The Apparition of a Seventeenth-Century Donne Reader: A Hand-Written Index to *Poems, By J.D.* (1633)

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Literary scholars ... have made reading a central concern of textual criticism, because they understand literature as an activity, the construal of meaning within a system of communication. ... But [book historians] may find their observations somewhat time-bound. Although the critics know their way around literary history (they are especially strong on seventeenth-century England), they seem to assume that texts have always worked on the sensibilities of readers in the same way. ... Reading itself has changed over time.

—Robert Darnton[1]

The story of man's travels through his own texts remains in large measure unknown. —Michel de Certeau[2]

Near the turn of the eighteenth century, Jonathan Swift satirized what he considered to be a relatively new way of reading, a method whereby readers would skip to the back of a book and "get a thorough Insight into the *Index* .... Thus Men catch Knowledge by throwing their *Wit* on the Posteriors of a Book, as Boys do Sparrows with flinging *Salt* upon their *Tails*," or, he continues, as "Physicians [who] discover the State of the whole Body, by consulting only what comes from *Behind*."[3] Nowadays indexes have a slightly

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[1]"What is the History of Books?" *Books and Society in History*, ed. Kenneth E. Carpenter (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1983), 19.

[2]*The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1984), 170.

[3]Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, ed. A.C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 145.

better reputation: the current deluge of texts and information—increasingly stored in easily-searchable electronic databases—is making us more dependent on indexes than ever. The index may not be the most thrilling section of a book, but we've all sneaked a guilty peek at a book's "behind," looking for a specific name or topic to avoid spending the time it would take to skim—let alone read—the entire volume. Long before Swift, in fact, printers and publishers often touted the book's index as a selling point, advertising the device on title pages *"for the readie finding out of any thing in the same conteyned,"* as many late-sixteenth century editions of the Geneva Bible claim.[4] Designed to save time and augment a fallible memory,[5] an index *points* the reader to a particular page; the word *index*, Peter Stallybrass reminds us, denotes both the forefinger and the "hand-like functions that are materialized in a book."[6] As Swift clearly saw, indexes encourage non-linear reading, a backward-and-forward action—the mark of active involvement between reader and text. If we agree with Robert Darnton and most reception theorists that reading is not a universal, transhistorical activity but instead is "time-bound"—a notion more likely to be believed now than in early modern Europe, when certain readers surely felt an affinity with early readers of texts like the Bible—then the explosion in availability of books with

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[4]Geneva Bible (STC 2163). Thanks to Peter Stallybrass for this citation. The definitive study on early modern indexing is Ann Blair, "Annotating and indexing natural books," in *Books and the Sciences in History*, ed. Marina Fransca-Spada and Nick Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 69-89. There have always been indexes of sorts: as Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), points out, "efforts at codifying and systematizing which pre-dated the new presses had long been made by preachers and teachers who had complied concordances for the use of other churchmen or arranged scriptural passages, sermon topics, and commentaries for themselves" (92). On late medieval indexing, see Francis J. Witty, "Early Indexing Techniques: A Study of Several Book Indexes of the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Centuries," *Library Quarterly* 35.3 (July 1965): 141-48.

[5]For the relation of indexing to memory, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), especially 100-21.

[6]I wish to thank Peter Stallybrass for permission to quote from an unpublished lecture, "How Many Hands Does It Take to Read or Write a Book?"

alphabetical "Tables" and indexes in the Renaissance may have altered the practice of reading itself.[7]

Early modern reading, critics have argued, was a more active, hands-on process than it often is today. Renaissance words, to use Judith Anderson's phrase, are *Words That Matter*.[8] Efforts were made to ensure that, once read, texts became actively incorporated into readers' lives—their thoughts, actions, decision-making, value-judgments, even their speaking and writing.[9] All texts, not least the Bible, were invested with use-value; Sir Philip Sidney even endorsed Horace's pragmatic theory for poetry, which argued that verse should "teach and delight," having an end of "well-doing and not of well-knowing only."[10] Yet this active involvement between text and reader is easier to theorize than to witness—especially when the lively readers have been dead for three hundred years. Book historians for some time now have been searching for such evidence by exploring material moments in the production, transmission, and reception of printed texts,[11] and some of the best indications of these transactions

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[7]See Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), especially Chapter 6, "The Physiology of Reading": "it is becoming increasingly clear that people in the past and of other cultures do not read in anything that might unproblematically be called the same way as us. Reading shares this characteristic with other, more manual skills" (385). One of the best introductions to "reading" in the Renaissance is Anne Ferry, "The Verb *to Read*" in *The Art of Naming* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), 9-48.

[8]Judith Anderson, *Words that Matter: Linguistic Perception in Renaissance England* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996).

[9]Renaissance reading, it is widely agreed, was largely practical. See Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied For Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," *Past and Present* 129 (1990): reading "was always goal-oriented—an active, rather than a passive pursuit" and thus was almost always "intended to *give rise to something else*" (30). See also Jardine and William Sherman, "Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in Late Elizabethan England," in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 102-24.

[10]*A Defense of Poetry*, ed. Jan Van Dorsten (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), 25, 29.

[11]For general studies of book history, see Darnton, "What Is the History of Books?" and Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries*

are found in marginalia, readers' "conversations with the dead."[12] Not only were Renaissance readers fond of writing in the margins of their books, they often collected what William Sherman calls "a thesaurus . . . of useful phrases, images, and ideas" in commonplace books or "notebooks, often organized by a set of preconceived subjects or 'topics'" (60-61). Anthony Grafton sketches a portrait of a typical Renaissance reader at work:

> Reading in early modern Europe—at least learned reading—
> implied copying and sorting as well as scanning. The ideal
> reader . . . did not sit back in an armchair with a book in his
> lap. He sat upright, strenuously attentive, at a desk, and
> copied extracts from what he read into notebooks.[13]

Since no two readers made notes in quite the same way, the distinction between a "notebook" and a commonplace book is often nebulous; and if a particularly scrupulous reader ever alphabetized a notebook or attached page numbers to mark the copied passages' textual origin, the notes might begin to resemble a personalized index. Ann Blair has shown that readers used the techniques of indexing and commonplacing to cope with an early modern version of "information overload," helping them to make texts available for later use (69).[14]

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in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[12]William Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 59. Sherman here draws on Stephen Greenblatt's "desire to speak with the dead" in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 1. For an overview of marginal notation, see H. J. Jackson's recent study, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). There are many studies of seventeenth-century marginalia; for one study of a 1639 edition of Donne's *Poems* with "copious contemporary annotations" (83), see John Sampson, "A Contemporary Light Upon John Donne," *Essays and Studies* 7 (1921): 82-107.

[13]"Is the History of Reading a Marginal Enterprise? Guillaume Bude and His Books." *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 91 (1997), 156.

[14]Blair notes that pedagogues often recommended this type of reading and writing to schoolboys, who were encouraged to copy "remarkable passages from their readings under appropriate headings (based, for example, on the

Commonplacing and indexing in effect merge when handwritten entries are added to a pre-existing index, or when we begin to make incipient indexes by jotting down a few words, phrases, and page numbers on the endpapers of books. Such marginal additions imprint shadowy traces of the reading process and begin to sketch a second-order commentary or even an interpretative criticism of the text, despite being nowhere written down in full sentences.[15]

One such index, compiled by an actual seventeenth-century reader of an actual book, preserved at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., in effect records one reader's response to his edition of Donne's posthumous poems.[16] The index compiler—actively reading and writing in mid-century England—is nameless, but his text has preserved for posterity a written trace of his literacy; he has compiled "An Index," as he calls it, in the back of his volume of John Donne's verse, the 1633 edition of the *Poems, by J.D.*[17] While this index exhibits some of the characteristics normally associated with alphabetical lists of words—it is neatly compiled in two ruled columns of words and short phrases followed by page numbers on the recto and verso of the last leaf of the book—in truth it bares only a formal

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topical or thematic content of the passage, or on its rhetorical utility) for later use in their compositions" (71). For an expanded treatment of commonplacing, see Blair, *The Theatre of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), especially "The Method of Commonplaces," 65-81.

[15]In the Renaissance, notes Eisenstein, "the preparation of each index was in itself an exercise in textual analysis" (100).

[16]I would, however, like to distance myself from the mainstream Reader-Response critics, whose works, quoting Sherman, "are peopled with every kind of reader except the real and historical: Elizabeth Freund lists the mock reader (Gibson), the implied reader (Booth and Iser), the model reader (Eco), the super-reader (Riffaterre), the inscribed or encoded reader (Brooke-Rose), and the ideal reader (Culler)" (55): *The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1987).

[17]*Poems, By J. D. With Elegies On The Authors Death* (London: M. F[lesher] for I. Marriot, 1633) Folger Shakespeare Library STC 7045 Copy 2. With very few exceptions, the Folger volume resembles the *English Experience* facsimile widely available (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo Press, 1970). I have used the masculine pronoun to refer to the index compiler only by default, as there is no good evidence about the reader's gender.

resemblance to our present-day notions about documentation (see Appendix). It makes no attempt to be systematic or comprehensive, the characteristics print historian Elizabeth Eisenstein has attributed to the early modern indexical spirit.[18] Even in its day it must have seemed small and idiosyncratic, since indexing was by the middle of the seventeenth century a wide-spread and highly refined practice, mastered by stationers in the sixteenth century (and before) not merely for scientific, legal, medical, historical, and theological texts but for verse and fictional prose as well.[19]

Joseph Glanvill—anticipating Swift's disparaging pronouncement by more than three decades—claims that "'tis a pitiful piece of knowledge that can be learnt from an index, and a poor ambition to be rich in the inventory of another's treasure."[20] Just how much useful knowledge *can* be gleaned from an index is apparent from a close reading of the Folger index, which gives direct testimony about the way Donne was read, interpreted, and used by his near-contemporaries in the seventeenth century, evidence exceedingly difficult to discover. The index meets our expectations about Donne's reception in some ways, as it is replete with citations of metaphor, paradox, and punning ambiguity—qualities of Donne's verse praised in the period and still appreciated today. No doubt the reader's

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[18]Eisenstein (92). See also C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964): "At his most characteristic, medieval man ... was an organiser, a codifier ... There was nothing which medieval people liked better, or did better, than sorting out and tidying up. Of all our modern inventions I suspect that they would most have admired the card index" (10).

[19]Peter Lindenbaum discusses two mid-seventeenth-century reader-compiled indexes of Sidney's *Arcadia*, texts quite similar to the Donne index, in "Sidney's *Arcadia* as Cultural Monument and Proto-Novel," in *Texts and Cultural Change in Modern England*, ed. Cedric C. Brown and Arthur F. Marotti (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan Press, 1997). He also mentions two mid-century printed poetical indexes: the 1655 edition of Sidney's *Arcadia*, which includes "a four-page 'Alphabetical Table, or Clavis, whereby the Reader is let in to view the principal stories contained in the *Arcadia* as they stand in their proper places,'" and an "Alphabetical Table" to George Herbert's *The Temple* published the very next year (82-83).

[20]*Scepsis Scientifica, or, the Vanity of Dogmatizing* (London, 1665); rpt, (Hove and Sussex: Harvester Press, 1970), 106.

motivation for marking some of the indexed words, like the final line
of the Holy Sonnet "Death be not proud," is easier to recognize than
in other cases, where the reader's intentions seem utterly alien.[21] The
vast majority of the index entries, though, follow patterns long
acknowledged by a variety of literary critics and historians; overall, the
selected passages depict a sustained theological investigation, a reader
gathering paradoxical images of faith, death, and spiritual re-birth,
among other topics. Since these concerns are overwhelmingly clerical
in nature, it is possible that the reader was using the index for
ecclesiastical purposes; perhaps he was a clergyman or a church
official, keeping a record of a number of stylistically exemplary
"Expressions" (the longest subject in the index) which could be
incorporated into sermons, letters, conversations, or used for other
religious occasions. Such use of Donne's verse is evidently very rare;
Ernest Sullivan, II, the leading scholar of Donne's contemporary
reception, argues that "the seventeenth century (including the clergy)
virtually ignored Donne's religious verse and rarely adapted the secular
verse for theological use."[22] Not only did the index compiler pore over
Donne's sacred verse, but he also searched the secular poems for
religious analogies useful in explaining the paradoxical mysteries of
Christian faith. Yet rather than revealing the "dialectical" Donne of
most contemporary critical accounts—a poet who wedded sacred with

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[21]In this sense, the exercise of interpreting this index might be compared
to Clifford Geertz's attempt to decipher Balanese cockfighting in "Deep
Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New
York: Basic Books, 1973), 412-53; see also Robert Darton's "Workers Revolt:
The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin," *The Great Cat Massacre and
Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984):
"anthropologists have found that the best points of entry in an attempt to
penetrate an alien culture can be those where it seems to be most opaque"
(78).

[22]*The Influence of John Donne: His Uncollected Seventeenth-Century Printed Verse*,
(Columbia and London: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1993), 37. Sullivan also
discusses the difficulty of gathering information about Donne's posthumous
reception: see his list of 58 known seventeenth-century Donne readers,
including recipients of Donne's verse epistles, numerous imitators, compilers
of verse miscellanies, translators and songwriters using Donne's verse (22-
26).

secular, soul with body—the compiler appears more attentive to the poems' sacred subjects than to their worldly, often provocative, situations. This reader's response, while not necessarily more authentic than contemporary critical readings, might temper our enthusiasm to project our own interpretations of Donne too far backward in time. Although sometimes obscure, the index reveals the ethereal apparition of one reader reading Donne in the seventeenth century.

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One obstacle to a more definitive reading of the Folger's Donne index is the frustrating lack of information about the book in which it is written. Unlike most books which attract scholarly attention— volumes with copiously annotated or elegantly decorated margins— the Folger's second copy of Donne's first printed collection of poems is quite unassuming. Most of its margins are bare; others contain nothing but simple one- or two-stroke quotation marks; and there are certainly more worm-holes in the quarto than scripted words. Like so many books from the period, it contains no owner's signature, and library records give no clues about the original owner's identity. According to an undated clipping from *The New York Times*, F.W. Morris purchased the copy for Mr. Folger for $12 at a Bangs & Co. auction.[23] Re-bound in the nineteenth century, it is likely that some blank leaves were removed from the end of the volume; thankfully, someone

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[23]Henry Clay Folger began collecting books in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and Bangs & Co. went out of business in 1903, setting a rough date for the clipping around the turn of the century. The $12 price tag—outrageously inexpensive today—apparently was a bargain even in Folger's day; in the 1895 sale of David Adee's books, for instance, a 1635 edition of Donne's *Poems* went for $34. See also Lindenbaum's discussion of Folger's style of collecting texts. Folger may have realized (as have many present-day book historians) that each copy of early modern printed texts was apt to be slightly different: "the main principle that seems to have governed his collecting was the pursuit of number: that is, Folger does not seem to have sought particularly clean copies ... once Folger learned of *any* decent specimen of a text, he went after it, whether he already had a copy of that edition (or issue) or not" (85).

appreciated "An Index" enough to leave it in the book: it appears on the volume's very last page, written in a brownish, probably iron-gall ink, which, due to its acidity, has bled through the fragile paper. The first index entry is typical: the word or subject "Age" is followed by the page number in the volume; and turning to page 335, we find a symbol resembling a quotation mark in the margin alongside a line in *Satyre III* which includes a metaphorical epithet: "age, deaths twilight" (335; Vv4r).[24] In most cases, the page noted in the index has a non-verbal mark (either a dot or a single or double quotation mark) calling attention to the passage containing the word or subject indexed;[25] only rarely are there marginalia on a page without an accompanying reference in the index or vice-versa.

All available evidence leads to the conclusion that "An Index" was created around 1650,[26] since the hand is predominantly italic with a few traces of English secretary, using abbreviations and spellings common to the mid-seventeenth century. For instance, the ascender of the *d* often bends back over the preceding letter, and the *e* takes two forms: the rounded ε and an earlier secretary form, as in the index entry for "Age," formed with two quick curved strokes. Not only the hand but some internal evidence points to the mid-seventeenth century. The editor of the posthumous 1633 edition omits all or part of nine lines of Donne's *Satyres*, and in all instances except one the reader has added the expunged words. For example, in the 1633 version of *Satyre II*, line 32 reads "To out-doe ————, and out-usure Jewes" (330, Vvv); the reader (brazenly) has written "Dildoes" in the margin. When entire lines are censored, the reader often writes the words under the extended dashes in the body of the text itself. The 1635 edition of Donne's *Poems*, in contrast, censors only one word— the very one not added to the Folger volume. The word immediately

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[24]This and subsequent references will be to the pagination in the 1633 edition; erroneous pagination necessitates the use of signature marks.

[25]See Sherman, who notes that John Dee used "quotation marks" as marginal notational devices (81). Early modern print conventions, of course, similarly often called for quotation marks in the margins alongside direct quotations.

[26]I wish to thank Laetitia Yeandle, Bill Sherman, and the staff of the Folger Shakespeare Library for their help dating, deciphering, and puzzling over this index.

follows the above quoted line in *Satyre II*: "To out-drinke the sea, to out-sweare the ————" (330, Vvv). The line remains censored in the 1635 and 1639 editions and is (falsely) corrected to "gallant, he" in the 1650 and 1654 editions. Not until 1669 does the word "Letanie" appear, as it does in most manuscripts. The fact that the reader has failed to add that word in his book makes it more likely that he read and copied the additions from an earlier printed edition, probably before 1650, because if he had access to the 1650, 1654, or 1669 editions, he might have added "gallant, he" or "Letanie" as he had emended the other passages.[27]

In the only printed reference to the Folger volume (to my knowledge), Deborah Aldrich Larson uses its marginalia to help refine the critical discussion of Donne's near-contemporary readership,[28] a debate largely focusing on whether contemporaries favored the religious poetry of "Doctor" Donne or the early verse of "Jack" Donne. This dualism, which Donne himself acknowledged in letters, was popularized in Izaac Walton's 1640 *Life of Dr. Donne*, the first biography of the poet.[29] "It is a truth," writes Walton, that in Donne's "penitential years, viewing some of those pieces that had been loosely (God knows too loosely) scattered in his youth, he wish't they had been abortive, or so short liv'd that his eyes had witnessed their funerals" (61). Walton all but urges readers to avoid the youthful lyrics and elegies and instead to take up study of the "Divine Sonnets, and other high, holy, and harmonious Composures" (61).[30] Larson takes

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[27]It might be, though, that the reader was morally offended by this single word and refused to add the words into his volume, additional evidence of this reader's religious inclinations.

[28]"Donne's Contemporary Reputation: Evidence from Some Commonplace Books and Manuscript Miscellanies," *John Donne Journal* 12 (1993): 115-30. Stephen N. Zwicker mentions the Donne index in a lecture, "Habits of Reading in Early Modern England: Cultivating a History of Reading," published on the Folger Shakespeare Library webpage, including representations of the index: (http://www.folger.edu/institute/nproject 11.html).

[29]*The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, & Robert Sanderson* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1927).

[30]"It was Walton's view that prevailed" for seventeenth-century readers, argues Robert Fallon; they "saw Donne through Walton's eyes and his

what might be called a "dialectical"[31] approach to this debate and argues that some seventeenth-century readers "were able to accept the poet-lover and preacher as a unified (and titillating) whole . . . [at least] some of Donne's seventeenth-century readers balked at deletions for the sake of clerical modesty and could accept that Donne the Anglican priest had written about sexual and potentially offensive religious matters" (116, 119).[32] This dialectical approach is widespread among Donne critics who understand the poetry as a marriage of body and spirit: "Donne's conceits," argues M. Thomas Hester, "subsume the sacred into the profane, confounding our understanding by positing analogies between sacred and profane love in which we 'cannot tell' whether to privilege the vehicle or the tenor."[33]

Surely the evidence from one reader's book will not answer the vexed questions about Donne's contemporary readership, but the overall pattern of index entries—contrary to Larson's claim—reveals a pronouncedly Waltonian and non-"dialectical" reader. For one thing, the index virtually ignores Donne's best-known poems, the *Songs and Sonets*. While the reader's indexical marks are quite evenly distributed throughout the text—the first on page 7 and the last on page 369— the indexing stops during the section of forty-nine *Songs and Sonets* printed in his edition: he has indexed only two subjects (to which we will return)—"Expressions" in "The Apparition" and "Contracts of

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uneasiness about the love lyrics is a continuing concern during all that period": "Donne's 'Strange fire' and the 'Elegies on the Authors Death,'" *John Donne Journal* 7 (1988), 197. Other scholars claim that, contra Walton, readers *did* enjoy Donne's secular, erotic lyrics (as surely they must have): "Walton's hagiographical writing of Donne," argues Sullivan, "would seem at variance with the typical seventeenth-century reading of Donne" (7).

[31]H.J.C. Grierson is credited with first applying the term *dialectical* to Donne's verse; see "The Poetry of Donne," in *Donne's Poetical Works*, 2 Vols., (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951), II: v-lv.

[32]Larson argues that the reader "probably" received the deleted passages "from a manuscript" (119), but she does not discuss the more troublesome "Letanie" omission, nor does she mention the book's index.

[33]"'let me love': Reading the Sacred 'Currant' of Donne's Profane Lyrics," in *Sacred and Profane: Secular and Devotional Interplay in Early Modern British Literature*, ed. Helen Wilcox, Richard Todd, and Alasdair MacDonald (Amsterdam: VU Univ. Press, 1996), 132.

Louers" in "Woman's Constancy." The *Songs and Sonets* are the cleanest section of his text, in that most of its pages are unmarked. By comparison, the poem immediately preceding the section, "The Litanie," contains five indexed words; the *Anniversaries*, which fall in the middle of the *Songs* in that strangely-arranged edition, have eighteen indexed words; and the poem immediately following the section, "Elegie. Language thou art too narrow," has two indexed words.

The index compiler does not always dismiss the secular Donne; perhaps he would not have even recognized a distinction between Donne's secular and sacred verse.[34] What is obvious, though, is that the reader clearly has religious concerns in mind. Evidence of his interest in the sacred can be seen in the only extended comments written in the volume, in the verse epistle "To Sir Henry Wooton: Here's no more newes":

> Here's no more newes, then vertue,'I may as well
> Tell you *Cales*, or *Saint Michaels* tale for newes, as tell
> That vice doth here habitually dwell.

> ˣ ' '   Yet, as to'get stomachs, we walke up and downe,
>   ' '   And toyle to sweeten rest, so, my God frowne,
>   If, but to loth both, I haunt Court, or Towne. (76, L2v)

Vice in court is so much stale news, writes Donne, who "haunts" and thus writes "*From Court*" only so he can deepen his loathing of the place. The annotator is particularly interested in lines 4-6; he marks four with an *x* ' ' and line five with a ' ', his typical quotation-mark-like symbol. The epistle is printed in three-line stanzas; following the sixth line, in the space between the second and third stanzas, the reader writes: "Why doe we not indure a litle pain, wch will make/ our ioy in t^e world to come seeme farr more pleasing . . ." (76, L2v; ellipses in original). Here, the reader has applied Donne's idea (present suffering increases future pleasure) to the Christian concept of earthly

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[34]For a twentieth-century statement of this claim, see for instance J. B. Leishman, *The Monarch of Wit* (New York: Harper, 1965): "nearly all Donne's serious poetry, his love-poetry no less than his religious poetry . . . is in this sense essentially, not merely nominally, religious" (28).

pain and heavenly pleasure, a conceit Donne suggests in line five ("so, my God frowne") but does not make explicit as the reader does. The marginal comment indicates what might be called allegorical reading, locating divine meaning in secular, mundane images ("stomachs," "toyle," and "rest").

The verse epistle's marginal comment is written in the same hand as the index entries, but we do not need this paleographic link to notice the index's pronounced Christian bent: it includes the moral and religious terms "Vertue" and "Vertuous" (thirteen times), "Christ," "God," "Heaven," "Prayre," "Trinity," "Vice & Vanity," and the "Virgin M." The index reveals a phantasmal image of a reader aware of what Hester calls "the lexicon of the 'currant' Reformation debate between Roman Catholic and Protestant" faiths (131). Subjects and words in the index such as "Good" and "Good works," "Faith," "Christs blood," "Bodys," "Brides," "Nice reasons," and "Martyr" each were used in the sectarian conversation in which Donne participated. Indexed under "Good," for instance, is a passage from another epistle "To the Countess Bedford. Reason is our Soules left hand," where the speaker claims to "rest on what the Catholique faith doth teach;/ That you are good" (78, L3v). The index calls our attention to Donne's (playful?) connection between Catholicism and its doctrine of good works or deeds. This is just the sort of complex, multivalent image routinely recorded in the index; "Good," of course, would mean different things to a Catholic and a Protestant reader, but even within a single discourse it means different things. The index compiler seems to have been reading these poems either in support or opposition to—but either way recognizing—some of the poems' more crypto-Catholic tendencies.[35]

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[35]It is conceivable that the index records some images the compiler considered blasphemous or sacrilegious. One of the subject headings reads "God can-not" and directs us to the epistle "To the Countesse of Bedford. On New-yeares day," where the speaker, at the height of his enthusiasm in the final stanza, claims that God "cannot, (that's, he will not) dis-inroule/ Your name" from Heaven's elect (90, N1v). Its appearance in the index suggests that the compiler at least noticed its flirtation with blasphemy. For Donne's relation to Catholicism, see Dennis Flynn, *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995).

Embedded in the index's repetitions and patterns is a rough outline of the compiler's interests: for one thing, he is informed and concerned about the sectarian issues of Donne's day. But it is difficult to discern much about the reader *personally* from his index and other markings. Entries such as "Embassador" and "men in Authority" might signal an interest in the affairs of wealthy, powerful men, while others—"Seruant" and especially "Low names to great vertues"— might signal more modest pursuits. Yet whenever we press these index entries, following the references and reading the verses to which they point, we find recurring patterns which—less directly—reveal something about the reader. One important pattern which emerges is a certain fixation on "Death": he has four different entries and ten page citations on various forms of the word.[36] A quick survey of the indexed passages, however, reveals little about the reader's personal interest in the subject. Some of the passages seem appropriate for an older man seeking spiritual comfort from Dr. Donne's images and language, like a few lines the reader emphasizes from the *Second Anniversarie*, indexed under the subject "Contemplation of our state on our death-bed":[37]

> Thinke then, my soule, that death is but a Groome,
> Which brings a Taper to the outward roome,
> Whence thou spiest first a little glimmering light,
> And after brings it nearer to thy sight:
> For such approaches doth heaven make in death.
> Thinke thy selfe labouring now with broken breath,
> And thinke those broken and soft Notes to bee
> Division, and thy happyest Harmonie.
> Thinke thee laid on thy death-bed, loose and slake;   "
> And think that, but unbinding of a packe,
> To take one precious thing, thy soule from thence. (263, Ll4r)

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[36]These index entries include "Death," "Contemplation of our state on our death-bed," "Dieing-men," and "Liberty by death"; "Graues" would run the number to five.

[37]The phrase "Contemplation of our state in our death-bed" is one of seven printed glosses in the margins of the 1633 edition's *Second Anniversarie* (263, Ll4r).

These are soothing words and would indeed be perfectly suited to a man lying on his death-bed; but it is unlikely that the dying man is the indexer himself. Instead, the index compiler may have been gathering words to repeat to other dying people in his capacity as a clergyman or religious official of some kind. Scanning down the page, the reader has placed regular quote marks beside a simile:

> Thinke that thou hear'st thy knell and think no more,
> But that, as Bels cal'd thee to Church before,   ”
> So this, to the Triumphant Church, calls thee. (263, Ll4r)

This image would be appropriate for a funeral service, a letter to a mourning friend, or a consoling word to a grieving mother; we might even see in this passage a glimpse of the church the deceased had attended. Even though critics seem to have found little evidence of Donne's verse put to ecclesiastical use,[38] the *Second Anniversarie*—itself an elegy—is a perfectly appropriate source for a pious figure of speech, made even more acceptable by the poet's later ordination. It is a wonder, in fact, why there are not more such records of religious appropriation of Donne's funereal elegies.

It might seem strange for one and the same person to mark and record these devout passages *and* add the naughty word "Dildoes" in the margin of his book. The compiler obviously was paying careful attention to his text and may have wanted the book to be complete; he adds the titles of three untitled *Songs and Sonets* in his edition as well, perhaps following the same impulse to properly emend his text.[39] The care which is so apparent in these emendations and the

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[38]Sullivan, finding little religious appropriation of Donne's verse, does note at least one such instance: "Without acknowledgement, Daniel Price adapted three segments from 'The second Anniversarie' for one sermon on the death of Prince Henry (*Prince Henry His First Anniversary*, 1613) and six segments from 'The second Anniversarie' as well as the refrain 'Shee, shee is dead; shee's dead' from 'The first Anniversary' for two more sermons in *Spiritvall Odovrs to the Memory of Prince Henry* (1613)" (37-38).

[39]He adds titles to three poems: "The Undertaking" (168; Cc3v), "Community" (222, Ff3v), and "Confined Love" (226, Gg1v). These titles are written in a more cursive, almost "round" hand, although similarities in letter-form and abbreviations make it likely the same person used two different hands.

meticulously-copied index can be witnessed in his approach to the poems, which he seems to have read with great diligence. In particular, he is drawn to Donne's metaphors (an early example of a reader who recognized Donne's reliance on conceits and figures, his "heterogeneous ideas ... yoked by violence together." The index is organized under an almost figurative principle: in many cases, the index entry points to a passage which figuratively describes that word. In the two passages quoted above, for instance, can be found a personification (death is a "Groome"); two metaphors ("breath" resembling harmonic "Notes," and the odd yet emphatically marked image of death as the "unbinding of a pack"); and the simile of bells as death. The index's other "Death" entries also point to figurative descriptions of that topic. In the "*Elegie on M^{rs}* Boulstred," which takes up the theme of "Death" from the very first word, the reader marks these lines near the beginning:

> Th'earth's face is but thy Table; there are set   "
> Plants, cattell, men, dishes for Death to eate. (69, K3r)   '

This passage features a combination of metaphor and personification, and another "Death" entry, from the "*Elegie on the Lady* Marckham," uses the metaphor "Man is the World, and death th'Ocean" (66, K1v); later in the poem, this metaphor is extended into a simile:

> In her this sea of death hath made no breach,   '
> But as the tide doth wash the slimie beach,   '
> And leaves embroderd workes upon the sand,   '
> So is her flesh refin'd by deaths cold hand. (67, K2r)   '

Donne is singled out here at his most explicitly figural, where death is again personified, a figure born of the strength and materiality of his metaphors and similes: body for beach and sea for death. The metaphorical "sea" in addition has a personified "hand" that "embroderd works upon the sand," just as death re-shapes the body.

   As is apparent in these passages, the compiler is drawn to particularly *explicit* metaphors, images which resemble similes more than metaphors; the indexed phrase "Man is the World, and death th'Ocean," for instance, is an explicit comparison and not quite a "metaphor" at all, since metaphor usually occurs when a word is taken

out of its normal context and transferred to a new circumstance. In other words, there is not much separation between enunciation and meaning in the image "death th'Ocean." Given the compiler's tendency to select explicit comparisons, it should come as no surprise that roughly one-third of the total of 159 index entries refer to a passage containing a "like" or "as."⁴⁰ In part a gathering of similes, the index resembles other printed collections, like Robert Cawdry's *A treasury or store-house of similes* (1600), an alphabetical listing of similes gathered from Biblical and secular sources.⁴¹ The title-page of Cawdry's collection advertises the volume as "pleasaunt, delightfull, and profitable, for all estates of men in generall," and the dedicatory epistle clarifies its usefulness:

> For many times that thing, which cannont [sic] bee
> perceiued or vnderstood of Readers of Bookes, and hearers
> of Sermons, by a simple precept, may yet by a Similitude or
> plaine example, bee attained vnto. So that if any be desirous
> to compare a thing from the lesse to the greater: Similitudes
> will help him greatly in his behalf, &c. (A2v)

Similarly, the Folger index records comparisons that might be useful for sermons or other religious purposes, like one passage from the end of *The First Anniversarie* indexed under the heading "Death":

> ,   for though the soule of man
> , ,   Be got when man is made, 'tis born but than

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⁴⁰See Leishman: Donne "may perhaps be regarded as the originator of a kind of descriptive, or professedly descriptive, poetry which became very popular during the seventeenth century. The chief characteristic, one might almost say, the essence, of this kind of poetry is the ingenious simile" which "sometimes really illuminating the subject, and sometimes merely displaying the author's ingenuity" (125). Hester, though, repeatedly stresses to his students Donne's preference of metaphor over simile, linking metaphor with Eucharistic "Real Presence" and simile with a more Protestant theory of bread as a sign or mere resemblance of Body.

⁴¹(Menston: Scholar Press, 1969), rpt. Also, Henry B. Wheatley, *How to Make an Index* (London: Elliot Stock, 1902) mentions the "curious poetical index to the *Iliad* in Pope's Homer, referring to all the places where similes are used" (21).

>   ’   When man doth die; our body's as the wombe,
>   And, as a Mid-wife, death directs it home. (205, Kk1v)

The analogies in this passage envision the body as a womb, the soul as a new-born, and death as a midwife. If the index compiler was interested in making a complete index, he could have cross-referenced this passage under "Bodys" and "Soule," both subjects in the index, but neither entry points to this passage. Regardless of how it is indexed, the passage instances the paradoxical idea and expression of death as the beginning of eternal life, death as re-birth, precisely the mystery of the Passion—a particularly apt image for a funeral oration or consoling letter.

Whereas before the compiler's interest in the last line of the Holy Sonnet "Death be not proud" seemed rather self-explanatory, his sustained interest in explicit figurations like personification might indicate that the line meant something very different to him than it does to many who read and teach the poem today. We can be fairly certain that the index's first "Death" entry (36) refers to that poem's last lines, marked with marginal quotes.[42] It emphasizes the animating personification of Death which drives the sonnet:

>   One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
>   ”   And death shall be no more, death thou shalt die. (36, F2v)

These lines include the two major figures of the poem, death personified and death as a type of sleep—more examples of Donne at his most figurative. (In addition, the passage is one of many indexed instances of witty, paradoxical figures of speech; here, death itself dies, the sort of self-referentiality Roland Barthes somewhere likens to

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[42]In the 1633 edition, the "Death be not proud" Holy Sonnet (numbered VI in that edition) begins on page 35 and is cut in half by a page-break at line seven, so that the poem's last line is on page 36. It is possible, however, that the "Death" entry points to Sonnet VII ("Spit in my face you Jewes"), also on page 36, since the reader has marked two lines in that poem: "They kill'd once an inglorious man, but I/ Crucifie him daily, being now glorified" (lines 7-8).

a barber getting his hair cut.[43]) Where a contemporary reader might be drawn to this poem because of the speaker's angry, combative voice, the index compiler might have experienced a more stylistic appreciation, enjoying Donne's (very overt and explicit) personification, a figure of speech arguably less appreciated today than it may have been in the past.[44]

No one who has spent much time reading Donne's verse will be surprised that the compiler's index points to a number of passages about death and dying, but a mere glance at the index entries does not give the full picture of the reader's interest in "Death," a theme which returns in passages indexed under entries which at first seem to have little to do with the subject. Consider this paradoxical passage which occurs a few pages earlier in the volume, from the Holy Sonnet "Oh my blacke Soule!" indexed under the category "Christs blood": the speaker advises the soul to

> wash thee in Christs blood, which hath this might   "
> That being red, it dyes red soules to white. (33, F1r)

The paradox here is enhanced by the pun: just as Christ's "dying" gives the gift of everlasting life, so the blood "dyes" the soul to white. The stain of Christ's blood negates the stain of Original Sin, a complex figure which surely would have interested a Christian reader. A second passage indexed under "Christs blood," occurring parenthetically in

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[43]Critics have long recognized Donne's propensity toward wit and paradox. On Donne's wit, see such seventeenth-century readers as Thomas Carew in his Elegie on Donne, "An Elegie upon the death of the Deane of Pauls, D^r. Iohn Donne: By Mr Tho: Carie" (385-88, Ddd1r-Ddd2v). For a more contemporary discussion of Donne's wit, see John Shawcross, *The Complete Poetry of John Donne* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1968): "In Donne's age, as generally in the twentieth century, readers' interest in Donne's poetry lay in the wittiness of Jack Donne's love themes" (xvii).

[44]As an explicit form of comparison, personification has followed a fate similar to that of the simile: see Jaqueline Vaught Brogan's entry for "Simile" in the *New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993): "following Coleridge's famous passage in the *Biographica Literaria*, 20th-c. critics have tended to associate simile with the lower order of 'fancy,' and metaphor . . . with the higher order of 'imagination'" (1149).

"An hymne to the Saints, and to Marquesse Hamylton," takes up the same terms:

> (And, who shall dare to aske then when I am
> Dy'd scarlet in the blood of that pure Lambe,   "
> Whether that colour, which is scarlet then,
> Were black or white before in eyes of men?) (163, Y2r)

Again, the blood has the power to color or "dye," but the blood's "dying" power takes on its more natural (and less paradoxical) function of covering or obscuring, whereas in the earlier passage the coloring itself miraculously cleansed and purified. The pun on "dye" as death also works differently in the second passage, where it evokes the speaker's own mortality as much as his savior's.

The wide diversity of index entries—everything from "Delight" to "Teares"—is in fact deceiving, since certain subjects, like death and re-birth, recur in various subjects, often where we least expect them. Several of the five passages indexed under "Marriage," for instance, also record figurative uses of "dying" as a kind of re-birth, the same trope singled out in the "Christs blood" entries. If the compiler is collecting figures of speech to be used for clerical functions, his interest in "Marriage" and his fifteen citations of Donne's *Epithalamions* should come as no surprise. Odder, though, is his emphasis on the intersection between these two subjects, as if he were searching for more images of death and just recording them in another location. One such passage which combines death and marriage occurs near the end of the *"Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne"* indexed under "Marriage":

> This bed is onely to virginitie
> "   A grave, but, to a better state, a cradle; (138, T1v)

In the act of marital consummation, "virginitie" dies and "a better state" is born, a paradoxical process resembling the simultaneous death of the body and re-birth of the soul in heaven. Replacing "virginitie" here with "the world" would transmute the marriage-bed into a death-bed like those in the "Death" entries. This image could be useful in a variety of circumstances; perhaps its very multivalence was precisely what earned its inclusion in the index.

The compiler's marks in the "*Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne*" point to the image of "grave" as "cradle" and *not* to the actual situation—the loss of "virginitie"—being discussed in the poem. Yet there are a few puzzling entries which point to passages which do seem a bit risqué. Another indexed passage which combines death and marriage appears under the subject "Contracts of Louers" in the early lyric "Womans constancy," one of only two indexed references to the *Songs and Sonets*.[45] The speaker is wondering what excuse his lady love might make "To morrow when thou leav'st"; will it be that,

> as true deaths, true maryages untie,
> So lovers contracts, images of those,   ,"
> Binde but till sleep, deaths image, them unloose? (197, Cc3r)

The compiler might have admired this dizzying passage for the metaphor of sleep as "deaths image," similar to the conceit marked in "Death be not proud"; or perhaps he admired the simile linking marriage and death with their parallel images, "lovers contracts" and sleep.[46] As we might expect from a poem in the *Songs and Sonets* section, this conceit is quite sexually charged: "Contracts of Louers" are *like* "true maryages" but without religious sanctioning; in fact, the word "contracts" seems an almost euphemistic reference to sexual intercourse. Added to this image is the active pun on "death," since the lover's bed indeed is a "grave" wherein the lovers experience the *petite mort* of sexual climax. A narrow-minded sort of clergyman surely would not have called attention to this passage; after all, we have seen how he shows no scruples about writing into his book the censored words and phrases in the *Satyres*. This entry, in fact, might make our clergyman seem as licentious as young Jack Donne himself.

Although the compiler's interest in marriage and death may invite speculation about a more prurient interest, the two terms naturally are associated in the religious discourse of Donne's day; death was

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[46]Assuming the index compiler appreciated this passage for its marital implications, he has indexed the passage under the metaphorical description and not the main topic, as we have seen in the past. Many such anomalies present themselves as the index's organizational structure is scrutinized.

considered the culmination of a Christian's "marriage" to Christ. The index in fact records a passage which relies on this association: indexed under "Marriage" is a passage from "A Funeral Elegie" for young Elizabeth Drury, who makes her appearance in heaven "Cloath'd in her virgin white integritie,/ For marriage, though it doth not stain, doth die" (254, Kk3v).[47] The "marriage" between the Bride (Elizabeth) and the Bridegroom (Christ) is fully consummated in death. This image was familiar in Donne's day from the allegorical interpretations of the Song of Solomon, in which sexual love was understood as spiritual longing.

Based on the index compiler's marginal comments and the preponderance of recorded religious images, then, he seems to approach Donne's verse with what St. Augustine would have called "charity," selecting Donne's images more for their spiritual value and meaning than for their literal, situational context.[48] That the reader is both selective and charitable can be witnessed in the index's eight

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[47]Donne surely remembered a verse from Isaiah 1:18, "Though your sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as snow," which he uses in a sermon of unknown date: *Sermons* (V, 15), in *John Donne: Selected Prose*, ed. Neil Rhodes (London: Penguin, 1987), 189-90. A similar description appears later in this sermon: "Purge me with hyssop, & I shall be clean: wash me, & I shall be whiter than snow," Psalms 51:7. A comparable passage appears under the subject of "Soule," pointing to Donne's verse epistle "To Mr. Rowland Woodward":

> If our Soules have stain'd their first white, yet wee
> May cloth them with faith, and deare honestie,
> Which God imputes, as native puritie. (74, L1v)

The indexer seems to be meditating on this image of God's mercy in various figurative manifestations.

[48]St. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D.W. Robertson (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1958). In order to interpret figurative expressions properly in the Bible, argues Augustine, "you must be very careful lest you take figurative expressions literally. What the Apostle says pertains to this problem: 'For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth'" (2 Cor. 3:6). "[W]hen that which is said figuratively is taken as though it were literal, it is understood carnally. . . . There is a miserable servitude of the spirit in this habit of taking signs for things, so that one is not able to raise the eye of the mind above things that are corporal and created to drink in eternal light" (83-84).

cited passages from Donne's secular, Ovidian Elegies. For instance, under the heading "Dieing-men" he indexes a passage from "Elegie I," lacking the title "Jealosie" in the 1633 edition and immediately following the Divine Poems and the Epigrams. The indexer seems to have in mind the husband of the

> Fond woman which would'st have thy husband die,
> And yet complain'st of his great jealousie. (44, G2v)

Graciously skipping the gratuitous description of the husband in the next two lines—

> If swolne with poyson, hee lay in'his last bed,
> His body with a sere-barke covered

—he marks (with a single quote in the margin) the simile at line six describing the dying husband,

>   Drawing his breath, as thick and short, as can
> '   The nimblest crocheting Musitian,

finding the sweet kernel within the sour husk, reminding us of the reader's interest in images of death, "as Bels" which "cal'd thee to Church before,/ So this, to the Triumphant Church, calls thee" (263, Ll4r). The reader leaves unmarked the next two lines, with the more gruesome image of the body

> Ready with loathsome vomiting to spue
> His Soule out of one hell, into a new. (lines 7-8)

The indexer can be seen picking and choosing the particularly charitable and holy images, even where some more modern critics have found more ambiguity and bodily, "materialist" imagery.

The passages recorded in the index clearly are *appropriate* for later use in religious speech or writing (sermons, letters, or pastoral visits), but we have seen little evidence that the index actually was used in this way. There are other uses which might appear equally plausible: for instance, the reader may have been recording Donne's descriptions of death and spiritual rebirth to soothe his own pain from a loss of a loved one. Another conceivable use for the index would be as a

meditative guide. In a recent essay, John T. Shawcross summarizes the meditative, almost mystical inclinations of many seventeenth-century Christians:

> The meditator would contemplate his sinfulness, his death, the Judgment upon him, and the possibility of Hell. Next, one contemplated the kingdom of Christ, service to God, and rejection of forces of opposition in order to avoid the Hell to which one's sinfulness should have lead. Inflamed with love of God, the 'new' soul, having been illuminated, could contemplate union with God. That union, particularly observable in the language of the work of St. Teresa of Avila, played with sexual imagery and coition, and ultimately employed the concept of the wise virgin awaiting the Bridegroom and their marital bliss (Matthew xxv), as well as The Song of Solomon and Revelation xxi:9: 'Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the lamb's wife.[49]

The similarities between this description and the index entries should be immediately recognizable. The compiler surely has contemplated Donne's uses of "Sinn," "Death," and "Judges," since each are entries in his index; there are entries which record the compiler's interest in the afterlife—"Heaven" has four page citations; and we have witnessed the indexer's interest in Donne's imagery of the "marital bliss" between believer and Bridegroom.

These similarities make it likely that the index compiler was familiar with the meditative tradition so important to seventeenth-century Christianity,[50] so there is important evidence that the passages were to be used for more than personal, meditative purposes. Two entries—"Epithets" and "Expressions"—support the theory that the index compiler "would first read and then speak/write Donne verse," a practice Sullivan suggests was widespread in the seventeenth century (42). As Sherman reminds us, the Renaissance was "an age when (unlike our own) imitation and the use of preprocessed

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[49]John T. Shawcross, "The Meditative Path and Personal Poetry," *John Donne Journal* 19 (2000), 87.

[50]Of course these widespread meditative techniques influenced the literature of the period: see Louis Martz's *The Poetry of Meditation* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954).

materials [was] not only allowed but expected" (61).[51] Readers, we have seen, used commonplace notebooks to gather their own verses for imitation, and following this demand, publishers began printing such collections. As Anderson notes, "The commonplace book or collection of *sententiae*—variously proverbs, adages, aphorisms, maxims, apophthegms, and sayings, indeed *mots*—figures among the most frequent of Renaissance publications" (33). Sullivan has written about the popular genre of verse miscellanies (gatherings of poetry from Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Donne, among others), collections he likens to self-help books in their pragmatic value, with a readership of "relatively uneducated adults who needed assistance in getting ahead in daily life," the more educated of the bunch finding "value in Donne's verse as it became part of their discourse" (46).

While the compiler of the Folger index was more educated than the majority of readers Sullivan discusses, his index is in essence a short-hand collection of Donne verses, following the same principle of selection used in compiling the verse miscellanies. Poole's *The English Parnassus*, for instance, advertises itself as collection of "The choicest Epithets, and Phrases: With some General Forms upon all Occasions, Subjects, and Theams, Alphabetically digested" (Sullivan, 39). The index's "Epithits" entry has two page citations, both religious in nature. From "To the Countesse of Huntingdon. Man to Gods image" he calls attention to the characterization "manger-cradled infant" (91, N2r); and in "An Epithalamion, Or marriage Song on the Lady Elizabeth," he indexes the line "The Lirique Larke, and the grave whispering Dove" (118, Q3v). Again, the pun on "grave" is intact here and must have interested the reader, although this passage is not included in the index's "Graues" subject-heading.

The longest entry in the Folger index, with fourteen page citations, (twice as many as "Death") is "Expressions," a word commonly used in the period to denote memorable and particularly fashionable

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[51]See also Grafton's "Is the History of Reading a Marginal Enterprise?" which describes the "ideal" Renaissance reader as one who read for the ultimate purpose of writing: "What he mastered, he could quote and interpret; what he annotated, he could reprocess. . . . This form of reading was intimately connected with writing" (156).

phrases.[52] A compilation of such "expressions" from the period has the characteristically long title "THE ACADEMY OF Complements. Wherein *Ladies, Gentlewomen, Schollers,* and *Strangers* may accommodate their Courtly practice with gentile Ceremonies, Complementall amorous high expressions, and formes of speaking or writing of Letters most in fashion. . . . The sixt Edition, with two Tables" (Sullivan, 28).[53] Unlike most of the index entries, which record instances of words used on each page, "Expressions" is a true "subject." Most words in the index actually appear on the cited page; only one of the fourteen pages, however, actually contains a variant of the word "Expressions." It occurs in the "Ecclogve. 1613" where Idios responds to Allophanes:

>   I knew
>   All this, and onely therefore I withdrew
> "   To know and feele all this, and not to have
> '   Words to expresse it, makes a man a grave
>   Of his own thoughts. (126, R3v)

(The loaded metaphor where the absence of speech becomes a "grave" must have appealed to the index compiler here.)[54]

With a few puzzling exceptions, the "Expressions" passages occur in divine poems, marriage songs, and funeral orations—all quite fitting for various religious obligations. Given what we already know about this reader's interest in paradoxical figurations of death, his interest in Donne's "Annuntiation and Passion" will come as no surprise. He indexes the central idea of the poem under "Expressions":

> This Church, by letting those daies joyne, hath shown
> Death and conception in mankind is one. (169, Z1r)   '

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[52]"Expressions" seems to be used in its rhetorical sense, similar to the *OED*'s fourth definition: "Manner or means of representation in language; wording; diction; phraseology. A word, phrase, or form of speech."

[53]Sullivan describes this volume as a "'how to pick up significant others' book" (42); Donne's verse appears in this volume, although there appears to be no direct connection between it and the Folger index.

[54]Because this entry is a subject and not an actually-appearing word, it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint exactly which phrase he finds noteworthy, so we must warily rely on his marginal quotation marks for guidance.

He also cites an earlier "Expression" in the poem: Mary

> sees a Cedar plant it selfe, and fall,
> "   Her Maker put to making, and the head
> Of life, at once, not yet alive, yet dead. (152,[55] Y4v)

The great paradoxes in these passages both address the cycle of death
and rebirth. Perhaps they are not included under the subject-heading
"Death" because the reader is noting the style—the "Expression"—of
these passages. But consider another "Expressions" entry, from "Sapho
to Philanis," two pages earlier:

> Thou art not soft, and cleare, and straight, and faire
> '   As *Down*, as *Stars*, *Cedars*, and *Lillies* are,
> But thy right hand, and cheek, and eye, only
> Are like thy other hand, cheek, and eye. (166, Y3v)

These lines, perhaps more reminiscent of Spenser than of Donne,
question the effectiveness of the very figurative conceits the compiler
is so intent on recording. Or could it be, simply, that he liked these
last two passages because they both refer to the cedar tree, a
traditional symbol of majesty and incorruptibility—even immortality.[56]

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[55]The page number is in error here: sequentially, Y4v should be page 168.

[56]Song of Songs 1:17: "the beams of our houses are cedars, our rafters
cypresses." See Origen's commentary on this passage, *The Song of Songs
Commentary and Homilies*, trans. R. P. Lawson, *Ancient Christian Writers' Series*
Vol. 26 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1957): "the beams are said to be
of cedar, to show that priests ought to be full of the virtue of incorruption and
the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ" (176). The "Sapho to Philantis"
passage recalls another indexed "Expression" from the "Epitalamion . . . on
the Lady Elizabeth," which describes the "faire Phoenix Bride" and employs
the techniques of catalogue verse:

> Up, up, faire Bride, and call,
> Thy starres, from out their severall boxes, take
> Thy Rubies, Pearles, and Diamonds forth, and make
> Thy selfe a constellation, of them All,
> And by their blazing, signifie,
> That a Great Princess falls, but doth not die. (119, Q4r)

The only other reference to a tree in the "Expressions" entries is a passage from "The Apparition," one of the two citations from the *Songs and Sonets*. The poem begins with a now familiar situation:

> When by thy scorne,O murdresse, I am dead,
> > And that thou thinkst thee free
> From all solicitation from mee,
> Then shall my ghost come to thy bed. (191, Bb4r)

These lines should immediately remind us of the "Dieing-men" entry from "Elegie I," where we also find a murdered man, "swolne with poison," and a wife who is "jolly / As a slave, which to morrow should be free" (44, G2v). In "The Apparition," the compiler's marks occur after the speaker's ghost appears to the former lover, now in bed with a new man: on seeing the specter of the speaker, the lady might stir or pinch her new beau; but the man, apparently suffering from post-coital fatigue, would misinterpret her fear as libido and

> > > > thinke
> > > Thou call'st for more,
> > And in false sleep will from thee shrinke,
> > And then poore Aspen wretch, neglected thou   "
> > Bath'd in a cold quicksilver sweat wilt lye   "
> > > A veryer ghost then I. (191, Bb4r)

Unless the index compiler again was interested in the arboreal image (since "Aspen" can refer to the light-colored wood of the asp tree as well as the tremulous quality of its leaves), it is difficult to find a good explanation for the reader's interest in this passage. He would have known that "quicksilver sweat" was a common treatment for syphilis in the period, and the overall theme seems to have little devotional value. Like "Elegie I" and the other indexed poem from the *Songs and Sonets*, "Womans' Constancy," this poem takes up the theme of adultery and death, and again we glimpse the apparition of a Christian reader "poaching" for useful phrases in Donne's rather irreverent and unpreacherly verse.[57]

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[57]See Certeau, Chapter XII, "Reading as Poaching," 165-76.

This small pattern, however intriguing, is overshadowed by the remaining 155 entries, which on the whole reveal a distinct ecclesiastical concern; and the expressions entries on the whole give the best evidence that the reader is in fact recording images for later linguistic use. Its list of page citations is more sequentially scrambled than any other entry, indicating that page numbers may have been added after the reader had copied the index into the book from his notebook or commonplace book; this category, that is, may have been a work in progress more than most other subject-headings. This reader has shaped and molded his experience of his book; the index is a tool which turns the Donne volume into a kind of (manuscript) commonplace book. Peter Lindenbaum has noticed a similarly hybrid form of commonplace book/index in the "Alphabetical Table or Clavis" in the back of the 1655 edition of the *Arcadia*, a "slightly odd" table, "a cross between an outright Index (something which directs a reader's attention to details *within* the text) and the first step towards a Commonplace Book (a record of what a reader takes *away from* texts for his or her own use)" (83-84). It is precisely this inside-out quality which characterizes the index compiler's active involvement with his text, pointing within the text in order to use it for his own (outward) use. Readers of books, that is, may have naturally taken a more fluid, manuscript-type approach to printed texts; not only compilers of manuscripts, it appears, could "tailor individual copies of the same piece to suit changing circumstances and specific recipients."[58]

Donne himself thought about his readership, about manuscripts, books, and the "use" to which his poems might be put, as is apparent from his occasional discussion of such topics in verse and prose. Donne's verse letters (if they are to be trusted) contain some of his most straight-forward comments concerning the "uses" of poetry, and not surprisingly, the index's most literary subject-headings ("Writers," "Verses," and "Rime") are clustered in the section of verse epistles. In fact, more than a third of the page numbers in the index, 62 of the 158, refer to Donne's letters in verse and prose. The concentration of citations in this genre should provide another clue about the index's use: it may have been an aid to the reader's own epistolary duties. We

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[58]Ted-Larry Pebworth, "Manuscript Poems and Print Assumptions: Donne and his Modern Editors," *John Donne Journal* 3 (1984), 3.

can glimpse the compiler's attitudes towards language and writing from his treatment of one of Donne's more famous statements about writing, his verse letter "To Mr Rowland Woodward," entitled "A Letter of Doctor Donne to one that desired some of his papers" in one manuscript.[59] Three index entries refer to this poem—"Omissions," "Soules," and "Bodys"—but it is the first of these subjects that most illuminates the reader's reaction to Donne's poems. Near the beginning of the letter, the speaker uses a simile to describe his affections:

> Like one who'in her third widdowhood doth professe,
> Her selfe a Nunne, tyed to retirednesse,
> So'affects my muse now, a chast fallownesse.
> Since shee to few, yet to too many'hath showne
> How love-song weeds, and Satyrique thornes are growne
> Where seeds of better Arts, were early sown.
> Though to use, and love Poëtry, to mee,
> Betroth'd to no'one Art, be no'adulterie;
> "   Omissions of good, ill, as ill deeds bee. (74, L1v)

The speaker's stated reasons for not sending copies of his poems to Woodward—his muse is fallow, the poems have been handled by "too many" already—come strikingly close to Walton's distaste for the "loosely (God knows too loosely) scattered" manuscripts (61). The letter, suggestively linking writing to sexuality and fertility throughout, ends with the odd injunction that the recipient "Manure thy selfe then, to thy selfe be'approv'd" (34) rather than reading Donne's poetry.

The index compiler has marked the left margin alongside the line beginning with "Omissions," a complex sentiment suggesting that the lack of good is as bad as active wrongdoing, perhaps drawing on the patristic definition of evil as the absence of good. Taken by itself, the line sounds like a (rather Catholic) argument in favor of doing good works, but taken in context, it clearly refers to the act of writing poetry. Using and loving poetry, the speaker suggests, is "no'adulterie"; but if it hinders you from doing good deeds, your

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[59]*John Donne: The Complete English Poems*, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Everyman [J.M. Dent], 1994), 192.

"Omissions" of good are as evil as if you actively did something wrong. The next stanza goes a step further by comparing poetry with "vanity," which "weighs as much as sinne." By highlighting "Omissions," the reader indicates that he considers poetry useful. Words must not be ends in themselves, and writers always must be committed to service—certainly apt for a devoted Christian.

Another iteration of Donne's pragmatic theory of poetry occurs in another verse letter, *"To the Countesse of* Bedford. *On New-yeares day."* The index's lone reference to "Verses" directs our attention to the letter's second page, where the speaker expresses his gratitude that "these times shew'd mee you":

> In recompense I would show future times
> What you were, and teach them to'urge towards such,
> " Verse embalmes vertue;'and Tombs, or Thrones of rimes,
> " Preserve fraile transitory fame, as much
> " As spice doth bodies from corrupt aires touch. (88, M4v)

The poem voices the Horacian *exegi monumentum* motif, a stock image in much Elizabethan and Jacobean poetry familiar from Shakespeare's Sonnet 55 ("Not marble, nor the gilded monuments / Of princes shall outlive this powerful rime") and other sonnets.[60] "Verses" have the preservative power to "embalm" the Countesse's "virtue"; metaphorically, they are "Tombs," and poetic language is connected explicitly with a kind of earthly, material immortality which has its likeness in the soul's immortality in Heaven. The speaker emphasizes that his poem must not become simply an idle (or idol) monument, however; it should "teach" "future times" "to'urge towards" enacting her virtues. Again, the passages marked are those which depict poetry as heuristically useful for preserving virtues and for presenting readers with models of virtuous action.

Donne himself holds a more equivocal theory of poetry—and a less utilitarian one—than the index compiler would lead us to believe. One occurrence of Donne's non-pragmatic aesthetic comes in the prefatory "Epistle" to *Metempsycosis*. In the 1633 edition, the "Epistle" appears

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[60]Patricia Thomson, "Donne and the Poetry of Patronage," in *John Donne: Essays in Celebration*, ed. A.J. Smith (London: Methuen, 1972), especially 318-20.

first and serves as an introduction to the entire volume. The speaker (surely John Donne) says that he "will have no such Readers as I can teach" (A3v). Hester makes much of this line, suggesting that Donne's poems "are profitably viewed in part as a witty critique of the poetry, the poetics, and the Protestant polemic" of Sidney's tendency toward didacticism: "not only do [Donne's poems] frequently not 'teach ... the Readers', but seem more concerned to reject their auditors' attempts to comprehend their 'mystery' even as they figure the speaker himself as similarly confounded" (131). The index compiler, however, makes no marginal traces in the introductory epistle, and the index records not a single word or subject from it. Only those passages which voice a pragmatic poetics are recorded in his index.

After noticing the compiler's keen awareness of Donne's paradoxical, punning, ambiguous figures, it is somewhat surprising to find the reader exhibiting such an apparently simple, uncomplicated reading of "Verses." Not only his markings but that which he has left *un*marked can shed light on the nameless index compiler. One unmarked stanza from "The Canonization" occurs in the midst of the sea of clean pages in the *Songs and Sonets* section:

> We can dye by it, if not live by love,
>   And if unfit for tombes and hearse
> Our legends bee, it will be fit for verse;
>   And if no peece of Chronicle wee prove,
>   We'll build in sonnets pretty roomes;
>   As well a well wrought urne becomes
> The greatest ashes, as halfe-acre tombes,
>   And by these hymnes, all shall approve
>   Us *Canoniz'd* for Love. (203, Dd2r)

As Dayton Haskin has shown, this most familiar of Donne stanzas actually received very little attention before the twentieth century, and the index compiler is no exception to this rule.[61] Yet, knowing

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[61]"On Trying to Make the Record Speak More about Donne's Love Poems," in *John Donne's "desire of more": The Subject of Anne More Donne in His Poetry*, ed. M. Thomas Hester (Newark and London: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1996), pp. 39-65.

what we do about the index compiler, we might wonder just what about these lines could have *not* interested our reader. The paradox of the first line includes the punning occurrence of "dye" which appears in the "Christs blood" entries; "Graves"—while not exactly "Tombs"—is also a subject in the index, with two entries; as in the "Verses" citation, poetry is a substitute for "tombes"; and the image undergoes a delightful convolution when "sonnets" are compared (using the readers' favorite figure, the simile) with "a well wrought urne."

It was Cleanth Brooks who brought "The Canonization" "to the center of Donne's canon" (Haskin 42); if Brooks had compiled an index in the back of his Donne (surely too "scientific" a procedure for him), he might have cited the above stanza from "The Canonization" under his "Verses" heading. The poem is exemplary for Brooks not only because it "is an instance of the doctrine which it asserts," that is, "the well-wrought urn."⁶² Brooks locates a "paradox" at the poem's center—that "the poet daringly treats profane love as if it were divine love"—and goes on to assert poetry's inevitable motion towards paradox (11). "The language of poetry is the language of paradox," he famously announces, since "apparently the truth which the poet utters can be approached only in terms of paradox" (3). Both Brooks and the index compiler are interested in metaphor, paradox, even "Verses" as "Tombs" or at least "urns"—yet these similarities only sharpen our perception of their differences. "Verses" for Brooks are somewhat like "Tombs," but he insists that "urns are not meant for memorial purposes only" (21); it is not only their pragmatic use-value that counts. "Verses" are, instead, vessels of the truth of paradox. Good poets and readers "must be prepared to accept the paradox of the imagination itself" in order to breath life into the urn-poem's ashes, from which will rise a Phoenix of "Beauty, Truth, and Raritie" (21).

The "paradoxes" Brooks finds in "The Canonization" are very different from those recorded in the index. A better word than "paradox" to describe what Brooks admired about Donne might be the poet's "dialectical" combination of unlike terms ("the poet daringly treats profane love as if it were divine love"). The paradoxes which

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⁶²"The Language of Paradox" in *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1947), 17.

interest the index compiler, on the other hand, are always paradoxes of faith.[63] In "*La Corona*," for instance, the compiler marks a passage cited in the entry "God":

> "   The ends crowne our workes, but thou crown'st our ends,
> For, at our end begins our endless rest. (28, E2v)

This complex sentiment again exhibits the familiar blend of end and beginning, death and re-birth. On the next page is a passage recorded under "Virgin M*ary*":

> yea thou art now
> Thy Makers maker, and thy Fathers mother,   "
> Thou'hast light in darke; and shutst in little room,
> Immensity cloysterd in thy deare wombe. (29, E3r)

These powerful paradoxes, observed by all the church fathers, involve the mysteries of existence and immortality, unanswerable questions shrouded in a cloak of unknowing. So while his was a *paradoxical* Donne, the index compiler seems not to have read a *dialectical* Donne at all. If it is true, as Hester claims, that Donne's poems "challenge the readers to privilege either the profane dramatic situation or the sacred analogy" the poems posit (132), the index compiler has chosen the latter, perhaps less comfortable than twentieth-century critics with the more material of Donne's metaphors, the suggestive substance in which the idea of spiritual love is enfleshed.

While many of the passages recorded in the Folger index are explainable within the context of seventeenth-century religion and rhetoric, there are a few passages to which the reader seems to be responding for quite personal and utterly irrecoverable reasons. For instance, the index includes a heading called "Short Galleryes," the single page reference pointing to "A Letter to the Lady Carey, and Mrs Essex Riche, From Amyens." Donne has been praising the Lady and at the end of the letter turns his attention to her sister,

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[63]See Murray Roston, *The Soul of Wit: A Study of John Donne* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), especially 172-75 in the chapter "The Paradox of Faith."

>   shee
>   Of whom, if what in this my Extasie,
>   And Revelation of you both I see,
> "   I should write here, as in short Galleries
>   The Master at the end large glasses ties,
>   So to present the roome twice to our eyes,
>   So I should give this letter length, and say
>   That which I said of you. (114, Q1v)

"Short Gallerys" is a part of Donne's simile here, and while the image seems to have little importance to the verse, it is actually a neatly self-referential image of the letter itself. Rather than extending the letter by praising Mrs. Riche, he uses the image to suggest that, since all the virtues of the one are reflected in the other, there is no need to repeat them. This entry might cause us to wonder if the "short Galleryes" image reminded the compiler of a particular gallery—possibly his own?—or whether the figure ever appeared in a sermon or devout letter.

Swift and Glanvill might point to this entry in support of their low estimation of the scholarly value of indexes; yet for its original compiler, "An Index" likely was at the metaphorical *center* of his book, not merely the excretory supplement which "comes from *Behind*." Certainly some of the entries are more difficult to decipher than others, and no one would argue that each entry is important to Donne scholarship or provides a better understanding of the poems. Yet this document provides valuable insight into Donne's near-contemporary readership. Perhaps more seventeenth-century readers used Donne's verse for ecclesiastical purposes than previously supposed, and there may be other religious readers who admired and imitated some quite sensual images, perhaps appropriating them for use in a sacred context. This revealing index, the reader's shortcut to useful phrases and "Expressions," can be a passageway for modern-day readers as well, allowing us to glimpse a few moments in the history of reading.

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Appendix

An Index.

A.
Age 335
Annuntiation 168 <
Apparrell: 326 • 327 •
men in Authority 141 •

B.
Beauty 38 • 52 • 181 •
Beauty decayd • 59 •
Bodys • 70 • 72 • 109
Braine 21
Brides 121 • 137 •

C.
Change 48
Chastity 38
Christ 30 • 32 • 36 •
Christs blood 33 • 163 •
Xst [Christs] blood & our teares •
35 •
Church 169 •
Confidence 21
Contracts of Louers 197
Court 79 • 126 •

D.   (250
Death 36 • 61 • 66 • 67 • 69 • 182
•
Contemplation of our state
on our death-bed 263 •
Delight 302
Liberty by death 266 •
Dieing-men 44
Selfe-dispiseing 65 •

E.
Eye 65 • 117
Epithits 91 • 118

An Index.

Embassador 96
Example 104
Expressions • 130 • 142 • 166
168 • 179 • 191 • 169 • 119 • 123
•125 • 126 • 270 • 350 • 60 •

F.
Faire entrance fowle exit 54
—— gales of noe continuance 57
Faith 74 •
Feasts 132 •
Fortune 105 •

G.
God 28 • 274
Gods nearnesse 105
—— wrath 83
—— can-not 90 •
—— like man 39 •
Good 78
Good works 52 •   (56
Litle good better then great
nought
Good wishes • 102 •
Short Gallerys • 114 •
Graues 145 • 234 • 297 •
Greate place 106 •

H.
Heauen • 124 • 143 • 147 • 267

I.
Ioy 274
Ingratitude 84 • 56
Iudges 348 •

K.
Knowledge 62

An Index   An Index

A

Age. 335.
Annuntiation. 168.
Apparrell. 326. 327.
men in Authority. 330.

Beauty. 39. 52. 191.
Beauty decay'd. 59.
Bodys. 70. 72. 109.
Braine. 21.
Brains. 121. 137.

C

Change. 48.
Chastity. 38.
Christ. 30. 32. 36.
Christ's bloud. 34. 163.
2d. & 3d Co heavers. 35.
Church. 169.
Confidence. 21.
Contracts of Lovers. 197.
Court. 79. 126.

D

Death. 36. 61. 66. 67. 69. 102. 250.
Contemplation of our selves on our death beds. 263.
Delight. 302.
Liberty by death. 266.
Dieing-men. 44.
Selfe-dispoising. 64.

E

Eyes. 64. 117.
Epitaphs. 91. 118.
Embassador. 96.
Examples. 104.
Expressions. 130. 142. 166.
168. 179. 191. 169. 119. 123.
125. 126. 270. 350. 60.

F

Faith receaved fowle exit. 54.
— gates of not continue. 57.

F

Faith. 74.
Fasts. 138.
Fortune. 105.

G

God. 28. 214.
Gods nearenesse. 105.
— wrath. 83.
— can not goe.
— like man.
God. 70. 72. 89.
Gods workes. 52. (56)
Evill good after evill. great might.
Good workes. 102.
Short Gallerys. 84.
Genesis.
Gods great place.

H

Heaven. 124. 143.

I

Joy. 27.
Judges. 48.

K

Knowledge. 62.

L

Labour. 76.
Language. 296.
Shortness of life. 239.
Life. 115.

M

Man. 62. 37.
— how many.
Virgin M. 29.
Marriage. 120. 122.
Martyr. 277.

N

New promise.
Nice.

An Index | An Index

O

Obedience 148
Objects 153
Officious 303
Omissions 72
Oppressions

P
Passions
Prayer 355

R

S
Servant 99
Silence 13
Sinn 67
Spirits weak
Sleepe 57
Sweath 59
Soule 72 74
Study 99

T
Tongue 73
Trinity 99
Trinity 171
Truth 116

V
Vertue 101 141 142
Vertues 109
154
Vice 87
Wife & Family 368 369

W
Weaknesse 13
Will 110
Words 87 222
Wordlyng
writing 93