with *form* was fun for his pupils and that identifying features and knowing terms enabled them to look "for the effect" and "impact" of *form*. He stated that understanding these techniques, being alive to rhythm and syllabic patterning, are crucial and integral to the meaning of early modern poetry.

In his characterisation of the significance of *form* in early modern poetry, Martin related the poetry to rap culture:

Informal modern culture [has] those kind of rhymes and that makes them very in tune to Renaissance poetry because it has a lot of the same musical discipline and relationships. Erm, a lot of stuff – you know – that was written for music in Renaissance poetry, it all has musical kind of discipline with it and when I was growing up that wasn't really – yes – rock-and-roll rhyme but it didn't ... there wasn't the sort of ... I don't know – they didn't lavish the attention that Rap does on rhyme and structure and rhythm and so on.

Martin suggests that the way that contemporary music culture lavishes “attention” on “rhyme and structure and rhythm” makes pupils “in tune” with Renaissance poetry. Martin draws a parallel between the “musical discipline” of early modern poetry and with the music that his pupils listen to. Justin makes a similar point about the musical elements of the poetry:

It's a lot more melodious and mellifluous in the early modern period than it is anywhere else. It's a lot more melodious and mellifluous in the early modern period than before or after. You're a lot more aware of it. It's a great deal scruffier before and after. I think. So, you know, in terms of its emphasis on mellifluousness and this sheer delight of the measure, that is particular to that period, I think, and it is something I talk about more in early modern poetry than any other kind of poetry. It is easier to talk about; it's clearly something that you can't ignore.

Both teachers suggest that musical qualities are very significant in the poetry and Justin argues more so than poetry of other periods. He suggests that the reader is “a lot more aware of it” than in poetry of other periods. He identifies the two qualities of “mellifluousness” and “sheer delight in measure” as being the musical qualities that are in his opinion, “particular” to the period. As a consequence of this musicality, Justin argues that he would “talk more about” these elements with his pupils and that talking about them was “easier” than with other kinds of poetry. Martin also suggests that in his opinion the musical elements of early modern makes the poetry more accessible to his pupils.

Justin identified, as the student Elaine did, his belief that reading aloud was a very useful technique in exploring the *form* of early modern poetry. In his response to the extract on the interview schedule from Sidney he explores this:

It's a big issue just getting kids to understand ... And you are constantly emphasising look at the way it's constructed in terms of sounds ... They don't read for music and they don't read aloud, they're used to semantic meaning, they're used words meaning something... where you've got a one-for-one reference between the semantic meaning of the word and that to which it refers as opposed to the sound of a word and choosing a word for its sound and the way it works in the sentence and the music of it is part what it means and it's ... in the descriptors for A-level ... is that notion that it's not you look through those things for the meaning, those things are the meaning.

Justin states that in teaching the poetry of the period he views it as a "big issue" to encourage his pupils to read the poetry aloud and to move them away from only looking for "semantic" meaning to understanding that "the music is part of what it means". He feels he needs to challenge his pupils who don't read for music as "those things are the meaning". He states that this element of the relationship between "sound" and "meaning" is written in to the 'A' Level descriptors so very necessary for his pupils to understand. The student Elaine had stated that she had not read aloud in her 'A' Level class and would have liked to do so.

Martin demonstrated how useful and engaging he perceived the form of the sonnet to be for younger pupils by providing examples of poems that his pupils had produced, using the sonnet form. He also suggested that early modern poetry, specifically sonnets, "can be more accessible than the poetry of 300 years later" particularly because of their form. He drew a comparison between the form of a Shakespearean sonnet with Browning's *My Last Duchess*, a poem that he says his pupils struggle with:

They're not afraid of this form, whereas if you show them – you know – all sorts of other forms, anything from a Victorian novel to the long narrative Browning dramatic monologue, they're thinking 'Whoa, what is this, how am I supposed to....whoa, look at that on the page, it's huge (*laughter*), how am I supposed to read that' – you know – 'Ancient Mariner, it goes on.....'

The brevity of the sonnet form Martin believes is something that his pupils are not “afraid of”, in contrast to a variety of more modern, but longer texts, that he suggests his pupils feel that they struggle read. Martin stated that he used sonnets from Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* which work well “right down the school” and stated that the Shakespearean sonnet is a “kind of ideal of poetry.”

(ii) Form and structure

Both Justin and Martin used similar metaphors to characterise the way that they perceive early modern poetry. Martin stated:

Int Renaissance poetry is like....

M ... Well it’s like sitting down with a perfect glass of wine really, isn’t it?

There’s so much to enjoy about it, I don’t want to get too Keats with you, but several things you enjoy about it, but it’s like a most perfect glass of wine in a most elegant glass so you have ... it’s got structure and body to it, it’s got highly sophisticated and beautiful content, but it’s also got ... it’s contained in this beautiful sort of vessel of its structure or whatever and it becomes part of you or something.....

Whilst Justin suggested a metaphor in responding to the extracts by Puttenham in the interview schedule:

G Yeah it’s just Keats isn’t it? Poetry of the well-wrought urn is a well-made piece, I’ve constructed this object, a scientific object could have ... and that means correct measure and rhymes in the right place and the line length being similar. You know, it’s got that sort of symmetric....

Int And can you ... or would you relate that phrase to early modern poetry?

G Yeah I think I probably would.

Int How would you relate it?

G It still well-wrought enough to know that it’s [an?] urn but it’s quite often got deliberate cracks in it. That you need to recognise the fact that it’s a pot as opposed to it’s a bunch of shards.

Int So a pot, you know, in terms of there’s ocular proportion?

G Yeah; it’s the shape of the thin ... you know, here’s the shape of the thing, it’s this beautiful graceful shape that’s clearly been put together deliberately to make this pleasing shape on the page and measuring what-have-you – there it is.

Justin's metaphor came within the context of responding to extracts of Puttenham (see Appendix C), whilst Martin's metaphor was his suggested one when asked to give one. Both acknowledge that their metaphors are in some way Keatsian, Martin not wanting to get "too Keats" and Justin with "it's just Keats isn't it". Martin's image suggests two dimensions to the poetry, the form of an "elegant glass" or "beautiful... vessel" which has "structure and body" that contains a "perfect" glass of wine, which is the "sophisticated and beautiful content" of the poetry. Martin repeats "enjoy" and that the poetry becomes "part of you". Justin's metaphor is similar, in that he evokes a "well wrought" urn with a "beautiful graceful shape". Both an urn and a glass constrain and enclose their contents, and in both metaphors the deliberately constructed quality of form in early modern poetry is foregrounded. Justin extends his metaphor by then stating that early modern writers were both conscious of classical rules and forms, but also enjoyed deliberately breaking those rules, which he portrays as "shards". Justin uses the early modern term "measure", for meter. Justin puns on the term "measure" by also noting the "scientific" construction of the urn, which is precise and symmetric". He suggests the urn is a "well-made piece", "scientific" and "correct".

(iii) Metaphor

Three teachers identified the specific type of metaphor, the *conceit*, as being a very particular element in early modern poetry. Tanya associated the term with Shakespeare's sonnets while Martin referred to Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* stating that "this...metaphysical image can really make a poem work, even for a modern reader because there's this sort of visualisation or whatever, that it's not a dry intellectual exercise, even though the poems are quite clever." Martin characterises the strength of the *conceit* as being linked to its visual qualities, that prevent it from being dryly "intellectual". He also suggests that to the modern reader, this technique can "really work" because it is both "clever" and visual.

Justin linked the term *metaphysical* with the term *conceit* in the same way that Martin did. In referring to his own study John Donne at 'A' Level, Justin gave a

detailed account of his interpretation of Donne's use of the *conceit* :

Because he's just so dense and so extraordinary and who's he talking to? Who's getting all this stuff? Who's getting being raped by God? Who's getting those references? Who's getting this strange and intently intellectual idea of conceits and how they work? It's an odd thing and only come out of a period that starts to be rational, that starts to be legalistic, that man whose got that kind of legalistic training and all the kind of canon law stuff that is totally soaked in and talking to people who also, you know, utterly steeped in rational thought and Christian thought and legalistic thought and linguistic cleverness and, you know, that is called metaphysical wit.

Justin identifies the *conceit* as specific to the historical moment in which Donne is writing, where he suggests there is a particular meeting of different elements, "legalistic", "rational" and "Christian", that enable it to exist. Justin raised this element of his perception of the early modern period at a different point in the interview, where he discussed the impact of changing "epistemological ways of discovering what the truth" and "ways of talking about the universe". Justin argues that this came about through "rational investigation of the world" and "this method called science" which was a "great innovation" of the Renaissance. In his characterisation of the *conceit*, Justin argues that this particular quality of the period is related to the "odd" technique of the conceit that brings together disparate strands into one metaphor. The fourth strand that Justin identifies as being part of the *conceit* is "linguistic cleverness" which is in the context of Donne's "legalistic training" and those around him with similar training and thinking. Justin describes the *conceit* as "strange and intently intellectual" and the extract ends with Justin summarising that all these strands combine within the term "metaphysical wit".

Tanya, in her response to question (10), discussed poetic form as a key term that she would use in her teaching of early modern poetry. She explained her perception of the way that her students responded to the form of the poetry:

It's like a double-edged sword, isn't it, it's ... I think initially they think it's naff—they don't like it; they think it's a bit naff, but then in a way because it is so

structured the poet's forced to like – I don't know – pare down his ideas or her ideas to fit into that structure so that it's ... you know, elegant really, because if it was a real ... if it was naff it would be like a limerick, but it's not ... early modern poetry isn't, it's precise and it's clever and I think it's a crafted piece of work and any student with anything about them will upon reading it and analysing it will realise that it's clever and people appreciate it; that's where it strikes a chord with people, they think 'it's bloody clever that' (*laughter*). Well, it's true, isn't it?

Martin had characterised the *conceit* as being “visual”, “intellectual” and “clever” and here Tanya, in her characterisation of the way that her students respond to the poetry of the period, uses similar adjectives to describe the use of form such as “clever” or “elegant”. Justin speculated over the *conceit* as to who would actually be “getting all this stuff” and in this extract Tanya perceives that her pupils are reading, analysing and appreciating the poetry, stating that “any student with anything about them” will arrive at the point where they state “it's bloody clever that”. Tanya describes how, in her view, the structures required in early modern poetry had forced the poet to “pare down his ideas or her ideas” into something “precise”, “crafted”. To render the voices of her students Tanya uses the term “naff”. She states that the students do initially regard the poetry as “naff” until they come to understand it and “appreciate” it. The poetry is not “naff” in Tanya's words, unlike a limerick which would be.

(iv) Humour or wit

Two teachers, Jenny and Tanya, commented on humour as a characteristic of the poetry. Jenny stated that Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* was funny, as “it's saying ‘get your kit off, let's have some fun’ (*laughter*)”. Tanya, discussing key terms in the context of the poetry of Donne and Herbert brought up the idea of *word play* and stated that:

So it's kind of that wit and that wittiness and that cleverness, because humour ... it's connecting the people, isn't it, and if you write something that's witty or humorous and people can see it's clever or witty, it engages them, it kind of draws them in, doesn't it.

Tanya suggests that humour is a significant element of the poetry that connects people, it “engages them” and it “draws them in”. Tanya also characterised her students responding to the “clever” conceit which “strikes a chord”. In the above extract Tanya expresses that people can “see it’s clever” and become involved with it. In a similar way the student Steve had identified humour as an element in early modern poetry and also that humour has the effect of drawing him in within a classroom context.

(v) Summary

All the teachers identified *rhyme* and *rhythm* as being significant in different ways in their perceptions early modern poetry. Justin and Martin suggested similar elements that were significant to them in their teaching context; musical elements, elegance of form and the *conceit*. Both used metaphors of a vessel to characterise the poetry and humour was discussed by Jenny and Tanya as significant elements in their conception of the poetry.

9.2 (c) Lecturers

All four lecturers identified *form* as a feature that is very significant in early modern poetry, characterising the period as one of inventiveness and experimentation. Three of the lecturers identified the relationship of poetry to rhetoric significant and three also highlighted *voice* as significant in the poetry. Two lecturers discussed *metaphor* and *humour* as particularly important in the poetry of the period.

(i) Form

All four lecturers identified that in their opinion the period was one in which the *form* of poetry is of particular importance in terms of inventiveness and experimentation. Stefan stated that there was a “tremendous interest in form” and that the historical period created for poets a very “generative situation”. Diana identified “formal experimentation” as a key quality of the poetry of the period and Gavin “a rigorous attention to form and meter... the poets of the time expect and

utterly chastise its absence...they can be particularly contemptuous of poetry that fails to keep its accent and its metre.” Gavin elaborated on his view regarding form, detailing some specific elements:

There is no other period that is so inventive when it comes to what it does with form. What you can say with form, with meter, with something as minor as rhyme schemes, we experiment so much and we overlook so much of it because it isn't as big a part in a lot of other periods in literary history... I mean the best one probably is the psalms of Mary and Philip Sidney ... where almost every single poem is written in a different rhyme scheme; a different formal structure. And that's outrageous when you're taking it from a sequence of 30-odd poems. Now Mary Sidney in particular writes what is possibly the most ambitious, most complex poem in the language, where there's something like nine stanzas in each individual line can be read and the first line of each stanza makes a whole poem, the second line makes a whole poem, it is unbelievably complex... I think the sheer ambition of that is just mind-blowing, it really is. And I think while that's present in other periods, it's such a huge emphasis in this one.

Gavin argues that “no other period...is so inventive” and that the experimentation with *form* from this period tends to get overlooked “as it isn't as big a part in a lot of other periods in literary history”. He reiterates that in particular he perceives that in the early modern period, the emphasis on *form* is “huge”. Gavin is very qualitative the adjectives he uses in his assessment of the ambition shown by Mary Sidney, as an example, for her experimentation with *form*, “outrageous”, “mind-blowing”. Gavin characterises the importance that he perceives in this attention to *form* of early modern poets.

Two lecturers commented on the significance of meter and the impact this has on the reading of early poetry in a contemporary context. Gavin observed that the early modern emphasis on meter is “probably something that we are not very good at recognising” and that in a contemporary context “we tend to read with a particular expectation that the unit of thought is a syntactical one, that you run from the start of the sentence to the end”. Gavin argued that meter does not shape contemporary expectations of reading of early modern poetry, instead contemporary readers will overlook meter and focus purely on syntax. Similarly,

Carla noted that her students did not respond to meter, “I don’t know if it’s because we don’t do it in schools as much, but they’re not that into meter and they’re not very comfortable with being into meter.”

In contrast to contemporary “syntactical” readings, Gavin pointed the expectations of the way that meter featured in the poetry at the time it was written. Gavin suggested why this might be:

If you listen to readings of someone like John Donne, we have actors reading John Donne, they are wonderful readings, they really do express some sweep of the meter and the sentence and the thought but I really don’t think they are Renaissance readings where the emphasis on accent and on keeping a pure metre are central to what constitutes poetic quality at the time. Donne was criticised for his meter, Ben Jonson says he deserves hanging. I think that’s the same with Shakespeare’s Sonnets, for example, we tend to think of them, the psychological sweep, when we read them either quietly or aloud that’s the rhythms we allow them, I just don’t think any sixteenth or seventeenth-century reader would read them that way...I don’t think those readings are accurate.

Gavin argues that “pure meter” is “central” to perceptions of “poetic quality” at the time which he returns to later in the interview, stating that the importance of “strict accentual verse” is “something specific, unmatched about the investment of Renaissance poets in the formalisms in the metres”. Gavin linked this to the classical background of the period, in that education was conducted in Latin and to discourse in English alone was regarded as “barbaric”. The writers and readers of the poetry were, he pointed out, to all intents and purposes, bilingual. This, in effect, bilingualism of the readers of the period had the outcome of being such that this period was “probably the first time in English that so much poetry was being produced on these models”. Gavin’s points echo Stefan’s identification of this period as being “really generative”, which he suggested as the result of “a big mix of historical coincidences” including the classical education of the poets.

Diana’s characterisation of the period as one of “formal experimentation” she elaborated with examples of what the period was doing in terms of the shape of poems:

The shape of the poem, gets pushed ... yeah, gets really pushed, so it's from Sidney doing the kind of double sestinas and various kind of very elaborate patterns of structures of Herbert's...shape poems, and people like Mary Sidney doing all the different versions of the Psalms and so on, so there's definitely that sense of formal experimentation.

Like Stefan, Diana draws attention to the work of Mary and Philip Sidney to exemplify "formal experimentation" and the use of elaborate forms. Diana also refers to the "very elaborate patterns" of the work of Herbert's "shape poems".

(ii) Rhetoric

Three of the lecturers linked the significance of form with ways to convey this to students. Diana and Stefan link the elements of formal experimentation with rhetoric and the use of that in their teaching. In the way that Gavin drew a comparison between modern ways of reading the meter and what is known of how early modern poets would have interpreted the meter, Diana and Stefan sought to characterise how to convey to students the significance of form of the poetry of the time in their teaching. Diana explained:

Poets are very deliberately playing with language and its effect, but they're also thinking about language as a way of doing certain things and I think reading the rhetorical guides, reading things like Puttenham and reading things like Wilson, at least the rhetorical guides of the period, can be a really interesting way to think about how were people imagining poetry and how were people thinking it operated.

Diana points out the importance of conveying to her students how "people were imagining poetry" in the period, in contrast to contemporary set of expectations that her students will bring to reading the poetry. Diana referred at another point in the interview to her use of rhetorical guides in her teaching, as did Stefan. Stefan recounted how he had used Erasmus' *De Copia* with his students, asking them to apply the rhetorical techniques to some writing of their own "it was brilliant; they really enjoyed it and they came away with the most extreme elaboration, metaphors" and they "were suddenly looking at it in a very different way because

they had the experience of writing as a Renaissance writer". Stefan suggests that he felt that his students had understood much more the form and operation of the poetry by applying principles from a treatise on rhetoric, in a similar way to that which Diana suggested rhetorical manuals could do, in showing a contemporary reader "how people were imagining poetry and how people were thinking it operated."

One of the recurrent images, noted in the literature review, in early modern rhetorical manuals is of rhetorical techniques being like clothes that poetry is dressed in. Puttenham (1589/2004) suggested that without these techniques poetry would be "naked and bare and not clad in his kindly clothes and colours" (p. 134). Using a similar metaphor, Gavin characterised how he perceived the poetry needing to be taught. In his response to question (8) asking how he might introduce early modern poetry to his students, Gavin replied that there is a "need to teach [it] flamboyantly" and allow the poetry to be "dressed up" because "there's an awful lot of early modern poetry which is...flashy, has really good fun with the resources of meter, the inherited resources of classical reference as well". Gavin argues it is significant to acknowledge and "have fun" with the meter and "inherited classical resources". Like Diana and Stefan, Gavin perceived that the form and meter of the poetry was very significant in the poetry of the period, and that it was important to deal with this in working with students of the period.

(iii) Metaphor

Two of the lecturers discussed *metaphor* as being a significant constituent of early modern poetry. None of the lecturers used the term *conceit* and only one lecturer used the term *Metaphysical* as a category, in contrast to the teachers where three of them used the term. Diana and Gavin both referred to John Donne as an example in their discussion of this type of metaphor. In Diana's response to the question regarding the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern*, in which she used the Shakespearean phrase "rich and strange" to characterise the period, she gave Donne as an example of what she meant:

Donne I suppose would be a great example in that there's a kind of determined oddness to his poetry, which I think students respond very well to, and it's self-conscious and it's kind of testing the boundaries of what poetry can do and it's playing with ideas and I think...he's actually bringing in ideas from everywhere and kind of mixing together this kind of intense religious faith and concepts of the new science and poetic tropes and ideas about the material world and so on, and I suppose that kind of alchemy, that kind of sense of there is so much happening in a given poem that really seems to me very characteristic of this period

Diana uses Donne as an example to represent the way that many writers of the period are "testing the boundaries of poetry", in which they are bringing in "ideas from everywhere" and mixing them together with "poetic tropes" in a "kind of alchemy". In this way, Donne is "very characteristic of this period", which has a "kind of determined oddness". Diana's exploration of the complexity of Donne's poetry, which the term *conceit* seeks to encapsulate in describing the metaphors, is in parts very similar to the teacher Justin's description of the "strange and intently intellectual idea of conceits".

Gavin also uses Donne's poetry as a touchstone for the way that metaphor is a very important element of the poetry. In his response to question (8) asking how he might introduce early modern poetry to his students, Gavin replied that there is a "need to teach [it] flamboyantly". He stated that he perceived a danger in the new historicist approach to literary interpretation "which wants poetry to be illustrative of some historical lesson" which then becomes "dry in a way the poetry is not dry". By contrast, Gavin stated that in the seminar room he wanted a poem to "fizz within its own self". He then used John Donne as an example of teaching "Renaissance poetry":

I think teaching John Donne, it's hard to spend any length of time with his poems before you come into contact with the sheer hallucinatory qualities of the poems that his metaphors have objects changing from one thing to another. He has tears falling out of eyes that turn into pregnant bellies – glow worms with words inscribed on them. It's kind of like a dream scene from *Dumbo*. It's hard not to be flamboyant if one takes students through the movement of images through

poems. It's hard not to be gobsmacked at the sheer implausibility of what he is doing. His poems and his images are utterly outrageous but at the same time admirable and really silly. This I think is before you take in the other set of important contexts that when he is doing the image of the tears falling down his face turning into pregnant bellies and glow worms that this is a valedictory poem of farewell that is describing his going abroad. There's a whole load of historical contexts; the nature of travel overseas, the diplomatic and colonial context of the time. The time of his images that are I think really important secondary level of reference but the sheer flamboyance precedes that.

In a similar way to the teacher Justin, who wondered about Donne's "odd" and "strange" *conceits*, Gavin describes himself being "gobsmacked" by the "sheer hallucinatory qualities of the poems" that are both "admirable and really silly". He discusses taking his students through the *metaphors* as the first level of analysis. The *metaphor* should, Gavin believes, "fizz" as, like the poetry of Donne, an "awful lot of early modern poetry lends itself perfectly" to being taught flamboyantly and "within its own parameters". Gavin sees this reading of *metaphor* as the first level of reading the poem, because he then states that the "secondary level of reference" are the contexts and time period of the poem, but the "sheer flamboyance" of the images "precedes that".

Stefan noted the tendency for critical readings of the poetry to overshadow the aesthetic responses of student to the *form* and *metaphor* of early modern poetry. In the way that Gavin argued poems should "fizz" and be taught "flamboyantly", Stefan suggested that that the "words" of the poetry were enjoyable, and cited Spenser as an example:

I think there's a tendency to live with the critical schools we have and looking at politics and trying to see double meanings in everything; sometimes we overlook the fact that some of these words are just great fun and that is one of the parts of literature. The Faerie Queene does a great many things but it's also a hilarious romp through an imaginary landscape and, frankly, you know, if the words weren't enjoyable in some sense people wouldn't read them and we wouldn't read them. I think we sometimes tend towards other readings rather than the aesthetic which is absolutely fine - it's what a subject does - but overlooking that entirely can sometimes make it seem a little bit dry; maybe it doesn't really celebrate exactly how exciting this literature is.

Like Gavin, Stefan used the adjective “dry” to characterise the way that the poetry is handled at university level, which he feels doesn’t “celebrate” the aesthetic response and how “exciting” the poetry is. *Metaphor* featured in Gavin and Diana’s identification of what was “flamboyant” about the poetry, part of the “alchemy” of the texts and Stefan identified the “aesthetic” of *form* and *metaphor* as something significant and possibly overlooked at university level in encountering early modern poetry.

(iv) Voice

Three lecturers noted the significance of *voice* in early modern poetry. Diana pointed out that poets are “experimenting” with “kinds of voice...with kinds of address” and Stefan that early modern poets are “ambitious” with “personal voice”. Gavin in particular elaborated on what he interpreted was a tension between “metrical formality” of the poetry and the informality, often, of the speaker of the poem:

A really quite common strategy of discursive informality – making the speaker rough and ready, frank and bold about how they are going to frame what they say. I think the incongruity between those [formality/informality] is quite important, while you never lose your iambic pentameter within that – there’s a quite common colloquialism ‘for God’s sake hold your tongue’ that kind of doing away with certain proprieties while also maintaining formal elements...I think it’s an enjoyable rhetorical pose, personally, there is a sense that you can embody a drama inside the poetics by having that – by having voices like that – at the same time there’s a lot of fun can be got out of that character of the speaker who is embodied in the poem.

Gavin’s argument of a “drama” inside a poetics is very close to Hebron’s (2011) argument that in the poems of the period are dramas played out in “miniature theatres” (p. xiii). Gavin points out that the poems represent a “rhetorical pose”, in which the “discursive informality” of a “rough and ready” speaker plays out within a very metrically formal structure. He quotes the opening line of Donne’s *The Canonization* in which the speaker boldly chastises his lover in bed, within the context of a highly intricately structured lyrical poem. Gavin pinpoints the interplay,

the “incongruity” between the “rough and ready speaker” and the maintenance of the “formal elements” creates a “discursive informality”. Gavin suggests that this “discursive informality” is a site of potential for “a lot of fun” for the reader to have with the voices “embodied” in the poems.

(v) Humour or wit

All four lecturers identified play and humour as a significant element of the poetry. Stefan stated there was a “a lot of play” in the poetry, Carla commented on the “bawdy playfulness” of many of the texts, Diana also stated there was a “lot of play” in the poetry. Gavin stated “Sometimes they’re very inquisitive in an experimental manner and sometimes just very playful, enjoying themselves. I think enjoyment is something we overlook a lot...”, suggesting that the element of playfulness in the poetry of the period is often overlooked. Gavin commented on the presence of wit, but observed that what modern readers might take for the actual wit of the poets was derived from their classical forebears:

Renaissance poetry even though it sometimes sounds so quintessentially English it’s a culture in which education is conducted in Latin and its really easy to forget this but English alone to speak English alone and to write English alone is more or less barbaric at the time. That combined with a culture of imitation which means that so frequently poems we think of as expressions of the intrinsic wit and genius of a poet like John Donne is in fact a translation of a translation of...that’s quite proper and ordinary, it’s what people are doing all the time.

Gavin’s observation of the significance of classical origins relates to both wit and to the formal experimentation of the period.

(v) Summary

All four lecturers identified that in their opinion the period as one in which the *form* of poetry is of particular importance in terms of inventiveness and experimentation, with three of them linking the significance of form with ways to convey this to students. Two lecturers commented on the significance of meter and the impact this has on the reading of early poetry in a contemporary context along with two

who discussed the importance of rhetoric and its influence on early modern form and meter. Like the teachers, two lecturers discussed *metaphor* and the ways in which it is comprised of many elements as being a significant constituent of early modern poetry. Three lecturers also noted the significance of *voice* in early modern poetry while all four lecturers, like the teachers, identified play and humour as a significant element of the poetry. As with the students and teachers, the poetry of John Donne was used as an exemplar of the elements that the lecturers perceived as significant, whilst mention was also made by the lecturers of Mary Sidney and her elaborate experimentation with *form*.

9.2(d) Examiners

All four examiners commented on various elements of *form* as significant in their perceptions of early modern poetry. Two examiners referred specifically to the term *conceit* in characterising what they perceived as the significance of metaphor to early modern poetry. Three of the examiners highlighted specifically the element of *voice* as significant within the poetry of the early modern period.

(i) Form

Three examiners commented on various elements of *form* as significant in their perceptions of early modern poetry. Georgina commented on the use in early modern poetry of a “rigid kind of form”, that the poetry was “structured” and the importance of the poets “using the meter”. James suggested that if he was working with the poetry of John Donne, he would pay “close attention to aspects like metre and tone in a way that would be interesting and sort of useful for students to explore.” He observed that in early modern poetry generally there “is an attention to form and meter that is worthy of study” which he later related to music and working on that with students:

The music of the...the verse...the sound of that harmonious chime and all the uses of assonance and just the clever placement of different sounds within lines

and subtleties of a kind of technical nature are interesting things for students to explore.

James characterised form in early modern poetry as “worthy” of study, through paying “close attention” to the details of its construction, such as the “placement” and “subtleties” of the use of different sounds. James used the image of “harmonious chime” to portray elements within the form and structure of a poem that are musical and “interesting” to students.

Natalie’s interpretation of early modern poetry revolved around the term *metaphysical*. She stated her perception of the essence of the *form* of a metaphysical poem was as being short, in that “they’re not narratives or epics... they don’t often tell a story” and that the key element of their form was that “they kind of capture an idea or a moment or, you know, an emotion. So it’s getting to the...getting to the heart of what that...what that feeling might be”. Natalie commented that, with regard to Spenser and early modern narrative poetry that she would “rather read the Baghdad telephone directory (*Laughter*)”. However, like James, she argued that *metaphysical* poems from the early modern period enable students in an exam to demonstrate their expertise in the subject and took her analysis of the significance of form even further than James:

I genuinely do feel that students who are all have been asked in the past to compare some metaphysical poem and a much more modern poem, write better about the metaphysical poem because the techniques are kind of front and centre...actually, this kind of poetry can be a very good way for a student to be able to showcase what they can do...if they can actually link form, structure, and language to meaning ... then these poems often enable them to do that because they give them a lot to write about in terms of form, structure, and language.

Whereas James suggested that *form* is interesting to students and repays “close analysis”, for Natalie, the linguistic form and poetic techniques are “front and centre” which she argues enables pupils to really “showcase” what they can understand about the poetry or the period, especially in an exam. Of the wide spread of poetry from the early modern period, Natalie specifically discussed metaphysical poetry within an exam context. She argued that pupils can “write

better” about the form and techniques in these poems than of a “much more modern poem” so they can demonstrate their abilities in addressing the exam assessment objectives of “form, structure and language.” Natalie repeated this point where she stated that exam candidates, “often find it harder to write about a modern poem which can be in a more conversational voice and perhaps doesn’t have such an overt rhyme scheme”

In his response question (7) asking “why do or might you choose to set Early Modern/ Renaissance poetry for your exam?” Paul raised *form* as a significant element, within the context of what he is looking for in a poem for an exam:

Oh, Jonson’s definite... I continue to use that as the best example ... trying to get teachers to get away from teaching bloody form, so you’re just doing mechanical quantity surveying on rhyme schemes and look at structure, because the structure of that poem is a good example of how structure is the emotional shift from pain of loss to rationalisation of God’s will to reconciliation with things, so the structure’s more interesting than form in that...So I’m saying for me form is silhouette and structure is an MRI scan... it was also because A04 – a chance to be assessed – is about context and I don’t want context to be bolted on historical facts that Dickens was born in Portsmouth and.....what I wanted them to see is that this man has just lost his son and he says ‘Well it’s God’s will and I’m quite happy that I had him for a short time’. *Is that how you would react?* Not bloody likely. What’s the difference? And gradually you can get them to see that you can think like that if you begin to reconstruct the perspectives and the nexus of values and attitudes which is a world governed by faith, which we’ve lost.... my rationale would have been A04, A02 authors craft in using an inherited form but shaping it to a new purpose; A01 is your personal response which should now be located within the A04 and A03 how can you compare that poem with another one? So I can fulfil the whole of the literature assessment objectives in one poem.

Using Jonson’s *On His First Sonne* Paul elaborates on the significance of *form*, which he suggest for him is “silhouette” whilst what he is really interested in is “structure”. Paul states he wants to see candidates in an exam identify “emotional shift” which in his perception is the movement in the speakers’ thinking between pain at the loss of his son to “I’m quite happy that I had him for a short time”. In his response to the extracts from Puttenham regarding early modern ideas regarding

music and poetry, Paul stated “musicality and the rhyming and the visual pattern ... all of that is ... that’s Christmas cracker stuff”. Paul’s characterisation of *form* is in relation to the movement of the speaker’s thinking rather than in sympathy with early modern conceptions of the importance of rhyme, rhythm and musical patterning. As an examiner, he is viewing a poem with the assessment criteria of his GCSE exam in view, such that all the criteria can be addressed by using the poem.

(ii) Metaphor

Two examiners referred specifically to the term *conceit* in characterising what they perceived as an important quality of *form*. Natalie referred to Donne’s *conceit* of the compasses in *A Valediction Against Mourning* as an example of how “central” *conceit* is in the workings of a metaphysical poem:

If you’re looking at something like, you know, the image of the compasses and things like that, is there that central conceit, you know, that metaphor that tries to link this and this and if so, can we visualise it, can we unpick...the kind of central image or, you know, what is the poem trying to capture because most of the metaphysical poems aren’t that long...often that sense of the use of imagery that suggests the new world, you know, the composites, the scientific background toward the ingenious cleverness...

Natalie relates the fact that most of the metaphysical poems “aren’t that long” with the way that the *conceit* tries to “link” together “what the poem is trying to capture”. The *conceit*, she argues, enables the poem to bring together the disparate elements of the poem, the “composites”, succinctly. She also characterises the metaphor as enabling the reader to “visualise” and to “unpick” the poem. Natalie also characterises the poems as having the quality of “ingenious cleverness”, reminiscent of the teachers’ comments on the visual and “intellectual” qualities of the *conceit*.

Natalie used the verb “unpick” at two other places in her interview, once in relation to teachers supporting students with religious and biblical allusion, and once to characterise students suggesting different meanings and readings in an early modern poem. The stem of the noun “text” is *texere* in Latin, meaning to

weave or fit together. Natalie's use of the term resonates with the idea of unpicking a cloth, with a *conceit* as "central" holding the whole fabric of the text/poem together. The lecturer, Carla, also used the term "unpick" to characterise working through the various "different kind of possible layers" that she perceives as being present in early modern poetry.

Two other examiners, Georgina and Paul use Donne as their example of their understanding of *metaphor* in early modern poetry. Georgina used the adjectives "far-fetched and unusual", "bizarre", "rich, ornate...sensory". She referred to *The Alchemy* as an example, saying she would:

Always remember him talking about the gold and the feel of the gold and that might have been in 'the Alchemy' and the ... obviously the colour and the ... maybe more of the feel, the touch of things and obviously the feel ... the intense emotions that he felt, because it was quite emotive, wasn't it, it was like ... he was quite intense really, I think.

Georgina repeats "intense" to convey her perceptions of Donne's metaphors. She focuses on the use of visual and sensory detail. She remembers "the feel of the gold...the colour...the feel...the touch". She remembers the intensity of the emotions portrayed in the poem as very strongly associated with the colours and "the touch of things". It is significant to Georgina that these details persist in her memory. Paul also characterised Donne as an early modern poet who is perennially popular, "the thing that everybody loves about Donne is that he transfers the ecclesiastical to the erotic". Like Georgina he exemplified with a reference to one of Donne's *Holy Sonnets* that he remembered vividly from when he had studied Donne at A'Level:

Batter my Heart three-person'd God' and ... *Gosh, where is this coming back from ...* and he uses the words 'ravish me'. It's the sexuality; it's 'take me God'. 'Tumble me'. And it's hugely daring, isn't it?...And so potentially offensive to cast a spiritual devotion in the light of rough and tumble. So that was exciting.

As a young man, Paul recalls, he found the imagery and language of the poetry "exciting", "daring", "offensive" and identifies the "sexuality" as appealing to him at that age. Both examiners suggest a strong emotional connection that they have

had, in response to the language and imagery of the poems by Donne.

(iii) Voice and humour

Three of the examiners highlighted specifically the element of *voice* as significant within the poetry of the early modern period. Georgina characterised *voice*, specifically in relation to the poetry of John Donne as “humorous and bawdy and shocking”. She also stated that “Renaissance poetry...tends to be quite comic in a lot of ways and more light-hearted and less perhaps serious than the romantics.” Natalie highlighted one element of *voice* in the poetry of the period as being the use of “direct address” and stated that in a lot of early modern poetry it “appears that...the poet himself, or a male persona, [is] expressing ideas, emotions in a kind of confident way”. This confidence that Natalie identified she then characterised as “peacocking”. Natalie discussed this element of *voice* within the context of her ‘A’ Level exam and the candidates’ responses in the exam:

And we also want...them to bring in, because it’s a synoptic exam and tests all the assessment objectives, we also want them to look at interpretations of text and sometimes obviously, the male voice in these poems can be quite interestingly critiqued by young students nowadays who sort of say, “Well, this guy is basically trying to talk this woman in to bed,” you know. And make their own links and connections as to how that plays out, then and now. In fact that it’s a male voice, sometimes we might put a female poet on to challenge that kind of thinking.

Natalie points out that the element of male *voice* in the poetry is one that she perceives is significant in the poetry and one that she actively wants candidates to engage with. She wants candidates to explore the dimensions of the male *voice* both within the original time context “then” and looking at “links and connections...now”. She also notes that this characteristic of the confident male *voice* of the poetry of the period needs to be challenged by placing female poets of the period in the ‘A’ Level exam.

A further element of *voice* that Natalie also suggests is significant in early modern poetry is the aspect of a “gap...where...it’s either, there appears to be no gap between the poet and the speaker or... whether there does appear to be a gap”. She suggests that this is important to explore with students and refers to a poem by Ben Jonson to illustrate her point:

One of the poems I find really creates this, is Ben Jonson’s ‘That Women Are But Men’s Shadows’. That’s really good for voice because looking at address really I suppose...he does appear to be speaking. He says he is speaking to men, us men. .. and I have said it’s a bit like, you know, someone bragging to his mates down the pub...and opens up all debate about, I mean, I’ve had some very interesting responses from female students along the lines of...so, it might not mean it then. It might be the sort of that thing that everyone knows that blokes do down the pub but they wouldn’t do it. (Laughter)

Natalie refers to exam responses that “open up debate” about the tone of the *voice* in the poem, whether there is a “gap” and the speaker is simply adopting a rhetorical pose, or whether Jonson really “does appear to be speaking”. She then characterises the behaviour depicted in the poem as being bravado, “bragging”, something that “blokes do down the pub” but they would not actually see through their boasted actions, “they wouldn’t do”. This braggadocio is reminiscent of Natalie’s term “peacocking” that she applied to this element of the male *voice* in the poetry.

James also identified the confidence present in the male *voice* he perceived as prevalent in early modern poetry, using a similar phrase to Natalie, of the poets “turkey cocking”. James gave a detailed appraisal of another element of his perception *voice* and its significance in the poetry of the period:

Often even in the sonnet tradition there’s a sense of working through a problem or an idea or often, those early poems are useful to explore from the perspective of the changes in the speaker’s thoughts and ideas and...thinking of something like...*They Flee From Me*, it’s a lovely poem that’s got to a real sense of reflection and different points in that poem really focus on imagery from particular events of looking at small hands...or a shoulder or falling of a, you know, garment from a woman’s back and...it’s kind of a nice thing to do to sort of follow the lines of thought.

He uses Wyatt's *They Flee From Me* to exemplify the way that the speaker's voice is depicted as changing perspectives, with different points of detail coming into and out of focus for the reader. Like Georgina's recall of Donne's depiction of touch, James catalogues the specific details he remembers, such as "small hands", "shoulder" or the "garment" from a "woman's back". He follows on with:

Things like the poem about Anne Boleyn, you know, where we get a kind of narrative building up and a sense of the speaker's anguish and feelings almost exile and then the way it changes in the final stanza to just look at the necklace of the, you know, 'noli me tangere'...I mean it's quite a modern feeling in the sense that there's a narrative and there's a kind of range of almost from, you know, within the kind of voice of the speaker, when to use a cinematic analogy and then to like a big close-up at the end. So, you know, you can trace that through, through form and shape and I think students can get a lot from that close attention to those earlier poems.

In James's opinion, "close attention" by students to "form and shape" enables students to engage with the change in the "speaker's...feelings".

(iv) Summary

Three examiners commented on various elements of *form* as significant in their perceptions of early modern poetry. James commented on the relationship of form to music in early modern poetry and Natalie suggested that the significance of form, that techniques are "front and centre" made the poetry especially useful in an exam context. Two examiners referred specifically to the term *conceit* in characterising what they perceived as the significance of metaphor to early modern poetry. The term "cleverness" was associated with the term *conceit*, and Georgina and Paul spoke specifically about the imagery of Donne as something that endures in their memory. Three of the examiners highlighted specifically the element of *voice* as significant within the poetry of the early modern period, particularly the prominence of a male *voice* and the presence of humour in that *voice*. The examiners explored what these different elements offer their candidates, characterising how they read them and the way in which form and voice is significant to that.

9.2(e) Comparison

The students, teachers and examiners all identified *form* as an element they perceived as being of particular significance in early modern poetry. Three of the students directly stated the significance of understanding the poetry in relation to the oral origins of classical poetry and rhetoric. Mary particularly commented on the relationship of rhythm and rhyme to “oralities” in the poetry and the significance of that to younger pupils. The students related their perceptions of these specific elements to the contexts of their own learning and study of the poetry. All the teachers also identified *form* as being significant in different ways in their perceptions of poetry of the period; Jenny commented on the significance of rhyme particularly for younger students and Justin and Martin suggested that within their teaching context the musical elements relating to form were particularly significant. Three examiners commented on various elements of *form* as significant in their perceptions of early modern poetry. James, like Justin and Martin, perceived that the relationship of form to music in early modern poetry was particularly significant, especially within the context of his own teaching and Natalie suggested of the significance of *form*, that techniques are “front and centre”, which made the poetry especially useful in an exam context.

All four lecturers identified that in their perceptions the *form* of poetry is of more importance in this period than in other literary periods in terms of inventiveness and experimentation. Stefan characterised the period as highly “generative” and Gavin stated that “no other period was so inventive when it comes to form”. Gavin in particular pointed out the significance of the educational background of the poets of the period, in effect being bilingual in Latin and English, such that the inventiveness was the result of a “big mix of historical coincidences”. Three of the lecturers linked the significance of form with ways to convey this to students, Gavin stating that the poetry needed to be taught “flamboyantly” so that it can “fizz, within its own self” whilst Diana and Stefan discussed the teaching of rhetoric in relation to the poetry of the period. Diana and Stefan particularly commented on the poetry of Mary Sidney with regard to form.

Three of the participants, one student, one teacher and one lecturer identified reading early modern poetry aloud as significant in relation to the significance of *form* in early modern poetry. The student Elaine observed that her experience of encountering the poetry at school had been passive, reading it “sitting” or being “read to”. She stated that reading the poetry aloud would have both made it more interesting for her and “a lot more easier to understand”. She related reading aloud with the oral qualities of the poetry and with noticing more fully the rhythm and the rhyme of the texts. Justin and Gavin both observed that when reading the poetry aloud, their students would read syntactically, as Gavin also observed modern actors will do. They both observed that reading aloud and paying more attention to form and meter would be closer to what is known of early modern practices of reading aloud and perhaps support their students in understanding the poetry, as Elaine suggested she thought would be the case.

All of the groups of participants identified metaphor, and more specifically the *conceit* as a highly significant element of early modern poetry. Discussion of the *conceit* provoked quite emphatic responses to it. Terms such as “bizarre” and “strange” were applied by participants to the *conceit* as well as “cleverness”, “clever” and “intellectual”. The poetry of John Donne recurred throughout the participants’ discussion of the *conceit*, although Marvell was also mentioned in relation to this. The lecturer Gavin suggest that it was hard not to be “gobsmacked” and Diana characterised it as suffused with “determined oddness”. Both the teacher Justin and the examiner Paul characterised the strength of their reactions to the *conceit* as being very emotive, while the lecturer Diana used the term “alchemy” questions, Justin asking “who’s he talking to?” and Paul “it’s hugely daring, isn’t it?” Both the teacher Georgina and the examiner Paul spoke specifically about the imagery of Donne as something that endures in their memory. The lecturers did not use the term *conceit* to characterise the metaphors in early modern poetry, while two of teachers, two of the examiners and two of the students did.

Three of the examiners and three of the lecturers specifically highlighted *voice* as significant, this element as significant within the poetry of the early modern

period, particularly the prominence of a male *voice* and the presence of humour in that *voice*. Gavin pointed out that the poems represent a “rhetorical pose”, in which the “discursive informality” of a “rough and ready” speaker plays out within a very metrically formal structure. Natalie characterised the male *voice* as a challenge and something to be acknowledged within an exam setting. Four lecturers identified play and humour as a significant element of the poetry. The teachers Jenny and Tanya identified the *humour* in the poems as a significant element that in their conception of the poetry, as did the examiner Georgina. These participants viewed humour as engaging their students and “it...draws them”, which is an opinion that the student Steve also voiced.

9.2(f) Discussion

Form as a code within the larger theme of characteristics of early modern poetry was highly significant to respondents in their perceptions of the poetry of the period. All the respondents related it to their various contexts. The “oralities” of the verse was noted by the students as something that they responded to, both as younger learners and as undergraduates. The teachers discussed the relationship of *form* to music and how that was significant for them in their teaching contexts. Three participants from different groups also noted reading aloud as something that was either under-utilised in learning situations or neglected by their students.

The literature review notes that Alexander (2013) argues for a research – informed pedagogy for “hearing the voice of poetry” (p. 116) which may suggest some ways to work with the significant element of *form* of early modern poetry suggested in the data. Alexander (2013) argues that “style is a strategy to restore the poet’s voice” (p. 119) but that in the current contemporary teaching context, there has been a “commodification of poetry teaching” (p. 120) such that “there can be more teaching about poetry than actual reading of poems” (p. 120). This is an outcome, Alexander (2013) argues, of poetry being part of the “current target-driven and outcomes-obsessed curriculum” (p. 121) which has meant that the reading of poetry aloud has been neglected. Alexander (2013) suggests that this

issue needs to be addressed in training teachers and proposes “three simple principles” (p. 121) for trainee teachers:

- 1) You learn to read poetry by reading poetry
- 2) Poets write poems so as to direct us to read poems in the way they intend
- 3) Find as many ways as possible to get young people reading poems aloud for themselves (p. 126).

Alexander (2013) argues that trainee teachers need to be more confident with reading poetry and more open to the way that poets have written poems “to direct us” to read them. The data from this study suggest that the significance of *form* in early modern poetry, and the relationship between *form* and the way that “Poets write poems so as to direct us to read poems” (p. 126), indicate that reading poetry aloud, both in school and university settings, is a neglected but useful practice.

The literature also referred to Blake’s (2013) argument that poetry is “a matter of spokenness, part of a deep cultural heritage of literary meaning making, in which orality is encoded in the form even as it moves into the mono-modality of standard print production” (p. 138). In her argument, Blake (2013) positions poetry on the page within the “deep cultural heritage” of the *form* of poetry as an oral multi-modal form that is re-presented in a mono-modal version on the page. In reviewing research into poetry as a “matter of spokenness” she argues that in the current educational context “we are invited to do better” (p. 140). The comments made by teachers and students on the difficulties with reading aloud in this study, the sense from the students that the oral dimensions of the poetry had been under utilised in their educational experience, chimes with Blake’s (2013) observation that all involved could “do better” with regard to thinking of poetry as a “voiced, social experience” (p. 138)

In the data, the Lecturers all highlighted their opinions that the poetry of the early modern period stands out from poetry of other period in that no other period was so “generative” and “innovative”. The literature review notes how Puttenham (1589/2004) provides insight into early modern thinking about the way that classical

principles were being taken into vernacular English poetry and resulting in new modes of versification. The literature review also notes that this was a significant area of debate between poets at the time, as to whether English should develop its own form of “accentual-syllabic system” (Alexander, 2004, p. l) for poetry or simply use classical patterning of syllables. The result of this debate and experimentation at the time led to “sound patterns and rhythms which...are strikingly new” (p. li). The significance of this debate is echoed in the data, for the participants nearly all respond to the *form* of the poetry as something which has the potential to engage readers with the poems and something which repays close attention in the class or seminar room in its varied and complex forms. The attention to *form* was discussed in the data as being effective in a pedagogical situation when it was creative, such as Jenny’s reference to writing poems and Stefan’s to applying early modern rhetorical techniques to writing.

The lecturer Gavin in particular suggested that reading early modern poetry and responding to the *form* of the poetry should be in the first instance exciting. He states that the first level of response should be that the poetry should “fizz” in its own right, not be used to serve as “dry...historical” lessons. Like Gavin, Stefan used the adjective “dry” to characterise the way that the poetry is handled at university level, which he feels doesn’t “celebrate” the aesthetic response and how “exciting” the poetry is. The literature review discussed Stevens’ (2007) arguments that “the core of effective English teaching may be seen as the centrally Romantic idea of wonder as the essence of art (and maybe poetry particularly)” (p. 56). The data indicated that most of the participants identified *form* as highly significant in their encounters with early modern poetry, but their characterisations of that experience was mixed in terms of how *form* was used and responded to. Gavin’s argument for a first level of response that allows poetry to “fizz” and to be “flamboyant” suggests that he believes that there should be an element of “wonder” (Stevens, 2007, p. 56) at work in encountering the poetry. The lecturer Stefan also suggested that, in his perception, the “aesthetic” response to poetry by students is under-valued at university level.

Sagaser (2002), writing with reference to her experience of running undergraduate courses on early modern poetry argues that “teaching form and meter is essential to teaching Renaissance literature” (p. 185). She argues that to ignore “the question of meter” (p. 185) is to miss a “vital” (p. 185) aspect of early modern aesthetics. She explains that she uses techniques such as memorisation and recitation in every seminar that she has with her undergraduates, as well as setting verse writing assignments for her students. Sagaser (2002) even sets “unconventional” (p. 189) exams, where students have had to learn four to six poems of their choice and recite them to her, for their assessment. She argues that memorization and recitation, both her own and that of the students, “foster both aesthetic and historical insights into form and meter, as do our readings of Renaissance poetic theory, especially Sidney’s *Defense of Poetry* and Daniel’s *Defense of Ryme*.” (p. 186) The benefits of memorisation that Sagaser (2002) outlines are that it “forces them to observe – or forge – metaphors, connections, suggestions and formal features in the poems that they would never have experienced otherwise” (p. 189)

Like Alexander (2013) and Gordon (2009), Sagaser (2002) argues forcefully for reading aloud to be a key seminar activity, for both herself and her students. She states that she has an “insistence on the aural experience of poetry from the first day” (p. 190) of her early modern poetry modules. She outlines a variety of strategies for reading aloud in different ways that she uses in the seminar room, which she states, “show over and over again how necessary this reading together is; without it, clearly, most students would never read the verse skilfully and so would never really hear it” (p. 188) This is a sentiment expressed throughout the data for this study by different participants. As the teacher, Martin, expressed in the data that iambic pentameter was natural to speakers of English, so Sagaser (2012) states that it occurs “naturally in our speech” (p. 192) and she work with recitation in her seminar to get students to “feel for themselves how different meters and lines represent different kinds of voice” (p. 192).

Sagaser (2002) argues that this immersion in aspects of the form and meter of early modern poetry needs to be combined with increasing students’ “insight

into the past” (p. 195) which is “no mean feat” (p. 195). She outlines active approaches to challenging students’ perceptions of the period, which she characterises as being “progressively more extreme caricatures of the Victorian age” (p. 195) in two ways. Firstly she challenges students’ notions of chronology and secondly she wants to confront the students with elements from the period that are crucial to understand, which she summarises as; “it is crucial that students learn that most sixteenth and seventeenth-century English persons confronted disease, violence and death frequently and graphically. Being lower class, especially as a woman, could make life particularly limited and grim” (p. 196). Sagaser argues the significance of combining active involvement in form and meter through memorisation and reading aloud, with a lively understanding of historical context, as the two most important strands of her teaching of the reading and responding to early modern poetry, with her undergraduate students.

The tension between “dry” new historicist readings and other possible readings is also present in what the examiners said with regard to *form*. Natalie and James, ‘A’ Level examiners, both suggested that using early modern poetry in the exam enabled their pupils to really “showcase” what their understanding of the interplay between *form* and meaning, whilst Paul dismissed this approach stating that *form* is not that significant, it is “mechanical quantity surveying” whilst his definition of “structure” is the “emotional shift” of a man who has “just lost his son”. The context of the use of poetry is significant in this tension, as Paul is a GCSE examiner whilst James and Natalie are ‘A’ Level examiners, so whilst both sets of exam criteria require candidates to refer to the historical contexts of poems, how those are interpreted varies. Gavin clearly believed that even at undergraduate level, there is a tension between how to balance between the aesthetic response to poetry and that which is informed by what he calls “secondary levels of reference” or the contexts of the poetry.

The literature review notes Fleming’s (1996) argument that it is crucial how and when “appropriate...contextual and historical details” (p. 38) are given to pupils, in consideration of what makes an “authentic response” (p. 38) and this

decision on the part of the teacher or lecturer is very much part of the art of teaching. Also noted in the review was Pike's (2000a) conception of "responsive teaching" (p. 13) based on reader-response theory, in which the "very *difference* (be it social, cultural, ethnic, religious, moral or linguistic) between the world of the text and the world of the reader" (p. 143) is used to engage pupils with the poetry. Pike's (2002a) argument was that "responsive teaching" (p. 13) started with an emphasis on readers' personal responses to a text, using Rosenblatt's (1970) term, as a "stimulus" (Pike, 2002a, p. 13) which should then be followed by "teaching about cultural context and form" (Pike, 2002a, p. 13).

There seems to be a consensus between Pike (2002a) and Fleming (1996) that context is something that should not be fore-fronted in the teaching of early modern poetry. Exactly where responding to *form* falls in this process is significant, particularly because both Pike (2002a) and Fleming's (1996) arguments are based on the teaching of pre-twentieth century literature, not specifically early modern poetry. The data suggests that the teaching of *form* is a significant element of what the participants perceive to be significant in reading and responding to early modern poetry. Both Pike (2002a) and Fleming's (1996) arguments suggest approaches from schools might apply to beyond school to university contexts, where both the lecturers warned that early poetry can seem "dry" to students if not handled with care to the pedagogy of reading it, which would seem to be a conclusion that is emerging out of this data.

Attitudes held by participants towards *form* can be compared to attitudes explored in the literature review. Chapter 3 of this study analysed the impact of Palgrave's (1861/1940) *The Golden Treasury* as part of a resurgence of interest in early modern poetry in the nineteenth century. His definition of lyrical poetry in the preface to the work was that the selection of the "best" (p.) poems for the volume was that these poems turn on "some single thought, feeling or situation" (p. ix). The examiner Natalie used a very similar phrase in her characterisation of the way that early modern, and specifically *metaphysical* poetry worked. She stated her perception of the essence of the *form* of a metaphysical poem was as being short, in

that “they’re not narratives or epics... they don’t often tell a story” and that the key element of their form was that “they kind of capture an idea or a moment or, you know, an emotion. So it’s getting to the...getting to the heart of what that...what that feeling might be”. Other participants observed similarly that brevity, especially of the sonnet form, was an element that they perceived significant in the poetry that they chose to teach.

The significance of Eliot (1921/1975) and Brooks’ (1947/1968) ideas reverberate in the data. The title of Brook’s (1947/1968) re-evaluation of particularly seventeenth century poetry, *The Well Wrought Urn*, was used twice by the teachers to characterise their perceptions of the poetry in its *form* and use of *metaphor*. In his study, Brooks (1947/1968) demonstrated his concern with the interior life of poems, examining the way in which he perceived they achieved harmony through metrical pattern and metaphor. The title of the book, a phrase from John Donne’s *The Canonization* and alluded to in Keat’s *Ode to a Grecian Urn*, expressed Brooks’ admiration and conception of a poem being a text which is united and complete within itself, with the structure of the poem providing this unity, ‘the essential structure of a poem...resembles that of architecture or painting: it is a pattern of resolved stresses’(Brooks, 2001, p.1223). This conception of the poem is very similar to the metaphors provided by Justin and Martin of an early modern poem. Martin supplied a metaphor that image suggested two dimensions to the poetry, the form of an “elegant glass” or “beautiful... vessal” which has “structure and body” that contains a “perfect” glass of wine, which is the “sophisticated and beautiful content” of the poetry. Justin’s metaphor was similar, in that he evokes a “well wrought” urn with a “beautiful graceful shape”. Both an urn and a glass constrain and enclose their contents, and in both metaphors the deliberately constructed quality of form in early modern poetry is foregrounded in their metaphors.

The literature review noted the Eliot’s (1921/1975) arguments that metaphysical poems were intellectual, that the quality of argument enabled unity and a fusion of associations and images. Similar terms were applied to the use of

metaphor within the poems by respondents, “cleverness”, “clever” and “intellectual”, with the lecturer Gavin suggesting he was “gobsmacked” by Donne’s use of imagery, while the lecturer Diana used the term “alchemy” to characterise the way that the poems enacted this fusion. A number of the respondents indicated that these qualities of the poetry were the result of the particular mix of historical circumstances of the period, so Donne’s imagery as an example that is “very characteristic of this period”.

Three of the examiners and three of the lecturers specifically highlighted *voice* as significant, this element as significant within the poetry of the early modern period. Gavin pointed out that the poems represent a “rhetorical pose”, in which the “discursive informality” of a “rough and ready” speaker plays out within a very metrically formal structure. Alexander (2004), in his discussion of the development of versification in this period notes that with the development of the “accentual-syllabic system” (p. l) came new sound patterns and rhythms, so that “English phraseology could be put in tension with a different metrical pattern” (p. li). The effect of this historical period in the development of English verse enables the “discursive informality” that Gavin suggests, existing within very “metrically formal” poetic structures.

The interrelationship between voice and the metrical formality is an element that the teachers Jenny and Tanya identified as significant for them within their classroom. The *humour* in the poems was also identified by a number of participants as a significant element that in their conception of the poetry as they view it as engaging their students and “it...draws them”. James (2001) discusses the use of humour in the arts based classroom cites his doctoral study looking at using poetry with humorous content material, where he concludes that “those students introduced to poetry with humorous content material statistically enhanced their attitude towards poetry as an art form.” (p. 6). Such claims need further scrutiny, possibly with further research in this field, but there was a sense amongst the participants that *humour* as an element that they perceived in the poetry was an important element that they viewed as particular to the poetry of the period.

Natalie characterised the male *voice* as a challenge and something to be acknowledged within an exam setting. The literature review notes the exclusivity of the term *Renaissance* and the ways in which using a term like *early modern* acknowledges and tries to challenge the exclusivity in this term, which in turn influences the ways that people conceptualise the period and the writers of the period. The examiner Paul stated that he had “never heard of a Renaissance woman poet” and Carla noted that her students came to the course not expecting to read a female writer. The code of *Gender* in the data is one that does not come into the scope of this discussion, as this is an area that merits more consideration than is available within the scope of this study. However, of relevance to this point is Grogan’s (2011) argument that it is possible to examine and challenge “the history of colonialism, slavery, racism, sectarianism, the oppression of women” (p.131) through addressing these issues directly and paying close attention to “our students’ social, ethnic, religious and historical differences.” (p. 132). In Grogan’s (2011) view, teaching Renaissance literature offers a “wonderful opportunity” (p. 142) to “live and teach multiculturalism within a full and searching analysis of its history, of the texts and ideas and...the cultural frameworks that it fosters” (p. 142). Grogan’s argument resonates with the way that Natalie characterised that she would want to see exam candidates understand the contexts of the *voice* within an early modern poem and argue back to it.

9.2(g) Conclusion

This section has addressed the subsidiary research question: *How do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners characterise the elements that they view as being specific to the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?* The broad theme *Characteristics of Early Modern Poetry* covered a very wide thematic area so for the purposes of answering the third subsidiary research question, a number of the codes within the *Characteristics of Early Modern Poetry* have been analysed in this section. The codes selected were those most clearly related to the issue of where the participants perceived poetic elements, with specific emphases in early modern poetry, to lie. These codes were; *form, voice, rhetoric, metaphor, reading aloud* and

wit and humour. All the participants responded to elements of *form* as the representation of the “oralities”, to use Mary’s word, in the poetry. The students, teachers and examiners discussed their perceptions of this emphasis in the poetry in relation to their own contexts and respective settings. The lecturers commented in more detail on the “generative” nature of the early modern period and the historical circumstances that gave rise to the various elements of *form* in the poetry. There was a sense amongst the participants that *reading aloud* was a practice that is relatively neglected but potentially very useful in responding to texts from this period. The influence of the term *metaphysical* and the idea of *conceit* are recurrent in the data as a very significant element of conceptualising early modern poetry. A number of the participants identified humour, wit and the appeal of memorising early modern poetry as, for them, a significant element of the poetry of the early modern period.

Chapter 10; Conclusion

10.1 Rationale for this research

This research set out to elicit the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the reading and reception of early modern poetry in the subject of English, in England. Whilst there is a wealth of research on the teaching and learning of poetry generally in the English curriculum, research focused specifically on the teaching of early modern poetry in school and university environments is sparse. The main instigator for this research was the researcher's personal and professional interest in the poetry from the early modern period. This is particularly pertinent in the light of changes that the current government have brought in at GCSE. The National Curriculum in English has featured early modern poetry under the heading of pre-twentieth century literature for the last 24 years. The revised National Curriculum in English limits the guidance for pre-twentieth century poetry for GCSE pupils to "representative Romantic poetry" (DFE, 2013, p.4), excluding all the previously suggested early modern poets.

The thesis began by reviewing how and why early modern poetry has come to be present in the curriculum of English today. The literature review provided a context for the current teaching and reception of early modern poetry by examining three key periods in the development of the poetry within the subject of English; the early modern period, the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, and current themes in the pedagogy of poetry and early modern poetry. The principal research question for this study was:

What are the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry in the subject of English?

This main question has been refined using three subsidiary research questions. The next section presents the concluding points organised under the three subsidiary research questions.

10. 2 Subsidiary Research Question 2: *In what ways do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners interpret early modern poetry within the subject of English?*

In answering this first subsidiary research question the two themes of *Response to Terms* and *Relevance* were explored. The first of these themes, *Response to Terms*, concerned the attitudes of the participants towards the early modern period and the way that they discuss and conceptualise the terms *Renaissance* and *early modern* in relation to their attitudes towards the poetry. All the participants were familiar with the term *Renaissance* and the usage of *early modern* was perceived as more specialised and problematic, particularly in relation to the presence of “modern” in the epithet. The interpretations of the period were varied, some reflecting the Victorian attitudes characterised by Arnold, and others reflected more recent ideas, influenced by the revision of attitudes towards the period from the 1980’s up to the present day.

The second theme that was explored in relation to the participants’ interpretation of early modern poetry was the theme of *Relevance*. Four key points relating to the subsidiary research question were raised in Chapter Seven. The first key point is the sense amongst the interviewees that there is a tension between interpretation of what is familiar and what is different in early modern poetry. Conroy and Clarke (2011) warn against shutting down the “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (p. 1) when teaching poetry of the early modern period by focussing only on what is familiar and this appears to be the case in the data for some of each of the teachers, examiners and students. Members of each of these three groups of participants focussed particularly on the familiar elements of the poetry, consequently this “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (p. 1) featured as a significant aspect of the participants’ interpretations of the poetry.

The second key point relating to the theme of *Relevance* is that this tension of “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (Conroy and Clarke, 2011, p. 1) might

arise out of combining two competing historical approaches that are “fundamentally distinct” (Chapman, 2012, p.100) to the poetry. The difference indicated in the data between the participants is in their interpretations of the “traces” (Chapman, 2012, p. 98) of the past in early modern poetry. The third point that may shed light on the participants’ interpretations is that there is a gap between what modern readers of poetry may expect from poetry, in that contemporary readers may come to poetry with post-Romantic expectations of poetry, and what contemporary writers’ notions of poetry were, which Gavin articulated as “a presumption that the proper realm of poetry is the persona – the investigation of the self, it’s the crystallization of an emotion that relates in some way to the self. Most early modern poetry doesn’t have that presumption”. In relation to this point, Hebron (2011) argues that the challenge is to “see through the eyes of people remote from us in their outlooks and beliefs” (p. xii), disregarding this poet-Romantic way of reading.

Finally, the fourth key point in relation to *Relevance* as an element of the participants’ interpretation of early modern poetry is Gordon’s (2009) notion of “lifeworld” (p. 165). This is a concept that he argues enables classroom reactions and interpretations of early poetry to be explored. He argues that *Relevance* in interpretation of poetry, so by extension early modern poetry, is “a meeting of two lifeworlds” (p. 166) within the poem, that of the “voice, history and culture” (p. 166) of the poet or the speaker of the poem, and that of the “lifeworld” (p. 165) of a pupil, or indeed “thirty or so pupils” (p. 166). The discussions in the data of the way that participants sought to convey the *Relevance* of the poetry, as they interpreted it, to their pupils and students, can be related to the way that they are seeking to engage with what Gordon identifies as the “lifeworld” (p. 165) of early modern poetry in their respective educational contexts. Such encounters in a classroom would inevitably include both familiarity and difference, setting up a “dialectic” (Conroy and Clarke, 2011. P. 1)

10. 3 Subsidiary Research Question 2: *What do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners perceive as significant in their teaching and learning of early modern poetry?*

In discussing the answer the second subsidiary research question, data was presented from the theme of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge*, which was recurrent throughout the data for all the participants. There were three main areas that were explored in relation to the significance that the participants attributed to this aspect of reading and responding to early modern poetry. The first aspect of *difficulty*, the initial “shock of the old” or “Contingent” (Steiner, 1978, p. 78), was noted in all the different contexts that the respondents discussed in their interviews. Participants all noted lexical *difficulty* as part of this initial barrier. Steiner’s second typology of *difficulty*, “Modal” (p. 28), and third, “Tactical” (p. 33) were both noted in the data and enable a clearer definition of the types of *difficulty* that participants perceived as significant in the poetry.

The process of reading early modern poetry was noted as a particular area of *complexity* that participants perceived in early modern poetry, particularly by those involved in school and examining contexts. The type of reading needed for the poetry recurred in the data as being a *complex* process, characterised by Steiner (1978) as “rallentando” (p. 35), and characterised by Elaine as being like a process of digestion. Finally, Snapper’s (2013) analysis of “resistance” (p. 31) to poetry within advanced English settings was explored in relation to facets of the significant area of *difficulty, complexity and challenge* identified in the data by the participants.

A variety of perspectives were expressed amongst the participants on the nature of *challenge* in relation to what they perceived as significant in reading and responding to early modern poetry. The examiners stated that they sought to include the poetry because of its “intellectual challenge” and “stretch and challenge. Two of the teachers, Tanya and Justin, identified the significance of *challenge* in relation to their own professional identity and its impact on their

subject knowledge and motivation, along with one of the examiners, Georgina. These three linked teaching the poetry with an ongoing challenge professionally. The students also identified early modern poetry with an enduring quality of challenge.

10.4 Subsidiary Research Question 3: *How do students, teachers, lecturers and examiners characterise the poetic elements that they view as being specific to the teaching and learning of early modern poetry?*

A number of codes within the broad theme of *Characteristics of Early Modern Poetry* were explored in answer to the third subsidiary research question. These codes were most clearly related to the issue of what the participants perceived to be poetic elements with specific emphases in early modern poetry. The particular codes that addressed this research question were; *form, voice, rhetoric, metaphor, reading aloud* and *wit and humour*. All the participants responded to elements of *form* as the representation of the “voiced social experience” (Blake, 2013, p. 138) in early modern poetry and identified these poetic elements of particular significance. The students, teachers and examiners discussed their perceptions of this emphasis in the poetry in relation to their own contexts. All three groups of participants discussed the way that they perceived the *form* of early modern poetry impacting on the reading and responding to the poetry in their respective settings. The lecturers commented in detail on the “generative” nature of the early modern period and the historical circumstances that gave rise to the various elements of *form* in the poetry.

There was a sense amongst the participants that *reading aloud* was a practice that is relatively neglected but potentially very useful in responding to texts from this period, in line with Alexander’s (2013) arguments that poets have written poems directing us how to read them through their *form* and that teacher training, in particular, needs to pay attention to this element of reading aloud and interacting with poetry. The data from this study suggests that the significance of

form in early modern poetry, and the relationship between *form* and the way that “Poets write poems so as to direct us to read poems” (p. 126) is an area that, in the perception of the participants, is of particular significance in the poetry of the period. The participants also related this particular emphasis that they perceived in the poetry with the classical, oral origins of the various poetic forms being used by poets of the period.

The influence of the term *metaphysical* and the idea of *conceit* were recurrent in the data as a very significant element of conceptualising early modern poetry. A number of the participants identified *humour*, *wit* and the appeal of memorising early modern poetry as, for them, a significant element of the poetry of the early modern period. All the subsidiary research questions together inform the overall question of: *What are the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry in the subject of English?*

10.5 Conclusion: Main Research Question; *What are the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry in the subject of English?*

The discussion of the data relating to the three subsidiary research questions has revolved around clarifying the different strands of “perception” in relation to the ways that respondents read and responded to early modern poetry. The participants’ perceptions of the *Relevance* of early modern poetry has been identified as very significant and an exploration of those attitudes has been presented. The key finding with regard to the way that participants perceived *Relevance* is the way that the “dialectic of familiarity and difference” (Conroy and Clarke, 2011, p. 1) is of great importance in a classroom or seminar context, as this is crucial in engaging pupils or students in reading and responding to early modern poetry. There was a general sense amongst the participants that *Relevance* can be found in the elements of the poetry that are familiar to readers, but there is a need to balance this with acknowledging the elements of difference that are also present

in the texts. Pike's (2004) exploration of the way that texts present "indeterminacy" (Pike, 2004, p. 143) and the "very difference...between the text and the reader" (p. 143) as a way of engaging readers is significant here. Gordon's (2009) concept of "lifeworlds" (p. 165) characterising the way that poetic texts operate in the classroom is a model that is useful to inform the way that readers and early modern poems can operate together in an educational setting.

The second area of perceptions was explored via the theme of *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge*, which was recurrent throughout the data for all the participants. This theme featured particularly in the way that the participants characterised what they perceived as significant about the poetry of the early modern period. All the participants expressed responses around this area and almost exclusively this *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* was viewed in a positive light, in that it can be exploited with pupils or students in many ways. Steiner's (1978) typology of difficulty has been utilised as a way to explore the different dimensions of this difficulty. In having a typology to utilise, the various dimensions of challenge of the poetry in the class or seminar room can be understood and used to support classroom interactions.

Linked to Steiner's typology was the complexity of the reading process required when reading and responding to early modern poetry, characterised in the data recurrently by the participants and in the literature by academics such as Brooks (1947/1968) and Eliot (1921/1975). This complexity was linked in a positive way by a number of participants in their respective educational contexts and with their journeys as readers of poetry. The teachers in particular linked this complexity with their professional development and the lecturers with one of the reasons that they enjoy and work with the poetry of the period. The problems that may be presented by the *Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge* can be explored with regard to Snapper's (2013) analysis of resistance to poetry, in both classrooms and seminar rooms, in the study of English. Snapper argues that the current assessment regime in schools leaves pupils ill prepared to deal with challenging texts, particularly at undergraduate level.

The third strand of perception was the particular elements that the participants perceived to be poetic elements with specific emphases in early modern poetry; *form, voice, rhetoric, metaphor, reading aloud* and *wit and humour*. The participants discussed their perceptions of these emphases that they perceived in the poetry in relation to their own contexts, such as in motivating pupils to learn or in examining pupils. A number of elements were seen as significant in relation to these emphases, such as the under-utilisation aesthetic responses in classrooms and seminar rooms, as argued by Stevens (2007). In relation to reading and responding to early modern poetry, the place of reading aloud has been highlighted by Alexander (2013), Sagaser (2002) and Gordon (2009) as a neglected approach to the poetry and one that is highly significant in working with the poetry. Yang (2006) explored “intralocution” (p. 29) in early modern poetry, using the elements of a speaker’s voice and poetic address, in the context of Taiwanese learners of English. In the light of participants’ perceptions of the significance of voice in the poetry, this approach may well be an area for further research within the context of classrooms in England.

10.6 Limitations of this research

There are a number of limitations to this study. The role of the researcher has to be acknowledged, starting as an “insider” (Thomas, 2009, p78) at the outset of the project and throughout the project being intellectually and emotionally involved, such that as Denscombe (2007) identifies, “the researcher’s self (their social background, values, identity and beliefs) will have a significant bearing on the nature of the data collected and the interpretation of that data” (p. 250). As Braun and Clarke point out, the researcher has an active role in identifying patterns and themes, and that ‘If themes ‘reside’ anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them’ (p. 80). Effort was made to ensure checks and balances were in place in the use of another coder and also through the use of the NVivo software programme, however there will always be an element of subjectivity in such a study.

Another limitation of this study is that data was only collected from sixteen participants and within one geographical area. It would certainly be possible to extend the study and produce a larger study, with more participants and across a much more extensive geographical area. The gender mix of the participants was eight women to six men, which is a reasonably representative gender mix, however ethnographically the sample was homogeneous, so a more widely representative mix of participants could improve the validity of the work.

10. 7 Recommendations for further research

In analysing the data for this study, nine main themes or “parent nodes” (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75) in the NVIVO programme from the data are presented in Table 12 :

Difficulty or Complexity or Challenge
Response to terms
Early modern poetry, characteristics
Frames for the period
Relationship to Assessment
Relevance
Teacher Identity
Teaching
Ways of reading

Table 13; Main themes or “parent nodes” (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75)

From the table it can be seen that a number of the broad themes, and the codes that were included within them, have fed in to answering the research questions for this study. The main themes that were used were; Difficulty or Complexity or Challenge; Response to Terms; Early modern poetry – characteristics; Relevance; Ways of Reading. Some codes that came within the other themes, or “parent nodes”(Bazeley and Jackson, 2013, p. 75) have been utilised. A number of codes have not been examined in this study, due to limitations of word count.

From the data that has not been presented here there is further potential exploration of data to be undertaken. The theme of *teacher identity* included much rich data about the interrelationship of teachers' subject knowledge and their professional identity. Recurrent as the code within the larger umbrella of *teaching* was the issue of gender, touched on in this study but fit for a much larger examination. The theme *ways of reading* comprised 19 codes, some of which was utilised in this study, but not all. There is much rich material for exploring the impact of new historicist reading practices on the reading and responding to early modern poetry. The theme of *relationship to assessment* includes codes on issues to do with teaching towards exams and text selection for exams. This study has not engaged with the role of the canon and canonicity. Codes within the broader theme of *frames for the period*, which numbered 15, included the relationship of the participants' journey through the education and their attitudes. The role of writing in the reading and responding to early modern poetry has not been fully explored.

10. 8 Recommendations for professional practice

The answers to the question: *What are the perceptions of students, teachers, lecturers and examiners of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry in the subject of English?* Would suggest that the participants in the study believe that early modern poetry has a lot of offer the English curriculum; humour, challenge and a wide variety of engaging poetic forms and voices. This indicates that there is the potential to raise the status of early modern poetry within the subject of English, particularly within secondary schools. Early modern poetry as an option for pre-twentieth century literature has now been replaced by representative Romantic poetry on the National Curriculum for Key Stage Four, so it follows that this will be the poetry that is studied at GCSE. This will limit the potential richness of the curriculum for teenage readers and proscribe the opportunities offered to teachers by teaching texts from other times. Add to this mix a prescription of two texts by Shakespeare over these two years (DFE, 2013), then the challenging and

enduring popular lyric poetry of the early modern period may well be underexploited in the curriculum for teenage readers of the future.

The data analysis would also suggest that there is much more potential for cross fertilisation between pedagogy in schools and that of university, that there is room for much more reader response and aesthetic approaches, in both sectors. There was a sense amongst the participants that not enough attention was paid to aesthetic approaches to early modern poetry, especially in the university sector. Stevens (2007) aesthetic approaches to reading and responding to pre-twentieth century poetry could offer some ways forward pedagogically, as could Pike's (2002) "responsive teaching" (p.13).

A number of teaching approaches that have recurred in the data, across secondary and Higher Education contexts, that have been viewed positively by participants. The importance of reading histories and journeys, particularly for trainee teachers, was noted by Cremin (2013) and Collins and Kelly (2013), and in the data the importance of encountering a wide variety of poetry, in individual and educational contexts, emerged as a significant elements of the participants' perceptions of the poetry. In the context of research into English in the secondary sector, poetry teaching is repeatedly characterised as "commodified" (Alexander, 2013, p. 120), and which as a consequence fosters "resistance" (Snapper, 2013, p. 39) to poetry, so encouraging wide reading and reading for enjoyment of early modern poetry, could go some way to address this situation.

There are opportunities to improve teacher training in two ways to sharpen a focus on early modern poetry. Encouraging more work with poetry and personal poetry journeys of teacher trainees, in the way that Cremin (2013) argued, would raise the status of early modern poetry with trainee teachers. Also working with trainees teachers to specifically engage with the elements of *Difficulty or Complexity or Challenge* highlighted by many participants as a highly significant element of their perceptions of reading and responding to early modern poetry in the subject of English.

Sagaser's (2002) account of her use of techniques such as memorisation and recitation with her undergraduates, as well as setting verse writing assignments and memorisation as assessment for her students, could contribute a great deal to understanding ways to engage and inform both secondary and university students about early modern poetry, using the resources of form and meter, highlighted as so significant to the participants in this study.

Word Count; 94, 142

Appendices

Appendix A; Interview Schedule - Examiners

Main Research Question; *What are the perceptions of examiners, teachers and students of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry?*

- 1) Here are two terms, Renaissance and early modern. Which terms might you use and why? Can you explain why you believe your particular chosen definition is appropriate to use to describe the period? What might academics argue about when they use these terms?
- 2) If you had to put a start to the period, when would you say that it started in England? Why go for those dates/ parameters? If you had to suggest when it finished, when would that be? Why?
- 3) When you think of early modern/Renaissance poetry, what words spring to mind?
- 4) Can you explain how you have come to think about the poetry of the period, for example who or what is framing your idea of the poetry and the period for you? Was it a teacher/exam book/ anthology?
- 5) What poets would you name that belong to this period?
- 6) Of the poets that you mentioned with which you are familiar, can you suggest any common characteristics, in that they are all classed as early modern/Renaissance poets?
- 6) Why do/ might you choose to set early modern or Renaissance poetry for your exam? If you do not, why not?
- 7) Has early modern poetry actually featured in your exam in the last ten or so years? In what ways?
- 8) What would you expect teachers to do in preparation for your exam?
- 9) What, in your view, would be a good answer on a poem (s) from the early modern or Renaissance period.
- 10) If you had to name five key terms that you would expect teachers to use in the classroom with your students whilst teaching poetry of this period, what would they be?
- 11) If I asked you to give me a metaphor to describe your feelings/ideas about early modern poetry, what would it be? If you want to draw the metaphor, please feel free!

Please look at the extracts below, two of which are written by early modern/Renaissance poetry theorists. I would like to explore your views on these extracts in the interview. How might these extracts prompt us to discuss ways of reading and encountering early modern poetry?

Extracts for discussion

Sir Philip Sidney describes the poet's power over his listeners, in both child and adult, as he characterises the pedagogical power of poetry:

'He cometh to you with words set in a delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner, and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue. Even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste.'

Sidney states, 'Poesy is therefore an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *mimesis*—that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture – with this end, to teach and delight'

Sidney states that poets, 'imitate both to delight and teach; and delight, to move men to take goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved.'

Sir Philip Sidney (1580) *The Defence of Poesy*

Puttenham defines the difference between prose and poetry as 'speech by metre is a kind of utterance more cleanly couched and more delicate to the ear than prose is, because it is more current and slipper upon the tongue, and withal more tuneable and melodious, as a kind of music, and therefore may be termed a musical speech or utterance, which cannot but please the hearer very well.'

Puttenham notes the suitability of English for rhyming, 'For this purpose serve the monosyllables of our English Saxons excellently well' (p. 120), because of the qualities of monosyllabic words or the less complex syllabic words by comparison with romance languages work well within a rhyme scheme.

Puttenham analyses the way that visual patterning in poetry is interlinked with the aural effects of the text. He writes, 'ocular proportion doth declare the nature of the audible, for if it pleaseth the ear well, the same represented by delineation to the view pleaseth the eye well, e converso.'

George Puttenham(1589)*The Art of English Poesy*

'There can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry...when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently.'

Matthew Arnold (1880) *The Study of Poetry*

'No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead.'

T.S. Eliot (1975) *Tradition and the Individual Talent*

Appendix B; Interview Schedule- Students

Project Title; *Encountering Early Modern Poetry in the subject of English*

Main Research Question; *What are the perceptions of examiners, teachers and students of the teaching and learning of Renaissance/early modern poetry?*

Questions for Students

1) Here are two terms, Renaissance or early modern. Which terms would you use and why?

Can you explain why you believe your particular chosen definition is appropriate to use to describe the period? What might academics argue about when they use these terms?

2) Which poets belong to this period? Who would you name?

3) If you had to put a start to the period, when would you say that it started in England? Why go for those dates/ parameters? If you had to suggest when it finished, when would that be? Why?

4) Why is it that you think in this way about the period? Can you explain how you have come to think like this? (Prompts; Who are the gatekeepers for the subject? Who or what is framing your idea of the poetry and the period for you? Was it a teacher/exam book/ anthology?)

5) Do poets such as Milton, Donne, Herbert and Wyatt (or add the poets from the period that you named) have any common characteristics, in that they are all classed as early modern poets?

6) Has early modern poetry featured in your studies either at school or at degree level? In what ways?

7) Why might you choose to study early modern poetry? What is the value of studying this poetry? What does it mean to you personally?

8) How was early modern poetry introduced to you?

9) What are the conceptual issues that you or other students might have to deal with when reading early modern poetry? Are they unique to early modern poetry?

10) If you had to name five key terms that have been used in the classroom whilst studying the poetry, what would they be?

11) If I asked you to give me a metaphor to describe your feelings/ideas about early modern poetry, what would it be? If you want to draw the metaphor, please feel free!!

Please look at the extracts below, which I would like to explore your views on in the interview. What do these extracts tell us about ways of reading and encountering early modern poetry?

1) Sir Philip Sidney describes the poet's power over his listeners, in both child and adult, as he characterises the pedagogical power of poetry:

'He cometh to you with words set in a delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner, and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue. Even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste.'

Sidney states, 'Poesy is therefore an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *mimesis*— that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth — to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture — with this end, to teach and delight'

Sidney states that poets, 'imitate both to delight and teach; and delight, to move men to take goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger; and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved.'

Sir Philip Sidney (1580) *The Defence of Poesy*

2) Puttenham defines the difference between prose and poetry as 'speech by metre is a kind of utterance more cleanly couched and more delicate to the ear than prose is, because it is more current and slipper upon the tongue, and withal more tuneable and melodious, as a kind of music, and therefore may be termed a musical speech or utterance, which cannot but please the hearer very well.'

Puttenham notes the suitability of English for rhyming, 'For this purpose serve the monosyllables of our English Saxons excellently well' (p. 120), because of the qualities of monosyllabic words or the less complex syllabic words by comparison with romance languages work well within a rhyme scheme.

Puttenham analyses the way that visual patterning in poetry is interlinked with the aural effects of the text. He writes, 'ocular proportion doth declare the nature of

the audible, for if it pleaseth the ear well, the same represented by delineation to the view pleaseth the eye well, e converso.'

George Puttenham (1589) *The Art of English Poesy*

3) Matthew Arnold and T.S. Eliot, wrote about the relationship of poetry to tradition, in the following ways:

'There can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry...when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently.'

Matthew Arnold (1880) *The Study of Poetry*

'No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead.'

T.S. Eliot (1975) *Tradition and the Individual Talent*

Appendix C; Example of Transcript (Extract)

Speaker	Transcript
S1	Recording ... [phonetic]. So here are two terms Renaissance and early modern. Which terms would you use and why?
S2	I really struggled with that question for a while. I was thinking the term Renaissance I suppose gives the kind of continuity with Italy in 14th century. And I suppose when I think if the term Renaissance I think of classical influence and revival -- cultural revival in that sense. Early modern I suppose, it seemed to have more quantitative rather than descriptive valuation in a way.
S1	When you say quantitative, what quantity were you thinking of?
S2	In term of dates really and it does not seem to have -- it does not seem to be so loaded when you say Renaissance. You think -- well, a discovery of past, classical work and cultural richness. Pride of forgiveness -- early modern it just seems to denote a period in time rather than have its connotations.
S1	Yes, excellent. Which one would you use, do you think?
S2	It depends -- I would use Renaissance when -- no I would use early modern.
S1	Yeah.
S2	It seems more neutral -- less historically biased.
S1	So it is the neutrality that you think is appropriate. So why do you think academics might argue about those terms?
S2	I suppose they might argue about overlaps and dates and who would be included into which kind of -- I mean if you think of Shakespeare, it always seems defensive to define him as anything but a great economical writer. I mean if you are going to say, oh Shakespeare he is an early modern poet it just seems to put him a rank down.
S1	That is interesting, yes.
S2	I suppose those type of things might cause [inaudible 00:02:53].
S1	Excellent, so you are saying it is about who constitutes -- who is in what group?
S2	Yeah

Appendix D; Consent Form

Department of Education, University of [REDACTED]

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Encountering Early Modern Poetry in the Subject of English

Researcher: [REDACTED]

Brief Description of the Study:

In this study, I am exploring the encounters of teachers, students, lecturers and examiners with early modern poetry in the subject of English. I am exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, ideas and feelings around their encounters with the poetry. In the interview there are no right or wrong answers and I am interested in any responses that you feel are natural to provide.

Please keep in mind that you are free to quit the study at any time if you do not feel comfortable any more. Also, all the data that I collect during the experiment will be fully anonymized. In other words, in order to protect your identity, all links to your personal details will be broken. You are able, however, to ask that your data be removed and not used for analysis or in reports at any time before or after the study has taken place.

Declaration of Consent

I have been informed about the aims and procedures involved in the experiment that I am about to participate in.

I reserve the right to withdraw at any stage in the proceedings. If I do so, I understand that any information that I have provided as part of the study will be destroyed and my identity removed unless I agree otherwise.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix E; First Version - NVivo Nodes July 12th

Parent Nodes	Child Nodes – Level One	Child Nodes – Level Two	Child Nodes – Level Three
Authors			
	Anthologies mentioned		
		Compiling anthologies	
		Working with anthologies as a student	
	Prose writers – early modern		
	Shakespeare		
		Place in the curriculum	
		Qualities attributed to his work	
		Renaissance or early modern	
		Sonnet 116	
		Sonnet 130	
		Sonnet 18	
	Specific Poets mentioned		
		Chaucer	
		Early Modern Poets	
			Cavalier
			Civil War
			Donne
			Female
			Johnson
			Marlowe
			Marvell
			Metaphysical
			Milton
			Shakespearean sonnets
			Sidney
			Spenser
			Wyatt
		Nineteenth century poets	
			Browning
			Coleridge
			Keats
			Tennyson
			Thomas Grey
		Twentieth century	
			Duffy
			Larkin
			Heaney
			Harrison
Criticism	Critical Theories mentioned		
	Critics mentioned		

	Dialogue as a significant term		
	Influence of critical theory		
Destination; University			
Differentiation			
Difficulty			
Discussion of the period	Associations of the term early modern		
	Associations of the term Renaissance		
	Attitudes towards the period		
	Conflation of EM with Tudor		
	Dates		
	Dialogue as a significant term		
	Perceived characteristics of the period		
	Periodisation		
	Using the two terms in teaching or writing		
	Ways the period was taught		
EM poetry, characteristics			
	Adjectives to describe characteristics		
	Allusions		
	Challenge or difficulty		
	Classical references		
	Confidence		
	Connotations of the term metaphysical		
	Courtliness		
	Dialogic voices		
	Discursive informality		
	Ecclesiastical references		
	Elite		
	Enjoyment		
	Formality		
	Imitation		
	Importance of Form		
		Rhyme	
		Rhythm	
		Shape	
	Instability and change		
	Length and associated qualities		
	Manuscript and print		
	Metaphor		

	Pastoral		
	Political		
	Reference to sex!		
	Rhetoric		
	Science or rationality		
	Self- conscious		
	Speaker or voice		
	Theme of beauty		
	Use of the term music or musical		
	Verbs to describe the poetry		
	Why study it..		
	Wit or humour		
Encounters with the poetry			
	As a teacher		
	Personal encounters		
	Relationship with other subjects		
	School		
	University		
		Postgraduate	
		Undergraduate	
Englishness			
	English as a language		
Enjoyment			
Frames for the period			
	A Lecturer		
	A teacher		
	Anthologies used by exam boards		
	Compiling own anthologies		
	CPD		
	Exam board anthologies		
	Influence of pre-teaching life		
	Libraries		
	Particularly influential works of criticism		
	Personal reading		
	Published anthologies		
	School context		
	Study of other subjects		
	Teaching as part of a syllabus		
	Undergraduate study		
Gender			
Historical Reading			

Influences on curriculum			
	Critical influences		
	Educational marketplace influences		
	Exam boards		
	Government policy		
	Text books		
	Time		
Interviewee's relationship with the period			
	Geographical factors		
Memory			
	Moral dimension of poetry		
Metaphors			
Perceptions of the past			
	Interviewees		
	Pupils		
Personal research			
Poetry in an exam context			
Reactions to extracts			
	Arnold		
	Eliot		
	Englishness		
	Puttenham		
	Sidney		
References to modern poetry			
Relevance			
Role of the examiner			
	Relationship between A'Level and Uni curriculum		
Selfhood			
Shakespeare as Icon			
Teacher Identity			
Teacher's subject knowledge			
Teaching			
	Experience as school student		
	Problems		
	Student's Responses		
	Teaching		
		Genre	

		Influence of assessment	
		Introducing early modern texts	
		Knowledge	
		Problems	
		Relationship between what teacher likes and pupils' reactions	
		Students' Responses	
			Good exam answer
			Pleasure
			Value of knowledge
		Teaching the poetry	
			Dialogue
			Difficulty
			GCSE
			Gender and poetry
			Pleasure
			Purpose of teaching poetry
			Relationship between key stages
			Significance of chronology
			Students writing poetry
			Teachers' attitudes to the poetry
			Teachers' freedom with the curriculum
			Teaching form
			Teaching strategies
			Undergraduate approaches
			Use of technical terminology
			What should teachers teach about the poetry
			Wider debates
		The position of A' Levels	
	Teaching the poetry		
		Barriers	
		Purpose of teaching poetry	
		Relationship between key stages	
		Significance of chronology	
		Students writing poetry	
		Teachers' freedom within	

		the curriculum	
		Teaching form	
		Teaching imagery	
		Teaching metaphor	
		Teaching Rhetoric	
		Teaching strategies	
		Use of technical terminology	
		What should teachers teach about the poetry	
		Wider debates	
	Teaching Shakespearean drama		
	Text Selection for Exam Papers		
	The sonnet form		
		GCSE	
		Qualities	
		Sonnet Sequences	
		Sonnets at KS3	
		Specific qualities in relation to teaching	
			Form
		Writing Sonnets	
	Tradition		
	Value of teaching early modern poetry		
Way of Reading	Biographical		
	Comparison		
	Contextual		
	Contrasts early modern and contemporary reading		
	Dialogic		
	Difference between teacher and pupil perspective		
	Exam preparation		
	Historical reading		
	Intertextual		
	Levels of reading		
	Linguistically		
	Material readings		
	Multiple meanings		
	Non- academic contexts		
	Poetic reading		
	Reader response		
	Reading aloud		
	Reading widely		
	Within the curriculum		

Appendix F; Second Version – Nvivo Nodes July 12th

Parent Nodes

Influences on curriculum
Reactions to extracts
Authors
Personal Research
Criticism
The Sonnet Form
Differentiation
Selfhood
Ways of Reading
Frames for the Period
References to Modern Poetry
Perceptions of the Past
Enjoyment
Memory
Englishness
Tradition
Destination; University
Relevance
Teacher Identity
Interviewee's relationship with the period
Gender
Value of teaching early modern poetry
Shakespeare as Icon
Teaching
Difficulty
Early modern poetry, characteristics
Metaphors
Discussion of the period

Appendix G; Final Version – NVivo nodes

Difficulty, Complexity or Challenge
Early Modern Poetry -characteristics
Frames for the period
Relationship to Assessment
Relevance
Response to terms
Teacher Identity
Teaching
Ways of Reading

Appendix H; Queries in NVivo

Type	Name	Created On	Modified On
Text Search Query	Challenge stemmed words	20/07/2014 06:27	20/07/2014 06:27
Text Search Query	Challenge synonyms	20/07/2014 06:24	20/07/2014 06:24
Text Search Query	characteristics	25/08/2014 18:12	25/08/2014 18:12
Text Search Query	Complex	20/07/2014 06:22	20/07/2014 06:22
Text Search Query	Complexity stemmed words	20/07/2014 06:26	20/07/2014 06:26
Text Search Query	Conceit (examiners)	02/09/2014 09:15	02/09/2014 09:15
Text Search Query	Conceit (lecturers)	01/09/2014 11:40	01/09/2014 11:41
Text Search Query	conceit (students)	26/08/2014 13:40	26/08/2014 13:40
Text Search Query	Conceit (teachers)	31/08/2014 07:34	31/08/2014 07:34
Text Search Query	Conceptual	26/08/2014 09:15	26/08/2014 09:15
Text Search Query	crazy	30/08/2014 12:46	30/08/2014 12:46
Text Search Query	Death	02/08/2014 12:48	02/08/2014 12:48
Text Search Query	Dense	30/08/2014 11:19	30/08/2014 11:19
Text Search Query	Difficult stemmed words	20/07/2014 06:25	20/07/2014 06:25
Text Search Query	Donne	13/08/2014 12:42	13/08/2014 12:42
Text Search Query	Early modern	10/08/2014 13:35	10/08/2014 13:35
Text Search Query	Early modern - 2	10/08/2014 13:38	10/08/2014 13:38
Text Search Query	Faerie Queen	14/08/2014 07:55	14/08/2014 07:55
Text Search Query	french	24/08/2014 10:24	24/08/2014 10:24
Text Search Query	Human	13/08/2014 12:12	13/08/2014 12:12
Text Search Query	Johnson	02/08/2014 13:09	02/08/2014 13:09
Text Search Query	Jonson	02/08/2014 12:47	02/08/2014 12:47
Text Search Query	mark scheme	23/08/2014 09:52	23/08/2014 09:52
Text Search Query	Metaphor (examiners)	02/09/2014 09:23	02/09/2014 09:23
Text Search Query	metaphysical	02/09/2014 08:18	02/09/2014 08:18
Text Search Query	meter (students)	26/08/2014 10:22	26/08/2014 10:22
Text Search Query	More	13/08/2014 08:06	13/08/2014 08:07
Text Search Query	reading	04/09/2014 12:13	04/09/2014 12:13
Text Search Query	rebirth	10/08/2014 13:20	10/08/2014 13:20
Text Search Query	re-birth	10/08/2014 13:19	10/08/2014 13:19
Text Search Query	Relevance	02/08/2014 08:32	02/08/2014 08:32
Text Search Query	Relevance and synonyms	02/08/2014 09:02	02/08/2014 09:02
Text Search Query	Reognise (lecturers)	13/08/2014 09:08	13/08/2014 09:08
Text Search Query	Rhyme (students)	26/08/2014 10:14	26/08/2014 10:14
Text Search Query	Rhyme (teachers)	30/08/2014 11:40	30/08/2014 11:40
Text Search Query	Rhythm (students)	26/08/2014 10:33	26/08/2014 10:33
Text Search Query	Romantics	14/08/2014 11:18	14/08/2014 11:18
Text Search Query	Search for synonyms for difficult	12/07/2014 14:10	12/07/2014 14:10
Text Search Query	Spenser	13/08/2014 08:05	13/08/2014 08:05
Text Search Query	stretch	22/08/2014 10:43	22/08/2014 10:43
Text Search Query	unpick	02/09/2014 11:45	02/09/2014 11:45
Text Search Query	urn	30/08/2014 17:21	30/08/2014 17:21
Text Search Query	Voice	02/09/2014 09:11	02/09/2014 09:11
Text Search Query	Weird	13/08/2014 12:23	13/08/2014 12:23

Reference List

- Alexander, G. (2004). Introduction. In Alexander & Gavin (Eds.), *Sidney's 'Defence of Poesy' and Selected Literary Criticism* (pp. xvii - lxxix). London: Penguin Books.
- Alexander, J.. (2013). Hearing the Voice of Poetry. In S. Dymoke (Ed.), *Making Poetry Matter* (pp. 116-126). London: Bloomsbury.
- Alexander, J. (2008). Listening—the Cinderella profile component of English. *English in Education*, 42(3), 219-233.
- Andrews, R. (2003). *Research questions*. London: Continuum.
- AQA. (2005). Anthology: GCSE English/English Literature Specification A 2005 onwards. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Aristotle. (1996). *Poetics*. London ; New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books.
- Armstrong, S. L., Davis, H. S., & Paulson, E. J. (2011). The subjectivity problem: Improving triangulation approaches in metaphor analysis studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10(2), 151-163.
- Arnold, M. (2000). The Superior Adequacy of Poetry. In Cunningham & V (Eds.), *The Victorians; An Anthology of Poetry and Poetics* (pp. 549-550). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Arnold, M.. (1978a). From Culture and Anarchy. In Allott & Miriam (Eds.), *Matthew Arnold; Selected Poems and Prose* (pp. 212-227). London: J.M. Dent and Sons.
- Arnold, M.(1978b). The Study of Poetry. In Allott & Miriam (Eds.), *Mathew Arnold; Selected Poems and Prose* (pp. 241-264). London: J.M.Dent and Sons.
- Arnold,M. (1993a). Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism (1867-9). In Collini & Stefan (Eds.), *Matthew Arnold: Culture and Anarchy and other writings* (pp. 53-211). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arnold, M. (1993b). Democracy. In Collini & Stefan (Eds.), *Matthew Arnold 'Culture and Anarchy' and other writings* (pp. 1-25). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arnold, M. (1910). *Reports on elementary schools, 1852-82* (New edn, with additional matter and appendices, and with an intr. by F.S. Marvin. 2nd impr. ed.). London: H.M.S.O., Eyre & Spottiswoode.
- Arnold, M. (1993). *Culture and anarchy and other writings*. Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Ascham, T. (1999). The Scholemaster. In Vickers & Brian (Eds.), *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (pp. 140-161). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Barrett, M.S. (2007). Music Appreciation: Exploring Similarity and Difference. In Bresler & Liora (Eds.), *International Handbook of Arts Research* (Vol. 1, pp. 605-619). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham [England] ; Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Bazeley, P., & Jackson, K. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo* (2nd ed. ed.): SAGE.
- Bell, J. (1999). *Doing your research project: a guide for first-time researchers in education and social science* (3rd ed. ed.). Buckingham, etc.: Open U.P.
- Benton, M. (1988). *Young readers responding to poems*. London: Routledge.
- Bird, C. M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2), 226-248.
- Blake, J.(2013). Commentary: Poetry as a Matter of Spokenness. In Dymoke & Sue (Eds.), *Making Poetry Matter* (pp. 138-140). London: Bloomsbury.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information : thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA ; London: Sage Publications.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brooks, C. (1968). *The well wrought urn : studies in the structure of poetry* (Revised ed. ed.). London: Dobson.
- Burckhardt, J. (1928). *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*. London : New York: George Allen and Unwin ; Macmillan.
- Chapman, A. (2011). Historical interpretations. *Debates in history teaching*, 96.
- Chuilleanain, N.E. (1996). Renaissance and seventeenth-century poetry. In Bradford & Richard (Eds.), *Introducing Literary Studies* (pp. 143-170). London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Clausen, C. (1980). The Palgrave Version. *The Georgia Review*, 273-289.
- Collini, S. (1994). *Matthew Arnold : a critical portrait*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Collins, M., F., Kelly, & Alison. (2013). Primary Student Teachers' Attitudes Towards Poetry and Poetry Teaching. In Dymoke & Sue (Eds.), *Making Poetry Matter* (pp. 20-30). London: Bloomsbury.
- Conroy, D., & Clarke, D. (2011). *Teaching the early modern period*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Corelis, & Jan. (2013). **Review: The New Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1950.** Retrieved April 23rd, 2013, from http://www.amazon.co.uk/product-reviews/0198121369/ref=cm_cr_dp_see_all_btm?ie=UTF8&showViewpoint=s=1&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending
- Coulson, J., Fowler, H. W., & Little, W. A. (1973). *The shorter Oxford English dictionary on historical principles*: Clarendon Press.
- Creef, T., & J. (2002). Discovering my Mother as the Other in the Saturday Evening Post. In Denzin, K, Lincoln, Y, & S (Eds.), *The Qualitative Inquiry Reader* (pp. 73-90). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Cremin, & Teresa. (2013). Exploring Teachers' Positions and Practices. In Dymoke & Sue (Eds.), *Making Poetry Matter* (pp. 9-19). London: Bloomsbury.
- Croll, P. (1986). *Systematic classroom observation*. London ; Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Daniel, S. (2004). A Defence of Rhyme. In Alexander & Gavin (Eds.), *Sidney's 'Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (pp. 205-233). London: Penguin Books.
- Davison, J. (2009). Battles for English. In Davison, Jon, Dowdon, & Jane (Eds.), *Learning to Teach English in the Secondary School* (3 ed., pp. 20-43). Abingdon Oxford: Routledge.
- Davison, J., & Dowson, J. (2009). *Learning to teach English in the secondary school: a companion to school experience*: Routledge.
- Denscombe, M. (2007a). *The good research guide : for small-scale social research projects* (3rd ed. ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Duncan-Jones, & Katherine. (1989). Notes. In Duncan-Jones & Katherine (Eds.), *Sir Philip Sidney The Major Works* (pp. 330-408). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dymoke, & Sue. (2000). *The Teaching of Poetry in Secondary Schools*. University of Nottingham.
- Dymoke, S. (2002). The dead hand of the exam: The impact of the NEAB anthology on poetry teaching at GCSE. *Changing English*, 9(1), 85-93.
- Dymoke, S. (2012). Poetry is an Unfamiliar Text: Locating Poetry in Secondary English Classrooms in New Zealand and England during a Period of Curriculum Change. *Changing English*, 19(4), 395-410.
- Eagleton, R. (2000a). *Doing English : a guide for literature students*. London ; New York: Routledge.

- Eagleton, T. (1996). *Literary theory : an introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Eliot, T.S. (1975a). The Metaphysical Poets. In Kermode & Frank (Eds.), *Selected Prose of T.S.Eliot* (pp. 59-67). London: Faber and Faber.
- Eliot, T.S. (1975b). Tradition and the Individual Talent. In Kermode & Frank (Eds.), *Selected Prose of T.S.Eliot* (pp. 37-44). London: Faber and Faber.
- Ellis, A. (1985). *Educating our masters: influences on the growth of literacy in Victorian working class children*: Gower.
- Elsky, M. (1983). George Herbert's Pattern Poems and the Materiality of Language: A New Approach to Renaissance Hieroglyphics. *ELH*, 245-260.
- *
- Ferguson, M. W., Quilligan, M., & Vickers, N. J. (1986). *Rewriting the Renaissance : the discourses of sexual difference in early modern Europe*. Chicago ; London : University of Chicago Press.
- Ferry, A. (2001). *Tradition and the individual poem : an inquiry into anthologies*. Stanford, Calif. ; [Great Britain]: Stanford University Press.
- Flanders, N. A. (1970). *ANALYZING TEACHING BEHAVIOR*.
- Fleming, M. (1996). Poetry Teaching in the Secondary School: The Concept of Difficulty. In Thompson & Linda (Eds.), *The Teaching of Poetry; European Perspectives* (pp. 37-43). London: Cassell.
- Gardner, H. (1972). *THE NEW OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH VERSE, 1250-1950; chosen and ed. by Helen Gardner*. Oxford, U.P.
- Gillham, B. (2000). *The research interview*. London: Continuum.
- Gordon, J. (2009). Sound ['] s right: pupils' responses to heard poetry and the revised National Curriculum for English. *Curriculum Journal*, 20(2), 161-175.
- Greenblatt, S. (1980). *Renaissance self-fashioning : from More to Shakespeare*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Grogan, J. (2011). Paradise Regained? Teaching the Multicultural Renaissance. In Conroy, Derval, Clarke, & Danielle (Eds.), *Teaching the Early Modern Period* (pp. 124-145). Chippenham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hebron, M. (2008). *Key concepts in Renaissance literature*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heninger, S. K. (1989). *Sidney and Spenser : the poet as maker*. University Park ; London: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Hennessy, J., & McNamara, P. M. (2011). Packaging poetry? Pupils' perspectives of their learning experience within the post-primary poetry classroom. *English in Education*, 45(3), 206-223.

- Hollander, J, Kermode, & F. (1973). *OXFORD ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE. GEN.EDITORS: KERMODE AND HOLLANDER.*
- Hulse, C., & Kinney, A. (2000). Tudor aesthetics. *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1500, 1600*, 29-63.
- Iser, W. (1978) *The Act of Reading: a theory of aesthetic response*. London: Routledge.
- James, D. L. (2001). *Split a Gut and Learn: Theory and Research*.
- Jeffcoate, R. (1992). *Starting English teaching*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Jones, E. F. o. M. C. (1991). *The new Oxford book of sixteenth century verse*. Oxford: U.P.
- Kiernan, P., & Brown, C. C. (1999). *Staging Shakespeare at the New Globe: Macmillan Basingstoke*.
- Kinney, A. F. (2000). The Position of Poetry: Making and Defending Renaissance Poetics. *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture, Volume One and Two*, 15-27.
- Korte, B., Schneider, R., & Lethbridge, S. (2000). *Anthologies of British poetry: critical perspectives from literary and cultural studies: Rodopi*.
- Leavis, F. R. (1952). *The common pursuit*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Leitch, V. B. (2010). *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism* (2nd ed. ed.). New York ; London: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New directions for program evaluation, 1986*(30), 73-84.
- Marcus, L. S. (1992). Renaissance/Early Modern Studies. *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*, 41-63.
- Marshall, B. (2000). *English teachers : the unofficial guide : researching the philosophies of English teachers*. London: Routledge.
- Mathieson, M. (1975). *The preachers of culture : a study of English and its teachers*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- May, S. W. (1999). *The Elizabethan courtier poets : their poems and their contexts*. Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press.

- Mears, C. L. (2012). In-depth interviews. *Research Methods and Methodologies in Education*, 170-176.
- Miles, M. B. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis : an expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed. ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Naylor, A. (2013). "Old poems have heart": Teenage students reading early modern poetry. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 12(1).
- Newbolt, H. J. S., & Board Of, E. (1921). *The teaching of English in England: being the report of the departmental committee appointed by the president of the Board of Education, etc.* London: HMSO.
- Norbrook, D. (1992). *The Penguin book of renaissance verse 1509-1659*. London, etc.: Allen Lane.
- Novak, B. (2002). Humanizing democracy: Matthew Arnold's nineteenth-century call for a common, higher, educative pursuit of happiness and its relevance to twenty-first-century democratic life. *American Educational Research Journal*, 39(3), 593-637.
- OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH VERSE 1250-1900; CHOSEN AND ED. BY A QUILLER-COUCH.* (1900a).
- OXFORD BOOK OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY VERSE; CHOSEN BY E K CHAMBERS.* (1932).
- Padley, S. (2006). *Key concepts in contemporary literature*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Palgrave, F. T. (1940). *GOLDEN TREASURY OF THE BEST ... POEMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ... <OXFORD>.*
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed. ed.). Newbury Park, Calif. ; London: Sage Publications.
- Pike, M. (2000a). Keen readers: Adolescents and pre-twentieth century poetry. *Educational Review*, 52(1), 13-28.
- Pike, M. (2000b). Pupils' poetics.
- Pike, M. (2003). The canon in the classroom: students' experiences of texts from other times. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 35(3), 355-370.
- Pike, M. A. (2000). *Keen readers: a study of communication and learning in adolescents' reading of pre-twentieth century poetry*. University of Southampton.
- Plato. (2001). Republic. In Leitch, Vincent, & B (Eds.), *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (pp. 41-77). New York: W.W.Norton & Company.

- Preminger, Alex., Warnke, Frank, J, Hardison, . . . B. (1974). *Princeton encyclopedia of poetry and poetics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Preminger, A., Warnke, F. J., & Hardison, O. B., Jr. (1974). *Princeton encyclopedia of poetry and poetics* (Enl. ed. ed.). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Punch, K. F. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*: Sage.
- Puttenham, & George. (2004). The Art of English Poesy. In Alexander & Gavin (Eds.), *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (pp. 55-203). London: Penguin Books.
- Richards, L. (2005). *Handling qualitative data : a practical guide*. London: SAGE.
- Rivers, I. (1994). *Classical and Christian ideas in English Renaissance poetry : a student's guide* (2nd ed. ed.). London ; New York: Routledge.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1970). *Literature as exploration*.
- Ryan, G. W., & Bernard, H. R. (2000). Data management and analysis methods.
- Sagaser, E.H. (2002). Flirting with Eternity: Teaching Form and Meter in a Renaissance Poetry Course. In Rasmussen, M.D. (Ed), *Renaissance Literature and Its Formal Engagements*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Shayer, D. (1972). *The teaching of English in schools, 1900-1970*. London, Boston: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Sidney, & Philip. (2004). The Defence of English Poesy. In Alexander & Gavin (Eds.), *Sidney's 'The Defence of English Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (pp. 3-54). London: Penguin Books.
- Snapper, G. (2013). Exploring Resistance to Poetry in Advanced English Studies. In Dymoke & Sue (Eds.), *Making Poetry Matter* (pp. 31-41). London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Steiner, G. (1978). *On difficulty, and other essays*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stevens, D. (2007). 'Draw your own conclusions': teaching pre-twentieth century poetry in an arts context. *English in Education*, 41(3), 54-66.
- Storer, R. (2004). Richards, Ivor Armstrong (1893–1979). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
- Swann, J. (2001). Recording and transcribing talk in educational settings.
- Thomas, G. a. (2013a). *How to do your research project : a guide for students in*

education and applied social sciences (2nd ed. ed.): SAGE.

Thomas, G. a. (2013b). *How to do your research project : a guide for students in education and applied social sciences* (2nd ed. ed.): SAGE.

Thorne, S. (1997). *Mastering advanced English language*: Macmillan New York.

Vickers, & Brian. (1993). Rhetoric. In Corns, Thomas, & N (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Poetry Donne to Marvell* (pp. 101-120). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vickers, B. (1999). *English Renaissance literary criticism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Waller, G. F. (1993). *English poetry of the sixteenth century* (2nd ed. ed.). London ; New York: Longman.

Whitley, & David. (2013). Commentary: Confidence and Resilience in Poetry Teaching. In Dymoke & sue (Eds.), *Making Poetry Matter* (pp. 42-45). london: bloomsbury.

Willinsky, J. (1990). Matthew Arnold's legacy: The powers of literature. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 343-361.

Wilson, & Anthony. (2013). Teachers' Metaphors of Teaching Poetry Writing. In Dymoke & Sue (Eds.), *Making Poetry Matter* (pp. 61-70). London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Woodcock, M. (2010). *Sir Philip Sidney and the Sidney circle*. Tavistock: Northcote Huouse Publishers.

Wynne-Davis, M. (2003). *Sidney to Milton, 1580-1660*: Macmillan.

Yang, C.-c. J. (2006). "*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*": intralocution and the teaching of Renaissance poetry in Taiwan. University of Nottingham.