

GUANO OF THE MIND: PUNS IN ADVERTISING

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‘Il n’y a pas de langage innocent’—Roland Barthes

What is the status of wordplay within the trade of advertising? I wrote to twenty of the largest international agencies to find out. The most common reaction was to claim that it was out-of-date to pun in adverts. Was professional deformation compelling them to have me on? A more charitable explanation would be that they were reflecting the age-old embarrassment connected with puns. Punsters in company habitually apologise for their activity. In addition, some practitioners stand on the dignity of the profession. Claude C. Hopkins said, in *My Life in Advertising*: ‘Frivolity has no place in advertising. Nor has humor. Spending money is usually serious business (. . .) People do not buy from clowns.’¹ Somebody should inform McDonald’s. A standard warning in guides to copywriting states: Do not be ‘clever’; it is distracting. There clearly is a danger of in-jokes, of mutual congratulation societies being formed between a witty sloganeer and a small body of like-minded consumers. But what of the other possibility: that humorous adverts might function like the jollities of a dentist as he extracts painfully from your gums and your pocket? One further point: it may well be that the supposed untranslatability of many puns deters advertisers, who often want to standardise their campaigns over various countries.

But the arguments for the usefulness of wordplay are stronger than such doubts. Advertising space is costly. Economy is essential, and puns are highly economical (two meanings for the price of one word or phrase), and in fact much more of a labour-saving device than many of the products they seek to promote. The mode of advertising is telegraphic, lapidary, as in journalism. ‘In Tabloid English, the thematic pun becomes a semantic substitute for syntax. It signposts the narrative structure of a brief story more clearly than any other verbal device known to literate man.’² Not only constraints of space, but also the need to spare possible buyers brain-fag or eye-strain, these too lead to fore-shortened texts. Since the fundamental message of all advertising is known to everyone in advance, there is a need for diversification. Wordplay, with its distortions, bifurcations and re-creations, introduces variety and refreshment into saturation. Puns, the devious ones, are a way round those rather stuffy rules of the advertising watchdogs: adverts should be legal, decent and true. A recipe for mass-produced boredom. The words of adverts are double-talk, necessarily. If adverts told only the verifiable truth, they would be pedantic and tedious. And so they have to approximate; they have to say one thing and suggest another. Obliqueness is all. So why not a virtue out of necessity, and a silk purse out of a sow’s ear? Enjoy the compulsion. Make business into a fête, combine business with pleasure. Thus many adverts come to be prized as art-work or as social entertainment. While still remaining sceptical of the ends being served, surely we can profit from the means. McLuhan wrote: ‘A lush car features a baby’s rattle on the rich rug of the back floor and says that it has removed unwanted car rattles as easily as the user could remove

the baby's. This kind of copy has really nothing to do with rattles. The copy is merely a punning gag to distract the critical faculties while the image of the car goes to work on the hypnotised viewer.³ Is he not insulting the viewer? Need we be dupes to that extent?

Advertising is all about association: associating a particular product with a particular firm and with an idea of quality, and so word and thought associations (echoes, jingles, puns) obviously come into useful play. As one practitioner stated: 'It is difficult to find many words in the English language that possess only one meaning'.⁴ Anthony Burgess expands on this basic phenomenon: 'Ambiguity is a vice of words (. . .) A scientific age like ours tends to worry about this aspect of language (. . .) Meaning should be mathematical, unambiguous. But this plurality of reference is in the very nature of language, and its management and exploitation is one of the joys of writing.'⁵ And, we should add, of reading. Ambiguity has obviously become a hurrah-word. Perhaps this stems from the teachings of Freud, and the whole concept of complex motivation. Ambiguous behaviour is felt to be richer than clear conduct. Behind all this skulks no doubt an unsureness about values. Since God died or was pensioned off, plurivalency reigns. We are all mugwumps. We cultivate bifocal vision (or squint). All wit, and (some would maintain) all mental creativity, entail the ability to think on at least two planes at once, by a kind of semantic and lexical diphthong. We are always on the look-out for doubles (to the extent of doubling up in both laughter and pain). Many people give punning names to their children or their homes (e.g. 'Kutyurbelyakin', which I took globally for a possibly Armenian word, until I broke it down into its constituent sounds). Think of the long list of double-barrelled terms we use: double-talk, double-meaning, double-cross, double-decker, double-edged, double-take, seeing double.

Just like double-meaning, or even more so double entendre, the neutral word 'suggestive' has come to have predominantly erotic connotations. In fact, despite the tactic of supplying scholarly equivalents, in order to sterilise or at least to cool what is being discussed, it is the most general words that can secrete the greatest amount of innuendo. As Maurice Charney explains: 'Double entendres, some planned but most fortuitous, lurk everywhere in the English language, whose loss of declensions, conjugations, and exact syntax make it vulnerable to sexual ambiguity. Any unsecured use of 'it' in English is almost automatically sexual and a vague 'do' has similar connotations (. . .) This gives the English language a quality of phonetic innuendo that may not be present in other, more exactly inflected language systems.'⁶ (The author is here guilty of linguistic chauvinism, for the verb 'faire' in French lends itself to very similiar exploitation.)⁷ Much advertising relies on this practice of nudging and winking, although in the area of erogenous zones, like that of parking zones, a stern warden keeps in check those who would violate the limits. The calculation must be exact, otherwise the joint offered stimulation (to buy and to jubilate) might get confused, to the detriment of the former. Hence perhaps what has been called the 'provocative serenity' of many faces in adverts.⁸ The models' desires are already satisfied, because they have enjoyed the product. Now it is up to us to sample it with the same kind of controlled licentiousness.

But one man's licence is another man's veto. In order to lacerate the conscience of licence-dodgers, the BBC coined the slogan: 'NO LICENCE. NO LIFE ON EARTH'. This was advertising as terrorism. The mere removal of distinguishing punctuation produced arresting ambiguity. No TV = living death. In a sense, this message was even truthful. If, as a result of being detected and in order to pay the hefty fine, you have to

sell your set or return it to the rental company, you have, so to speak, no longer any 'world about you', no 'life on earth' at your disposal. The message of course tells us something we already know, but it drives the meaning home; our dependence on TV is literally brought home to us. This skirts tautology, but in a more telling way than in another announcement from a public utility, the telephone service. This invented a very talkative little bird called Buzby. One of the accompanying slogans was: 'A ring keeps the family circle together'. This could mean: legalised marriages last longer; the family that prays together stays together (as the priest on the *Titanic* declared); and, of course, call your folks regularly. All edifying truisms: no shock, no rethinking involved. At best, this slogan reminds of unwelcome obligations. But traps have to be set better than that. An old advert for Players cigarettes tricked us with punctuation, like the BBC example. The initial slogan was 'Players please'. Thus, the mere act of politely asking for a packet over the counter acted as a boost for the product; the client is turned into the promoter.

Such twists of familiar phrases are common. The ancient cry of the ice-cream vendor, 'Stop me and buy one' was transformed by a family-planning campaign to 'Buy me and stop one', which has a kind of brutal charm. A similar example concerns the contraceptive-manufacturer Durex, which has also sponsored racing-cars. The net result of these twin activities was a picture of a sleek speedster with the ironic motto: 'A small family car'. If car adverts habitually equate ownership of their particular make with sexual possession, this version at least introduces an element of caution into the rapture. 'Bottle', in criminal slang, means guts. Newcastle Brown Ale, supposedly a stronger beer than most, chooses the slogan: 'Even in a can it's got bottle'—the implication being that different packaging in no way impairs the strength of the brew. One of the most famous of all British adverts for many years was the Guinness series for their stout: the very simple phrase 'My Goodness, My Guinness'. The rhyming message is obvious. The means varied inventively, but all featured a potential consumer exclaiming on seeing his beloved beverage being taken from his grasp: a zoo-attendant gazes at the shape of his glass inside the long neck of an ostrich; a construction worker watches his drink lifted from his grasp on a girder hoisted by a crane, etc. Moving from beer to milk, let us see how this 'goodness' ploy is exploited. In the past couple of years, the Milk Marketing Board has featured a young, fresh, fair-haired girl, raising a glass of milk towards her lips, accompanied by the slogan: 'I'm full of natural goodness'. This could signify: 'I'm drinking milk, which is good for my healthy development'; 'I'm virginal'; 'I'm good-hearted'; 'I'm liberal with my favours' (for goodness implies generosity), and (because the glass is held at chest-height) 'My breasts are full of milk'. This last is somewhat spoilt as a suggestion by the fact that the girl is under-endowed. A pretty complex, and possibly self-contradictory, set of meanings. The girl, in addition, has the heel of her shoe lodged in her crotch. Boot in puss, for a change. The technical advertising term 'body copy' (i.e. the main text of an advert after the headline or slogan) takes on its full import here. We might also call this 'knocker copy'. A further series makes the underlying suggestions of the first one more explicit: 'Some Like It Hot'. A more exciting and excited girl, lips pursed, raises to her mouth a glass of steaming milk, in which floats upright a stick of dark flake chocolate. Both series, incidentally, have the narcissistic quality of that old underwear advert of a young lady announcing: 'Next to myself I like Vedonis'.

'An example of commercial counter-advertising. At the turn of the century a popular myth held that pedalling a sewing-machine could endanger the baby of a pregnant woman. Singer put out a poster on which a healthy mother-to-be, in the centre of a capital S

(*gros S*) sewed happily away: 'Grossesse heureuse avec une machine à écrire Singer'.⁹ Another specimen of effective advertising concerns selling an idea, a social ideal, not a product; and it is in fact aimed precisely at the by-products of industry. 'The effluent society: how can we help to clean it up?'—with a picture of a drain discharging into a river. This is a truly pointed pun, whereas so many are blunt, and a tight twist, as the word 'society' consorts well with both the near-identical qualifiers, affluent and effluent.

Puns do not always work, of course, or work only dubiously, which is perhaps fitting for such an ambiguous mode. Another Guinness motto was: 'There's a lot of it about'. This is simultaneously a truism about the ubiquitousness of this beer, a wry comment on the clichéic nature of everyday conversation (for this is the stock response in Britain if you mention you have been ill), and thus finally an unfortunate assimilation of Guinness to a noxious virus. Less efficient again was the slogan in the Queen's Jubilee Year: 'We've poured throughout her reign'. This is strictly meaningless and certainly pointless, for no other liquid (except acid?) falls in company with rain. Then there are unintentional puns, like the pharmacy that claimed: 'We dispense with accuracy'. When the secondary meaning was pointed out to him, the manager simply changed it to 'We do not dispense with accuracy', and thus compounded the felony. Or the educational establishment, desperate to recruit students, putting this advert in the papers: 'You'll be in a class of your own'. I like also the T-shirt on sale in the Far East: 'If you're tired of life, visit Sri Lanka'. The age of package suicides?

'You can tell the ideals of a nation by its advertisements', said Norman Douglas, who was wrong about a lot of other things, too.¹⁰ If only things were so simple. In case what I go on to say seems to treat the French as whipping-boys, I should stress that, if advertising appears to be still in its infancy in France, in Britain and the U.S.A. it often seems to be in its second childhood. One French student of advertising language in fact underlines the relative rarity of wordplay in French adverts. He reasons that most clients there are flattered to be addressed in a tone which is 'noble, éloquent, oratoire ou poétique'.¹¹ Gallic rhetorical snobbery obviously permeates all levels of culture there, but has he not noticed the inanity of the famous 'Dubo, Dubon, Dubonnet' series? As if in recognition of the infantile nature of many of their slogans (e.g. 'C'est Shell que j'aime', which sounds like a drunkard's mispronunciation of 'C'est celle que j'aime', or perhaps a Club Méditerranée advert: 'Seychelles que j'aime'), the French often repeat the same poster dozens of times in close contiguity, literally papering the walls with some brand-image. A centripetal variant of this is the advert for the cheese 'Vache-qui-rit', whose image is reiterated internally to infinity. Here the onlooker's eye is coaxed to burrow into one placard instead of skating across dozens of the same. Perhaps the best hope for wit in advertising in France lies in the involuntary kind, as in this supermarket sign: 'Slips à la portée de toutes les bourses'. A recent globetrotting researcher into advertising language claims he found twice as much wordplay in English or American adverts as in French ones. In more detail, he saw in Britain more extensive punning and alliteration, but little rhyme, which was commoner on the Continent. His conclusion was that such adverts were in direct line of descent from the English wordplay tradition—Shakespeare and the Metaphysicals through to Joyce.¹²

As rhetoric is the art of persuasion, we can justifiably talk of advertising language as a rhetoric.¹³ We all pun; we all sell images of ourselves (including modest, underplayed images). Norman Mailer is just more blatant than most of us in talking of 'Advertisements

for Myself'.¹⁴ Language itself is narcissistic in this way. As Jean Paulham has pointed out, the very word 'etymology', signifying 'the authentic meaning', acts as its own advertisement.¹⁵ Etymology, like Coca-Cola, is the real thing. Self-advertising also favours the oblique approach. Conundrums, rebuses, charades and puns, are all interrelated and of like ancestry. All involve the recipient in that their coded message needs to be deciphered. The object is to impress the receiver with the cleverness of the person seeking to publicise himself in this way and, incidentally, to let the receiver congratulate himself on his astuteness in correctly reading the puzzle. Heraldry, for instance, provides many examples of punning in armorial bearings and family badges. Sir Walter Scott, in his notes to *Waverley*, calls the motto of the Vernon family a perfect pun: 'Ver non semper vivat'. The Spring will not last forever, or Vernon will last forever.¹⁶ On the Via Appia near Rome, the tomb of one Publius Maximum Philomusus contains two bas-reliefs of mice.¹⁷ (And notice how the joke cowers within the name, in a mouselike fashion.) Shop-signs continue this tradition, as in this French example: 'Au p'tit chien' (Opticien). 'Not only did our ancestors pun during their lives, but endeavoured, as much as possible, to convey the idea that they would do so in the world to come, for many of their epitaphs are replete with puns.'¹⁸ Here is one such for a dentist: 'Stranger, tread/This ground with gravity:/Dentist Brown is filling/His last cavity'.¹⁹ Today, of course, we having punning T-shirt mottoes, lapel-badges, car-stickers, trade-names, a whole plethora of means whereby we can seek attention and admiration, affirm ourselves, and provide free entertainment for others. Graffiti, in particular, are self-advertisements, even though mostly anonymous or pseudonymous. They are one of the very few means for the great majority of unrecognised writers and draughtsmen to reach a public. That least snobbish of writers, Raymond Queneau, once said: 'Les graffiti, qu'est-ce que c'est? toute juste de la littérature'.²⁰ Such wall-writing has been described as the 'I-was-here' syndrome. 'It is the ego at work, the self-accolade of achievement as well as a kind of recognition that maybe history has been made and posterity should be informed.'²¹ What will future generations, if there are any, think of our contemporary anti-nuclear graffiti: 'The only safe fast breeders are rabbits'? Or the splendid Spoonerism in 'Psychology is producing habits out of a rat'? Many graffiti, of course, show scant concern for social utility and are purely, or more often impurely, personal. As one commentator has said: 'The combination of antisocial thought, antisocial language to express it, and antisocial disfigurement of someone else's property enables the graffitist to discharge in one "emotional orgasm" many of the deep-seated emotions he may be harbouring and thus helps him to regain his composure'.²² I cannot help feeling that there is an element of wishful thinking in this analysis even stronger than that of the graffiti in question. The scrawl on the contraceptive vending-machine: 'This is the worst chewing gum I have ever tasted' is a kind of semantic pun, and peculiarly apt in that condoms and chewing-gum contain comparable substances: latex and chicle. In fact, chicle is the latex (i.e. milky ooze) from the *sapodilla*. By an obscure association of ideas, some might be reminded of the old popular song: 'Does your chewing-gum lose its flavour on the bedpost overnight?'

Wordplay recycles language. 'So many puns in modern advertising copy depend on a familiarity with the hackneyed in our language.'²³ We might add that we are all familiars of this particular sabbath, this common place where we are all experts. While we all use clichés, not everybody knows how to re-use what have been called 'duck-billed platitudes'.²⁴ Here is one twist which I have not yet inscribed anywhere: 'The meek shall inherit the earth. But the brazen shall contest the will'. It has been remarked that, in advertising, such

shifts are almost always from the metaphorical to the literal, since advertisers are promoting things.²⁵ But I think this view could itself be tilted around, for it is no less true that advertisers are selling an *idea* of things, as a prelude to the purchase of the article itself. I suspect, rather, that most advertising language plays between the two levels of the spirit and the letter, and would not wish to be closely tied to one or the other. 'There is no one-way traffic between the literal and the metaphorical.'²⁶

McLuhan suggests there is an innate comedy in the very phenomenon of advertising: 'Will Rogers discovered years ago that any newspaper read aloud from a theatre stage is hilarious. The same is true today of ads. Any ad put into a new setting is funny. [Hence those TV comics who have only to quote a slogan to procure a conditioned response of laughter.] This is a way of saying that any ad consciously attended to is comical. Ads are not meant for conscious consumption. They are intended as subliminal pills for the sub-conscious in order to exercise an hypnotic spell, especially on sociologists.'²⁷ Inevitably, punning adverts do draw attention to themselves as such, as artifacts. Even though oblique (not everyone will see their point), they are in this way less insidious than the 'subliminal seduction', the 'hidden persuaders', of advertising images. You need to be fully conscious to rumble a pun. Such self-conscious adverts give the game away, blow the gaff, on the whole process of publicising.²⁸ In addition, such adverts of course free themselves to some extent from purely commercial utilitarianism and offer themselves as wit, poetry or art. It has long been recognised that advertising is a branch of the entertainments industry, show business, to the extent that today many adverts seem hardly to be connected with a product at all, but rather to exist in their own right, as an object of amusement, puzzlement or aesthetic pleasure. Some series (the Benson and Hedges cigarette one, for instance, with the gold packet only one item in a luxuriantly golden roomscape) are in fact sold as décor. As Hayakawa has suggested: 'The task of the copywriter is the poeticising of consumer goods'. He calls this 'sponsored poetry'.²⁹ Obviously, the whole phenomenon is highly ambivalent. Such rhetoric is in a kind of straddle-position, between true art and commerce. As such, it is perhaps an indication, or a *reductio ad absurdum*, of the enforced position of the writer or artist in the contemporary world.

There is, too, the element of opportunism. The neologism 'actuavity' has been coined to define this: 'Actuavity, from *actuality* and *vitality*, could in basic terms be described as the riding of a wave generated by the media for secondary purposes'.³⁰ Ours is after all the society of side-effects, spin-offs and bandwaggoning. In 1977, Wall's advertised their sausages with the message: 'I'm meaty. Fry me!'—which was a skilful exploitation, the second time round, of National Airlines slogan: 'I'm Mandy. Fly me'. Another kind of opportunism is visible in the mattress manufacturer's poster during a French election: 'Pour tous les candidats qui se feront étendre le 12 mars'. We live now largely by approximation. 'In the increasingly budget-conscious world of advertising, products and campaigns will more and more have to rely on the riding of waves of sympathetic acknowledgement, near-recognition and imminent acceptance.'³¹ We have seen how clichés may be recycled. There is no need for us to be sniffy about such apparent parasitism, such salvage-operations, for they are inherent in all art. 'Cliché, or a standardised subsystem, is the necessary element for creation, since all inventions consist of the reassociation of previous material.'³² Advertising is an enterprise of montage. It places 'des bouteilles de Pepsi sur les lourds pavés d'une barricade ("Révoltez-vous, dit le slogan, pensez Pepsi")'.³³ Advertising design annexes the latest experiments of contemporary art. While no doubt such recuperation can degrade or trivialise, it can also help to give currency to what might otherwise remain marginal.

It has been maintained that advertising does not create needs, but responds and gives a direction to needs; it articulates them.³⁴ Perhaps this is why an agency could advertise itself as ‘ghostwriters for the masses’.³⁵ Even so, this is scarcely the posture of the servant; it is more that of the *éminence grise*. Advertising simultaneously treats its consumers as intelligent (they must see the joke, make the connexion, seize the allusion) and gullible, in that the satisfaction afforded by the former exercise will assist the ulterior aim of selling the product.³⁶ How persuasive can wordplay be in this? Traditionally, the pun makes you wince, flinch, grimace: all of these are movements away. But it can also incite to complicity, clubbability: a movement towards. (*Réclame* and ‘slogan’ both derive from rallying-calls.) It is thus both centrifugal and centripetal. Perhaps there is élitism in all this. It is well known that advertisers divide their potential public up into distinct classes. It could be that witty adverts are meant to appeal only to one section and to exclude the rest. But, then, why play this in-game on hoardings and TV screens, where it is viewed by millions of people? It has been argued, indeed, that bad puns may serve the purposes of attention-grabbing better than subtle ones, for ‘what copywriter, one imagines, could afford to be desperately unassuming?’³⁷

McLuhan accords to all of us the same democratic privilege of being moulded by the media: ‘The old belief that everybody really saw in perspective, but only that Renaissance painters had learned how to paint it, is erroneous. Our first TV generation is rapidly losing the habit of visual perspective as a sensory modality, and along with this change comes an interest in words, not as visually uniform and continuous, but as unique worlds in depth. Hence the craze for puns and wordplay, even in sedate ads.’³⁸ Is this prevalence a sign of decadence? Flaubert agonised over words; we toy with them (but Flaubert was also an inveterate punner). Is this world of verbal and iconographic narcotics going to pot? Are we making a hash of our lives, and, with more haste, is there less speed? The grass is always greener in another joint. We could continue this excruciating acid-test for ages, but it is surely self-evident that much poppycock is talked about decadence. Near the end of Petronius’ *Satyricon*, that splendid portrait of a society revelling in its death-throes, a boy hands round the feasters a jar containing puns and conundrums. The consummate conspicuous consumption of a consumer-society? As the whole phenomenon of wordplay in advertisements is so highly hybrid, perhaps we should simply exploit in our turn this state of affairs, enjoy what Pascal, in another context, called ‘the hovering between veracity and salacity’.³⁹

I have been talking about something that assails us every day, if often out of the corner of our eyes or through half-closed lids and switched-off minds: language is being used to sell us. To sell us short, to sell us a pup, to sell us down the river—or to sell us the goods (a conveniently ambiguous phrase)? Selling and deception have long been synonymous. ‘He failed with the hard sell. So he’s trying the soft peddle.’⁴⁰ No doubt words can be like the food (or even the bell substituted for food) provided for Pavlov’s dog. They can manipulate us, but we all know how pleasant manipulation can be. Puns are especially well suited for the advertising job, for they are usually delivered with the requisite ambivalent mixture of false apology and only too real aggression. We need to remember, of course, that the tigers in our tanks, a few years back, were merely paper ones.

Victor Hugo says in *Les Misérables*: ‘Le calembour est la fiente de l’esprit qui vole’.⁴¹ A fitting equivocal metaphor to end on, for Hugo may be either boosting a fertiliser, or pooh-poohing a waste-product.

NOTES

- ¹ New York, Harper, 1927, p. 179.
- ² R. Harris: 'The Dialect of Fleet Street', *Times Literary Supplement*, 22/5/1981, p. 560.
- ³ M. McLuhan: *Understanding Media*, London, Routledge, 1964, p. 231.
- ⁴ W. Weir: *On the Writing of Advertising*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1960, p. 50.
- ⁵ *Language Made Plain*, London, Fontana, rev. edn., 1975, pp. 105–6.
- ⁶ *Comedy High and Low*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 20.
- ⁷ See P. Guiraud: *Sémiologie de la sexualité*, Paris, Payot, 1978, p. 110.
- ⁸ V. Morin: 'Erotisme et publicité: un mécanisme d'autocensure', *Communications*, 9, 1967, pp. 105–106.
- ⁹ J. Bouillet: *Symbolisme sexuel dans les traditions populaires*, Paris, Payot, 1961, p. 206.
- ¹⁰ *South Wind*, New York, Dodd, Mead, 1930 (1917), p. 62.
- ¹¹ M. Galliot: *Essai sur la langue de la réclame contemporaine*, Toulouse, Privat, 1955, p. 472.
- ¹² H. Kirshner: 'Word Play in English Advertising', in R. C. Ligton and M. G. Saltzer (eds): *Studies in Honor of J. Alexander Kerns*, The Hague, Mouton, 1970, pp. 75–78.
- ¹³ We should not be shy of mentioning rhetoric in connexion with everyday speech-habits. As the 18th century rhetorician Du Marsais pointed out: 'Il se fait dans un jour de marché plus de figures qu'en plusieurs jours d'assemblées académiques'. Quoted in O. Reboul: *Le Slogan*, Brussels/Paris, Complexe, 1975, p. 77.
- ¹⁴ Cf. the anecdote of Beau Nash going out in gorgeous attire and being asked his destination. 'Why, I'm going to advertise myself, for that's the only use of a fine coat'. Quoted in W. Jerrold: *A Book of Famous Wits*, New York, McBride, Nast, 1913, p. 184.
- ¹⁵ J. Paulhan: *La Preuve par l'étymologie*, Paris, Minuit, 1953, p. 12.
- ¹⁶ J. L. André: 'Puns and Rebuses in History and Archaeology', *Reliquary*, 23, 1882-3, p. 170.
- ¹⁷ *Loc. cit.*, p. 169.
- ¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*, p. 170.
- ¹⁹ *Comic Epitaphs*, Mount Vernon, N.Y., Peter Pauper, 1957, p. 35.
- ²⁰ *Les Fleurs bleues*, Paris, Gallimard, 1965, p. 95.
- ²¹ R. Reisner: *Graffiti: Two Thousand Years of Wall Writing*, New York, Cowles, 1971, p. 70.
- ²² E. L. Abel and B. E. Buckley: *The Handwriting on the Wall*, Westport, Conn., Greenwood, 1977, p. 74.
- ²³ E. K. Sheldon: 'Some Pun among the Hucksters', *American Speech*, 31, 1956, p. 14.
- ²⁴ C. Wordsworth, *The Guardian*, 16/10/1980, p. 8.
- ²⁵ Sheldon, *loc. cit.*, p. 15.
- ²⁶ G. Caird: *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, London, Duckworth, 1980, p. 15.
- ²⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 228. A nice sting in the tail.
- ²⁸ See J. P. Kelly and P. J. Solomon: 'Humor in Television Advertising', *Journal of Advertising*, 4, 1975, p. 35. 'Are humorous advertisements seen as being less deceptive than other advertisements?'
- ²⁹ S. I. Hayakawa: *Language and Thought in Action*, London, Allen and Unwin, 2nd edn., 1965, pp. 263–264.
- ³⁰ R.-J. Hérail and E. A. Lovatt: 'Actuavity: the harnessable linguistic workhorse of media projection', *Admap*, September 1978, p. 436.
- ³¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 437.
- ³² C. Jencks and N. Silver: *Adhocism*, New York, Anchor, 1973, p. 65.
- ³³ J. Dubois: 'Publicité et fonctions du langage', in: *Significations de la publicité*, Liège, 1974, p. 41.
- ³⁴ Reboul, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
- ³⁵ Fuller, Smith, Ross. In W. Sunners: *American Slogans*, New York, Paebar, 1949, p. 11.
- ³⁶ L. Duisit: *Satire, Parodie, Calembour*, Saratoga, Ca., Anma Libri, 1978, p. 113. 'Si le calembour est consommé quotidiennement par les masses, en échange, il force les masses à consommer.' Thus Duisit runs a *douche écossaise* on the whole phenomenon.
- ³⁷ Sheldon, *loc. cit.*, p. 15.
- ³⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 288.
- ³⁹ 'De l'esprit géométrique', in *Pensées et opuscules*, ed. L. Brunschvicg, Paris, Hachette, 1957, p. 187. 'Le balancement douteux entre la vérité et la volupté.'
- ⁴⁰ Letter from A. Clark, in response to my request in *The Guardian* for readers' examples of puns.
- ⁴¹ *Les Misérables*, Paris, Hetzel, n.d., 1, 3, VII, p. 185.