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John Donne's Use of Proverbs in His Poetry.

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JOHN DONNE'S USE OF PROVERBS IN HIS POETRY.

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Abstract

The main tendency in the criticism of Donne's poetry during the past two or three decades has been the effort to read the poetry in the light of the habits of thought of his age. One habit of thought or tradition popular in Donne's time was the use of the proverb as a stylistic device. The extent to which Donne uses proverbs and the ways in which he uses them have not been appreciated.

I have attempted to do two things in this study: to identify all the proverbial material which Donne uses; to analyze this material in order to determine Donne's characteristic uses. As a source for the proverbs current in Donne's day I have used primarily M. P. Tilley's Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, which is a compilation from several Renaissance collections of proverbs.

Donne uses 267 different proverbs a total of 352 times. His characteristic ways of using proverbs are for allusion, for amplification of the thought or imagery, and for an argument from authority. He sometimes uses proverbs for beginnings and endings. Each of these uses had been part of the proverb tradition and each was advocated by the Renaissance rhetoricians, such as Thomas Wilson, who did
much to encourage the widespread interest in the proverb during the Renaissance. Donne seldom uses a proverb mechanically. Rather, he adapts it to the context of the poem, and in the freedom, variety, and skill with which he treats proverbs he most resembles Shakespeare. Donne may have learned more about the use of proverbs from the Elizabethan dramatists than from the rhetoricians. Since the interest in proverbs declined sharply in the late seventeenth century, Donne is one of the last of the major poets, if not the last, to use them extensively.

Since the twentieth-century reader is generally unfamiliar with proverbs, a knowledge of them is of considerable value for an understanding of Donne's poetry. Proverbs are often needed to explicate an allusion or to understand the source of the imagery. Most proverbs have some conspicuous formal trait, such as ellipsis, or paradox, or alliteration, and Donne sometimes preserves this trait in his usage. Thus, the form of the proverb contributes something to Donne's style. Proverbs are primarily conventional, oral forms, and a knowledge of Donne's use makes the reader more sensitive to the conventional aspects of Donne's thought and to the conversational tone of his poetry. Some so-called "conceits," for example, are perhaps more accurately described as proverbs if such description keeps Donne's originality in focus. It is easy for us, too, to exaggerate Donne's learning and to explain a line or passage in terms of
Renaissance philosophy when, actually, a proverb seems to suffice. Finally, the proverb is characterized by common diction, and, therefore, the many proverbs in Donne contribute greatly to his "common language." Because proverbs are no longer in fashion, however, modern readers sometimes find an obscurity in passages where Donne seems to have been using the common language of his day.
INTRODUCTION

John Donne, once "kidnapped" by the poets and critics of the twentieth century, has been ransomed gradually over the last twenty or twenty-five years and is now back home in the seventeenth century. No longer is his poetry considered the norm for judging poetry and we do not hear so much any more about the "dissociation of sensibility" which followed Donne. One sign of his return to his own century is that no one today argues that Donne is a greater poet than Milton; another is that he is much less an inspiration, it seems, for the younger contemporary poets. In tracing the strong reaction against Donne as a "modern," Miss Helen Gardner finds its beginning in Rosemond Tuve's wellknown study of the differences between Elizabethan and metaphysical imagery and between Renaissance poetic theory and practice and modern theory and practice. Much of the ransom was provided by historical studies by scholars reacting to the excesses of the "new criticism." One of these scholars, Douglas Bush, comments on the controversy between the new critics and the historical critics:


2Ibid., p. 10.
In the modern view, Johnson's sane but limited neoclassical insight was focused largely upon degenerate extravagances and missed the essentials of the metaphysical genius. These would be, to attempt a brief summary of modern definitions: a philosophic consciousness as the matrix of amatory, religious and other poetry; the concentrated, pregnant fusion of thought and feeling, of argumentative logic and passion; the assimilation by an active and unified sensibility of widely different ideas and kinds of experience; the questioning exploration of the individual poet's complex impulses and attitudes in dramatic tension and conflict, rather than the presentation of an assured, preconceived result--a special kind of private rather than public poetry; a texture and tone not in one key but of mingled seriousness and ironic wit, of contrast and surprise; the homely and realistic or the erudite rather than the fanciful or mythological image, and the intellectual, organic, and functional rather than the decorative or illustrative use of it; the language and rhythms of speech, of expressive dissonance, instead of the smoothly "poetical."³

Following this excellent summary of several years of criticism, Bush remarks that modern views embodying many of these judgments have been formed after the fact and that some of the ideas are restatements of the views of nineteenth century critics who were in the romantic tradition. He then describes the results of several attempts to read Donne in the context of his own day, pointing out that historical criticism would add "important correctives" to the modern view which he has just summarized. These correctives are:

only psychological and technical novelties and neglecting the current rules of decorum governing the various poetic genres; that Donne's unified sensibility was really multiple and decidedly not philosophical, although he used philosophical ideas; that much of what is now taken to be peculiarly metaphysical or at least Donnian learning, from alchemy to religious iconography, was in its own day more or less common property; that supposedly unrelated ideas and images were less startling in an age that accepted the great chain of being and the divine unity and correspondence of all parts of creation. 

The value of historical criticism to our understanding of Donne was recognized early in this century by Sir Herbert J. C. Grierson, whose 1912 edition of the poems marked the beginning of the intense interest in Donne in the twentieth century. In the introduction to his edition, Grierson distinguishes between the approach of the literary historian and that of the lover of literature:

For the lover of literature, literary history has an indirect value. He studies history that he may discount it. What he relishes in a poet of the past is exactly the same essential qualities as he enjoys in a poet of his own day--life and passion and art. But between us and every poet or thinker of the past hangs a thinner or thicker veil of outworn fashions and conventions. The same life has clothed itself in different garbs; the same passions have spoken in different images; the same art has adapted itself to different circumstances. To the historian these old clothes are in themselves a subject of interest. His enjoyment of Shakespeare is heightened by finding the explanation of Falstaff's hose, Pistol's hyperboles, and the poet's neglect of the Unities. To the lover of literature they are, until by understanding he can discount them, a disadvantage because they invest the work of the poet with an irrelevant air of strangeness. He studies them that he may grow familiar with them and forget them, that he may clear and intensify his sense of what alone has permanent value, the poet's individuality and the art in which it is expressed. 

4Bush, pp. 131-132.

5The Poems of John Donne (London, 1912), II, vi.
Donne criticism has turned more and more to an effort to lift the "veil of outworn fashions and conventions" and readers have become more aware that the "clothes" are old rather than modern. So, for example, Donne's relation to the "new philosophy which calls all in doubt" is now seen in the light of his relation to scholastic philosophy;^ Donne the "metaphysical" poet is now seen in a broader scope as the monarch of wit.7 Donne the anti-Elizabethan and anti-Petrarchan relied more on Elizabethan and Petrarchan conventions, it has been demonstrated, than was once thought.8 Studies of the supposed "school of Donne" have revealed that he was not "fundamentally antithetical to Jonson, whose influence even cooperates in certain directions with that of Donne"9 and that Donne's influence must be seen in terms of the "general sensibility of the age."10 Recently, Donne's school has been interpreted as those fifteen or more courtiers and wits with whom he was closely associated and for whom, it is held, he wrote his


8See Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1947) and Pierre Legouis, Donne the Craftsman (Paris, 1928).


10Ibid.
poetry.\textsuperscript{11} We have learned a great deal, too, about the relation of Donne's religious poetry to the methods of meditation popular in his own day.\textsuperscript{12} Miss Helen Gardner, who has contributed greatly to an understanding of Donne's religious poetry, believes that the attempt to read Donne in the light of a knowledge of the habits of thought of his age, and to define his originality by a study of the traditions that he turned to his own purposes, is still the road that offers the "best hope of arriving at the secret of his power."\textsuperscript{13}

There remains at least one tradition in Donne's poetry which has, to my knowledge, never been examined. This is the tradition of the proverb used as a stylistic device, a tradition very much alive in Donne's own day, and it had been one of the central traditions in the course of English literature.

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent and in what ways Donne uses proverbs in his poetry; that is, to read Donne in the light of a particular habit of thought of his age. The identification of the proverbial material in the poetry, which constitutes Part II, provides the basis for Chapters II-VI of Part I. By itself, Part II is the evidence that one of Donne's significant sources, hitherto not fully recognized, is proverbial material. The

\textsuperscript{11}A. Alvarez, \textit{The School of Donne} (New York, 1961).

\textsuperscript{12}Louis L. Martz, \textit{The Poetry of Meditation} (New Haven, 1954).

\textsuperscript{13}Gardner, p. 11.
chapters of Part I (except the first, which is a sketch of the proverb tradition in English literature) are attempts to analyze the various uses Donne makes of the material. Part I is, then, a study of one element of Donne's style, if style is understood not as something detachable from the literary work, but as the recurrent features of the texture of meaning. One of these features in the texture of meaning of Donne's poetry is the proverb.

The chief values of this study are an increase in our knowledge of Donne's sources and a better understanding of his style. These values have long been recognized as the fruits of the study of a writer's use of proverbs. Morris Palmer Tilley, one of the outstanding students of the proverb in the Renaissance, has said that "among the sources of a writer, the proverbial material used by him should be recognized." Tilley himself made major contributions to our knowledge of the proverbial material used by Lyly and Shakespeare. He "felt a deep responsibility to Shakespeare," says Hereward T. Price, who adds that:

Tilley was convinced that the proverbs were of inestimable value because, in particular, they clear up passages hitherto obscure and, in general, they lead to a more intimate understanding of important characteristics in Shakespeare's style.

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14 For this definition of style, see Monroe C. Beardsley, Aesthetics (New York, 1958), p. 222.


16 Ibid., p. v.
Shakespeare's use of proverbs has been studied to some extent, but Donne's not at all.  

The value of a knowledge of proverbs in clearing up passages thought to be obscure is especially evident in Donne's poetry. Many have found in Donne as obscurity which they attribute to his carelessness or wilfullness or to his esoteric knowledge. But many passages prove, upon examination, to be proverbs or allusions to proverbs which seem obscure to us because we have lost touch with proverbs.

In Chapters II-IV, I discuss those features of Donne's style which became clear after analyzing the mass of proverbial material in Part II. The terms of classification, "allusion," "amplification," and "authority," I have taken from the Renaissance rhetoricians or from Tilley. One chapter is devoted to each of these uses. Chapter V is concerned with the usual stylistic traits of the proverb and their relationship to Donne's style. Chapter VI considers some of the general comments on the metaphysical style, and here I attempt to show that a knowledge of proverbs as a source for a metaphysical poet, in this case, Donne, forces us to modify some statements about metaphysical obscurity and helps us to

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understand better statements about colloquial diction and conversational tone. I say "in this case, Donne," for I am certain that both Vaughan and Herbert used proverbs extensively, and I believe that studies of their use will, along with other studies such as this one, bring about some modification of our view of the metaphysical poets.

The method I have used to identify proverbial material in Donne seems to be the only practical one, although it does have some weaknesses. To recognize a proverb, one must first know the proverb, obviously, but this presents a difficulty for most twentieth-century readers, who come in contact with few proverbs in their speech or their reading. Without Tilley's Dictionary, a study of this type would present great difficulties. But it is possible after reading Tilley's Dictionary or The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs to familiarize oneself with a great number of proverbs. Moreover, one develops a certain feeling for a proverb that permits a tentative identification which can then be checked against the dictionaries. Many of the identifications were stumbled on while I was checking on an entirely different proverb. The weakness of this method is that one never feels he has identified absolutely all the proverbial material. An allusion may have escaped him here, an alteration there. In some cases, a phrase or a line in Donne resembles a proverb so closely that, although identification is not certain, it seems likely. It is probable, then, that of any errors in Part II, most are on the side of inclusiveness.
An alternate method for identifying a proverb would have been to use a definition as a touchstone. But the difficulties with this method are far greater than with the one I have used, for the definition of the proverb has never been fully achieved. It is a task that is, according to Archer Taylor, "too difficult to repay the undertaking" if the intention is to obtain a definition that can be used as a touchstone. Taylor believes that we can identify a proverb not through a definition, but by an "incommunicable quality [which] tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not." Because of this incommunicable quality, Taylor remarks that those who are not native speakers of a language will never recognize all its proverbs, which means that "much that is truly proverbial escapes us in Elizabethan and older English."\(^{18}\)

Although Taylor would be content with a provisional definition of the proverb as "a saying current among the folk," since "so much of a definition is indisputable"\(^{19}\) and the significance of other elements could be seen later, Tilley notes in the Foreword to his dictionary that such a definition is too limited. He says that the proverb collectors and the writers of the period from 1500 to 1700 had an elastic conception of what was proverbial, admitting material into their collections which seemed to them to be proverbial or "at least of sufficient currency to be entitled to that


\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 3.
term." An example of that elasticity is provided by John Heywood's *A Dialogue conteining the number in effect of all the proverbes in the Englishe tongue* (1546). In a recent study of this work, Rudolph E. Habenicht concludes that:

... the Dialogue contains far more than just 'proverbs.' In a total of 2,744 lines, there are not only 1,139 proverbs and 128 proverbial comparisons and epithets, of which 113 appeared first in the revised (c. 1549) edition of the Dialogue, but also 200 figurative expressions (not recorded elsewhere as proverbs), and 127 idiomatic phrases and oaths are recorded by Tilley as proverbs and are here so listed in the index. About 228 proverbs and 60 proverbial comparisons and epithets are not recorded either by Tilley or by ODP /Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs/. Together these sayings make the Dialogue an important source for a knowledge of the colloquial idiom of the first half of the sixteenth century.

In spite of this loose and flexible understanding of the term "proverb" by English writers and collectors, students and scholars have found it necessary to develop a working definition and to determine the distinctions, where possible, among related terms such as adage, aphorism, sententia, apothegm, charm, and learned and popular proverbs. The distinctions are not easy. The proverb is distinct from the maxim in that its wisdom is of a "homely, popular variety, which is expressed through figures and in language similarly homely and popular." The true proverb is distinct from the proverbial comparison, such as "merry as a cricket," in

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20 Tilley, p. v.
22 Habenicht, p. 2.
that the proverb is a complete sentence; the comparison is not a wise saying but is used for descriptive and intensive purposes.\(^23\) The differences between the proverb and similar forms have been summarized by Habenicht as follows:

The common proverb is a particular species of a large body of moral maxims and sententiae which express some counsel, ethical precept, or truth in a succinct and memorable way. It differs from the adage, or maxim, in its language and style, the proverb being usually concrete, metaphoric, and frequently rhythmical; the adage is usually abstract and prosaic. The proverb, furthermore, is figurative in concealing a 'hidden' meaning, whereas the wise saying is direct in expression and unenigmatic in meaning.\(^24\)

Habenicht admits, however, that such a distinction is an ideal one, "for the common proverb in the sixteenth century is frequently confused or loosely associated with the classical adage, the wise 'proverbs' of Solomon, simple figurative expressions, or the sage sayings of the Fathers.\(^25\) One writer, while admitting that the early Tudor writers left no definition of the proverb, studied the various sayings which they called proverbs and concluded that by the term "proverb" they meant:

\[
... a grammatically complete statement, in common use, expressing a generalization of some kind or prescribing some type of behavior, brief in its form of expression, and usually, but not always, crystallized by some conspicuous formal characteristic.\(^26\)
\]

\(^{23}\)Habenicht, pp. 64-65. \(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 1.

\(^{25}\)Ibid., p. 1.

There were several synonyms for "proverb" used by Renaissance writers, further evidence that the term was not defined with much precision. Some of these synonyms are: "ballad," "byword," "old clerk's saw," "text," "old said saw," "old common saying," and "word." The adage or wise counsel was sometimes called "proverb" and vice versa. For example, Sir Thomas Elyot says in his Dictionary (1538), that he has not omitted "proverbes, called Adagia, or other quicke sentences" which he considers "necessarie to be had in remembrance," and John Palsgrave quotes an English proverb in Acolastus in this way: "... in our adage it is hard halting before a cryple." 27

Quite often the writer indicated for his readers that he considered a saying as proverbial by some introductory phrase, such as "The proverb goeth ..., " "As the Proverb is ..., " "as we say ..., " "We say ...," 28 There were also attempts to indicate either a foreign source or analogue, or to specify that the proverb was English. Ben Jonson says in Epicoene II.vi.10, "Saltat senex, as it is i' the proverbe," indicating the Latin origin of the proverb, "All is well, the old man dances." From Chaucer's time and earlier there appear such identifying phrases as "the common proverb," the "proverb of old English," "our English proverb." The proverb was also designated as "the old proverb," an "old ancient proverb," "the proverb of antiquity," "the old spoken

27 Elyot and Palsgrave are quoted by Habenicht, p. 1.
28 Tilley, pp. v-vi.
proverb" or "the old and trite proverb."29 A common seventeenth-century reference was to "the vulgar proverb," indicating, perhaps, the shift in literary taste which led gradually to the depreciation of the proverb in the eighteenth century. Donne, however, often uses some neutral phrase to identify a proverb, as will be seen in Chapter IV.

There is no sharp distinction between the proverb and the apothegm or the proverb and sententiae. Charles Smith, in a recent study of Shakespeare's proverb lore, reminds us of Tilley's point that the conception of the proverb was elastic, and he therefore makes no distinction between the two in his study, following the Renaissance practice.30 The distinction between the proverb and an apothegm seems to be not in kind but in the frequency of repetition. Taylor points out that some simple apothegms such as "Live and learn," "Them as has gets," "Haste makes waste," and "What's done is done" are characterized by a lack of metaphor but these "bold assertions" are recognized as proverbial because they are often used and can be applied to many situations.31 It is these simple apothegms, he says, which are the most difficult to recognize in a later age when they are no longer used and we have lost our ear for them.32

Another possible distinction is between the "learned" proverb and the "popular" one, and it would be easy to expect

29 Habenicht, pp. 1-2.
31 Taylor, p. 5. 32 Ibid., p. 6.
Donne to use the former rather than the latter, because of the emphasis that has been placed on his learning. This distinction is, however, not considered proper by those who have studied the proverb. It is true that the "learned" proverb can often be traced because it has been preserved in literature from classical times on down, whereas the "popular" proverb has no such record. So, "Know thyself" might have been a proverb long before it was attributed to any of the seven wise men or was inscribed on the walls of the temple of Delphic Apollo.  

Proverbs and proverbial phrases were one element of colloquial language, but the proverb was also considered a rhetorical figure. A rhetorical trait found in the simplest non-metaphorical aphorisms is parallel structure, frequently accompanied by contrast with respect to words, structure, and thought. Taylor gives the following examples:

Simple proverbial forms like Many men, many minds; Like master, like man; The more he has, the more he wants; Nothing venture, nothing win; Testis unus, testis nullus are dominated by parallelism. The repetition of the same word in two phrases heightens the effect of the contrasting second members. Many proverbs employ contrast alone by separating contrasting words with a colorless predicate: Hindsight is better than foresight; The longest way round is the shortest way home. A more complicated use of these devices is seen in Young saint, old devil; Man proposes, God disposes; The nearer the church, the farther from God; Spare the rod and spoil the child; Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise. Here we have parallelism of structure used to emphasize the contrast in words. Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise

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33Taylor, p. 6.
illustrates a chiastic use of contrast with parallelism of structure.\(^3\)

These rhetorical characteristics of proverbs make it quite likely that they would interest a man who was both poet and preacher. Chapter V is a discussion of the rhetorical traits of proverbs which are part of Donne's style.

Although it has been necessary to examine briefly the loose and strict definitions of the proverb in order to know what kind of material the study deals with, the problem of definition need not be solved now. In this study I have not used a definition to identify material as proverbial. Rather, I have admitted as proverbial only those expressions already listed in one of the two standard collections of English proverbs, Tilley's *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* and *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*. Since these two works draw their material largely from earlier collections of proverbs which, as Tilley says, had an elastic notion of the proverb, it could be said that I have adopted the loose definition of "proverb." Part II, then, includes comparisons, adagia, and sententia, all of which might not be included in a collection of proverbs strictly conceived. My chief interest is in the conventional quality of the material Donne used, in the expressions in his poetry which were popular in his day, and therefore the inclusive definition is the desirable one. It is this proverbial material in a broad sense which furnishes

\(^3\)Taylor, pp. 143-144.
evidence of how closely in contact was a writer of a distant age with the popular ideas and popular expressions of his day. There is no more certain way, I believe, for estimating the degree to which a writer observed the speech habits of his day and, conversely, appealed to his audience by using familiar expressions. The proverb (or proverbial material), it should be remembered, is primarily a spoken form, and the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were "soaked in proverbs." There were many streams whose confluence produced the flood of proverbs in the Renaissance, some of which began centuries earlier. All of these streams or traditions can be grouped under two aspects, oral and written, and a brief survey of these two is the subject of Chapter I.

THE TRADITION: ORAL AND WRITTEN

When Donne used proverbs in his poetry or in his preaching, or, for that matter, in his conversation, he was simply doing what everyone else was doing in his day. Proverbs were so much a part of the culture of not only Renaissance England, but of Renaissance Europe,\(^1\) that their use would have surprised no one. This chapter will show that the popularity of the proverb in Renaissance England was the culmination of a long tradition by outlining the tradition from the beginnings through the seventeenth century. The purpose of this outline is two-fold: to emphasize the number and variety of influences to which Donne was exposed; to examine briefly some of the more important literary uses to which the proverb had been put from the earliest English literature through Shakespeare, thus providing a basis for an evaluation of Donne's place within the tradition of employing the proverb as a stylistic device.

In order to stress the peculiar nature of the proverb, namely, that it is primarily an oral form, I have organized the tradition into two parts, oral and written. Since proverbs owe their birth to the tongue rather than the

\(^1\)Tilley, p. vii.
pen, and appeal primarily to the ear, not the eye; they provide us with an insight into the oral qualities of Donne's poetry in a way that nothing else can. When Donne used a proverb, he was using a habit of speech shared by most of his contemporaries. Conversely, when Donne learned a proverb he might have learned it from listening, not from reading. We are so bound by the printed page that we are likely to think of a writer's sources only in terms of written origins. For example, once we learn that many of the proverbs used by Donne also appear in two collections of proverbs by his friend George Herbert, Outlandish Proverbs (1640) and Jacula Prudentium (1651), we are inclined to think of Donne learning from Herbert's manuscript or of Herbert learning from Donne's poetry. It seems just as likely, however, that both learned the proverbs from various sources, some oral, some written.

In Donne's day, proverbs appeared everywhere. They were in all forms of writing, from school grammars to political satires. They were used for instruction in foreign languages, and they were illustrated in emblems and paintings. They were used in the marketplace and in the court. They were "everybody's weapon," "the small change of conversation." The status of proverbs in Elizabethan England, described by Heseltine in the following passage, was probably little changed in the first half of the seventeenth century:

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3Tilley, p. viii.
By the beginning of Elizabeth's reign every one—scholars, wits, courtiers, writers, the queen herself—spoke and wrote in proverbs, even invented them. They welcomed them for their common sense, or because of the 'sweet relished phrases' that struck the wide-open eyes and ears of the time with a delicious novelty.4

It is, of course, impossible to determine with much certainty all the oral influences on Donne. There are, however, at least three situations in which Donne must have heard and have spoken proverbs: the family, the pulpit, and the theatre.

Some attention has already been given to Donne's family as the source of ideas that appear in his poetry. Clay Hunt believes that Donne's home environment helps explain why his "literary imagination could never get far from matters of religion, and why imagery from scholastic theology kept crowding into even his flashily cynical early love poems."5 Helen Gardner points out that in poems like "La Corona," "A Litany," and the Holy Sonnets, "Donne is using as the material of his poetry ways of devotion he had learnt as a child."6 The "La Corona" sonnets, furthermore, are based on habits of liturgical oral prayer, rather than on habits of reading and private meditation.7 Donne must have learned much orally, too, about proverbs from his family.

7 Ibid., p. xxii.
Since proverbs were widely used for the instruction of the young in manners and morals, Donne's family might have so used them. But there was every reason for the Donne family to have a special interest in proverbs: among its members were two distinguished writers who did much to promote the interest in proverbs. Donne's grandfather was John Heywood, the "mad, merry wit." Heywood's Dialogue of Proverbs was the second collection of proverbs in English, following Nicholas Udall's Apothegms. In the Dialogue, an older man counsels a younger man by means of proverbs. Heywood's plays, too, are full of proverbs.

Donne's great uncle was Sir Thomas More, who used proverbs frequently in both his polemical writings and in his meditative work, such as the Dialogue of Comfort, which also has the form of an older man instructing a younger through proverbs. Thomas More recalls his own father's telling him that selecting a good wife is like trying to pick an eel out of a bag of snakes, a truth of experience which had become proverbial. It is not hard to imagine John Donne himself hearing such practical wisdom from his own father or from some other member of the family circle. Furthermore, a close friend of Sir Thomas More's was Erasmus,
who probably had greater influence in the spread of proverbs in the Renaissance than any other man. With such distinguished men, all of whom used proverbs extensively, belonging to the family circle, it seems likely that the Donne family would have used them often in day-to-day conversation. Proverbs in family speech then would have influenced Donne as strongly as family habits of prayer.

Another major influence upon Donne would have been the pulpit, one of the many forces at work for the diffusion of proverbs in the sixteenth century.\(^\text{13}\) The Bible, the chief source for the preacher, especially the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus, was an inexhaustible source of proverbs.\(^\text{14}\) In the Christian era, the Church Fathers sometimes "reshaped in more pregnant form the words of Biblical wisdom"\(^\text{15}\) and later, the translations of the Bible into the modern languages provided many proverbial expressions. Proverbs were collected in both Latin and the vernacular specifically for use by preachers. Although many of the sayings preserved in the homilies are trivial and artless, G. R. Owst believes that we should be grateful to the preacher because the proverbs "reveal, sometimes with almost startling effect, the unchanging psychology of our race, the eternal sameness of conversational topic, the similarity of outlook and the

\(^{14}\)Taylor, p. 53.
similarity of impression, even an identity of phrase throughout the centuries."\(^{16}\) It is in these proverbs, Owst says, that we hear "the cry of an ever-burdened, almost despairing peasantry that loves to shake off its sorrows and its fears with these quaint pessimistic folk utterances."\(^{17}\)

Donne was aware, no doubt, that proverbs were useful, even necessary elements in a sermon for the reasons described by Owst. Donne's wide knowledge of life is especially evident in his prose writings, says Evelyn Simpson, and she describes his sermons as "full of the ripe wisdom of experience gathered in many difficult walks of life."\(^{18}\) Even at a time of great personal grief, Donne makes use of a proverb. Miss Simpson notes that in the Easter sermon which he preached after the death of his daughter Lucy, Donne says:

\begin{quote}
He was but a heathen that said, If God love a man, Juvenis tollitur, He takes him young out of this world.\(^{19}\)
\end{quote}

We know also that proverbs were a frequent topic for trial subjects in the education of young men for the church, and that Donne and Jeremy Taylor attempted exercise themes on the same proverbs used by Aphthonius when he was a schoolmate of St. John Chrysostom's (345?-407 A.D.).\(^{20}\) Even if he had never written poetry, then, Donne would still have found

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\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 45. \(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 43.


\(^{19}\)LXX Sermons, no. 22, "Preached at S. Pauls, upon Easterday, 1627," quoted by Simpson, p. 267.

\(^{20}\)Habenicht, p. 11.
many uses for proverbs as a preacher.

The young John Donne was, we know, a "great frequenter of playes," and thus he was exposed to another strong oral influence toward using proverbs, which had long been a popular device of the playwright's. Proverbs abound in the medieval and Elizabethan drama. B. J. Whiting, in Proverbs in the Earlier English Drama, examines the Biblical plays, moralities, interludes, and early comedies and tragedies, tracing an unbroken line of usage from before 1400 to after 1600. Whiting finds that the authors of the religious plays, contrary to what one might expect, used proverbs not for instruction but rather "to enliven the dialogue in the comic scenes in an effort, perhaps, to give it realism." Comic characters are, in fact, "singled out by their use of proverbs." Because proverbs appeal to the ear, they "fit most convincingly into dialogue," and it is not surprising to find them used freely in the drama. We should not be surprised either to find Donne using them freely in many of his dramatic lyrics, where they help to characterize the speaker.

The chief point of Whiting's study is that:

... the use of proverbs had been conventionalized before the English drama developed into

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22 Whiting, p. 4.

23 Ibid., p. 4.

24 Ibid., p. x.
its most characteristic forms and that the popu-
laritv of homely sayings at the height of the
Elizabethan period was no more than a continua-
tion along familiar paths.25

The value of such knowledge is pointed out by Hereward T.
Price in his discussion of Webster's imagery. He says that
we must train ourselves to recognize proverbs which were
part of a stock of imagery common to all Elizabethan drama.
As Price says:

Many figures that appear to be brilliant
inventions turn out on inspection to be old
proverbs. When Bosola says: "Thou sleep'st
worse, then if a mouse should be forc'd to
take up her lodging in a cat's eare" (Duchess
of Malfi, IV, ii, 135-136), he appears to
have hit upon a striking figure. In reality
he is only employing a proverb well known to
the Elizabethans. They would approve of the
passage because Webster gave to an old saw a
novel application.26

The Elizabethan love of punning was expressed through proverbs,
where the pun was in the literal interpretation of a proverb.
Many plays had proverbial titles, such as Fast Bind Fast Find;
Hot Anger soon Cold; 'Tis good sleeping in a Whole Skin;
Measure for Measure; and The White Devil.27 Donne also, like
the Elizabethan dramatists, gives novel applications to old
proverbs and uses them for titles. He might have learned of
these uses without reading a word, but simply by frequenting
the plays, as he did.

25Whiting, pp. x-xi.
26"The Function of Imagery in Webster," Elizabethan
Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Ralph J. Kaufmann (New
For a comprehensive knowledge of every kind of proverb, however, he needed to attend no plays other than those of Shakespeare, whose work, according to Tilley, sums up the Elizabethan attitude toward proverbs. 28 "The dramatist Heywood," Tilley says, "resembles him (Shakespeare) in his use of the linked proverb," and "Webster comes near to him in skillful allusiveness," but no writer matches Shakespeare's comprehensive knowledge. 29

The proverbs in Shakespeare have been studied in some detail. They have been collected, explicated, and traced to possible sources. 30 There has been, however little detailed analysis of their functions in particular plays. Donne might have learned much from Shakespeare's practice. Tilley outlines five main uses of proverbs by Shakespeare, and we will see that each of these uses can be found in Donne, a fact which supports Tilley's statement that "what is true of Shakespeare will be found to apply to two centuries of English literature," 31 that is, to the literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Following are five uses of proverbs by Shakespeare as described by Tilley. 32

First, the proverb is sometimes distorted to achieve a comic effect. For example, "As dead as a herring" becomes "By gar, de herring is no dead so as I will kill him" (Merry

28Tilley, p. viii. 29Ibid., p. viii.
30Supra, "Introduction," note 17.
31Tilley, p. viii. 32Ibid., pp. vii-viii.
Second, the same proverb is shaped for different effects. The proverb "A red morning foretells a stormy day" is treated thus in Richard the Second:

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
As doth the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the east,
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
To dim his glory and to stain the track
Of his bright passage to the occident. (III,iii,62)

But in the First Part of Henry the Fourth, V,i,1, the same proverb becomes:

How bloodily the sun begins to peer
Above yon busky hill! The day looks pale
At his distemperature.

Third, a proverb is often expanded, as "Make hay while the sun shines" is:

The sun shines hot, and if we use delay,
Cold biting winter mars our hop'd-for hay.
(Third Part of Henry the Sixth, IV,viii,60-61)

Fourth, Shakespeare sometimes "merely glances at a proverb, giving us a splinter of it or a slight floating allusion." Tilley remarks that "for the Renaissance such dexterously evasive hints constituted one of the chief beauties of style." He illustrates the effect by calling attention to the way the proverb, "It is too late to call again yesterday," is woven into Salisbury's words:

One day too late, I fear me, noble lord,
Hath clouded all thy happy days on earth.
O, call back yesterday, bid time return,
And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men!
(Richard the Second,III,ii,67-70)

33Tilley, p. vii. 34Ibid., p. vii.
Finally, there is the long string of proverbs which Tilley credits to an Elizabethan delight in exuberance.\(^{35}\)

Sometimes the list of proverbs is used to give authority to the speaker, as in *Richard the Second*, II, i, 31-39, where the dying John of Gaunt says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Methinks I am a prophet new-inspired} \\
\text{And thus expiring do foretell of him.} \\
\text{His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,} \\
\text{For violent fires soon burn out themselves—} \\
\text{Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short.} \\
\text{He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes.} \\
\text{With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder.} \\
\text{Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,} \\
\text{Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.}
\end{align*}
\]

At other times, the same device is used to characterize a speaker who does not seem to be wise because of the hackneyed proverbs he uses. The speech of Polonius to Laertes (*Hamlet*, I, iii, 59-80) is a famous example of this usage.

Since the proverb is naturally suited for dramatic dialogue,\(^{36}\) it would seem that the dramatists did much to keep the proverb from becoming simply an ornamental device. In Shakespeare, as the examples cited by Tilley indicate, the proverb is part of a speech in a dramatic situation, suited to the character and the occasion. In contrast to the influence of the dramatists, especially Shakespeare, on the organic use of proverbs are the rhetoricians, who most often regarded the proverb as a detachable element of style, an ornament. Since the rhetoricians had a strong influence on the literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,\(^{37}\) the

\(^{35}\)Tilley, p. vii.  
\(^{36}\)Whiting, p. x.  
treatment of the proverb by the rhetoricians needs to be considered. But before we examine these aspects of the proverb tradition, a glance at the role of the proverb in the Renaissance grammar schools will provide a background for the influence of the rhetoricians.

The child in the English Renaissance could have learned proverbs in a number of ways, apart from the family or the pulpit: from books of maxims and counsels, from courtesy books, or from elementary Latin texts. In grammar school his knowledge of proverbs was developed by his study of Latin grammar, where proverbs were used for both translation and composition, and by exercise books and colloquial glosses. Smith presents the parallels between the proverbial material in Shakespeare and that in two books known to medieval and renaissance schoolboys, the Sententiae Pueriles of Leonard Culman and the Sententiae of Publius Syrus.

The theories regarding the use of proverbs were based on Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, and had been expressed in several exercise books which were in use throughout the Middle Ages and well into the seventeenth century. The most popular text in the Renaissance was a fourth century one by Aphthonius. Habenicht summarizes Aphthonius' treatment of the proverb:

In Aphthonius the proverb, one of fourteen several "topics" suitable for developing a theme, is defined as "a summary saying, in a statement

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38 Habenicht, p. 8.  
39 Smith, pp. 3-14.
of general application, dissuading from something or persuading toward something, or showing what is the nature of each." Proverbs are said to be true, plausible, simple, compound, or hyperbolic; and as topics for themes they may be worked out in this way: a brief encomium of him who made the saying followed by direct exposition, proof, contrast, enthymeme, illustration, example, and authority. The fourteen elementary topics with their model themes were recommended for use in several grammar schools during the sixteenth century, and in 1563 the text of Aphthonius was adapted into English by Richard Rainolde as A booke called the Foundacion of Rhetorike.\(^4^0\)

Other texts were used, such as Richard Sherry's *A treatise of schemes and tropes* (1550), which is based on an earlier compilation of rhetorical figures.\(^4^1\) The proverb was presented to the student not only as a topic for a theme, but as an authority or witness, and as an ornament.\(^4^2\) As Donald L. Clark says, the Renaissance rhetoricians continued the medieval notion that rhetoric was concerned mainly with style, and since *inventio* and *dispositio* of classical rhetoric were considered part of logic, rhetoric became mainly *elocutio* and *pronuntiatio*. He takes Sherry's work as typical in his definition of *elocutio* as the dressing up of thought.\(^4^3\)

One of the earliest and most popular textbooks of rhetoric in English was Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553). This work went through six editions in fifteen years and "was probably studied by every young writer of the day."\(^4^4\) Wilson repeats the uses of proverbs favored by the

\(^{4^0}\)Hebenicht, p. 77. \(^{4^1}\)Ibid., p. 12.  
\(^{4^2}\)Ibid., p. 12.  \(^{4^3}\)Clark, pp. 58-59.  
\(^{4^4}\)Heseltine, p. xiv.
medieval rhetoricians: emphasis, amplification, adornment, and embellishment. For example, Wilson says:

Agayne, sentences gathered and heaped together commend muche the matter. As if one should say: Revengeemente belongeth to God alone, and thereby exhorte manne to patience: He myghte brynge in these sentences with him and geve grete cause of muche matter. No man is hurte but of himself, that is to say: adversitie or wronge sufferinge is no harme to him that hathe a constaunt harte, and lives upright in all his doynges.45

Wilson also recommends the use of proverbs in The Rule of Reason, Conteyning the Arte of Logique.46 Another rhetorician, Henry Peacham, discusses the proverb in The Garden of Eloquence (1577) with an enthusiasm considered typical of the Renaissance:

Amongst all the excellent forms of speech there are none other more briefe, more signifi­cant, more evident or more excellent, than apt Prouerbs: for what figure of speech is more fit to teach, more forcible to persuade, more wise to forewarn, more sharpe to reprove, more strong to confirme or more piercing to imprint. Briefly, they are most profitable, and most pleasant, & may well be called, the Summaries of maners, or, the Images of human life: for in them there is contained a generall doctrine of direction, and particular rules for all duties in all persons.47

The rhetoricians, as these passages indicate, were interested in the proverb primarily for the weight that it could lend to an argument. They encouraged an interest in the proverb, which interest became manifest in the late

sixteenth century by an increasing number of proverb collections.

In the *Arte of Rhetorique*, Wilson acknowledges the value of a collection:

> But what nede I heape all these [proverbs] together, seynge Hewoodes Proverbes are in prynte, where plentye are to be hadde: whose paynes in that behalfe, are worthye immortall prayse.

Heywood's *Dialogue of Proverbs* was the second collection of English proverbs, following Nicholas Udall's *Apothegmes* (1542). In the mid-sixteenth century the interest in proverbs for their own sake was at a peak. Both of these works were translations in part of a collection by Erasmus published in 1500. This work, known in its mature form as the *Adagiorum Chiliades*, had an enormous influence on the interest in proverbs. It was a compilation of more than 4000 items, with each item explained. Like the later collections, it was a handy reference work for the schoolboy, the university student, the letter writer, and the versifier.

A brief description of some of the more important collections of proverbs to be published in England in the years 1500-1700, many within Donne's own lifetime (1572-1631), will indicate how intense was the interest. In 1614, a collection based on Heywood was published by William Camden. This collection of about four hundred proverbs was enlarged in the edition of 1623 and again in the editions

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49 Habenicht, pp. 17-18.
of 1629 and 1636. The interest of the clergy was reflected in the work of an English clergyman, Thomas Draxe, who published in 1612, a *Collection of Proper, Choice and Elegant Latin Words and Phrases*, and in 1616, *Bibliotheca Scholastica Instructissima Or, A Treasurie of Ancient Adagies, and sententious Proverbs* (1616), containing over two thousand proverbs listed under subject headings. Another clergyman, John Clark, produced his *Paroemiologia* in 1639, a collection of proverbs intended for the grammar schools. Finally, there was George Herbert's *Outlandish Proverbs*, published posthumously in 1640, and expanded by another editor for a second edition in 1651 under the title *Jacula Prudentium*. There were many other important collections of proverbs in languages other than English, such as John Florio's *First and Second Fruits* (1578 and 1591), which were dialogues written to introduce to Englishmen the proverbs beyond the Alps. 50

Apart from the schools, the rhetoricians, and the collectors, there was one other important source for Donne's knowledge of proverbs. This was nondramatic literature. From his reading of this literature, Donne could have learned much about the use of proverbs, but he would have learned nothing, I think, which would fully account for his own use of proverbs. Donne, like Shakespeare, tends to be quite flexible in his use of proverbs. Unlike Donne and Shake-
speare, many other writers tended to use proverbs mechanically, as didactic tools or stylistic ornaments.

Proverbs, as Taylor says, although used differently in every age, appear frequently in writings which appeal to the folk, and rarely in those types of literature far removed from the folk.51 The medieval German court epic, for example, a "relatively artificial and cultured product, shows a disinclination" for proverbs.52 The distinction cannot be made too definite, however, for Chaucer's sophisticated and anti-popular Troilus is full of them.53

Chaucer can be regarded as the medieval master of proverbs, just as Shakespeare is the Renaissance master. Proverbs appeared frequently in medieval nondramatic literature, in works like the Ancren Riwle, in the poetry of Gower and Lydgate.54 Chaucer used proverbs in the way his contemporaries used them, as he does in the tale of Melibee. In response to the host's criticism of "Sir Thopas," the character Chaucer offers to tell a "moral tale vertuous," adding:

Therefore, lordynges alle, I yow biseche,
If that you thynke I varie as in my speche,
As thus, though that I telle somewhat moore
Of proverbes than ye han herd bifoore
Comprehended in this litel tretys heere,
To enforce with th' effect of my mateere.55

But Chaucer's use of proverbs was not bound by the practice of his contemporaries or by the medieval rhetoricians. B. J.

51 The Proverb, pp. 171-172.  
52 Ibid., pp. 171-172.  
53 Ibid., p. 172.  
54 See Heseltine, pp. ix-xi.  
Whiting studied Chaucer's use of proverbs and concluded that:

No other poet of repute has made so considerable a use of proverbial material as Chaucer, and no one else ever used it so skillfully and effectively. He used proverbs to heighten characterization: the wise saws of Pandarus are as much a part of that engaging and abused companion of Troilus as are his courage and unfailing humor. Chaucer used proverbs to cap a climax, to emphasize a situation; he used them seriously and he used them humorously. He made them a part of his style. . . .

Whiting's comments on Chaucer's knowledge of the rhetoricians are useful in determining Donne's relationship to the rhetoricians. Chaucer often begins or ends a literary unit with a proverb, a practice recommended by the rhetoricians. But to argue that Chaucer took the precept from the rhetoricians is another matter. Whiting's opinion is that Chaucer might have been influenced by Deschamps and the fabliaux writers. Chaucer knew the precepts of the rhetoricians, but he could burlesque them, and it is his sense of humor that makes Whiting doubt the rhetoricians had a strong influence.

Likewise, Donne most probably knew the rhetoricians of his day, but he may not have been influenced strongly by them. He might have learned from Chaucer a skill and effectiveness closer to Shakespeare's than to the mechanism of those who followed the rhetoricians slavishly.

The early Tudor writers continued the practices of the medieval writers, and sixteenth century rhetoricians encouraged the use of proverbs. A recent study by Thomas

57 Ibid., p. viii.
Mauch lists the proverbial material in six major early Tudor writers: Barclay, Skelton, Wyatt, Tyndale, More, and Hall. After examining the works of Skelton and More in some detail, Mauch concludes that both writers follow the precepts of the rhetoricians, but not slavishly. Like the medieval writers, they use the proverbs as a form of authority, as a moral admonition without straightforward didacticism, and for beginning and ending a work. Both show superiority in using a proverb as a tool of satire.  

In contrast to the functional use of proverbs in satire stands the proverb used simply as an ornament, as it is in the prose of John Lyly. Lyly studs the pages of Euphues with proverbial gems, exaggerating the fondness of the age for fanciful and ornate language. It was once thought that Lyly's use of proverbs as an ornamental stylistic device was based on Pettie's Petite Pallace, but Lievsay suggests that both Lyly and Pettie may have been influenced by Stefano Guazzo's La Civil conversatione. The fact that a large number of Guazzian proverbs occur in Euphues reminds us that there was an international interest in proverbs at the time. One of the few references to Spanish vernacular literature in Donne's work, for example, is to a proverb. Miss Simpson points out that in one letter, Donne writes, "The Spanish proverb informs me, that he is a fool which cannot make one

58 Mauch, pp. 229-230.
59 Heseltine, p. xiv.
60 Lievsay, p. 79.
Sonnet, and he is mad which makes two.  

Donne may have learned some proverbs from Lyly, but he seems to have been little interested in Lyly's treatment of the proverb as an ornamental device. Donne's uses, as we shall see, are seldom if ever mechanical. Two poets who were Donne's contemporaries are, like Lyly, in contrast to Donne in their use of proverbs. In 1604 Anthony Sherley published *Witts New Dyall: Or, a Schollers Gaze*, a work consisting of poems on general and moral topics, such as "Of God," "Of Christ," "Of Truth," "Of Prayer," "Of Vice," "Of Pride." The verse has been described as a kind of wretched anticipation of the metaphysical. The poems are essentially versified commonplaces:

Mariage is God's Indenture which he drawes
Twixt Man and Woman: tis life's Obligation;
It is Loues Piller: tis the Chayne of Laws;
Tis the good evill, the bitter delectation.

Wedlockes hell, is when the husband throwes
His frounes, his brawles, his curses, and his blowes,
On his Wifes head: yet spendes the amourus charmes
Of smiles and kisses in a strumpets armes.

Verse of this type, written when Donne was a young man, in no way prepares us for the way Donne handles commonplaces or proverbs. Neither does the following poem by Michael Drayton (1563-1631). Drayton's entire sonnet is made up of proverbs, but the mechanical artificial quality of the dialogue is unlike anything in Donne:

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61 *A Study of the Prose Works*, p. 48, note 3.
62 *Lievsay*, p. 207.
Sonnet 58 from *Idea to Proverbe*

As Loue and I, late harbour'd in one Inne,
With Proverbs thus each other intertaine;
In loue there is no lacke, thus I beginne?
Faire words makes fooles, replieth he againe?
That spares to speake, doth spare to speed (quoth I)
As well (saith he) too forward as too slow.
Fortune assists the boldest, I replie?
A hasty man (quoth he) nere wanted woe.
Labour is light, where loue (quoth I) doth pay,
(Saith he) light burthens heavy, if farre borne?
(Quoth I) the maine lost, cast the by away:
You have spunne a faire thred, he replies in scorne,
And having thus a while each other thwarted, 64
Fooles as we met, so fooles againe we parted.

Drayton's tour de force can serve as a contemporary contrast to Donne in the use made of proverbs. Drayton's poem is much closer to Lyly's prose than to Shakespeare's dramatic verse in that the proverbs, although unified by their application to love, are strung together in somewhat mechanical fashion. Donne seldom uses proverbs so mechanically. What characterizes his use of proverbs, especially, is their functioning as integral parts of a larger whole. Sometimes the proverbs help to develop the character of the speaker, and sometimes they are used to conclude an argument. Often the proverb is present only in an oblique reference, and at other times the idea or the imagery of the proverb is developed at length.

Donne's use of proverbs exhibits the control, the naturalness, the variety, and the subtlety that one finds in Chaucer and Shakespeare rather than the artificiality that strikes the reader of *Euphues* or of Drayton's sonnet.

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Part of the reason for this distinction is, no doubt, Donne's own artistic genius. Part of the reason, too, might be that Donne learned much of his usage from the living drama, where the proverb was a natural component of dialogue.

Donne's place in the tradition, then, is in a small group apart from the larger group of writers who used the proverb primarily as an ornament. Since Donne comes at the very end of a period when the interest in proverbs was intense, and just before the decline of that interest, he could be described as the last great artist to use proverbs in poetry. Following him, there are no poets of any significance who use proverbs. In fact, there are few writers in the eighteenth century who use them at all; it is during this time that the proverb is frowned upon in polite circles. There is some revival of interest in the nineteenth-century novelists, especially in Dickens and Trollope, but no poet of significance that I know of uses them again. Donne is, then, in a real sense, at the end of a tradition. In nondramatic poetry he is the fine flower of that tradition, comparable in his artistry only to Shakespeare.

In the next three chapters I have analyzed three main functions of proverbs for Donne. Although each of these functions--allusion, amplification, and authority--is recommended by the rhetoricians, each can also be found in Shakespeare. The terms are useful for analysis, regardless

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65 See Heseltine, pp. xvii-xx, and Tilley, p. vii, for brief discussions of the decline in interest in proverbs.
of where Donne learned the usage. In the discussion of each of these uses, other functions of proverbs will be treated when I am discussing entire poems, such as "The Canonization." These three uses are by no means the only ones that might be discussed, but they seemed to me, after analysis of the material in Part II, to be the most representative.
Studies of Donne's imagery usually emphasize its peculiar qualities, perhaps taking their direction from Dr. Johnson's emphasis on "the most heterogeneous ideas . . . yoked by violence together."1 The conventional aspects of Donne's style, particularly if he is viewed only in relation to the Petrarchan tradition, do not receive much attention because they do not seem to merit it. The following conclusion, reached by Milton A. Rugoff after a detailed study of Donne's imagery, is rather typical in its stress on Donne's uniqueness:

The final picture with which our study of Donne leaves us is of a writer who forsook for the most part the accepted poetic beauties and the romantic overtones of traditional imagery—particularly those of classical mythology and the world of nature; who forsook the charm of both the simple and the sensuous, leaving the first for poets like Herrick and the second for those like Keats, conscious that his own function lay elsewhere; who forsook, though much less completely, the warmth and humanity of the familiar and the common, finding more attractive that which lay beneath them, and who gave up, finally, loveliness in general, because above all he worshipped sense and intellectual meaning—those same gods to whom he had sacrificed smooth metre and liquid rhythm.2

2 Donne's Imagery (New York, 1939), p. 244.
It is easy to think of Donne only in terms of what he had forsaken, because that is so striking. But once one is aware of the extent to which Donne used proverbs, it is difficult to speak at all of his giving up the "warmth and humanity of the familiar and the common." Donne depended heavily on the familiar and the common when he used proverbs, but often the proverb is partially hidden in an allusion.

Donne alludes to a proverb, usually, in one of two ways. The first way is quite direct, and it consists of Donne's employing a conventional metaphor such as "Life is a pilgrimage" (128). There is nothing particularly witty or exciting about the use of such a proverbial expression, but we must admit that many such "familiar" images occur in Donne.

The second method is more interesting because it is more subtle. The proverb is hinted at quite obliquely, and, if the reader recognizes the allusion, the meaning of the passage is clarified. If he does not recognize the proverb, he may miss the full meaning of the passage, or, at worst, regard it as obscure. Tilley informs us that "for the Renaissance such dextrously evasive hints constituted one of the chief beauties of style." Take, for example, these lines from "The Second Anniversary":

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3The number in parentheses corresponds to the numbering of proverbs in Part II.

4Dictionary, p. vii.
And shee made peace, for no peace is like this,
That beauty and chastity together kisse:5
(Manley, p. 103, lines 363-64)

The force of the compliment depends on the reader's recognizing the allusion to the proverb, "Beauty and chastity seldom meet" (12). He then realizes that Donne is deliberately contrasting Elizabeth with the popular saying about beautiful women. In a recent edition of the poem, Frank Manley directs the reader to Psalm 85:10: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other," which is less relevant here, I think, than the proverb. Manley says that the "paradox of chaste beauty was a commonplace that had appealed to Donne before," but if we do not recognize it as proverbial we are not sensitive to the immediate response the allusion would have drawn from Donne's contemporaries.

Sometimes a passage will strike the modern reader as obscure, and the tendency may be to exaggerate the obscurity found in Donne by his contemporaries. For example, the twentieth-century reader is likely to regard as somewhat obscure these lines from Stanza XXVIII of "The Progress of the Soule":

Exalted she'is, but to the exalters good,
As are by great ones, men which lowly stood.
- It's rais'd, to be the Raisers instrument and food.

5For the text of the Anniversaries I have followed John Donne: The Anniversaries, ed. Frank Manley (Baltimore, 1963). Future references are to this edition, which will hereafter be referred to as Manley, and will be included in the text.

6Ibid., pp. 193-194.
The contemporary of Donne, however, would probably have understood these lines in the light of the proverb, "The great put the little on the hook" (100), which seems to be alluded to here. Grierson, although he does not cite the proverb, remarks that the line is to be taken as an "aphorism" in this sense: "To be exalted is often to become the instrument and prey of him who has exalted you."7

Donne's use of conventional simile and metaphor can be seen clearly in "Holy Sonnet VI," which is a tissue of proverbial expressions:

This is my playes last scene, here heavens appoint
My pilgrimages last mile; and my race
Idly, yet quickly runne, hath this last pace,
My spans last inch, my minutes latest point.8

In these first four lines, Donne has drawn most of his imagery from proverbs: "This world is a stage and every man plays his part" (265); "Life is a pilgrimage" (128); and "Life is a span" (129). Perhaps Donne is also thinking of the proverb, "The first Minute after noon is night" (174) in "my minutes latest point." In the next two lines,

And gluttonous death, will instantly unjoynt
My body, and soule, and I shall sleep a space.

(Grierson, I, 324, lines 5-6)

7The Poems of John Donne, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson (London, 1912), I, 306, lines 275-280. This edition will be referred to hereafter as Grierson and references will be included in the text.

8John Donne: The Divine Poems, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford, 1952), p. 7, lines 1-4. This text will be referred to hereafter as Gardner, DP, and references to the poems will be included in the text.
Donne seems to be alluding to the proverb, "Sleep is the image of death" (212), only here he is reversing the terms. The concluding line of the poem, "For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devill," is simply the proverbial statement (267) of the conventional images for the temptations which the Christian faces.

Sometimes, especially in the longer poems, Donne uses the same conventional metaphor more than once. For example, "The body is the prison of the soul" (22) appears twice in "The Second Anniversary":

Thinke in how poore a prison thou didst be
After, enabled but to sucke and crie.
(Manley, p. 96, lines 173-4)

Shee, whose faire body no such prison was, . . .
(Manley, p. 98, line 221)

This same proverbial imagery is used three times in "The Progresse of the Soule":

This soule to whom Luther, and Mahomet were
Prisons of flesh; . . .
(Grierson, I, 297, lines 66-67)

Now swome a prison in a prison put,
And now the Soule in double walls was shut,
Till melted with the Swans digestive fire,
She left her house the fish, and vapour'd forth;
(Lines 241-242)

This Soule, now free from prison, and passion, . . .
(Line 371)

This conception of the body as imprisoning the soul might be traced to Plato, who uses it in the Phaedo and elsewhere, or to one of the Cambridge Platonists, such as John Smith, who expresses in his Discourses the same view of the soul-body relationship. He says the good life is the effort
"... more and more to withdraw ourselves from these Bodily things, to set our soul as free as may be from its miserable slavery to this base flesh." But, since the imagery had appeared as early as 1581 in John Lyly's *Campaspe*, and was apparently conventional, it would seem safer to find Donne's source in the language of his day rather than in a more remote source. There are a number of these popular similes in Donne's poetry, such as: as dry as a bone (23); as hard as a stone (221); as black as jet (115); as white as ivory (114); as straight as a cedar (27); as black as hell (106); as changeable as a chameleon (30); as slow as a snail (214); as mute as a fish (78); as swift as lightning (131); as lustful as sparrows (218); as lecherous as a goat (91); to quake like an aspen leaf (126).

The other form of allusion which I have distinguished, which is perhaps more properly allusion because it is more covert than the first, is used extensively by Donne. The technique is to glance at a proverb, to give us, as Tilley describes Shakespeare's method, "a splinter of it or a slight floating allusion." The proverb is usually woven closely into the texture of the poetry, requiring an exercise of some wit on the part of the poet and calling for an equal exercise of wit by the reader, or at least for a knowledge

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10 See Tilley, B497.

of the proverb. To indicate how carefully Donne fits individual proverbs into the whole poem, I shall examine in greater detail two of his secular poems, "His Parting from Her" and "The Canonization," and several of the Holy Sonnets.

The way in which Donne can fit several proverbs into one poem is illustrated by Elegy XII, "His Parting from Her," which contains more or less oblique references to sixteen different proverbs. Of the sixteen, three are concerned with the general character of love and fortune, apart from the particular love. The fact that "Love is blind" (ll.1-4), for example, is introduced early in the poem:

Oh Love, that fire and darkness should be mixt,
Or to thy triumphs soe strange torments fixt?
Is't because thou thy self art blind, that wee
Thy Martyrs must no more each other see?

(Gardner, ESS, p. 97, lines 13-16)

In her recent edition, The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets (Oxford, 1965), Miss Helen Gardner places this poem among the "Dubia." There are, she says, no strong grounds for attributing the poem to Donne on the evidence of the manuscripts, and she argues that the internal evidence is strongly against accepting it as authentic (pp. xli-xlili). In effect, she says it is too poor a poem to be assigned to Donne. She is in direct opposition to Grierson, who argues that it "is so fine a poem that it is difficult to think that any unknown poet could have written it" (II, cxxxvi-cxxxvii). I have included the poem, fully aware that there is disagreement among the editors, and that it may not by authentic. I should add, however, that the technique of using proverbs in the poem is not strikingly different from the technique in other poems by Donne, although there is a proportionately larger number in this poem. If it is not Donne's, then it illustrates the same techniques used by one of Donne's contemporaries. The work will be referred to as Gardner, ESS, and the references will be included in the text.
A similar proverb, "Fortune (Justice) is blind" (82), is alluded to twice. The first time it is joined with an allusion to another proverb, "Great Fortune brings with it great misfortune" (84), in these lines:

So blinded Justice doth, when Favorites fall,  
Strike them, their house, their followers all.  
(Lines 33-34)

The second example is a good illustration of how Donne transmutes the common form of the proverb with his wit:

Till Fortune, that would rive us, with the deed  
Strain her eyes open, and it make them bleed.  
(Lines 61-62)

There are several other proverbs alluded to in this poem, most of them referring to love. A simple listing of the proverbs and the relevant lines will illustrate how heavily Donne has drawn upon proverbs in this poem:

1. As innocent (harmless) as a Dove (56)  
As loving (tame, patient) as a Dove (pigeon) (56)  
Love is blind (141)

   Yet Love, thou'rt Blinder then thy self in this,  
   To vex my Dove-like friend for mine amiss:  
   (Lines 29-30)

2. As lost as a Drop of water in the sea (57)  
   Or as I'had watcht one drop in a vast stream,  
   And I left wealthy only in a dream.  
   (Lines 27-28)

3. Love is full of fear (trouble) (142)  
   Or have we left undone some mutual Rite,  
   Through holy fear, that merits thy despight?  
   (Lines 19-20)

4. Love will find a way (150)  
   And we can love by letters still and gifts,  
   And thoughts and dreams; Love never wanteth shifts.  
   (Lines 71-72)
5. Love is sweet in the beginning but sour in the ending

Time shall not lose our passages: the Spring
Shall tell how fresh our love was in the beginning;
The Summer how it ripened in the ear; And Autumn, what our golden harvests were.
The Winter I'll not think on to spite thee, But count it a lost season, so shall shee.
(Lines 77-82)

6. After Night comes the day (180)

And dearest Friend, since we must part, drown night
With hope of Day, burthens well born are light.
(Lines 83-84)

7. The Sun shines upon all alike (227)

Though cold and darkness longer hang somewhere, Yet Phoebus equally lights all the Sphere.
(Lines 85-86)

8. Fortune (Woman) is constant only in inconstancy (83)

Be then ever your self, and let no woe
Win on your health, your youth, your beauty: so Declare your self base fortunes Enemy, No less by your contempt than constancy:
(Lines 89-92)

9. Say well is good but do well is better (201)

For this to th'comfort of my Dear I vow, My Deeds shall still be what my words are now;
(Lines 95-96)

10. Few Words show men wise (263)
Where many words are, the truth goes by (263)
Full of courtesy, full of craft (263)

Much more I could, but many words have made That, oft, suspected which men would persuade;
(Lines 101-102)

Thus, in a poem of 104 lines, Donne has alluded to sixteen proverbs, one of them, "Fortune is blind" (82), being used twice. There are several other proverbs in the poem which will be discussed under one of the other uses or will appear in Part II.
An awareness that Donne is alluding to a proverb can be an invaluable aid in explication. I do not wish to suggest that a mere identification of a particular phrase or line as proverbial somehow invalidates other interpretations of the passage which do not recognize the proverb. But the presence of the proverb tells us not only something about Donne's source, something about his originality, and something about his audience; the proverb can be a very useful tool in reaching a full understanding of his meaning. His poem, "The Canonization," for example, has provoked an enormous amount of criticism, and, although Donne uses several proverbs in the poem, this fact has been recognized by no commentator, to my knowledge. Take, for example, the third stanza:

Call us what you will, wee'are made such by love;
Call her one, mee another flye,
We'are Tapers too, and at our owne cost die.
And wee in us finde the'Eagle and the Dove:
The Phoenix ridle hath more wit
By us, we two being one, are it
So, to one neutrall thing both sexes fit.
Wee dye and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.

(Gardner, ESS, p. 74, lines 19-27)

A commentary which seems rather typical is that of Doniphan Louthan:

The speaker anticipates (in fancy) one term of invective which might be used: the couple as flies (i.e., either nobodies without ambition or common lechers). Developing his reply by the association of ideas, the speaker comments: We're not only taper flies fatally attracted by the flame, we're tapers as well. It's no skin off your nose: we die at our own cost. /The taper's burning consumes itself and nothing else; the lovers die gradually by intercourse, each instance of which deducts a day from
their lives--but nobody else is implicated. We find in us the eagle and the dove /symbols here of the aggressive and the submissive; perhaps the Eagle and the Dove, like the Ram and the Lamb, point to polar manifestations of God's nature . . . ; Edgar H. Duncan has noted that, in alchemical terms, the "eagle" and the "dove" are instrumental in the rise of the "phoenix."/ As Mr. Brooks notes, the flaming tapers and the birds merge at this point into the fabulous phoenix, a flaming bird which rises from its own ashes. The enigma of the phoenix makes more sense if the bird is taken as a symbol of unity in love. In a way, the phoenix-before and the phoenix-after constitute two beings in one--and so do lovers.13

This is a useful and suggestive commentary. What I wish to point out, however, is that several things that could be said, if the commentator were aware of the proverbs being used, have not been said.

First of all, very little of the imagery in the stanza is original with Donne, although the usual commentary might lead one to think so. Four proverbs, I believe, supply the primary images: "The Fly (moth) that plays too long in the candle singes its wings at last" (79); "A Candle (torch) lights others and consumes itself" (25); "An Eagle does not hatch a dove" (59); "As rare as the Phoenix" (186). Donne fuses the images and ideas in these proverbs into something new, but he had the proverbs at hand and must have expected the contemporary reader to recognize this.

13 The Poetry of John Donne: A Study in Explication (New York, 1951), p. 113. In "The Canonization": The Language of Paradox Reconsidered, ELH, xxiii, 36-47, William J. Rooney stresses the conventional character of the figures and images in the poem, although he does not cite the proverbs.
The speaker of the poem, defending himself against criticism, says that he and his lover have been made into something new by love. The speaker's comparison of himself and his lover to a fly playing about a candle until it singes its wings suggests the early stages of their love: both lovers can be called flies in the sense that they played long enough about the flame of love to get burned. Their relationship was at first, perhaps, only a flirtation. The speaker then says that the chiding friend can call them tapers. A taper, as Louthan points out, consumes itself and nothing else, and thus the image continues the theme of the first stanza:

"Alas, alas, who's injur'd by my love?" But the allusion to the proverb, "A candle lights others and consumes itself" adds another note, that of mutual giving. The flame of love in each lover feeds the flame in the other. They die gradually, perhaps by sexual intercourse, as Louthan suggests. But they die, also, in that the separate selves, flies or tapers, are consumed, but the consumption produces a new and unique being. It is the uniqueness of their love which the speaker is stressing, I believe, by his allusion to the proverbs concerning the Eagle and the Dove, and the Phoenix.

It would seem that any contemporary reader aware of the proverb, "An Eagle does not hatch a dove" (59), would recall it at this point. It was proverbial that the eagle and the dove are opposites. The usual sense of the proverb is seen in a passage in Pettie's translation of *The Civile Conversacon of M. Steeven Guazzo*, III, II 15 (1581):"Remembering the
saying /in choosing a wife/, that the Eagle breedeth not the Pigeon." The speaker does not say, "we are the Eagle and the Dove," but "wee in us finde the Eagle and the Dove." That is, after the death of ourselves and the creation of our new being, we find in us two things that are never found together according to popular wisdom. It may be that the eagle and the dove are symbolic of the aggressive and the submissive, or that there is also an allusion to alchemy. But on the popular or first level, one might say, the emphasis is on a unique creation. Here one might apply the principle of facilior lectio which Louthan advocates: " . . . choose the easiest reading the context will bear (whether or not there is a textual problem involved)."

The rarity of the love and what it has produced is underlined again by the reference to the phoenix. The rarity of the phoenix was proverbial, and, as the speaker says, "we two being one, are it."

There are other passages in the poem where a knowledge of proverbs is an aid to explication. The opening line of the third stanza, "Wee can dyé by it, if not live by love," is perhaps an allusive denial of two proverbs, "Lovers live by love as larks live by leeks" (157), and "They love too much that die for love" (157). Once again, Donne may wish to emphasize the unusual quality of the love by saying, in effect, that the common sayings about love,

14Tilley, E2.
15 The Poetry of John Donne, p. 22.
particularly the second proverb, do not apply in this instance.

The last stanza, which is made up of the invocation by other lovers to the saints of love, contains allusions to at least four proverbs. The opening lines, "And thus invoke us; You whom reverend love / Made one anothers hermitage;" appear to be a slight alteration of the proverb, "The lover is not where he lives but where he loves" (156). The popular idea is there, appropriately placed in the mouths of "all" who "shall approve / Us Canoniz'd for Love." The alteration is the inclusion of words with religious connotations, "reverend" and "hermitage," in keeping with the prayer-like tone. The next line, "You, to whom love was peace; that now is rage" is a glance at either "Love is a sweet torment" (140) or "Love is full of fear" (142). Love is now "rage" for the lovers making the invocation, but it never was that for the canonized, which again underscores the rarity of their love. One explication of these final lines is made possible by a knowledge of proverbs:

Who did the whole worlds soule extract, and drove
Into the glasses of your eyes,
So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize,
Countries, Townes, Courts: Beg from above
A patterne of your love!

(Gardner, ESS, pp. 74-75, lines 40-45)

Louthan has little to say about these lines, perhaps giving consent by his silence to the difficulties discussed by Grierson. Grierson is quite firm in his rejection of E. K. Chambers' version, which reads:
Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
into the glasses of your eyes;
So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize--
Countries, towns, courts beg from above
A pattern of your love.16

Of this reading, Grierson says:

These harsh constructions are not Donne's. The
object of 'drove' is not the 'world's soul,' but
'Countries, towns, courts;' and 'beg' is not in
the indicative but the imperative mood. For
clearness' sake I have bracketed ll. 42-3 and
printed 'love!' otherwise leaving the punctua-
tion unchanged.17

What is the source of the imagery and what exactly is the
meaning of the first two lines? What is the "world's soul"
and in what sense was it driven into the "glasses" of the
lover's eyes? Plausible answers to these questions can be
made, I believe, on the basis of a proverb to which Donne
seems to be making a veiled allusion. The proverb is, "The
Eye is the window of the heart (mind)" (68). If one takes
as the antecedent of "who" not the lovers but "love" which
made them one another's hermitage, then it was love that
extracted the whole world's soul or heart, and drove it into
their eyes. Since the eye is the heart's window, it is in
their eyes that others could see a love which was an extrac-
tion or intensification of love found throughout the world.
The metaphor of the eye as the window explains, by associa-
tion, Donne's reference to the "glasses of your eyes." Then,
the eyes as glasses or windows are viewed as mirrors, and

16 Quoted by Grierson, II, 16.

17 Ibid., p. 16.
here, again, Donne seems to be drawing upon a proverb: "The Eye sees not itself but by reflection" (68). Their eyes are the windows of their hearts, which contain in essence the love in the world, and they are also mirrors, in which they see their own love reflected. In this reading, then, the object of "drove" is not "Countries, Towns, Courts" but "the worlds soul." Whether the subject is finally understood to be "love" or the "lovers" does not affect this reading. I suggest that the syntactical position of "Countries, Towns, Courts" is neither the subject of "beg" nor the object of "drove," but an appositive to "all" in "that they did all to you epitomize." The lovers find "all" in each others' eyes, that is, Countries, Towns, Courts,—every place.

It would be foolish, certainly, to argue that the proverbs alluded to in "The Canonization" provide complete answers to the many questions raised by the poem. But, since Donne's reliance upon proverbs in his poetry cannot be denied, and since it seems certain that he was alluding to several proverbs in this poem, then any explication which does not take the proverbial material into account would seem to be quite limited.

The reader might have wondered, by this time, if Donne alludes to proverbs only in his so-called secular poetry, since nearly all of the examples have been taken from secular or love poems. Such an impression would be false, for Donne seems to make no sharp separation in his use of proverbs between his love poetry and his religious poetry, although there are fewer proverbs in his religious
poetry. This lack of separation is not surprising for students of Donne, who have seldom found an essential difference between the techniques of his religious and secular poetry. As Joan Bennet says:

In the religious poetry Donne explores his feelings toward God just as, in the secular poetry, he explored his feelings toward the beloved. He defines the intricate balance of his attitude with similar subtlety, although, as already in the mature love poetry, delight in paradox has given place to the perception of interrelations. In the religious poetry, as in the secular, profound emotion works upon Donne's intellect not as a narcotic but as a stimulant.18

Miss Bennett says of Donne that "it is an essential character of his mind that he recognizes trivial mundane affairs as part of the same experience as death and the dread of eternity."19 Both of these statements apply to Donne's use of proverbs. He uses proverbs, which one might consider in a sense as drawn from the world of "trivial mundane affairs," in the same ways in both kinds of poetry, though perhaps to a lesser extent in his religious poetry.

The Holy Sonnets illustrate proverbs functioning as allusions in Donne's religious poetry. Holy Sonnet VI has already been discussed as an example of Donne's using conventional similes, which form a cluster of proverbial phrases in the first five lines of that poem. Donne does not draw upon proverbs so heavily in any other Holy Sonnet. Holy Sonnet XIX, however, illustrates Donne's mixing of

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19 Ibid., p. 20.
human and divine, the human here represented partly by
proverbs. The speaker says:

As humorous is my contritione
As my prophane Love, and as soone forgott:
As ridlingly distemper'd, cold and hott,
As praying, as mute; as infinite, as none.

(Gardner, DP, p. 16, lines 5-8)

The contemporary of Donne might have recognized indirect
references to two proverbs: "Sound love is not soon for­
gotten" (154), and "Hot love is soon cold" (134). Donne is,
it seems, applying the proverbs, which refer to love between
man and woman, to the love between man and God. Two other
proverbs can be recognized as slightly veiled in these
lines:

So my devout fitts come and go away
Like a fantastique Ague; save that here
Those are my best days, when I shake with feare.

(Gardner, DP, p. 16, lines 12-14)

Perhaps Donne had in mind the proverb "Agues (Sicknesses)
come on horseback but go away on foot" (4) in the first
two lines. But the saying "Fear and shame much sin does
tame" (75) seems a certain allusion in the last line.
Paradoxically, the days that the speaker shakes with fear
are his best days. The reason is that fear tames the sin.

At times Donne compresses an allusion to a proverb
into a single word, as he does in Holy Sonnet I:

But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,
That not one houre my selfe I can sustaine:
Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his art,
And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart.

(Gardner, DP, p. 13, lines 11-14)
The proverb hinted at by the word "wing" is "To be under another's (mother's) wing" (252). There is also a possible allusion in "iron heart" to the saying "The iron entered into his soul" (112). As Smith and Heseltine explain, this saying originated from a mistranslation in the Vulgate of the Hebrew Bible, Ps. CIV (CV), 18, which is, literally, "his person entered into the iron, i.e., fetters, chains." But the "iron soul" appeared in the Great Bible of 1539: "Whose fete they hurt in the stockes: the yron entered into hys soule."20

It is generally recognized that the "two great themes of Donne are love and death."21 Many of the proverbs Donne uses could be classified under these two themes. Proverbs expressing some thought about death appear frequently in the religious poetry, just as proverbs dealing with love are often found in the secular poetry, although there is no sharp division. Holy Sonnet X, the theme of which is victory over death through eternal life, illustrates how often Donne will draw on popular sayings for his religious poetry:

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill mee,
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.

21 Louthan, p. 171.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, warre, and sickness dwell,
And poppie, or charms can make us sleepe as well,
And better than thy strouke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

(Gardner, DP, p. 9)

If Donne's contemporaries knew the proverb "He that fears death lives not" (48), they might have found an allusion to it in "some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful." He is certainly referring to the proverb "Sleep is the image of death" (212), one of his favorites, in line 5, and this proverb provides the central idea of the poem, that death is but a sleep from which we will wake once and for all.
The idea of life after death was also proverbial: "He has not lived that lives not after death" (47). Line 7 is simply a restatement of the proverb, "Those that God loves do not live long (The good die young)" (93).

Incidentally, three of these four proverbs appeared in the two collections of proverbs by George Herbert, Outlandish Proverbs (1640) and Jacula Prudentium (1651).

There are many other examples of Donne's using proverbs as allusions or "dexterously evasive hints." All that I have identified are listed in Part II. We have seen, though, that there are degrees of indirectness in Donne's usage, and that the proverb is usually woven into the texture of the poem. It is the nature of an allusion to

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22 Tilley often lists a related proverb or another form of a proverb in parentheses. Here, as elsewhere in this study, I have listed the proverb exactly as it appears in Tilley.
be unobtrusive, but an examination of some other uses Donne makes of proverbs, such as for amplification or for authority, will demonstrate that Donne often acknowledges quite clearly his debt to proverbs.
Chapter III

PROVERBS USED FOR AMPLIFICATION

Amplification was one of the ways of using proverbs encouraged by the Renaissance rhetoricians, such as Thomas Wilson, who were generally following the advice of medieval rhetoricians. The medieval rhetoricians advocated a liberal use of proverbs to amplify the subject matter, and "this amplification consisted of elaborate descriptions, ornaments, digressions, and other devices; and of these, ornament and digression gave ample scope for the inclusion of proverbs, sententiae, or exempla." The somewhat mechanical approach suggested by this summary description is found in Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique:

The thirde kinde of Amplifyinge is when wee gather suche sentences as are communely spoken, or elles bie to speake of suche thynges as are notable in this wyse. Of the first these maye be examples, In lamenting the miserye of wardeshyppes, I might saiie it is not for noughte so communely said: I will handle you like a warde. She is a step mother to me: that is to saye, she is not a naturall mother: who is worse shodde then the shomakers wife: that is to saye: gentilmen's children full ofte are kepte but meanelye. Trotte sire and trotte dame, how should the fole amble, that is, when bothe father and mother were noughte, it is not like that the childe will

1Clark, pp. 160-161.

2Heseltine, p. x.
proue good, without an especial grace of God.  

In Wilson's view, the subject is amplified by the listing of relevant proverbs, and these are "amplified" by spelling out their meaning, as with "Trotte sire and trotte dame." When Shakespeare amplifies a proverb, his technique bears little resemblance to Wilson's. Shakespeare develops the imagery of the proverb and adapts it to the occasion. Tilley\(^4\) gives this example of Shakespeare expanding "Make hay while the sun shines":

\[
\text{The sun shines hot, and if we use delay,} \\
\text{Cold biting winter mars our hop'd for hay.} \\
\text{(Third Part of Henry the Sixth, IV,iii,60-61)}
\]

This technique of Shakespeare's is actually closer to what Wilson discusses under "exornation," particularly under "tropes":

An Allegorie is none other thyng, but a Metaphor used throughout a whole sentence, or Oration. As in speaking against a wicked offendour, I might say thus, Oh Lorde, his nature was so evill, and his witte so wickedely bente, that he ment to bouge the shippe, where he hymselfe failed, meaning that he purposed the destruction of his owne countrie. It is evill puttyng strong wine into weake vessels, that is to say it is evill trusting some women with weightie matters. The English Proverbs gatherde by John Heywood helpe wel in this behaulf, the whiche commonly are nothyng elles by Allegories, and darcke devised sentences.\(^5\)

The idea of using one metaphor throughout a whole discourse or throughout a long passage is a more accurate description


\(^4\)Dictionary, p. vii.

\(^5\)The Arte of Rhetorique, pp. 198-199, Fol. 94.
of Donne's practice than Wilson's remarks on Amplification. Donne often extends the basic metaphor of a proverb for several lines, integrating it fully into the poem. His practice is more like Shakespeare's than it is like that described by Wilson.

Amplification, then, can be understood as expansion of the ideas or imagery in the proverb. The distinction between allusion and amplification is not a rigid one, and perhaps some of the examples treated as allusion could with justification be considered as amplification. The difference between the two terms is the difference between the implicit and the explicit. In one, the reader is given a hint and is expected to supply the full proverb. In the other, the ideas or images implicit in the proverb are drawn out. Quite often, however, the reader is still expected to have a knowledge of the proverb in order to see what is being expanded. The distinction will become clearer in an examination of some proverbs used for amplification which are used elsewhere for allusion.

We saw Donne employing "As rare as the Phoenix" (186) in "The Canonization," where the note of rarity is not explicit. In "The First Anniversary," the rarity of the Phoenix is emphasized as Donne expands the proverb to fit the context:

'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply, and all Relation:
Prince, Subject, Father, Sonne, are things forgot,
For every man alone thinkes he hath got
To be a Phoenix, and that there can bee
None of that kinds, of which he is, but hee,

(Manley, pp. 73-74, lines 213-218)
The proverb is applied to the man who, following "new philosophy calls all in doubt" (line 205), and he now thinks himself "As rare as the Phoenix." The proverb has been amplified to three lines and also serves as a summary statement of the world's being "crumbled out againe to his Atomis" (line 212).

We have seen how Donne treats the proverb "Sleep is the image of death" (212) in "Holy Sonnet X," where it is alluded to rather directly and where the idea is central to the poem, although the imagery is not always closely associated with the proverb. The hints are there, however, and for that reason the proverb was discussed as an allusion. The same proverb seems to be the basis for a long passage in "Obsequies to the Lord Harrington. . . ." Here it is as if the proverb provoked Donne's imagination to supply several concrete examples of the truth expressed by the proverb. A related proverb, "A sleeping Man is no better than a dead man" (212) is also suggested, particularly by the last line:

Thou seest mee here at midnight, now all rest;
Times dead-low water; when all minds devest
To morrows businesse, when the labourers have
Such rest in bed, that their last Church-yard grave,
Subject to change, will scarce be a type of this,
Now when the client, whose last hearing is
To morrow, sleeps, when the condemned man,
(Who when hee opes his eyes, must shut them than
Againe by death,) although sad watch hee keepe,
Doth practice dying by a little sleepe,

(Grierson, i, p. 271, lines 15-24)

Donne uses the proverbs "Fortune (Justice) is blind" (82) and "Love is blind" (141) in the poem "His Parting from Her" primarily as allusions. One reference is simply to
"blinded justice"; the other is more difficult to classify as simple allusion, since Donne does expand the proverb:

Till Fortune, that would rive us, with the deed,
Strain her eyes open, and it make them bleed.

(Gardner, ESS, p. 98, lines 61-62)

Donne is here treating the proverb as a literal statement and then stating the consequences of fortune opening her eyes. The proverb is, in a sense, amplified, but the reader is not taken far beyond the idea expressed in the proverb. By contrast, the same proverb is used in "To the Countess of Salisbury" and here it seems that the ideas contained in the proverb are used to develop a compliment to the Countess:

So, though I'am borne without those eyes to live,
Which fortune, who hath none herself, doth give,
Which are, fit means to see bright courts and you,
Yet may I see you thus, as now I doe;

(Grierson, I, 226, lines 79-82)

The proverb "Love is blind" (141) was also alluded to in "His Parting from Her," but in "Love's Exchange" Donne combines it with the proverb "Love is without reason" (146) to get these lines:

Give mee thy [Love's] weaknesse, make mee blinde,
Both wayes, as thou and thine, in eies and minde;

(Gardner, ESS, p. 46, lines 15-16)

In "The Canonization" Donne uses the proverb "The Fly (moth) that plays too long in the candle singes its wings at last" (79) for a very slight allusion, which, as we have seen, he combines with a proverb about tapers. In the elegy "Oh, Let mee not serve . . . .," however, he expands the proverb by adding concrete details to it, and uses it as
a simile for the devil:

...; so, the tapers beanie eye
Amorously twinkling, beckens the giddie flie,
Yet burnes his wings; and such the devill is,
Scarce visiting them, who are intirely his.

(Gardner, ESS, p. 11, lines 17-20)

These comparisons and contrasts between allusion and amplification emphasize the need to distinguish these two uses. When he amplifies a proverb, Donne seems to be treating the proverb with more imagination, drawing out the images or ideas suggested by the proverb, or adding concrete details to make the proverb more vivid.

There are better examples of how Donne's mind and imagination often work over a proverb. The first example also illustrates how he often associates one proverb with another, as he does here with the proverbial simile, "As slow as a snail" (214) and the saying "Like a snail, he keeps his house on his back (head)" (214). In two different poems Donne dwells on these two proverbs, first in "To Henry Wotton":

Be thou thine owne home, and in thy selfe dwell;
Inne any where, continuance maketh hell.
And seeing the snaile, which every where doth rome,
Carrying his owne house still, still is at home,
Follow (for he is easie pac'd) this snaile,
Bee thine owne Palace, or the world's thy gaile.

(Grierson, I, 192, lines 17-52)

The next is from "The Second Anniversary":

Shee, shee, thus richly, and largely hous'd, is gone:
And chides vs slow-pac'd snailes, who crawle upon
Our prisons prison, earth, nor thinke vs well,
Longer, then whilst we beare our brittle shell.

(Manley, p. 99, lines 217-250)
In the second passage, Donne also alludes to the proverb, "The body is the prison of the soul" (22).

Donne's contemporaries, we can believe, would have had an immediate reaction to these passages, at once recognizing the source and at the same time enjoying Donne's ability to fit the proverb into a poem and to expand upon it. These same readers, like the readers of Shakespeare who could recognize immediately the sources of his plays, would have been in a much better position than we to distinguish between what was truly original in Donne, or, better, in what exact way he was being original. I doubt that one of Donne's contemporaries, for example, would have been quite as rhapsodic as George Saintsbury is about some well-known lines in "The Second Anniversary." Leading up to the lines, Saintsbury says:

It is indeed possible that the union of the sensual, intellectual, poetical, and religious temperaments is not so very rare; but it is very rarely voiceful. That it existed in Donne preeminently, and that it found voice in him as it never has done before or since, no one who knows his life and works can doubt. That the greatest of this singular group of poems is 'The Second Anniversary,' will hardly, I think, be contested. Here is the famous passage:

\[\text{Her pure and eloquent blood} \]

Spoke in her cheeks and so distinctly wrought,
That one might almost say her body thought,
which has been constantly quoted, praised, and imitated.\(^6\)

Nothing is taken away from these lines if we know that they

may have been based on the proverb, "Blushing (Bashfulness) is virtue's color (is a sign of grace)" (21). Nor does it detract from them if we know that many Renaissance writers used the proverb, for no one used it quite like Donne. Shakespeare, for instance, stays rather close to the proverb in Much Ado about Nothing, IV, i, 35:

> Behold how like a maid she blushes here.  
> Comes not that blood as modest evidence  
> To witness simple virtue?

Donne has made something much more memorable and beautiful than the proverb, and yet the similarity of the thought should be noted and the proverb considered as a likely source. The same could be said for another well-known passage in "The Extasie," which may deserve the high praise which Saintsbury gives it:

> But the passionate mood, or that of mystical reflection, soon returns, and in the one Donne shall sing with another of the wondrous phrases where simplicity and perfection meet:  
> So to engraft our hands as yet  
> Was all our means to make us one,  
> And pictures in our eyes to get  
> Was all our propagation.7

Once again, the remote source of these lines seems to be almost certainly a proverb, "To look babies in another's eyes" (10). Donne uses this proverb also in "Witchcraft by a Picture":

> I fixe mine eye on thine, and there  
> Pity my picture burning in thine eye,  
> My picture droun'd in a transparent teare,  
> When I looke lower I espie;  
> (Gardner, ESS, p. 37, lines 1-4)

7"John Donne," p. 20.
The same proverb is also used by Sidney in "Astrophel and Stella":

When thou sawest, in Natures cabinet, Stella, thou
straight lokest babies in her eyes. 8

The difference in the treatment is that Donne has made the
proverb personal and dramatic, as he often does. Perhaps
the twisting of the eye-beams in "Ecstasy" is to be explained
by Italian Platonism, 9 but it seems unnecessary to look far
beyond England for the pictures in the eyes.

Sometimes the proverb that Donne is using has become
so much a part of our general knowledge, even though we do
not think of it as a saying, that we may overlook it. For
example, it is commonly known that "Running water is better
than standing" (246) or that "Standing pools gather filth"
(246). These were popular sayings in Donne's time and it is
interesting to watch him manipulate the somewhat colorless
proverbs. Both proverbs are used in "Change":

Waters stinke some, if in one place they bide,
And in the vast sea are worse putrifi'd:
But when they kisse one banke, and leaving this
Never looke back, but the next banke doe kisse,
Then they are purest; Change'is the nursery
Of musicke, joy, life, and eternity.

(Gardner, ESS, p. 20, lines 31-36)

The two proverbs also appear in "Variety":

Rivers the clearer and more pleasing are
Where their fair spreading streams run wide and farr;
And a dead lake that no strange bark doth greet,
Corrupts it self and what doth live in it.
Let no man tell me such a one is faire.
And worthy all alone my love to share. 10

(Gardner, ESS, p. 104, lines 11-16)

As the last lines indicate, the speaker here is using the proverbs as exempla to "prove" that "Variety takes away satiety" (242), in nature and in love. The opening lines of the poem call the reader's attention to this proverb:

The heavens rejoice in motion, why should I
Abjure my so much lov'd variety,
And not with many youth and love divide?
Pleasure is none, if not diversified:

(Lines 1-4)

It would not be difficult to conclude that Donne relies more on proverbs as a means of amplification in poems where he is dealing with conventional views, such as those expressed in "Change" and "Variety." One sometimes suspects that in poems where Donne might not have felt an intense personal involvement, he was relying on proverbs to jog his imagination. In "The Second Anniversary," for example, there is a long passage of praise for Elizabeth Drury which may well have been inspired not by her but by a proverb. The proverb is "Examples teach more than precepts," which Ascham expresses in The Schoolmaster in a way more clearly parallel to Donne's lines: "One example is more valuable than XX pre-

10 Although there is some slight textual support for the authenticity of this poem, Gardner excludes it from the canon mainly because she "cannot find any parallel in Donne's works to the easy, natural, good-tempered tone of this poem" (p. xlv). It is worth noting, however, that here are used the same two proverbs which Donne uses in "Change" and they are used in exactly the same way: as arguments for a variety of lovers.
Note how Donne explores all the implications of this saying as applied to a person's life, in this case, to Elizabeth Drury's:

There thou (but in no other schools) mayest bee
Perchance, as learned, and as full, as shee,
Shee who all Libraries had thoroughly red
At home, in her owne thoughts, and practised
So much good as would make as many more:
Shee whose example they must all implore,
Who would or doe, or thinke well, and confesse
That are the vertuous Actions they expresse,
Are but a new, and worse edition,
Of her some one thought, or one action:
Shee, who in th'Art of knowing Heauen, was grewen
Here vpon Earth, to such perfection,
That shee hath, ever since to Heauen shee came,
(In a far fairer print,) but read the same:
Shee, shee, not satisfied with all this waite,
(For so much knowledge, as would ouer-fraite
Another, did but Ballast her) is gone,
As well t'enioy, as yet perfectione.
And cals vs after her, in that she tooke,
(Taking her selfe) our best, and worthiest booke. 12
(Manley, p. 101, lines 301-320)

Two passages from "The First Anniversary" also strengthen the impression that Donne depended on proverbs when he had a task to complete. His treatment of proverbs in these instances seems to be characterized more by ingenuity than

11Tilley, Dictionary, E213.

12Manley (p. 191) considers this passage to be Donne's version of the traditional metaphor, the book of the mind: liber rationis, and refers to the inscription of divine ideas by God as discussed by Bonaventure and John of Salisbury. It seems to me, though, that the proverb is equally relevant to this passage and to the preceding fifty lines, where the plight of the poor soul is described. In lines 250-299, the speaker stresses how little man knows about himself, his origin, or the nature of the body, and how men do not understand even the least things—"We see in Authors, too stiff to recant, / A hundred controversies of an Ant" (Lines 281-282). Faced with so much controversy and ignorance, man must turn to the example of Elizabeth, which will teach more than all the books.
by creative imagination or emotional power. For example, in "A Funerall Elegie" Donne appears to be depending heavily on the proverb "He that would know what shall be must consider what has been" (120) for the following lines:

Hee which not knowing her sad History,
Should come to reade the booke of destiny,
How faire and chast, humble, and high shee'ad beene,
Much promis'd, much perform'd, at not fifteene,
And measuring future things, by things before,
Should turne the leafe to reade, and reade no more,
Would thinke that eyther destiny mistooke,
Or that some leaves were torne out of the booke.

(Manley, page 84, lines 83-90)

Similarly, the two proverbs, "There is Nothing so bad in which there is not something of good" (182) and "Death at the one door and heirship at the other" (46) provide the basis for these lines:

Wel dy'de the world, that we might live to see
This world of wit, in his Anatomee:
No euil wants his good; so wilder heyres
Bedew their fathers Toombes with forced teares,
Whose state requites their losse: whils thus we gain
Well may we walk in blacks, but not complaine.

(Page 65, lines 1-6)

Although Donne also uses proverbs for amplification in his religious poetry, he does so less frequently than in the secular poetry. The technique, though, is the same. The basic idea of the proverb is made more concrete by an elaboration of the imagery as the proverb is being fitted into context. In "A Litanie," for instance, the proverb "God is a potter and we are the clay" (92) is recognizable:

My heart is by dejection, clay,
And by self-murder, red.
From this red earth, C Father, purge away
All vicious tinctures, that new fashioned
I may rise up from death, before I'm dead.

(Gardner, DP, p. 16, lines 5-9)
Even in so personal a poem as the "Hymn to God, my God, in my sicknesse," Donne is apparently expressing the central Christian doctrine of the resurrection through popular contemporary language, found in the proverb, "East and West (Extremes) become the same" (62):

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West, For, though theire currants yeeld returne to none, What shall my West hurt me? As West and East In all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one, So death doth touch the Resurrection.

(Gardner, DP, p. 50, lines 11-15)

There are also many examples in the "Holy Sonnets," as is illustrated in Part II.

Because of the problems involved in the dating of Donne's poems, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to reach a certain conclusion regarding the relative number of proverbs used in each group of poems. For example, it does not seem justifiable to say that the use of proverbs diminishes as his style matures. What is important and certain is that Donne uses proverbs in every type of poem, so that it can safely be said to be a characteristic of his style. What is true of his allusion to proverbs is also true of his amplification of them: it "is so individual that we are usually unaware of the means by which he elicits our response."13

By amplification of a proverb, Donne often makes something entirely new. Just as he transforms stock themes of European

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13 Gardner makes this comment regarding Donne's use of rhetorical devices and literary conventions. (The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets, p. xxii)
love poetry by his vividly dramatic imagination, so does he transform many stock expressions. But the transformation of amplification of a proverb which was probably on the lips of many of his contemporaries requires great imaginative power, and an awareness of how Donne has amplified proverbs is necessary for our understanding of the nature of his originality.

Because of Donne's originality, the proverbs used in his allusions and amplifications might have been slightly hidden from his contemporaries. The dexterity of the hint, of course, was highly valued. There is one use of proverbs, however, where Donne calls the reader's attention to the proverb because he wants to use it as a source of authority, the topic of the next chapter.

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14 Gardner, ESS, p. xxi.
Chapter IV

PROVERBS USED FOR AUTHORITY

Proverbs had long appealed to didactic writers as an effective means of instruction. They expressed the distilled experience of humanity in a vivid, memorable fashion. As expressions of man's experience, they had a certain authority; they were a kind of universal witness. They could, then, be used as a testimony with which to build an argument, and were considered as part of a "storehouse of places," classed under Invention, which was a major division of logic. According to Wilson, this "storehouse" included:

- testimonies . . . called, sentences of the sage, which are brought to confirm any thing, either taken out of olde authors, or els soche as haue been vsed in this common life. As the sentences of noble men, the lawes in any realme, quicke saiynges, proverbes, that either haue bene vsed before, or bee now vsed. Histories of wise Philosophers, the judgementes of learned men, the common opinion of the multitude, olde cus-tome, auncient fashions or any suche like.\(^1\)

The same view of proverbs is expressed by Henry Peacham, who regards them as "Summaries of maners, or, the Image of human life: for in them there is contained a generall doctrine of direction, and particular rules for all duties in all persons."\(^2\)

\(^1\)The Rule of Reason, Conteinyng the Arte of Logique (1551, Fol. 49), quoted by Mauch, p. 108.

\(^2\)The Garden of Eloquence (1577), quoted by Mauch, pp. 88-89.
Donne uses proverbs as witnesses in one of two ways. He either acknowledges the proverb openly, or he uses the proverb as a kind of conclusion to a whole poem or to a line of argument within a poem.

The proverb is acknowledged as such by Donne through some phrase which indicates that it expresses a common view. Such phrases include, "as men thinke," "Let no man say," "Men say, and truly," or "Men say." Writers of the Renaissance were, as Tilley remarks, "fond of introducing a statement by some such phrase as, 'The proverb goeth,' 'As the Proverbe is,' 'as we say.'" It cannot be said that Donne is fond of this technique, although he does use it. He never mentions the word "proverb," however, as in "As the Proverbe is," even though he makes his reference to the proverb quite clear, as the following examples illustrate. In one of his verse letters to Thomas Woodward, Donne cites the proverb, "Better be envied than pitied" (65):

Men say, and truly, that they better be Which be envyed then pittied: therefore I, Because I wish the best, doe thee envie: O wouldst thou, by like reason, pitty mee!  
(Grierson, I, p. 204, lines 9-12)

This same proverb, by the way, is treated more as an allusion than as a witness in "Julia":

Harke newes, 6 envy, thou shalt heare descry'd My Julia; who as yet was no'r envy'd.  
(Gardner, ESS, p. 100, lines 1-2)

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3 Supra, p. 12.
In "The First Anniversary," the proverb "An ague in the spring is physic for a king" (3) is clearly acknowledged:

And, as men thinke, that Agues physicke are,
And th'Ague being spent, giue over care,
So thou, sicke World, mistak'st thy selfe to bee
Well, when alas, thou'rt in a Letargee.

(Manley, p. 68, lines 21-24)

Here Donne not only accepts the common saying but comments on the usual behavior following an ague, and then applies both to the world without Elizabeth Drury.

Donne not only points up the proverb by a phrase, but he also emphasizes the proverb in other ways, often by setting off either a key word or the entire proverb as a parenthetical remark, or by other punctuation, as if to make sure that the proverb would not be missed. Both devices are used in "Love's Progress." The speaker is arguing that those lovers err who start out by focusing attention on the face of the loved one, because it is subject to change and disguise. The speaker then gives other advice, concluding with the proverb, "The Devil is known by his claws (cloven feet, horns)" (54):

Rather set out below; practise my art.
Some symetrie the foote hath with that part
Which thou dost seeke, and is thy Map for that,
Lovely enough to stop, but not stay at;
Least subject to disguise and change it is;
Men say, the Devil never can change his.

(Gardner, ESS, p. 18, lines 73-78)

The proverb here functions as more than an expression of a common view. By association of the foot of the Devil with the foot of a woman, Donne helps to maintain the tone of somewhat cynical humor which characterizes the poem.
In the second example, Donne has adapted to the context the proverb, "Custom (Use) is another (a second) nature" (43), but he makes the adaptation and the speaker's acceptance of the proverb obvious by emphasizing the key word, "use":

Perfection is in unitie; Preferre
One woman first, and then one thing in her.
I, when I value gold, may thinke upon
The ductillness, the application,
The wholesomeness, the ingenuity,
From rust, from scyle, from fyre ever free,
But if I love it, 'tis because 'tis made
By our new Nature, Use, the soul of trade.

(Gardner, ESS, pp. 16-17, lines 9-16)

The poem is "outrageous," as Gardner says, and nothing in it is more outrageous than the speaker's application of the proverb to woman, who is treated throughout as a thing.

Donne sometimes sets off the entire proverb as a parenthetical remark, but in such a way that the proverb provides proof of an argument or furnishes a general truth parallel to the experience being described. Notice, for instance, how he sets off a form of the proverb, "Silence is (gives) consent" (208) in his "Elegie: Death":

Language thou art too narrow, and too weake
To ease us now; great sorrow cannot speake;
If we could sigh out accents, and weepe words,
Griefe wears, and lessens, that tears breath affords.
Sad hearts, the lesse they seems the more they are,
(So guiltyest men stand mutest at the barre)
Not that they know not, feel not their estate,
But extreme sense hath made them desperate.

(Grierson, I, 284-285, lines 1-8)

Whether this elegy is in honor of Lady Marckham or Lady Bedford, some remarks by Grierson on another elegy by Donne
for Lady Marckham apply here. Grierson is discussing an elegy for the same lady by Francis Beaumont which is found in several Mss. collections of Donne's poems and is sometimes attributed to Donne, sometimes to Beaumont. In the poem, Beaumont admits that he never knew Lady Marckham. Grierson comments:

The taste of Beaumont's poem is execrable. Elegies like this, and I fear Donne's among them, were frankly addressed not so much to the memory of the dead as to the pocket of the living.

(Grierson, II, 209)

Donne's muse certainly seems to be straining for an expression of grief in these opening lines. After beginning with the conventional notion that language cannot express such grief, he repeats the idea with part of the proverb "Small sorrows (griefs) speak, great ones are silent" (215). He follows this with an adaptation of the proverb "Grief is lessened when imparted to others" (102). Then the speaker says that the less a sad heart expresses its sadness, the more sad it is, just as the guiltiest men are the most silent. The "authority" for this statement, it appears, is the proverb "Silence is (gives) consent" (208). By setting off as parenthetical what is obviously a version of the proverb, Donne is supporting his statement about sad hearts with the proverb.

This device of setting the proverb off as a parenthetical remark is used in "The Expostulation," where several other proverbs appear:
To make the doubt cleare, that no woman's true,
Was it my fate to prove it strong in you?
Thought I, but one had breathes purest aire,
And must she needs be false because she's faire?
Is it your beauties marke, or of your youth,
Or your perfection, not to study truth?
Or thinke you heaven is deafe, or hath no eyes?
Or those it hath, smile at your perjuries?
Are vowses so cheape with women, or the matter
Whereof they'are made, that they are writ in water,
And blowne away with winde? Or doth their breath
(Both hot and cold at once) make life and death?
Who could have thought so many accents sweet
Form'd into words, so many sighs should meete
As from our hearts, so many oaths, and teares
Sprinkled among, (All sweeter by our feares
And the divine impression of stolne kisses,
That seal'd the rest) should now prove empty blisses?
Did you draw bonds to forfet? signe to breake?
Or must we reade you quite from what you speake,
And finde the truth out the wrong way? or must
Hee first desire you false, would wish you just?

(Gardner, ESS, pp. 94-95, lines 1-22)

There would scarcely be anything left of this passage, which is about one-third of the poem, if the proverbs were removed. Here the proverbs seem to have a more integral relationship to the structure of the poem than is usual in Donne. These first twenty-two lines are built around questions by the injured love. It is immediately clear that the questions are intended to be understood by the audience as rhetorical questions. Most of them are proverbs which have been turned into questions. In other words, the answers to

Of the six elegies usually attributed to Donne which Gardner classes as "Dubia," this poem has the strongest claim for Donne's authorship since it was included in the first edition. There are reasons to question this inclusion, however, and Gardner finds the poem generally lacking in Donne's tone, although the themes are handled by him. Once again, as with "His Parting from Her" and "Variety," the treatment of proverbs is not distinctively different from Donne's, except that there seems to be a heavy concentration of them in one-third of the poem.
the questions were proverbial. The answer to "And must she needs be false because she's faire?" is either "Fair face foul heart" (71) or "Beauty and chastity (honesty) seldom meet" (12). Similarly, the next two questions have answers in the proverbs "Jove laughs at lovers' perjuries" (117) and "Lovers vows are not to be trusted" (158).

The speaker then asks another question: "Or doth their breath / (Both hot and cold at once) make life and death?"
Enclosed in the parentheses is the saying "Out of one Mouth to blow hot and cold," which is the proverbial mark of the dissembler. The proverb, then, represents the common opinion on Women and is really an affirmative answer to the question.

It is interesting to consider the assistance that proverbs can give to the solution of textual problems. This particular passage has been read two different ways, the difference depending upon the placement of "at once."
Grierson places the phrase with "Both hot and cold" rather than with "make life and death," as was done in the 1633-69 edition. The sense of the proverb appears to favor Grierson's reading, for the emphasis is on the hot and cold as issuing at once. Some writers using the proverb add a phrase like "With the same breath." In 1627, W. Hawkins in Apollo Shroving II, iii, p. 119, used a form close to Donne's: "Doe you blow hot and cold at once, at once will and nill?"

There are several more proverbs in the passage.

5Tilley, M1258.
Lines 13-18 depend upon them, or at least suggest them. The entire passage, describing the course of love from sweetness to "empty blisses," recalls the proverb "Love is sweet in the beginning but sour in the ending" (145). Within this passage, enclosed by parentheses, is a form of the proverb, "Stolen pleasures are sweetest" (189). Then, the last four lines in the series of questions are rather obscure lines which can be explicated with the help of proverbs. The line, "Did you draw bonds to forfet? signs to breake?" may be another allusion to "Lovers' vows are not to be trusted" (158). The next two lines, "Or must we reade you quite from what you speake, / and finde the truth out the wrong way," can be understood in the light of two related proverbs: "A Woman says nay (no) and means aye" (258); "A woman's heart and her tongue are not relatives" (258). The final question, "... or must / Hee first desire you false, would wish you just?" seems explainable by the saying "A Woman does that which is forbidden her" (256), or, as it was put by Richard Hill (1536) in his commonplace book, "A woman oftymes will do that she is not bede to do."6

The several proverbs in the interrogatory part of "The Expostulation" have been used to express some conventional attitudes toward women. The speaker admits the fact immediately after the last question:

0 I prophane, though most of women be
This kinde of beast, my thought shall except thee;
(Lines 23-24)

6Tilley, W650.
The proverbs have served as the witness of generations, even centuries, to the popular notion of what most women are like.

Another technique which Donne uses when he wants a proverb to function as a witness is to place the proverb in a conspicuous position, usually at the end of a lengthy argument where it operates as a conclusion or as a generalization, summing up the thought of several preceding lines. In "His Parting from Her," for example, the proverb is both a summary of the speaker's challenge to fortune and a justification for the challenge:

Oh Fortune, thou'rt not worth my least exclame,
And plague enough thou hast in thine owne shame.
Do thy great worst, my friend and I have armes,
Though not against thy strokes, against thy harmes.
Render us in sunder, thou canst not divide
Our bodies so, but that our soules are ty'd,
And we can love by letters still and gifts,
And thoughts and dreames; Love never wanteth shifts.

(ESS, p. 99, lines 65-72)

Gardner considers "Love never wanteth shifts" a "weak addition to fill out the line," a "tame consolation when we compare it with Donne's other treatments of the theme of union in absence."7 Perhaps the words gain strength if we consider them a conclusion to the challenge to fortune, not simply a filler. The words have the authority of experience behind them, the truth of the ages. It is true that the thought expressed is more conventional than that in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," but Donne, as we have seen, often makes use of conventional (i.e., proverbial) expressions. A similar use of a proverb as a conclusion occurs in "Epithalamion

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7The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets, p. xlii.
Made at Lincolné's Inne," where the proverb "The Truth shows best being naked" (238) is treated with the kind of imagination characteristic of Donne at his best:

Thy virgins girdle now untie,
And in thy nuptiall bed (loves altar) lye
A pleasing sacrifice; now dispossesse
Thee of these chaines and robes which were put on
T'adorne the day, not thee; for thou, alone,
Like vertue'and truth, art best in nakednesse;

(Grierson, I, 143, lines 73-78)

Often, Donne makes it quite obvious that he intends the proverb to function as an ending by placing it in an end position, either at the end of the stanza or at the end of the poem. In the lengthy poem "The Progresse of the Soule," at least three stanzas are so ended:

XL
In which as in a gallery this mouse
Walk'd, and surveid the rooms of this vast house,
And to the braine, the soules bedchamber, went,
And gnaw'd the life cords there; Like a whole towne
Cleane undermin'd, the slaine beast tumbled downe;
With him the murtherer dies, whom envy sent
To kill, not scope, (for, only hee that ment
To die, did ever kill a man of better rooms,)
And thus he made his foe, his prey, and tombe:
Who cares not to turn back, may any whither come.

(Grierson, I, 311)

This last line appears to be a version of "He runneth far that never turneth again" (200). In stanza XLVI, the proverbial comparison, "As Wise as an ape" (9), provides the concluding line:

XLVI
It quickned next a toyfull Ape, and so
Gamesome it was, that it might freely goe
From tent to tent, and with the children play.
His organs now so like theirs hee doth finde,
That why he cannot laugh, and speake his minde,
He wonders. Much with all, most he doth stay
With Adams fift daughter Siphatecia,
Doth gaze on her, and, where she passeth, passe,
Gathers her fruits, and tumbles on the grasse,
And wisest of that kinde, the first true lover was.
(Grierson, I, 313)

In stanza XLVIII, Donne concludes with the proverb
"Nature is the true law" (179), which he sets off syntactically as we have seen him do before:

By this misled, too low things men have prov'd,
And too high; beasts and angels have beene lovd'd.
This Ape, though else through-raise, in this was wise,
He reach'd at things too high, but open way
There was, and he knew not she would say nay;
His toyes prevaile not, likelier means he tries,
He gazeth on her face with teare-shot eyes,
And up lifts subtly with his russet pawe
Her kidskinne apron without feare or awe
Of nature; nature hath no gaole, though shee hath law.
(Grierson, I, 314)

The last stanza of this poem, LII, illustrates another use Donne makes of the proverb, one closely related to the use we have been examining. In this use, the proverb functions as the conclusion of the entire poem, that is, as the ending in a structural sense. The entire stanza has the sense and tone of the conclusion as it builds up to the proverb,

"Nothing is good or bad but by comparison" (181):

Who ere thou beest that read'ist this sullen Writ,
Which just so much courts thee, as thou dost it,
Let me arrest thy thoughts, wonder with mee,
Why plowing, building, ruling and the rest,
Or most of these arts, whence our lives are blest,
By cursed Cains race invented be,
And blest Seth next us with Astronomie.
Ther's nothing simply good, nor ill alone,
Of every quality comparison,
The onely measure is, and judge, opinion.
(Grierson, I, 315-316)

Nothing better illustrates Donne's willingness to use a proverb when it suits his purpose than Elegy VIII, "The Comparison," where he concludes the poem with the
saying, "Comparisons are odious" (35), which is contradictory to the proverb we just examined. The poem is one long exemplum for the proverb, since the speaker makes several odious comparisons, indeed, and applies them to his friend or acquaintance and his friend's mistress. There is an ambiguity in the proverb as the conclusion to a list of odious comparisons, for while the comparisons are all highly unfavorable, the proverb softens them all by stating the common view that such comparisons as that between my mistress and your mistress are always odious. The last several lines of the poem convey the general tone and show how the proverb is used:

Are not your kisses then as filthy, 'and more,
As a worme sucking an invenom'd sore?
Doth not thy fearfulness hand in feeling quake,
As one which gath'ring flowers, still feare'd a snake?
Is not your last act harsh, and violent,
As when a Plough a stony ground doth rent?
So kiss good Turtles, so devoutly nice
Are Priests in handling reverent sacrifice,
And such in searching wounds the Surgeon is
As wee, when wee embrace, or touch, or kisse.
Leave her, and I will leave comparing thus,
She, and comparisons are odious.

(Gardner, ESS, p. 6, lines 43-54)

The final example of a proverb functioning as a conclusion is an interesting one because it seems to represent a fusion between Renaissance Neo-Platonism and popular wisdom. It is quite likely that the former was the source for the latter. It should be noted, however, that an idea popular among some of the intellectuals of the day may also have been common in the marketplace. The idea was expressed memorably by Spenser:
For of the soule the bodie forme doth take: 
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

The proverb is "Virtue (valor) is the beauty (nobleness) of 
the soul (mind)" (243). Here is Donne's conclusion to his 
poem "To Mr. R. W."

If men be worlds, there is in every one
Some thing to answere in some proportion
All the worlds riches: And in good men, this,
Vertue, our formes forme and our soules soule, is.

(Grierson, I, 210, lines 29-32)

In using proverbs as a means of ending a line of 
argument, a stanza, or a poem, Donne was in a tradition going 
back to the medieval rhetoricians, and, through them, back to 
Aristotle. Janet Keseltine says that the medieval rhetoricians 
recommended a liberal use of proverbs as beginnings or endings.9

Chaucer used them in this way, as B. J. Whiting discovered:

Chaucer used proverbs or sententious remarks at 
the beginning of literary units four times, and 
at the end in the case of six pieces. A single 
proverb is used in most cases, but there are four 
in the prologue to Bock II of Troilus and Criseyde, 
and the Manciple's Tale ends with a stream of 
proverbs, poured out pell-mell.10

Donne generally uses a single proverb for a conclusion, 
although, as we have seen, there are many clusters of pro-
verbs throughout the poems. Whether Donne was influenced by 
the rhetoricians or not is beside the point here. Whiting 
speculates that Chaucer may have been influenced not by the

8 "A Hymne in Honour of Beautie," The Complete Poeti-

9 Keseltine, p. x.

10 Chaucer's Use of Proverbs, p. 18.
rhetoricians but by Deschamps or by the writers of the Fabliaux. What is important is to recognize that an essential element of Donne's style is the proverb functioning as an authoritative statement or common viewpoint, and as an ending, summary, or conclusion. In this habit of thought, Donne was part of a tradition.

We should distinguish, finally, between Donne's use of a proverb for authority and his acceptance of the proverb as true. At times he uses contradictory proverbs, and at all times he seems more interested in fitting the proverb into the context rather than in its didactic worth. Sometimes the proverb is intended to be a conclusive statement, but Donne can also speak with contempt for proverbs. In the elegy "/Tutelage/," for example, the speaker is reminding his lover how much he has taught her about love, and he asks her to recall her former state:

Remember since all thy words us'd to bee
To every suitor; I, if my friends agree:
Since, household charms, thy husbands name to teach,
Were all the love trickes, that thy wit could reach;
And since, an houres discourse could scarce have made
One answer in thee, and that ill arraid
In broken proverbs and ture sentences.

(Gardner, ESS, p. 12, lines 13-19)

This passage emphasizes the difficulty of discussing Donne's attitude toward proverbs apart from particular poems. He does not simply accept a proverb as true and therefore authoritative. He will use it as if it were true in a particular poem, but he might contradict it in another poem.

\(^{11}\) Whiting, p. 18.
Like Shakespeare, Donne exploits this technique of using proverbs for authority by sometimes accepting the common beliefs and sometimes denying them.\textsuperscript{12}

Regardless of how Donne treated the "truth" contained in the proverb, when he used any proverb he adopted, often, the stylistic traits of the proverb. The relationship between the stylistic traits of proverbs and Donne's style is the subject of the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{12}Tilley, pp. vii-viii.
The proverb, according to a recent definition, is "usually, but not always, crystallized by some conspicuous formal characteristic." ¹ Some proverbs, for example, have the form of paradox--"The nearer the church, the farther from God"; others are a kind of allegorical statement--"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Some are built on alliteration--"The more the merrier"; others on rhyme--"Fast bind, fast find." Some are shaped by ellipsis--"Uncouth un kissed"; some by repetition--"Enough is enough." Many proverbs are metaphorical, but even in the simple non-metaphorical proverbs, there is often "parallelism and contrast in words, structure and thought." ² Simple parallel structure is found in "Many men, many minds," and contrast alone in "Hindsight is better than foresight." Sometimes the parallelism in structure emphasizes the contrast--"Young saint, old devil."

Most proverbs, then, have peculiar formal or stylistic traits. A writer who uses proverbial material extensively, as Donne certainly does, may owe a little or a great deal to the stylistic traits of the proverbs which he incor-

¹Mauch, p. 10. ²Taylor, p. 143.
porates into his poetry. He will owe less, of course, to the extent that he alters the form of the proverb to fit the context of the poem. It is the purpose of this chapter not to examine each individual proverb used by Donne, but to illustrate some of the ways in which his style has been influenced by the stylistic traits of proverbs. Particular attention will be given to the relationship between the proverb and the conceit, that use of figurative language most commonly associated with Donne. A knowledge of proverbs is a valuable aid in clarifying the nature of the conceit.

Donne has not, surprisingly, made extensive use of proverbs which are paradoxical in form. This is not to say that he does not use proverbial material to construct a paradox. It may be true that "the only way by which the poet could say what 'The Canonization' says is by paradox," and it has already been demonstrated that Donne uses several proverbs in "The Canonization." Some of these proverbs, such as "The Fly (moth) that plays too long in the candle singes its wings at last," are not paradoxical in form. On the other hand, the proverb "A Candle (torch) lights others and consumes itself," which appears as "We're tapers too, and at our own cost die" might be considered paradoxical in form. The proverb "Who weens himself wise, Wisdom wats him a fool" is paradoxical, and Donne keeps this formal aspect in

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4*Supra*, pp. 47-53.
The Triple Poole": "Who are a little wise, the best fooles bee" (Gardner, ESS, p. 52, line 22). In another instance, Donne alludes to the paradox expressed in the proverb, "Fortune (woman) is constant only in inconstancy" (83), in the poem "His Parting from Her":

Be then ever your selxe, and let no woe
Win on your health, your youth, your beauty: so
Declare your selfe base fortunes Enemy,
No less by your contempt then constancy:

(Gardner, ESS, p. 99, lines 89-92)

Perhaps the best example of a paradox in Donne's poetry which is due primarily to his use of a proverb which is paradoxical in form, occurs in "The Prohibition": "Hate mee, because thy love's too great for mee" (Gardner, ESS, p. 40, line 20). Donne is here apparently restating this proverb: "The greatest Hate proceeds from the greatest love" (103).

Many of the proverbs which Donne uses are characterized by alliteration, but he seldom preserves the alliteration. This is further evidence of the freedom with which Donne manipulates proverbs generally. He seems always to be more interested in the demands of the particular poem and the context in which the proverb is used than he is in preserving the form of a proverb. Compared to the total number of proverbs which he uses, the number of those whose alliteration is maintained is insignificant. In "The Expostulation" it appears that some of the alliteration, along with the parallelism and contrast, of "Fair face foul heart" (71) is kept in the line, "And must she needs be false because she's faire" (Gardner, ESS, p. 94, line 4). Similarly, the alli-
teration of "Likeness causes liking (love)" (132) is continued in "Change":

Likenesse glues love: Then if see thou doe,
To make us like and love, must I change too?
(Gardner, ESS, p. 20, lines 23-24)

It is difficult to see in this case how Donne could have omitted the alliteration without losing the proverb entirely. Similarly, the proverb "Stolen Pleasures are sweetest" (189) could not be easily expressed without the alliteration.

Donne uses this proverb twice, once in "Expostulation" and once in "His Parting from Her":

Who could have thought so many accents sweet
Form'd into words, so many sighs should meete
As from our hearts, so many oathes, and teares
Sprinkled among, (all sweeter by our feares
And the divine impression of stolne kisses,
That seal'd the rest) should now prove empty blisses?
(Gardner, ESS, pp. 94-95, lines 13-18)

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Stoln (more to sweeten them) our many blisses
Of meetings, conference, embracements, kisses?
(Gardner, ESS, p. 98, lines 47-48)

There are a few other instances where Donne keeps the alliteration of the proverbs as with "fuel" and "fire," drawn from two proverbs, "Add Fuel to the fire" and "Take away Fuel take away fire." But these examples do not merit discussion except as further evidence that when Donne maintains the alliteration of a proverb it seems almost accidental.

The instances of alliterative proverbs which he neglects are too many, and the ones he uses too few, to permit one to say that Donne's style was greatly influenced by the alliter-
Although there are few examples of Donne's using proverbs for their rhyme, paradox, or alliteration, there are several instances of parallel structure in his poetry which can be traced to the parallel structure of a proverb. Even here, though, the number of examples is only about ten, which is very slight in proportion to the body of Donne's poetry.

In a few cases, Donne has altered only the diction of the proverb, keeping the structure. For example, the proverb, "Fire is love, and water sorrow" (77) appears in "The Dissolution": "My fire of Passion, . . . water of teares" (Gardner, ESS, p. 86, lines 9-10). More extensive alteration of diction is performed on the proverb "Tears in the eyes, ruth in the heart" (233), but again the parallel structure of the proverb is recognizable in two passages. The first is from "Holy Sonnet III":

In mine Idolatry what showres of raine
Mine eyes did waste? What griefs my heart did rent?
(Gardner, DP, p. 13, lines 5-6)

The second is from "The Lamentations of Jeremy":

And for my citys daughters sake, mine eye
Doth break mine heart.
(Gardner, DP, p. 43, lines 249-250)

In "His Parting from Her," the proverb "Say well is good but do well is better" (201) provides the sense and, perhaps, the parallelism of the second line of this couplet:

For this to th'comfort of my Dear I vow,
My Deeds shall still be what my words are now;
(Gardner, ESS, p. 100, lines 95-96)
Donne is able to achieve a kind of unexpressed parallelism by alluding to a proverb that is parallel in structure. The reader, knowing the proverb, recalls the parallelism of the original. One familiar with the elliptical proverb "No cross, no crown" (41), for example, might think of the full proverb when he reads these lines from "The Crosse":

Better were worse, for, no affliction,
No crosse is so extreme, as to have none.

(Gardner, DP, p. 26, lines 13-14)

Also, the first half of the proverb "Small Sorrows (griefs) speak, great ones are silent" (215) is easily "heard" when one reads these lines from "Elegy: Death":

Language thou art too narrow, and too weake
To ease us now; great sorrow cannot speak;

(Grierson, I, 294, lines 1-2)

If these proverbs are "heard" by the reader, then, in a sense, Donne is subtly bringing a parallelism to the passage not by direct statement but by allusion.

Donne's debt to proverbs for such stylistic traits as parallelism, contrast, and alliteration seems slight, indeed, when compared with his extensive use of proverbs as a source for imagery. Because this source of Donne's imagery has never been recognized, studies of his imagery have been somewhat out of balance in favor of the erudite over the commonplace. In the more specialized studies of the conceit it has seldom been recognized that proverbs are the bases for many "conceits." The result, in both the studies of the imagery and of the conceits, is that Donne's originality
is exaggerated, and his use of traditional or conventional material is slighted. Some remarks on proverbs and Donne's imagery and proverbs and Donne's conceits are, therefore, necessary.

Three characteristics of Donne's imagery have been frequently noted: its intellectual quality, its avoidance of the commonplace, and its realism. Donne's imagery may be valued, Leonard Unger says, "because it is found to be urban, intellectual, realistic." In a full length study of the sources of Donne's imagery, Milton Rugoff emphasizes Donne's "utilization of the least obvious aspects of the familiar." This tendency is allied, Rugoff says,

... to that which turned him toward unfamiliar or recondite sources. By means of both types he avoided the really commonplace, striking out figures which he could be quite sure had not been used before.

The same view is expressed by R. L. Sharp, who believes that Donne, like the other metaphysical poets, "attempted to rid poetry of those 'servile weeds'--imitative moods and phrases, superficiality, facility, and that sensuousness which is always antithetical to intellectual content." Even though Donne had an "hydroptique" thirst for learning, and even though much of his imagery is intellectual

5Donne's Poetry and Modern Criticism (Chicago, 1950), p. 87.
6Rugoff, p. 123.
7Ibid., pp. 123-124.
and unconventional, his use of proverbs forces one to admit that he did draw heavily upon the conventional and the non-intellectual. The proverb is by nature a commonplace and, since its appeal is to the ear and memory rather than to the intellect, it is, in a sense, nonintellectual.

Proverbs are usually metaphorical, although the proverbial apothegm such as "Live and Learn"; "Enough is enough"; "What's done's done," is characterized by an absence of metaphor. Donne seldom uses this type of proverb. Most of the proverbs and proverbial phrases which he uses are metaphorical, and Chapter III illustrates how often the metaphor is amplified by his imagination.

It would seem that Donne's use of proverbial similes alone (I count some fifty instances) would force one to qualify the statement that he "avoided the really commonplace." Any reader of Part II might find the adjectives "intellectual" and "unconventional" inadequate as descriptions of Donne's imagery. The evidence of Part II supports a conclusion reached by George Williamson:

Contrary to many critics, I find in Donne a rather frugal store of images and a definite economy in their use, except where the effect depends upon sheer multiplicity. . . . In short, if one isolates the astronomical, physiological, and scholastic figures in Donne, one removes a very large part of his store of images.9

I would add "proverbial material" to the list of sources, and stress that this addition may remind us that Donne was

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as interested in the speech of his own day as he was in its astronomy or physiology or philosophy.

Finally, there is the relationship between the pro-verb and the conceit. The definition of a metaphysical conceit is usually built on Dr. Johnson's comments in his essay on Cowley. He found metaphysical poetry to be characterized by

... discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. ... The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtlety surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased.  

The metaphysical conceit is usually regarded as more far-fetched than the Petrarchan conceit, more original and less trivially ornamental. It is now generally agreed that the conceit is not as central to Donne's poetry or to the poetry of the other metaphysical poets as was once thought. The word "conceited" does not sum up the quality of metaphysical poetry for Gardner, and for Mario Praz, the chief thing with Donne is not the "concetti" but the dialectical slant of his mind.

The conceit as it is usually understood, however,

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13 "Donne's Relation to the Poetry of His Time," p. 57.
may be even less important than we now consider it to be simply because there is confusion for some between a conceit and a proverb. Many proverbs in Donne's poetry, having gone unrecognized, have been called conceits. The consequences are important, for the word "conceit" suggests a far-fetched quality in the comparison and an originality, both of which are attributed to Donne. But if the comparison is, in fact, a proverb, then we should attribute the fantastic quality of the comparison and the originality to the author of the proverb, who is, probably, unknown.

The twentieth-century reader of Donne who is unfamiliar with proverbs needs to be cautioned against the too easy application of the word conceit. To prove that it has been over-used, I will cite some examples from various critics.

The first example is one where the proverb provides the basic idea for a longer passage in which the metaphor is elaborated to the point where it is best described as a conceit. The poem is "Hymne to God my God, in my sicknesse," and the passage is the well known one that Donne builds around the map figure:

Whilst my Physitians by their love are growne
Cosmographers, and I their Mapp, who lie
Flat on this bed, that by them may be showne

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With regard to the authorship of a proverb, Taylor remarks: "Of course an individual creates a proverb and sets it in circulation. The inventor's title to his property may be recognized by all who use it or his title may be so obscured by the passage of time that only investigation will determine the source of the saying. No one disputes Shakespeare's claim to To be or not to be, but Sir Francis Bacon has not maintained his hold on Knowledge is power with equal success (The Proverb, p. 34)."
That this is my South-west discoverie
Per fretum febris, by these streights to die,
I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;
For, though there currants yeeld returne to none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East
In all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one
So death doth touch the Resurrection.

(Gardner, DP, p. 50, lines 6-15)

The basic idea in the passage is expressed in the proverb
"East and West (Extremes) become the same" (62), which is
alluded to in the last two lines. Donne has, it is true,
developed the idea at length in an original way, but it
should be noticed that his primary material is a proverb.

A better example is "The Canonization," which has
already been discussed in detail in Chapter II. Critics
commonly refer to the comparisons of the lovers to flies,
tapers, and the phoenix as conceits. Brooks calls these
"fantastic comparisons," different from the "threadbare
Petrarchan conventionalities" in their "sharpness and bite."
Unger accepts them as conceits, and Hunt, too, refers to
them as "witty conceits." But if these images are pro-
verbial, then they are no less conventional than a Petrarchan
conceit. In Florio's Second Fruits (1591), XII, p. 171, we
read, "All of us . . . are before women . . . like fly neare
to the candle." The comparisons in Donne's poem are not

16Donne's Poetry and Modern Criticism, pp. 27-28.
17Donne's Poetry: Essays in Literary Analysis, p. 77.
18Tilley, F394.
nearly as fantastic from the viewpoint of his contemporaries as they might seem to us, and we might better call them proverbs rather than conceits if it enables us to keep Donne's originality in focus.

The last stanza of "The Canonization" illustrates the same point. It has been described as based on a "complex conceit" built upon the visual picture of the two lovers staring fixedly into each other's eyes. Both Hunt and Mahood consider this "conceit" to be a reworking of the same "fancy" that is found in "The Good-morrow." I agree that the same fancy is in both passages, but I would argue that the basis is the proverb "To look babies in another's eye" (10). The imagery is more accurately described as conventional, and to describe it as fanciful or to apply the word "conceit" may obscure the conventional character.

In summary, I support Miss Gardner's remarks about metaphysical conceits as applied to Donne:

Much stress has been laid recently upon the strongly traditional element in the conceits of metaphysical poetry. A good deal that seems to us remote, and idiosyncratic, the paradoxes and twistings of Scripture to yield symbolic meanings, reaches back through the liturgy and through commentaries on Scripture to the Fathers and can be paralleled in medieval poetry.20

One of these strongly traditional elements of the conceit is often a proverb, which, although remote to us, may reach out

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to Donne's contemporaries, or back to medieval poetry or the Church Fathers, or even back beyond them to classical writers.
DONNE'S COMMON LANGUAGE AND OBSCURITY

The knowledge that Donne uses proverbs often in his poetry makes the reader sensitive to certain stylistic traits or habits of expression which can be traced directly to individual proverbs. A knowledge of proverbs can also deepen our understanding of two aspects of Donne's style which have often been discussed--his common language and his obscurity.

Dryden praised Donne for his "deep thoughts in common language,"\(^1\) and T. S. Eliot says that "... Donne ought always to be recognized as one of the few great reformers and preservers of the English tongue."\(^2\) This common language is used by Donne to achieve a colloquial idiom, which has often been noted and is usually regarded as one of the distinguishing marks of the metaphysical style. Donne's principal innovation was that "he first made it possible to think in lyric verse."\(^3\) His syntax, except for an occasional surprise, follows the "movement of talk,"\(^4\) exhibiting, like

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\(^3\)Ibid., p. 16.

Herbert, "an instinctive feeling for common speech--pithy, sententious, and shrewd."^5

Part of the explanation of Donne's speech rhythms is that the metaphysical manner originated in the 1590's, the decade of the great flowering of the drama.6 Donne introduced into the lyric the cadences of speech which the contemporary dramatists had developed in blank verse.7 F. R. Leavis considers it idle speculation to wonder whether or not Donne actually gained anything from dramatic verse, but nevertheless he believes that Donne's "verse--the technique, the spirit in which the sinew and living nerve of English are used--suggests an appropriate development of impressions that his ear might have recorded in the theatre."8 Leavis is reminded of Shakespeare by Donne's subtle use of the speaking voice.9

Sometimes Donne's common language is understood in a negative sense as his deliberate avoidance of conventionally poetic diction, an avoidance that some consider to be

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9Ibid., p. 33.
"almost without parallel in English poets." Like Wordsworth, Donne and the other metaphysical poets prefer words in everyday use, but they go beyond Wordsworth's "natural language of impassioned feeling" to the "natural language of men when they are soberly engaged in commerce or on scientific speculation, so that the words themselves, apart from their meaning in the context, have no repercussions." In spite of this natural language, however, Donne's diction, viewed over all, is, like the diction of many of his contemporaries, a "free and flexible mixture of the plain and the purple, the learned and the colloquial."

The contribution that the proverbs in Donne's poetry make to his colloquial idiom has not been appreciated. The proverb has, by nature, the rhythm of speech since it originates as a spoken form and appeals more to the ear than to the eye. The late 1590's was not only the period of the flowering of the drama, where proverbs were used freely, but it was also a high point in England of a centuries-long interest in the proverb. The proverb was the "small change of conversation," "everybody's weapon," and the age was "soaked in proverbs." Nondramatic poets like Wyatt, Skelton, and Drayton had used the proverb, and it had long been considered the normal ingredient of colloquial or low style in

10 Bernard Groom, The Diction of Poetry from Spenser to Bridges (Toronto, 1955), p. 64.


prose. It was regarded as proper for certain genres, such as the pastoral, and generally for any work aimed at a popular audience.\textsuperscript{13}

When Donne used a proverb, then, he was gaining the effect of the speaking voice very simply. Since they were primarily spoken forms, it seems to me that proverbs contribute to what Josephine Miles calls the "native predicative mode in English," "the mode of discursive speech," which she finds in Chaucer and Wyatt (both of whom used proverbs) and in Donne.\textsuperscript{14} Certainly what Tilley says of Shakespeare can be said of Donne: he "observed the speech habits of the people around him with close attention."\textsuperscript{15}

Donne's common language or plain diction is also due partly to his use of proverbs. The proverb is usually composed of common language. As Taylor says, "they [proverbs] must necessarily restrict their choice of words to the simplest and the most obvious materials."\textsuperscript{16} In the proverbial vocabulary there are, with the exception of a few relic words and nonce-formations, few peculiarities of diction.\textsuperscript{17} Proverbs, as I have said, often grow out of the marketplace, out of the homely and familiar; they are expressed in the natural language of men.

\textsuperscript{13}Mauch, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{14}Eras and Modes in English Poetry, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, 1964), p. 20.
\textsuperscript{15}Dictionary, p. vii.
\textsuperscript{16}The Proverb, p. 135. \textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 135.
Proverbs are invaluable, therefore, if we are to appreciate fully Donne's plain diction and colloquial idiom. The modern reader, more often than not unfamiliar with the proverb, may miss the strong conversational tone of a passage. A case in point is the following stanza from "The Canonization":

Call us what you will, we're are made such by love;  
Call her one, mee another flye,  
We're Tapers too, and at our owne cost die,  
And wee in us finde the'Eagle and the Dove;  
The Phoenix ridle hath more wit  
By us, we two being one, are it,  
So, to one neutrall thing both sexes fit.  
Wee dye and rise the same, and prove  
Mysterious by this love.  

(Gardner, ESS, p. 74, lines 19-27)

The colloquial tone and common language of these lines must have been quite evident to Donne's contemporaries, who would have recognized the four proverbs which, as we have seen, Donne uses here: "The Fly (moth) that plays too long in the candle singes its wings at last" (79); "A Candle lights others and consumes itself" (25); "As rare as a phoenix" (186); "The Eagle doth not hatch a dove" (59). But for a modern critic, apparently unaware of the proverbial language, it is at this place in the poem where the conversational tone is lost. Clay Hunt says,

After the first line of stanza 3 the speaker seems to work away from a direct concern with his opponent and, as the mind turns inward to an examination of his love, the poem loses the lively conversational immediacy of an answer to an actual opponent and takes on instead the character of an analytic private meditation.18

18 Donne's Poetry, p. 75.
This passage in "The Canonization" is only one of many in Donne's poetry, no doubt, where we are likely to miss the colloquial idiom because we have lost touch with the proverbs themselves.

Another consequence of our failure to lift this veil of outworn fashion, in some ways more serious than missing the tone of a poem, is that we exaggerate Donne's obscurity. Obscurity has become associated with the metaphysical style, particularly with Donne's style, and has, in fact, been one of the chief objections to the style.\(^9\) As Miss Bennett says, the charge of obscurity is ambiguous because the word "obscure" can have many meanings.\(^{20}\) It is difficult to say, sometimes, whether the obscurity is due to the reader or to the poet. One cause of obscurity, certainly, is that images clear to the poet's contemporaries are no longer clear. A knowledge of proverbs is especially valuable in removing some of this kind of obscurity because with proverbs we have a clear case of the poet following a contemporary fashion which has fallen out of use. The danger, though, is that the twentieth-century reader will charge Donne with the obscurity rather than account for it by a change in fashion.

This danger has not always been avoided. R.L. Sharp, for one, explains Donne's obscurity as a result of his desire to express the untraditional.\(^{21}\) But if the obscurity

\(^{19}\) Bennett, p. 15.  
\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 15.  
results from Donne's use of a proverb which is no longer known to us, then Donne is using a traditional expression which is untraditional for the modern reader. The obscurity, that is, was unintentional. "Holy Sonnet XIII" is a poem which some have found to be flawed by obscurity, others by bad taste. Both charges are removed, I think, by an understanding of Donne's use of proverbs in the poem. In order to argue that a knowledge of the proverbs used in the poem is necessary for an explication and evaluation, the poem needs to be quoted and analyzed in full:

What if this present were the worlds last night? 
Marke in my heart, O Soule, where thou dost dwell, 
The picture of Christ crucified, and tell 
Whether that countenance can thee affright, 
Tearres in his eyes quench the amasing light, 
Blood fills his frownes, which from his pierc'd head fell, 
And can that tongue adjudge thee unto hell, 
Which pray'd forgivenesse for his foes fierce spight? 
No, no; but as in my idolatrie 
I said to all my prophane mistresses, 
Beauty, of pitty, foulnesse onely is 
A signe of rigour: so I say to thee, 
To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign'd, 
This beauteous forme assures a piteous minde. 

(Gardner, DP, p. 10)

The structure of this sonnet is clear: in the octave, the speaker, imagining that the end of the world has arrived, asks his soul whether it is frightened by the picture of Christ crucified; in the sestet, the question is answered. But the proverbs used by Donne in both parts have not been recognized, and they are the keys to a unified interpretation.

In the octave, the countenance of Christ is described in vivid detail:
Tears in his eyes quench the amazing light,  
Blood fills his frownes, which from his pierc'd head fell,

These lines suggest the proverb, "In the Forehead and in the eye the lecture of the heart (mind) doth lie" (81) in both their arrangement and in their sense, which will become clear.

The sestet has been criticized quite severely. Arnold Stein considers lines 10-12 as typical of "frequent wilful or careless" obscurity in Donne. Stein says, "produces literary harshness." Louis Martz regards the octave as brilliant, but adds: "Unfortunately, the sestet of this sonnet is unworthy of this opening: the reference to 'all my prophane mistresses' is in the worst of taste: there is almost a tone of bragging here." Neither of these views seems tenable once the lines are explicated, which neither critic attempts.

The first words of line 9 answer emphatically the question of the octave: "no, no; . . . ." Then the speaker begins to set up a contrast with the spiritual or religious mood of the octave. He refers to "idolatrie" in the past tense. In this earlier, sinful state, he had several "prophane mistresses," and said to all of them, "Beauty, of

22 "Donne's Harshness and the Elizabethan Tradition," SP, XLI (1944), 398.
23 Ibid., p. 398.
24 The Poetry of Meditation, pp. 83-84.
pitty, foulnesse onely is / A signe of rigour." The sense of what he said to his mistresses can escape a modern reader, for Donne has here compressed three proverbs into one sentence. It is simplest to consider the last one first. "Foulnesse onely is / A signe of rigour" appears to be based on the proverb, "He cannot be Virtuous that is not rigorous" (245). This proverb suggests the sense of "rigour" in the poem. "Rigour" in a profane mistress would be a sign of virtue, according to the proverb, but it would be undesirable, a "foulnesse." Beauty, not foulness or ugliness, is desirable in a profane mistress, because "Beauty and chastity (honesty) seldom meet" (12). The speaker has set up the following parallel: Beauty (which is seldom chaste) is a sign of pity. Foulness is a sign of virtue. The sense of "pity" is clear from the proverb, "Pity is akin to love" (188).

With the help of these three proverbs, we can understand lines 10-12 thus: I said to all my profane mistresses, beauty is a sign of pity (love), foulness is a sign of rigor (virtue). This was the way the speaker regarded beauty and virtue in his state of idolatry. He then says to his soul, "so I say to thee," that the statements are still valid, only not in the same sense. The speaker is no longer in a state of idolatry; he now fears God and contemplates the picture of Christ crucified. Unlike the countenances of the profane mistresses, Christ's countenance is not beautiful literally, with tears in his eyes and blood filling
the frowns in his forehead. It is beautiful, though, when one reads the lecture of the heart through the eyes, which are filled with tears for men, and through the forehead, which is covered with the blood shed for men. Christ's countenance is not foul or ugly when one reads the heart through it, and therefore he is not rigorous, but forgiving. His pity is also love, but not the kind of "love" signified by the merely physical beauty of the women in the speaker's former state. The statements he had made to these mistresses are still true, but on a much higher level, a level reached through the paradox of Christ's countenance, which is ugly only on the superficial level. The speaker suggests the paradox in line 11 where he argues that the picture could not be ugly, for it is Christ's, not a wicked spirit's. He then applies the statement to Christ: "This beauteous forme assures a piteous minde."

There is not a wilful or careless obscurity in this poem. Donne is working with language and ideas which would have been quite familiar to his contemporaries. He is working quite subtly and allusively, it is true, but we expect this of Donne. The lines may indeed be exasperating, but they do yield meaning. Any harshness a modern reader hears in these lines is created, I would argue, not by Donne's careless obscurity but by our unfamiliarity with his sources. Why one should consider a reference to "prophane mistresses" as being in the "worst of taste," especially in one of Donne's religious poems, is difficult to
understand. To describe the tone as one of bragging, as Martz does, one has to read the line as an autobiographical, true statement. But since the speaker is recalling what any man might have said who was in a state of idolatry, worshipping physical beauty--that is, since the speaker is using a proverb or proverbs, one should be especially reluctant, I think, to read the lines as autobiography. Moreover, the tone is not one of bragging but of logical argument, based on a paradox, for the purpose of assuring the soul of Christ's pity.

Sometimes Donne's obscurity has been attributed to his learning, to his knowledge of Classical or Renaissance philosophy, for example. The danger here is that we exaggerate Donne's learning because, as C. S. Lewis says, there is so little overlap with our own. This absence of an overlap is nowhere more evident than with proverbs, and it has often led readers to concentrate more on Donne's complexities than on his simplicities. The simplicities, in this case proverbs, may be complexities for us because of changing fashions in expression, but we should admit that Donne's contemporaries might have read him differently. To illustrate, in a recent study of Donne by A. Alvarez heavy emphasis is placed on Donne's intellect and his originality, without any indication that often Donne borrowed ideas and language from the

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man in the street. Alvarez says:

. . . Donne was not only one of the most supremely intelligent poets in the language, he was also the first Englishman to write verse in a way that reflected the whole complex activity of intelligence. A number of Elizabethan poets embodied the philosophical truths of their period in verse of considerable elegance and power. But Donne created a poetic language of thought, a mode of expression which so took for granted the intellectual tone and preoccupations of his time that it made of them, as it were, the stage on which the intimate give-and-take of personal poetry was played. He was, in short, the first intellectual realist in poetry.26

If more than a little of Donne's thought and language was conventional, as I have demonstrated in Part II, and if much of his realism arises from his drawing upon common materials, then a picture such as Alvarez draws is exaggerated. It would be easier to discuss Alvarez's view if he had demonstrated the basis for it. But he assumes that Donne was "dealing in compelling poetic terms with the intellectual adult's full experience in all its immediacy"27 and then goes on to discuss the "school" of Donne. He quotes an excerpt from a poem by Herbert of Cherbury, and remarks that it is like a poem by Donne in that "to understand the poem fully the reader is expected to come fully prepared, knowing enough philosophy not to have to strain after the references."28

Donne's reader was expected to understand many references which we have to strain after, but these references were perhaps less frequently to philosophy and esoteric intellect-

27 Ibid., p. 51.
28 Ibid., p. 61.
ual matters than Alvarez assumes.

There are some well known lines from "The Good-morrow," for example, which have been taken as evidence of Donne's knowledge of epistemology or of optics. The lines are:

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appeares,
And true plaine hearts doe in the faces rest.

(Gardner, ESS, p. 70, lines 15-16)

Hunt comments on these lines as follows:

According to a standard theory the experience of love begins with the physical sensation of the sight of a beautiful woman, and the arrival of the image of the woman at the eye of the lover initiates a specific psychobiological process which results in love. After the image strikes the lover's eye it is conveyed to the heart. As it lodges there, it heats the heart and releases the "spirits" in the blood, which mediate between the body and the soul. This release of the spirits activates the soul, which is seated in the heart, and conveys to it the apprehension of the woman which the senses have received; and thus the rational faculties of the soul become involved in an experience which began with bodily sensation. The resultant motion of the soul opens the pores of the body and allows the spirits and the soul to "transpire." In this way the love experienced by the soul is manifested in the lover's face.29

This theory which Hunt summarizes from The Courtier is not, he says, being expounded by Donne, but he believes that some of it lies behind lines 15-16 of "The Good-morrow," and it does account for the concreteness of the images.30 If Hunt is right, then it is easy for the reader to be left marveling

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29 Donne's Poetry, pp. 62-63.

30 Ibid., p. 63.
at Donne's knowledge of the "psychobiological process" and his ability to treat it artistically. The reader is left with a picture of Donne as one of the "most supremely intelligent poets in the language."

Perhaps Donne knew and accepted the theory described by Hunt, but it is not necessary to think so in order to understand these lines. Line 15 is quite possibly a form of the proverb, "To look Babies in another's eyes" (10), which means "To see the small images of oneself reflected in the pupils of another's eye." It appeared in Elizabethan literature at least by 1565, about six years before Donne was born. The proverb may have had some relation to the theory, but this seems doubtful since the proverb is a truth of experience. Nor is it necessary to go to Renaissance philosophy for the explanation of line 16. Perhaps more common than the notion that the soul transpires through the pores of the body was the proverb, "The Face is the index of the heart (mind)" (81), which seems to be the idea Donne is expressing. Its use by John Withals in 1586 is a kind of prose statement of line 16: "Your face doth testifie what you be inwardly." Even if a reader were unwilling to grant that the proverbs were the source for these lines, he might admit that they have equal claim. If he did admit this, he would be less likely to use the lines as an example of Donne's knowledge of philosophy, or as an example of his

31 Tilley, Dictionary, B8.
32 Tilley, Dictionary, Fl.
knowledge of Renaissance optics, as one writer does.\textsuperscript{33} It would seem reasonable in this case to accept the more common source, the proverb, as the one Donne used. The consequence, of course, is that we cannot here imagine Donne expecting his readers to come to the poem knowing enough philosophy to avoid having to strain after the references. They would have been much better equipped for most of his poems if they knew the current proverbs, as they no doubt did. While it is true that all critics from Dr. Johnson to Miss Joan Bennett have, as Helen White says, agreed that the distinctive trait of metaphysical poetry is its intellectual emphasis,\textsuperscript{34} yet this should not blind us to the simplicities in Donne's common language.

\textsuperscript{33}M. M. Mahood, Poetry and Humanism, pp. 93-94. Miss Mahood believes that Donne's deep interest in the science of optics may explain why eye images abound in the Songs and Sonnets.

\textsuperscript{34}The Metaphysical Poets, p. 74.
CONCLUSION

Donne uses proverbs in his poetry to a considerable extent, as Part II of this study demonstrates. In simple numerical terms, he uses 267 proverbs in 352 different instances. Of a total of 194 poems, counting by Grierson's edition, there are 94 in which I found no proverbs. This raw figure is misleading, however, since two particular groups of poems had fewest proverbs: the Epigrams, where I found proverbs in 2 of 19 epigrams, and the Verse Letters, where proverbs appeared in 9 poems out of 34. By contrast, proverbs are used in 36 of 55 Songs and Sonnets, in 17 of 20 elegies, and in 8 of 19 Holy Sonnets. In other words, if we subtract the Epigrams and Verse Letters, there are only 52 poems in which no proverbs are found; proverbs appear in nearly half of the Holy Sonnets, in two-thirds of the Songs and Sonnets, and in more than three-fourths of the Elegies.

In spite of the many difficulties in establishing dates for particular poems, one can say that proverbs are used throughout Donne's poetry, early and late. The Elegies, the first three Satyres, and one group of the Songs and Sonnets have been placed before 1602, and the remaining Songs and Sonnets from 1602-1605. Sixteen of the Holy
Sonnets have been dated in 1609, the "Hymne to God, my God, in my sickness" has been dated in 1612, and the Anniversaries have been dated in 1611-1612. Proverbs are used in all these groups of poems, and in the single poems named. They are used in some of his finest poems, like "The Canonization," and in the less inspired ones, like "The Jeat Ring Sent." Donne's use of proverbs may be regarded, then, as a persistent stylistic trait. Because the use of proverbs in poetry is an outworn convention, however, a veil has been drawn between the modern reader and this aspect of Donne's style. The modern reader, therefore, could study proverbs "that he may grow familiar with them and forget them, that he may clear and intensify his sense of what alone has permanent value, the poet's individuality and the art in which it is expressed."\(^2\)

Once we recognize the presence of so much conventional language and thought in Donne's poetry, we are better able to appreciate his true originality. One of his chief sources, proverbs, was available to everyone and was used by preachers, dramatists, satirists, and lyric poets. Much work remains to be done on the use of the proverb in Renaissance literature, but a glance at the tradition as it is now known to us permits a preliminary evaluation of Donne's

\(^1\) For the dating of the Songs and Sonnets, the Elegies, the Satyres, and the Divine Poems, see Gardner, ESS and DP, passim. For the Anniversaries, see Manley, pp. 50-54.

\(^2\) Grierson, II, vi.
position. Donne is within the tradition, and yet, like Shakespeare, stands apart because of the artistry with which he uses proverbs. Although the use of the proverb was discussed and encouraged by Renaissance rhetoricians, it does not seem safe to conclude that Donne was influenced strongly by them. There were many other possible sources, especially the drama, from which Donne might have learned much about the use of proverbs. The way Shakespeare integrates the proverb into a dramatic context seems much closer to Donne's practice than the rather mechanical approach of the rhetoricians like Thomas Wilson.

Proverbs contribute to Donne's style in various ways. Often he alludes to a proverb, either quite directly or by compressing the proverb into a word or two. Because of the widespread popularity of proverbs in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it seems unlikely that even the most fleeting allusion to a proverb escaped his intended audience. Sometimes Donne amplifies the proverb by elaborating upon the idea or the imagery. Sometimes he uses the proverb as a kind of authoritative conclusion to an argument, treating the proverb as the testimony of mankind. It is difficult to say when Donne himself accepts a proverb as true, since he does use as testimony in different poems proverbs which are themselves contradictory, such as "Comparisons are odious" (35), and "Nothing is good or bad but by comparison" (181). Although at times Donne seems to be relying upon a proverb to furnish ideas or imagery where
inspiration is lacking, generally he shapes the proverb to fit the context of the particular poem. The flexibility with which he treats proverbs is evident when one examines his use of the same proverb in different poems.

Proverbs contribute to Donne's style in other ways, apart from the characteristic uses of allusion, amplification, and authority. Because the proverb has a rather fixed form, some elements of parallelism, paradox, ellipsis, and alliteration in Donne's poetry can be traced to the proverbs he was using.

Our understanding of two frequently mentioned aspects of Donne's style, common language and obscurity, is increased in the light of his use of proverbs. The proverb is by nature composed of common language, or plain diction, and therefore part of Donne's common language is accounted for by his use of so many of them. Furthermore, the proverb is primarily an oral rather than a literary form, and Donne's conversational tone was probably much stronger for his contemporaries than it is for us. Paradoxically, some of Donne's obscurity, for us, is due to his use of common language, the language of proverbs which we no longer speak.
PREFACE TO PART II

Part II is a list of all the proverbial material which I have identified in Donne's poetry. The proverbs are arranged alphabetically according to the form which appears in either Tilley's Dictionary or in The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs. The letter and number in parentheses following each proverb are those in Tilley. Page numbers are given if the proverb was located in ODEP. Under each proverb are the relevant lines from Donne's poetry. I do not have the same certitude about each identification, and the reader may prefer to regard some of the proverbs as suggested sources rather than as positive identification. I have, as I said, preferred to err on the side of inclusiveness. For most of the proverbs, however, identification seems certain.

Following the alphabetical listing of the proverbs, there is an index arranged according to the titles of the poems in which these are found.

I would like to have included some of the other appearances of the proverbs in Renaissance literature which are listed in Tilley. There is no other way to indicate the widespread use of the proverbs and the ways other Renaissance writers used them. Often the proverb had appeared
long before Donne's time. But considerations of space made the inclusion of such information impractical, and it is easily accessible in Tilley. For some proverbs, the first appearance listed in Tilley is in one of Donne's poems. These proverbs are indicated by an asterisk.

I have used the following abbreviations in Part II:

A  John Donne: The Anniversaries, ed. Frank Manley
DP  John Donne: The Divine Poems, ed. Helen Gardner
ESS The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets of John Donne, ed. Helen Gardner
P  The Poems of John Donne, 2 vols., ed. H.J.C. Grierson
CDEP The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs
PROVERBIAL MATERIAL IN DONNE'S POETRY

1. 
ABSENCE sharpens love, presence strengthens it. (ODEP, p. 1)

A Valediction: of the Booke

How great love is, presence best tryal makes,
But absence tryes how long this love will bee;

ESS, p. 68, lines 57-58

2. 
Old AGE is full of infirmities. (A72)
AGE breeds aches. (A66)

The Second Anniversary

... threatened with the rage
Of sickness, or their true mother, Age.

A, p. 97, lines 177-178

3. 
An AGUE in the spring is physic for a king. (A79)

The First Anniversary

And, as men thinks, that Agues physick are,
And th'Ague being spent, giue ouer care,
So thou, sick world, mistak'st thy selfe to bee
Well, when alas, thou'rt in a Letargee.

A, p. 68, lines 21-24

4. 
AGUES (Sicknesses) come on horseback but go away on foot. (A83)

Holy Sonnet XIX

So my devout fitts come and go away
Like a fantastique Ague:
DP, p. 16, lines 12-13

5. Autumnal AGUES are long or mortal. (A84)

The Autumnall

ESS, pp. 27-28

6. ALL are of the same dust. (A119)

Elegie upon the untimely death of the Incomparable Prince Henry

But now this faith is heresie: we must
Still stay, and vexe our great-grand-mother, Dust.

P, p. 268, lines 43-44

Epithalamion V: Her Apparrelling

. . . since wee which doe behold,
Are dust, and wormes, 'tis just
Our objects be the fruits of wormes and dust;

P, p. 137, lines 152-154

7. Like ANGEL visits. (ODEP, p. 10)

Aire and Angells

So in a voice, so in a shapeless flame,
Angells affect us oft, and worship'd bee:

ESS, p. 75, lines 3-4

8. An APE is an ape, a varlet is a varlet, though they be clad in silk or scarlet. (A262)

An APE is an ape though clad in scarlet (gold). (A263)

On His Mistris

Richly cloth'd Apes are call'd Apes,

ESS, p. 24, line 31
9.
As wise as an APE. (A269)

The Progresse of the Soule: XLVI
It quickned next a toyfull Ape,
And wisest of that kinde, the first true lover was.
P, p. 313, lines 451-460

The Progresse of the Soule: XLVIII
This Ape, though else through-vaine, in this was wise,
P, p. 314, line 473

10.
To look BABIES in another's eyes. (B8)

The Extasie
And pictures on our eyes to get
Was all our propagation.
ESS, p. 59, lines 11-12

The Good-morrow
My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
ESS, p. 70, line 15

Witchcraft by a Picture
I fixe mine eye on thine, and there
Pitty my picture burning in thine eye,
My picture drown'd in a transparent teare,
When I looke lower I espie;
ESS, p. 37, lines 1-4

11.
As naked as they were BORN. (B137)
Cf. 238

Satyre I
Hate vertue, though she be naked, and bare?
At birth, and death, our bodies naked are
And till our souls be unapparelled
Of bodies, they from bliss are banished.
Mans first state was naked.

P, p. 146, lines 41-44

12.
BEAUTY and chastity (honesty) seldom meet.  (B163)

The Second Anniversary

And shee made peace, for no peace is like this,
That beauty and chastity together kisse:

A, p. 103, lines 363-364

13.
BEAUTY is but skin-deep.  (B170)

The Undertaking

But he who lovelinesse within
Hath found, all outward loathes,
For he who colour loves, and skinne,
Loves but their oldest clothes.

ESS, p. 57, lines 13-16

14.
A mad BEDLAM.  (B199)

The Will

... my writen rowles
Of Morall counsels, I to Bedlam give;

ESS, p. 55, lines 38-39

15.
Where the BEE sucks honey the spider sucks poison.  (B208)

Twickenham Garden

But 0, selfe traytor, I do bring
The spider love, which transubstantiates all,
And can convert Manna to gall,

ESS, p. 83, lines 5-7
16. The BETTER the worse. (B333)

The Crosse

From mee, no Pulpit, nor misgrounded law,  
Nor scandall takes, shall this Crosse withdraw,  
It shall not, for it cannot; for the losse  
Of this Crosse, were to mee another Crosse:  
Better were worse, for no affliction,  
No Crosse is so extreme, as to have none.


17. BLACK will take no other hue. (B36)
To make BLACK white. (B40)

Holy Sonnet IV

Oh my blacke Soule! . . .

Yet grace, if thou repent, thou canst not lacke;  
But who shall give thee that grace to beginne?  
Oh make thy selfe with holy mourning blacke,  
And red with blushing, as thou art with sinne;  
Or wash thee in Christs blood, which hath the might  
That being red, it dyes red soules to white.

DP, p. 7, lines 9-14

The Expostulation

Whilst he, black wretch, betray'd each simple word  
Wee spake, unto the cunning of a third.

ESS, p. 95, lines 37-38.

18. To make BLACK white. (B46)

The Anagram

Who, mightier then the sea, makes Moores seem white,

ESS, p. 22, line 46

19. BLIND men can judge no colors. (ODEP, p. 51)

The First Anniversary
Sight is the noblest sense of any one,  
Yet sight hath onely color to feed on,  
And Colour is decayd: summers robe growes  
Duskie, and like an oft dyed garment showes.

A, p. 78, lines 353-356

20.  
The BLOOD of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. (B157)

The Second Anniversary

Vp to those Martyrs, who did Calmely bleed  
Cyle to th'Apostles Lampes, dew to their seed.

A, p. 102, lines 351-352

21.  
BLUSHING (Bashfulness) is virtue's color (is a sign of grace). (B180)

The Second Anniversary

. . . her pure and eloquent blood  
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinkly wrought,  
That one might almost say, her bodis thought,

A, p. 99, lines 244-246

22.  
The BODY is the prison of the soul. (B197)

The Second Anniversary

Thinke in how poore a prison thou didst lie  
After, enabled but to sucke and crie.

A, p. 96, lines 173-174

Shoe, whose faire body no such prison was,

A, p. 98, line 221

The Progresse of the Soule: VII

This soule to whom Luther, and Mahomet were  
Prisons of flesh; . . .

P, p. 297, lines 66-67
The Progresse of the Soule: XXV

Now swome a prison in a prison put,
And now this Soule in double walls was shut,
Till melted with the Swans digestive fire,
She left her house the fish, and vapour'd forth;

P, p. 305, lines 241-244

Progresse of the Soule: XXXVIII

This Soule, now free from prison, and passion,
P, p. 310, line 371

23.
As dry (hard) as a BONE. (B514)

The Litarie: IV. The Trinity

O Blessed glorious Trinity
Bones to Philosophy, but milke to faith.
P, p. 17, lines 28-29

24.
He is a blind BUZZARD. (B792)
LOVE is blind. (L506)

Loves Diet
Thus I reclaim'd by buzard love, to flye
At what, and when, and how, and where I chuse;
ESS, p. 46, lines 25-26

25.
A CANDLE (torch) lights others and consumes itself. (C39)

The Canonization
We're Tapers too, and at our owne cost die,
ESS, p. 74, line 21

26.
To go out like a CANDLE in a snuff. (C49)
For even as first likes Taper is a snuffe

ESS, p. 58, line 24

27.
As straight (tall) as a CEDAR. (C207)

Sapho to Philaenis

Thou art not soft, and cleare, and strait, and faire,
As Down, as Stars, Cedars, and Lilies are,
P. p. 124, lines 21-22

28.
High CEDARS fall (are shaken) when low shrubs remain
(are scarcely moved). (C208)

As straight (tall) as a CEDAR. (C207)

Upon the Annunciation and Passion falling upon one day. 1608
She sees a Cedar plant it selfe, and fall,

DP, p. 29, line 8

29.
The CHAIN is no stronger than its weakest link. (ODEP, p. 87)

The Second Anniversary

Shee who was such a Chaine, as Fate emploies
To bring mankind, all Fortune it enioies,
So fast, so even wrought, as one would thinke,
No Accident, could threaten any linke,

A, p. 96, lines 143-146

30.
As changeable as a CHAMELEON. (C221)

On His Mistris

Men of France, changeable Camelions,

ESS, p. 24, line 33

31.
There is CHANGE of all things. (C233)
CHANGE is sweet. (C229)

Variety
All things doe willingly in change delight.
ESS, p. 104, line 9

Change
Change'is the nursery
Of musicke, joy, life, and eternity.
ESS, p. 20, lines 35-36

32. The COCK is the countryman's clock. (C485)

Epithalamion: V
The masquers come too late, and 'I thinke, will stay,
Like Fairies, till the Cock crow them away.
P, p. 129, lines 67-68

33. The COCKATRICE slays by night only. (C495)
Crush (Kill) the COCKATRICE in the egg. (C496)

The Perfume
Though he had wont to search with glazed eyes,
As though he came to kill a Cockatrice,
ESS, p. 7, lines 7-8

34. As many COLORS as there are in the rainbow. (C519)

The First Anniversary
Swadling the new-born earth, God seemd to like,
That she should sport hersel'f sometimes, and play,
To mingle, and vary colours every day.
And then, as though she could not make enow,
Himselfe his various Rainbow did allow.
A, p. 78, lines 348-352
35. COMPARISONS are odious. (C576)

The Comparison

Leave her, and I will leave comparing thus,
She, and comparisons are odious.

ESS, p. 6, lines 53-54

36. CONTRARIES being set the one against the other appear more evident. (C630)

Holy Sonnet XIX

Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one:

EP, p. 15, line 1.

37. The CORRUPTION of the best is the worst. (C668)

The First Anniversary

For, before God had made vp all the rest,
Corruption entred, and deprau'd the best:
It seis'd the Angels, and then first of all
The world did in her Cradle take a fall,

A, p. 73, lines 193-196

38. It is an ill COUNSEL that has no escape. (C693)

The Autunnall

Yong Beauties force your love, and that's a Rape,
This doth but counsaile, yet you cannot scape.

ESS, p. 27, lines 3-4

39. He that will in COURT dwell must needs curry favel /favor/. (C724)

The Will

My truth to them, who at the Court doe live;

ESS, p. 51, line 11
40. CRETANS are liars (Use craft against Cretans). (C822)
Grecian FAITH. (F31)

Mercurius Gallo-Belgicus

Change thy name: thou art like
Mercury in stealing, but lyest like a Greeke.
P, p. 78

41. No CROSS no crown. (C839)
The Crosse

Better were worse, for, no affliction,
No Crosse is so extreme, as to have none.
DP, p. 26, lines 13-14

Hymne to God, my God, in my Sicknesse

So, in his purple wrapp'd receive mee Lord,
By these his thornes give me his other Croune;
DP, p. 50, lines 26-27

42. Still CUPID'S arrows stick near to the heart. (C913)

Variety

His sinewy bow, and those immortall darts
Wherewith he'is wont to bruise resisting hearts.
ESS, p. 106, lines 59-60

43. CUSTOM (Use) is another (a second) nature. (C932)
CUSTOM makes sin no sin. (C934)
The Relique

Which nature, injur'd by late law, sets free:
ESS, p. 90, line 30

The Progresse of the Soule: XXI
Men, till they tooke laws which made freedome lesse,
Their daughters, and their sisters did ingresse;
Till now unlawfull, therefore ill, 'twas not.

Loves Progress

But if I love it, 'tis because 'tis made
By our new Nature, Use, the soule of trade.

The DANGER (river) past and God forgotten. (D31)

The Litanie: XVI

From needing danger, to bee good,

The DAY has eyes, the night has ears. (D62)

Breake of Day

Light hath no tongue, but is all eye;

DEATH at the one door and heirship at the other. (D138)

The First Anniversary

Wel dy'de the world, that we might liue to see
This world of wit, in his Anatomie:
No euill wants his good: so wilder heyres
Bedew their fathers Toombs with forced teares,
Whose state requites their los:

He has not lived that lives not after DEATH. (D153)

Holy Sonnet X
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

DP, p. 9, lines 13-14

The First Anniversary

As oft as thy feast sees this widowed earth,  
Will yearely celebrate thy second birth,  
That is, thy death. For though the soule of man  
Be got when man is made, 'tis borne but than  
When man doth die. Our body's as the wombe,  
And as a Mid-wife, death directs it home.

A, pp. 80-81, lines 449-454

48.  
He that fears DEATH lives not. (D155)

Holy Sonnet X

Death be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not soe,

DP, p. 9, lines 1-2

49.  
DEATH'S day is doomday. (D161)

The Litanie: XXII

In th'houre of death, the'Eye of last judgement day,  
Deliver us from the sinister way.

DP, p. 21, lines 197-198

50.  
To pay one's DEBT to nature. (D168)

Holy Sonnet XVII

Since she whom I lovd, hath payd her last debt  
To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,  
And her soule early into heaven ravished,  
Wholy in heavenly things my mind is sett.

DP, p. 14, lines 1-4
51. It is easier to DESCEND than ascend. (D204)

The First Anniversary

Loth to goe vp the hill, or labor thus
To goe to heauen, we make heauen come to vs.

A, p. 76, lines 281-282

52. DESIRE has no rest. (D211)
DESIREE torments us a hope comforts us. (D212)

The Token

Send me some token, that my hope may live,
Or that my easeless thoughts may sleep and rest;
Send me some honey to make sweet my hive,
That in my passion I may hope the best.

ESS, p. 107, lines 1-4

53. DESPAIR (Love) makes cowards courageous. (D216)
NECESSITY makes the coward grow courageous. (K62)

The Calme

Whether a rotten state, and hope of gaine,
Or to disuse mee from the queasie paine
Of being belov'd, and loving, or the thirst
Of honour, or faire death, cut pusht mee first,
I lose my end: for here as well as I
A desperate may live, and a coward die.

P, p. 179, lines 39-44

54. The DEVIL is known by his claws (cloven feet, horns). (D252)

Loves Progress

Rather set out below; practise my art,
Some symetrie the foote hath with that part
Which thou dost seeke, . . .
Least subject to disguise and change it is;
Men say, the devill never can change his.

ESS, p. 18, lines 73-78
Song
Or who cleft the Divels foot

ESS, p. 29, line 4

55. DO as you would be done to. (D395)
Mercurius Gallo-Belgicus
'Tis sinne to doe,
In this case, as thou wouldst be done unto,
To beleive all:
P, p. 78

56. As innocent (harmless) as a DOVE. (D572)
As loving (tame, patient) as a DOVE (pigeon). (D573)

His Parting from Her
Yet Love, thou'rt blinder than thy self in this,
To vex my Dove-like friend for mine amiss:

ESS, p. 97, lines 29-30

Epithalamion: On the Lady Elizabeth . . .
Thou marryest every yeare
The Lirique Larke, and the grave Whispering Dove,
P, p. 127, lines 5-6

57. As lost as a DROP of water in the sea. (D613)

His Parting from Her
Or as I'had watcht one drop in a vast stream,

ESS, p. 97, line 27

58. As dull as a DUTCHMAN. (D654)
The DUTCHMAN drinks his buttons off, the English doublet and away. (D655)
The DUTCHMAN drinks pure wine in the morning, at noon wine without water, in the evening as it comes from the butt. (D656)

On His Mistris

But none of these, Nor spungie hydroptique Dutch, shall thee displease,

ESS, p. 24, lines 41-42

59. An EAGLE does not hatch a dove. (E2)

The Canonization

And wee in us finde the Eagle and the Dove;

ESS, p. 74, line 22

60. To have an EAGLE'S eye. (E6)

The Litanie: VIII. The Prophets

Thy Eagle-sighted Prophets too,

DP, p. 19, line 61

61. EARTH must go to earth (Dust to dust). (E30)

The EARTH produces all things and receives all again. (E31)

The Dissolution

Shee'is dead; And all which die To their first Elements resolve;

ESS, p. 86, lines 1-2

To Mr. Tilman after he had taken orders

And so the heavens which beget all things here, And the earth our mother, which these things doth beare,

DP, p. 33, lines 51-52

62. EAST and west (Extremes) become the same. (E44)
Upon the Annuntiation

All this, and all between, this day hath shoune,
Th'Abredgment of Christs story, which makes one
(As in plaine Maps, the furthest West is East)
Of th'Angels AVE, and Consummatum est.

DP, p. 29, lines 19-22

Or as creation he had made, as God,
With the last judgement, but one period
His imitating Spouse would joyne in one
Manhoods extremes: He shall come, he is gone:

DP, p. 30, lines 37-40

Hymn to God, my God, in my sickness

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West:
For, though theire currants yeeld returne to none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East
In all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one,
So death doth touch the Ressurrection.

DP, p. 50, lines 11-15

63.
The END of our good begins our evil. (El18)
The END of passion is the beginning of repentence. (El19)

Cales and Guyana

That one things end doth still beginne a New.
P, p. 76

64.
ENVY (Calumny) shoots at the fairest mark (flowers, virtue). (El75)
FAMT is but the breath of the people and that often unwholesome. (F46)

Obsequies to the Lord Harrington

But till thou should'st successfullly advance
Thine armes 'gainst forraine enemies, which are
Both Envy, and acclamations popular,
(For, both these engines equally defeate,
Though by a divers Mine, those which are great,)
P, p. 277, lines 196-200
65.*
Better be ENVIED than pitied. (E177)

To Mr. T. W.

Men say, and truly, that they better be
Which be envyed then pittied: therefore I,
Because I wish thee best, doe thee envie:

ESS, p. 104, lines 9-10

Julia

Harke newes, 6 envy, thou shalt heare descry'd
My Julia; who as yet was ne'r envy'd.

ESS, p. 100, lines 1-2

66.
EXAMPLES teach more than precepts. (E213)

The Second Anniversary

Shee who all Libraries had thoroughly red
At home, in her owne thoughts, and practised
So much good as would make as many more:
Shee whose example they must all implore,
Who would or doe, or thinke well, and confesse,
That aie the vertuous Actions they expresse,
Are but a new, and worse edition,
Of her some one thought, or one action:
Shee, who in th'Art of knowing Heauen, was growen
Here upon Earth, to such perfection,
That shee hath, euer since to Heauen shee came,
(In a far fairer print,) but read the same:
Shee, shee, not satisfied with all this waite,
(For so much knowledge, as would cuer-fraite
Another, did but Ballast her) is gone,
As well t'enicy, as yet perfections,
And cals vs after her, in that shee tooke,
(Taking herselfe) our best, and worthiest booke.

ESS, p. 101, lines 303-320

67.
Every EXTREMITY (extreme) is a vice (fault). (E221)

The Autumnall

I hate extremees; yet I had rather stay
With Tombs, then Cradles, to weare out a day.
68.
The EYE is the window of the heart (mind). (E231)
The EYE sees not itself but by reflection. (E231a)

The Canonization

Who did the whole worlds soule extract, and drive
Into the glasses of your eyes
So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize,
Countries, Townes, Courts:

ESS, pp. 74-75, lines 40-44

Twicknam Garden

Alas, hearts do not in eyes shine,

ESS, p. 84, line 23

69.
The EYE will be where the love is. (E233)

The Message

Send home my long strayd eyes to mee,
Which (Oh) too long have dwelt on thee;

ESS, p. 30, lines 1-2

70.
As many EYES as Argus. (E254)

The Second Anniversary

Hee that charm'd Argus eyes, sweet Mercury,
Workes not on her, who now is grownen all Ey;

A, p. 97, lines 199-200

The Will

Here I bequeath
Mine eyes to Argus, if mine eyes can see,

ESS, p. 54, lines 2-3
71.
FAIR face foul heart. (F3)
BEAUTY and chastity (honesty) seldom meet. (B163)

The Expostulation

And must she needs be false because she's faire?
Is it your beauties marke, or of your youth,
Or your perfection, not to study truth?

ESS, p. 94, lines 4-6

72.
A good FACE needs no paint. (F7)

Holy Sonnet XVIII

Show me deare Christ, thy Spouse, so bright and cleare
What! is it she, which on the other shore
Goes richly painted?

DP, p. 15, lines 1-3

73.
FAIR without but foul within. (F29)

The Anagram

Women are all like Angels; the faire be
Like those which fell to worse; but such a shee
Like to good Angels, nothing can impaire:
'Tis lesse griefe to be foule, then to'have beene faire.

ESS, pp. 21-22, lines 29-32

74.
FAME is but the breath of the people and that often
unwholesome. (F46)

The Will

My tongue to Fame;

ESS, p. 54, line 5

75.
FEAR and shame much sin does tame. (F132)

Holy Sonnet XIX

So my devout fitts come and go away
Like a fantastique Ague: save that here
Those are my best dayes, when I shake with feare.

DP, p. 16, lines 12-14

76.
FIRE descends not. (F256)

Epithalamion XI: The Good-Night

Fire ever doth aspire,
P, p. 140, line 219

77.
FIRE is love, and water sorrow. (F260)

The Dissolution

My fire of Passion, sighes of ayre
Water of teares, and earthly sad despaire,

ESS, p. 86, lines 9-10

78.
As mute as a FISH. (F300)

The Progresse of the Soule: XXIX

Is any kind subject to rape like a fish?
Ill unto man, they neither doe, nor wish:
Fishers they kill not, nor with noise awake,

To Sir Henry Wotton

Fishes glide, leaving no print where they passe,
Nor making sound;
P, p. 182, lines 56-57

79.
The FLY (moth) that plays too long in the candle singes
its wings at last. (F394)

Elegie VI: Oh, Let mee not serve . . .

. . . so, the tapers beamie eye
Amorously twinkling, beckens the giddie flie,
Yet burnes his wings; and such the devill is,

P, p. 88, lines 17-19

The Canonization

Call her one, mee another flye,

ESS, p. 74, line 20

80.
He is doubly fond /Foolish/ that justifies his FONDNESS.  
(F440)

The Triple Foele

I am two fooles, I know,
For loving, and for saying so
In whining Poetry;

ESS, p. 52, lines 1-3

81.
In the FOREHEAD and in the eye the lecture of the heart  
(mind) doth lie.  (F590)

Holy Sonnet XIII

Marke in my heart, 0 Soule, where thou dost dwell,
The picture of Christ crucified, and tell  
Whether that countenance can thee affright,  
Tears in his eyes quench the amasing light,  
Blood fills his frounes, which from his pierc'd head fell,  
And can that tongue adjudge thee unto hell,  
Which pray'd forgivenesse for his foes fierce spight?

DP, p. 10, lines 2-8

The FACE is the index of the heart (mind).  (F1)  
A fair FACE must have good conditions.  (F5)  
A blithe HEART makes a blooming visage.  (H301)

The Good-morrow

And true plaine hearts doe in the faces rest,

ESS, p. 70, line 16
82.  
FORTUNE (Justice) is blind.  (F604)  
His Parting from Her  
So blinded Justice doth, when Favorites fall  
ESS, p. 97, line 33  
Till Fortune, that would rive us, with the deed,  
Strain her eyes open, and it make them bleed.  
ESS, p. 98, lines 61-62  

To the Countess of Salisbury  
So, though I'am borne without those eyes to live,  
Which fortune, who hath none her selfe, doth give,  
Which are, fit meanes to see bright courts and you,  
Yet may I see you thus, as now I doe;  
P, p. 226, lines 79-82  

83.  
FORTUNE (Woman) is constant only in inconstancy.  (F605)  
His Parting from Her  
Declare your self base fortunes Enemy,  
No less by your contempt then constancy:  
ESS, p. 99, lines 91-92  

84.  
Great FORTUNE brings with it great misfortune.  (F610)  
The higher STANDING (up) the lower (greater) fall.  (S823)  
His Parting from Her  
So blinded Justice doth, when Favorites fall,  
Strike them, their house, their followers all.  
ESS, p. 97, lines 33-34  

85.  
As wily (crafty) as a FOX.  (F629)  
Change  
Foxes and goats; all beasts change when they please,  
Shall women, more hot, wily, wild then these,
Be bound to one man,
 _ESS, p. 20, lines 16-18_

86.
 A FRIEND is one's second self. (F696)

To the Lady Bedford

You that are she and you, that's double shee,
 In her dead face, halfe of your selfe shall see;
 Shee was the other part, for so they doe
 Which build them friendships, become one of two;
 _P, p. 227, lines 1-4_

87.
 Have but few FRIENDS though much acquaintance. (F741)

To Mr. I. L.

Of that short Roll of friends writ in my heart
 Which with thy name begins, since their depart,
 _P, p. 212, lines 1-2_

88.
 Add FUEL to the fire. (F785)

Negative Love

For sense, and understanding may
 Know, what gives fuell to their fire:
 _ESS, p. 56, lines 5-6_

On His Mistris

Men of France, ... Loves fuellers,
 _ESS, p. 24, lines 33-35_

The Dissolution

But that my fire doth with my fuell grow.
 _ESS, p. 86, line 15_
89.
Take away FUEL take away fire (flame). (F786)

To Mr. S. B.

But seeing in you bright sparkes of Poetry,
I, though I brought no fuell, had desire
With these Articulate blasts to blow the fire.

_P, p. 211, lines 12-14_

90.
Hasty GAMESTERS oversee /blunder/ themselves. (G26)

The Will

My patience let gamesters share.

_ESS, p. 54, line 24_

91.
As lecherous as a GOAT. (G167)

Change

Foxes and goats; all beasts change when they please,
Shall women, more hot, wily, wild then these,
Be bound to one man,

_ESS, p. 20, lines 16-18_

Holy Sonnet IX

If poysonous mineralls, and if that tree,
Whose fruit threw death on else immortall us,
If lecherous goats, if serpents envious
Cannot be damn'd; Alas; why should I bee?

_DP, p. 8, lines 1-4_

A Nocturnall Upon S. Lucies Day, being the shortest day

You lovers, for whose sake, the lesser Sunne
At this time to the Goat is runne
To fetch new lust, and give it you,

_ESS, p. 85, lines 38-40_

92.
GOD is a potter and we are the clay. (G196)
The Litanie: I. The Father

My heart is by dejection, clay,
And by selfe-murder, red.
From this red earth, O Father, purge away
All vicious tinctures, that new fashioned
I may rise up from death, before I'am dead.

DP, p. 16, lines 5-9

93.
Those that GOD loves do not live long (The good die young).
(G251)

Holy Sonnet X

Much pleasure, then from thee /Death/, much more must flow
And soonest our best men with thee doe goo,

DP, p. 9, lines 6-7

Elegie on Mistris Boulstred

Now hee /Death/ will seeme to spare, and doth more wast,
Eating the best first, well preserv'd to last.

P, p. 282, lines 10-11

94.
As yellow as GOLD. (G280)

The Bracelet

Not that in colour it was like thy haire,

ESS, p. 1, line 1

95.
GOLD is tried in the fire. (G281)

The Autumnall

But now shee's gold oft tried, and ever new.
That was her torrid and inflaming time,
This is her tolerable Tropique clyme.

ESS, p. 27, line 8

Loves Progress
I, when I value gold, may think upon
The ductillness, the application,
The wholesomeness, the ingenuity,
From rust, from scyle, from fyre ever free,

ESS, p. 16, lines 11-14

96.
He that labors and thrives spins GOLD. (G297)

Resurrection, Imperfect

He was all gold when he lay downe, but rose
All tincture, and doth not alone dispose
Leaden and iron wills to good, but is
Of power to make even sinfull flesh like his.

DP, p. 28, lines 13-16

97.
The purest GOLD is most ductile. (G291)

Loves Progress

I, when I value gold, may thinkes upon
The ductillness, . . .

ESS, p. 16, lines 11-12

98.
We must not look for a GOLDEN life in an iron age. (ODEP, p. 250)

The First Anniversary

She that did thus much, and much more could doe,
But that our age was Iron, and rusty too,

A, p. 80, lines 425-426

99.
GRACE (Nurture) and manners make a man. (G391)
NATURE passes nurture. (N47)
NURTURE is above (passes) nature. (N357)
ART apec nature. (A330)

Epithalamion VII: The Benediction

Raise heires, and may here, to the worlds end, live
Heires from this King, to take thankes, you, to give,  
Nature and grace doe all, and nothing Art.  
P, p. 138, lines 177-179

100.
The GREAT put the little on the hook. (Gl434)  
The Progresse of the Soule: XXVIII  
Exalted she'is, but to the exalters good,  
As are by great ones, men which lowly stood.  
It's rais'd, to be the Raisers instrument and food.  
P, p. 306, lines 278-280

101.
The greater GRIEF (sorrow) drives out the less. (Gl446)  
The Broken Heart  
All other griefes allow a part  
To other griefes, and aske themselves but some;  
They come to us, but us Love draws,  
He swallows us, and never chawes:  
ESS, p. 51, lines 11-14

102.
GRIEF is lessened when imparted to others. (Gl447)  
The Elegie: Death  
If we could sigh out accents, and weepe words,  
Griefe weares, and lessens, that tears breath affords.  
P, p. 284, lines 3-4

The Triple Foole  
I thought, if I could draw my paines  
Through Rimes vexation, I should them alay.  
Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,  
For, he tames it, that fetters it in verse.  
But when I have done so  
Some man, his art and voice to show,  
Both set and sing my paine,  
And by delighting many, frees againe  
Grieves, which verse did restrains.  
To Love and Grieves, tribute of Verse belongs,
But not of such as pleases when 'tis read,
Both are increased by such songs:
For both their triumphs so are published,

ESS, p. 52, lines 8-20

103.
The greatest HATE proceeds from the greatest love. (H210)
The Prohibition
Hate mee, because thy love's too great for mee;

ESS, p. 40, line 20

104.
A HEART as hard as a stone (flint, marble). (H311)
A Jeat Ring Sent
Thou art not so black, as my heart,
Nor halfe so brittle, as her heart, thou art:

ESS, p. 38, lines 1-2

105.
An honest HEART cannot dissemble. (H316)
Witchcraft by a Picture
Though thou retaines of mee
One picture more, yet that will bee,
Being in thine owne heart, from all malice free.

ESS, p. 37, lines 12-14

106.
As black (dark) as HELL. (H397)
Resurrection, imperfect
Who, not content to'enlighten all that dwell
On the earths face, as thou, enlightned hell,
And made the darke fires languish in that vale,

DP, p. 28, lines 5-7

107.
He is gone to his long (last) HOME. (H533)
The Autumnall

I shall ebbe on with them, who home-ward goe,
ESS, p. 28, line 50

108.
HONOR will buy no beef. (H573)

The Will

\[I\ give\] My brazen medals, unto them which live
In want of bread;
ESS, p. 55, lines 40-41

109.
Where there is no HONOR there is no grief (sorrow). (H581)
Great HONORS are great burdens. (H582)
HONOR and ease are seldom bedfellows. (H568)

The Storme

(For, Fates, or Fortunes drifts none can soothsay,
Honour and misery have one face and way.)
P, p. 175, lines 11-12

\[Image\ and\ Dream\]
Honours oppresse weake spirits,
ESS, p. 58, line 7

110.
HOPE for the best. (CDEP, p. 303)

The Token

Send me some honey to make sweet my hive,
That in my passions I may hope the best.
ESS, p. 107, lines 3-4

111.
Soon HOT soon cold. (H732)

A Tale of a Citizen and His Wife
And heat of taking up, but cold lay downe,

ESS, p. 103, line 43

112.
The IROH entered into his soul. (190)
As heavy as LEAD. (L134)
As cold as LEAD. (L137)

Resurrection, imperfect
Leaden and iron wills to good,

DP, p. 28, line 15

113.
He that will not bear the ITCH must endure the smart. (1105)

Satyre I

He them to him with amorcous smiles allures,
And grins, smacks, shrugs, and such an itch endures,
As prentises, or schoole-boyes which doe know
Of some gay sport abroad, yet dare not goe.

P, p. 148, lines 73-76

114.
As white as IVORY. (1109)

The Anagram

Though they be Ivory, yet her teeth are jeat,

ESS, p. 21, line 4

115.
As black as JET. (J49)

The Flea

And cloysterd in these living walls of Jet.

ESS, p. 53, line 15

A Jeat Ring Sent

Thou art not so black, as my heart,
The Anagram

Though they be Ivory, yet her teeth are jeat,

To be out of JOINT. (J75)

The First Anniversary

Then, as mankinde, so is the worlds whole frame
Quite out of icynt, almost created lame:

On His Mistris

Augure mee better chance, except dreade Jove
Thinke it enough for mee, to'have had thy love.

The Expostulation

Or thinke you heaven is deafe, or hath no eyes?
Or those it hath, smile at your perjuries?

To drink the juice of MANDRAKE (mandragora). (J101)

The Progresse of the Soule: XVII

Poppie she knew, she knew the mandrakes might,
And tore up both, and so coold her childs blood;

Like KING (prince) like people. (K70)
Kings (as their patterne, God) are liberall
Not onely in fulnesse, but capacitie,
Enlarging narrow men, to feele and see,
And comprehend the blessings they bestow.

P, p. 133, lines 44-47

120.
He that would KNOW what shall be must consider what has been. (K170)

The First Anniversary

He which not knowing her sad History,
Should come to reade the booke of destiny,
How faire and chast, humble and high shee'ad beene,
Much promis'd, much perform'ed, at not fifteene,
And measuring future things, by things before,
Should turne the leafe to reade, and read no more,
Would thinke that eyther destiny mistooke,
Or that some leafes were torne out of the booke.

A, p. 84, lines 83-90

121.
KNOW thyself. (K175)

The Second Anniversary

Poore soule in this thy flesh what do'st thou know.
Thou know'at thy selfe so little, as thou know'at not,
How thou did'at die, nor how thou wast begot.

A, p. 99, lines 254-256

Thou art to narrow, wretch, to comprehend
Even thy selfe:

A, p. 99, lines 261-262

What hope haue we to know our selues, when wee
Know not the least things, which for our use be?

A, p. 100, lines 279-290

122.
LABOR in vain is loss of time. (L3)
You lose your LABOR. (L9)

The First Anniversary

Let no man say, the world it selfe being dead, Tis labour lost to haue discovered The worlds infirmities, since there is none Alive to study this dissectione;

A, p. 69, lines 63-66

123.*
Good LAND evil way. (L50)

The Anagram

Beauty is barren oft; best husbands say There is best land, where there is foulest way.

ESS, p. 22, lines 35-36

124.
To sing like a LARK. (L70)

Epithalamion: On the Lady Elizabeth

Thou marryest every yeare The Lirique Larke,

P, p. 127, lines 5-6

125.
The more (Many) LAWS, the more (many) offenders (sins). (L117)

The Litanie: XXVI

That living law, the Magistrate Which to give us, and make us physicke, doth Our vices often aggravate,

DP, p. 25, lines 226-228

126.
He trembles (quakes, shakes) like an aspen LEAF. (L140)

The Apparition

And then poore Aspen wretch,
127.
To turn over a new LEAF. (L146)

To Sir Henry Goodyere

Who makes the Past, a patterne for next yeare,
Turnes no new leafe, but still the same things reads,
Scene things, he sees againe, heard things doth heare,
And makes his life, but like a paire of beads.

P, p. 183, lines 1-4

128.
LIFE is a pilgrimage. (L249)

Holy Sonnet VI

This is my playes last scene, here heavens appoint
My pilgrimages last mile;

DP, p. 7, lines 1-2

To Sir Henry Wotton

Life is a voyage, and in our lifes wayes
Countries, Courts, Towns are Rockes, or Remoraes;

P, p. 180, line 78

129.
LIFE is a span. (L251)

Holy Sonnet VI

My spans last inch.

DP, p. 7, line 4

The First Anniversary

And as in lasting, so in length is man
Contracted to an inch, who was a span.

A, p. 71, lines 135-136
130. The LIFE of spies is to know, not be known. (L257)

His Parting from Her

Have we not kept out guards, like spie on spie?
ESS, p. 98, line 45

131. As swift as LIGHTNING. (L279)

The Second Anniversary

Or see thy flight; which doth our thoughts outgoe
So fast, that now the lightning moues but slow:
A, p. 89, lines 11-12

The Progresse of the Soule

As lightning, which one scarce dares say, he saw
'Tis so soone gone, (and better proofe the law
Of sense, than faith requires) swiftly she flew
To a darkes and foggie Plot;
P, p. 300, lines 126-129

132. LIKENESS causes liking (love). (L294)

Change

Likenesse glues love: Then if seoe thou doe,
To make us like and love, must I change too?
ESS, p. 20, lines 23-24

133. By LINK and link the coat of mail is made at last. (L307)

The Bracelet

Nor for that seely old moralitie,
That as those links are tyed our love should be;
ESS, p. 1, lines 5-6

134. Hot LOVE is soon cold. (L483)
Holy Sonnet XIX

As humorous is my contritione
As my prophane love, and as soone forgott:
As ridlingly distemperd, cold and hott,
As praying, as mute; as infinite, as none.

DP, p. 16, lines 5-8

135.
In LOVE there is both dotage and discretion. (L486)
LOVE is without reason. (L517)
It is impossible to LOVE and be wise. (L558)

Loves Diet

... made it feed upon
That which love worst endures, discretion.

ESS, p. 45, lines 5-6

136.
LOVE asks faith and faith firmness. (L497)

His Parting from Her

Take therefore all in this: I love so true,
As I will never look for less in you.

ESS, p. 100, lines 103-104

137.
LOVE, being jealous, makes a good eye look asquint. (L498)

The Message

Yet since there they'have learn'd such ill,
That they be
Made by thee
Fit for no good sight,

ESS, p. 30, lines 3-8

138.
LOVE cannot be compelled (forced). (L499)

The Autumnall

Yong Beauties force your love, and that's a Rape,

ESS, p. 27, line 3
139.
LOVE comes by looking (in at the eyes). (L501)

His Parting from Her

Was't not enough that thou didst dart thy fires
Into our bloods, inflaming our desires,
And made'st sigh and glow, and pant, and burn,
And then thyself into our flame did'st turn?

ESS, p. 98, lines 35-38

140.
LOVE is a sweet torment. (L505a)
LOVE is full of fear (trouble). (L507)

The Canonization

You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;

ESS, p. 74, line 39

141.
LOVE is blind. (L506)

Variety

Here love receiv'd immedicable harms,
And was dispelled of his daring arms.
A greater want then is his daring eyes,

ESS, p. 105, lines 55-57

The Will

If they be blinde, then Love, I give them thee;

ESS, p. 54, line 4

His Parting from Her

Oh Love, that fire and darkness should be mixt,
Or to thy Triumphs soe strange torments fixt?
Is't because thou thy self art blind, that wee
Thy Martyrs must no more each other see?

ESS, p. 97, lines 13-16

Yet Love, thou'rt blinder then thy self in this,
To vex my Dove-like friend for mine amiss:
ESS, p. 97, lines 29-30

142.
LOVE is full of fear. (L507)

Holy Sonnet XIX

I durst not view heaven yesterday; and to day
In prayers, and flattering speaches I court God:
To morrow I quake with true feare of his rod.

DP, p. 16, lines 9-11

His Parting from Her

Or have we left undone some mutual Right,
Through holy fear, that merits thy despight?

ESS, p. 97, lines 19-20

143.
LOVE is lawless. (L508)

A Valediction: of my name in the Window

But all such rules, loves magique can undoe,

ESS, p. 64, line 11

144.
LOVE is sweet in the beginning but sour in the ending.
(L513)
LOVE'S beginning is fear, middle sin, and end grief and
annoyance. (L555)

Farewell to Love

/Lo/ve/ Being had, enjoying it decayes:
And thence,
What before pleas'd them all, takes but one sense,
And that so lamely, as it leaves behinde
A kinde of sorrowing dulness to the minde.

ESS, p. 82, lines 16-20

His Parting from Her

Time shall not lose our passages; the Spring
Shall tell how fresh our love was in beginning:
The Summer how it ripened in the eare;  
And Autumn, what our golden harvests were.  
The Winter I'll not think on to spite thee,  
But count it a lost season, so shall shee.  

ESS, p. 99, lines 77-82

The Expostulation

Who could have thought so many accents sweet  
Form'd into words, so many sighs should meete  
As from our hearts, so many oathes, and teares  
Sprinkled among, (all sweeter by our feares  
And the divine impression of stolne kisses  
That seal'd the rest) should now prove empty blisses?

ESS, p. 94-95, lines 13-18

145.  
LOVE is the touchstone of virtue. (L516)

To the Countesse of Huntington

Why love among the vertues is not knowne  
Is, that love is them all contract in one.

P, p. 421, lines 129-130

146.  
LOVE is without reason. (L517)  
LOVE is blind. (L506)

Loves Exchange

Give mee thy weaknesse, make mee blinde,  
Both wayes, as thou and thine, in eies and minde;

ESS, p. 46, lines 15-16

147.  
LOVE (Woman, Honor), like a shadow (crocodile, death),  
flies one following and pursues the fleeing. (L518)

To the Countesse of Huntington

Who strives through womans scornes, women to know,  
Is lost, and seekes his shadow to outgoe;

P, p. 419, lines 65-66
His Parting from Her

Since she must go, and I must mourn, come Night,
Environ me with darkness, whilst I write:
Shadow that hell unto me, which alone
I am to suffer when my Love is gone.

ESS, p. 96, lines 1-4

148.
LOVE makes men orators. (L522)
LOVE and business teach eloquence. (L491)

Holy Sonnet XIX

As humorous is my contritione
As my prophane love, and as soone forgott:
As ridlingly distempered, cold and hott,
As praying, as mute, as infinite, as none.
I durst not view heaven yesterday; and to day
In prayers, and flattering speaches I court God;
To morrow I quake with true feare of his rod.

DP, p. 16, lines 5-11

149.
LOVE of lads and fire of chips is soon in and soon out. (L526)
Hot LOVE is soon cold. (L483)

The Paradox

Love with excesse of heat, more yong then old,
Death kills with too much cold;

ESS, p. 38, lines 7-8

150.
LOVE will find a way. (L531)

His Parting from Her

And we can love by letters still and gifts
And thoughts and dreams; Love never wanteth shifts.

ESS, p. 99, lines 71-72

151.
LOVE without End has no end. (L533)
A perfect LOVE does last eternally. (L539)
The Good-morrow

If our two loves be one, thou and I
Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.

ESS, p. 71, lines 20-21

152.
Natural LOVE descends but it does not ascend. (L535)

The Autumnall

Since such loves naturall lation is, may still
My love descend, and journey downe the hill,
Not panting after growing beauties,

ESS, p. 28, lines 47-49

153.
A perfect LOVE does last eternally. (L539)

The Anniversarie

Only our love hath no decay;
This no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday,
Running it never runs from us away,
But truly keepes his first, last, everlasting day.

ESS, p. 71, lines 7-10

154.
Sound LOVE is not soon forgotten. (L542)

Holy Sonnet XIX

As humorous is my contritione
As my prophane love, and as sone forgott:

DP, p. 16, lines 5-6

155.
We LOVE that dearly that costs us dearest. (L562)

The Autumnall

If we love things long sought, Age is a thing
Which we are fifty yeares in compassing.

ESS, p. 28, lines 33-34
The LOVER is not where he lives but where he loves. (L565)

On His Mistris

Feeds on this flatterye,
That absent lovers one in th'other bee.

ESS, p. 23, lines 25-26

The Canonization

And thus envoke us; you whom reverend love
Made one anothers hermitage;

ESS, p. 74, lines 37-38

157.
LOVERS live by love as larks live by leeks. (L569)
They love too much that die for LOVE. (L546)

The Canonization

Wee can dye by it, if not live by love,

ESS, p. 74, line 28

158.
LOVERS' vows are not to be trusted. (L570)

Woman's Constancy

So lovers contracts, images of those,
Binds but till sleep, death's image, them unloose?

ESS, pp. 42-43, lines 9-10

Holy Sonnet XIX

Oh, to vex me, contraryes meet in one:
Inconstancy unnaturally hath begott
A constant habit; that when I would not
I change in vowes, and in devotions.
As humorous is my contritione
As my prophane love, and as soone forgott:

DP, pp. 15-16, lines 1-6

159.
A true LOVER'S-knot. (L571)
The Token

I beg noe ribbond wrought with thine owne hands,
To knit our loves in the fantastick straine
Of new-toucht youth;

ESS, p. 107, lines 5-7

160.*
LUCY-light, the shortest day and the longest night. (1585)

The Second Anniversary

Thinke that they bury thee, and thinke that rite
Laiest thee to sleepe but a saint Lucies night.

A, p. 95, lines 119-120

A Nocturnall upon S. Lucies day, being the shortest day

'Tis the yeares midnight, and it is the dayes,
Lucies, who scarce seaven houres herself unmaskes,

Since shee enjoys her long nights festivall,
Let mee prepare towards her, and let mee call
This houre her Vigill, and her Eve, since this
Both the yeares, and the dayes deep midnight is.

ESS, pp. 84-85, lines 1-2; 42-45

161.
Every MAN before he dies shall see the devil. (M105)

Holy Sonnet VI

And Gluttonous death, will instantly unjoynt
My body, and soule, and I shall sleepe a space,
But my'ever-waking part shall see that face
Whose feare already shakes my every joynt;

For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devill.

DP, p. 7, lines 5-8; 14

162.
MAN is the measure of all things. (CDEP, p. 402)

Ecclogve
As man is of the world, the heart of man,
Is an epitome of Gods great booke
Of creatures, and man need no farther looke;

P, p. 133, lines 50-52

163.
A MAN can die but once. (M219)
The Paradox
Wee dye but once,
ESS, p. 38, line 9

164.
A MAN may strain his nose till it bleed. (M270)
His Parting from Her
Till Fortune, that would rive us, with the deed,
Strain her eyes open, and it make them bleed.
ESS, p. 98, lines 61-62

165.
A MAN without reason is a beast in season. (M306)
Upon Mr. Thomas Coryat's Crudities
If man be therefore man, because he can
Reason, and laugh, thy booke doth halfe make man.
P, p. 172, lines 13-14

166.
A wicked MAN is his own hell. (M417)
Eclogue
As heaven, to man dispos'd, is every where,
So are those Courts, whose Princes animate,
Not only all their house, but all their state.
P, pp. 132-133, lines 40-42

167.
The wise MAN is deceived but once, the fool twice. (M424)
The Triple Poole

And I, which was two fooles, do so grow three;
Who are a little wise, the best fooles be.

ESS, p. 52, lines 21-22

168.
A MAN'S house is his castle. (M473)

Jealousie

Now I see many dangers; for that is
His realme, his castle, and his diocese.

ESS, p. 10, lines 25-26

169.
MEN are not angels. (M544)

The Litanie: XVI

From thinking us all soule, neglecting thus
Our mutuall duties, Lord deliver us.

DP, p. 22, lines 143-144

170.
It is better to be a MARTYR than a confessor. (M703)

(1599 Minsheu Span.Dial, p. 22 And when they do racks you,
rather prooue a martyr then a confessor.)

His Parting from Her

Is't because thou thy selfe art blind, that wee
Thy Martyrs must no more each other see?
Or tak'est thou pride to break us on the wheel,
And view old Chaos in the Pains we feel?

ESS, p. 97, lines 15-18

171.
New MEAT begets a new appetite. (M831)

Variety

All things doe willingly in change delight,
The fruitfull mother of our appetite:
172. Who has no MEMORY (understanding) let him have legs.  

The Second Anniversary

Forget this world, and scarce thinke of it so,  
As of old cloaths, cast of a yeare agoe.  
To be thus stupid is Alacrity;  
Men thus Lethargique haue best Memory.

A, p. 93, lines 61-64

173. As old as METHUSELAH. (M908)

The First Anniversary

Where is this mankind now? who liues to age,  
Fit to be made Methusalem his page?

A, p. 71, lines 127-128

174.* The first MINUTE after noon is night. (M987)

A Lecture upon the Shadow

Love is a growing, or full constant light;  
And his first minute, after noone, is night.

ESS, p. 79, lines 25-26

Holy Sonnet VI

This is my playes last scene, here heavens appoint  
My pilgrimages last mile; and my race  
Idly, yet quickly runne, hath this last pace,  
My years last inch, my minutes last point,

DP, p. 7, lines 1-4

175. As changeful (inconstant) as the MOON. (1111)

The Will

My constancie I to the planets give;
The MOON directs more than the sun. (M1118)

A Valediction: of Weeping

0 more than Moone,

The MOON is not seen where the sun shines. (M1120)

Epithalamion

Here lyes a shee Sunne, and a hee Moone here.
She gives the best light to his Spheare,

Out of one MOUTH to blow hot and cold. (M1258)

The Expostulation

Or doth their breath
(Both hot and cold at once) make life and death?

NATURE is the true law. (N46)

The Progresse of the Soule: XLVIII

. . . without feare or awe
Of nature; nature hath no gaole, though shee hath law.

After NIGHT comes the day. (N164)

His Parting from Her

And dearest Friend, sinc: we must part, droun night
With hope of Day,
NOTHING is good or bad but by comparison. (N298)

The Progress of the Soule: LII
Ther's nothing simply good, nor ill alone, Of every quality comparison, The onely measure is, and judge, opinion.

P, p. 316, lines 518-520

There is NOTHING but is good for something. (N327)
There is NOTHING so bad in which there is not something of good. (328)

The Progress of the Soule: LII
Ther's nothing simply good, nor ill alone, Of every comparison, The onely measure is, and judge, opinion.

P, p. 316, lines 518-520

The First Anniversary
No euill wants his good:
A, p. 65, line 3

Sweet is the NUT but bitter (harr) is the shell. (N360)
Not worth a NUTSHELL. (N365)

Communitie:
And when hee hath the kernell eate, Who doth not fling away the shell?

ESS, p. 34, lines 23-24

OPINION sways the world. (O68)

Variety
And we made servants to opinion,
A monster in no certain shape attir'd,
And whose originall is much desir'd,
Formlesse at first, but growing on it fashions,
And doth prescribe manners and laws to nations.

185.
As proud as a PEACOCK. (P157)
The PEACOCK has fair feathers but foul feet. (P158)

Satyre I

He heares not mee, but, on the other side
A many-coloured Peacock having spide,
Leaves him and mee;

P, p. 143, lines 91-93

186.
As rare as the PHOENIX. (P256)

Epithalamion: On the Lady Elizabeth

All that is nothing unto this,
For thou this day coupl'est two Phoenixes;

P, p. 127, lines 17-18

... one bed containes, through Thee,
Two Phoenixes, whose joyned breasts
Are unto one ancther mutuall nests,
Where motion kindles such fires, as shall give
Yong Phoenixes, and yet the old shall live.

P, p. 128, lines 19-26

Up then faire Phoenix Bride, frustrate the Sunne,

P, p. 128, line 29

The First Anniversary

For every man alone thinkes he hath got
To be a Phoenix, and that there can bee
None of that kinde, of which he is, but hee.

A, pp. 73-74, lines 216-218
The Canonization

The Phoenix ridle hath more wit
By us, we two being one, are it,
So, to one neutrall thing both sexes fit.
Wee dye and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.

ESS, p. 74, lines 23-27

187.
He that touches PITCH shall be defiled. (P358)

To Sir Henry Wotton

Life is a voyage, and in our lifes wayes
Countries, Courts, Towns are Rockes, or Remoraes;
They breake or stop all ships, yet our state's such
That though then pitch they staine worse, wee must touch.

P, p. 180, lines 7-10

188.
PITY is akin to love. (P370)

Holy Sonnet XIII

Beauty, of pitty, foulnesse onely is
A signe of rigour:

DP, p. 10, lines 11-12

189.
Stolen PLEASURES are sweetest. (P123)

The Expostulation

Sprinkled among, (all sweeter by our feares
And the divine impression of stolne kisses,
That seal'd the rest) should now prove empty blisses?

ESS, pp. 94-95, lines 16-18

His Parting from Her

Stoln (more to sweeten them) our many blisses
Of meetings, conferences, embracements, kisses?

ESS, p. 98, lines 47-48
190.  
To hate (shun) one like POISON. (Pl459)

Julia

I blush to give her halfe her due; yet say,  
No poysn's halfe so bad as Julia.

ESS, p. 101, lines 31-32

191.  
Standing POOLS gather filth. (Pl465)

Variety

And a dead lake that no strange bank doth greet,  
Corrupts it self and what doth live in it.

ESS, p. 104, lines 13-14

192.  
PRETTINESS dies first (quickly). (P567)  
BEAUTY does fade like a flower. (B165)

The Anagram

Love built on beauty, soone as beauty, dies.

ESS, p. 21, line 27

193.  
PRIDE is the root of all sin. (P578)

The Litanie: XVII

Neglecting to closeake sins spawne, Vanitie,

DP, p. 22, line 148

194.  
PRIDE that apes humility. (ODEP, p. 519)

The Crosse

And then as worst surfets, of best meates bee,  
Soe is pride, issued from humility,

DP, p. 27, lines 39-40

195.  
Like PRINCE, like people. (ODEP, p. 519)
The Sunne Rising

Princes doe but play us;

ESS, p. 75, line 23

196.
An empty PURSE fills the face with wrinkles. (P6;3)

The Autumnall

But name not Winter-faces, whose skin's slacke;
Lanke, as an unthrift's purse; but a scules sacke;

ESS, p. 28, lines 37-38

197.
Let REASON rule all your actions. (R4;3)

The Second Anniversary

For shee made ivars, and triumph'd; res on still
Did not overthow, but rectifie her will:

A, p. 102, lines 361-362

198.
There is a REMEDY for all things but death. (R69)

The Will

To him for whom the passing bell next tolls,
I give my physic bookes;

ESS, p. 55, line 37

199.
REWARD and punishment are the walls of a city. (R95)

The First Anniversary

Are these but warts, and pock-holes in the face
Of th'earth? Thinke so: But yet confesse, in this
The worlds proportion disfigured is,
That those two legges whereon it doth relie
Reward and punishment are bent awrie.

A, p. 76, lines 300-304
200.  
He RUNS far that never turns again.  (R210)

The Progresse of the Soule: XL

And thus he made his foe, his prey, and tombo:  
Who cares not to turn back, may any whither come.

P, p. 311, lines 399-400

201.
SAY well is good but do well is better.  (S123)

His Parting from Her

For this to th'comfort of my Dear I vow,  
My Deeds shall still be what my words are now;

ESS, p. 100, lines 95-96

202.
The SEA complains it wants water.  (S179)
The SEA refuses no river (is never full).  (S181)

The Will

To women or the sea, [I give] my teares.

ESS, p. 54, line 6

Satyre II

To out-drinke the sea,

P, p. 151, line 33

203.
He that tells his SECRET is another's servant (slave).  
(S192)

The Progresse of the Soule: XLIII

Hee hath engag'd her; his, she wholly bides;  
Who not her owne, none others secrets hides.

P, p. 312, lines 421-422

204.
We SEE sleeping that which we wish for waking.  (S205)
Then Fantasie is Queene and Soule, and all;  
She can present joyes meaner then you do;  
Convenient, and more proportionall.  
So, if I dreame I have you, I have you,  
For, all our joyes are but fantastical.

ESS, p. 58, lines 10-14

When the SERPENT is dead the poison will not hurt. (S229)

The First Anniversary

But as some Serpents poison hurteth not,  
Except it be from the lieue Serpent shot,  
So doth her vertue need her here, to fit  
That vnto us; shee working more than it.

A, p. 79, lines 409-412

To lick into SHAPE. (S284)

I621 Burton Anat. Mel. Democr. to rdr. (1676) 7/2 Enforced as a Bear doth her Whelps, to bring forth this confused lump,  
I had not time to lick it into form.

Loves Progress

And love's a beare-whelp borne; if wee'overlicke  
Our love, and force it new strange shapes to take  
We erro, and of a lumpe a monster make.

ESS, p. 16, lines 4-6

The Bracelet

Or were they Spanish Stamps, still travelling,  
That are become as Catholique as their King,  
Those unlick't beare-whelps, unfil'd Pistolets,  
That, more then cannon-shot, availes or lets,

ESS, p. 2, lines 29-32

The SICKNESS of the body is the health of the soul. (S423)

Holy Sonnet IV
Oh my blacke Soule! (now thou art summoned
By sickness, deaths herald, and champion;

DP, p. 7, lines 1-2

208.
SILENCE is (gives) consent. (Sh46)

Elegie: Death

Sad hearts, the lesse they seeme the more they are,
(So guilthiest men stand mutest at the barre)
Not that they know not, feele not their estate,
But extreme sense hath made them desperate.

P, p. 285, lines 5-8

209.
He shall sink in his own SIN. (Sh46)

Holy Sonnet I

I dare not move my dimme eyes any way,
Despaire behind, and death before doth cast
Such terror, and my feebled flesh doth waste
By sinne in it, which it t'wards hell doth weigh;

DP, p. 12, lines 5-8

210.
He is nothing but SKIN and bone. (ODEP, p. 595)

His Picture

My body'a a sack of bones, broken within,

ESS, p. 25, line 9

211.
SLEEP is the brother (kinsman, cousin) of death. (Sp526)

The Storme

Sleepe is paines easiest salve, and doth fullfill
All offices of death, except to kill.

P, p. 176, lines 35-36
SLEEP is the image of death. (S527)

Holy Sonnet X

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and Dreadfull, for, thou art not soe,
For, those, whom thou thinkest, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee;
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee.

DP, p. 9, lines 1-5

To the Lady Bedford

So madame, as her Soule to heaven is fled,
Her flesh rests in the earth, as in the bed;

P, p. 228, lines 27-28

Womans Constancy

So Lovers contracts, images of those,
Binds but till sleep, deaths image, them unloose?

EES, pp. 42-43, lines 9-10

See also:
A sleeping MAN is no better than a dead man. (M337)

Obsequies to the Lord Harrington

Thou seest mee here at midnight, now all rest;
Times dead-low water; when all minnes devest
To morrows businesse, when the labourers have
Such rest in bed, that their last Church-yard grave,
Subject to change, will scarce be's type of this,
Now when the clilent, whose last hearing is
To morrow, sleeps, when the condemned man,
(Who when hee opes his eyes, must shut them then
Againe by death,) although sad watch hee keeps,
Both practice dying by a little sleepe,

P, p. 271, lines 15-24

SEVEN sleepers. (ODEP, p. 577)

The Good-morrow
Or snorted we i'the seauen sleepers den?

ESS, p. 70, line 4

214.
As slow as a SNAIL. (S579)
Like a SNAIL, he keeps his house on his tack (head). (S580)
The BODY is the prison of the soul. (E497)

The Second Anniversary

Shee, shee, thus richly, and largely hous'd, is gone:
And chides vs slow-pac'd snailes, who crawle upon
Our prisons prison, earth, nor thinke vs well
Longer, then whil'st we beare our brittle shell.

A, p. 99, lines 247-250

To Sir Henry Wotton

Follow, (for he is easie pac'd) this snail'e,

P, p. 182, line 51

Be thou thine owne home, and in thy selfe dwell;
Inne any where, continuance maketh hell.
And seeing the snail'e, which every where doth rone,
Carrying his owne house still, still is at home,
Follow, (for he is easie pac'd) this snail'e,
Be thine owne Palace, or the world's thy galle.

P, p. 182, lines 47-52

215.
Small SORROWS (griefs) speak, great ones are silent. (S661)

Elegie: Death

Language thou art too narrow, and too weake
To ease us now; great sorrow cannot speake:

P, p. 284, lines 1-2

216.
The SOUL needs few things, the body many. (S668)

Upon the Annuntiation and the Passion
Tamely, fraile body, 'abstaine to day; to day
My soule eates twice, Christ hither and away.

DP, p. 29, lines 1-2

217.
To grease a fat SOW in the tail. (S682)
Claw a CHURL by (Grease a fat sow in ) the tail and he
(she) will beray your hand. (C386)
Gull a KNAVE and he will grease your hands. (K123)

A Tale of a Citizen and His Wife

I touch no fat sowes grease,

ESS, p. 101, line 6

218.
As lustful as SPARROWS. (S715)

The Progress of the Soule: XX

In this worlds youth wise nature did make hast,
Things ripened sooner, and did longer last;
Already this hot cocke, in bush and tree,
In field and tent, oreflutters his next hen;

P, p. 302, lines 191-194

Epithalamion: On the Lady Elizabeth

The Sparrow that neglects his life for love,

P, p. 127, line 7

More truth, more courage in these two do shine,
Than all thy turtles have, and sparrows, Valentine.

P, p. 130, lines 97-98

219.
One may point (look) at a STAR but not pull (reach) at it.
(S825)

Song

Goe, and catche a falling starre,
183

220.
STARS are not seen by sunshine. (S826)

The Litanie: XII. The Doctors

Their zeal may be our sinne. Lord let us runne
Meane waies, and call them stars, but not the Sunne.

DP, p. 21, lines 116-117

221.
As hard as a STONE (flint, rock). (S878)

A Valediction: of my Name, in the Window

My name engrav'd herein,
Doth contribute my firmnesse to this glasse,
Which, ever since that charme, hath beene
As hard, as that which grav'd it, was;

ESS, p. 64, lines 1-4

222.
As still as a STONE. (S879)

Elegie on the L. C.

Here needs no marble Tombe, since hee is gone,
He, and about him, his, are turn'd to stone.

P, p. 287, lines 25-26

223.
After a STORM comes a calm (fair weather). (S908)

The Calme

Stormes chafe, and some weare out themselves, or us;
in calmes, Heaven laughs to see us languish thus.

P, p. 178, lines 5-6

224.
The STREAM cannot rise above its source. (ODEP, p. 625)

Holy Sonnet XVII
Here the admiring her my mind did whett
To seeke thee God; so streames do shew the head,

DP, p. 15, lines 5-6

225.
The SUBJECT3' love is the king's lifeguard. (ODEP, p. 628)
MEN (Men's love), not walls, make the city (prince) safe. (M555)

The Anniversarie

Here upon earth, we're Kings, and none but wee
Can be such Kings, nor of subjects bee;
Who is so safe as wee? Where none can doe
Treason to us, except one of us two.

ESS, p. 72, lines 23-26

226.
The rising, not the setting, SUN is worshipped by most men. (S979)

The Sunne Rising

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,

ESS, p. 72, line 1

227.
The SUN shines upon all alike. (S985)

His Parting from Her

Though cold and darkness longer hang somewhere,
Yet Phoebus equally lights all the Sphere.

ESS, p. 99, lines 85-86

Variety

The sun that sitting in the chaire of light
Sheds flame into whatever else seems bright,

ESS, p. 104, lines 5-6

228.
The SUN together with man generates man. (S986)
The Progresse of the Soule: II

Thee, eye of heaven, this great Soule envies not, By thy male force, is all wee have, begot.

_P, p. 295, lines 11-12_

229.
To set forth the SUN with a candle (lantern, taper). (S988)
Resurrection, imperfect

A better Sun rose before thee to day, Who, not content to enlighten all that dwell On the earths face, as thou, enlightened hell, And made the darke fires languish in that vale, As, at thy presence here, our fires grow pale.

_DP, p. 28, lines 4-8_

Epithalamion: On the Lady Elizabeth

Thou mak'st a Taper see What the sunne never saw,

_P, p. 127, lines 19-20_

230.
Two SUNS cannot shine in one sphere. (S992)

His Parting from Her

I will not look upon the quickning Sun, But straight her beauty to my sense shall run;

_ESS, p. 99, lines 73-74_

The Sunne Rising

If her eyes have not blinded thine,

_ESS, p. 73, line 15_

Ecclogve

At Court the spring already advanced is, The Sunne stayes longer up; and yet not his The glory is, farre other, other fires.
First, zeale to Prince and State; then loves desires
Burne in one brest, and like heavens two great lights,
The first doth governe dayes, the other nights.

P, p. 132, lines 15-20

231.
Like a SWAN, he sings before his death. (S1028)

The First Anniversary

And all the world would be one dying Swan,
To sing her funerall prayse, and vanish than.

A, p. 79, lines 407-408

Epithalamion: XVII. The Benediction

Blest payre of Swans, Oh may you interbring,
Daily new joyes, and never sing,
Live, till all grounds of wishes faile,
Till honor, yea till wisedome grow so stale,
That, new great heights to trie,
It must serve your ambition, to die;

P, p. 138, lines 171-176

232.
TAKE it or leave it. (T28)

Satyre I

For better or worse, take mee, or leave mee:
To take, and leave mee is adultery.

P, p. 146, lines 25-26

233.
TEARS in the eyes, ruth in the heart. (T83)

Holy Sonnet III

In my Idolatry what shoures of raine
Mine eyes did waste? What griefs my heart did rent?

DP, p. 13, lines 5-6

The Lamentations of Jeremy
And for my city daughters sake, mine eye
Doth breake mine heart.

DP, p. 43, lines 249-250

234.
His THREAD is spun. (T249)

A Hymne to God the Father

I have a sinne of feare, that when I have spunne
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore;

DP, p. 51, lines 13-14

235.
TIME devours all things (consumes, wears out). (T325)

Satyre II

Whom time (which rots all, and makes botches poxe,
And plodding on must make a calfe an oxe)
Hath made a Lawyer,

P, p. 151, lines 41-43

236.*
When you do hear a TOLL or knell then think upon your
passing bell. (T375)

\underline{1624}\ Donne Devotions xvii, p. 98: Never send to know for
whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

The Will

To him for whom the passing bell next tolls,
I give my physick booke;

ESS, p. 55, lines 37-38

237.
No TRUST to be given to a woman's word (a woman). (T551)
LOVERS vows are not to be trusted. (L570)

The Expostulation

Are vowes so cheape with women, or the matter
Where of they'are made, that they are writ in water
And bloune away with winde?
The TRUTH shows best being naked. (T589)

Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne

... for thou, alone,
Like vertue and truth, art best in nakednesse;

As true as a TURTLE to her mate. (T624)

Epithalamion: On the Lady Elizabeth

More truth, more courage in these two do shine,
Then all thy turtles have, and sparrows, Valentine.

He that is not handsome at TWENTY, nor strong at thirty,
nor rich at forty, nor wise at fifty, will never be handsome, strong, rich, or wise. (T631)

The Autumnall

If we love things long sought, Age is a thing
Which we are fifty yeares in compassing.

She has a TYMPANY with two legs (heels). (T648)

She is pregnant (Tilley)

And though in childbirths labour she did lie,
Midwifes would sweare, 'twere but a tympanie.

VARIETY takes away satiety. (V18)

CHANGE is sweet. (G229)
The Indifferent

And by Loves sweetest Part, Variety, she swore,

ESS, p. 42, line 20

Variety

The heavens rejoyce in motion, why should I
Abjure my so much lov'd variety,
And not with many youth and love divide?
Pleasure is none, if not diversifi'd:

ESS, p. 104, lines 1-4

VIRTUE (Valor) is the beauty (nobleness) of the soul (mind).

To Mr. R. W.

If men be worlds, there is in every one
Some thing to answere in some proportion
All the worlds riches: And in good men, this,
Vertue, our formes forme and our soules soule, is.

P, p. 210, lines 29-32

VIRTUE never grows old. (V87)

The First Anniversary

But she, in whom, to such maturity,
Vertue was ground, past growth, that it must die.

A, p. 79, lines 413-414

He cannot be VIRTUOUS that is not rigorous. (V91)

Holy Sonnet XIII

Beauty, of pitty, foulnesse onely is
A signe of rigour:

DP, p. 10, lines 11-12
246.
Running WATER is better than standing. (W103)
Standing POOLS gather filth. (P465)

Change

Waters stinke soone, if in one place they bide,
And in the vast sea are worse putrifi'd:
But when they kisse one banke, and leaving this
Never looke backe, but the next banke doe kisse,

ESS, p. 20, lines 31-35

Variety

Rivers the clearer and more pleasing are,
Where their fair spreading streams run wide and farre:

ESS, p. 104, lines 11-12.

247.
To fetch (wring) WATER (blood) out of a stone (flint).
(W107)

Twicknam Garden

Or a stone fountaine weeping out my yeare.

ESS, p. 84, line 18

248.
To write in WATER. (W114)

The Expostulation

Are vowes so cheape with women, or the matter
Whereof they're made, that they are writ in water,

ESS, p. 94, lines 9-10

249.
The WEAKEST to the wall. (W195)

Satyre I

Now we are in the street; He first of all
Improvously proud, creeps to the wall,
And so imprisned, and hem'd in by mee
Sells for a little state his libertie;
One WEDGE drives out another. (W234)
The thin end of the WEDGE is to be feared. (ODEP, p. 649)

Satyre II
Like a wedge in a blocke,

Good WINE makes good blood. (W461)
The Autumnall
There he, as wine in June, enrages blood,

To be under another's (mother's) WING. (W495)
Holy Sonnet I
Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his art
And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart.

Whoween himself wise, WISDOM wots him a fool. (W522)
The Triple Foole
Whc are a little wise, the best foolees bee.

A WOLF (fox) may change his hair but not his heart (nature, malice). (W616)
As wily (crafty) as a FOX. (P629)
As lecherous as a GOAT. (G167)
Foxes and goats; all beasts change when they please,
Shall women, more hot, wily, wild then these,
Be bound to one man,

ESS, p. 20, lines 16-18

255.
Trust not a WOMAN when she weeps. (W638)

Twicknam Garden

Nor can you more judge womans thoughts by teares,

ESS, p. 84, line 24

256.
A WOMAN does that which is forbidden her. (W650)

The Progresse of the Soule: XX

. . . and t'her whom the first man did wive
(Whom and her race, only forbiddings drive)

P, p. 298, lines 86-87

The Expostulation

Hee first desire you false, would wish you just?

ESS, p. 95, lines 21-22

257.
A WOMAN is the weaker vessel. (W655)

The First Anniversary

Shee in whom vertue was so much refin'd,
That for Alloy vnto so pure a minde
Shee tooke the weaker sex,

A, p. 72, lines 177-179

258.
A WOMAN says nay (no) and means aye. (W660)
A WOMAN'S heart and her tongue are not relatives. (W672)

The Expostulation
Or must we read you quite from what you speake,
And finde the truth out the wrong way?

ESS, p. 95, lines 20-21

259.
WOMEN are as wajoring (changeable, inconstant) as the wind. (W698)

Song

And finde / what winde / Serves to'advance an honest minde.

And swears:/ No where / Lives a woman true, and faire.

ESS, p. 29, lines 7-18

260.
WOMEN are great talkers. (W701)

Some women have some taciturnity;
Some Nunneries, some grains of chastity.

A, p. 80, lines 423-424

261.
WOMEN laugh when they can and weep when they will. (W713)
WOMEN naturally deceive, weep, and spin. (W716)
WOMEN weep and sicken when they list. (W720)

The Will

To women or the sea, /I give/ my teares,

ESS, p. 54, line 6

262.
Not to be able to see WOOD for the trees. (W733)

/IImage and Dream/

... the more, the lesse wee see.

ESS, p. 58, line 8

263.
Few WORDS show men wise. (W799)
Where many WORDS are, the truth goes by. (W823)
Full of COURTESY full of craft. (C732)

His Parting from Her

Much more I could, but many words have made
That, oft, suspected which men would persuade;

ESS, p. 100, lines 101-102

264.
Not WORDS but deeds. (W820)

The Progress of the Soule: XLII

To Abels tent he stealeth in the darke,
On whose skirts the bitch slept, 'ere she could bark,
Attach'd her with streight gripes, yet hee call'd those
Embracements of love; to loves work he goes,
Where deeds move more then words;
P, p. 312, lines 414-417

265.
This WORLD is a stage and every man plays his part. (W882)

The Second Anniversary

Shee, to whom all this world was but a stage.
A, p. 93, line 67

How others on our stage their parts did Act;
A, p. 100, line 286

On His Mistris

Men of France, . . . the rightest companie
Of Players which uppon the worlds stage bee.
ESS, p. 24, lines 33-36

Holy Sonnet VI

This is my playes last scene,
Dp, p. 7, line 1
266.
When I die, the WORLD dies with me. (W891)
A fever
But when thou from this world wilt goe,
The whole world vapors with thy breath.
ESS, p. 61, lines 7-8

The First Anniversary
But though it be too late to succour thee,
Sick world, yea dead, yea putrified, since shee
Thy intrinsique Balme, and thy preservative,
Can never be renew'd, thou never live,
I (since no man can make thee liue) will trie,
What we may gaine by thy Anatomy.
A, p. 69, lines 55-60

Well dy'de the world, that we might liue to see
This world of wit, in his Anatomies:
A, p. 65, lines 1-2

267.
The WORLD, the flesh, and the devill. (ODER, p. 732)
Holy Sonnet VI
For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devill.
DP, p. 7, line 14

Holy Sonnet XVII
Least the World, fleshe, yea Devill putt thee out.
DP, p. 15, line 14
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Vita

Arthur William Pitts, Jr., son of Arthur William Pitts and Helen Armstrong Pitts, was born February 11, 1933, in Corry, Pennsylvania. He attended St. Edward's School, Corry Junior High School, and Corry Senior High School, from which he was graduated in 1950. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Princeton University in 1954, with a major in English, and a Master of Arts degree in English from Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., in 1960. From 1953 to 1960 he was a teacher of Latin at the Landon School for Boys, Bethesda, Maryland, and an Instructor of English at Gannon College, Erie, Pennsylvania, 1960-61. From 1961 to 1963, he held a teaching assistantship in English at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Since 1963 he has been an Assistant Professor of English at State University College at Buffalo, New York.

He is married to the former Deirdre Dwen of Dunkie, Louisiana, and is the father of six children.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Pitts, Arthur William, Jr.

Major Field: English

Title of Thesis: John Donne's Use of Proverbs in His Poetry

Approved:

[Signatures and titles]

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

July 20, 1966